

The Future is Now

A feast of today's best composers

Looking at most orchestra programs, you'd be forgiven for imagining that composers stopped writing music around the turn of the century — the 19th century, that is. Fortunately, the **University of Oregon School of Music** understands that today's musicians are creating art that speaks to our 21st-century ears. UO music prof **Robert Kyr** brings some of the nation's most adventurous musical creators to the school's bi-annual **Music Today Festival**, opening Monday, Feb. 21, at Beall Hall with a headlining concert by the **Ralph Alessi Jazz Quintet**. Trumpeter/composer Alessi's progressive jazz sounds entice fans of straight-ahead jazz as well as more vanguard types. Tuesday's show features the Pennsylvania-based sax and guitar Duo Montagnard playing music by 20th century postclassical composers. The UO Trombone choir concert at Beall Wednesday, Feb. 22, features two world premieres and, later that evening at Aasen-Hull Hall, two UO student music ensembles — the new **Loaded Dice** and **Sospiro** — will perform music by the engagingly out there composer Mark Applebaum and more.

The **Eugene Contemporary Chamber Ensemble** concert Feb. 24 offers music by the great contemporary American composer Frederic Rzewski, plus student compositions. The Aasen-Hull concert Friday, Feb. 25, features the local **TaiHei Ensemble** with Bay Area-based soprano **Rebecca Stahlberg** playing contemporary music by composers influenced by the ever-intersecting cultures of the Pacific Rim. That same evening, Portland jazz pianist **Randy Porter** joins the **Oregon Jazz Ensemble**, while Saturday afternoon's **Oregon Percussion Ensemble** concert at Beall offers music by one of today's most popular composers, **Jennifer Higdon** and another highly respected contemporary composer, **John Harbison**, as well as three ur-classics by the inventors of the percussion ensemble, John Cage and Portland-born **Lou Harrison**.

The **Future Music Oregon** performance Feb. 26 at Schnitzer Hall offers electronic and digital music by **Oregon Electronic Device Orchestra**, and Sunday afternoon's **University Symphony** concert at Beall has 20th century French composer Darius Milhaud's jazzy *Creation of the World* and his Czech contemporary Zoltan Kodaly's *Hary Janos Suite*. That evening's Beall concert boasts another new UO ensemble, **Ambrosia**, playing works by UO and other contemporary composers.

The festival closes with two top choices: Monday, Feb. 28 at Beall, the **Convergence Ensemble** sings 20th century music by the UO's own Kyr, Benjamin Britten, John Taverner and more, while Tuesday's Aasen-Hull concert features the UO's own **Beta Collide** faculty ensemble playing music by Applebaum, Pulitzer Prize-winner **David Lang**, two world premieres by Korean composers, and more.

Seattle-based traditional Scottish singer/storyteller **Rich Hill** returns to the UO's Collier House on Feb. 20 with the women's



Jessie Marquez

Gaelic a cappella ensemble **Kitchen Ceilidh**. And on Feb. 17 at the EMU, there's a free concert and art exhibit called **Pueblo a Pueblo**, featuring Argentine singer and classical guitarist **Cecilia Zabala** leading a musical tour of South America.

Eugene chanteuse **Jessie Marquez** unveils Feb. 18 at the Shedd her breezy new CD, *All I See is Sky*, adding Brazilian grooves to her trademark Cuban-style music. Also at the Shedd on Thursday through Sunday, Feb. 24-27, singer **Siri Vik** and her trio perform theater songs by Kurt Weill and Bertholt Brecht. **Todd Johnson** plays haunting didjeridu music Feb. 27 at First United Methodist Church.

The Feb. 17 offering by **Eugene Symphony**, perhaps the prime pick of its season, features the terrific UO faculty piano duo of **Claire Wachter** and **Dean Kramer** in the great piano concerto by Milhaud's French colleague Francis Poulenc. Get to the Hult an hour early to enjoy some of ESO's musicians performing Poulenc's enchanting sonatas for flute, piano and clarinet. The symphony program includes Nikolai Rimsky Korsakov's masterpiece, *Scheherazade*, based on the Arabian Nights tales.

On Feb. 26, ESO accompanies the **Eugene Concert Choir's** performance of Mozart's great Mass in C Minor. At Springfield's Wildish Theater on Feb. 28, the excellent **Chamber Music Amici** performs a delectable program of trios by Dvorak and Beethoven.

On Tuesday, Feb. 22, Cozmic Pizza hosts a double CD debut show with Portland singer/cellist **Ashia Grzesik** unveiling music from her new Eastern-European influenced EP *Bison Rouge*, with help from accordionist **Todd Bayles** and cellist/guitarist **Skip von Kuske**, who'll also perform in his duo Groovy Wallpaper, featuring percussionist **Don Henson** from Sneakin' Out. The Guinean drumming of **Mounafanyi** is at Cozmic Feb. 19. Portland-based **MarchFourth Marching Band** plays Feb. 18 at WOW Hall, with **Medium Troy** opening. Avant improv musician **Daniel Heifa** unveils his old-timey songwriting project, Daniel Boone's Fault, with the rootsy Low Tide Drifters Feb. 26 at Wandering Goat. **EW**

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WHEN: Wednesday, Feb. 23
6:00 - 8:00 PM

WHERE: Northwest Community
Credit Union, 3660 Gateway Street, Springfield

COST: \$10 per person includes entry, appetizers & drinks

- Keynote address by Joshua Skov, Chair of the Eugene Sustainability Commission & Principal of Good Company
- See the latest electric vehicle prototype from Arcimoto
- Browse educational displays from various GreenLane members
- Enter to win a hand-cranked blender from the The Green Store

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