

Williamsport Symphony Orchestra Newsletter

Winter 2013

Music of the Spheres

February 12, 7:30PM
Community Arts Center

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February 2013

10 *Close Up Concert 2*
3:00 PM at Mary
Lindsay Welch Honors
Hall, Lycoming College

11 *Meet the Maestro*
5-7 PM *Capitol Lounge,*
CAC
For tickets: 570-322-
0227

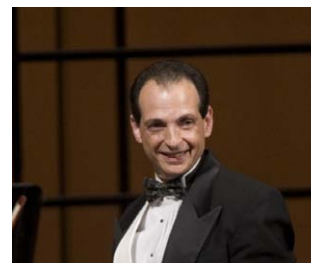
12 WSO Music of the
Spheres
7:30 PM at CAC

18 WSYO & WSJS
winter concert
7:30 PM at CAC.

Conductor's Corner

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! I hope you had a fantastic start into this new year and are ready to listen to more wonderful music from the WSO.



Still with the sounds of our presentation of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* in my ears, I heard and watched the Berlioz opera, *Les Troyens*, at the Met. In May we will hear this composer's *Symphonie Fantastique*, and in the February concert we will hear the results of his influence during the presentation of Holst's *The Planets*.

Holst's orchestral suite came 85 years after the Berlioz opera; however, the lush orchestrations, the freedom of form, the beauty of melodic lines, and the pounding rhythms of this piece definitely mirror Berlioz. Since I was a kid, I have been fascinated by astronomy and science fiction, enjoying Bradbury's *Martian Chronicles* and the Star

23 WSO Fundraiser
"Masquerade 2013"
6 to 10 PM at CAC

March 2013

16 WSO Let's Rock
7:30 PM at CAC

24 Close Up Concert
3:00 PM at Mary
Lindsay Welch Honors
Hall

May 2013

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

7 WSO Symphonie
Fantastique
7:30 PM at CAC

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[WSO Website!](#)

Trek series. Holst's music is instantaneously dreamy; enhancing it will be a series of images prepared by Professor Ned Ladd from Bucknell's Department of Physics and Astronomy.

The first half of the program will feature Mozart's Concerto for Harp and Flute. WSO's principal harpist, Ruth Hunter, and Williamsport native, Pamela Stahl, will be featured. This is one of only two concertos Mozart wrote for two instruments; he composed it when just 22 years young; the music is both delicate and profound.

I hope to see you at the February concert. Please continue to spread the word because our orchestra deserves to be heard by others who - like you - enjoy the live experience.

Fondly,

Gerardo Edelstein
Music Director/Conductor

December's Mystery Piece Winner

Natalie Gephart correctly identified Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* and now has two Anytime Tickets to use/share. Twenty-five audience members correctly identified the piece. A "forever" attendee, Mrs. Gephart played flute and piccolo during her Williamsport High School student days. She loves the music and especially appreciates this conductor; she also remarked: "How lucky we are in this area to have such talented musicians."

Program Notes

Mozart & Holst by Dr. Gary Boerckel

Mozart's Concerto for Flute and Harp grew from a commission by the Duke de Guines, a flutist, with a daughter who was a magnificent harpist. To the commission was added a sum to cover lessons in composition for the daughter. Mozart - the inveterate (and brutally honest) letter writer- included the following account: "...she very soon gets bored, and I cannot proceed too quickly...even if



there really were genius there, but unfortunately there is none...." Mozart completed the concerto and the lessons, however, the Duke reneged on the agreed-upon fee, paying only half the amount. Said Mozart: "There's nobility for you."



Pamela Stahel

The WSO will - nobly - present the Concerto, featuring Pamela Stahel who returns to Williamsport from Zurich where she performs with the Zurich Opera Orchestra. Joining her is WSO's harpist, Ruth Hunter. Women of the Lycoming College choir add their voices to the last movement of the Concerto.

Gustav Holst's *The Planets* follows the intermission. Ned Ladd, associate professor of Physics and Astronomy at Bucknell University, is collaborating with the orchestra, presenting visual imagery to accompany the performance. The 1914-16 composition occurred during the infancy of modern astrophysics.



