

The Orion ENSEMBLE

Ensemble-in-Residence, Chicago College
of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University

NEWS

SPRING 2005

Spring Concert Series 3rd SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT Family Concert

With Musical Mime Interpretations by T. Daniel and Laurie Willets

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2005

7:00 p.m. - FOX VALLEY UNITY CHURCH, BATAVIA

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2005

4:00 p.m. - WINNETKA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1255 WILLOW ROAD, WINNETKA

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2005

7:30 p.m. - GANZ HALL, ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY,
MICHIGAN AVENUE, CHICAGO



4th SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT

SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 2005

7:00 p.m. - FOX VALLEY UNITY CHURCH, BATAVIA

SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2005

4:00 p.m. - WINNETKA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1255 WILLOW ROAD, WINNETKA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2005

7:30 p.m. - GANZ HALL, ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY,
MICHIGAN AVENUE, CHICAGO

Upcoming Events

MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 2005

FREE LUNCHTIME CONCERT

12:15 pm - CHICAGO CULTURAL CENTER

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2005

"LIVE FROM STUDIO ONE"

8:00 p.m. - WFMT 98.7FM

SPRING BENEFIT PERFORMANCE

SUNDAY, APRIL 3, 2005 - 2:00 P.M.

DUNHAM WOODS RIDING CLUB, WAYNE, IL

January 2005

CHAMBER MAGIC

In February, the Orion Ensemble presents its third series of concerts with renowned mime artists, T. Daniel and Laurie Willets. I had the privilege of working with this team last year in a mesmerizing production of *L'Histoire du Soldat* by Igor Stravinsky. I was astounded by their ability to captivate the audience with their creative interpretations. Through movement, they gave the music a fresh and exciting energy. I asked them if they would like to join the Orion and they expressed great enthusiasm.

Willets and Daniel have given concerts with orchestras worldwide, and in Chicago, have frequently performed with the Chicago Symphony. They have been a part of family and children's concerts in works such as *Peter and the Wolf*, *Carnival of the Animals*, and *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Certainly, this concert will be a favorite for the whole family.

The team is also known for pairing movement with chamber music. They created an ensemble called *InVenTionS*, with Chicago Symphony, Assistant Principal Clarinetist, John Bruce Yeh and clarinetist, Theresa Reilly. This innovative group brings classical music for duo clarinets together with eclectic theatrical movement.

Orion will collaborate on two works in the February concerts—Darius Milhaud's, *Suite*, Op.157, for clarinet, violin and piano, and Chicago composer, Stacy Garrop's, *little bits-five miniature movements*, for clarinet, violin, cello and piano. Both of these works will delight the ears and the eyes!

The February programs also include two more gems! Chick Corea, a world famous jazz pianist, wrote a wonderful piece called, *Addendum*, for violin, cello and piano. As you know, Orion and Orion audiences love pieces written with a jazz flair! And we will share with you one the best-loved chamber works, sure to warm you on a cold winter's night—Franz Schubert's, *Trio*, Op.99, in B-Flat Major, for violin, cello and piano.

In our fourth series, in April and May, for the first half of the concert we will be handing the stage to our incredible pianist, Diana Schmück! She will enchant you with some of the most revered works for piano—Beethoven's, *Sonata* in C Minor, the *Pathétique*, Shostakovich's, *Prelude and Fugue No.7* and *No. 8*, and Liszt's, *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6* in D-Flat Major. For over a decade, we have all been blessed by Diana's artistry as a chamber musician in Orion concerts and we look forward to being inspired by her solo performance.

What could be more satisfying than the Mozart, *Quintet* in A Major, K.581, for clarinet and strings to end the second half of this marvelous program? It has been almost 10 years since we last performed this timeless masterpiece. Written near the end of Mozart's life, this profound piece displays the clarinet's beauty of sound in its wide-ranging lyrical lines and its incredible agility throughout all ranges with the uniting warm sonority of the string quartet.

As always, we look forward to bringing you our finest work in these upcoming concerts. We will be very busy all spring preparing for these programs and many other activities as well. In February, we will begin a new recording project with Cedille Records of unrecorded works from the Romantic era. We are traveling to Carroll College, in Wisconsin and St. Mary's College, in Indiana in April to present concerts and master classes. At home, our other performances will include a free lunchtime concert on January 31, at the Chicago Cultural Center (12:15p.m.), a live broadcast on WFMT on February 28 (8:00 p.m.), our Spring Benefit at the Dunham Riding Club in Wayne, Ill. on April 3 (2:00 p.m.), and a special concert on May 17 in the Naperville School's Spring Concert with their enormous string program and a master class for the students.

