

New Music Parties

Plus some older gems

Eugene is home to some major music festivals, but for leading edge sounds, we're lucky to have a couple of smaller, more adventurous series as well. This weekend, DIVA hosts its fifth **IMMI Festival**, which presents musical improvisation that follows a different road than most jazz — not just harmonies and melodies but entire musical structures are subject to spontaneous, cooperative composition. On Thursday at Wandering Goat Coffee House, **Any Permutation** presents a free show of the compelling improv music and video of former UO composer/performers Daniel Heila and Douglas Detrick. Detrick starts from jazz while Heila comes from a more “classical” tradition, and it'll be fascinating to see how they find common ground. Silent films have long provided a vehicle for new improvised music, and on Friday at DIVA, the **Knotty Ensemble** (consisting of veteran improv musicians from Oregon and Vancouver, B.C.) and guests improvise a soundtrack to the classic documentary *Nanook of the North*. On Saturday, **Any Permutation** returns to DIVA for its own soundtrack improv to pioneering British filmmaker John Grierson's pro-labor documentary *Drifters*. And on Feb. 27, another great former UO saxman, **Joe Manis**, plays a release party at Jo Federigo's for his fabulous new trio CD, *Evidence*, which will thrill fans of Monk, Rollins and original music.

That other cutting edge music celebration, the UO's **Music Today Festival**, concludes with UO faculty percussion master **Charles Dowd** playing music of centenarian composer Elliott Carter on Friday in room 163 of the Music Building, and harmonica virtuoso and UO alum **Joe Powers** (accompanied by pianist Naoko Aoki and dancers) playing modern tangos by Astor Piazzolla and others. And there's more contemporary music at the UO's Beall Hall: On Feb. 23, Oregon Symphony trumpeter **Jeffrey Work** plays rarely heard modern repertoire with a trio. On Feb. 25, Dowd returns as soloist on 22 instruments in Darius Milhaud's sparkling *Percussion Concerto*, and will conduct the **Oregon Percussion Ensemble** in his own Frank Zappa tribute and Edgard Varese's landmark “Ionisation” and more. And in a free Feb. 26 show, the **Eugene Contemporary Chamber Ensemble** plays three new works, including Dale Trumbore's award-winning “Disbelief and Suspensions.”

More contemporary music finally returns to the menu in the best **Eugene Symphony** concert of the year this Thursday. **Jennifer Higdon** is one of today's finest and most listener friendly composers. Her previous appearance with the ESO was a highlight, and this one features the West Coast premiere of Higdon's *Loco* and her *Percussion Concerto*, featuring one of the world's greatest musicians, percussionist extraordinaire Evelyn Glennie, who is to percussion what Yo Yo Ma is to cello and, like Higdon, is equally enthusiastic about reaching out to audiences. And percussion features prominently in the classic piece on the program, Haydn's brilliant *Symphony 103*.

The university also has some splendid

old music. On Feb. 20-21 at the Sheldon High School Auditorium, the UO **Opera Ensemble** will perform Henry Purcell's great early British opera, *Dido and Aeneas*, with contemporary dances created for this production by Alli Bach and Purcell's colorful score played on period instruments



Angela Hewitt

and conducted in historically informed fashion by UO Baroque music specialist Marc Vanscheeuwijck. On Feb. 22, one of America's leading pre-Romantic ensembles, the **Portland Baroque Orchestra**, will bring their period instruments, historically informed performance methods, master oboist and guest conductor Paul Goodwin and acclaimed flutist Janet See to Beall for a highly recommended concert of music by Rameau (his danceable *Pygmalion*), Francois Couperin, one of Handel's great Op. 6 concerti and C.P.E. Bach. It's great to see the UO finally taking advantage of this great Oregon treasure. And on March 3, one of the world's greatest pianists, **Angela Hewitt**, plays a Beall recital of music by Beethoven, Faure, Ravel's wistfully beautiful *Tombeau de Couperin* and her specialty, J.S. Bach (one of his English Suites).

On Feb. 26, the Shedd hosts Eugene favorite **Maria Jette** (with pianist Sonja Thompson and UO violinist Fritz Gearhart) in an imaginative program of rarely heard songs of British composer Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Eugene's own chamber orchestra, the **Oregon Mozart Players**, perform their always delightful tribute to their namesake at the Hult Center's Soreng Theater Feb. 28 and March 1, in a program featuring Mozart's first great symphony, the dark and dramatic No 25, his lovely *Oboe Concerto* and one of his danceable divertimenti.

This weekend also features a trio of excellent world music concerts. On Thursday, Cozmic Pizza hosts a benefit for Water for People, which supports locally sustainable drinking water resources and sanitation facilities in developing countries. The music is by the high spirited Balkan ensemble **Kef**, which plays irresistible dance music from Eastern Europe on a wide assortment of instruments. On Feb. 20, the **Afro Cuban All Stars**, featuring Buena Vista Social Club co-founder **Juan de Marcos**, perform Cuban jazz at the Hult Center's Silva Hall. Afterwards, you still have time to go from there to one of the year's most highly recommended concerts at the WOW Hall, featuring one of the world's greatest musicians, Zimbabwean Afro pop pioneer **Thomas Mapfumo**, and the Bay Area's **Albino**, which channels and jazzes up the style of Nigerian Afropop master Fela Kuti.

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