

Williamsport Symphony Orchestra Newsletter

April 2013

Symphonie Fantastique

Tuesday, May 7

7:30 PM

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May 2013

6th *Meet the Maestro*
5:30 -7 PM at the
Capitol Lounge, CAC
For tickets: 570-322-
0227

7th WSO Symphonie
Fantastique
7:30 PM at CAC

WSO Annual Campaign
Kicks off!

June 2013

Conductor's Corner

Dear Friends,

It is strange that I have to talk about the last concert of the season already! It has been an incredible ride. Each concert showcased our talented musicians, fabulous soloists, marvelous choirs; we traveled through time and performed music of many different genres. The last concert is no exception and I can guarantee you it's going to be an electrifying experience!



If we have to name a composer after Beethoven who shook up the music world, definitely Hector Berlioz would come in first place. A genius who never learned to play an instrument seriously, he decided to become a composer at an early age. Contemporaries disliked him because of his avant-garde ideas but later composers adored Berlioz and paid tribute to him "stealing" some of his most beloved melodies. The young French composer was determined to

*Season Subscription
Brochure is mailed*

July 2013

17th Billtown Brass, Music in
the Park, Hufnagle Park,
Lewisburg 7:30pm

Quick Links



[WSO Website!](#)

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Special thanks

Special thanks goes to Jesse Hunt, Sarah Myers, and Emilie Tupper-- members of the Williamsport Symphony Junior Strings and students of Anna Draper--for performing in the inner lobby before the March concert.

storm the world with his innovative music, and he succeeded.

Tonight we will perform one of his most popular works: the *Symphonie Fantastique*: "An Episode in the Life of an Artist". One of the first programmatic symphonies ever written, the piece tells the story of a young artist desperately in love who intoxicates himself with opium and starts dreaming first about an ideal romance but with a tragic ending. It is very impressive how Berlioz is able to transform delicate, elegant and peaceful tunes to more abrupt, aggressive and very intense ones. The March of the Scaffold and the Witches Sabbath are perhaps the famous sections in the piece where he introduces some interesting new techniques in the orchestral instruments that will challenge your ears!

Like Berlioz, Beethoven was a revolutionary too, perhaps in a smaller scale. Unlike Berlioz, his compositions were widely accepted during his lifetime. In a mega concert performed in 1808 Beethoven played for the last time the piano and introduced to the public his *Concerto No. 4*, my favorite. Unlike the custom of starting a concerto with an orchestral introduction, Beethoven decides to open the piece introducing the main theme of the movement with piano alone. It is a very virtuosic piece that showcases the soloist interacting with some beautiful orchestral passages. A very short, very rhythmic and quasi dissonant short middle movement is followed by a glorious finale.



We are very fortunate to have Alexander Schimpf, as the guest pianist, winner of the 2011 Cleveland Piano Competition. Seat back, relax, and enjoy the last concert of the season! Don't forget

to check out our new season that will be amazing and reserve your tickets early! It has been a pleasure to share our music- making with you and I am looking forward to seeing you soon!

Fondly,

Gerardo Edelstein
Music Director/Conductor

Guest Artist - Alexander Schimpf



Pianist, Alexander Schimpf made his mark on the world of classical music while in his twenties. First came the 2008 German Music Competition prize; then came first prize in the Beethoven Piano Competition in Vienna. At the 2011 Cleveland International Piano Competition, he captured first place and the Audience Favorite Prize - the first German musician to dominate that competition.

Schimpf's studies took him from Hanover to Dresden's College of Music and to Wurzburg, where he studied with Bernd Glemser; French pianist Cecile Ousset also influenced his career. Performances have brought him to concert halls throughout Europe as well as South America - from New York's Keyboard Institute & Festival to the International Chopin Festival in Poland. In addition to his solo concert performances, he has radio recordings and CDs and performs as a member of a chamber ensemble.

As noted in a *New York Times* review, following his debut performance in Carnegie Hall, "Alexander Schimpf may be one of the lucky pianists who can hop off [the competition] treadmill and do what he was trained to do: make music."

He will "make music" with the WSO at the May 7 concert, performing Beethoven's *Piano Concerto # 4*.

