



Televised gaming circuit will change history, culture

On April 16 a company called Major League Gaming Inc. issued a press release stating the USA Network has signed a contract to broadcast the first televised professional video gaming tournament circuit from April 21 to the end of the year. This is not a joke.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Feb. 22 that the company received \$10 million in venture capital while they were looking for a network to televise their upcoming 2006 circuit. Then, in the press release last week, MLG named cellular service provider Boost Mobile and auto manufacturer Scion as the major sponsors for the circuit, adding even more millions to MLG's budget.

I first heard a brief mention of the new pro gaming circuit on CNN on April 17, and I think I surprised myself with my reaction. My first thought was that a gaming tournament with national mass-media coverage would be an incredible leap forward for my beloved gaming community. Then, as the reality of being both gamer and journalist settled in my head, I realized that I am torn.

On the surface, a gaming-media revolution of this scale has the potential to force our nation's ill-informed to accept that video games are not the hate-breeding, war mongering tools of our children's destructive behavior that so many blame for their own lack of parental aptitude.

Then the realistic and amateur gamer in me started to wonder what will happen when pop-culture consumerism gets its grubby hands on competitive gaming. Video gaming has certainly grown exponentially in its popularity over the last 25 years, but it still managed to reserve a certain sense of honesty and society among the gamers themselves that I now fear is in great danger.

For example, the reality of gaming as it stands is that serious gaming is still for geeks, and only those in touch with their inner geek are serious gamers. Yes, we buy billions of dollars worth of video gaming products world-wide every year, but not because P. Diddy or Paris Hilton told us to. So what will happen if, all of a sudden, it's cool to be a gamer?

MTV and Microsoft almost managed to do it last year with their special, four-long "release party" for the X-Box 360, and it was Microsoft living up to its expected flop when the system launched that allowed us real gamers to — God help me — "keep it real."

Now it would seem that the rest of the 2006 year will determine whether the outcast title of "video gamer" I've earned will be re-defined forever in a matter of a few months. That's why televising this gaming circuit is definitely not a joke, it's cultural history in the making.

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'Muse Trio' plays to inspire

Katie Wilson

The Clackamas Print

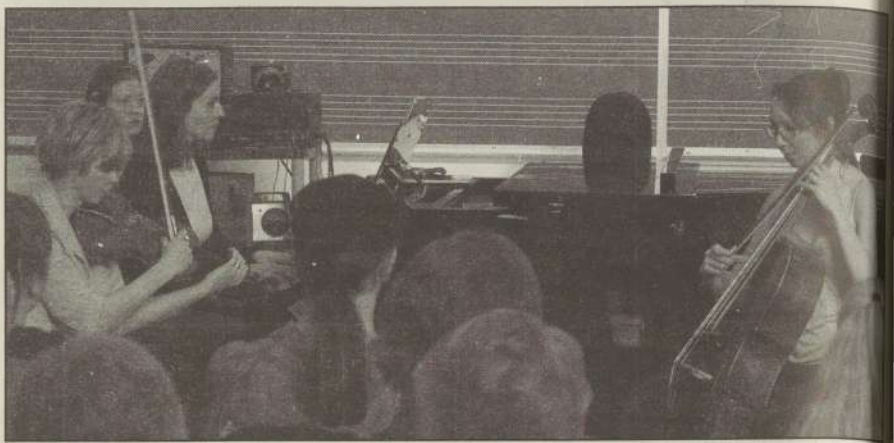
The Muse Trio, composed of Nikki Graybeal on cello and Clackamas instructors Wendy Goodwin (violin) and Naomi LaViolette (piano), finished tuning as I sat down in the crowded LeRoy Anderson Band room in the Niemeyer Center last Friday at noon.

Goodwin introduced the members of the trio and told the audience they would perform Dvorak's Dumky Trio. She pointed out some things to listen for in the music and they began.

The six-movement piece sounded like a mildly and beautifully schizophrenic folk dance interspersed with slower, moodier moments of calm and reflection.

Their second and final piece was Shumann's Piano Quintet. Two guest musicians joined them: Noelle Sisk on second violin and Jackie Schmidt on viola.

Meanwhile, I went from feeling like a dead bird to a slightly-more-alive bird. Bugs were beginning to look appetizing again; maybe I wouldn't have an emotional breakdown in my car later.



Nikki Graybeal and Clackamas Instructors Wendy Goodwin and Naomi LaViolette perform as the Muse Trio in the LeRoy Anderson room in the Niemeyer Center last Friday.

It is unfortunate that some people think classical music is boring, emotionless and repetitive with nothing to say and no one to speak to.

The pieces presented by the trio were anything but boring, emotionless and repetitive. The performers were not off in their own little world pretending that Bach was still alive. They were excited, engaged in the music and translating it to their audience. They cared and they made us

care too.

I went into the concert thinking that in my present mood it could only give me comfort if Goodwin stood up, screamed, kicked chairs out of her way and then smashed her violin against the floor.

But then there wouldn't have been any music.

Amidst all the restraint that some seem to think classical music imposes there is all the freedom to make

extraordinarily beautiful music.

There is form, but it was the structure that held my attention, that made me want to stay: The building and release of tension, the layers of sound and melodies, the conversation of ideas between the instruments.

The Muse Trio hopes to do more of these afternoon concerts, so keep your eyes open for flyers. Your vigilance will be well rewarded.

Badda-bing! It's the weekly 'Sopranos' update

N.P. Delzell

The Clackamas Print

When HBO's hit series "The Sopranos" came out harder than a Mike Tyson right, viewers knew they were in for a ring around their eye.

However, between whacks, the show has broken new ground. "The Sopranos" has gone mainstream — good for the average viewer and horrible to the core fan who watches like it's their religion.

Episode 72, "Luxury Lounge," gets things started with "old country" hoods (mob underling) hired by Tony Soprano (James Gandolfini) from Naples to whack the soon-to-be boss of New York.

Now that's what a "Sopranos"

gripped fan likes to see — murder, revenge and a lil' bang, bang action from the family — mob bosses getting banged out for being overzealous. That's gangsta.

Most of the episode is dedicated to Christopher's (Michael Imperoli) attempt to produce a mob-horror flick or mainstream mob movie. These scenes are amazing, with guest appearances by Sir Ben Kingsley and Lauren Bacall who play themselves.

All returns to normal when Christopher sees the free giveaways in the "luxury lounge" and makes a move to jack or rob Bacall for their free gift basket after he is told to "fagabout" receiving one.

"They just hand this shit out to the coolest people who need it the least," Christopher said.

Watching this sequence was truly a gangster's experience for one who enjoys watching a "star" get shook.

Artie Bucco (John Ventimiglia), Tony's best friend and non-connected restaurant player, goes through a series of events that suggests he may have to be taken care of. He goes after non-made hood Benny Fazio (Max Casella, formally "Boner" from "Growing Pains") and knocks Benny out. Artie gets away with it only to be caught with his hand in a boiling pot of spaghetti as Benny uses his skills in revenge.

Gangsta, gangsta, with some hard knocks than any other show period.

The show also returns to its old methods, going back to some of the old sets and scenes in New Jersey that make some viewers return every week.

With sub-plots that make those of any show in television history, "The Sopranos" has whacked and laid the pin-hand down on television again. It will continue to be the dominating show on HBO for years after cancellation.

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