



Backstage

November 2023

Change is the only constant in life.....Heraclitus (Greek Philosopher)

NOT-SO-HIDDEN ASSET

One treasure that the wind symphony continues to showcase is the music programming and conducting talent found within the musician group. Most recently, the wind symphony and our audience experienced the “Synergy” concert on October 15 programmed and conducted by Mark Claassen, one of our many talented high school music educators (photos above). If you missed the live performance, check out the YouTube recording available on our webpage: www.swwsymphony.org where you can also find video links to earlier concerts, the playlists, and conductors.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Southwest Washington Wind Symphony was started in February 2005 by Richard Carr (pediatric anesthesiologist), Gayle Beacock (music retail), Scott Barnes (music educator at Vancouver School for the Arts & Academics), and David Kinch (music educator at Jason Lee Middle School). As with any organization that accumulates 19 years of life experience, there are leadership personnel changes. This past summer, a number of major leadership positions in the SWWS Board were handed-off to competent and committed younger leaders which is satisfying to see and promotes confidence in the organization’s future. The current Board of Directors includes: Carinn Ormson (President, Flute), Rebecca Weidenaar (Secretary, clarinet),

Don Nelson (Treasurer, clarinet), Jean Kent (Librarian, flute), Colleen Chun (Marketing/Publicity Director), Samantha Wright (Personnel Director, clarinet), and John Velasquez (Performing Musician Representative, trumpet).



CONGRATULATIONS!

The Evergreen Public Schools were awarded the Best Communities for Music Education Award in April 2023 presented by National Association of Music Merchants Foundation for the 6th time! This award recognizes and celebrates school districts for their support and commitment to music education. A few EPS high school students perform at many of the wind symphony concerts. We appreciate their volunteering the time and effort. SWWS benefits from this incubator of talent: multiple SWWS musicians attended Evergreen Public Schools, now teach in the Evergreen School district, and perform in the wind symphony alongside their former music teachers.

THE COST OF SHEET MUSIC

Displays of sheet music for sale at music stores are gradually being replaced by online sales and electronic versions for purchase that are then downloaded. Concert band music is no exception. Many printed pieces of concert band music are still available for online purchase and SWWS routinely buys printed music with parts for each instrument of the concert band which are then shipped to us. Other select pieces are only available for rent and one set of printed music for each instrument is shipped to us and must be returned after performance. Another option for some music is to purchase an electronic version that our music librarian must then print out for each musician. So to acquire music for a concert, SWWS must pay the purchase price, shipment costs (one-way or two-way to return printed rental music), rental fees, and printing costs. Shipping costs make up a significant percentage of the total cost to acquire a piece of music for performance.

If you would like to help with acquisition of sheet music, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution directed towards the purchase of music. For our October 15 program, it cost \$427 to purchase and ship the sheet music for 4 musical numbers and \$495 to rent and ship the music for another single musical piece. Donors directing gifts towards sheet music acquisition will be acknowledged in the program. Thank you for your consideration. We could not do this without your generous support. See you on March 3, 2024.



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IN THE TROPICS

Captivating and soothing “tropical” tones from marimbas greeted the crowd in the lobby prior to our March 3 concert despite the drizzly overcast 42 degrees outside. These unique instruments originated in Africa long, long ago and were first brought to Central and South America. Originally, the sounds were produced by striking bars of wood spanning a hole in the ground. Then hollow gourds were attached to the underside of the wood bars for resonance. More recent versions had wooden and, later, metal tubes replacing the gourds. Modern marimbas cover four to five octaves. [Music Instrument Guide; Yamaha.com]

The spectators were mesmerized by the unique sounds and surrounded the marimbas even after the auditorium doors opened at 2:30 pm.

The marimbas were skillfully played by Jayden Corey, Landon Walters, Blake Bruning, and Makoa Lewis from Hockinson High School; Gideon Beau from Evergreen High School; and Kaytie Twelves and Daniel Lindsey from Union High School. Many thanks to these talented musicians!



“MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS” MONTH

Sponsored by the National Association for Music Education, Music In Our Schools month raises awareness of the importance of music education. During March 2024, the Lower Columbia River Music Educators Association supports and sponsors performances at various elementary, middle, and high schools. Events include vocal solo & ensemble contest, high school band and orchestra outreach concerts to feeder middle schools, choral concerts by individual and combined middle school groups, concerts by combined middle and high school groups, a choral festival, middle school beginner band performances, and more.