Program Notes by Dr. Gary Boerckel

Beethoven the Pianist

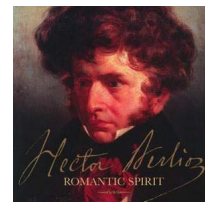


including Mozart-Beethoven attacked the instrument like a demon, snapping strings, breaking keys, and inspiring wonder and awe in his audience. More than one prominent virtuoso considered changing professions after hearing Beethoven, but over the years Beethoven's disinclination to practice and increasing deafness left him open to criticism. By the time of the premiere of the fourth piano concerto in 1808, Beethoven had largely abandoned public performance. He asked two other pianists to play the solo part in his new concerto, and agreed to perform it himself only after they declined. The concert took place in mid-December in an unheated concert hall with a monster program that included the fifth and sixth symphonies, the choral fantasy, and excerpts from the mass in C major. Not everything went well that day, but Beethoven the pianist was in fine form. One music critic wrote: "He played...with astounding cleverness and in the fastest possible tempi. The Adagio, a masterly movement of beautifully developed song, he sang on his instrument with a profound melancholy that thrilled me."



Ah, Berlioz!

Berlioz never did anything by halves. The son of a scholarly physician in the south of France, he was sent to Paris to study medicine. Despite his almost complete lack of musical training, however, Berlioz chose a different career path; he threw himself into musical composition and was quickly accepted into the Paris Conservatory. Soon he was the terror of his teachers and the hero of his classmates. Surrounded by other students, he would "hold court" in the balcony of the opera house and scream his approval-or, more often, disapproval-at the performers. Berlioz even took on the venerable director of the conservatory, Luigi Cherubini-who despised him. Ultimately Cherubini allowed Berlioz to give a concert of his own works in the conservatory hall. In 1828, Berlioz was transformed by a series of events: he read Goethe's *Faust*, attended a performance of *Hamlet*, and fell desperately in love with the actress who played Ophelia, Harriet Smithson. He showered Smithson with flowers and love-letters. Ecstasy and jealous rage gave Berlioz no rest for months. He composed his first masterpiece, the epoch-making *Symphonie Fantastique*, based on his feelings for Smithson, a woman he had yet to meet. The paths of love are mysterious. Berlioz was finally introduced to Smithson in 1832, and they were married a year later. The marriage turned out to be miserable for both parties and they separated permanently in 1840.



Yet Another Orchestra Retiree

Last month's newsletter provided an "Up Close & Personal" profile of principal oboist, Sue Laib. In that profile she references the pleasure of music-making with "her seatmate and friend, Lesley McClelland." That seatmate and friend - a member of the WSO for over a decade - cites competing activities exacerbated by the travel time (it is a 5-hour round trip for rehearsals and concerts in Williamsport) as the reason she submitted her resignation.

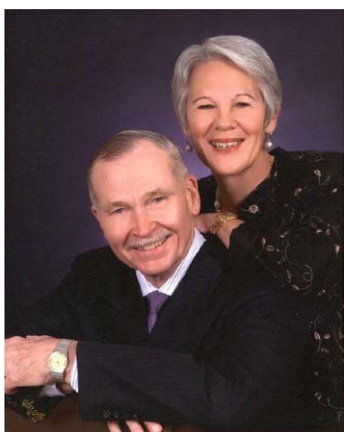
Ms. McClelland's competing activities include her work on her New York farm that then yields products that she takes to the



Farmers' Market. Add then her work as the Assistant Librarian in the Owego Public Library. Add also her other musica commitments: as English horn in the Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes; member of the Basically Bach Ensemble in Endicott, NY; and a member of the Venti Dementi woodwind octet in Ithaca, NY. Busy indeed!

Asked about the highlights of her time with the WSO, Ms. McClelland noted working with guest artist, guitarist Sharon Ibsen several seasons ago and this season's presentation of The Planets. "Playing with the orchestra has been a joy," she added and then she echoed her friend and seatmate: "and wonderful to play with Sue Laib."

Without Our Donors -- An Empty Stage: Meet the Powers



Dr. Francis and Caryn Powers

"I never dreamed we would have what we have now: incredibly talented musicians, quality performances, such sophistication of music." So noted Caryn Powers, an assessment shared also by her husband, Dr. Francis (Skip) Powers.

Having begun their association with the orchestra as subscribers upon coming to town in 1977 (Skip to administer the then-new cancer center at Divine Providence Hospital), Caryn thereafter joined the orchestra board at the time when the orchestra was performing in various venues, including the Williamsport High School auditorium. There was held the "Children's Concert" for which Caryn arranged the buss transportation. Continuing as season subscribers and donors since that time, Caryn now holds Trustee Emerita status.

