

Overtones

Chamber Music Corvallis • Oct. 2008

For many musicians who perform early music, the music itself is not an acquired taste, like coffee, which most of us “learn” to like. It’s more like hot chocolate, which most of us loved at first taste. This might help to explain why so many of these musicians play in multiple early music groups, some of them thousands of miles apart. It might also explain why so many music critics, when describing performances by these groups, use words such as “passionate,” “lush,” and “thrilling,” adjectives more often associated with the romantic repertory.

Monica Huggett, artistic director of the Portland Baroque Orchestra (PBO), which will appear in Corvallis on October 14, had her first taste of early music chocolate when, as a teenager at the Royal Academy of Music in London, she was introduced to the baroque violin. At the time, she was studying traditional violin but was enamored of Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, the Beatles (“I still think the second side of Abbey Road is brilliant,” she told *Strad* magazine in a 1999 interview),



Monica Huggett, performing with the Portland Baroque Orchestra

The Concert

WHAT: The Portland Baroque Orchestra

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 14

WHERE: LaSells Stewart Center

and Eric Clapton. “I often thought I should really have been a lead guitarist,” she told *Strad*. However, when she played her first baroque violin, she felt an immediate and complete empathy with the instrument.

Clapton may have gone on to become a Commander of the British Empire, but Huggett has become a member of the Royal Academy of Music and is widely recognized as one of the world’s foremost baroque violinists, a giant in the world of historically informed performance.

Besides starting her thirteenth year as artistic director of PBO, she tours the world as a soloist, director, and chamber musician, particularly with her period-instrument ensemble, *Sonnerie*, whose CD of Biber violin sonatas won a 2002 Gramophone Award for best baroque instrumental recording. Huggett herself has appeared on over 40 recordings.

For Huggett, there is nothing anemic about early music. As she told Lindsay Kemp, in a *Gramophone* interview in 1996, “I see Bach as this big North German with huge hands who could stretch a tenth . . . , a great big chap who was difficult, passionate, overwhelming and larger-than-life.

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His music should be full-blooded; you shouldn't be feeling 'I mustn't do this, it's too much,' but really go for it!"

The PBO consists of local and national performers. A look at a few of them reveals musicians as enthused about the early music scene as Huggett is.



Joanna Blendulf

Joanna Blendulf, co-principal cellist of PBO, also performs with the American Bach Soloists, the Jubilate Baroque Orchestra, and the San Francisco Bach Choir – all based in California – and the Indianapolis Baroque Orchestra.

Oboist Gonzalo Ruiz, professor of oboe at the Oberlin Conservatory's Baroque Performance Institute and an acclaimed historical instrument soloist, is the reed player in LaRiche & Co., an early music trio whose mission is to revive and preserve the music of the oboe's golden age in the eighteenth century. Joanna Blendulf is



Barry Bauguess

the trio's cellist. Ruiz is also an expert in historical reed-making techniques, and more than two dozen of his reeds are on permanent display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Also on the faculty of Oberlin's Baroque Performance Institute is Barry Bauguess, trumpet player with PBO. In great demand as a baroque trumpeter, Bauguess has recorded on six different labels and written a book on the natural trumpet. Even out of the classroom and off the stage, he has ties to early music: He's married to baroque dance soloist and historian Paige Whitley-Bauguess.



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Check out one of her performances on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNexBB8JirE>.

Like Huggett, PBO's guitar and lute player, Richard Savino, grew up on Eric Clapton. He also grew up on Jimi Hendrix, eclectic guitar player Ralph Towner, jazz guitarist Joe Pass, and Segovia, among others. He cites these varied influences as a reminder to early music enthusiasts that "whether or not we can find documentation for things being done a particular way in the 18th century



Richard Savino

does not necessarily mean that it is the only way." His mantra, he says, is "dogma is the antithesis of art." This refreshing flexibility has not hurt his career. He has performed on NPR's *Performance Today* and *The World* and appeared on PBS, CBS, CBC, and BBC television. One Parisian music journal has declared Savino's recording of Boccherini's guitar quintets essential to any classical music collection. Savino often tours with Monica Huggett, sometimes performing on the theorbo, a large lute with additional bass strings, used for accompaniment.

