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Season 2014-2015

Williamsport Symphony Orchestra E-Notes

March 2015

2014-2015 Calendar

March 2015

20 Meet the Maestro
Happy Hour
Capitol Lounge, CAC
5:30-7:00 pm

21 WSO *Jazz & Latin*
Community Arts Center
7:30 pm

29 Close Up Concert #3
Treasures for Winds
Mary Welch Honors Hall
Lycoming College
3:00 pm

May 2015

03 WSYO Chamber Recital
Mary Welch Honors Hall
Lycoming College
3:00 pm

11 Meet the Maestro
Happy Hour
Capitol Lounge, CAC
5:30-7:00 pm

12 WSO *Hope & Triumph*
Community Arts Center
7:30 pm

For more information, please visit
www.williamsportsymphony.org



Season Sponsor



Concert Sponsor

Conductor's Corner

Dear Friends,

Latin and Jazz music have a lot in common: irresistible rhythms, rich harmonies and exotic melodies. They can coexist, but they also get mixed with great results. Our upcoming concert will showcase the better of these two music worlds, from the North to the South, some swing and some tango, and we will not forget the mambo!



The central piece of the program is one of the most popular pieces ever written for piano and orchestra, *Rhapsody in Blue* by George Gershwin. The work was originally composed for piano and jazz band in 1924 but orchestrated eighteen years later, and that is the version you are going to hear with the symphony and our own Gary Boerckel! You have seen Gary many times playing inside the orchestra, but this time he will be shining in the very front.

Without doubt, Leonard Bernstein is the most important American composer, conductor and educator of the twentieth century and *West Side Story* his most celebrated musical. We could not do this concert without at least one dance from the show, my favorite one, mambo! Growing up in Argentina I had the chance to listen to a variety of tango music (the most traditional one), but also the most avant-garde composed by Astor Piazzolla, a virtuoso also of the bandoneon. I have enjoyed arranging some of his tangos for string orchestra and I would

like to share one with you called "Fuga y Misterioso" taken from his only short opera *Maria de Buenos Aires*.

More traditional Latin dances like the Malambo and Conga will be showcased in compositions by Ginastera and Marquez, and the concert will conclude with a medley by the great Duke Ellington. He is generally considered to have elevated the perception of jazz to an art form on a par with other traditional musical genre. A concert filled with exciting tunes impossible to be missed! Bring your friends and family and have a great time at the symphony! See you there!

Fondly, Gerardo Edelstein



Gerardo Edelstein
Music Director/Conductor

Raise the Region



Once again the Symphony is participating in the First Community Foundation Partnership's 2015 fundraising event which helps local nonprofits. In partnership with Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships, the 30 hour event starts Wednesday, March 11 at 6:00pm. On-line donations can be made through 11:59pm Thursday, March 12. We encourage you to support the Williamsport Symphony by visiting www.raisetheregion.org and making a donation. If you need assistance, please call the Symphony office at 570-322-0227 and we will be happy to help. Thank you for your support, for without you, it's just an empty stage!

Program Notes by Dr. Gary Boerckel

Small World

The Williamsport Symphony's March concert-Jazz and Latin-includes music by some of the greatest composers of North and South America writing over the last

century. Many of them knew each other and almost all of them knew Aaron Copland. Copland and George Gershwin grew up two miles from each other in Brooklyn, New York. They were both children of Russian Jewish immigrants and only two years apart in age.



Copland pursued classical training in piano and composition while Gershwin dropped out of school and-to a great extent-taught himself.

After the success of *Rhapsody in Blue*, Gershwin went to Paris to study composition with Copland's principal teacher, Nadia Boulanger. Boulanger's response to Gershwin-"I can teach you nothing"-he took as a compliment. Leonard Bernstein-who often acknowledged Copland as one of his most important mentors-was one of Gershwin's finest interpreters. Bernstein was also an early champion of the music of the Argentinean composer Alberto Ginastera. Ginastera studied composition with Copland for two years and taught Astor Piazzolla for five before Piazzolla left for Paris to study with Boulanger....and the circle is complete.

"I'm Composing What?!?"

George Gershwin [1898-1937] was terrified to read-in a newspaper article dated January 4, 1924-that he was at work on a jazz concerto to be performed by himself with the Paul Whiteman Band at Aeolian Hall on February 12. A call to Whiteman confirmed the date *and* Whiteman's complete confidence that Gershwin could pull it off. Gershwin protested that he did not know how to orchestrate and Whiteman responded that his arranger, Ferde Grofé, would take care of that. Most of the famous melodies of the *Rhapsody* seem to have occurred to Gershwin on a train trip to Boston. He worked quickly but was reluctant to deliver the score to Whiteman.

