

Rivers Run Through It

The music scene flows through Eugene

In late 2009, the fine experimentalist/post-minimalist composer Eve Beglarian decided to escape her New York bubble, and spent more than four months paddling and pedaling down the Mississippi River by bike and kayak from at its source in Minnesota to New Orleans, talking to and performing with and for the people who lived along the way, recording the sounds she heard, and of course writing music that reflected her journey. On April 11, we'll get to see and hear what she discovered in a concert at Beall Concert Hall featuring other most welcome musical visitors, the Northwest's finest new music ensemble, **Third Angle**, who also find their way here from Portland along a river path, the highway that parallels the Willamette, and the superb musicians of Eugene's own **Beta Collide**. As part of their quarter-century celebration, Third Angle also commissioned a brand new work from Beglarian, who over a two-decade career has won deserved renown for creating compelling sounds that involve global musical influences, digital technology, early music and avant theater music. UO horn prof Lydia Van Dreel will join them to premiere her new piece.

That's only one of several powerful modern musical currents flowing through the university this month. On Tuesday, April 5, two more UO new music stalwarts, electronic music prof Jeffrey Stolet and singer/scholar Nicholas Isherwood, will bring contemporary sounds from Paris, Rome, Brussels, the San Francisco Bay area and Marseilles, plus one of the last works of the visionary 20th century composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, with whom Isherwood collaborated for 23 years, and whose appearance on the cover of Sgt. Pepper demonstrates the influence he wielded over the Fab Four during their most adventurous period. The concert at the music school's Thelma Schnitzer Hall includes music for bass-baritone voice and various electronic accompaniment includes a world premiere, a setting of texts by Petrarch and by the great 20th century Jorge Luis Borges, Stolet's own homage to a Japanese film star, and much more.

On April 7 at Beall, the **UO Chamber Choir** sings a new work by still another UO new music master, composer Robert Kyr, and other new and old works from Monteverdi to Billy Joel. On April 10, the UO's Chamber Music @Beall series ends its season with the Prague-based **Pavel Haas String Quartet** (named after the fine 20th century Czech composer

killed at Auschwitz) in powerful 20th century works by Dmitri Shostakovich and Benjamin Britten and a 19th century classic by their countryman Antonin Dvorak.

Chamber music fans should also check out the local ensemble, **Chamber Music Amici**, which is composed of present and former UO faculty members and guests. On April 11 at Springfield's Wildish Theater, they'll perform Mozart's delightful first Piano Quartet and, commendably, a pair of contemporary works: Paul Schoenfeld's upbeat "Carolina Reverie Quartet" and Amici pianist Victor Steinhardt's own works for oboe, viola and cello. Even some of the post-concert treats come from near the UO — Excelsior Café.

The city's other major musical tributary, the Shedd, also reaches flood stage this month. On April 6, its Jaqua Concert Hall again hosts some frequent visitors who know a little bit about the Mississippi, the fabulous, groundbreaking Cajun band **BeauSoleil**, arrives from Lafayette, Louisiana to play at a jazz party — they'll pull out the pews and tables so you can dance if you want, or sit in the balcony or the back if you prefer. April 7 brings the African American a cappella folk legends **Sweet Honey in the Rock**, now approaching their 40th anniversary of singing socially conscious songs in genres from spirituals to reggae, hip hop to jazz, gospel to blues.

Finally, on April 13, the Shedd hosts the greatest male jazz singer of his generation, backed by a quartet featuring pianist **Laurence Hobgood**. Kurt Elling's latest album does what OG jazzers did back in the day: take current pop songs and jazz 'em up. But later jazzers kept recycling the pop tunes of the '30s and '40s for the next several decades, or, worse, clueless crooners (e.g. Bing Crosby's "Hey Jude") produced mannered, emasculated versions of contemporary rock hits. On his solid new disk, *The Gate*, perhaps influenced by his pop savvy producer, Don Was, Elling avoids those pitfalls. Way past the need to show off his considerable improvisatory and vocal chops, the 2010 Grammy winner stays close to the original tunes, working more with atmosphere than melodic embellishment, yet finding new dimensions that apparently always lurked in well worn classics by Stevie Wonder, John Lennon, Joe Jackson, King Crimson and others, while also adding original interpretations of jazz classics by Miles Davis & Bill Evans, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter and more. **ew**

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