

ORION NEWS

SPRING 2009

EXCITING GRANT AWARDS FOR ORION

Orion has again this year been the recipient of several grants that have enabled us to continue our mission of bringing great music to you. Although most foundations do not offer funding for general operating support, Orion has received three grants for this important purpose: from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; and the MacArthur Fund for the Arts and Culture at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation – the last of which is a two-year grant.

We have also been awarded a grant this year that will enable us to build a new, cutting-edge website—a very significant development that will permit Orion to expand its ability to market its concerts and recordings. Through the work of our board chair, Shirlene Ward, the wonderful grant-writing talents of board member Roberta Stewart, and the help of many others, we were selected to receive this highly competitive award from the Arts Work Fund for Organizational Development.

As newspaper coverage for the arts is diminishing, arts organizations are seeking new ways to promote their concert events. An effective presence on the internet is crucial to any healthy arts organization, though funds are rarely available to them to create such a presence. The Arts Work Fund for Organizational Development has recognized this need and agreed to support the Orion Ensemble's proposal. Visitors to our new website will be able to purchase tickets and recordings, make donations, sample recordings, and view photos and video. We eagerly look forward to having this new site up and running by the 2009-2010 season.

In this challenging financial environment, Orion is extremely grateful for the enormous support we receive not only from individuals who attend our concerts and give generously, but also the financial backing from supportive foundations like the Arts Work Fund, Donnelley Foundation, Driehaus Foundation, and the Illinois Arts Council. Thanks to them and to you, we look forward to bringing more wonderful music to our audiences.

Kathy Pirtle, *Executive Director*

"SIMPLY DELICIOUS" BENEFIT AT QUINCE REPRISED



We are delighted to announce that Quince Restaurant in Evanston will again host The Orion Ensemble and friends for a benefit following the March 29 concert at the Music Institute of Chicago. Starting at 5 pm, Executive Chef Mark Hannon will offer three different tasting courses, each paired with a specially chosen wine. Additional appetizers will round out our meal. No raffle tickets to buy, no silent auction—just great food and wine in an appealing setting and the chance to honor The Orion Ensemble musicians for another season of remarkable music and musicianship.

Tickets for this event are \$80, with further details forthcoming soon, but make your reservations early, as space will be limited for this delightful event. If you'd like to be included on the invitation list, please e-mail me at OrionEnsemble@comcast.net or leave me a voice message at 847-822-3898 with your name and mailing address.

Quince at the Homestead is located at 1625 Hinman Avenue in Evanston, about two blocks from Nichols Hall, our concert venue at the Music Institute. The recipient of a "Wine Enthusiast Award of Unique Distinction" by *Wine Enthusiast Magazine* (January 2008), the restaurant is also acclaimed for its food and atmosphere. Their website (quincerestaurant.net) describes Mark Hannon's cuisine as "bold, bright with just a touch of whimsy."

"A cozy chic neighborhood eatery," says Peter Gianopulos of *North Shore Magazine* (January 2007). "Simply delicious" is the verdict of Pat Bruno in the *Chicago Sun-Times* (April 2007). Sherman Kaplan of *North Shore Magazine* (July 2007) has given Quince "20 out of 20," while John Mariani (*Esquire Magazine*, May 2007) has listed Quince among the "top ten fine dining restaurants in Chicago."

Owners David and Holly Reynolds have been very generous to us, making their acclaimed restaurant available for a reasonable cost. We are very excited to honor Orion Ensemble with this fine fare, and we hope to fill every available seat! Don't miss it!

