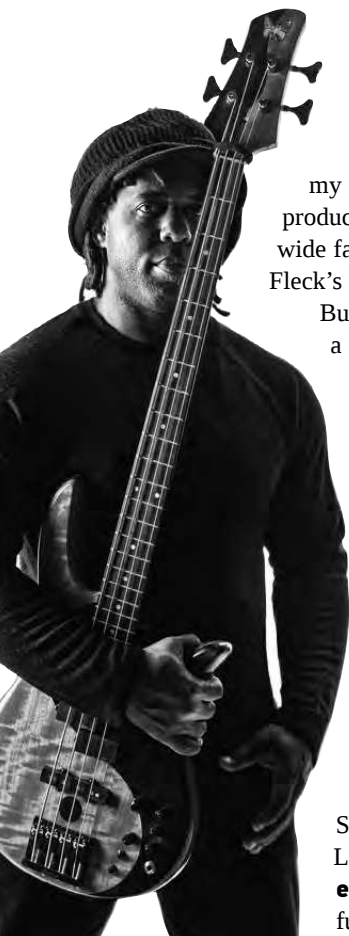


MUSICAL TREATS

January brings sparkling performances to town



In any contest to name the mythical “world’s greatest electric bassist,” **Victor Wooten** would score right at the top. The five-time Grammy winner — who also composes, produces and teaches — gained worldwide fame for his buoyant work in Béla Fleck’s Flecktones, which continues.

But he’s also somehow maintained a scintillating solo performing career despite all his many activities. His trio with the comparably virtuosic former Parliament/Funkadelic drummer Dennis Chambers and saxophonist Bob Franceschini leans toward jazz and funk styles, and fans of bass deity Jaco Pastorius’s dazzling work in jazz-fusion legends Weather Report will find some familiar thrills. They’re playing at The Shedd this Saturday, Jan. 13.

The following Friday, The Shedd moves from funky jazz to Latin jazz when the **Carl Woideck Jazz Heritage Project** infuses the classic jazz of Theloni-

ous Monk, Miles Davis and John Coltrane with Latin jazz rhythms like samba, bossa nova and more.

The mood turns bluesy the following night when The Shedd reprises another of its popular series, Mark Hummel’s Blues Harmonica Blowout. This celebration of Chicago blues features Billy Boy Arnold, former Muddy Waters bandleader and guitarist John Primer, RJ Mischo, Chicago blues singer Deitra Farr (vocalist; Chicago Blues Hall of Fame), Oscar Wilson and more blues belters and harp blowers.

For a more intimate jazz show, head over to the little bungalow at Broadway and Adams Jan. 19 to catch one of Oregon’s finest jazz masters, **George Colligan**, with his recently arrived Portland State University faculty colleague, singer Sherry Alves, in a program of jazz standards. Like Colligan, who’d become a top-call pianist and organist on the New York jazz scene before escaping to Oregon, Alves earned a national reputation for jazz vocals and performed with stars including Kurt Elling, Allen Toussaint, Sara Bareilles, Ben Folds and more.

Speaking of singing, it doesn’t come much sweeter than **Ladysmith Black Mambazo**’s spirited South African a cappella sound, which suffuses The Shedd on Wednesday, Jan. 24. The four-time Grammy winners have been entertaining fans around the world with their expertly coordinated song and dance performances for more than four decades. Most famous for the work on Paul Simon’s *Graceland* album, they’ve also performed with everyone from Emmylou Harris to Stevie Wonder and many, many more, and yet every time I’ve seen them, no matter how big the venue, they’ve managed to connect with audiences in an almost personal way.

A very different yet equally powerful group vocal performance arrives at Central Lutheran Church on Saturday, Jan. 13, when the sublime singers of **The Ensemble** sing a relatively under-performed set of some of J.S. Bach’s tastiest

music. Even without the arias and more elaborate orchestration of his famous cantatas, Bach’s half-dozen (depending on how you categorize them) surviving motets constitute some of his richest and most complex choral music.

It takes exceptional singers to perform them with only one voice singing each part, which affords a wonderful intimacy and transparency. Happily, three of them will be performed by this all-star team drawn from Portland’s finest choirs, who’ll also sing arias from two Bach cantatas. A bonus Bach cello sonata provides an instrumental interlude.

The very next afternoon, Jan. 14, you can hear even more rarely performed Baroque music at United Lutheran Church, 22nd and Washington, when **Oregon Bach Collegium** plays compositions from a region not typically associated with those sounds. Blame Catherine the Great, who strove to bring the most sophisticated Western arts to Russia, enticing several top Italian composers to the courts of St. Petersburg and Moscow. But Eastern Europe also home-brewed its own Baroque compositions, and the OBC trio of violinist Holly Roberts, cellist UO faculty member Marc Vanscheeuwijck and harpsichordist Margret Gries will play music from Polish Baroque composers as well as Italian composers living in Russia.

Finally, the new year brings glad tidings of another source of contemporary classical music to join the rising tide of the last few years. The **Spontaneous Combustion New Music Festival** brings accomplished performers from Oregon, New York and beyond to three West Coast cities to play new music by today’s composers.

The first Eugene concert, Tuesday, Jan. 23, at New Zone Gallery, 220 W. 8th Avenue, features Boston flutist Orlando Cela, who’s premiered well over 100 new works, playing music by Jean-Patrick Besingrand, Daniel Schnyder, Paolo Geminiani, the great flutist Robert Dick, Mac Waters, and an oldie by Marin Marais.

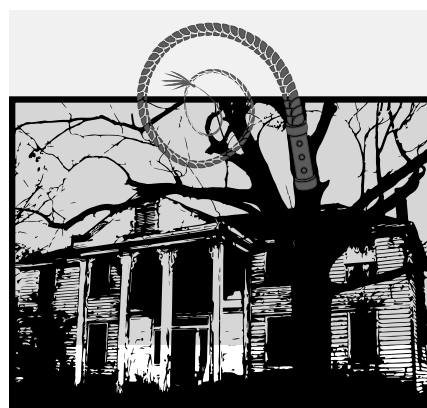
We’ll tell you a lot more about the festival next time. ■

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