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MUSIC BY BRETT CAMPBELL

Guitars, Catholics, etc.

Sacred Steel, Shaker Loops, and other spring sounds.

Guitar fans have plenty to drool about this month. On April 25, the **Campbell Brothers** (no relation) bring their exuberant Sacred Steel sounds to town. The Campbells have recently unleashed this powerful fusion of gospel and electric blues and rock from the African American Pentecostal churches that spawned it in the 1930s. Moaning, wailing, weeping guitars (lap steel, pedal steel, electric, bass) interweave with Katie Jackson's boss vocals to produce a religious experience for disciples of God, guitars, or both.

somehow conjures a gentle mystery that keeps me listening to it again and again, trying to divine its elusive power.

More 20th century sounds are on tap at the Hult Center on Thursday, April 24, when Eugene Symphony conductor laureate **Marin Alsop** returns to lead her old band in a concert of British music, featuring the contemporary Scottish composer James MacMillan's explosive *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel*. This colorful 1992 percussion concerto grew out of the composer's Catholic faith, "a musical exploration of the theology



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The Shedd hosts another guitar deity, **Bill Frisell**, on Tuesday, May 6. With his distinctively spacious sound — the Miles Davis of the guitar — Frisell reached the pinnacle of the jazz world in the 1980s, then transcended that category, successfully integrating folk and country idioms into his improvisational palette to create a unique yet unmistakably American sound. So diverse are his influences that you can never be sure what a Frisell show will sound like; his WOW Hall duet concert last year was one of the mellowest in memory.

Since he'll have his rhythm trio this time, we can probably expect some of the twangier, folk-inspired sounds of his '90s work. It's a must-see for jazz, guitar and American music fans.

And if that's not enough, don't fret: Two other guitar masters are also playing on Friday April 25th: the amazing **Leo Kottke** at the McDonald Theatre, and jazz-Latin-classical fusioner **Philippe Bertaud** at Café Paradiso.

The Shedd turns to contemporary classical music at the **American Symphonia's** concert on Sunday, April 27. Anyone who heard John Adams' neo-Romantic *Violin Concerto* here a few months back should try one of his most popular works, the shimmering 1978 string septet "Shaker Loops," whose repeating musical patterns build to an evocation of religious ecstasy in this mesmerizing piece from his minimalist-influenced days. Stephen Paulus's 1995 "Voices from the Gallery" is a sort of modern, tongue-in-cheek "Pictures at an Exhibition" that allows the subjects of 11 famous works of art (including "Christina's World," "Mona Lisa," "Nude Descending a Staircase") to "speak" through narrators (Sandy Naishtat and Shirley Andress). The speeches are often pretty funny, the music delightfully varied and entertaining. The program also features an American classic: Charles Ives' haunting "The Unanswered Question." This atmospheric simplicity of this mini-masterpiece

behind the Advent message" and ends with a timely Easter hymn tune. It's a big, spectacular, dramatic piece whose theatricality is enhanced in live performance by the percussion soloist, Colin Currie, racing from vibraphone to woodblocks to marimba to drum set.

The program also includes Edward Elgar's popular *Enigma Variations* and the sweeping orchestral suite Benjamin Britten extracted from his great 1945 opera, *Peter Grimes*. These four "sea interludes" vividly depict dawn, Sunday morning, moonlight and a storm over the Suffolk coast.

One of the hottest American conductors, Alsop recently became the first woman to head a major British orchestra. Yet she still finds room in her impossibly crowded schedule to return frequently to Eugene, where she made her name, built an orchestra, and brought so much stirring — and often contemporary — music to town in the 1990s. It's rare to see an in-demand conductor return to a mid-sized market, so it's a mark of Alsop's affection for this community that she's back so often.

Britten's sunny 1950 settings of five spring-themed poems, "Flower Songs," blossom at the **Eugene Vocal Arts Ensemble's** concert Saturday, April 26 at Central Lutheran Church. The concert also includes a choral extract from one of Paul McCartney's "classical" ventures, *Standing Stone*, and songs by Brahms, Eugene's Robert Rubinstein, and more.

On Monday, May 5, the church hosts saxophone master **Rhett Bender** in a free recital of 20th century music by John Harbison and others, sponsored by the UO music school. And the UO's always-fascinating **World Music Series** brings traditional Latin American music on April 25 when **Tlen-Huicani** performs at Beall Hall. This acclaimed ensemble of folk harp and guitars from Veracruz, Mexico, has been spreading the sounds of Central and South America around the world for three decades. **EW**

Exquisite vocal works of love and springtime

Flower Songs

EUGENE VOCAL ARTS ENSEMBLE

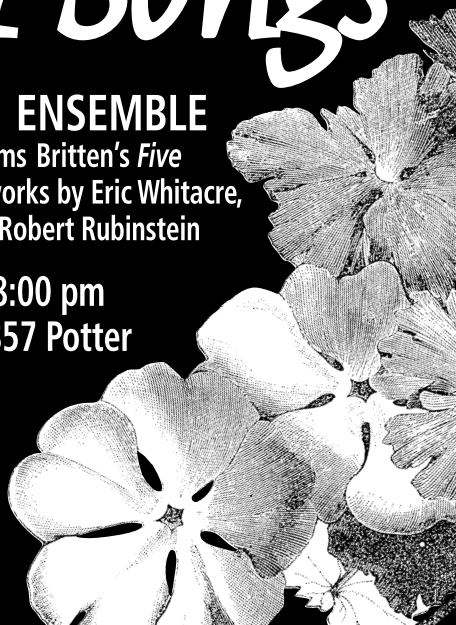
Diane Retallack, conductor, performs Britten's *Five Flower Songs*, Brahms' *Op. 92*, & works by Eric Whitacre, Paul McCartney, & local composer Robert Rubinstein

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