

Soirees Musicales to bid adieu at season's end

Burt Saidel



The loyal audience for Don Hageman's *Soirées Musicales* began a year-long farewell on Saturday evening. Don announced last year that 40 years of providing Dayton with an outstanding piano recital series would be enough.

We have been privileged to be part of that audience since the inception. The first years' concerts were held in the historic home on Riverview Terrace that Don shares with Jon Rodriguez.

Moving to the Art Institute and then to Shiloh Church, the series has attracted, through Impresario Don's far-reaching connections, the finest piano artists. I have described the concerts for nearly half that tenure with the greatest pleasure.

To begin this landmark season, Don invited South African native Petronel Malan. Petronel, young, very lovely and full of artistic energy, delighted the audience in 2007. My memory of that wonderful recital did not prepare for this encounter.

Her program, five major works, all had difficulty ratings that would be Olympian. It was both a musical and athletic exhibition. Petronel has the almost unique ability to play with blinding speed and yet retain crystalline clarity, brilliance, emotion and still be full of joy.

What is encouraged by piano competitions finds fulfillment

under the flying fingers and innate musicality of this remarkable young artist. She also brings a musical taste which introduces her audiences to works of more obscure composers. Such names as Stephen Heller and Charles Tomlinson Griffes come to life. In fact, even familiar works have a freshness and excitement, making them seem new.

The concert included works by Haydn, Rachmaninoff and her favorite, Liszt, plus Griffes and Heller. Reading the signature lines of the movements was enough. Her interpretations of *allegro vivace*, *molto tranquillo*, *andante cantabile*, *presto* and *feroce* were expressed with perfection and flowing musicality. As she played, she smiled and moved her arms in graceful, poetic gestures. It is clear that she loves what she does nearly as much as those of us hearing her do.

Now, as we lose *Soirées Musicales*, we must find some new way of attracting this amazing artist to Dayton. All suggestions are gladly accepted.

Musica!

I reach back to Sunday, Oct. 11 and find a day filled with song. Fortunately for all, I was not the one singing.

Musica! is my favorite singing group. Under their director Bob Jones, they plumb the breadth and depth of vocal selections to come up with unusual and exciting programs. Their *métier* is *a cappella* singing but they add instrumental accompaniment on occasion.

For this concert, they went far off the charts and invited Michael and Sandy Bashaw to bring their manifold selection of instruments

to add special zest to the program.

The afternoon began typically with the *Musica!* singers in fine form, performing American folk songs and a few with definitely African accents. In a clever bit of programming, after each set of numbers, a delightful exhibition of "musical chairs" would ensue. The singers would rearrange themselves into interesting patterns before belting out the next songs.

Then Michael and Sandy arrived. They played several very interesting and exciting numbers on guitar and flute. These seemed tame by previous Bashaw standards. It didn't take long, however, for the exotic instruments to be introduced. At one time, I found myself, and the rest of the audience, shaking an elaborate Thai rattle in time with Michael's hand signals.

After each *Musica!* concert, we remind ourselves that they are a wonderful musical adventure. Don't miss their Christmas concerts on Dec. 19 and 20.

Halpern/Dobbs recital

The day of singing continued into the evening. Alan Halpern and Bonnie Dobbs joined with pianist Brian Dobbs in a very impressive recital at the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Both Alan and Bonnie are serious vocalists. Alan serves as cantorial soloist and administrator for Temple Israel. Bonnie is a well known singer and vocal teacher.

Their multi-lingual program covered several centuries and genres. Outstanding selections were Bonnie's rendition of Mozart's "Dove sono" by Mozart and Alan's demanding trilogy of Ravel

songs from *Don Quichotte a Dulcinee*.

Their devotion to their art is so commendable. Their willingness to share their talents is praiseworthy. We remain so grateful to be living in such a talent pool as Dayton.

Dayton Theatre Guild

Again, I have failed my dear readers. The busy schedule and a trip to Chicago kept me away from the Dayton Theatre Guild's second production in their new home until the final performance.

The play, Neil Simon's *The Sunshine Boys*, has been around for a long time. It's "schtick" humor has been around even longer. Simon, in his mid-forties in 1972, created the play using old time vaudeville actors he knew as models.

The recreation by the Theatre Guild required every ounce of "schtick" circulating around the Dayton area and probably some was imported. Director Matthew Smith chose veteran and venerable Ralph Denner to play one of the theatrical fossils. Don Campbell, in debut, was the other.

Together, they milked the material dry, providing a giant dose of real humor without a single pie-in-the-face. They were ably assisted by Mike Stockstill as the foil for much of the comedy. Darling Natasha Randall was the sexy nurse in appropriate lingerie. With a nurse like that, no one would want to get well.

Not busy enough with the new theater, the Guild has inserted an extra play, *Hallelujah Girls*, into the schedule. It plays from Nov. 27 through Dec. For tickets, go www.daytontheatreguild.org.

Tamburitzans perform Nov. 1

The *Tamburitzans* of Duquesne University will perform this Sunday, Nov. 1, at 2pm at the Centerville High School Performing Arts Center. This group of young folk artists is dedicated to the preservation of the music, songs and dances of Eastern Europe and neighboring folk cultures. During the performance the audience is also treated to more than 400 colorful authentic costumes. This production is presented by the South Slavic Club of Dayton. For tickets contact Cityfolk at 496-3863.

The Stepcrew debuts Nov. 7

The internationally acclaimed traditional dance and music ensemble known as The StepCrew, hailed by the *Calgary Herald* as a "sizzling, sensational, [and] definitely must see event," makes its Dayton debut with a concert Saturday, Nov. 7, at the Victoria Theatre, located at 138 N. Main Street in downtown Dayton. The performance, which begins at 8 p.m., launches the 2009-2010 Cityfolk Celtic Series. Reserved seat tickets for the concert are \$21-\$36, and are available from the Cityfolk Box Office at (937) 496-3863. More information is available on the web at cityfolk.org.

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