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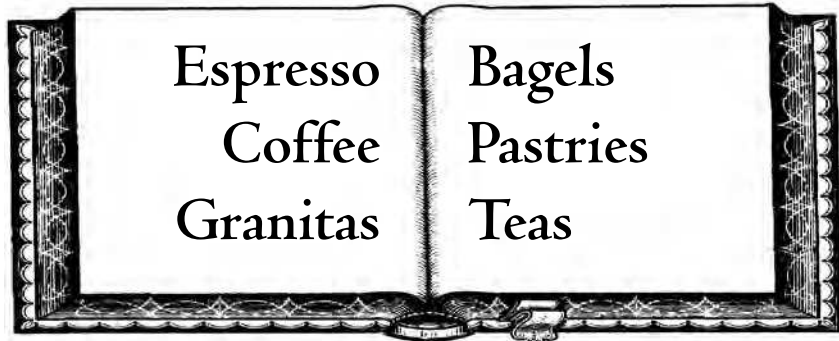
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music BY BRETT CAMPBELL

ESO plays Jennifer Higdon's
Concerto for Orchestra,
Jan. 15, Silva.



Young Americans

Music from classical music's
next generation comes to town.

During breaks between pieces at the Oregon Mozart Players' fall concert, Music Director Glen Cortese announced the score of the Yankees playoff game in progress, which he monitored backstage each time the orchestra left the stage. On Jan. 10 and 11, the OMP's concerts will provide further evidence of the New York-based conductor's love for his home when his Eugene orchestra performs his "Mannahatta."

Inspired by poems of another New Yorker, Walt Whitman, the piece (originally a piano solo) is "a musical interpretation of the feeling I experienced from reading these poems and living in this great city," Cortese says. "I think a lot in visual images when I compose, and Whitman talks about the coastline, the waves, the shore, and those images influenced my musical ideas." The concert continues the Americana theme with the ever-popular suite Aaron Copland arranged for chamber orchestra of the music from his *Appalachian Spring* ballet, and then a pair of winsome works for flute and orchestra by its namesake — Mozart's *Flute Concerto* K.314 and "Andante" K. 315.

It's great to see Cortese continuing the OMP's commitment to contemporary music, and even more welcome to see Music Director Giancarlo Guerrero maintaining the Eugene Symphony's long-nurtured national reputation for programming new sounds.

On Thursday, Jan. 15 the ESO performs two powerful 20th century concertos for orchestra. I first heard Jennifer Higdon's music when Marin Alsop brought her to the Cabrillo Festival last year for a performance of an impressively rumbustious piece. Still in her early 40s, Higdon has recently become one of the most acclaimed composers of her generation, winning praise from musicians and audiences alike for her tonal music's populist yet non-pandering appeal and its echoes of Bernstein, Ravel, and Bartók.

Higdon's breakthrough work, the half-hour concerto we'll hear next Thursday, changes moods from motoric to mystical, and features an all-percussion movement; critics in Philadelphia and her home base of Atlanta called it her masterpiece, noting influences of Copland, Messiaen and Stravinsky. And, thanks to Guerrero, we're lucky enough to hear it here in its West Coast premiere, with the composer present, just a year or so after its premiere — an amazing coup for a town this size.

The other piece of the program, Witold Lutoslawski's 1954 *Concerto for Orchestra*, re-

flects the great Polish composer's interest in his nation's folk music, and, like Higdon's, rushes to an exciting climax. Influenced by 20th-century giants Bartók, Stravinsky, Debussy and Prokofiev, it's considered a landmark 20th-century work. This concert, along with the wonderful Aaron Kernis showcase that opened the season and the John Corigliano show coming this spring, demonstrates Guerrero's admirable commitment to modern music, and the orchestra's ability to handle unusual forms. I hope local listeners will repay Guerrero's intrepid and insightful programming by taking a chance on music that may be unfamiliar, yet will likely prove at least as rewarding as — and more exciting than — yet another performance of the usual warhorses.

There's also some first-rate classical and contemporary music coming up at the UO this month. On Thursday, Jan. 8 the school's Chamber Music Series presents the renowned chamber orchestra I Musici de Montréal playing music by Borodin, Bruckner, and "Coup d'Archet" ("Bow Strokes") by the Montreal-based composer Denis Gougeon, who's won plaudits for his dynamic, melodic music, particularly that written for the stage. As with every ensemble in this long-running series, this concert offers some of the finest smaller-scale music around; the group has recorded many CDs and played some of the world's finest venues.

Still more of today's art music is on tap at a free recital by acclaimed pianist Jeffrey Jacob at Beall on Sunday, Jan. 10. He'll play works by Bartók and other 20th-century composers, including the second volume of the great George Crumb's landmark "Makrokosmos" for amplified piano, and a piece by Crumb's son, David, who's a UO faculty member and a noted composer in his own right.

Yet another distinguished visitor comes to the school when the violinist Diane Monroe arrives for a residency and presents two concerts — one with the Oregon Jazz Ensemble on Jan. 16 and another with the Oregon String Quartet on the 22nd, when she'll play a quintet by Brahms and David Baker's "Sonata for Jazz Violin and String Quartet." Monroe's impeccable jazz credentials — she's been a member of the great String Trio of New York (where her predecessors included Billy Bang and Regina Carter), the Uptown String Quartet, and Max Roach Double Quartet — make her show a must for Eugene jazz fans, and it's great to see another fine musician here who breaks down the barriers between genres.

CW