Grace Goudy Distinguished Artists Series Presents Two Upcoming Concerts

The Grace Goudy Distinguished Artists Series presents two superb pianists in the new year; a master-teacher and artist who is revered around the world, John Perry and an extraordinary young musician, winner of the career-defining Gilmore Young Artist Prize, Elizabeth Schumann.

Thursday, Jan. 30, John Perry will give a master class, free to the public at 1–3 p.m. on the stage of Hudson Hall. His recital will be later that evening, 7:30 p.m. One of the great instrumental teachers, with too many students who have achieved great fame to note, it is perhaps best to rely on what others have said in regards to his teaching, “John Perry never ceases to amaze, and this Master Class was no different”... or from a student, “John Perry doesn’t turn on the light, he turns off the dark.” His demonstrations and performances inspire wonder; from inimitable Beethoven interpretations to his astonishing renderings of Debussy and Ravel. He was in fact the first American and non-French person to win the special prize for the performance of French Music at the Marguerite Long-Thibaud Competition. His program will include the deeply moving, and form-shattering Beethoven Sonata op 110, Debussy’s typically color imbued “Estampes” and the Chopin mazurkas op 59.

Elizabeth Schumann, about whom the Washington Post has written, “Deft, relentless, and devastatingly good; the type of performance that you experience not so much with your ears, as with your solar plexus.” This concert concludes this year’s offerings with a recital Thursday, April 10 at 7:30 p.m., in Hudson Hall. In addition to Liszt and Beethoven, the program will feature the visionary 3rd Piano Sonata of the Australian composer Carl Vine. This work was commissioned by Elizabeth as part of the Gilmore award.
Note from the Chair

In the fall installment of “Note from the Chair,” I wrote about three ongoing projects: the search for a director for the University Chamber Orchestra, the completion of our National Association of Schools of Music re-accreditation, and work with the university administration on funding music scholarships. Fortunately, there is excellent news to report on all three fronts. The search for a director for the University Chamber Orchestra is underway and has turned up some highly qualified and gifted candidates. Our response to the NASM Visitors’ Report has been submitted, and now we await a response from NASM national offices. The third and most-critical piece — scholarship funding — has been established, and we have already had our first music scholarship audition, with two more audition dates to come early in the spring semester.

The scholarship funding is especially good news as in the present financial setting of a recovering American economy, many prospective students and parents are looking not only at the quality of an institution and its faculty but also at the bottom line: how affordable is the place. Working with new Vice President of Enrollment and University Communications Michael Beseda, we intend through enhanced aid and scholarship awards to be able to attract students of the highest musical achievement. The next step is to designate and advertise special music scholarships, such as instrument-specific awards that would attract top string, wind, brass, percussion and voice prospects to be foundational members of our orchestra, wind ensemble, choirs and opera programs.

Our accreditation team’s review and subsequent Visitors’ Report validated many aspects of our program, in particular the strength of our faculty and the depth of our curricula. Some revision was called for in our liberal arts music degree, the BA in music. This area has now been revised and made more flexible. Once in place, our new Bachelor of Arts will have options for exploring different paths within music, ranging from musicology and composition to performance and improvisation.

Figaro Gets Hitched as Dramatic Vocal Arts Throws a Fabulous Springtime Wedding

This season, Willamette University’s Dramatic Vocal Arts program, in collaboration with the University Chamber Orchestra and theatre department, presents “The Marriage of Figaro” by Mozart. In this charming, witty and vivacious opera, the infamous barber of Seville and a wild cast of characters dazzle and delight with some of opera’s most memorable music.

Figaro intends to wed Susanna, but it appears that Count Almaviva has scandalous and romantic intentions toward her as well. Through trickery and deception, the characters live out a single day of insanity, revealing the jealousy and lust that lurk in the corridors of the count’s palace. In this maze of madness, is there any hope for true love, trust or forgiveness?

Based on a farce originally banned in Vienna for its depiction of class conflict, Mozart’s opera brings to light historical conflicts not previously challenged while also bringing the audience to a roar of laughter and tears. Featuring a phenomenal cast and unflaggingly beautiful score, this English adaptation of “Le nozze di Figaro” is a lively opera that will be enjoyable for all.

Performances are at 7 p.m. March 6 and March 7-8, and 3 p.m. March 9 at Smith Auditorium. Tickets are $10 for adults and $5 for students. Tickets can be purchased at the Theatre Box Office or at the door. Tickets are also available online at https://www.boxofficetickets.com/go/event?id=224035

For more information, call 503-370-6221 or email thtr-tix@willamette.edu.

“Do You Know the Way To Kathmandu?”

We’ve been busy in the jazz and improvisational music area this semester preparing for our trip to Nepal in March to work and study at the Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory. The faculty jazz quintet has been invited — along with a select group of Willamette students. The following students were chosen through a rigorous application and audition process to present a series of concerts and workshops in Kathmandu early this year: Sean Edging, saxophone (senior, Las Vegas, Nev.); Matt Sazima, piano (senior, Granite Bay, Calif.); Thomas Shipley, bass (junior, Tucson, Ariz.); and Jarrett Tracy, drums (junior, Sacramento, Calif.). While in Nepal, faculty and students will perform several concerts of new music in addition to participating in a week of classes, workshops and collaborative performances with young Nepali jazz musicians. Be sure to join us in Salem on March 17 for a special send-off concert featuring both ensembles before they depart for the other side of the globe. Fun fact: Nepal is 12 hours and 45 minutes ahead of Pacific Daylight Time, and it takes nearly 21 hours of flight time spread over two days to get there!

