

Herbie Hancock performs at the Silva Concert Hall Feb. 3.



Putting Our Best Note Forward

Eugene brings in the 21st century's big names.

By Brett Campbell

The winter and spring music seasons' source of greatest abundance is the Oregon Festival of American Music. Jazz fans around the Northwest are already looking forward to the Feb. 3 Directions in Music concert featuring legendary keyboard player/composer **Herbie Hancock**, sax titan **Michael Brecker** and young trumpet star **Roy Hargrove**.

That show — so big it's happening at the Hult Center — is probably the top jazz pick of the season. But the April 10 show at the Shedd with the **Dave Holland Big Band**, one of the finest ensembles now working in jazz, is a close second. Holland's small group concert last year might have been the most incendiary jazz show I've seen in Oregon, and this

one may just shake the old church's rafters.

A sleeper show that fans of moody, well-crafted improvisational music should not miss is the March 17 concert by the **Tomasz Stanko Quartet**. A veteran of Germany's high-quality ECM label (home of Keith Jarrett, Arvo Part, Charles Lloyd and many other great musicians), Stanko has been putting out darkly beautiful music for two decades. Other strong Shedd jazz shows include violinist **Regina Carter** on Jan. 28, the great pianist **Mose Allison** on Feb. 11, and the return of the phenomenally telepathic **Bill Charlap Trio** on Feb. 12.

The Shedd has a strong lineup of American roots-based performers, too, including the return of Cape Breton fiddle diva **Natalie MacMaster** on Jan. 26, the always-

fascinating **Darol Anger's American Fiddle Ensemble** on Feb. 5, Cajun swingers **BeauSoleil** on Feb. 27, bluegrass master **Ricky Skaggs** on May 12, and slack-key guitar legends **Keola Beamer** on May 15 and **Led Ka'apana** on March 10. If you value intelligent, emotionally-charged rock, don't miss the great Austin singer-songwriter **Alejandro Escovedo** on April 6 at the Shedd, even if you've never heard of him.

All that, and we still haven't mentioned my top spring concert recommendation. One of the 20th century's most forward-looking composers/performers, **Laurie Anderson**,

brings her electric violin and synthesizers, sly humor, and singular songs and narratives to town March 12. That show should appeal to hipsters and classical fans alike—or anyone interested in the future of music, for that matter.

Classical music lovers will also want to be at the Shedd for some too-rarely-heard music of two earlier 20th century masters, Samuel Barber and Benjamin Britten, in the **American Symphonia's** April 7 and 8 concerts. Don't miss Broadway diva **Audra McDonald** on May 25 either.

American music is also alive and thriving at the University of Oregon's Beall Concert Hall, where, in addition to the Music Today Festival's riches (see accompanying article), UO faculty violinist **Kathryn Lucktenberg** performs still another concert of 20th century American music on Jan. 13. The UO's acclaimed Chamber Music Series has three strong offerings, too: **Berlin's Philharmonia Quartett** on Jan. 20, the **Paris Piano Trio** on Feb. 15, and the outstanding young string octet **Concertante** on March 3. Each year the school's World Music Series brings an amazing musician from India and on Feb. 25, it's **Kartik Seshadri**. The UO is also collaborating with Lane Community College jazz artists in a new **Oregon Jazz Festival** January 21-22.

Another Beall Hall show on Jan. 26 features UO artists in songs and chamber music by **Tchaikovsky**, part of a tribute to the Russian romantic who is also the centerpiece of the **Eugene Symphony's** season, with many of his most popular works featured in orchestra concerts on Jan. 27 and 29. My recommendation is the Feb. 24 concert featuring the 20th century Russian master **Sergei Prokofiev's** magnificent music written for the classic film *Alexander Nevsky*, along with a new work by resident composer **Philip Rothman**.

The **Eugene Opera** offers Verdi's *Rigoletto* on March 11 and 13, while the **Eugene Concert Choir** pays tribute to the late local composer **Jon Sutton** in its Jan. 22 concert. As it has in recent years, the choir ends its 30th season on May 7 with yet another ambitious choral-orchestral work: Beethoven's epic *Missa Solemnis*, backed by the **Oregon Mozart Players**.

The OMP has a strong season of its own, highlighted by the premiere of music director Glen Cortese's chamber version of Mahler's sublime "Song of the Earth" (sung in Chinese!) on Feb. 19 and 20. Another one of my prime

picks of the season is Peter Schickele conducting Bach's "magnumest of opuses," *The Abduction of Figaro*. Schickele is one of the best things to ever happen to classical music. Not only is he a fine composer, popularizer and explainer, he also punctures the field's pomposity with much-needed humor. This should be a blast, with the OMP augmented by the rumbles of their namesake rolling in his grave.

Finally, the **Oregon Bach Festival** brings its usual wealth of classics, along with one of the most significant single contemporary music events in Eugene history: The West Coast premiere of the first great work of the 21st century, Osvaldo Golijov's *Passion After St. Mark*. You'll be hearing a lot more about that here soon.

Most local clubs and concert halls are still filling their schedules, but we do know a few highlights already. The Hult Center is bringing the excellent klezmer/new music clarinetist **David Krakauer** on Feb. 15 and 16. DIVA continues to grow as a progressive performance venue, bringing live music to the **Imaginify MetaMedia** conference on Jan. 28, **Daniel Tapio Heila's Knotty Ensemble** accompanying moving images with improvised music on Feb. 11, the **Eugene Sacred Harp Singers** on Feb. 25, the pioneer of sampled music **Carl Stone** on March 26 (in conjunction with his UO show that weekend, another top recommendation), and the return of the virtuoso San Diego percussion improviser **Nathan Hubbard** with his new vibes trio on March 30. The McDonald Theatre already has **Leo Kottke**, the **Vienna Choir Boys** and other popular acts scheduled. Be sure to check *EW's* weekly music columns and calendar to find out about the other events still to come. ■

Natalie MacMaster performs at the Shedd Jan. 26.



Soloist Robert Sullivan performs with the Oregon Mozart Players Jan. 8.