

AUTUMN VOICES

A flurry of hot musical concerts will help keep the damp depression of the November chill at bay

Any contest for the greatest songwriter of all time has to rank Franz Schubert near the top. He wrote 600 of them, after all, despite dying at 31, many still sung today, nearly 200 years after he died.

But Schubert also wrote bigger, though less known, vocal compositions, including 39 sacred works. The last few seem to incorporate the drama and desire he'd mastered in writing for a single voice into emotionally powerful music on a grander scale.

This Friday, Nov. 2, at Beall Concert Hall, **Eugene Vocal Arts** and **Eugene Concert Orchestra** perform Schubert's gorgeous next-to-last Mass in A flat. While we don't hear it performed nearly as often as other Romantic sacred works by, say, Brahms and Beethoven, it's visionary and rises to that same heavenly level. The concert also features secular German romanticism by Brahms, Mendelssohn and Schumann.

Vibrant vocals resound at Beall next Saturday, Nov. 10, as the resurgent **Oregon Mozart Players** continue their season-long celebration of the great American conductor/composer/music advocate Leonard Bernstein's centenary.

"I like that last piece you played," President Eisenhower once told Bernstein. "It's got a theme. I like music with a theme, not all them arias and barcarolles." (The first word refers to the solo songs in operas, the second to music in the style of the folk songs crooned by Venetian gondoliers to match their paddle strokes.)

Amused, the composer never forgot Ike's remark, and nearly three decades later, he used it as the title of his last major work. Ranging in styles from Broadway to Bartók to Mahler and compiled from compositions over several decades, the eclectic *Arias and Barcarolles* does have a theme — marriage — and OMP performs it with, appropriately, a husband and wife

team of soloists, **Paul Scholten** and **Kathryn Leemhuis**.

The show also features another voice (perhaps that should be "Voice"), the rich mahogany bass baritone of our own **Peter van de Graaff**. The nationally renowned veteran classical radio host, who calls Eugene (and KWAX radio) home these days, is the narrator in Aaron Copland's classic setting of altogether more-inspiring presidential words: *Lincoln Portrait*.

Both Copland and Bernstein, our greatest advocates of contemporary American music, would have been pleased to share OMP's program with a living American composer. LA-based Adam Schoenberg is now one of the most performed composers of his generation, but he was only 25 and a student of John Corigliano when he wrote *Finding Rothko* in 2006. Inspired by the great American abstract painter Mark

Rothko, who grew up in Portland, it too has a theme, a musical phrase that connects the four movements, each named for a prominent color (red, yellow, orange, wine) in Rothko's palette and each representing one of his paintings.

Speaking of American imagery, that's actually the title of another all-American concert Sunday, Nov. 4, at First Baptist Church. **Eugene Symphonic Band's** fall show includes more Bernstein (the beautiful closing song from his great operetta *Candide*, "Make Our Garden Grow," and a "Wrong-Note Rag"), an *American Barndance* (by Richard Saucedo), Morton Gould's *Santa Fe Saga*, and yes, still another vocal work: *Five Folk Songs for Soprano and Band*. Jennifer Quinnelly sings Bernard Gilmore's 1963 settings of Irish, American, Greek, Spanish and Yiddish songs, representing our multicultural nation in music.

One of Oregon's great voices, **Rebecca Kilgore**, brings her jazz trio (which includes the superb pianist **Randy Porter**) to Broadway House Saturday night, where she'll sing American songbook standards from her forthcoming new CDs. Email Paul Bodin to reserve seats at pbodin@uoregon.edu.

And speaking of the American Songbook, no one alive has done more to advocate and preserve it than **Michael Feinstein**, the pianist and singer who for three decades has been tirelessly advocating the works of our 20th-century legends like his mentor Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Duke Ellington and the rest. He's a fixture on PBS and concert stages around the world, and he's back at The Shedd this Sunday night, Nov. 4, doing his invaluable American music thing.



PETER VAN DE GRAAFF

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