

PRELUDE



Vol. XLVI, No. 1 September, 2019 Eugene Symphony Guild Newsletter

Mission Statement: The Eugene Symphony Guild supports the Eugene Symphony Association through fundraising, community education, and volunteer services.

A Meeting With Francesco

It was a typical summer afternoon in late July when three of us from the Symphony Guild had the great pleasure to interview Francesco Lecce-Chong. Melva Boles, Juliet Bender and I were given the privilege of sitting down with Francesco for an hour to talk about several topics. We are very grateful to Francesco for giving us this time out of his super busy schedule. He was gracious as always and gave us so much information that we decided to divide the topics into two articles for the Prelude.

His response to the question about what his dream program would be included three concerts from the 2018/2019 season. He said that there is often a difference between what you dream up and what is actually put on paper, how it is performed and evaluated. He knew when he was 16 that he wanted to be a conductor and spent the next 16 years attending many concerts and dreaming up different programs.

The concerts in the 2018/2019 season which were outstanding for him included the *Doctor Atomic* paired with Brahms's Violin Concerto. This program combined the dark representation of Oppenheimer's moral struggles as he developed the atomic bomb and the sublime beauty of the Brahms's concerto which he said redeems one's hope for humanity.

On top of the list of his favorite programs of that season, besides the *Dr. Atomic*, were Eighth Blackbird and the Sound of Light featuring a work by Scriabin combined with a light orb replicating colors for each note. This concert also included a six month mentorship program which led to five students being selected to create digital art to be projected on a screen behind the orchestra to illustrate the music being performed.

Francesco told us about how his passion for music developed from banging on a beat up old piano that led to piano lessons at age 7. He also studied other instruments including violin and clarinet. While playing in a youth orchestra he expressed an interest in conducting. At age 26 Francesco knew that he wanted to pursue a career as a conductor.

In response to a question about what he looked for in a first rehearsal Francesco said that it was important to listen and react until it comes together. The orchestra will set the bar for itself. He recalled the time when he had the opportunity to shadow Dutch conductor Edo de Waart and learned something new from him every time he interacted with an orchestra.

On the topic of directing from memory, Francesco said that it is helpful to connect with his musicians and see the whole scope of the piece. It is not done to be cool, but it is all about comfort. If he has a lot of concerts in a short period of time he said he would be less inclined to conduct without a score to glance at.

Francesco was also asked about how he felt when debuting with the San Francisco Symphony in June. He said it was *great* and that his parents, who live in San Francisco, were joined by over 100 family and friends in the audience. He said there were even people from Eugene in attendance.

Melva, Juliet and I personally wish to thank Francesco for giving us his valuable time and sharing his thoughts with us. It was such a rewarding interview which we wanted to share with the rest of the Eugene Symphony Guild members through the Prelude.

Suzanne Shapiro

September Guild Meetings

Dates, times and places for the Board and General Membership meetings are listed on the bottom of page two. For a surprise performance this first general meeting see page four for details.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Friends

Where has summer gone? It seems to have vanished in the blink of an eye. There are many fond memories though which will live in our hearts including the wonderful Eugene

Symphony concert in the park at Cuthbert in July. What a fabulous and entertaining program. The orchestra was wonderful, as usual. How do they perform so beautifully in spite of the heat of the night and stage lights and the bugs? I am so grateful that we have the Eugene Symphony and all its educational programs, including the instrument petting zoo, which are spearheaded by Katy Vizdal. Special thanks is due also to the entire ESA staff for their expert management of our orchestra and its many programs on and off stage.

Our first Fall membership meeting is almost upon us. There are quite a few musicians lined up for our fall meetings and new fundraising projects are in the works. Your Board is working hard to maximize our fundraising results while putting the least stress on our members. Stay tuned for further information. Please remember that our membership meetings are now being held at Elmer's at Valley River Center in what was McGrath's Fish House near Valley River Inn. Meeting times are still at

10:15 a.m., with social time and coffee at 10:00. I have been adding in more social time during meetings as time allows and we are no longer programming both a musician and speaker in each program. Programs end no later than 12:00 p.m., and members going out for lunch after the meeting are encouraged to patronize Elmer's for giving us free space for our meetings.