Despite Whiteman's enthusiasm, Gershwin kept tinkering with the piano part right up to the performance. A note in the conductor's score reads..."wait for nod [from George]." The hall was packed for the concert. Most of the leading musicians in New York were there, including Stravinsky, Sousa, Fritz Kreisler, Walter Damrosch [conductor of the New York Philharmonic], and Victor Herbert [one of the legends of Broadway]. When Gershwin saw Herbert come in he almost lost his nerve. He need not have been concerned. By most accounts, the audience was ecstatic after Gershwin played his *Rhapsody*. Overnight, George Gershwin became the most discussed, most admired, most envied, and, probably, the highest-paid composer in America.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

The WSYO and Its Conductor

Appointed conductor of the youth orchestra - the WSYO - in the Spring of 2012, Dr. William Ciabattari added young musicians to his instructional/directorial repertoire:

Lycoming College students, the concert band, jazz ensemble, pep band, and the new Lycoming College Community Orchestra. As Associate Professor of Music and Director of Instrumental Ensembles, Bill continues the academic career he began at Heidelberg College in Tiffin, Ohio.

Busy, indeed; as in one week, he conducts the WSYO on a Sunday and the Lycoming College Community Orchestra and the Concert Band, on Friday, continuing the ongoing interaction with all ages, in all stages of musical activity. His academic credentials include undergraduate work at the University of Arkansas and graduate work at Cleveland Institute of Music and Case Western Reserve University. He has carried his tuba to varied settings: the stage of the CAC, North Arkansas Symphony, Case Symphonic Bands, the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, and Billtown Brass venues among others.



The May 13 issue of "Symphony Notes" provided an "Up Close and Personal" profile of Bill and His wife Rebecca , a trombone player with the WSO. Beyond the biographical detail included there, these additions yield a "deeper" introduction to this educator, musician, conductor.

A common question for any professional: "What has been your most satisfying/personally rewarding experience?" yielded this response:

Conducting and performing with the Cleveland Youth Wind Symphony at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in France. Playing our patriotic music in that location was truly powerful.

The question regarding his choice of education as a career yielded this response:

I feel it's my mission to work with young musicians to help them grow as musicians and human beings. I also feel the same call to do what I can to help my community be the kind of place that people want to root themselves.

This "Up Close and Personal" profiles both the musician and the WSYO. About that relationship he notes that he had set his sights on directing the youth orchestra "from the first day I arrived in Williamsport, nine years ago; when I finally got that opportunity, I was elated."

The WSYO - then and now

The WSYO had Its inaugural season in 1986, the brainchild of Walt Straiton of the Williamsport School District. He was director of the group for its first eight years before passing the baton to Rick Coulter (who was featured in the previous edition of "Symphony Notes" along with the Billtown Brass, his brainchild). During those years, the WSYO performed at the Williamsport High School; concerts now occur at Lycoming College's

Clarke Chapel and at the CAC. After Coulter and before Ciabattari, came Christopher Para from Bucknell and Jennifer Sacher-Wiley from Susquehanna. Throughout its time, the WSYO auditions potential players; side-by-side opportunities to perform with the WSO have also been standard - as was the case in this December's WSO concert.

The recent WSYO concert - like the others before it - comes after five rehearsals as well as sectional rehearsals. For the latter, Ciabattari enlists the help of other musicians; among them Ken Sarch and Andrew Rammon to work with strings. Rehearsals and concerts require the assistance of another set of key players: the parents of the musicians; "I love it," says Ciabattari about the commitment and cooperation of family members.

The value/success of the WSYO can be traced through its "alumni," many of whom go on to careers in music; among them are the **Leidhecker brothers**, sons of Rob and Aegina - WSO musicians - and who, like their parents, are music educators. The honor roll includes **Jeff Thayer**, currently concertmaster of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra; **Mark Thayer**, member of the New World Symphony and educational director of the St. Louis Symphony; **Jason Hurwitz**, who joined the world tour of Barrage.

In addition several distant and more recent WSYO players moved to positions with the WSO: Aman Patel, Mark Fereshtek, Rob Fenstermacher, Wendy Hemmindinger, Catherine Byn, Leah Nason, Walker Konkle, Amy Dowling, Tim Breon, Rachel Nesbitt, and Sarah Hamm, who is currently a WSO violinist.

Among its milestones, the WSYO commissioned a piece by composer Dana Wilson which it premiered in memory of the victims of TWA Flight 800 (1996). Included among them was a member of the WSYO, flutist Monica Weaver, who with the Montoursville members of the high school French Club were on their way to France.

