

# The Orion ENSEMBLE

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

## NEWS

SPRING 2006

### *Spring Concert Series* 3rd SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT

SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 2006

3:00 p.m. - MUSIC INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO,  
NICHOLS HALL - 1490 CHICAGO AVENUE, EVANSTON

SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2006

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

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2006

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



### 4th SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT

SUNDAY, MAY 21, 2006

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

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2006

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

SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 2006

3:00 p.m. - MUSIC INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO,  
NICHOLS HALL - 1490 CHICAGO AVENUE, EVANSTON

### *Upcoming Events*

MONDAY, MARCH 27 AND MAY 22, 2006

"LIVE FROM STUDIO ONE"

8:00 p.m. - WFMT 98.7FM

FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 2006

CUTTING HALL, PALATINE, IL - 8:00 P.M.

THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2006

FOX VALLEY HALL OF FAME - 7:15 P.M.

SPRING BENEFIT PERFORMANCE

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2006 - 2:00 P.M.

February 2006

## ORION PREPARES EXCITING SPRING CONCERTS

It's January, and Orion is busy planning rehearsals for our upcoming programs. Our gifted pianist, Diana, is our "schedule genie"—she magically finds common times amongst our crazy calendars. The greatest reward for our work is playing concerts for you!

Our third series repertoire includes an eclectic mix of styles and eras. We open the concert with the beloved **Trio** in E-Flat Major ("Kegelstatt"), for Clarinet, Viola and Piano, by Mozart. In this early work for the clarinet, Mozart masterfully combines the warm sonorities of the viola and clarinet with the piano. I look forward to playing this piece with our wonderful new violist, Jennifer Marlas. Next we present a delightful recent piece, full of Latin sounds and rhythms, by Erling Patrick Horn, called **Black Tango** (2002) for Piano Quartet. We have not played any chamber music by Charles Ives on our series yet, and are excited to include a short work, his **Largo**, for Violin, Clarinet and Piano on this program. This lyrical piece often sounds like a lullaby that could be played while drifting gently on a boat and then is contrasted with more powerful moments. We end the concert with the lush French romanticism Debussy's early **Piano Trio**.

Our season finale promises to be a memorable chamber music experience. We offer a final tribute to Mozart's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday—the **Quartet** in G Minor for Piano Quartet, K. 478. We will also present a rarely heard, lovely classical trio by Anton Polzelli, for the unique combination of clarinet, viola and cello. And—if you've been waiting for Orion to play something "with a little Klezmer"—now is your chance! You won't want to miss the amazing **Trio** (1990) for Clarinet, Violin, and Piano, by the Paul Schoenfield. If you remember the fabulous reception that we received when we performed Schoenfield's effervescent **Café Music** two years ago, this piece will send you on a recording quest of his work.

We hear every year that Orion keeps getting better. People tell us that they don't know how we do it. The answer lies in the fact the Orion Ensemble is not just a "chamber group", we are a devoted sisterhood of inspired artists whose joy is creating music with a great depth of spirit. You, our chamber music family, are a part of this magic. Join us for the adventure.

~Kathryne Pirtle

## ORION ANNOUNCES DEBUT RECORDING WITH CEDILLE RECORDS:

### *Twilight of the Romantics: Chamber Music by Walter Rabl and Josef Labor*

A new Orion recording, produced by Cedille Records, will grace the chamber music landscape soon. Jim Ginsburg, producer of the internationally distributed Chicago-based recording company, Cedille Records, invited the Orion Ensemble to record a CD. Cedille Records features acclaimed Chicago artists recording unique repertoire—often never previously recorded.

This recording represents Orion's commercial recording debut. We are very excited about the international distribution of our work and the opportunity that Cedille Records has presented to us. Look for this recording at upcoming concerts—it is sure to become one of your favorites.

Here is an excerpt from press release of Cedille Records for the recording by **Nathan J. Silverman**:

#### ***Twilight of the Romantics: Chamber Music by Walter Rabl and Josef Labor (Cedille Records CDR 90000 088)***

unearths two rare gems that stand alongside Brahms's own late clarinet chamber music as major contributions to the genre: Rabl's Quartet in E-Flat Major for Clarinet, Violin, Cello, and Piano, Op. 1, of 1896 and Labor's Quintet in D Major for Clarinet, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Piano, Op. 11, composed in 1900.

*Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, quoted in the CD booklet, describes Rabl's chamber works as "fresh and enjoyable compositions of considerable artistic worth, clear and simple in form, thoroughly natural and unforced in expression."

Rabl's Quartet, Op. 1, for clarinet and piano trio is believed to be the only known 19th-century work scored for precisely those instruments. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* calls the quartet "notable for its unusual scoring and skilful melodic writing."

