

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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Free “Attracting Pollinators” workshop

Oct 11, 6-8:30pm, McMenamins Kennedy School (5736 NE 33rd Ave, Portland). Attend “Attracting Pollinators to the Urban Garden,” a free sustainable garden workshop at which participants learn about the bees, flies, beetles, moths, and butterflies that provide vital pollination services in urban gardens, and also discover which plants can help attract and support them. For info, or to register (required), call (503) 935-5368 or visit <www.emswcd.org>.

Free “Naturescaping Basics” workshop

Oct 14, 21 & 29; Oct 14, 11:30am-3:30pm, Peninsula Park Community Center (700 N Rosa Parks Way, Portland); Oct 21, 9am-1pm, Woodstock Community Center (5905 SE 43rd Ave, Portland); Oct 29, 1-5pm, Leach Botanical Garden (6704 SE 122nd Ave, Portland). Attend “Naturescaping Basics,” a free sustainable garden workshop at which participants learn to create a low-maintenance landscape that conserves water; prevents pollution; creates a habitat; and saves time, money, and energy. The workshop also offers natural gardening and design tips to help make a garden a healthy place for children, pets, and wildlife. For info, or to register (required), call (503) 935-5368 or visit <www.emswcd.org>.

Medicare information session

Oct 15, 18 & 21; Oct 15, 1:45-3:15pm, Holgate Library (7905 SE Holgate Blvd, Portland); Oct 18, 3:30-5pm, Fairview-Columbia Library (1520 NE Village St, Fairview, Ore.); Oct 21, 11am-12:30pm, Gresham Library (385 NW Miller Ave, Gresham, Ore.). Attend a free information session to learn the basics of the Medicare program and also how it operates for those who are already enrolled. For info, or to register (required), call (503) 988-5123 or visit <events.multcolib.org>.

“Kimchi 101”

Oct 16, 5-6:30pm, North Portland Library (512 N Killingsworth St, Portland). Learn about the fermented cabbage dish known as *kimchi*, a staple of Korean cuisine since its inception in seventh-century Korea, and how to make it, at “Kimchi 101.” For info, or to register (required), call (503) 988-5123 or visit <events.multcolib.org>.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist

Oct 17, 7-8pm, Whole Foods Market, Studio 1, Mount Bachelor Conference Room (3535 NE 15th Ave, Portland). Engage in conversation about literature at a Pageturners discussion sponsored by Friends of the Library. The book for discussion is Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, a book about an immigrant, who after September 11, finds his position in his adopted city of New York suddenly overturned and his identity in seismic shift, which unearths allegiances more fundamental than money, power, and maybe even love. For info, call (503) 988-5123 or visit <events.multcolib.org>.

“Architecture of Internment: The Buildup to Wartime Incarceration”

Oct 17, 7-8:30pm, Walters Cultural Arts Center (527 E Main St, Hillsboro, Ore.). View “Architecture of Internment: The Buildup to Wartime Incarceration,” a travelling exhibit highlighting the role of Oregonians in the decision to incarcerate Japanese Americans during World War II. The display features personal letters and proclamations from Oregonians to then-governor Charles Sprague in 1941 and 1942 advocating for the exclusion and incarceration of Japanese-American Oregonians, along with his responses; blueprints of potential “Assembly Center” and “Relocation Camp” locations such as race tracks and fairgrounds; letters from Japanese Americans expressing outrage about the injustice; and more. For info, call (503) 615-3485 or visit <www.hillsboro-oregon.gov>. To learn more, visit <www.grahamstreetproductions.com>.

“Beginning Cybersecurity”

Oct 21, 2-4pm, Capitol Hill Library (10723 SW Capitol Hwy, Portland). Learn how to stay safe online at “Beginning Cybersecurity.” Topics include creating a secure password (and why to do it), recognizing and avoiding scam e-mails and identity theft, identifying security concerns with mobile apps, and understanding the basics of encryption. Participants may bring a laptop or mobile device or use a library computer. For info, or to register (required), call (503) 988-5123 or visit <events.multcolib.org>.

Mandarin computer basics

Oct 21, Nov 18 & Dec 16, 10:30am-12:30pm, Multnomah County Central Library (801 SW 10th Ave, Portland). Attend classes to learn basic technology skills for computers, taught by friendly, patient staff in Mandarin. For info, or to register (required), call (503) 988-5123 or visit <events.multcolib.org>.

“Family Acceptance” workshop

Oct 22, 4-6pm, Warner Pacific College, Library (2219 SE 68th Ave, Portland). Attend “Family Acceptance,” a workshop featuring Asian-American parents sharing their experiences of confusion, fear, love, acceptance, and celebration of their LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning) children. Parents of LGBTQ youth who would like to talk with other parents who understand the unique cultural issues in the community, LGBTQ people who want to come out to their parents, people who are struggling with family acceptance, and those who have already come out to their parents, caregivers, or other family members are welcome to attend. Dinner is provided. For info, or to register (by October 15), call (503) 877-9379 or e-mail <api.pride@gmail.com>.