We held a lovely luncheon in June when the new board officers were installed. Though attendance was not as good as hoped those attending enjoyed meeting friends, wine, lunch and a wonderful performance on keyboard given by our Young Artist Competition senior winner, Michelle Sulaiman. I personally wish to give thanks for the gifts of lovely flowers and wonderful scarf, which I plan to wear frequently, given to me at the luncheon. It has been a challenging year as first year Guild president, but I am very grateful for the support and kind words given me by Guild members. Special thanks to Carolyn Abbott for guiding me through the forest of my first year.

— Suzanne



September Meetings, Places and Times

The September Board meeting on Wednesday, September 11, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., at Quail Run Clubhouse, 435 Covey Lane.

The General Membership meeting, Wednesday, September 18, 10:00 a.m. social time, 10:15 a.m. meeting time, location is Elmer's restaurant in Valley River to the left of Valley River Inn. Please note:

1. Everyone please sign in on the list by the front entrance to the room and designate as a guest any friend, neighbor or family member you bring to the meeting.
2. Fill out and stick to clothing a name tag.
3. Take one raffle ticket, and place half in basket (there will be a surprise raffle gift given out at the end of the meeting).
4. Place any books you wish to give away in box before meeting starts and collect any books you want to take home at the end of the meeting.

SOCIAL NOTES and NEWS

Armchair Travelers will be held on Monday, September 23, at 7:00 p.m. at Bonnie Fromhold's house. Sandy Harland's niece Lynne Lucas will talk to us about an international organization called Days for Girls which empowers women and girls worldwide through sustainable menstrual care and health education.

Book Note participants will be reading these books over the next three months:
September 9th - *Educated* by Tara Westover at Edna DeHaven's at 7:00 p.m.
October 14th - *Becoming* by Michelle Obama at Sandy Harland's at 7:00 p.m.
November 11th - *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly at Glenda Hay's at 7:00 p.m.

Bar Hopping enthusiasts will gather at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 12, at the Oregon Electric Station located at 27 E. 5th Street. Please join us as we explore new venues and enjoy this special monthly social time with one another. Let's catch up on summer adventures! Hope to see you there!

The **Second Friday Guild Bridge** group will be held on Friday, September 13, at Bonnie Fromhold's house from 1:00-4:00 p.m.. Please call her to reserve a place.

Weekly Walking Hour is scheduled for these Tuesday mornings from 9:30-10:30 a.m., September 3, 10, 17 and 24. If you are new to the group, please call Nancy Holloman to be added to the email notification of the starting point. Walks begin in different places each week and are usually on level ground.



Sandy Harland, Bonnie Fromhold and Edwena Matychuck spent the day selling prize drawing tickets for ten fabulous baskets at the Garden Tour this summer.

MUSICAL CHAIRS! New Orleans/Louisiana Low Country Dinner featuring Frogmore Stew

Frogmore Stew is not a stew and it contains NO Frogs! It is a classic Low Country South Carolina dish. It is also known as Low-Country boil. Join us on the terrace of the Tate for the version of Frogmore Stew that contains four ingredients: red skin potatoes, sausage, corn and shrimp. You will also enjoy traditional side dishes and desserts from New Orleans and Louisiana Low Country. September 22, 5—8 p.m.. \$45 per person. For reservations and more information, contact Ginger Fifield

MEMBERSHIP PLANS

There are opportunities for members to help the Guild by representing the Guild at lobby tables at three to four concerts this season. This is a great opportunity to talk up the Guild to patrons who stop by and promote membership to those interested.

There will be wine and appetizers at a new member social time this Fall on Thursday, November 7 from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. at a downtown location. Members may attend if they bring a friend, relative, neighbor or acquaintance who is interested in finding out more about the Guild and is interested in joining. We need new members and each one of us is the best liaison with the community to bring in new people.

