

NATURAL MUSIC

A week of music seeking communion with the world

Someone should make a movie about **Joseph Boulogne**, le Chevalier de Saint-Georges. Fencing champion, dashing soldier (an officer in Europe's first all-black regiment, he was entrusted by Louis XIV as one of his bodyguard), violin virtuoso, conductor of one of Europe's best orchestras and much more — he was an 18th-century superstar.

Besides his many adventures, Boulogne was also the first composer of African ancestry to rock the classical world. His music, long neglected by the old classical music establishment's polite racism, has recently been getting a lot more attention, not least because someone *did* make that movie.

Canada's fine Tafelmusik orchestra recorded some of Boulogne's orchestral music for the soundtrack and CD *The Black Mozart*, about a decade ago. But his chamber music is harder to find, so **Chamber Music Amici's** performance of a violin and piano sonata and a quartet on Monday, Feb. 12, at The Shedd is a rare treat. The concert also includes the lovely *Lyric Quartette* by one of America's finest black composers, William Grant Still (recorded years ago by Eugene's own Oregon String Quartet), and a nature-inspired contemporary quartet by African-American composer Jonathan Bailey Holland written in 2016 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service.

The **Eugene Symphony** performs another concert pairing contemporary nature inspired music and 18th-century sounds next Thursday, Feb. 15. One of today's most entertaining and accomplished violinists, **Rachel Barton Pine**, stars in Vivaldi's familiar yet still fab *Four Seasons* violin concertos, which so movingly evoke seasonal natural sounds. You've never seen them like this, though, because the orchestra's performance will be augmented by visual imagery of our own McKenzie River, chosen from over 600 photos and videos submitted by Lane County residents (see EW "Rolling on the River," 2/1).

Nature also inspired the program's 21st-century composition by a young California composer and former classmate of ESO music director Francesco Lecce-Chong who deeply impressed audiences last summer when she was a resident composer at Portland's Chamber Music Northwest. **Gabriella Smith** wrote her colorful *Tumblebird Contrails* to recapture the rapture she felt at the seaside during a three-day backpacking trip in Point Reyes, California. The third composition, Edward Elgar's *In the South*, conveys the warm relaxation the English Romantic composer felt when on vacation in Italy, reminiscent of similar Italian postcards by cold-weather composers like Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky.

If you'd rather just bask in those 17th-century sounds without modern intrusions, check out **Ensemble Primo Seicento's** performance of early Italian Baroque music for organ, harpsichord, cornetto, sackbut, recorder and voice Sunday, Feb. 11, at Church of the Resurrection (3925 Hilyard Street).

Unfortunately, that's the same afternoon that another ensemble of early music specialists, **Música Eugenia**, plays still more nature-nourished Spanish music from the 13th to 21st centuries at United Lutheran Church (2230 Washington Street). The show includes music for guitar, percussion and voice from the Spanish Renaissance, Baroque and Romantic eras, a 20th-century piece by Federico Moreno Torroba as well as a new Spanish song written by the ensemble.

Still another Spanish Baroque composer, Antonio Soler, is on the program, along with J.S. Bach and his son J.C.F., at a harpsichord and viola da gamba recital by **Kraig Scott** and **University of Oregon professor Marc Vanscheeuwijck** Friday, Feb. 16, at the UO's new Berwick Hall.

Speaking of the UO, its wonderful world music series features renowned Indian musician **Ustad Shafaat Khan**, who's performed played sitar with rock stars like Stevie Wonder at Bonnaroo as well as a wide assortment of musicians from many traditions. On Wednesday, Feb. 21, at Beall Hall, he'll play classical and multicultural fusion compositions for sitar, tabla and voice.

There's plenty of excellent non-classical music happening too, at even more intimate venues. On Valentine's Day, you can hear one of America's greatest songwriters in any genre, **Peter Case**, in a house concert at 755 River Road. The former Plimsoul leader took his pure pop in a folkier direction on famous '80s albums featuring backup musicians like Roger McGuinn, Mike Campbell, John Hiatt, Ry Cooder and more, and has since worked with T Bone Burnett and Ben Harper.

Another house concert Feb. 16 at Broadway House features **Josh Hettwer's** new original music at the CD release show of the Eugene saxophonist's new quintet CD. For more information, and to reserve seats, contact Paul Bodin at 541-686-9270.

Speaking of jazz, the next night at The Shedd, one of the world's most enchanting American music legends, Seattle guitarist/composer **Bill Frisell** joins bassist **Thomas Morgan** in music from one of the finest CDs I heard last year. Their duo recording *Small Town*'s tunes range from jazz to rock to country to film score classics, Friselled into uniquely alluring beauties. ■



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