Ruth Hunter

To celebrate the advances in astronomy since that time, Holst's celestial music is accompanied by images of the universe beyond our solar system. Each movement is dedicated to a different type of celestial object-exploded stars, giant galaxies, ethereal clouds of gas and dust, spectacular environments that we now understand so much better. This reinterpretation marries Holst's timeless music with the products of the relentless march of astrophysical exploration.

MASQUERADE 2013

Saturday evening, February 23, is the date for a "Magical Midwinter Evening of Masks, Music, and Merriment" in support of the WSO. Serenaded in the CAC lobby by an ensemble of WSO musicians, guests will discover as they climb the stairs a variety of foods, beverages, colors, and sounds to enliven this mid-winter evening, beginning at 6:00pm. through 10:30 pm. In the Capitol Lounge, the band "Pepper Street" will provide music for dancing.

Tickets are available online, via caclive.com, at the CAC box office, or through the WSO office (322-0227). The Masquerade will take the place of the "Dancing Under the Summer Stars" summer fundraiser.

New Faces

Welcome to new members of the WSO Board: Lori Clutter, Nancy Eischeid, Joyce Hershberger, Aegina Leidhecker, Jason Wiemann, and Virgil Probasco.



**Aegina
Leidhecker**

Lori Clutter and her husband own an international piano business and Lori is an accomplished keyboard musician. **Nancy Eischeid**, chief financial officer of the Williamsport-Lycoming Chamber of Commerce, will take over as WSO treasurer and chair of the Finance Committee. **Joyce Hershberger**, active with the SPCA and other community organizations, returns to the Board to serve on the Governance Committee. **Aegina Leidhecker**, long-time member of the flute section and teacher in the Loyalsock School District, joins Andrew Rammon as a player representative. **Jason Wiemann** has recently joined the McCormick Law practice. Jason grew up and was educated in Pittsburgh. **Virgil Probasco** has recently retired from Wire Rope after a long career. He played a major role in the United Way fundraising campaign.

And as you have been reading and hearing, **Janet Harris** has begun her work as the Executive Director of the WSO. Janet comes to the position with extensive experience in fundraising and finance in New York. Locally, she has worked for M&T and Woodlands banks. She has also been active in the community and has been a season subscriber/WSO supporter. In case you missed it, Janet was featured in the January 3 *Showcase* supplement to the *Sun-Gazette*.



Janet Harris

Meet the Maestro

Maestro Edelstein and guest artists Pamela Stahel and Ruth Hunter will share cocktails and light fare with attendees Monday, February 11, 5:00-7:00 pm in the CAC Capitol Lounge. Tickets for the event are \$20.00; they are available through the WSO office (322-0227); reservations may be made by phone with ticket payment at the event.

Up Close & Personal

Meet David Lassiter

Violinist, real estate salesman, missionary, chauffeur, choir director, school teacher, armored car driver, orchestra conductor, private music teacher, world traveler, member of Honolulu and Orlando Orchestras among others---all describe a 21 year member of the WSO. Whether in the first violin section, assistant concertmaster, principal second, or in



the viola section (there for 5 years) - all roles he has filled with the WSO - David Lassiter's arrival in Williamsport, hired for the Suzuki program during Pat Thayer's absence, may be best described as serendipitous.

Serendipity began with the urge to take a break from traveling-as a member of the Montovani Orchestra, as a violinist for four years and then three years as its conductor. That role concluded with a Williamsport appearance on December 12, 1990, at the Capitol theater. From Montovani to the WSO with Robin Fountain and back to the Capital/CAC---all part of Lassiter's life journey. "I had no intention of staying in Williamsport," he said, "however, the arts community, the string program at Williamsport High School, the natural beauty, and the WSO kept me here along with meeting my future wife, Christy Bower." David and Christy were married in 1993.

Not only has he been a mainstay with the orchestra, he also founded the Chamber Choir which he conducted with Kent Weaver as associate conductor; coincidentally, Weaver now functions as that group's conductor. The Chamber Choir and Orchestra introduced itself to the community when it opened the Community Theater League's new home with its initial performance December 1999 and continues performing today. Christy continues to serve on the WCC&O board.

