UA68/9/2 The Symphony

Bowling Green Western Symphony Orchestra

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THE SYMPHONY 2010-2011 PRESENTS
A MUSICAL ODYSSEY

2010-2011 Symphony Concert Series
All Symphony Concerts will be in VAN METER HALL on FRIDAYS at 8 p.m.

Broadway Today
September 10, 2010
Featuring music from Phantom of the Opera, Les Misérables, Mamma Mia, Rent and Disney favorites like Beauty and the Beast.

The Classic
October 29, 2010
Tchaikovsky – Coronation March, Violin Concerto
Ching-Yi Lin, Violin Soloist
Haydn – Symphony No. 94 “Surprise”

Holiday Pops
December 10, 2010
Mr. and Mrs. Santa Clause will be singing, Performance will include the BGW Choral Society, traditional Christmas Carols and the annual Sing-a-long.

Some Old, Some New
February 25, 2011
Pre-College Suzuki Selections
Handel – Concerto Grosso
Schubert – Symphony No. 8 “Unfinished”
Ravel – La Valse

Brahms Fest
April 8, 2011
Brahms Piano Concerto No. 2
Sylvia Kiesenbaum, Piano
Brahms – Schicksalslied and Nanie
BGW Choral Society

Season subscribers will enjoy reserved parking and easy access to Van Meter. No steps are required to enter Van Meter and handicapped parking is available.

Chamber Series
Baker Chamber Players
December 5, 2010
Chandler Memorial Chapel
on WKU Campus
$50 per person
60 person limit

Baker Chamber Players
May 1, 2011
Baker Arboretum
and Downing Museum
$50 per person
60 person limit

Mark Your Calendar for these Special Events
Symphony Day
at Jackson’s Orchard
September 18, 2010
10 a.m.-Noon
FREE EVENT!
The Symphony will play excerpts from “It’s The Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown” and have special performances from the Bowling Green City and Warren County school orchestras and the WKU Pre-College Program.

Symphony Soirée
February 25, 2011
Watch for new and exciting details coming soon.

www.TheSymphonyatWKU.org
Call 745-5222 to order tickets
As its 2010-2011 concert season begins, the Symphony will find itself once again in the familiar confines of hallowed Van Meter Hall. This is a highly anticipated homecoming. The Symphony and its patrons relish the opportunity to once again hear classical music in this recently renovated facility. Concert goers will immediately notice the facility's cosmetic alterations, but the most satisfying modification will be the acoustical adjustments that will allow them to enjoy the rich robust sound of the entire orchestra or the simple strain of a single instrument. The return to Van Meter Hall will benefit both the Symphony and its patrons. The renovated performance venue has a rich heritage indelibly linked to The Symphony.

After Western purchased the hilltop campus of the defunct Potter College for Young Ladies in 1909, the institution hired architect Brinton B. Davis and landscape architect Henry Wright to develop a master plan for the new college campus. The first new campus structure recommended by the duo and affirmed by the school's charismatic president Henry Hardin Cherry was a major administration building that would contain administrative offices, three classrooms, and a 1,600-seat auditorium for chapel services, community events, and arts performances. Cherry wanted the building to reflect the institution's promising future. Agreeing, Davis chose a Classic Revival architectural style that hinted of the Acropolis's Erechtheion temple with its stately portico, classic ornamentation, and handsome location atop College Hill.

While the new building was being constructed, the Western Normal Orchestra was evolving. During Western's first year of operation, 275 students, the majority of them future teachers, enrolled in music courses. The 1907 catalog announced: "An orchestra of eight instruments has been organized and is practicing regularly. If you play an orchestral instrument, bring yours with you. There will be no extra charges for practice or playing. Lessons can be gotten at very reasonable rates. Anyone taking lessons will be admitted to the orchestra as soon he is able to play." The following year, the catalog cited the group's improvement: "The Normal School Orchestra...is growing in proficiency and earnestness. A very high grade work is being done. The Orchestra adds much to the literary programs rendered in Vanmater Hall from time to time." (This Vanmater Hall was the auditorium of the old Southern Normal School located on College Street, the location today of Bowling Green Towers.) Although the Normal School Orchestra had no doubt played for earlier events, the first extant program listing the group is from November 19, 1909, when they played Carl Bohm's "Atacque des Uhlans" (Charge of the Uhlans) and Juvention Rosas's "Over the Waves."

Western's "School of Music" and consequently the Normal School Orchestra benefitted when Franz Strahm was hired to lead all musical efforts on the hill in 1910. What Dr. Cherry saw in Strahm, he liked—a man brimming with energy, an animated conductor with charisma, and a musician comfortable in leading both instrumental and vocal performances. Besides his heavy teaching load at Western, Strahm was responsible for the Orchestra and the Normal School's daily chapel services that were held in the new Van Meter Hall. He used the orchestra frequently to accompany guest musicians and the new and popular Oratorio Society, which performed its first piece in November 1910. The organization of the Oratorio Society was the first component of Strahm's master plan to introduce a May music festival to Bowling Green.

Van Meter Hall was dedicated on May 5, 1911; musical programs involving other ensembles and soloists.

The first solo concert performed by Western's Orchestra was held in Van Meter Hall on May 16, 1937. Its 50 members played a program consisting of modern and classical music. The modern portion of the program, conducted by Dr. Robert D. Perry, consisted of two pieces by Ferde Grofe and "American Bolero" by Nacio Herb Brown. After an intermission, Strahm conducted the classical compositions, which included Tchaikovsky's Dance Russe Trepak and Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in C Minor. The Sunday afternoon concert was a decided success, but it was still several years before the Orchestra was consistently giving annual concerts of its own.

