

SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE ROAD

The 5 Browns wow young audiences BY DEANNA UUTELA

They don't record pop songs in their garage, and they don't tour around in a colorful school bus like a certain other family five, but the group called the 5 Browns does consist of a group of musically talented siblings spreading the joy of music — classical music.

The 5 Browns consists of Ryan, 20, Melody, 21, Gregory, 23, Deondra, 25, and Desirae, 27. They form a quintet of nationally renowned classical pianists who are one of the top draws at this year's Bach Festival.

Growing up in Utah, the Browns were taught the importance of a strong family connection, the Mormon scripture and the piano. Their mom Lisa, classically trained to sing opera, decided early on that she wanted her children to have music in their lives. The piano, she says, was an obvious place to begin.

"Our children started piano lessons by the age of three," Lisa says in press material. "We noticed a clear talent and interest from the start."

By as early as age nine, each Brown had made a debut with a major symphony orchestra. "I think Desirae was in school, about 6 years old, when she realized that not everybody in the world plays the piano," Keith Brown, their dad,

recalls. "She just thought it was a part of life, like eating or sleeping."

When Desirae began to plan for college, Deondra decided to accelerate her education in order to attend school with her sister. They say that the responses from the finest music schools in the nation were overwhelming, and they decided to attend New York's Juilliard. One year later Gregory, Melody and Ryan were accepted to Juilliard as well — the first time five siblings were ever accepted simultaneously as students at the school.

Advised by manager Joel Diamond and their parents, the siblings joined together to become a quintet of classical pianists playing on five pianos and in various ensemble combinations. From then on their lives have consisted of television appearances, profiles in major publications, two CDs, performances around the country and screaming fans.

Tiger Woods was a golf hottie and Josh Groban boosted adult contemporary music; now, the young, attractive 5 Browns are raising the profile of classical music among younger people.

"How could a classical musician ever imagine walking out on a stage with a sea of university students roaring as if we were

the latest band?" Melody Brown said recently. "Never before could I have ever thought that I'd be performing composers like Debussy or Rachmaninoff for so many people my age and finding that they actually really enjoyed what they heard!"

Though the Bach Festival begins after the UO lets out for the summer, tickets have been flying away as fast as they're printed,

The 5 Browns



The Festival Orchestra plays its heart out at OBF '06

OUTSIDE THE BACHS

Oregon Bach Festival sked and highlights!

Wednesday 6/27

★7 pm InChoir (The Studio, Hult Center)
Sing along with the masters!
See story, p. 7.

Friday 6/29

6:30 pm Inside Line: Peter Hopkins (Soreng Theater, Hult Center)
6:45 pm Opening Ceremonies with the Pacific International Children's Choir Festival (Hult Center lobby)
★7:30 pm Choral-Orchestral Concert: Brahms *German Requiem** (Silva Concert Hall, Hult Center)
The opening of the festival, always a moment alive with anticipation and energy — don't

forget your binocs; make reservations at your favorite downtown restaurant; get a parking spot early; *will the soloists live up to the days of yore?* — should be appropriately full of lush sound and texture.

Saturday 6/30

11 am Dance Theatre of Oregon presents *The Dancing Composers* (Soreng Theater, Hult Center)
noon PICCFEST Choir (Hult Lobby)
★7:30 pm Choral-Orchestral Concert: PDQ Bach: "The Jekyll & Hyde Tour" (Silva)
See story, p. 2, and buy tix for this major, and majorly enjoyable, event.

Sunday 7/1

★4 pm Choral-Orchestral Concert: Bach & Family:* Bach concertos, Mozart Sinfonia Concertante and Jupiter Symphony (Silva) This concert shows off Helmuth Rilling's brilliant family and, more generally, the Festival family of wonderful musicians. We love us some Allan Vogel: Yes, please do play that oboe d'amore!

Monday 7/2

noon Organ Interludes: ElRay Stewart Cook (Central Lutheran Church)
★7:30 pm Intimate Evenings: Trio Verlaine, "Menuet Antique" (Beall) Mmm ... French music. Mmmm ... Lorna McGhee. Mmmmm ... viola / harp / flute trio. Like chamber music? Like the up close and personal effect of Beall? This is for you.
8 pm PICCFEST Gala Concert (Silva)

Tuesday 7/3

noon Hinkle Distinguished Lecture: Martin Marty (Soreng)
4:30 pm Discovery Series: Bach Cantata 78* (Soreng)
★8 pm Choral-Orchestral Concert: all Mendelssohn, Midori, violin soloist; Jeffrey Kahane, conductor (Silva) Violin goddess Midori! Conductor and piano god Jeffrey Kahane! Eugene hearts you both. (And by the way, if you like The Kahane and/or Chopin, don't forget July

according to the OBF's George Evano.

Melody Brown says that classical music isn't stuffy and shouldn't be restricted only to people who grew up playing it or whose parents loved it. "[The music] can be placed in a concert hall, stadium, or living room, and it has the same effect — this music can transcend everything!"

In between appearances on *Oprah* and interviews with *The New York Times*, The 5 Browns will be performing in the Hult Center at 7:30 pm on Friday, July 13 in their first and only Oregon appearance. Ticket prices range from \$15-\$27, and you'd better get them soon if you want to see the sensational sibs live onstage. ♦

5's all-Chopin concert with him as soloist.)

Wednesday 7/4

No concerts

Thursday 7/5

noon Let's Talk: Anton Armstrong and SFYCA Alumni (The Studio)
★4:30 pm Discovery Series: Haydn Mass for Theresa Part 1* (Soreng Theater, Hult Center)
Going to the Mass for Theresa in a couple of days? Make sure you head for the Discovery Series first!
★7:30 pm Intimate Evenings: all Chopin, Jeffrey Kahane, soloist and conductor (Beall)

Friday 7/6

noon Organ Interludes: Barbara Baird (First Congregational Church)



Trio Verlaine Monday, July 2