

# PARADE OF PORTLANDERS

Rose City performers descend on Eugene

Once upon a time, it seemed as though music, like the Willamette, flowed mainly to the north: Eugene bands worked hard to play Portland, but the favor wasn't always returned, especially in the classical and jazz arenas. More and more, though, we're seeing Portland performers recognizing the value of the Eugene market and, accordingly, this winter and spring brings a parade of Portlanders here to perform additional, even exclusive concerts.

On Jan. 23, seven of Portland's finest singers (drawn from its top choirs) and Baroque musicians (including members of the city's Musica Maestrale period instrument ensemble) arrive at Central Lutheran Church when **The Ensemble** performs the music from one of the first and greatest of all English operas. Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* recounts the tragic relationship between the Carthaginian queen and the hero of the Trojan War. They'll also perform music from a slightly earlier English Baroque opera, John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*.



That same night, **Portland Cello Project** (PCP) comes to Hi-Fi Music Hall to play its ever-changing mix of pop, hip hop, rock and classical covers on a flock of cello.

If Portland Cello Project plays rock music on "classical" instruments, **Amplified Repertory Chamber Orchestra of Portland** (ARCO) does the converse, performing classical music in rock clubs and with rock attitude. The band's Feb. 13 WOW Hall program sounds traditional — Bach, Beethoven, Brahms — but what makes ARCO special is its decidedly non-traditional colorful stage lighting, tasteful amplification, informal atmosphere (which includes quaffing a beer or two while you watch), memorized performances (which means real attention to expression and audience connection rather than hiding behind music stands and just getting the notes right) as well as uninhibited, emotionally expressive performances. They play the music as accurately as any of their local classical peers, but with way more fun and excitement. And they'll also play new music by ARCO violinist Mike Hsu.

ARCO-PDX and PCP are leading contributors to Portland's burgeoning indie-classical music scene, in which the composers and musicians themselves, rather than big institutions like the Oregon Symphony or presenters like Chamber Music Northwest, are blazing new trails, especially in homegrown and new contemporary classical music. Another is **Cascadia Composers**, the organization of Northwest composers that sponsors eight or so concerts each year exclusively featuring the music of its members, who also include accomplished Eugene composers like **Paul Safar** and **Mark Vigil**.

On Jan. 30, Cascadia returns for its second Eugene performance that not even Portlanders will get to hear. Its multisensory *Perceptions of Sound* enhances the original music (by Eugeneans **Safar and Alexander Schwarzkopf** and top Portland composers like Susan Alexander, Jeff Winslow, Lisa Ann Marsh and more) with special lighting effects, immersive visual displays, mobile musicians, video art, live cymatics and more. Musicians from both Eugene (including **Delgani String Quartet**) and Portland sing and play percussion, strings, synthesizer, winds, amplified harpsichord and "Robohorn," which you'll just have to experience.

Portland jazzers also venture south more often these days, thanks to The Jazz Station and other venues such as the intimate Broadway House concert series, whose Jan. 30 installment features the superb Portland pianist-organist-drummer-trumpeter **George Colligan** and his trio, for their third appearance. Colligan also performs with Eugene's Joe Manis, and creative collaborations like theirs, Cascadia Composers and more are what's really exciting about the increasing Eugene-Portland musical connection: not just bringing music fans in each city music from the other, but also cross-fertilizing, and thereby enriching, the music of both. — *Brett Campbell*

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Questions? Contact director  
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