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BILL CHARLAP

## STURDY SONGBOOK

Elvis Costello, Brahms and Shakespeare lead up to Hallow's Eve.

When rock came along, it seemed to spell doom for the so-called Great American Songbook, those perennials composed by (mostly) New York-based songwriters from the 1920s through the mid 1950s. But those hardy tunes keep finding new life in various guises, and not just in cabaret or karaoke croon sessions. In Oregon, there's no better evidence for their robustness than The Shedd. On Saturday, Oct. 27, it brings back for the fourth appearance the great jazz pianist **Bill Charlap**. The son of a Broadway composer (Moose Charlap) and pre-rock pop singer (Sandy Stewart), Charlap has over the past 15 years managed to find new life in those old songs and others, and his impeccable, energetic performances demonstrate their lasting power.

Many of those classic tunes originated in stage musicals or films, and next Thursday and Sunday (Nov. 1 and 4), The Shedd features a sort of repurposing that brings many of the songs back to the place of their birth — the stage — but in a new context. Singer-actress **Shirley Andress** and stage director **Richard Jessup** take 18 songbook classics (by Harold Arlen, the Gershwins and also tunes from recent musicals and contemporary songwriters, like Elvis Costello and Burt Bacharach's "God Give Me Strength") to create a new, scripted, jukebox musical-style, one-woman show that traces a character's emotional journey from despair to hope.

You can hear classic stage music in close to its original context this Friday, Oct. 26, when **Cascadia Concert Opera** gives its final performance of Otto Nicolai's comic opera, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, at LCC's Ragozzino Hall. But rather than a fully staged production, the company is presenting a concert version of Shakespeare's Falstaffian farce with piano accompaniment, a nine-member cast featuring singer-actors from around California and Oregon and an eight-member chorus. It's a treat to see this plucky, accomplished outfit expanding its reach from small venues to larger spaces.

I mentioned that Bill Charlap comes from a musical family, and in fact he's married to another fine jazz pianist (Renee Rosnes). On Sunday, Nov. 4, another accomplished musical couple appears in the University of Oregon's **ChamberMusic@Beall** series. Longtime Emerson Quartet cellist **David Finckel** and pianist **Wu Han** not only perform and record (11 CDs) together; they also direct the prestigious Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and Music@Menlo festival. In their Beall Hall concert, they'll play an excellent program of sonatas by Beethoven (one of his finest chamber works), Debussy (ditto), Brahms and Shostakovich.

Speaking of intimate sounds, on Monday, Oct. 29, at Springfield's Wildish Theater, the excellent local players of **Chamber Music Amici** perform a classic, Brahms's breakthrough *Piano Quartet No. 1*, and a rarity worth hearing by one of his friends: Austrian composer Heinrich von Herzogenberg's *String Trio No. 2*, which bears distinct Brahmsian and Beethovenian influences.

Back at the UO, the season is in full swing with several recommended concerts. This Sunday, Oct. 28, the student **Tardis Ensemble** play 20th-century music that responds to poetic words and images by Copland, Barber, Britten and more at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art. The same afternoon, the **University Symphony's** first program under conductor David M. Jacobs at Beall Hall includes a short work by the rising young Princeton composer Chris Rogerson (who's studied with composers from Aaron Kernis to Jennifer Higdon), Dvorak and Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 5*. Also at Beall, you can hear a ton o' tubas on Oct. 31's **OcTUBAfest**, and a heap o' harpies on Nov. 3's **Harp Day**, including a concert featuring Corvallis composer-harpist **Julia Kay Jamieson**. There's new music by UO students on Nov. 6's free **Oregon Composers Forum** concert and on Nov. 7, the marvelously monikered New York-based **Genghis Barbie**, "the leading post post-feminist feminist all-female horn experience," plays arrangements of pop music from the '70s to today — sort of a Portland Cello Project for horny women.

Finally, on All Hallow's Eve (Oct. 31), try **Mood Area 52's** annual live performance of their original, tango-fueled live score (cello, accordion, guitar, bass, drums, cornet, toy piano) to F.W. Murnau's classic silent vampire flick *Nosferatu* at the Bijou Art Cinemas. It's always a neat trick, and a treat to boot. ■

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