Both she and Skip grew up with music in their lives, from his mother's love of music and the beautiful Irish tenor voice of his father to Caryn's family penchant to sing together - around the piano at home as well as in the car during road trips. Skip "followed his bliss" when in 1984 he satisfied his lifelong urge to take vocal lessons, leading him to sing with the Chamber Choir and with the Susquehanna Valley Chorale. He also participates in the Berkshire Choral Festival and this summer will be singing a concert in Sonoma, CA; Caryn continues to sing with her church choir. That, and time they spend at Tanglewood each summer rounds out their "music fix." As Caryn notes: "I cannot imagine a life without music." Supporting the WSO is one means of demonstrating that value.

Both Powers continue to "give back" to the community that embraced them as they embraced it. The Community Arts Center, the Susquehanna Health System, the JVBrown Library, the Medical Auxiliary, and United Way among other organizations to which they have committed time along with the receipt of an Arts Council Award, Director's chair award, Non-Rotarian of the Year award bear out their commitment.

Caryn's answer to the question: "What is most unforgettable about your involvement with the orchestra" yielded this response: "The fun was in the building." That building included collaborations with other "builders," chief among them - Carol Sides, who - with Caryn - was instrumental in arranging staging of the first live performance of the *Nutcracker* at the CAC, performed with the Williamsport Symphony Orchestra. Subsequent "building" included the move of the orchestra, first, to the Scottish Rite and then to the CAC, the hiring of Rolf Smedvig, followed by the hiring of Robin Fountain, and the interaction with the musicians. The "building" now has a solid foundation, thanks to the Powers and others like them.

Meet the Maestro -- May 6

At the final Meet the Maestro Monday, May 6th, Gerardo will speak about the Berlioz *Symphonie Fantastique* and will introduce pianist Alexander Schimpf. Special guests will be the donors and sponsors who so generously made possible the success of our February *Masquerade*. Join us in the Capitol Lounge from 5:30 - 7 for a spring dinner and beverage as we celebrate Maestro Edelstein's third season as Music Director. Spend time on the CAC's elegant balcony, weather permitting. Tickets: \$20. Reserve your spot by calling the WSO office (322-0227).



Up Close & Personal

Meet Bill Kenny, principal horn

Playing principal horn has been compared to piloting a 747: much of the time you're flying along, enjoying the scenery - but then you have to land. For the horn player, that landing is when you go from a supporting or accompanying role to playing a solo line that puts you at the center of attention.

We can appreciate Bill's analogy, but are never disappointed that he's in the pilot seat. His landings are usually breathtakingly beautiful! Bill Kenny is in his 22nd year with the Williamsport Symphony - 21 (he thinks) in the principal's seat. In his day job he is professor of music and chair of the music department at Bucknell where he teaches a variety of courses and ensembles including the Symphonic Band, Conducting, and Brass Methods among others. He also teaches horn and plays in faculty woodwind and brass quintets.



Bill Kenny

We asked Bill for his favorite French horn players; he named Dennis Brain and Barry Tuckwell. When he first started playing horn, he bought LP recordings of Brain and Tuckwell and listened to them, score in hand, to emulate their playing. "They were very different players, but Tuckwell had the tone I loved...Now there are so many great players and recordings to choose from, but I feel like Brain and Tuckwell were ...early teachers for me, so they stay at the top of my list." Last week he met with a

prospective student and asked her the same questions. "She told me Brain and Tuckwell. I couldn't believe it!"

Question: What made you choose to play the French horn? Response: "I played trumpet all through school, including as an undergraduate at Oregon State University, but I was a pretty weak player. My first music teaching position was at a high school in western Oregon, and it bothered me that some of the high school trumpet players in my band were stronger players than I was. I learned that there was a new horn teacher in the area, and he agreed to take me on as a beginning student at age 23. (His name is Candler Schaffer; he is currently conductor of the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra.) That was a real turning point - that he had confidence in me and a lot of patience. Some of my lessons were two-hour marathon sessions, and he didn't take any money. I have been really lucky to have had several teachers along the way who made a huge difference in my life. He was one of them."

