

Spring's First Festival

A classical love story sparks the arts

Ah, April. The first Saturday Market! Rhubarb poking its red stems into our pies! And to usher in the first full month of spring, the Eugene Symphony puts on a festival of surpassing verdancy, dedicated to pastoral power ... and erotic love.

The Discovering Daphnis Festival, which runs April 4-10, gives the music institution more ways to reach beyond the confines of the Hult Center and into the community. There's a little something for everyone from young artists to aspiring dancers to contemporary music connoisseurs to movie lovers, with a flourish at the end.

The festival's events lead up to the April 10 Eugene Symphony performance of *Daphnis et Chloé*, a ballet score by Maurice Ravel. Shepherds, pipes, the great god Pan and the strength of true love make appearances in the classic love story of Daphnis and Chloé — but not everyone knows the tale. Hence, the festival lights the way to a broader understanding of this ancient Greek account.

Since the symphony introduced its long-range plan last fall, staff members have been planning ways to work in partnership with a wide variety of arts organizations in town. The highlights begin with the April 4 First Friday ARTWalk, where, in the Hult Center lobby, art lovers and proud relatives will find murals by Springfield students. Hundreds of elementary students listened to the gloriously intense score and then created the artworks, which were judged by "celebrity jurors" like Bob Keefer of the *R-G*, Mary Unruh of *DIVA* and Sid Leiken, mayor of Springfield. Apparently, there are many pirates involved (which is only right, for pirates figure heavily in the original story). Pop from the Hult to the Downtown Library, where the Eugene Contemporary Chamber Ensemble performs some Ravel with Eugene Symphony music director Giancarlo Guerrero as guest conductor at 6 pm.

Perhaps you weren't among the crowd that watched *Ballets Russes* at *DIVA* last year; you can make up for that by checking out this super gorgeous documentary on a really big screen at the Bijou at 12:30 pm Sunday, April 6. And the next day, meeting the challenge of the UO's Collier House and its limited space, UO dancers perform improv dances to the music of Sound City. It's part

The Storm, Pierre-Auguste Cot, possibly inspired by Daphnis and Chloe



The Eugene Symphony
Jennifer Koh and Daphnis et Chloé
 8 pm Thursday, April 10
 Hult Center • \$15-\$46
www.hultcenter.org
www.eugenesympphony.org

of Brian McWhorter's brilliant Sound-Bytes series and runs a mere few minutes, 11:54 pm to 12:08 pm. But the UO isn't finished with its contributions: Monday night, there's a French music spectacular at Beall Hall, with the music of Germaine Tailleferre, Olivier Messiaen, Paul Dukas and Ravel. As symphony executive director Paul Winberg notes, there's also a program for the more academic, talky set: Thursday, April 10 kicks off at noon in Beall Hall with a panel discussion about how the legend of Daphnis and Chloé has inspired much art over the years. Finally, Ballet Fantastique performs a concert in The Studio at the Hult beginning at 6:30 pm that night. A big plus: All of this pre-symphony festivating is absolutely free.

If you love the swoops of violins on an impressionistic wave of sound, Ravel's score will thrill you, taking you on the journey of the young, innocent, frustrated lovers. But the program also boasts replacement violinist Jennifer Koh, stepping in for the injured Nicola Benedetti with Szymanowski's Violin Concerto, so there's a soloist to balance the hoopla of Ravel. Something for everyone: That's the Discovering Daphnis Festival. **EW**

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