We hope to see you for our series concerts and our other performances. You are the reason we keep growing. Without you, our chamber music family, we would spend countless hours playing the world's most beautiful, exciting and engaging music for ourselves! We are grateful for each one of you and we thank you for your being a part of the magic!

~Kathryne Pirtle

WHAT ORION MEANS TO ME

Last year, we began sharing thoughts about our incredible experience as a group with you. Now in our 12th year—and for some of us, over 15 years of playing chamber music together—we have much heartfelt sentiment.

From Florentina:

It's not easy to express in a few words what Orion means to me. I'm sure we share so many of the same wonderful feelings since we've embarked on this exciting musical journey. It has taken us through music written hundreds of years ago to that written today, from one continent to another, through a multitude of musical styles, from the most classical to the unimaginable. And to do this with your favorite people—does it get any better?

For me personally, chamber music has always been my most beloved musical genre. I have played it since my early teens—concertized, competed (and won)—and always tried to make it better, more interesting and compelling. As the years go by, our music becomes an even deeper experience, as I hope you would agree, since you, our audience, play such a big role.

Of course this amazing musical journey has also taken us to many places in this country—from Arizona to North Dakota and from New York to Florida. I remember many adventures (not always musical) with Orion. We had a three-week tour that took us through the Dakotas in mid-February, during the worst winter of the decade. We journeyed past snow banks as tall as 10 feet high, in a van, from one concert venue to the next—I was driving! Everything was white with wisps of blowing snow, including the road, and all of the sudden we flew off the road into the fields of waist-deep snow. Not a car in sight...just fields covered with white...no cell phones...no signal...so, I thought, "They will miss a great concert!"

Well, a few minutes later, a truck drove by...saw

us...stopped...came out...and the driver said, "Need a rope?" (Our knight in shining armor had appeared!)... "Yeah!"...And so, we were pulled out of about 4 feet of snow and made it to the next concert with enough time to warm up!

I hope this winter will not be like the one I remember in the Dakotas and that you will join us for our next concerts!

Florentina Ramniceanu

THE OTHER ENSEMBLE OF PLAYERS

Orion concerts are consistently of the highest quality. As audience members we know we can sit back, relax, and look forward to an intensely pleasurable musical performance. Sometimes we may forget that it takes a surprising number of people to create all this magic. In addition to the extensive talent and dedication of the musicians, another ensemble of people regularly contributes to the success of these events. The Orion is supported by a generous group of volunteers who work quietly behind the scenes, all but invisible, but nonetheless essential to the flow of the Orion's musical season. Many of them have been around since the beginning of Orion. It seems appropriate that we should recognize some of these volunteers. In this newsletter we want to acknowledge those individuals who specifically contribute to the smoothness of the concerts.

Concert preparation begins with music selection. **Lynn Modrusson** is facilitating that task by looking at the Orion's entire repertoire since their inception and compiling a computerized record. After twelve years of series and tour concerts, the Orion's repertoire is wonderfully extensive and the musicians are looking forward to having this organized resource to draw from. Lynn has also taken over the job of printing program pages.

Tending to last minute details at each concert while making sure that staging, chairs, and music stands are in place is not glamorous, but a vital contribution. **Warren Wakerlin** has been performing this task "forever" in Batavia and **Royce Eckhardt** is his important counterpart in Winnetka.

Some volunteer faces you know because they're always there to greet you and handle ticket sales. **Roberta Stewart** along with **Marianne and Les Sommers** create the familiar and cheerful presence at Batavia's ticket table. **Doris Jackson** loyally handles this role at the Chicago venue while **Jan Dunteman, Joe Taylor, and Bruce Huvad** ably manage the task in Winnetka.

Batavia concert goers know the face, if not the name, of

BALDWIN PIANO FOR SALE

What better place to seek a new owner for my beloved 6'3" grand piano than among Orion's followers! If not you, perhaps you know someone who is in the market for a very special instrument - a 1932 Baldwin "C" model grand piano, rebuilt in 1985, with a newer beautiful red mahogany finish. It was appraised for \$13,000, but I am asking \$10,000. Please pass the word for me!

Roberta Stewart
630-221-9434

Ryan Kawabata. A former clarinet student of Kathy Pirtle's at Northern Illinois University, this young man has competently turned pages for Diana Schmuck for five seasons, freeing her fingers to fly over the piano keys. **Bonnie Campbell** has also been seen in the role of page turner. And you've seen her name in the program as the author of those well-written and helpful program notes.

Orion concerts are traditionally capped off by conversation with the musicians and lovely treats. Those lucky enough to attend the Batavia series are truly spoiled by the divine desserts of **Lenore DuPree**. Lenore is Kathy Pirtle's mother – we reap the benefits of her motherly devotion. Kathy's father, **Clarence DuPree**, is also always on hand to help, carrying in supplies and setting up.