Rabl (1873-1940) entered it in a competition held by a prestigious Vienna music society whose honorary president was Brahms. The quartet won first prize, and at Brahms's behest, it was published along with several other Rabl works.

The quartet is particularly inventive in its second movement, which incorporates a funeral march, mazurka, song, fugue, and march of triumph and involves six different tempo indications, two meter signatures, and a variety of textures. The quartet's finale explores vast harmonic territory.

Unlike Rabl, Labor (1842-1924) was never mentored by Brahms, but he frequented the same artistic circles and shared Brahms's conservative Romantic style. Among his

supporters was Austria's prominent and culturally influential Wittgenstein family. Pianist Paul Wittgenstein commissioned a concerto for left hand from Labor before going on to offer commissions to Strauss, Ravel, Britten, and Prokofiev. Philosopher (and amateur clarinetist) Ludwig Wittgenstein considered Labor among "the six truly great composers" along with Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Brahms. Among Labor's students were Alma Schindler, who later married Gustav Mahler; Paul Wittgenstein; and Arnold Schoenberg.

The first movement of Labor's Quintet, Op. 11, employs a traditional harmonic structure but traverses many keys. He frequently contrasts the sonority of the strings and clarinet with that of the piano in *concertante* fashion. The second movement opens with a folk-like melody in the clarinet that perhaps suggests his Bohemian roots. The unusually structured third movement opens with a keyboard fantasia, followed by string solos and a violin cadenza, with 16 meter changes, almost as many tempo changes, and sudden dynamic shifts along the way. The finale is a theme and variations, where each variation builds upon the last.

In her CD liner notes, clarinetist and teacher Bonnie H. Campbell speculates about why these works faded from public view. She notes that Rabl's composing career was brief: after the 1903 debut of his final composition, the surprisingly Wagnerian opera *Liane*, he devoted himself to opera conducting and, later, piano accompaniment. Labor was blinded by smallpox in early childhood, and perhaps this disability hindered him from vigorously and widely promoting his work. Lastly, both works arrived at the dawn of musical Modernism and might have seemed *passé* to the newest tastemakers.

Cedille Records (pronounced say-DEE') is dedicated to showcasing the most noteworthy classical artists in and from Chicago. The nonprofit label is an arm of The Chicago Classical Recording Foundation. For a free catalog and the locations of local retail outlets, contact Cedille Records, 5255 N. Lakewood Ave., Chicago, IL 60640-2220, call (773) 989-2515; E-mail: [info@cedillerecords.org](mailto:info@cedillerecords.org). On the Net: [www.cedillerecords.org](http://www.cedillerecords.org).

## ORION HEARD ON NEW FAZIOLI SALON SERIES, BROADCAST ON WFMT

Some of you may have discovered that there is a new weekly concert, broadcast live on WFMT. Orion was privileged to be the first ensemble featured on the Fazioli Salon Series, airing live from Pianoforte, the Fazioli piano showroom in Chicago's historic Fine Arts Building. On February 10, Orion presented a concert highlighting the music on their recently-released CD, *Twilight of the Romantics: Chamber Music by Walter Rabl and Josef Labor*.

Fazioli pianos are made in Italy, and are hand-crafted with the finest materials. The soundboards of these instruments

are made from red spruce trees in the Italian Alps, the same wood, known for evenness, lightness and flexible strength, that was used for Stradivarius violins. Fazioli Pianoforti was started by pianist/engineer Paolo Fazioli in 1979, with a goal of making the best piano possible. Three pianos were hand-crafted the first year; since then about 1200 pianos have been made.

Orion enjoyed having the Fazioli piano as part of their ensemble for this broadcast.

## EVANSTON WELCOMES ORION ENSEMBLE

Musicians and audience alike are thrilled to have Orion Ensemble performing this season in Nichols Concert Hall of the Music Institute of Chicago, 1490 Chicago Avenue, Evanston.

Nichols Hall link:

<http://www.musicinst.com/nichols.html#history>.

Excellent acoustics and fine architectural detail abound in this fine 500-seat hall. Built in 1912, the former First Church of Christ, Scientist, was designed by Solon S. Beman in a Greek Revival style, complete with pillars, chandeliers and a Skinner organ. Renovated in 2003 after its purchase by the Music Institute of Chicago, this award-winning space offers excellent sight lines, professional sound and venue support, handicap accessibility, and a Steinway grand piano. All we need to achieve perfection at this venue is a standing-room-only audience! So bring your friends to hear the excellent concerts on March 12 and June 4!

