

THE OREGON SINFONIETTA

The Orchestra of the Chamber Music Society of Oregon – Our 36th Year

Dr. Donald Appert, Music Director/Conductor

Larry Greep, President

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2008

Next concert:

Sunday, November 16th, 3:00 pm

Sunnyside Adventist Church, 10501 SE Market Street just East of I-205

Bruckner – Symphony No. 3 in d minor, "Wagner"

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

In September 2008, the Chamber Music Society of Oregon, a fine Oregon tradition, began its 36th year of service dedicated to promoting musical education and providing performance opportunities for people of all ages and financial means. During the past 35 years, thousands of people have enjoyed the fine concerts performed by CMSO, and thousands of students have learned to play an instrument and discovered the joy of making music. We are very pleased to announce the successful resumption of our children's music instruction program.

The concept of our children's program, as put forth by the founders of CMSO, was to provide instruments and lessons to children who are typically underserved. To that end, we are honored to have a partnership enthusiastically embraced by the Salvation Army of North Portland, and our program is once again a reality for metro area children. We are fortunate to have hired two talented, inspiring teachers who are dedicated to enriching the lives of children through music.

In addition to the student instructional program, we continue to offer:

- * four free concerts each season
- * performance opportunities for student soloists, the winners of our concerto competition
- * an instrument loan program for students of modest means

We look forward to seeing you at our concerts this year and in the years to come. Please spread the word to your friends and neighbors about the best musical deal in the Portland metro area.

Larry Greep, President

UPCOMING CONCERTS

Sunday January 25, 2008

Gade – Echoes of Ossian Overture, op. 1
Appert – In the Similitude of a Dream
David – Concertino for Trombone
Bailey Schmidt, trombone
Haydn – Symphony No. 104 "London"

Sunday March 22, 2008

Lalo – Symphonie Espagnol, op. 21
Niloy Ghosh, violin
Borodin – Symphony No. 2 in b minor

Sunday May 10, 2008

Svendson – Symphony No. 2 in Bb major
Beethoven – Piano Concerto No. 5
"Emperor," William Han, piano

MEET THE MUSICIANS



This is the last concert with us for **Helen Palmer**, viola, who is moving to Alaska to be with family. When she was ten her mother gave her the violin she had used. It was during the depression and lessons were \$0.50. They were renting a room with kitchen privileges, and since Helen liked to skate and do other things after school, she would get up at 5:30 a.m. to practice, turning on the oven and putting her left hand in it to keep warm.

Helen played throughout her school years; they moved near Madison her senior year and she rode with a friend into town weekly to take lessons. Her mother took a job that started at 4:00 in the morning to pay for them so she would be home by noon to tend to Helen's grandfather. Helen went to a small four-year college that specialized in music and after graduation taught band, girls glee club and music in grade school in a small town, and then taught violin at six grade schools in Madison. After the War she and her husband moved to Portland and raised three children who all played instruments.

After her husband passed away Helen returned more actively to music, joining the Oregon Sinfonietta over 20 years ago. She says she has thoroughly enjoyed playing here and looks forward to joining another program in Alaska.



Esther Wijaya Smith (bass) hails from the City of Bogor, Indonesia, just 25 miles south of Jakarta. She emigrated to the United States in 1995 to study at Portland Bible College and earned a dual bachelors degree in Theology and Music (Religious). Later she attended Portland State University and earned a second bachelors degree in music and gained valuable experience as a member of the Portland State University Orchestra. Her love for European classical music and American jazz led her to train with local jazz upright bass expert Dan Schulte and additional study in classical string bass with Ken Baldwin.

Esther joined the Oregon Sinfonietta in 2007. This past August she married Michael Smith, a relationship that began with a discussion about the wonders of the upright bass and their favorite jazz musicians. In the future Esther plans to earn a masters degree in music so that she may become a music educator and share the joy of music with young people, especially those who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

CONDUCTOR'S CORNER

This season's opening concert has a rarely heard work by the Austrian composer Anton Bruckner. His Symphony No. 3 is called the Wagner Symphony because the great opera composer liked it so much. You can hear the wonderful chromaticism and colorful harmonies inspired by Wagner throughout each movement. If you listen closely you might recognize a reference to *Tristan und Isolde*. This music is extremely challenging for all the sections of the orchestra because it demands great subtlety as well as endurance. We will present it without an intermission so that you can savor it to the fullest. Bruckner was an organist and you can hear how he carefully builds up the layers of sound as if he were pulling the different organ stops. He was extremely insecure and always took friends' and colleagues' suggestions for "improvement" of his work, thus creating a total of five versions of this symphony alone! We are performing the final version from 1890, revised 13 years after the premiere in 1877 which was so admired by Richard Wagner. Whether it is the best version or not isn't important.



Wagner's influence on Bruckner is easily traced with the chromatic harmonies that captivated so many composers of the late 19th century. The use of the brass section reminds one of Richard Strauss' tone poems of the same period. Not surprisingly, Beethoven's influence is also present, especially in a striking passage from the fourth movement which reminds the listener of the same very close imitation (an echo effect but very close together) that we also hear in Brahms' *Academic Festival Overture* written just three years later in 1880.

Perhaps the best way to enjoy this music we hear so seldom is to try to slow one's internal pace down. Bruckner takes us on a very full hour's journey in his symphonic world that defies the rush of our modern world with its constant frantic pace. You may never encounter a Bruckner symphony again but it is our hope that the Oregon Sinfonietta has brought you a new experience musically to savor like you would a fine wine.

