

Pepsi and Scotch: The New Season at the Symphony

by Donna Reese

He wants to give you more than you're used to; and it seems the odds are in his favor.

As the new Music Director and Conductor of the Eugene Symphony Orchestra (ESO), Adrian Gnam is bursting onto the Eugene music front with an enthusiasm reminiscent of Mount Hood's recent vigor. An inspired advocate of live music, Gnam is anxious for the community to be involved with what he refers to as "this fabulous symphony." He wants to present programs and artists that will attract a broad audience. He wants to strengthen the musical ability of the Orchestra. He wants to be involved with the community, and he wants everyone to know that he is. This, he says, is what a Symphony is all about.

If symphonies are about combining many elements into a harmonious form, Gnam's life is one long concert. Besides his dedication to a high-visibility profile which keeps him talking to groups and organizations, the media and individuals (virtually anyone interested in music), he is also the Director/Conductor of the Midland (Michigan) and Macon (Georgia) symphonies, as well as Principal Guest Conductor of Concerto Soloists in Philadelphia. He is also an oboe player himself, formerly a principal oboist of the American Symphony under Leopold Stokowski and the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell.

If there is any cacophony between the administrative position of Music Director and the artistic role of Conductor, Gnam shows no indication of it. He seems as pleased by his public role as he is confident in his artistic one. "My dual roles are not incompatible," he says. "They're interdependent. But my first responsibility is to the Orchestra rather than the public."

And the season's music flaunts its priority. The repertoire is diverse enough to attract almost anyone at some point. It includes familiar works and new works, new artists and familiar artists: P.D.Q. Bach (a sort of Harlem Globetrotter of the classical world); "Dr. Jazz," Billy Taylor and his Trio; and the First Lady of Song, Ella Fitzgerald are among the superstars. Six Classical concerts, three SuperPops concerts, and several Youth concerts are scheduled.

The opening classical concert October 31 features pianist Eugene Istomin (part of a trio with Leonard Rose and Isaac Stern). Gnam will debut



Adrian Gnam is the new musical director and conductor of the Eugene Symphony Orchestra. They'll open their classical season Thursday, Oct. 31 at the Hult Center.

with the ESO in a performance of *Promenade Overture* by John Corigliano. The November 21 concert will present the extremely rare piece by Handel entitled *Hercules*. Gnam says it is as exciting and powerful as *The Messiah*.

Now in the process of making Eugene his home with wife Cathy, Gnam looks forward to this season and has even more exciting plans for the future years.

"New things are important," he says. "After all, if you only have Pepsi to drink and you drink it all the time, how can you know the wonderful taste of scotch?"

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