Metered on-street parking is free on Sundays. Prime spaces go quickly, so allow extra time to find your spot. Until the new city garage opens at Sherman and Davis, try the Church Street Self Park two blocks north of Nichols Hall, with an entrance just east of Chicago on Church St. It is also free on Sundays.

### *After Music, Dinner*

Another advantage of having Orion Ensemble in Evanston is the option to sample some of the fine local restaurants after the concert. Whether you favor Thai, Italian, Vegetarian, or something modern and eclectic, you'll find many options within 1-4 blocks of Nichols Hall. Ask for our list at the concert or check out [evanstonrestaurants.net](http://evanstonrestaurants.net) or [metromix.com](http://metromix.com). Some nearby favorites of Evanston Orion Board Members include Prairie Moon, Pete Miller's, Lulu's Dim Sum, and Gio. Another block or two offers Annam Café, Koi, Narra, Davis Street Fishmarket, The Stained Glass, Blind Faith, Noodle Garden, and many, many more. See you in Evanston!

~Shirlene Ward

## ORION ART POSTERS FOR SALE

A limited number of framed copies of the exquisite wood-print posters that Joe Taylor designed and printed for Orion last fall will be sold at the March concerts. These posters are one-of-a-kind art, and the unframed copies that we hung in libraries to advertise our last concert were actually *stolen*! It seems that people recognize these as possible collector's items. These colorful works of art are signed by the artist and by the Orion musicians. Joe plans to make a new version each year.

This year's posters will be sold for \$200 dollars. They are incredible pieces not to be missed.

## PHOTO FINISH

Late last spring I remember getting the news from Kathy that a new violist, Jennifer Marlas, had officially joined Orion. "What great news," I considered. Her credentials left nothing to question and I knew she would be a terrific addition to the group.

However, as the longtime publicist for the group, my thoughts immediately jumped to "photo shoot"! A new addition, meant it was time for a new look for Orion. After coordinating calendars and deciding on a location—Orion's new Evanston home, Nichols Concert Hall in the Music Institute of Chicago—it was time for the big day!

I met the photographer, Joe Davis, to scout the venue for good shot locations. Joe had worked with the group once before and is an artist in his own right, having exhibited his fine art photography at the Judy Saslow Gallery-Chicago, Ukrainian Museum of Modern Art, Lannon Cole Gallery and North Eastern Illinois University. Joe and I agreed that the concert hall's striking architectural elements, graceful stained glass windows and the stately grand piano provided the most sophisticated of settings.

Meanwhile, the green room was buzzing with anticipation and excitement as each of the Orion women was treated to makeup and hair styling that would have made any red carpet celebrity proud. Joe and I waited patiently for the finishing touches, a gracious array of black dresses and just a bit of sparkle, and then it was time to begin. "Lights, camera, smiles, ladies," I said.

We moved from the hall to the stage and threw in a costume change as we raced the clock to finish the shoot. But, as I looked through Joe's lens I could see the Orion Ensemble that I have come to know over the years, a group of warm, engaging musicians whose pleasure in working together and passion for music leaps from the stage to the listener.

~Eileen Chambers

Please consider a tax deductible donation to Orion Ensemble. A contribution envelope is included with this newsletter, for your convenience. We appreciate your support!

## ORION HAIKU

A Haiku to tell you all  
What Orion means to me,  
Reflecting.

Constellation Orion,  
A part of our galaxy,  
Expanding.

Pianist Diana Schmück  
A part of the Orion,  
Expanding.

Discussion in rehearsals,  
Finding magic in each phrase,  
Exploring.

Works by living composers,  
Who give us new sounds and signs,  
Broadening.

Playing well-loved works again,  
Every opportunity,  
Deepening.

Ears and hearts open to sounds,  
Finding new ways to express,  
Listening.

Scheduling rehearsal times,  
Planning and sending programs,  
Detailing.

Exploring composers' lives,  
Finding out what made them write,  
Researching.

Grappling with technology,  
Lost attachments, broken parts,  
Frustrating.

Meeting other musicians,  
Composers and guest artists,  
Enriching.

Long-lasting relationships  
With Orion's performers,  
Maturing.

Concerts outside Chicago,  
Energy in new settings,  
Traveling.

Playing our series for you,  
Encouraged by your ears, hearts,  
Delighting.

Grateful for all your support,  
Getting to know you a bit,  
Connecting.

Orion's growing family,  
Celebrating together,  
Affirming.