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Chamber Choir and Willamette Singers Back From Successful Tour to California and Oregon

The Chamber Choir and Willamette Singers recently returned from their concert tour of California and Oregon. The tour took the choirs to Portland, Medford, Novato, San Mateo, Eureka, Roseburg and Salem.

The choral program will now turn its attention to preparation for the Winter Concert at 7 p.m. Saturday, March 1. The Chamber Choir is continuing to perform works written by Benjamin Britten in celebration of the 100th year of his birth and will present the beautiful “Hymn to St. Cecilia.”

Willamette Singers has received another invitation to give an honorific performance at the Northwestern Division Conference of the American Choral Directors Association, which will be held in March in Seattle.

In the third year of the Vocal Jazz Invitational Festival in Smith Auditorium, the Willamette Singers are welcoming guest artist Kirk Marcy to come for a day of clinics with guest choirs from South Salem, West Salem and Sprague high schools. Marcy has had a long career as a jazz performer and teacher. He toured with the Four Freshman for several years and is the director of choral activities at Edmonds Community College in Washington. He will work with the guest choirs throughout the day and then perform with each of them and the Willamette Singers in the festival concert on Friday, April 25 at 7:30 p.m.

Looking forward to a great season of music making. See you there.

Willamette Master Chorus closes season with two performances

The Willamette Master Chorus has invited Anton Armstrong to guest conduct its winter concert, titled “How Can I Keep From Singing.” Armstrong is a professor of music at St. Olaf College, where he directs the well-known St. Olaf Choir. The concert will primarily be devoted to African American spirituals and gospel music. Performances are at 7 p.m. March 15 and 3 p.m. March 16 at Hudson Hall. The group will finish the season with performances at Mount Angel Abbey’s church at 3 p.m. May 4 and May 18. The chorus will present “Kings, Prophets and Judges,” music that centers around stories from the Old Testament. Tickets and other information can be found at willamettemasterchorus.org.

Small Ensembles Celebration

The spring concert of Willamette University’s small classical music ensembles will take place at 7:30 p.m. Monday, April 21, at Hudson Hall. The Waller Trio, fresh back from winning the Music Teachers National Association chamber music competition, will be featured. Also on the program will be the percussion ensemble House Party 7, the Columbia Piano Quartet, WW5 (woodwind quintet) and the Pacific String Quartet.

The mission of the Small Ensemble Program is to enhance musicianship through team building, personal responsibility for one’s own part, and the development of awareness and sensitivity to the other players on each musical “team.” The groups include music majors and minors, music scholarship recipients and talented non-majors. They receive weekly coaching by members of the music faculty.

UCO in Figaro and Concerto Roles

The Willamette University Chamber Orchestra is Willamette’s showcase student orchestra. Coming off a fall semester that included performances of Grieg, Vivaldi, Prokofiev, Bartok, Kabalevsky and a conductorless account of Mozart’s “Serenata notturna,” the University Chamber Orchestra embarks on a spring semester that includes collaborations with Dramatic Vocal Arts’ production of “The Marriage of Figaro” and the winners of this year’s Concerto/Aria Competition. Featured performers at this year’s concert include Happiness Yi performing Rosauro’s Brazilian-influenced Concerto for Marimba, and Jason Pegis performing Tchaikovsky’s immortal contribution to the concerto genre, Variations on a Rococo Theme for cello and orchestra.

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Salem Chamber Orchestra continues with Brandenburgs 4, 6

Salem Chamber Orchestra will perform two programs this spring. “Homage: Brandenburg Concerto No. 4” features Willamette University instructor Sarah Tiedemann and guest Sandy Hughes on flutes and Denise Dillenbeck playing violin in Bach’s fourth Brandenburg. Also on the program is Ravel’s “Le tombeau de Couperin” and Aaron Jay Kernis’ “Musica Celestis.” The concert will take place at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 1, at Hudson Hall.

The season finale is “Farewell: Brandenburg Concerto No. 6,” which also includes Haydn’s “Farewell” symphony and features Willamette professor Anita King as soloist in Brahms’ Piano Concerto No. 2. The performance will be at 3 p.m. Sunday, April 6, at Hudson Hall.

Both programs will be conducted by Nikolas Caoile, principal conductor. Tickets for both events are available at Travel Salem by calling 503-581-4325 or online at salemchamberorchestra.org.

Music Technology Lab Update

Last fall, Digital Music Techniques and Creating Music With Technology students collaborated on projects with students in rhetoric, studio art and computer science classes. The collaborations, all involving the scoring of video elements, were screened in the Ford Hall film studies theater.

This spring, music students will collaborate with classes in computer science to score 3D animation projects, and with biology students doing sound and scoring for movies about ecology. Students in Advanced Digital Music Production once again will be recording campus groups. Likewise, they’ll work with students and faculty from the Chemawa Indian School, recording studio performances of traditional music and producing a CD. Music education students will present music technology classes to community youth through the Saturday Explorations Program.

Finally, students will be able to apply for summer project grants through the Learning Through Creating program supported by the Mellon Foundation.

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