SEPTEMBER CONCERT PREVIEW

Join us on September 26, 2019, at 7:30 p.m. for the opening Eugene Symphony concert of the 2019/20 season. The program includes works by Kenji Bunch, Max Bruch, and Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

Kenji Bunch (born 1973) is an American composer and violist living and working in Portland, Oregon. He currently works as artistic director of Fear No Music, an ensemble dedicated to exploring and performing great music of the 20th and 21st centuries and promoting education and advancement of young composers. He teaches at Portland State University, Reed College and for the Portland Youth Philharmonic. His featured composition, *Groovebox Variations*, is an infectious tribute to Quincy Jones; it was commissioned and premiered by the Seattle Symphony in 2016.

Max Bruch (1828-1920) was an important figure in 19th-century German musical life, both as a composer and a conductor. *Scottish Fantasy*, a composition for violin and orchestra, was completed in 1880. It is a four-movement fantasy on Scottish folk melodies. Although Bruch visited Scotland for the first time a year after the work's premiere, he had access to Scottish history and lore at the Munich library. In paying homage to the Scottish tradition, the work gives a prominent place to the harp in the instrumental

accompaniment to the violin which will be played by Bulgarian violin star Bella Hristova.

Tchaikovsky's (1840-1893) intensely emotional music combines many influences in an individual style: Russian folk song with Western European technique; nationalism with a deeply personal agenda; and the bombastic with the haunting and beautiful. His Symphony No. 5 in E minor was composed in 1898 and first performed in St. Petersburg of the same year with Tchaikovsky conducting. It is a cyclical symphony, with a recurring main theme which is heard in all four movements. The Symphony, over time, has become one of the composer's most popular. The second movement, in particular, is considered to be classic Tchaikovsky; well-crafted and colorfully orchestrated with a memorable melody for solo horn. In fact, parts of the second movement have been used in numerous movies and served as inspiration for songs.

Don't forget the Eugene Symphony Guild sponsored Concert Preview in The Studio at 6:30 p.m., prior to the concert. Francesco will give an overview of the concert as well as introduce our featured performer, violinist Bella Hristova.

Melva Boles

STAY TUNED

The October 17 concert features Mahler's "Titan" Symphony, the Mendelssohn "Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra" with soloists twin sisters Christina and Michelle Naughton, and "Barnstorming Season" by composer-in-residence Matt Browne.

Symphony Week includes; Symphony Happy Hour - 5:00 p.m. on Monday at First National Tapouse; Performance and Q&A with Christina and Michelle Naughton, 4:00 p.m. Tuesday at Beall Hall; Guild Symphony Preview on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. in The Studio.

Sandra Weingarten

MUSICIANS OF THE MONTH

Featured music at our opening meeting of the season comes from within our ranks!

Our President, Suzanne, a professional opera and choral singer, and Sharron Smith, recently retired Eugene Symphony violinist, will entertain us with two duets. How exciting to see what talent we have among us!

Behind the Curtain — Symphony News



Greetings Guild members,

I hope you enjoyed a spectacular summer and found time for fun, reflection, and plenty of music! Here at the Symphony office we have been as busy as ever, in between finishing out the

2018/19 season, establishing our new staffing structure, and oh yeah, the small matter of producing our run of outdoor summer concerts in late July. I am thrilled to report that it may indeed have been our best year ever, with enthusiastic and overflowing crowds in all three locations. Many patrons reported that our program on July 26 at Cuthbert Amphitheater was their favorite of the 11 so far, while both Cottage Grove and Roseburg (on July 29 and 30 respectively) saw record audiences. In all, we believe we performed for nearly 11,000 Oregonians in the span of five days. Not bad, eh?

We now turn the page and look forward to the rest of our 54th season of music and service, and the third with Music Director & Conductor Francesco Lecce-Chong. Together with our orchestra, our strong Board of Directors, our outstanding administrative team, and of course all of you, we are well poised to have a truly remarkable year. Francesco has planned a fascinating and fulfilling set of programs, ending with a three-concert arc that celebrates how art and creativity help build connections between people, which in turn strengthen our community. I will write more as we get closer to those extraordinary concerts and civic events next March through May 2020.