BENEFITS OF MUSIC EDUCATION

High-quality evidence-based research has shown that music education equips students with foundational skills for lifelong success such as enhancing fine motor skills, working memory, recall and retention of verbal information; advancing math achievement, atten-

tiveness, perseverance, and self-esteem; and cultivating critical thinking skills, study habits, and abstract reasoning. For more information, see the Arts Education Partnership: www.aep-arts.org

Adults learning music also benefit from developing new skills (fine motor skills, listening skills, using muscles in new ways, counting rhythm, memorizing notes and how to play them). However we adults may overestimate our abilities, underestimate how much practice is needed to master new skills, be impatient, and have fear of failure. Adults typically have more experience with music, so they oftentimes can hear things in music that children miss. So even if we have to settle for being less than a virtuoso, taking lessons and practicing are great mental exercises to keep brain cells active and then you can play with your children and grandchildren. [“Never Too Late to Learn an Instrument” by Brigid McCarthy. Weekend Edition Saturday, NPR; 12/27/2008]

See you at our next concert: May 19.

‘Cool Collaboration’

Pair of concerts celebrate milestones for Vancouver performing arts groups

By Monika Spykerman, *The Columbian* OCT 17, 2024

Two Vancouver performing arts groups are celebrating milestones this weekend. Vancouver Master Chorale is continuing its 75th anniversary season with a full-length performance of Verdi's "Requiem," while Southwest Washington Wind Symphony will kick off its 20th anniversary year with a concert appropriately titled "Celebrations."

Vancouver Master Chorale's performance of Giuseppe Verdi's masterwork has been on director Jana Hart's mind since before the pandemic. It's a remarkably ambitious undertaking, Hart said. "It's one of the most gorgeous things. It's exciting, it's dramatic," Hart said. "There's nothing like it. It's not done that much because it requires such operatic voices."

Italian composer Verdi wrote a total of 26 operas, including "Rigoletto," "La Traviata," "Otello" and "Aida." His "Requiem" isn't on that list, although Hart said the piece nevertheless packs the same emotional punch as an opera. The only real difference, Hart said, is that the performers are not in costume, moving across the stage.

The chorale was all set to learn this piece with the Southwest Washington Symphony before the pandemic, Hart said. Then COVID-19 shut everything down. The idea languished in the back of Hart's mind until six or seven months ago, when she got a call from Rob Davis, conductor of Southwest Washington Symphony. Both agreed they were ready.

It's taken countless hours of rehearsals for both musical groups. The piece is "incredibly challenging," Hart said, and there are many solos requiring opera-level voices. This piece of music is "not like Bach, where you're trying to figure out what the mathematical equation is," Hart said. "It's Italian in your face, just hugely dramatic, almost spoken. It's all about emotion."

The Vancouver Master Chorale's performance of this piece is a testimony to the choir's high caliber of musicality, Hart said. ~~In fact, Vancouver Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle will introduce the piece at Skyview Concert Hall on Sunday, welcoming the Longview-based Southwest Washington Symphony.~~ It's a "cool collaboration between the two communities," Hart said.

As the first notes of "Requiem" ring out at Skyridge Concert Hall in Salmon Creek, Union High School Performing Arts Center in Camas will resound with the opening measures of the Southwest Washington Wind Symphony's 20th anniversary concert, "Celebrations." [correction: Vancouver Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle will give opening remarks at the wind symphony concert.]

The wind symphony will continue its tradition of free concerts showcasing the vigorous musicality of its 55 members, many of whom are music teachers at local schools and colleges. The symphony provides an opportunity to perform more challenging music than is possible in their daily jobs while providing a way to support each other professionally, said board member Colleen Chun, who handles the group's marketing and publicity.

"If you look at our mission statement, we're focused on music education," Chun said. "We want to nurture an appreciation of symphonic band music by performing free concerts." The symphony's concerts are on the short side (usually about an hour and a half) to keep the audience's attention, Chun said. Programs feature a lively mix of recognizable tunes as well as lesser-known works. The Sunday concert, conducted by Patrick Murphy, director of bands at the University of Portland, and Chris Sigman, a music educator in the Evergreen School District, includes "Olympic Fanfare and Theme" by John Williams, "Americans We" by Henry Filmore, "Sanctuary" by Frank Ticheli and "Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral" by Richard Wagner.