Other milestones include appearances off-stage; for example at the Lycoming Mall during the holiday season. In addition, collaborations with other area groups including, for example, the Uptown Music Collective add variety to the performances; the most recent concert included dance. Not yet milestones but likely to be, given Ciabattari's goals are "broader recognition via PMEAs performances" as well as recording sessions and performing new music.

The recent three-way collaboration - WSYO, Junior Strings, St. John's School of the Arts - along with the WSYO's "conquering the Borodin Symphony No. 2" last fall demonstrate both the strengths and the value of the youth orchestra as it further enriches the community and energizes its youth.

Featuring the People Who Make the WSO a Success

As the WSO newsletter has taken shape over the years, it began in 2009 to feature occasionally the people who contribute to the orchestra's success. The shift in 2013 to an electronic format has made the features a staple of the newsletter, given our readers' interest in the "Up Close and Personal" content. Provided here is a summary of the to-date featured donor-subscribers and musicians. If you have missed reading about these people, you have the opportunity to go to the WSO website www.williamsportsymphony.org to read about them.

But before you head to the website, it is appropriate to note that the pre-electronic format included information about several musicians including Don Fisher, Brad Holtman, Robert and Aegina Leidhecker, the Burke sisters, and Andrew Rammon. There was also a piece about long-time donor/subscriber

Charline Pulizzi. While those features are available only on paper, the following can be found on the website.

The Musicians:

February 2013 - David Lassiter

March 2013 - Sue Laib

May 2013 - Bill Kenney

Summer 2013 - Dale Orris

October 2013 - Michael Gross

Holiday 2013 - Dave, Drake & Diana Bailey

February 2014 - Ellen Krajewski

March 2014 - Steve Olson

May 2014 - Bill and Becky Ciabattari

Summer 2014 - Shirley Whitnack

October 2014 - Gretchen Carpenter

December 2014 - Valerie Whyman

February 2015 - Rick Coulter

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Sharon and Bill Hoffmann

Doris and Tom Teufel

Michael and Lyneah Hudock

Larry Lunt

Bill Davis and Jason Moyer

Eric Haines

Bev and Bill McCauley

Eleanor and Pastor James Gold

Watch for the continuing "Up Close and Personal" features in the newsletters to come; donors/subscribers ensure that the musicians you read about remain on the stage.

Young Musicians on the CAC Stage



When the supply of programs is exhausted and when the auditorium seats 550-600 enthusiastic attendees, including family groups, the evening of music can rightly be dubbed a success. The talented youth comprising the Williamsport Symphony Youth Orchestra and the Junior Strings along with the dancers from the St. John's School of the Arts presented a polished, professional representation of talent and commitment on the CAC stage February 22.

Conductors Ciabattari (for the WSYO) and Radspinner (for the WSJS) presented a program featuring a segment for each group and then a segment when they joined forces that ended with the "Warrior Legacy" by New Bold, a "big piece." The program also featured soloists William Knauth, WSYO concertmaster, and Lycoming faculty member, Fiona Gillespie with a vocal rendition of "Goodnight Moon."

The St. John School of the Arts added 16 dancers to the stage for the Stravinsky *Firebird* movements. Theresa Kendall was choreographer and instructor for the group.

The concert sponsors included the Woodcock Foundation for the Appreciation of the Arts, Wegmans, Robert M. Sides Family Music Centers, J. R. Judd Violins, and Long Island Pizza.

Both conductors demonstrated their ability to shift from their principal instrument; for Ciabattari, the tuba, and for Radspinner, the double bass. During the joint WSYO and WSJS selections as each had his turn conducting, the other became part of a section.

Outreach School- Elk County Catholic High School

Twenty-four students, five adults, and a two-and-a-half hour ride in a school bus with a stop at Wegmans for dinner. That's how these folks from ECCHS spent the cold

February 17th evening to be in the audience for the WSO concert. Steve Olson, one of the evening's soloists in the Mozart quartet, had talked w/ his former band director, Ray Knight, and the idea was hatched for them to be the outreach school for this concert. It helped that there are three other local

connections, Don and Kristin Fisher (Kristin as an alumna and Don who did some pre-student teaching and percussion work with the marching band while a student at IUP). Among the students was senior Ellen Cooney who is the granddaughter of Ellie and Joseph Laver, long-time WSO subscribers.



