

People's Prima Donna

Dawn Upshaw's sublime voice and vision

The qualities that make **Dawn Upshaw** the world's most necessary singer aren't the traditional accoutrements of divadom: outsized pipes, range and ego. Sure, the thrice-Grammy honored soprano has the chops to sing most of the big classical song cycles and opera roles and is as in demand as any other star singer of her generation. But far more than any of her contemporaries, Upshaw has the artistic range and courage to pursue new and unusual musical currents. Her radiant singing in overlooked 20th century repertoire, such as Gorecki's *Third Symphony*, sets new standards. She grew up singing protest songs with her folk musician family, and her natural, approachable singing style (far from the stereotypical wide-vibrato, stentorian "operatic" wailing) have made her a favorite of contemporary composers such as Osvaldo Golijov. Her fiercely passionate performance of his *Ayre* song cycle with Eighth Blackbird at California's Ojai Festival was one of the most moving musical moments I've ever experienced. She'll perform music of Golijov, as well as Stephen Foster, Olivier Messiaen, Ruth Crawford Seeger and more, at the Hult Center on Feb. 17.

Few composers have had as eventful a life as electronic music pioneer **Jon Appleton**: A red diaper baby whose parents were blacklisted, he ran away from home (L.A.) to New York and the South Pacific; embarked on various other peregrinations and love affairs in Japan, Scandinavia and Moscow; helped develop the groundbreaking electronic instrument called the Synclavier; studied at the UO; taught at Dartmouth ... well, you can listen to his fascinating narration (and get a good sense of

his music through its accompanying sound-track) at eamusic.dartmouth.edu/~appleton/bio/incompletebiography.html On Feb. 17, the UO's Future Music Oregon program brings Appleton back to Oregon for performances of four of his works. This is an ideal opportunity for anyone new to electronic art music to sample some of the most appealing sounds of anyone in electro-academia.

Also at the UO: On Feb. 16 the UO's Beall Hall has Ravi Shankar's greatest protégé, sitar master **Kartik Seshadri**, accompanied by tabla player **Arup Chattopadhyay**. His last show at Beall created an utterly spellbinding atmosphere which put his unbelievably virtuosic technique in the service of some magnificent ragas from the classical music tradition of North India. Indian as well as Middle Eastern colors tinge the original music of Portland cello virtuoso **Adam Hurst**; he returns to Cozmic Pizza on Feb. 21 for another evening of sinuous, low-register sonic adventure.

One of the happiest developments in last year's music scene was the emergence of a regular group of Baroque music specialists, often pulled together by harpsichordist and Baroque violinist Margret Gries, performing occasionally around here and Southern Oregon. When played on the instruments and in the manner the composers intended, Baroque and early classical music sounds radically different from modern imitations. On Feb. 24 at Episcopal Church of the Resurrection (3925

Hilyard), Gries' **Oregon Bach Collegium** will perform J.S. Bach's scintillating second Brandenburg Concerto and a concerto and two cantatas by Bach's great contemporary, Georg Philipp Telemann. It's a rare chance to hear that famous trumpet line played on a Baroque instrument, which sounds quite different from the modern version.

Another welcome appearance last year was Cherry Blossom's informal concerts of original music by local composers and performers. This month's edition, on Feb. 18 at Tsunami Books (admission free, donations accepted), features music by Oregon composers **Paul Safar, Gary Noland, Jack Gabel, Michael Coolen** and **Jeff Winslow**, performance poetry by **Carter McKenzie**, and various local dancers — from tap to tango — and musicians.



Let's also applaud the return (after a few years off) of another tasty local institution: the **Oregon Mozart Players' Chamber Music & Chocolate** concert, which this time happens

Feb. 22 at Springfield's new Wildish Theater. The show features Dvorak's ever-popular "American" String Quartet, Gershwin's "Lullaby" and an undisclosed rock song arranged for string quartet — plus plenty of scrumptious desserts. These informal presentations knock some of the stifling formality off of classical performances and make it easy to enjoy sweet music.

Old traditions get a boost of new energy at the Shedd this month. On Feb. 16 the young Hawaiian ukulele virtuoso **Jake Shimabukuro** brings his extended range axe to town to play music never thought possible on the instrument. Lane County has a surprisingly strong uke community, so we're part of the uke revival that's happening all over the country. In fact, the instrument never really went away after its initial fad; George Harrison, for one, composed much of his music on it, and Shimabukuro will almost certainly play his quicksilver version of "While My Guitar Gently Weeps." A similar revival has been powering bluegrass music in the past decade, and the Boston-based quartet **Crooked Still** is one of the bands bringing rock vitality to Appalachian sounds. They'll bring their banjo, cello, bass and vocals to the Shedd on Feb. 25.

Jazz, too, has benefited from an infusion of modern rock, hip hop and funk influences, and one of its prime purveyors, **Bobby Previte's Coalition of the Willing** (which includes Seattle's great Skerik) plays the WOW Hall on Feb. 18. For a deep immersion in the state of jazz, check out this year's **Portland Jazz Festival** Feb. 16-25. Featuring 140 events and paying tribute to the classical/avant garde influences brought by Europe's ECM label, the PJF brings **Chick Corea, Gary Burton, Dave Douglas, Tomasz Stanko, Charles Lloyd** and scads more jazzers from hither and yon. You can see my full preview at www.wweek.com/editorial/3314/8553/ **EW**

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