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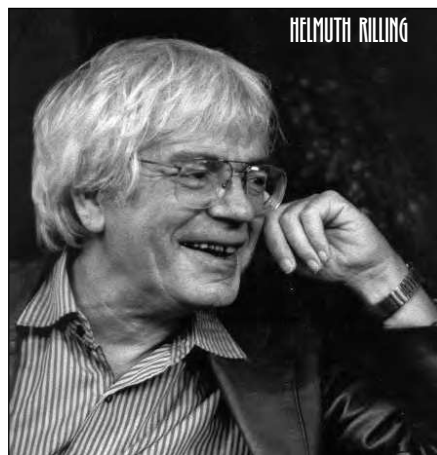
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## Up and Running

This year's Bach Fest has some high points.

Stories by Brett Campbell

This year's Oregon Bach Festival hasn't even started, and already it's been a roller coaster. Up: I was excited because, in even numbered years, the Festival has brought or commissioned an exciting new work; in 2002, it was Tan Dun's magical *Water Passion*.

Also up: My excitement grew when word came that this year's new work might be the masterpiece that already stands as one of the defining masterworks of the new millennium, Osvaldo Golijov's *St. Mark Passion*, commissioned by Helmuth Rilling at the same time as Tan's *Passion*.

Down: Then came word that logistical and financial consideration prevented the Golijov's premiere, leaving no big new work.

Up: But then, as has so often happened, the Festival's Composers Symposium announced that its featured artist would be one of the great American composers, George Crumb, and would celebrate his 75th birthday year with a number of his finest works.

Down: Then the rest of the festival schedule was announced, revealing that one of my major complaints about the OBF — its failure to acknowledge the revolutionary transformation of Baroque performance practice through the use of period instruments and tunings, and less familiar Baroque works and composers — hadn't improved at all. In fact, even the token one or two period instrument concerts that past festivals had sponsored in Beall Hall were missing this time — a major disappointment.

Up: But as I perused the rest of the schedule, a number of unexpected gems kept surfacing. The return of so many past festival favorites, led by the incomparable singer Thomas Quasthoff reminded me why, despite its occasional shortcomings, the Oregon Bach Festival is still one of the richest fonts of musical achievement in the Northwest.

This year's festival contains enough

mainstream works, performed to the usual high OBF standards, to satisfy most classical music fans, while sprinkling in enough rarer gems to excite the alternative audience as well. I recommend seeing at least one of the two great choral orchestral masterpieces on the schedule: the *B Minor Mass* and/or the *St. Matthew Passion*. The chance to see an artist of the accomplishment of Thomas Quasthoff should on no account be missed — be sure to attend at least one of his shows, if you can get tickets. My other top recommendations include the program of Baroque concertos and two concerts featuring some of Mozart's finest music: the *Requiem* at Silva Hall and music for winds at Beall Hall.

The Beall concerts offer a musical purity and intimacy that the larger venues lack, and I suggest that you attend at least a couple of shows there.

Flute fanatics — and everyone else — should be overjoyed at the prospect of hearing the divine Lorna McGhee perform in various settings: with chamber orchestra in Krzysztof Penderecki's Flute concerto, with harp and viola in music by Bach and Takemitsu (both at the top of my list of suggested concerts), and even in a Celtic-flavored concert. All three of those are warmly recommended to fans of smaller scale and forward-looking music — the alternative audience, if you will, but also anyone with an interest in exploring new musical vistas. Best of all, the Composers Symposium concerts feature the spine-tingling music of one of America's greatest composers, George Crumb. Even without a mega new work on this year's Bach Fest program, those concerts provide ample opportunity to hear some of the 20th century's most intriguing and inviting art music — a wonderful chance to open your ears and mind to musical adventure. And we can look forward to the Golijov *Passion* next year. ■

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