PBO's performance on October 14 is supported in part by a grant from the Oregon Cultural Trust, investing in Oregon's arts, humanities, and heritage. ■

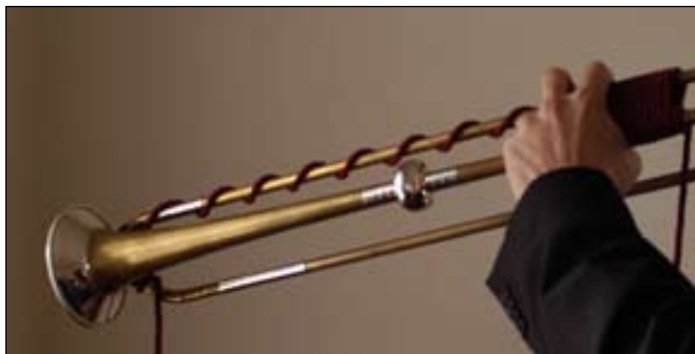
This season marks the 50th anniversary of Chamber Music Corvallis and the 25th anniversary of the Portland Baroque Orchestra. We will celebrate these happy milestones with a birthday reception in the lobby of the LaSells Stewart Center after the concert. Please join us!

Early Music: the Era and the Instruments

Many early music groups confine their repertory to European music composed between 1600 and 1750. This period encompasses classical music from the medieval, Renaissance, and baroque periods. Some groups, such as the Portland Baroque Orchestra, extend their repertory into the classical period. Thus, PBO specializes in performing baroque and classical music composed by Buxtehude, Corelli, Purcell, Scarlatti, Bach, Telemann, Couperin, Vivaldi, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and many others.

Early music groups perform on either authentic period instruments or copies. In PBO, for example, artistic director Monica Huggett plays on a 1618 Amati made in Cremona, Italy, by the sons of Andrea Amati, and Denise Briesé plays a 1997 copy of Gasparo da Sallo's 1600 violone. The violone is the fretted, five- or six-string ancestor of the double bass.

String instruments in early music groups have gut rather than metal strings. The bows, a little arched, are strung with animal hair. An early seventeenth-century violin generally has a shorter and wider fingerboard, no chin rest, and a bridge that is lower and less curved than that used on a modern violin. There are often no end pins on the larger string instruments. Woodwind instruments are made from wood and have few or no holes. Trumpets and horns have no valves. ■



Above: Barry Bauguess's baroque trumpet. *Right:* Reproduction of a 1640 violone by E. Busch.



It Takes a Village to Raise an Orchestra

Last December, the *New York Times* published an article by a long-time music critic, Allan Kozinn, calling for a serious rethinking of the music program in New York's public schools.

According to Kozinn, in spite of the fact that the city allocates \$67.5 million a year for education in the arts directly to the city's schools, and in spite of the fact that the Department of Education operates under an ambitious blueprint designed to foster music literacy, music education in the public schools is desperately inadequate.

Why? The blueprint was a recommendation, not a requirement. More troublesome, though, says Kozinn, is that the \$67.5 million has become "a dependable gravy train" for various arts organizations rather than a means of strengthening music programs. These organizations write grants and get funded to bring performers into the classroom. Kozinn writes, "Often halls are rented, musicians are hired and transported, and everything from ushers to piano tuners (and movers) are

paid for, all using cash that the city's Department of Education should be spending on full-time music teachers and instruments." (In 2006, there was only one music teacher for every 1,200 students in the city.)

What students need, says Kozinn, is what they used to get in New York City: basic music in schools, lessons, access to free beginners' instruments when necessary, and experience playing in an orchestra or band. "Classroom visits by musicians were part of the program as well," Kozinn writes, "but they supplemented the curriculum. Today, too often, they *are* the curriculum."

In other words, a good music program combines instruction, experience, and example. By that standard,



Jane Salmon, of the Schubert Ensemble of London, coaches a group of high school cellists in Corvallis in January 2008. The Schubert Ensemble's school workshops were supported by Chamber Music Corvallis.