Given the variety and range of Lassiter's experiences, the question - "what is the most important/valued of your experiences" yielded this response: Teaching - "the ultimate accomplishment." That accomplishment is reflected not only among the students with whom he worked in Southern California, students now in their 50s, many of whom followed his lead and teach music, but is also reflected within the WSO as three of his students sit as members of the orchestra. Lassiter has a Bachelors Degree from Chapman University in Southern California and a Masters Degree from Florida State University, both in Music Education.

Serendipity brought David Lassiter to Williamsport and - serendipitously - Williamsport itself with its opportunities kept him here, enriching his students, the WSO, and all who have enjoyed both the instrumental and choral music he helps to deliver. It all started with a father who insisted on his son's learning to play the violin; who then traded in his Buick for that first instrument; then accosted a man on the streets of D.C. who happened to be carrying a violin case, as he looked for a teacher. That man - Lassiter's first violin teacher - just happened to be a member of the National Symphony. Serendipity indeed.

Meet our Donors, the Phillips

The serendipity that brought David Lassiter to the WSO also brought then Air Force Lieutenant Birch Phillips into the life of his to-be-spouse, Ann Marie, in her hometown of Victoria, Texas. And that serendipity has enriched the Williamsport community as well as the WSO.

The Phillips family has been resident since the nineteenth century, playing a role in the business community (Phillips Supply House - along with Plankenhorn's - is the oldest, continuing member of the local Chamber of Commerce). As significant, the current Phillips family members are major supporters of their community, providing both leadership and charitable giving as their contributions.

The health system (Birch), the food bank (Ann Marie), Penn College (Birch), James V. Brown Library (Ann Marie) are among the leadership/time contributions that have brought recognition to them individually and as a couple: the Community Arts Center Director's Chair award, the Israel Bonds award, a United Way award, among others. They were "there" when the current WSO was created, built upon the Susquehanna Valley Symphony organization. They provided office space to the symphony in their building on Market Street until 2006 when the WSO offices moved into the CAC.

Birch was invited to sit on the board in those early years/mid-to late 1970s and then transferred his seat to Ann Marie, as his other board involvements grew. Her 20+ years on the board included functioning as the organization's treasurer; she holds Emerita status.

Season subscribers "ever since," their children and grandchildren also enjoy the orchestra. Season donors "ever since" as well. Why? "The orchestra is an asset to the community," they say; they have observed the growth/transformation over time; and their commitment to their community includes keeping the musicians on the stage.

Youth Programs

WSYO and Junior Strings in concert-- February 18, 7:30 pm, CAC

The two youth-centered programs share the CAC stage for a joint concert. Directed by Dr. Bill Ciabattari, the Williamsport Symphony Youth Orchestra will feature music by Copland, Anderson, and Gounod. Also featured will be the concerto competition runner-up, Walker Konkle, performing Concerto No. 22 in A minor (movement 1) by G.B. Viotti.

The Junior Strings, directed by Matt Radspinner, has expanded to 30 participants in its second semester. The two groups will collaborate on *Chant Rituals* by Elliot Del Borgo to round out the evening of music.

Concert is free and open to the public!

Do you want "To Be the Maestro"?

There remain a few unsold tickets (of the 100 at \$100) yet available that provide the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to command the attention of 75 musicians and direct their presentation of one orchestral piece. The winner will be drawn and announced at the March concert. The winner also receives a "conducting tutorial" from Maestro Edelstein in preparation for his/her appearance. Get your chance to stand on the podium and turn to the thunderous applause that follows your conducting debut. Worth more than \$100, surely.

Fan Mail

Of the December 2012 WSO concert, L.L. wrote:

"We are new to Williamsport, having moved here from the Washington, D.C. area and were very pleased to have experienced the talent of the musicians in greater Williamsport. We are looking forward to the programs for 2013."

Mrs. Holmes Yealy, formerly of Williamsport wrote:

"How fortunate we were to have had the opportunity to live in an area where so much good music was available and it gets better as the years go by."

Enid Yealy

