

THE OREGON SINFONIETTA

OUR 38TH YEAR

Dr. Donald Appert, Music Director/Conductor

Larry Greep, President

NEWSLETTER FOR MARCH, 2011

Next concert: Sunday, March 13th at 3:00 p.m.

Sunnyside Seventh-day Adventist Church, 10501 SE Market Street just east of I-205

Mendelssohn – Overture to Ruy Blas
Saint-Saëns – Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor
Megan Yip, soloist*
Brahms – Symphony No. 4 in E minor

Program notes for this concert are on page 4

Megan Yip, 14, began studying cello at age 6 with the late Naomi Blumberg, and later with India Jobelmann. For four years her teacher has been Hyun-Jin Kim. Twice – first when she was nine years old – Megan has won the First Prize scholarship in the Oregon Society's Cello Scholarship Audition. She has served as the assistant principal in the Portland Youth Philharmonic's Young String Ensemble, as principal in its Conservatory Orchestra and has played in the Philharmonic Orchestra since she was 12. She and her two siblings, Mighten and Melody, make up the chamber music group "The Yip Trio," which performs frequently in churches and for community events.

When four Megan began piano with her mother and the next year started with Dorothy Fahlman. Her piano orchestral debut was a duo with her sister Melody performing the *Carnival of the Animals* with the Columbia Symphony. They subsequently played *Carnival* with the Portland Chamber Orchestra. In both 2009 and 2010 Megan placed first in Oregon in the Music Teachers National Association's Junior Division Piano Competition and she represented Oregon twice at the Northwest Division level, and both times was the Alternate Winner.

Megan has been to the International Institute for Young Musicians in Kansas and was accepted into the Bowdoin International Musical Festival in Maine twice as a pianist. This year she plans to apply to Bowdoin as a cellist. Megan has also studied ballet and fencing and enjoys biking and hanging out with siblings and friends at school. She sings in the school choir and is a honor roll freshman at Jesuit High.



UPCOMING CONCERTS

**FEATURING CMSO CONCERTO COMPETITION WINNERS*

SUNDAY, May 22nd, 2011

Mozart – Piano Concerto No. 21 in C major

Mary Stone, soloist*

Mendelssohn – Symphony No. 5

“Reformation

**FOR DETAILS OF 2011-2012 SEASON
SEE PAGE 5**

MEET THE MUSICIANS



Elke Rühl, second violin, joined us three years ago when she came to Portland from Germany. She had researched community orchestras in the Portland area and found the Oregon Sinfonietta on the list provided by David Kerr Violin Shop, and was impressed by Conductor Appert's prompt response to her e-mail. Elke started violin in fifth grade. She would have preferred piano, but there wasn't an instrument available – whereas her grandfather's old violin was still sitting in the attic. She was taught by members of the Stuttgart Philharmoniker while in school. With all her travelling over the years she never regretted learning the violin because it is small enough to carry. Past and present jobs include publishing and education, and in Portland she works with schools between Northern California and Alaska that offer German programs in connection with the standardized German Language Diploma. She has also spent four years in England. Next summer she will return to Aachen, well known for its famous Cathedral, dating from 800 A. D. (Aachen became Charlemagne's home and political power base). Elke has met lots of musicians through the Sinfonietta and is particularly grateful to Virginia Euwer Wolff, her stand-partner, who introduced her to many wonderful musicians in the Portland area. Elke looks forward to returning to her partner and friends in Aachen but says she will miss Portland and its cultural scene greatly.



Karen Karger only took up the **cello** two years ago, but has been involved in music most of her life. She started with the violin when she was six years old, but switched to the piano at age 12. Karen studied piano well into adulthood and participated in various choral organizations along the way. She considered majoring in music in college, but instead graduated with a degree in art and English, managing to squeeze in some music classes. Karen has wanted to learn to play the cello for a very long time and finally dove in when she came across an inexpensive instrument with which to get her feet wet. Her supportive husband, Pat, gave her a nice replacement cello last Christmas. Karen's most memorable musical experience (to date) was performing the chorus of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra.