~Diana Schmück

## THE ORION ENSEMBLE GUEST PERFORMERS AT FOX VALLEY ARTS HALL OF FAME BANQUET

The Orion Ensemble has been invited as guest performers for the black-tie induction banquet of the Fox Valley Arts Hall of Fame, to be held Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at the Eagle Brook Country Club in Geneva, Illinois. "We are honored to have the prestigious Orion Ensemble perform for this gala event," stated Arts Hall of Fame President, Susan Starrett. The communities of the Fox Valley, running from Elgin south through Yorkville, Aurora and Naperville take great interest and pride in each class of the Arts Hall of Fame.

The Fox Valley Arts Hall of Fame honors persons from the area who have achieved international or national recognition and been in their profession for twenty years. This year's inductees (honored with a medallion and a plaque that is permanently displayed at the Paramount Arts Theatre in Aurora) are: Elgin composer, **Daniel Brewbaker**; sculptor **Ray Kobald** of St. Charles; a pioneer in the world of dulcimer playing and tuning, **Bill Robinson** of St. Charles; **\*Douglas Steensland** of Elgin, author of 10 flute method books used internationally and founder of Elgin Civic Symphony; Auroran **\*Mary Hackney Wicker**, painter; and CNN anchor formerly of Naperville, **Paula Zahn** for her documentaries.

Former inductees include: **Jan Morris** Bach, composer; **Elisabeth Spalinger Boehm**, ballet; **John Drury**, journalist; **\*Ruth VanSickle Ford**, watercolorist; **Eric Halfvarson**, bass opera singer; **Robert Hanson**, music director - Elgin Symphony Orchestra; **\*William S. Hart**, actor; **\*Marguerite Henry**, author; **Stan Jorstad**, photographer; **Wendell Minor**, artist; **Bruce and Claire Newton**, TV producers, writers; **\*Robert Olah**, instrumentalist; **\*Maud Powell**, violinist; **\*Trygve Rovelstad**, sculptor; **Grover Schiltz**, CSO English horn, oboe.  
(\* Denotes deceased.)

Banquet invitations and information may be obtained by calling (630) 605-4000.

~Peter J. Starrett

### ORION CONCERT 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](http://www.orionensemble.org)





# 2006 Spring Concert Series

New  
Location!

*Evanston* - Sunday, March 12

7:00 pm - Music Institute of Chicago, Nichols Hall, 1490 Chicago Avenue

*Batavia* - Sunday, March 19

7:00 pm - Fox Valley Unity Church, 230 Webster Street

*Chicago* - Wednesday, March 22

7:30 pm - Roosevelt University, Ganz Memorial Hall, 430 S. Michigan Avenue

## *Concert Three*

---

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	<i>Trio</i> In E-Flat Major for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano, K. 498 ("Kegelstatt")
Earling Patrick Horn	<i>Black Tango</i> for Violin, Viola, Cello, and Piano (2002)
Charles Ives	<i>Largo</i> for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano (1901)
Claude Debussy	<i>Trio No. 1</i> in G Major for Violin, Cello, and Piano (1880)



### Single Tickets:

\$23 Adults    \$20 Seniors    \$8.00 Students

For more information, call 630.628.9591

[www.orionensemble.org](http://www.orionensemble.org)



NON PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 349  
JOLIET, IL

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

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



## **CORE ARTISTS**

**Jennifer Marlas**  
*Viola*  
**Kathryne Pirtle**  
*Clarinet*  
**Florentina Ramniceanu**  
*Violin*  
**Diana Schmück**  
*Piano*  
**Judy Stone**  
*Cello*

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Kathryne Pirtle**  
*Executive Director*  
**Janet Safanda**  
*Chairman*  
**Edythe Johnson**  
*Vice-Chairman*  
**Tracy Shepherd**  
*Treasurer*  
**Warren Wakerlin**  
*Secretary*  
**Shirley Brashler**  
**Becky Farnes**  
**Mary Ann Gee**  
**Bruce Huvad**  
**Les Sommers**  
**Roberta Stewart**  
**Kim Yee**  
**Joe Taylor**  
**Shirlene Ward**

## *Spring 2006*

### **3rd SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 2006**

3:00 p.m. - MUSIC INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, NICHOLS HALL

**SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2006**

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

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2006**

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

**MONDAY, MARCH 27 AND MAY 22, 2006**

"LIVE FROM STUDIO ONE" 8:00 p.m. - WFMT 98.7FM

**FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 2006**

CUTTING HALL, PALATINE, IL - 8:00 P.M.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2006**

FOX VALLEY HALL OF FAME - 7:15 P.M.

**SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2006**

SPRING BENEFIT PERFORMANCE - 2:00 P.M.

### **4th SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT**

**SUNDAY, MAY 21, 2006**

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

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2006**

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

**SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 2006**

3:00 p.m. - MUSIC INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, NICHOLS HALL

*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.*