Shirlene Ward, *Board Chair*



Spring Concert Series

SEASON CONCERT #3

Wednesday, March 18 at 7:30 pm – Chicago
Roosevelt University Ganz Hall
430 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago

Sunday, March 22 at 7 pm – Geneva

Fox Valley Presbyterian Church
227 East Side Drive, Geneva

Sunday, March 29 at 3 pm – Evanston

Music Institute of Chicago Nichols Hall
1490 Chicago Avenue, Evanston

SEASON CONCERT #4

Sunday, May 24 at 7 pm – Geneva
Wednesday, June 3 at 7:30 pm – Chicago
Sunday, June 7 at 7:30 pm – Evanston
**(same locations as above)*

www.orionensemble.org

SEASON CONCERT #3

Celebrates Mendelssohn's 200th Birthday
Premiers New Work

The Orion Ensemble will join the celebration of Mendelssohn's 200th birthday this year and premiere a circus themed work during its third concert series of the 2008-09 season in March (see dates and locations in the box).

High Wire Act for Clarinet, Violin, Cello and Piano (2009) by critically acclaimed composer **Laura Elise Schwendinger** was inspired by wire sculptures of circus figures done by Alexander Calder. Each of its five movements is a musical character portrait of its title. In the first movement, "High Wire Act," fast figures representing the trapeze artists alternate with string harmonic motives serving as the trapeze apparatus. The second, "Tightrope-Walker," uses long, nearly static lines that build upward to evoke the tension of the art. "The Aerialist" begins with great activity in all instruments that soon turns into a love song. "Trapped Bird" uses musical arabesques to aurally depict a bird trapped under a circus tent, fighting for free flight. Finally, "Troupe Finale" reprises material from the first movement, but in a more rousing and virtuosic guise. Originally written for flute, strings, and piano, Schwendinger has written a new transcription of the piece for Orion. Orion board member and Evanston artist Joe Taylor will be showing circus-related artwork at the Evanston concert. This is a familiar theme for Joe, who has also collaborated with the Actor's Gymnasium, where his daughter Meredith has performed amazing feats of flight.

Max Bruch created a wide variety of moods and textures from the instruments in his **Eight Pieces for Clarinet, Viola and Piano, Op. 83**, which the Orion Ensemble excerpts on this program. It is likely that he was drawn to this particular instrumental combination because of his son's proficiency on the clarinet and his own penchant for dark sonorities. Bruch's love of melody (which he refers to as the "soul of music") and his timbral imagination in using these three instruments make the set a delight for performers and listeners alike.

With 2009 as the 200th anniversary of the birth of the great 19th century German composer **Felix Mendelssohn**, Orion performs his **Trio in D Minor for Violin, Cello and Piano, Op. 49**, written during a time of relative equilibrium between his career and personal life. Although it has been suggested that the slow movement, a dialogue between the string instruments, is an elegy to his father, who had died four years earlier, much of the rest of the piece reflects his joy in his recent marriage and comfort with his home environment of Leipzig. Virtuosity and lyricism pervade the work amidst extroverted and introverted moments. The work is perhaps best viewed as a tribute to life.

Season Series Concert # 4 Preview!

Orion's 2008-09 season concludes with performances in May and June that welcome back Baird Dodge, principal second violinist of the CSO, featuring fantasies and adaptations of opera and movie themes by Ludwig van Beethoven, John Williams and Franz Liszt and closing with a string quartet by the great opera composer Giuseppe Verdi.

UPCOMING CONCERTS & EVENTS

Unity Temple

Saturday, Feb. 28, 7:30 PM
875 Lake Street, Oak Park
Ticket info, 708-445-8955

Chicago Cultural Center

Monday, March 9, 12:15 PM
Free Lunchtime Series

Season Series Concert #3

Wednesday, March 18 at 7:30 pm – Chicago
Roosevelt University Ganz Hall
430 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Sunday, March 22 at 7 pm – Geneva

Fox Valley Presbyterian Church
227 East Side Drive, Geneva

Sunday, March 29 at 3 pm – Evanston

Music Institute of Chicago Nichols Hall

1490 Chicago Avenue, Evanston

Benefit at Quince Restaurant immediately following

Concert tickets are \$25, \$22 for seniors and \$10 for students; children 12 and younger are admitted free.

For more information or tickets, visit:

www.orionensemble.org or call 630-628-9591.

