

Early music event, art song project are welcome additions

By Peter Jacobi H-T Columnist
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Additions to Bloomington's classical music scene or schedule are always welcome. In the next couple of weeks, there are additions, certainly not grandiose ones but significant, nevertheless.

This coming weekend and early in the week that follows, fans of Early Music can relish something akin to a small dosage of BLEMF, the late and lamented Bloomington Early Music Festival.

And one Saturday later, on Feb. 28, a new professional arts organization named Calliope's Call, dedicated to the performance of art songs, will introduce itself with an inaugural concert.

It's encouraged.

The extended weekend

This burst of activity comes from a collaboration of local Early Music institutions: Gamma Ut, a student-led organization in the now-titled Historical Performance Institute of IU's Jacobs School of Music; the Historical Performance Institute itself, and Bloomington Early Music, a not-for-profit organization with a mission to engender activity in the historically informed performance arts.

Also involved is the Jacobs School's new Office of Entrepreneurship and Career Development. That office happens to be headed by Alain Barker, who led BLEMF through some of its best years and who remains committed to furthering Bloomington's stake in the world of Early Music.

Barker translates the school's hiring of Dana Marsh, a world-respected historical performance specialist, conductor, singer, organist and academic, as a critically important arrival on the local music scene, one that will spur activity. Add to that, says Barker, the impressive creative energy among the Early Music students and a shared excitement about what might be possible in Bloomington.

I believe, he continues, that a new era is emerging, one in which the town-gown spirit that existed in the BLEMF era can flourish. The upcoming weekend is a wonderful mix of events that showcases new talent and, with a look to the future, also focuses on building a career.

Planned are events for just students and professionals and those open to the rest of us. Next Saturday afternoon, for instance, in Cook Music Library, a professional session featuring Marsh and two founders of Piffaro, the Renaissance Band, explores the how-tos of *Launching Your Ensemble: Connecting to the World*.

That evening, starting at 7 in First Presbyterian Church, a showcase concert brings together four student ensembles from the Historical Performance Institute: a Renaissance wind band, a Medieval troupe, a Renaissance cappella choir and a viol consort.

Sunday afternoon at 2:30 in St. Thomas Lutheran Church, another public event brings us the latest installment of the Bloomington Bach Cantata Project, *Sehet! Wir gehn hinauf gen Jerusalem* (Behold! We Go Up to Jerusalem). On Monday evening at 7 in Recital Hall, students in the Historical Performance Institute play a chamber music recital.

And during the Monday and Tuesday that follow the weekend, Piffaro founders Bob Weimken and Joan Kimball meet with students for private coaching sessions and a group seminar. It's a stimulating mix.

Taking care of the art song

Calliope's Call is the dream project of Megan Roth, a mezzo-soprano who insists there are too few art song recitals. So, for the cultural enrichment of our community and beyond, she says she sought to reverse that situation at least locally by founding Calliope's Call, this to instill an appreciation and love for the art song genre by offering affordable, high quality performances that showcase this rich and vast field, with works by traditional to contemporary composers performed by world class artists.

The organizations calling card concert takes place Saturday, Feb. 28, in Bloomington's Unitarian Universalist Church, with a repeat the following afternoon in Indianapolis at the Tabernacle Presbyterian Church. The program, titled *Childs Play: Songs for and about Children*, features works by Poulenc, Heggie, Duke, Bernstein, Ives and Schumann, an intriguing lineup.

Roth, an experienced singer with a wealth of credits in opera, oratorio and art song, came to Bloomington in 2013. That's when her husband, Adam McLean, was appointed professor of movement and stage combat in IU's Department of Theatre and Drama. Settled in Bloomington, she began to reassess her future, deciding in the process to intensify her search for art song performance opportunities.

I've always loved the genre, she explains, but there are few professional opportunities in which to perform this vast repertoire. For years, I have searched for concert series and venues to host art song recitals. Organizations outside of colleges that feature this type of music are few. I am passionate about introducing it to the public, to showcase the diversity of compositions in this area of classical music.

The inaugural concert will feature four performers. And how were they chosen?

Through many events at IU Theatre, she says, I came to know Scott Hogsed and Paul Pisano who, incidentally, also have a spouse on faculty in the department. I invited Paul [piano] and Scott [baritone] to participate. The fourth musician is soprano Kim Pokin Lee, a Roth friend from graduate school days at Florida State University. Kim relocated to Chicago some years ago and, knowing of her deep love for art song, I invited her to join us for this inaugural concert.