Karen was raised in northern New Mexico and moved to Portland in 1988. Her career has been technology marketing and she is currently the Marketing Manager for EasyStreet Online Services. Her other hobbies include walking, sewing, painting and gardening. Karen says that although it's nice learning pieces for the solo instrument, it's really thrilling to hear the music come together with such a talented group as the Oregon Sinfonietta.

CONDUCTOR'S CORNER



Our March 13 concert continues my tenth anniversary celebration as Music Director/Conductor of the Oregon Sinfonietta with repertoire that should be familiar to most of our audience. Mendelssohn, like Mozart, was a success early in life. His *Overture to Ruy Blas* dates from 1839 when he was 30 years old and it still shows the freshness of his better known *Overture to a Midsummer Night's Dream*, composed when he was 17. I performed *Ruy Blas* early in my tenure with the Sinfonietta and wanted to return to it now that the orchestra is stronger.

As always, it is a great pleasure to showcase another winner of the our concerto competition that we hold each year. Megan Yip, a fine cellist already at the age of 14,

will be performing the Saint-Saëns *Cello Concerto No. 1*. The work is in one movement with three sections – fast/slow/fast, without any break. It has been a favorite showcase for cellists since it first appeared in 1872. We know you will enjoy hearing this fine musician.

Over the years I have programmed both of Brahms' overtures and the *Variations on a theme of Haydn*. This marks the first time I have attempted one of his symphonies with the orchestra. Brahms was so self-conscious of the shadow of Beethoven that he did not compose his *Symphony No. 1* until 1876 when he was in his 50's! As a result he only wrote four symphonies and this last dates from 1885. The wealth of musical material is astounding and most satisfying for everyone involved. The last movement uses the chord progression of the opening eight measures as the basis for a continuous variation form which builds to the fantastic climax of the symphony. It has been a great pleasure to work on this masterpiece in rehearsal and I am looking forward to the concert with great anticipation. It has gone well and I plan to include Brahms' *Symphony No. 2* as the final work next season.

Lastly, it is with great pride that we congratulate Esperanza Spalding on winning the Grammy Award for New Artist (beating no less than Justin Bieber!). Her early training came from the Chamber Music Society of Oregon youth program and you can see a note of thanks to the founders Hazel DeLorenzo and Dorothy McCormack on her latest CD titled "Chamber Music Society." We hope you will join us as we continue this legacy of providing opportunities for young artists in the area. See you on March 13th!

Don Appert

DR. DONALD APPERT'S WEBSITE

A new website-in-progress is at <http://www.maestroappert.com/>

OREGON SINFONIETTA WEBSITE

Please visit <http://www.cmsomus.org> to learn more about the orchestra, our concerto competition, upcoming concerts and contact information.

Program Notes, Sunday, March 13, 2011

Overture to Ruy Blas, Op. 95

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

In Victor Hugo's 1838 play *Ruy Blas*, a thinly veiled tract for political reform, a slave in seventeenth-century Spain who admires the queen is disguised as a nobleman by a scheming count and brought to court in order to humiliate him. Instead Blas wins over the populace and the queen and introduces popular reforms. He is "outed" and humiliated, and commits suicide after murdering his tormenter, dying in the queen's arms. Hugo sympathized in later life with "radicals" and promoted liberal reforms. Mendelssohn remained conservative in his politics as well as his music but was commissioned to write an overture to a play he despised. The overture alternates between the royal fanfares and "popular" melody. Unlike the play, the work ends joyfully, as in some film versions, with Blas living.

Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 33

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

Saint-Saëns was one of music's most brilliant and well rounded prodigies. His long life was fascinating – a man who played for Clara Schumann also wandered the earth incognito because of his fame, visiting virtually every country and composing *Hail, California* for the Panama Exposition of 1915 in San Diego. He took pride in refined musical technique; not an innovator, he embraced pure music, despite his admiration of Liszt. His cello concerto was written in mid-life. There are no pauses between the sections, or movements. It opens somberly, and the second theme is a tranquil melody. A contrasting minuet-like intermezzo follows difficult showy passages for the cello. The cadenza precedes some recollections of past themes and new fragments, and then an orchestral statement leads to some entirely new subjects by the soloist before the final measures.

Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Brahms labored and worried over his first symphony, mindful of Beethoven's legacy and Ninth Symphony. Indeed Brahms First Symphony is often referred to as the "Tenth." Less than ten years later (1885) he was considered the greatest living musician and his masterful, final Fourth Symphony, although considered cerebral and difficult at the time, caused him much less anxiety. Its genesis was his fascination with several Bach chaconnes, one of which he used for the finale, a repeated harmonic progression with variations (musicologists differ among themselves in distinguishing a chaconne from a repeating bass melody, or passacaglia). Inspired by the intellectual challenge he integrated themes even more complexly than ever and built on "thirds" throughout the work, all the while following traditional form. The first movement begins straight off with the first theme – no introduction – and ends with pounding minor chords of fate. Listeners expect these to resolve to a majestic or joyful major in the finale, as in Brahms First (C minor) Symphony or Beethoven's Fifth. They don't.

The majestic, often brooding *Andante moderato*, sonata-like in form, features thematic variations; such variations are the basis of the finale. The *Allegro giocoso*, not strictly a scherzo, uses major key themes and the piccolo and triangle to provide contrast to the melancholic nature of the rest of the symphony. The finale, whether called a chaconne or passacaglia, is a masterpiece of classical composition and one of Brahms' greatest achievements. Using an ancient form his thirty variations recall the Bach chaconnes, although they use a full orchestra (the finale of Beethoven's *Eroica* was based on variations of a bass theme, something Brahms was well aware of). A major key chorale in the middle inspires hope in the overall A-B-A form that there will be some reconciliation, but finally the thirds so evident throughout the symphony and the scale structure of the opening ground bass line combine to form the opening minor key theme, and even the coda and ending remain dark and tragic, so like Brahms. He viewed himself as the last in a line of Germanic tradition, and near the end of his life he set the first four notes of the symphony, BGEC, to the words "Oh death, Oh death" in *Four Serious Songs*, op. 121, no. 3.

Program notes by Bill Dameron

CMSO/SINFONIETTA ARTISTS IN THE NEWS

As many of you already know, the Grammy Award for Best New Artist this year, announced February 13, went to **Esperanza Spaulding**, who got her start with our youth orchestra and whose latest album is "Chamber Music Society," a direct reference to us, the Chamber Music Society of Oregon. She gives special thanks in the CD notes to our founders, Hazel DeLorenzo and Dorothy McCormack, and along with her mother and her band the first two persons she thanked in her acceptance speech at the awards were Hazel and Dorothy. We thank this generous and warm artist for her support of CMSO, helping to sustain our orchestra and its highly respected annual concerto competition for young artists.

Andy Rim, who performed the Grieg Piano Concerto with us so wonderfully last May, is a competition winner of Portland's 17th annual *Young Artists Debut! Concerto Concert Competition* and will play Liszt's *Totentanz* with Neil DePonte and members of the Oregon Symphony and Oregon Ballet Theater Orchestra Sunday, April, 12 2011, 7:30 PM at the Newmark Theatre.

Our piano competition winner in 2007-2008, **Adria Ye**, who moved us with her insightful interpretation of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor, is now 12 years old, and as reported in the *Lake Oswego Review* last December, is a full time student at Julliard, where she is the youngest pupil of the chairperson of the piano division, Yoheved "Veda" Kaplinsky.

2011-2012 SEASON ANNOUNCED!

Sunday November 6, 2011

Berlioz – Overture to King Lear
Barber – Knoxville: Summer of 1915
Linda Appert, soprano
Stanford – Symphony No. 3 "Irish"

Sunday January 22, 2012

Wagner – Siegfried Idyll
Weber – Clarinet Concerto No. 1*
Schumann – Symphony No. 3 in Eb (Rhenish)

Sunday March 18, 2012

Beethoven – Egmont Overture
Bruch – Violin Concerto no. 1 in G minor*
Dvorak – Symphony No. 7

Sunday May 13, 2012

Beethoven – Piano Concerto No. 4*
Brahms – Symphony No. 2

*All concerts Sunday at 3:00 at Sunnyside Seventh-day Adventist Church *Concerto Competition Winner*

**FOR THEIR CONTINUED MAJOR SUPPORT OUR DEEPEST THANKS TO
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