

Pied piper of music returns to county

Beloved educator Gookin to lead Wind Symphony legacy concert

By Scott Hewitt, Columbian staff writer

Published: March 18, 2016, 6:06am



Larry Gookin



Natalie Neshyba, Flutist

If Clark County ever had anything like a pied piper, that was Larry Gookin. The Pied Piper of Hamelin, you'll recall, was that German fairy-tale figure whose music was so magical, it brought rats — and then children — under his control. Gookin never aimed his musical powers at rodents, but he sure has inspired generations of music students to follow his excellent example.

“So many of our local music educators see him as their mentor,” said Rich Carr, president of the Southwest Washington Wind Symphony. Many of those mentees will join together Sunday afternoon to play in a Wind Symphony “Musical Legacy” concert in tribute to their teacher. The concert will even feature a piece commissioned in Gookin’s honor by a consortium of music groups, including the Wind Symphony. That piece is “St. Francis,” by David Maslanka, a popular contemporary composer and friend of Gookin’s. Maslanka posted on his website that he wrote the piece because of Gookin’s “fascination with St. Francis. ... The heated compassion of St. Francis is mirrored in Larry’s lifelong devotion to the movement of young lives through music.”

Gookin was a music professor and director of bands at Central Washington University for 34 years. During that time, he said, he frequently made “the long, long drive” from Ellensburg to Clark County to teach classes, adjudicate music competitions and conduct the Wind Symphony. He retired from CWU last year. It’s “a little weird,” he acknowledged, how many of his CWU students came from Clark County and then returned again to teach music here. (Plus, two more conductors of the Wind Symphony, founder Mark Lane and Lewis Norfleet, both went on to become music faculty at CWU.) “There’s such a strong musical connection between Central Washington and music education in Clark County,” Carr said. According to his careful counting, 70 percent of the players in the Southwest Washington Wind Symphony are local music educators — and 40 percent of those educators were taught by Gookin.

Mark Claassen, the band director at Union High School, said you probably couldn’t count all the local music teachers, at every level, who were taught by Gookin. Claassen was emailing from Indianapolis, Ind., where

his wind ensemble was one of 18 invited to perform in the National Concert Band Festival; Claassen in turn extended the invitation for Gookin to guest conduct his students there. “He really is a musical father to so many and I wanted to share my musical ‘Dad’ with my own musical ‘kids.’ It meant the world to me that he would be willing to come and share his wisdom with my students,” said Claassen, who studied with Gookin for seven years.

Sam Ormson, the band director at Mountain View High School, studied with Gookin for four. ” ‘You have to love the music, and you have to love your musicians,’ ” are great words of Gookin wisdom, Ormson said. “When he comes and visits my high school bands, they immediately get better, and they are laughing, smiling, and enjoying every second of the rehearsal. I also see this among the adult musicians in the Southwest Washington Wind Symphony. He is a master of his craft.”

Another Gookin student was Natalie Neshyba, who will perform the flute solo during Georges Bizet’s “Carmen Fantasie” on Sunday. (It’s not a Gookin connection, but Neshyba is the daughter of Mark Neshyba, a music teacher at Wy’east Middle School and trombonist with the popular Portland dance band 5 Guys Named Moe.)

“The most rewarding thing you can do as a music educator is pass the torch,” Gookin said when The Columbian caught up with him by phone in Indianapolis. “I see all these great musicians down there who are dedicated to teaching.” And it’s especially heartwarming to see them coming together and playing together under his baton as guest conductor, he said. “Looking out at the Southwest Washington Wind Symphony and seeing all my former students — it’s extremely rewarding,” he said. Don’t forget all his excellent former students who are doing great things but don’t happen to be in this particular band, he added.

The free “Musical Legacy” concert is set for 3 p.m. March 20 at Union High School, 6201 N.W. Friberg-Strunk St., Camas. Learn more about the 50-player Southwest Washington Wind Symphony at www.swwindsymphony.org. “Community music education is important,” Carr said. “We want people to be aware of the caliber and talent of our music educators in Clark County — and the ‘father’ of so many of them is Larry Gookin.”



You must never feel badly about making mistakes...as long as you take the trouble to learn from them. For you often learn more by being wrong for the right reason than you do by being right for the wrong reasons.

- Norman Juster, *The Phantom Tollbooth*

Backstage

January 2017

PDX BRASS

If you arrived early to our Oct. 23 concert, you were serenaded by the sounds of the PDX Brass quintet in the lobby. The group includes SWWS Board member Kurt Heichelheim, Mark Vehrencamp, Dan Schlesinger, Carol Smith, and John Kim who all graciously agreed to kick off our pre-concert entertainment program before the wind symphony performance. This venue gives our patrons a taste of different types of musical styles played by community ensembles. We hope to also include vocalists in the future. Eventually we would like to include student ensembles providing them a performance venue to enrich their music education and to support the joy of making music for a receptive audience. Please contact SWWS Vice President, Pete Boulé, via email to pjboule@gmail.com if you have suggestions for future pre-concert entertainers.

DRIVE & SUPPORT MUSIC EDUCATION

License your vehicle in Washington, drive with a unique special design license plate, and support music education in our local schools all at the same time.