Chun emphasized that the group is not a symphony orchestra but a symphonic band. Instruments include woodwinds (clarinet, oboe, flute, piccolo, saxophone and bassoon) and brass instruments (trumpet, French horn, tuba

and trombone). Concerts also feature two stringed instruments, a double bass and piano, as well as percussion instruments, which can include everything from a bullwhip to gong-like steel bowls. Audiences might even hear a slide whistle or harp.

The group is funded in part by local businesses such as Beacock Music and Music World, as well as the generosity of audiences who offer donations, Chun said. Each concert also includes a chance to purchase \$5 raffle tickets for an original fine art piece by contemporary American artist Keith Lindberg.

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IF YOU GO

What: Vancouver Master Chorale performs full-length "Requiem" by Giuseppe Verdi with the Southwest Washington Symphony
When and where: 7 p.m. Saturday at Lower Columbia College's Rose Theater, 1600 Maple St., Longview, and 3 p.m. Sunday at Skyview Concert Hall, 1300 N.W. 139th St., Vancouver

Cost: The Longview concert is free. Tickets to the performance at Skyview Concert Hall are \$30 per person at vancouvermasterchorale.org

What: Southwest Washington Wind Symphony "Celebrations" concert

When: 3 p.m. Sunday

Where: Union High School Performing Arts Center, 6201 N.W. Friberg-Strunk St., Camas

Cost: Free Information: swwindsymphony.org



“Sunny Meadow” by Keith Lindberg

Backstage

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Talent is like the marksman who hits a target that others cannot reach. Genius is like the marksman who hits a target that others cannot even see.

~ Arthur Schopenhauer (German philosopher 1788-1860)

ONGOING PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE AND LONGEVITY

SHOWCASING STUDENT TALENT

Our pre-concert lobby performances usually showcase high school student musicians. Not to be outdone, 8th grade trumpet students, Quentin Smith and Zachary Elder (aka “Q&Z”), performed duets before our May 19 concert (above). Well done, musicians! Come back anytime!

FINE ART RAFFLE

Thanks to Grace Teigen, Gene Wigglesworth, and their nonprofit Give Art Foundation, SWWS is the recipient of “Sunny Meadow,” an oil-on-canvas painting by California artist Keith Lindberg. At our October 20 concert, this lovely painting was raffled for \$5/ticket (or 5 tickets for \$20). The funds were dedicated to continuing the SWWS mission by covering general expenses such as insurance, sheet music purchases, website services, and facility rental. The lucky winner was one of our long-time clarinetists who happened to be the first person to buy a ticket that day. Being first has its advantages!

FREE BAND & ORCHESTRA CLASSES

From October 2024 through May 2025, the Vancouver School District is offering free band or orchestra classes for 5th graders at 3 high schools (Columbia River, Fort Vancouver, and Skyview). Classes are 3:15-4:00 pm and taught by Vancouver Public School teachers. Transportation from their elementary school to the high school is

provided. Registration is required. Band class includes clarinet, flute, trombone, and trumpet. Orchestra class includes cello, viola, and violin. We hope interested students don’t miss this amazing opportunity. Wow! Kudos to VPS! We’re always in favor of programs that promote music education to the next generation for many reasons such as improved math skills, hand-eye coordination, and time-management skills. There may be a budding SWWS musician in that group!

SCHOOL OF ARTS & ACADEMICS

5th through 12th graders in the Vancouver School District also have the opportunity to apply to attend the Vancouver School of Arts & Academics, the arts magnet school in the Shumway neighborhood. In addition to instrumental and vocal music, the school offers instruction in dance, theatre, literary arts, visual arts and moving image arts. VSAA was honored with the “Exemplary School 2022-2027” designation by the Arts Schools Network. The Arts Schools Network is a national organization that provides arts educators from K-12 schools, colleges, and universities quality improvement resources, support, and networking opportunities to elevate the success of their students.

SWWS ON KXRW-FM

Producer Steven Glickman interviewed SWWS current president, Jessicah Wager (photo below), and past presidents, Pete Boulé and Rich Carr (lower photo) in the KXRW studio on October 10. The radio show profiled SWWS, its mission, and its accomplishments to a radio audience over the airwaves and the internet.