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Corvallis has a very good music program. Regardless of the many budget cuts made to music education in 509J, Corvallis as a city has retained a remarkably resilient music education program, thanks to the commitment and generosity of many people – public school teachers, private teachers, parents, and community donors.

Just look at the opportunities for young string players alone. As early as the third grade, they can begin to learn an instrument through Elementary Strings, a program held early in the morning before the school day begins and sponsored by the Corvallis Youth Symphony Association, a nonprofit organization. As they progress in the school system, students can play in the Early Bird Orchestra (also sponsored by CYSA) and the middle school orchestra. In high school, they move on to the Concertato and Camerata orchestras. Outside of school, private teachers and groups have stepped up to offer orchestral experience from the beginning of strings training through the end of high school. The Corvallis Preparatory Orchestra, started by cello teacher Tanya Katz and now run by Rebecca Williams and Sandy Byers, is for absolute beginners. Many children move from the Prep Orchestra to the Willamette Chamber Orchestra, under long-time director Penelope Wolff. From there, as middle schoolers, they can join a full orchestra, the Willamette Valley Junior Honors Symphony, and then advance to the award-winning Corvallis Youth Symphony, directed by Charles Creighton.

String players in high school – and sometimes even in middle school – who can't fit WVJHS or CYS into their schedule or who just want to play in more orchestras have further options: Pro Musica Corvallis, an adult amateur string orchestra that also welcomes students, and the Willamette Valley Community Orchestra. Not bad for a city with a population just short of 33,000, if you don't count the university.

Chamber Music Corvallis, too, has played an important role in the music education of Corvallis children. Since 1993 CMC has spent about \$24,000 to bring

professional chamber ensembles into the city's music classrooms, where they perform and coach. Furthermore, CMC supports a local quartet, the Amici, that regularly plays in elementary schools in and around Corvallis. And, of course, students are admitted free to CMC concerts.

They're also admitted at no charge, if seats are available, to performances of the Corvallis-OSU Symphony Orchestra, a semiprofessional, 60-member ensemble directed by Marlan Carlson. In fact, professional musicians who grew up and began their musical training in Corvallis are occasionally among the soloists featured with the orchestra.

Referring to the New York scene, where professional performances "are the curriculum," Allan Kozinn writes that

the music world pats itself on the back for these flybys and produces lots of high-minded talk about creating future audiences and about how the arts make children better math and science students. Recently a musician whose ensemble performs in schools told a radio interviewer that she and her colleagues "sometimes even let the kids touch the instruments."

Kozinn's response? "Sometimes! Even!"

Thanks to the efforts of many people, young string players in Corvallis get to do a lot more than "touch the instruments." They get to play in the orchestra. ■

COMING UP IN THE 2008-2009 SEASON

Borealis String Quartet

Tuesday, November 11, 2008

Beethoven—String Quartet in F Minor, op. 95 (*Serioso*)

Kelly-Marie Murphy—*Ashes* (2007)

Puccini—*Il Crisantemi*

Mendelssohn—String Quartet in F Minor, op. 80

Vilnius String Quartet with Andrius Zlabys, piano

Tuesday, January 20, 2009

Schubert—String Quartet in E-flat Major, op. 125

Balakauskas—String Quartet no. 2

Brahms—Piano Quintet in F Minor, op. 34

Mozart Piano Quartet

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mendelssohn—Piano Quartet in B Minor, op. 3

Schubert—Adagio and Rondo Concertante in F Major, D. 487

Beethoven—Symphony no. 3 (*Eroica*) (arr. for piano quartet by Ries)

Leipzig String Quartet

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

Mozart—String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421

Janáček—String Quartet no. 2 (*Intimate Letters*)

Brahms—String Quartet in A Minor, op. 51, no. 2

Cypress String Quartet

Thursday, April 16, 2009

Call and Response: Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Puts

Mendelssohn—String Quartet in A Minor, op. 13

Beethoven—String Quartet in F Major, op. 135

Kevin Puts—String Quartet (2009)

Reminder

Once again, CMC is printing a single program to be used for every concert this season. You were wonderful last year about hanging onto your programs or turning them in at the end of the concert to be used again. We encourage you to keep up the good work this season.