Just prior to Franz Strahm's death in 1941, Weldon Hart, a talented composer and conductor, was selected to lead the 65-piece Western Symphony. His most significant efforts on the hill in 1910. What Dr. Cherry saw in Strahm, he liked—a man brimming with energy, an animated conductor with charisma, and a musician comfortable in leading both instrumental and vocal performances. Besides his heavy teaching load at Western, Strahm was responsible for the Orchestra and the Normal School's daily chapel services that were held in the new Van Meter Hall. He used the orchestra frequently to accompany guest musicians and the new and popular Oratorio Society, which performed its first piece in November 1910. The organization of the Oratorio Society was the first component of Strahm's master plan to introduce a May music festival to Bowling Green.

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From this point until the early-1980s, the Orchestra generally played semi-annual concerts to appreciative audiences in Van Meter Hall. From the beginning, the Orchestra's conductors encouraged talented, community musicians and faculty members to practice and perform with the group. Without these committed musicians, the Orchestra would have often been unable to execute pieces proficiently.

When it appeared that budget constraints might nix the Orchestra in the early 1980s, community support and several grants allowed the group to perform a four-concert series for the 1982-1983 season. To reflect the renewed emphasis on town-gown relations, the group was re-named the Bowling Green-Western Symphony Orchestra (BGWSO). Tickets for individual concerts were $2 for students and $4 for adults. Significantly, the first concert that season, held on October 18, 1982, took place at the recently remodeled Capitol Arts Center in downtown Bowling Green. This remained the BGWSO's performance venue until 2005 when the group began giving concerts at First Baptist Church.

Now, the Symphony is ready to return home to Van Meter Hall. What Symphony guests and performers find at Van Meter Hall will impress them: cleaned and restored architectural features, bright and attractive meeting facilities, enlarged dressing rooms, improved lighting and acoustics, new seating, a dramatically enlarged stage area, better building access including handicapped entrances and an elevator, as well as the addition of patron bathrooms near the lobby. Befitting an arts facility, Van Meter will also boast several new pieces of artwork, including a new sculpture "Lyric" by Tom Corbin of Kansas City, a large fresco on the lobby's second floor executed by Mike Nichols, and the familiar Four Seasons sculpture grouping in the auditorium itself. However, many these new amenities will pale when the ears of Symphony guests hear the rich sound made possible through acoustical adaptations and improved sound equipment. Indeed, the hill and Van Meter Hall are once again alive with the sound of music.
Pre-College Strings Program

During the last two decades of the twentieth-century and at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Bowling Green was noted for being the largest city in the Commonwealth that did not have a public school strings program. With the hiring at Western Kentucky University of Baker Professor, Dr. Bill Scott, in 2003, this was soon to change.

Using his motivational and leadership skills, Dr. Scott's initial connection to a Warren County Principal, Connie Allen, was a pivotal point in the necessary collaboration that would instigate a public school strings program. In the Spring of 2004, WKU’s Department of Music partnered with the Warren County Schools in Bowling Green to start an elementary strings program. The initial class of 20 fourth graders met twice a week at Natcher Elementary School to learn to play string instruments while paying a small tuition fee to be a member of this pilot program. Two more strings faculty members were hired, with salaries being equally shared by WKU and the DELO-administered pre-college/public school strings program.

By the Spring of 2006, strings classes had been added in three more elementary city schools. For the Bowling Green City School District, this meant that every elementary school in the district now offered string instruction to its 6th grade students. In Warren County, string classes, taught by WKU cellist, Sarah Boronow, were added to a third elementary school.

On May 15th, 2006, the impact of that small pilot program was realized as 250 string students from Bowling Green Independent Schools and Warren County Schools came together in the basketball venue, Diddle Arena, on Western's campus to give a final concert for the year. The excitement was evident as students from eight different elementary schools gathered to perform for school administrators, parents and friends. By the end of 2007, over 500 public school string musicians from grades 4-7 were in the program.

In addition to the continued growth of the elementary program, great strides were taken to advance the program into the junior high and middle schools. In 2006-2007, Bowling Green Junior High School and Drakes Creek Middle School offered strings classes to 6th and 7th grade students, respectively.

In April 2007, the Bowling Green Independent Schools approved the advertisement for an Orchestra Director. Patrick O'Rourke was hired to fill this city school's position for 2007-08, while WKU faculty member, Sarah (Boronow) Berry, continued to serve as the strings instructor for the Warren County Schools.

The 2008-2009 year began with even more changes that involved creative scheduling of the strings classes at the county schools. Fall 2008 public school strings enrollment was 132 for the County and 235 for the City, totaling 367 students. A String Finale Concert, featuring 3 massed orchestras, was again held at Diddle Arena on April 28, 2009, conducted by WKU/Warren County Strings Director Sarah Berry, Bowling Green City Schools Orchestra Director, Patrick O'Rourke, and WKU Strings graduate assistant, Amberly Bush.

The 2010-11 academic year will see Amberly Bush as the first orchestra director for the Warren County Public Schools. The Pre-College String Development Program, a collaboration between WKU's Division of Extended Learning Outreach (DELO) and Department of Music under Bill Scott's mentorship, has continued to grow and blossom. The four Artist Faculty, who work with 4-18 year olds in the program, serve as principal players in the The Symphony. With their guidance, students in the Pre-College Strings Program performed with The Symphony last spring and will continue to do so in the coming year. What a wonderful opportunity for the children and a magnificent legacy for Bill Scott and The Symphony. More information about the Pre-College Strings Program and how to enroll your child can be found at: www.wku.edu/pca/pre-college-strings-program.