Orion Benefit at Quince Restaurant in Evanston

Sunday, March 29, 5 pm, following Evanston concert

Ticket info, 847-822-3898, or OrionEnsemble@comcast.net

WFMT Live Broadcast, 98.78 FM

Monday, April 6, 8 PM

Chicago Chamber Music Society

Saturday, April 25, 6:30 PM

Women's Athletic Club of Chicago

626 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Season Series Concert #4

Sunday, May 24 at 7 pm – Geneva

Wednesday, June 3 at 7:30 pm - Chicago

Sunday, June 7 at 7:30 pm – Evanston

**(see Season Series Concert #3 listing
for venue location details)*

Opus Chamber Music Camp

August 2-7

Benedictine University, Naperville

DONATION AND ORDER FORM

Yes! I want to support Orion's efforts to extend our musical heritage through its series and outreach concerts. Here is my tax deductible gift to support Orion's performances in the amount of:

\$100 \$75 \$50 \$25 \$ _____

Please send me:

Twilight of the Romantics CD Qty: ____ @ \$15 ea. plus \$1.25 s&h Total \$ _____

All Mozart CD Qty: ____ @ \$15 ea. plus \$1.25 s&h Total \$ _____

Orion and Guests CD (Alex Klein, Oboe; Julian Gray, Guitar; Dale Clevenger, Horn)
Qty: ____ @ \$15 ea. plus \$1.25 s&h Total \$ _____

Orion T-Shirts Qty: ____ Small ____ Medium ____ Large ____ X-Large
@ \$15 ea. plus \$1.25 s&h Total \$ _____

Orion Tote Bags Qty: ____ @ \$15 ea. plus \$1.25 s&h Total \$ _____

Check Enclosed (**Please make payable to Orion Ensemble**) Total \$ _____

Please charge to my: Visa Mastercard _____
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Signature _____ Phone Number (____) _____

Name _____ Email: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Thank You! Using the enclosed envelope, kindly send this order form (and check, if paying by check) to:
Orion Ensemble, c/o Kathy Pirtle, 1107 Fischer Drive, Addison, IL 60101

Thank you for your gift. Orion Ensemble is a 501-c-3 Corporation and your donation is fully tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please check if your employer has a matching gift program to extend your gift.



THE ORION ENSEMBLE VALUES YOUR SUPPORT

Perhaps it shouldn't be so, but making and enjoying art is an expensive proposition. Rare indeed is the artist of any medium who can make more than a modest living—if that—from making art alone. The Orion Ensemble's talents have been sustained over the years by support from many generous music lovers as well as several granting agencies that have recognized the value and importance of the group. Still, every year is a gamble that Orion can raise enough to meet its modest budget. In this daunting financial climate, arts organizations everywhere are at risk - and small organizations, such as Orion, are especially vulnerable. We hope that your own circumstances will allow you to be a part of The Orion Ensemble support team this year. Your contribution, of any size, is a vote for more great music-making, to lift our spirits and soothe our souls. For whatever you can give, we most sincerely thank you.

Shirlene Ward
Board Chair



ORION INSPIRES YOUTH THROUGH OPUS CHAMBER MUSIC CAMP

In August, Orion will once again be the Ensemble-in-Residence at the OPUS Music Camp at Benedictine University in Naperville. By working with the many talented young artists at the OPUS Chamber Music Camp, Orion helps inspire the musical development and creative appetite for learning and listening to chamber music in a whole new generation of young people. Information on the camp is available at www.napopus.org.



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CORE ARTISTS

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kathryne Pirtle, *Executive Director*
Shirlene Ward, *Chair*
Becky Farnes, *Vice-Chair*
Christa Hamilton, *Co-Treasurer*
Tom Young, *Co-Treasurer*
Warren Wakerlin, *Secretary*

Shirley Brashler
Susan Dixon
Mary Ann Gee
Bruce Huvad
Janet Safanda
Les Sommers
Roberta Stewart
Joe Taylor
Kim Yee



Inside:

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- Program details for season concert #3 in March
- Exciting grant awards for Orion

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