

Monday, November 4, 2013

Some End of the Semester Performance Highlights

From the beginning of November until the end of the fall semester is always a busy time for OU Music, Theatre and Dance. Music and dance ensembles that have been working for weeks are ready to perform for an audience, and the second theatre production of the year opens in the middle of the November. A few minutes with the season brochure or the OU online calendar will uncover something to suit every taste. Chamber music? Jazz? Symphonic? Opera? The sophisticated wit of one of England's great twentieth-century playwrights? Yes -- we have all that and more. Here are just some of the highlights.



On **November 14**, the **OU Brass Band** will celebrate its fifth anniversary with a recital featuring alumnus and tuba player **Nicholas Adragna** as soloist in a performance of the *Concerto for Tuba* by Martin Ellerby. Mr. Adragna now performs across the country with the Copperstreet Brass Quintet. The concert will also feature **Emily Maas**, who was the third place winner in the North American Brass Band Association's Slow Melody Championship. This was an especially impressive feat, since a number of the competitors came from the professional ranks. She will perform Antonin Dvorak's *Rusalka's Song to the Moon*, which she played in the competition. The band will also perform Philip Wilby's technical show piece, *Paganini Variations*.

Also on **November 14**, the play *Blithe Spirit* by Noël Coward will open its run of nine performances. Director **Thomas M. Suda** describes the play as, "A portrayal of a marriage thrown into comic confusion by the appearance on the scene of what we might describe as the ultimate 'other woman' - coming as she does from the other side, the afterlife." This happens when, as research for his next novel, Charles Condomine engages a medium, Madame Arcati, to conduct a séance, which inadvertently raises the ghost of his late wife, Elvira. For Ruth, Charles's current wife, Elvira's presence is no laughing matter, particularly since Elvira seems eager to reclaim her former husband – either in this world or the next.

On **November 22 and 23**, the **Oakland Chorale and the University Chorus**

will perform off campus at St. Irenaeus Church in Rochester Hills, offering an opportunity for a general audience to enjoy the works the Chorale performed at the recent American Choral Directors Association Michigan Fall Concert in Flint. They received two standing ovations and were, in the words of their proud director **Associate Professor Mike Mitchell**, "the talk of the conference." The concert will feature works of Mozart, Bruckner, Ives, Farrant, Mitchell and music from India, Bulgaria, and more.



The **Oakland Symphony Orchestra** will perform on **November 24**, in a program that will include **Alta**

Dantzler, mezzo-soprano and **Sean Cooper**, bass-baritone, as guests in the exciting one-act opera *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* by Béla Bartók. **Associate Professor Gregory Cunningham**, conductor of the OSO, says, "The entire Oakland Symphony has rarely, if ever, delved into the realization of a complete opera, and I am extremely excited to be giving voice to such an evocative work full of symbolism and allegory. The power and immediacy of the plot and text, sung in English, are magnificently framed by Bartók's music, making it one of my favorite 20th century operas. I am confident that patrons of this concert, within such an intimate space as the Recital Hall, will find it to be a particularly powerful musical experience."

The opera will not be fully staged, but **Associate Professor Kerro Knox** is designing lighting that will, in his words, “enhance the musical experience and assist in the storytelling.” Professor Knox says, “The lighting will help the audience to see what the characters are seeing.”



On **December 5, 6 and 7**, the Oakland Dance Theatre and the OU Repertory Company will perform the dances they have been working on throughout the semester. All the dance faculty have choreographed works that will be included in the annual dance showcase. A unique feature this year will be the inclusion of two classical ballet pieces performed by ODT, which have been choreographed by **Christina Tasco** and by new faculty member **Elizabeth Kattner**. ODT have also been working with guest choreographer **Meg Paul**, who has set *Torelli* on them, a very challenging piece by Twyla Tharp. **Assistant Professor Thayer Jonutz** said, “The dance is different every time it is set, because while there is structure and there are movement themes that repeat, the students are collaborative in the process and the dance is different, depending on how the students respond to the assignments they are given.”

OU Repertory Company has been working with guest choreographer **Kendra Portier**, who has set a dance on them that is a continuation of the ideas she’s been working on through a commission given to her by the Brooklyn Academy

of Music (BAM). Thayer said, “It’s pretty exciting that our dancers are furthering her vision on that work in process.” Kendra is currently dancing with modern dance giant David Dorfman. He is known for his athleticism, and Kendra’s dance for OU Rep has lots of high-powered, high-energy movement. Thayer said, “It’s like a 10-minute sprint.”

We hope to see you at one or more of one of these performances. Ticket information below!

Buy tickets for the OU Brass Band Concert [here](#).

Buy tickets for Blithe Spirit [here](#).

Buy tickets for the University Chorus and Oakland Chorale Recital [here](#).

Buy tickets for the Oakland Symphony Orchestra Concert [here](#).

Buy tickets for the Oakland Dance Theatre and OU Repertory Company Annual Showcase [here](#).

Photos:

Top left: Nicholas Adragna

Middle right: The University Chorus. Photo by Rick Smith.

Lower left: OU dance majors. Photo by Scott Lipiec.

SUMMARY

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