Don Appert

APPERT HONORED BY AMERICAN SOCIETY OF COMPOSERS, AUTHORS & PUBLISHERS

For the third time Clark College music professor Donald Appert has been honored with the ASCAPLUS Award, presented by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP). He also received ASCAP awards in 2005 and 2006. Appert, who is currently in his nineteenth season as Music Director/Conductor of the Clark College Orchestra and his eighth with The Oregon Sinfonietta, was honored for international performances of three of his works: *Nara Variations* in Japan and Spain, *Elegy for Strings* in Italy, and *Prism* in Romania.

News of the award comes as Appert celebrates his 30th year as a member of ASCAP. He says he is currently composing his first work for a large symphony orchestra.

(from Clark College press release)

The Oregon Sinfonietta, Sunday, November 16, 2008, 3:00 p.m.

Symphony No. 3 in D minor "Wagner"

Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)

One should not be in a hurry when listening to good music, especially that of Bruckner, whose symphonies unfold slowly to reveal their beauty and the skill of the composer. Although unsophisticated and considered an Austrian country bumpkin in his personal life, Bruckner was thoroughly schooled in Viennese tradition and a strong proponent of the laws of harmonic progression. Working from the bass up, his sequences of organ-like sonorities (he was an organist) led to his nickname, the composer of adagios. His teacher, interestingly, was Simon Sechter, with whom in 1828 the ailing Franz Schubert had one of his last lessons. Sechter was later professor of composition at the Vienna Conservatory, succeeded by Bruckner; Mahler was a student there when Bruckner taught.



The similarities between Mahler's and Bruckner's symphonies are striking at first hearing. Many of Mahler's works echo Bruckner; the use of the more rustic Ländler (Austrian country dance in three-quarter time) in place of the minuet in the symphonic "scherzo" movements, as well as the harmonies and progressions. Both also look back to Beethoven, and Mahler's First and Bruckner's Third Symphonies both draw upon Beethoven's D minor (Ninth) Symphony. But their music represents opposite ends of the philosophical spectrum. Uncertain Mahler, always questioning and restless, was a Jew who converted in order to obtain the post as Vienna State Opera conductor. He found much to admire in Catholicism but was never religious. Death and uncertainty predominate in his works. Bruckner was uncertain about his music and rewrote his works constantly, but he was certain about his God and his own place in this and the next world, and his music is peaceful and conveys repose. He was extremely religious, even stopping his teaching to pray when the bells rang for the Angelus.

Both men admired Wagner. In Bruckner's case it was idol worship, in part influenced by his attendance in 1865 at the premiere of *Tristan und Isolde*. He was inevitably caught between the warring Brahms and Wagner factions, and attacks by Wagner backers and critics just went with the territory. Bruckner had a number of direct quotes from Wagner in the first version of the Third Symphony, which he admitted later were over the top when he removed some of them. He dedicated the work to Wagner, who praised highly it when Bruckner took it to him in Bayreuth.

Bruckner composed his Third Symphony in 1873-74, then reworked it further before its premiere in 1877. This "revision" was published with unauthorized changes in 1878. Bruckner again revised the work extensively in 1888-89. This later version with still more unauthorized changes appeared in 1890. It wasn't until the mid-20th century that editions appeared cleansed of many of the earlier corruptions. Today we will hear the last version of the symphony. The first theme of the first movement is a majestic trumpet call (repeated in the last movement), the last theme more of a chorale. The adagio, opening with a serene string tune, was written with the composer's mother in mind. The "scherzo" is in three-quarter time with a Ländler-like trio which could have been written by Mahler over twenty years later. After a heroic beginning the second part of the finale features another Mahler favorite: a dance tune superimposed over a solemn chorale. Several stories have Bruckner claiming he was inspired by a funeral taking place near a country dance. The majestic trumpet theme from the first movement but in a major key highlights the work's close.

Program notes by Bill Dameron

CMSO STUDENT PROGRAM: MUSIC CAMPS

The CMSO Fall classes in partnership with the Salvation Army Moore Street Center began in September and now include beginning and intermediate levels. The response has been very enthusiastic among both returning students and newcomers who came because they had heard positive comments about our program. We are growing every semester and providing quality instruction to students who do not otherwise have access to music education and appreciation, thanks to the dedication of the CMSO board, the Salvation Army Moore Street Center and our music teachers. The students will perform as part of The Salvation Army annual Christmas program at the Moore Street Center Sunday December 21st. For more information contact the Center at 503-493-3925.



Our summer music camps returned in 2008 with resounding success. These are extensive programs. In the two one-week sessions we had 36 students, ages 7-13, learning violin, viola, trumpet, electric bass and flute. They played in large and small ensembles and had some theory and music appreciation classes, covering everything from Bach, Beethoven, Stravinsky & Bernstein to world music, Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, The Mama and the Papas and jazz, learning about many of the greats such as Monk and Coltrane. Both sessions concluded with recitals and certificates for participants.

John Burkhardt



ARTISTS, GRAPHIC DESIGNERS, NERDS – CMSO/OREGON SINFONIETTA LOGO CONTEST

Win acclaim! Feel good! Contribute! We need a good, simple, original logo design. Convert the final to a JPEG file for widespread use on our newsletter, in programs, on a letterhead and on our website. Not too complicated; it must taken in at a glance and have an impact in a small size. See any board member if you have questions.

**Activities of the CMSO, a
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