Very simply, the concerts would not be the wonderful events they are without the assistance of these people. Thank you, thank you to this "other ensemble" of faithful volunteers who not only enjoy the music, but help make it all happen.

~Janet Safanda

IT'S IN THE STARS

When Orion Ensemble's brochure came out this season, it had a new "look." Instead of our very own "stars"—Kathy, Diana, Florentina, and Judy—on the cover, we had a whole constellation of stars. Specifically, we were treated to an artistic interpretation of the stars and nebulae of *Orion, The Hunter*.

Graphic artist Denise Laurin created a very special mix of photography and graphics. A base photograph of the nebulae came from her archives. Placed on top are musical notes, highlighting the main stars in Orion's body. Using a bit of artistic license, she omitted some notes on the stars for the bow and belt, while adding flying notes and staff that extend beyond the nebulae.

Denise explained, "I loved the new concept of using the constellation and what it literally and figuratively represents. Imagery in the cosmos always has a conceptual connotation to begin with—an infinity of ideas. With their artistic dedication and level of achievement, the women of Orion Ensemble inspired me."

The new concept meant research for photos of the nebulae as well as seeking diagrams of the constellation itself. Denise drew upon her experience in research, developed as she attained a Masters degree in Art History. Research is part of what she especially likes to do, reaching past the design processes of typesetting and production.

Beyond her graphic design work, Denise teaches Art History at Elgin Community College and takes commissions in fine art, especially portraiture. She recently com-

pleted an exhibit of her art at Moraine Valley Community College, as well as showing one work at ECC in October. From January 14 through 28, she will be one of 10 artists featured in an exhibit, "Leonardo daVinci, a Finite Life...Infinite Possibilities" at the Latin School in Chicago.

If you have picked up a copy of the glossy *Arts Beat Magazine*, you have seen her work as the long-standing graphic designer for the Fox Valley Arts Council. In addition to major contracts with U.S. Food Service and Martin-Brower Company, Denise accepts smaller accounts. Orion Ensemble has been fortunate to enlist her as part of our "team".

If you'd like to contact Denise Laurin for graphic design or portraiture, she can be reached at DMS Associates in Bartlett, Illinois, 603-483-3404. Meanwhile, we eagerly wait to see what she creates for next year's brochure.

~Roberta Stewart

Hal Leonard Corporation Releases New Recording of Unaccompanied Works of Bach Played On Clarinet by Kathy Pirtle

The Hal Leonard Corporation, the largest music publishing company in the world, has just released my solo album of unaccompanied cello and violin works by J.S. Bach. I have played and performed these pieces for over 25 years, as they have been my constant companion through my training and career as a performing artist and teacher.

I decided to record these great works because I wanted to inspire clarinetists to regard these pieces as important recital repertoire—beyond "etudes." I feel that the sound of the clarinet is a beautiful match for their magnificent reflective beauty.

They have had a wonderful history of recordings through cellists and violinists beginning with the brilliant cellist, Pablo Casals, who first recorded them, endearing them to our hearts. They have never been recorded on the clarinet, but a marvelous transcription for clarinet of Bach's unaccompanied works, compiled by Himie Voxman, has been available since 1948. My recording will be a partner to this transcription and will be sold as a solo album as well. Later I will be preparing a new edition of this transcription.

I am happy to share this recording with you. It will be available at concerts or you can order one.

(Note: To order Bach recording, send \$12.95 plus \$1.50 for postage and handling—\$14.45 total—to **Kathy Pirtle**, c/o **Orion Ensemble**, 1107 Fischer Dr. Addison, Ill., 60101. Please make your check out to "Kathy Pirtle," as this is not an Orion Ensemble recording.)

~Kathryne Pirtle

TICKETS are available in advance by calling

(630) 628-9591 or purchased at the door.

ADULTS - \$23.00 SENIORS (60 and over) - \$20.00

STUDENTS - \$8.00 Children (12 and under) - Admitted Free



Visit us at our website, www.orionensemble.org



Please consider a tax deductible donation to

Orion Ensemble. A contribution envelope

is included with this newsletter, for your convenience.

We appreciate your support!

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at Roosevelt University*

c/o Kathy Pirtle
1107 Fischer Drive
Addison, IL 60101



*T. Daniel and
Laurie Willets,
Mime Artists*

*Upcoming
Family Concerts
featuring Musical Mime
Interpretations by T. Daniel
and Laurie Willets
Sunday, February 13,
Sunday, February 20,
Wednesday, February 23*

CORE ARTISTS

Kathryne Pirtle
Clarinet
Diana Schmück
Piano
Florentina Ramniceanu
Violin
Judy Stone
Cello

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*The Orion Ensemble is funded in part by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency,
and the MacArthur Fund for Arts & Culture at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation.*