What happens with Calliope's Call after the debut weekend? My plan for the next two seasons largely depends on the success of our fundraising efforts, Roth says. Provided that we raise the required amount, I will hold two concerts for the next two or three seasons and hope to increase the number as we grow. I have been in contact with many artists who have impressive resumes, having sung nationally and internationally, and who have shown great enthusiasm and interest in participating in my concert series. I plan also to pull from the pool of many established professional artists in this area. ... I'm hopeful, too, that we will have the opportunity in the future to commission works for our group.

Megan Roth sounds serious. That's promising.

Contact Peter Jacobi at pjacobi@heraldt.com.

If you go

To the Early

Music Weekend

Three concerts are ours to enjoy, all free of charge:

4276868724 Saturday evening at 7 in First Presbyterian Church, 221 E. Sixth St., a Showcase Concert performed by Arethusa Musica, Forgotten Clefs, the Burgundy Consort and BloomingViols.

66822347 Sunday afternoon at 2:30 in St. Thomas Lutheran Church, 3800 E. Third St., the Bloomington Bach Cantata Project offers 6505Sehet! Wir gehn hinauf gen Jerusalem, BWV 159, directed by Sarah Heusch.

Monday evening at 7 in Recital Hall, students in the Historical Performance Institute play a chamber music recital.

To Calliopes Call

Inaugural concert is 5 p.m. Feb. 28 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, 2120 N. Fee Lane. Admission is free, but donations are accepted.

Mezzo-soprano Megan Roth, soprano Kim Pokin Lee, baritone Scott Hogsed and pianist Paul Pisano present 29Child6505s Play: Songs for and about Children, art songs by Poulenc, Heggie, Bernstein, Duke, Ives and Schumann.

Show times

2027326682 This evening at 6 in Auer Hall, Edmund Cord conducts the IU Brass Choir in 266329726Brass Across Europe. Bass trombonist Carl Lenthe is guest soloist. Free.

Monday evening at 8 in the Musical Arts Center (MAC), the Monday jazz concert series features the Steve Allee Jazz Ensemble. Free.

28172853 Tuesday evening at 8 in Auer, the University Chorale and Conductors Orchestra join under the baton of Carlo Vincetti Frizzo for selections from Brahms Four Songs and Mendelssohns Die erste Walpurgisnacht5251 (The First Walpurgis Night). Free.

19626464252 Tuesday evening at 8 in the MAC, the IU Wind Ensemble, led by Stephen Pratt, plays music by IU faculty composers David Dzubay and Don Freund, along with works of Andre Previn, Cliff Colnot, Vincent Persichetti and Ottorino Respighi. Free.

28172853 Wednesday evening at 8 in the MAC, guest Marzio Conti conducts the Concert Orchestra in music of Chabrier (Overture to Gwendoline), Parish-Alvars (Harp Concerto in E-Flat Major) and Shostakovich (Symphony No. 6 in B Minor). Free.

Thursday evening at 8 in Auer, faculty husband Edward Auer and and guest wife Junghwa Moon Auer offer a piano recital of works by Debussy and Chopin. Free.

Saturday afternoon at 4 in Auer, the Conductors73266822347 Chorus, led by Steven Berlanga, sings music of des Prez, Monteverdi, Sviridov, Vaughan Williams, Mendelssohn, Esenwalds and Rossini. Free.

Saturday evening at 7:30 in the Buskirk-Chumley Theater, the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra, conducted by its artistic director Adam Bodony, presents 2817Shades of Music,6868724846 a program including Chabriers Espana,29 Barber6505s Adagio for Strings, Borodins In the Steppes of Central Asia, Khachaturians Masquerade Suite and Dvorak12s Slavonic Dance No. 1. Tickets (available at the Buskirk-Chumley box office) are \$15 for adults and free for children 18 and younger.

Saturday evening at 8 in Auer, a faculty composition recital featuring music of Don Freund, unites a host of Jacobs School faculty members, plus a few students: Kathryn Lukas, flute; Howard Klug, clarinet; Kathleen McLean, bassoon; John Rommel, trumpet; Carl Lenthe, trombone; Mitchell McCrady, horn; Kevin Bobo, percussion; Erin Brooker, harp; Reiko Shigeoka-Neriki, Sung-Mi Im, and Don Freund, piano; Bruce Bransby, double bass; Amanda Russo, mezzo-soprano; Reuben Walker, baritone; and Stephen Brew, guitar. Free.