In graduate school at the University of Illinois, Bill met his wife Amy. From where he sat in the horn section at the back of the band, he had a good view of the flute section where she played. Amy currently teaches music in the Selinsgrove Area School District. No surprise that their children are musicians: Sadie will graduate from Ithaca College in May with a double major in violin performance and music education; Jacob plays bass and trombone in his first year at Gettysburg College; and Grace is a sophomore at Lewisburg High School and sings, plays tuba in the band and violin in the orchestra. Both Sadie and Grace have played with the WSO on occasion.

As you look at the orchestra, the horns are center back, and often there are four or more of them. Occasionally the score calls for them to turn their bells toward the audience or to stand with the bells turned. About the section, Bill said, "The other players in the section feel like family to me. I loved sitting next to 2nd horn Rebecca Clark for many years. She taught me a lot about playing with confidence. Rebecca Dodson-Webster replaced her when she left the area, and she has a great sound and approach to playing. Valerie Whyman approaches playing with a sense of fun, and I really try to incorporate that into my playing. And Mardi Anderson has probably the most difficult job in the section playing low horn. She always does it with such confidence; nothing seems to phase her. I feel very fortunate to have somehow landed in such a great place." Continued good landings, Bill!

Maestro Edelstein Conducts Leonard Bernstein's *Mass*



In celebration of the 50th anniversary of Penn State's College of Arts and Architecture, the Schools of Music and Theatre produced Leonard Bernstein's *Mass* the first weekend in April. A huge theatre piece, Bernstein wrote the music and much of the text on a commission by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis for the opening of Lincoln Center in 1971. WSO Board member Rick Coulter was in Eisenhower

Auditorium for one of the weekend performances and sent this comment.

The early seventies were a turbulent time in our country politically, socially and spiritually. Bernstein was able to capture and portray much of that societal angst through the words, music and portrayals in his theatre work MASS. WSO's Gerardo Edelstein did an incredible job of leading the 300 performers (multiple choirs, full symphony orchestra, marching band, rock band, actors, dancers, celebrant) in this

eclectic, powerful and emotionally challenging work.

From the Desk of the ED

April 2013

What would we do without our friends! At the Symphony we constantly look to "grow our friends." Our friends include concert subscribers and attendees, individual and corporate donors, advertisers, and the Friends of the Symphony. Without them we couldn't keep our musicians on the stage or provide the educational and outreach programs that our region has come to love.



Janet Harris

Soon you will receive our annual fundraising appeal; your generosity supports our children and teens in the Youth Orchestra, the Junior Strings program, the Student Outreach program, and as recipients of discount and free tickets. Our seniors also benefit with free bus transportation from retirement communities and with group ticket discounts. Your donation also allows Maestro Edelstein to provide his Meet the Maestro and Dr. Gary Boerckel his pre-concert lectures.

Have you marked your calendar for Tuesday, May 7th for the *Symphonie Fantastique* concert which features award-winning pianist Alexander Schimpf? This evening our generous sponsors include Hudock Moyer Wealth Resources (season sponsors) and the Friends of the Symphony as Premier Orchestra Sponsor. By the way, maybe you noticed in the Sun-Gazette that the Friends are looking for more Friends! Please consider a membership to be part of what this group does to support the broad goals of the WSO.

If you attended the Symphony's performance in March, you saw it venture out of the classic box and host the guitar virtuoso talent of Rik Emmett and his Jeans 'n Classic Guitar Heroes. When Max Zorin, our Concertmaster and violinist extraordinaire, stepped forward to jam with him during "Layla," they brought down the house. We thank our sponsors for making this one-of-a-kind performance possible: Season Sponsor, Hudock Moyer Wealth Resources; Concert Sponsor, Lycoming College; Guest Artist Sponsor, Williamsport Sun-Gazette; and Hospitality Sponsor, Genetti Hotel.

Another date for your calendar is July 17. Our Billtown Brass will play that evening in Lewisburg's Hufnagle Park for the Music in the Park series. The concert begins at 7:30pm under the direction of Rick Coulter.

In closing, thank you to the generous donors who participated in the First Community Foundation's "Raise the Region" fundraising program on March 12.

Let the music play on!

Janet Harris

Fan Mail

Of the March Concert, Jeanette Winner of Williamsport wrote to Maestro Edelstein:

"One of the most interesting/exciting things about last night was the precision/perfection between you and Rik Emmet... marvelous ability to start and end so perfectly. Such dedication, talent doesn't seem a strong enough word. Oh, I guess the drummer would be included here."



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