This program is spearheaded by Music Aid Northwest in conjunction with the Washington State Department of Licensing and the Washington Music Educators Association. Music Aid Northwest is a 501(c)3 committed to philanthropy to benefit music education in Washington state. Part of the initial special design license fee and subsequent yearly renewal fees are collected by Music Aid Northwest for distribution to schools. License plate purchasers can designate their school

of choice. The school then receives an invitation to sign up for the program for quarterly payments. Alternatively, school music teachers who choose not to register their school are eligible to apply for grants from this program. Band, orchestra, and choir booster groups should research this option. For more information:

http://media.wix.com/ugd/3b5cd5_f87cf2c9fd504f459530438371376f30.pdf

<http://www.dol.wa.gov/vehicleregistration/spmusic.html>

<http://www.musicaidnorthwest.org/music-matters>



Join the Chaminade Club: Wind Symphony concert to feature a special guest and highlight a mostly forgotten female composer

by Scott Hewitt, *The Columbian* 3/4/2017



Cecile Chaminade, 1857-1944



Zachariah Galatis, Flute & Piccolo

Legend has it that French composer Cecile Chaminade made her Flute Concertino in D major a finger killer — stuffed full of speedy runs, daring leaps and syncopated solos — for the usual reason: jealous love. Stuck in a love-less marriage with a much older man, she wanted to humiliate a young lover who jilted her — a flautist. It's a tantalizing idea, but the simpler truth probably is that Chaminade, having accepted a commission to create something for the annual French flute-off known as the Paris Conservatory Flute Concours, felt obliged to write the trickiest, most challenging tour de force possible. That was in 1902, when Chaminade was popular in Europe and well on her way to becoming world famous. An American tour a few years later made her a true musical superstar and even inspired the formation of more than 100 women's amateur musical societies that were called "Chaminade Clubs." A few years after that, she was decorated with France's highest award, the Legion of Honor.

But Chaminade's fame and reputation didn't last. Music historians now debate whether it's because tastes were changing, or because she was a woman in a field crowded with men. That always worked against her: Even though her own gift was great enough to prompt family friend George Bizet, the great composer, to recommend the Paris Conservatory, her father would only allow private lessons. Conservatory wasn't for girls. Celebrated in her day as the prolific composer of hundreds of short pieces, Cecile Chaminade is mostly forgotten now — except for that devilishly tough Flute Concertino, a work she aimed to fill up with "all the difficulties of the instrument," she said.

Fortunately, the Southwest Washington Wind Symphony's special guest artist on Sunday afternoon is up to the task. Flute and piccolo master Zachariah Galatis, whose regular gig is with the Oregon Symphony, will take charge of Chaminade's Concertino as well as the dramatic, Flamenco-feeling "Piccolo Espangol" by James Christensen and "Only Light" by contemporary composer Aaron Perrine. Galatis, who has won many major awards for his piccolo and flute artistry, also performs with Third Angle, a Portland new-music ensemble, and 45th Parallel, a chamber group. He teaches at the University of Portland and privately.

The Southwest Washington Wind Symphony is a 50-player concert band that lives up to its name. Aside from a dash of percussion and strings, the group consists almost entirely of woodwinds and brass horns — instruments you blow through. This concert is free and open to the public.



MUSIC IN THE LOBBY - A MINI PRE-CONCERT CONCERT

"There's a jazz band playing in the lobby!" Patrons walked a bit faster to get into the lobby before our March 5 concert when they heard the saxophones harmonizing. People are just drawn to live musical performances up close which is one of many reasons the SWWS invites student groups to perform pre-concert. This was a rare opportunity for our patrons to hear a saxophone octet live (sax octets are reportedly a rare breed). The students were poised and received many compliments from their audience. The students also helped the ushers to move their music stands and chairs to the band room after the concert – great job, guys!

Thank you to the Skyview High School Saxophone Octet directed by Tim Heichelheim:

Soprano Sax: Niko Eria, Kevin Kinney
 Alto Sax: Harrison Neighbors, Dale Heying
 Tenor Sax: Bryce Regian, Matthew Hale
 Bari Sax: Kasper Hofbauer, Austin Bryant

Our May 14 Mother's Day concert was graced with partly sunny skies and no rain - a notable feature during the very rainy and cold Spring 2017. Many thanks to our Music in the Lobby featured group - the Union High School Trombone Quartet (directed by Mark Claassen):

Parker Twelves
 Sean Grimm
 Tyler Snow
 Noah Johnson



The adults and children in the lobby were mesmerized. We hope to have more small ensembles, including vocal groups, in our pre-concert series. Stay tuned!

Backstage

September 2017

RETROSPECTIVE

2014-2015

- Cara Gabrielson (soprano, May 2015)

2015-2016

- Patrick Murphy, Conductor
 - Guest Conductor: Larry Gookin (CWU)
 - Natalie Neshyba (flute, March 2016)

2016-2017

- Zachariah Galatis (flute/piccolo, March 2017)
 - Returning Guest Conductor: Pat Vandehey (May 2017)



Zack Galatis, flute

Thank you all! We could not do this without your interest and support. Imagine how quiet and unanimated life would be without music.....