WSO Board and Education committee members Rick Coulter and Craig Konkle met the bus at the Genetti Hotel and shepherded the students through the ice-cream sundae line. And then Don Fisher -in his musician/stand-up percussionist manner - did a pre-concert talk about what the students were going to hear that night. Don covered the history of the WSO, going back 100 years, the past and current music directors, the Community Arts Center, what being a semi-professional orchestra means (you play at a professional level but you are not paid enough to make a living in just the WSO). Students were reminded about the behavior expectations and finally given some info on the concert.

An extra bonus was remarks from principal trombonist Steve Olson dressed in a tux for his



part in the solo quartet. Steve told the kids how important Ray Knight was as a teacher and how he encouraged Steve as a high school musician, a music education major in college, and a music teacher. The students hung on every word!

And this two days later to Rick Coulter from Ray Knight:

We had 24 students and five adults who attended Tuesday evening's concert. Quite honestly I very impressed with the entire evening. My students enjoyed the evening and that was the main topic of conversations all day throughout the school.

Everything was wonderful. Please pass along a big thank you to all those involved; you made it an unforgettable evening. Thanks again, Ray Knight

(learn more about Steve in the March 2014 *Symphony Notes*)

Fan Mail

What a magnificent concert last night! You all just get better and better!

Each beautiful aria could be heard in the overture. The quartet - WOW - not only beautifully played music, but they seemed to have fun doing all that work! Their sense of ensemble was extraordinary; and the orchestral accompaniment held it all together. Mozart must have had great fun experimenting with all those variations that popped into his head.

The Dvorak certainly brought the evening to a rousing climax. Am looking forward to the next one. GB

I absolutely loved the Mozart quartet with orchestra! The soloists were flawless in technique, and so professionally expressed Mozart's playfulness. The orchestra was also a wonderful accompaniment. So beautiful, so much talent...

former bass principal, DD

We Asked: You Answered

It has been several years since we surveyed our audience about their likes and suggestions about the WSO's programs, so at the December concert we made available a one page form. Here are some results.

*We asked what kinds of music most listened to and classical orchestral masterworks was top choice. Surprisingly, the combined category of jazz, rock, and blues was the second choice. Broadway and movie scores, was next, followed by choral/orchestral pieces.

Contemporary (20/21st century) orchestral masterworks followed.

*Where did people choose to spend pre-concert? Two-thirds enjoy having dinner at a downtown restaurant before coming. Almost half read the WSO newsletter - *Symphony Notes*. Other favorites were attending Dr. Gary Boerckel's preconcert lectures in the Capitol Lounge, checking the website, attending Meet the Maestro the night before the show, and using social media.

*The question about WSO social events rated a holiday dinner auction with guest performers at the top. Suggestions for the 50th anniversary in 2016/17: creating of a CD "Best of Fifty Years," featuring local musical groups, returning past conductors and former orchestra members, and a dinner dance with orchestra. We welcome your ideas; email them to Janet Harris execdir@williamsportsymphony.org.

From the Desk of the ED

It may have been cold outside, but the Symphony's performance on February 17th was hot! The hearty souls who braved the weather were treated to the sounds of Verdi, Mozart and Dvorak, and you could have heard a pin drop between the symphonic movements. Featured musicians, Judith Burke, Sue Laib, Bill Kenny and Steve Olson, were cheered on by local fans along with students from Elk County Catholic High School. The students, who traveled two hours from St. Mary's to hear alum, Steve Olson, on bassoon in the Mozart quartet, attended through our Student Outreach program. A sincere thank you to our sponsors Hudock Moyer Wealth Resources, the Friends of the Symphony, and Bill and Sharon Hoffmann who helped make the concert possible.



Over the past couple of years, you may have noticed the occasional Symphony billboard around town and outside the county. The billboards in Clinton and Union county were made possible by a grant from the Lycoming County Visitor's Bureau; and the billboards in Williamsport were a generous donation from Lamar Advertising. Attendance has increased from folks outside of Lycoming County and it may be of interest that the person sitting next to you could be from one of 21 counties in Pennsylvania! Or from one of five states or two provinces in Canada! We welcome our out of town guests and are delighted that they share a love of classical music. As always, we hope to hear your comments or your suggestions, whether by email, Facebook or phone. As Gerardo, our beloved conductor said at the February performance "this is your orchestra."

Recently, a post on Facebook quoted Robin Williams as saying, "You know what music is? God's little reminder that there's something else besides us in this universe; harmonic connection between all living beings, everywhere, even the stars." Robin

Williams was a drama student at Juilliard and received an honorary doctorate in fine arts in 1991.

Let the music play on!



Quick Links

Williamsport Symphony Orchestra
220 West Fourth Street
Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17701
570-322-0227



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