In the meantime, we look forward first to our Opening Night concert on September 26. We will hear music by native Oregonian Kenji Bunch (who incidentally was a member of the Portland Youth

Philharmonic organization just a few years after I was, way back in a previous century...), followed by Max Bruch's vivid travelogue of the Scottish Highlands played by Bulgarian star violinist Bella Hristova, and finally Peter Tchaikovsky's deeply personal yet thrilling Symphony No. 5. We always like to start each season with a bit of a bang, and this year is no exception. Please join us!

Finally, I can not let this opportunity to address you pass without noting the end of an era. As I communicated in late July, after much discussion with your Guild leadership, we have mutually decided to conclude our partnership of having Guild members staff the front desk as receptionists and greeters. Times have changed, and as our office infrastructure has evolved (with new phone systems, greater reliance on email and texts, and so on) there has been less and less to do each day for our wonderful Guild volunteers. We have now transitioned to inviting volunteers in to help with specific projects on specific days, rather than having somebody come in every day.

We remain, as ever, deeply and profoundly grateful to all of you for what you do to support and sustain the Eugene Symphony, and know that this new structure will not dim our partnership in the least. It will just be, well, different! We hope you come visit us in the office often, and will bring any ideas, questions, concerns, or praise whenever you would like. On behalf of our entire team, THANK YOU!!

My best,
Scott
Scott Freck



Behind the Curtain — Symphony News

Laura Avery Visiting Masters- 2019/20 Master Class Schedule

2019/20 Laura Avery Visiting Masters Series

The *Laura Avery Visiting Masters* program provides aspiring professional and student musicians in the southern Willamette Valley with opportunities to develop their skills through master classes, workshops and demonstrations by distinguished guest artists from the Eugene Symphony's season.

All master classes are free and open to the public.

SEPT. 24, 2019

Violin Master Class

Bella Hristova, *violin*

4:00-5:30 p.m. at The Studio, Hult Center for the Performing Arts

OCT. 15, 2019

Performance and Q&A

Christina & Michelle Naughton, *pianos*

4:00-5:00 p.m. at Beall Hall, University of Oregon School of Music and Dance

Please check with <https://eugenesymphony.org> for updates. A full list of classes will be available in the next Prelude.

YOUTH CONCERT IN NOVEMBER

"World Beats," Tuesday, November 12. Travel around the world to learn of music from different cultures. This is the theme for the upcoming November Youth Concerts.

The Guild's involvement with our Youth Concerts as sponsors and ushers is a long-standing tradition. As the Guild membership has been declining and concert attendance has been growing, there is a greater need for ushers from outside the Guild. This is a great opportunity to invite a friend or neighbor, spouse or relative to help us as a volunteer usher. Providing school children with the experience of listening to a symphony orchestra live is something that should appeal to many people you know. So please ask them to help us. And, who knows, some of them may even join the Guild!

Katy Vizdal of the Eugene Symphony adds, "We are so grateful for all of the passion and support the Eugene Symphony Guild provides to our Youth Concerts each year. Thank you to all of the volunteers who help with these important musical experiences. They are life-changing for the students, and we couldn't do it without all of you!"



Guild memories from last year



A Chorus of Thanks

A very sincere thank you to everyone that provided the much loved cookies for the Music In The Garden.

We topped out over our goal of 100 dozen.

THANK YOU!!

Sylvia

Thank you Barbara Miner for your guidance and support as I learned how to put together the Prelude. I am still learning.... Judy

I wish to thank Carolyn Abbott, Juliet Bender, Sylvia Kaufman, Betsy Patton, Susan Greenwald, Corky Hughes, Judy England and Ginger Fifield for their commitment to serve on our Board of Directors Executive Committee this year. Also due thanks are Sandra Weingarten, Melva Boles, Nancy Holloman and Caroline Manewal for heading up committees or taking on tasks for the Guild. Suzanne

Please feel free to use this space to thank someone or several people. Unsigned thanks are welcome, too. Ed.

Feel free to print a copy of the Prelude when it is delivered to your email for future reference. Current and past issues of the Prelude can be found on the Guild website, <https://eugenesymphonyguild.org/membership/newsletter>



Eugene Symphony Guild
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SEPTEMBER

“Classical music is the best, and cheapest, mind-altering drug in the world.” Kamand Kojouri