Eugene Symphony’s music director commits to creating access to great live music

By Maileen Hamto

The Asian Reporter

Connecting people of all ages in Eugene with the magic and experience of live orchestral music is a priority for Francesco Lecce-Chong, the new music director and conductor for the Eugene Symphony.

Lecce-Chong started conducting at age 16, and has been ascending in his craft ever since.

Thus far in his short but illustrious career, Lecce-Chong, 30, has appeared with orchestras around the world, including the National Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, among others. He has served as assistant conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and music director of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra.

“Every performance is unique; nothing is ever exactly the same. At any given moment, as musicians, we all are feeling slightly different, all reacting slightly differently,” Lecce-Chong said. “I love the challenge and spontaneity, and the people I get to work with.”

For the top musical post at the Eugene Symphony, Lecce-Chong bested 250 candidates from across the United States and more than 40 countries. At his audition concert in March, he connected instantly with Eugene musicians.

“It was a difficult program, and the orchestra played so well together,” he said. “The performance was a perfect mix of intense work and real enjoyment as well.”

As one of the most sought-after conductors of his generation, Lecce-Chong’s travel schedule will continue to be busy. And he considers himself “lucky” to have a home base in Oregon.

“Even though I’ve been living in big cities, it’s great to return somewhere where the outdoors is so important,” said Lecce-Chong, a native of Boulder, Colorado.

“Nature and music go very well together. Eugene is a beautiful city to be part of the art scene.”

While settling into his new role, getting to know the community is on the top of his to-do list. Thus far, he has been busy becoming acquainted with the staff and musicians of the orchestra, as well as the symphony’s expansive support base in Eugene and beyond.

“No one goes to an orchestra concert and walks away feeling underwhelmed,” he said. “My biggest priority is to make sure everyone is connected to all that we’re doing, and



MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR. Connecting people of all ages in Eugene with the magic and experience of live orchestral music is a priority for Francesco Lecce-Chong, the new music director and conductor for the Eugene Symphony. Lecce-Chong started his four-year position with the Eugene Symphony this summer. (Photo/Amanda L. Smith Photography)

to feel connected to the music.”

“In a perfect world, we’re constantly moving to a spot where every single person in Eugene will have a chance to hear the Eugene Symphony,” he explained. “Our goal is to continue to expand what we offer, and be sure everyone has the chance to hear great music.”

Sharing his love for live music, while also ensuring the experience is accessible to people of all backgrounds is important for Lecce-Chong, who is proud of his mixed heritage.

“I grew up in a Chinese and Italian home — third-generation on both sides,” he said. “I learned very quickly about how much fun it is to experience culture.”

His lived experiences in bridging his upbringing with his training in classical piano have instilled an appreciation of and willingness to showcase the cultural artistry of diverse musical traditions whenever he can.

“As a music director, it’s important for me to take a big view of what we’re doing musically, and make sure we have wide cultural diversity in the music, although much of it is western- and European-based,” he said.

Lecce-Chong thoroughly appreciates opportunities to showcase diverse musical styles and origins. This year, he was the guest conductor for the Civic Orchestra of Chicago’s Lunar New Year concert that featured the Shaanxi Province Song and Dance Theatre National Orchestra performing on traditional instruments.

“It’s a joy connecting with musicians, each with their own artistry, personality, and their own

way of connecting with the music.” he said. “I’ve always loved that part about conducting: getting people to work together to create this amazing experience for our audience.”

In his various roles at other orchestras, Lecce-Chong became known for his ability and drive to connect with community and has had great success designing programs that engage youth in music. For the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, he led the nationally renowned Arts in Community Education program, considered among one of the largest arts integration programs in the country. While in Pittsburgh, he offered preconcert talks and conducted concerts for school audiences.

In Eugene, he looks forward to bringing the same passion for creating access to music for people of all backgrounds and ages.

“One of the great things about music is that you don’t need to play or experience it as a professional in order for it to have an amazing effect on you, to allow you to feel creative, to let your imagination run wild,” he said.

“As human beings, we’ve always used music to communicate with each other. Even deeper than spoken language, we are able to connect emotionally through music.”

The next performance of the Eugene Symphony, *Piano Fireworks*, is led by Lecce-Chong and features pianist Conrad Tao. It takes place at 7:30pm on Thursday, October 19 at the Hult Center for the Performing Arts, located at One Eugene Center in Eugene, Oregon. To learn more about Francesco Lecce-Chong and the Eugene Symphony, or to buy tickets, visit <www.eugenesymphony.org>.

STOP THE TEXTS. STOP THE WRECKS.

