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NISO NOTES

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NISO Season Kicks Off with Opera Selections

By Amber Vis

The Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra will kick off the 2013-2014 concert series with a night to celebrate two of the most important opera composers—Guiseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner. These two composers made a huge impression on opera in the 19th century. The fall concert will celebrate the 200th anniversary of these composers.

Both composers were born in 1813. Verdi was an Italian who served as a Senator for some years, and his name became an acronym for a political slogan. He spoke fervently to the people of Italy, and his music was equally passionate.

Wagner was German, and he celebrated the German heritage. He, too, was political, but was a controversial figure. His music is sometimes met with reservation because of its connection with the historical political scene in Germany.



Shannon Salyards

Principal Conductor, Christopher Stanichar is excited about the first concert of the NISO season and the opportunity to hear from two different opera composers.

“It will be an evening full of wonderful music. Most opera music takes hours to listen to. Obviously, we can’t go on for hours, so I chose sections of the best and most popular parts of the opera to celebrate these two composers,” Stanichar said.

This concert will feature two soloists. Shannon Salyards is a soprano, and Russell Svenningsen is a tenor. Both soloists will perform some of Verdi’s and Wagner’s most famous opera arias. Salyards is singing one of Stanichar’s favorite pieces, “Isolde’s

Love Death” from *Tristan and Isolde*. Svenningsen is “back by demand” from the concert in April. He is one of Stanichar’s colleagues and a “fantastic tenor.”

In this concert, the audience will get to hear a number of shorter excerpts. The longest will be about fifteen minutes, and the others will be around five to ten minutes.

“This is different than most concerts, where we play full symphonies. This variation is a good way to hear the best that these two composers have written,” Stanichar said.

The Fall Concert will be held in the B.J. Haan Auditorium at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa at 7:30 p.m. on November 12.



Russell Svenningsen

Fall Concert
November 12
7:30 pm

Looking Ahead: A Year of Famous Composers
By Karen DeMol, General Manager

The NISO 2013-2014 season is titled “The Year of the Composer,” and a wonderful year it will be! But isn’t every year a year of the composer? After all, every year we are indebted to composers for the repertoire we play. This year, however, the entire repertoire is by composers who are the giants of their own time period and style.

The fall concert presents music by Verdi and Wagner, both Romantic period opera greats. 2013 is the 200th anniversary. The spring concert focuses on music by the three famous B’s—Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms—and they deserve their fame. Bach is considered the pinnacle of the Baroque, Beethoven both culminated the Classical era and led into the Romantic period, and Brahms was a master of the rich harmony of Romantic times while harking back to Classic forms. In between these concerts, there will be a guest concert featuring American music with its own unique recognition of composers.

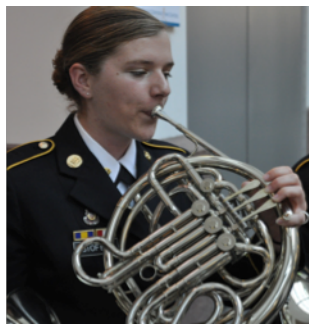
The fall concert, featuring the music of two Romantic period opera giants, is titled “Verdi vs. Wagner.” What’s the contest? Christopher Stanichar has chosen pairs of pieces by the two

cont.

A Closer Look at Our Musicians

By Amber Vis

The Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra is made up of a variety of members from many different backgrounds and areas. Along with professional musicians, community musicians, and high school students, college students also play an important role in the orchestra. NISO has college students from three area colleges—Northwestern, Dordt, and Augustana. These students all have different majors and interests. Let's get to know three of these students: Rebekah Stofer, Emily Wehde, and Leanna Bentz.



Rebekah Stofer

Rebekah Stofer is a senior majoring in music performance at Northwestern College. She is from Dewitt, Iowa, and this is her second year in NISO. She participates in NISO by playing the French horn, which she has been playing for eight or nine years. Her favorite part of NISO is “the challenging music” and the people in her section.

Emily Wehde has been playing the trombone for ten years. She is from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and attends Augustana College where she is a junior majoring in biology and Spanish. This is her second year with NISO. Emily said that she loves “the opportunity to be able to build upon my talents as a trombonist by playing alongside so many other gifted musicians.”



Emily Wehde



Leanna Bentz

Leanna Bentz is from Platte, South Dakota. She has been playing the harp since the fifth grade, and this is her third year in NISO. She also plays the euphonium outside of the orchestra. Leanna is a junior at Dordt College majoring in K-12 musical education (choral and instrumental). “My favorite part of NISO is the opportunity to

experience orchestral literature, since I have spent much more time playing in a band than an orchestra. The chance to be a part of music like that is really priceless, I think,” Leanna said.

Part of NISO's success is the involvement of diverse members. We appreciate the talents and contributions that these three musicians and their college peers bring to NISO.

composers—a pair of overtures, a pair of marches, etc.—through which we will hear the great similarities of and also the contrasts between these composers. The pair of overtures—Verdi's *Overture to La Forza del Destino* and Wagner's *Overture to Act III of Lohengrin*—both begin with grand brass calls which announce that something important is about to happen; the “something” in the Verdi, though, is an ominous call of destiny, while in the Wagner, it is a celebration. The marches also begin with big brass fanfares, as preludes to processions: the procession of Egyptian victors in the Verdi (*Triumphal March from Aida*) and the procession of guests in the Wagner (*Festmarsch from Tannhauser*).

A trio of opera arias for soprano and tenor, rich in operatic vocal showmanship, a pair of sorrowful preludes, and a pair of well-known favorites—the *Anvil Chorus* from Verdi's *Il Trovatore* and Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries* from *The Ring Cycle*—complete the program. All these selections richly embody the high drama, the intense emotions, and the colorful instrumentation of Romantic period music. Even if you do not consider yourself an opera fan, you will enjoy these favorite opera excerpts.

Who wins this contest? Why, we do—in this opportunity to hear dramatic Romantic music performed by a large symphony orchestra and two fabulous singers, Shannon Salyard and Russell Svenningsen.

The spring concert presents quite a contrast of style: Bach's lean and contrapuntal *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2* with virtuoso parts for NISO soloists Richard Bogenrief (trumpet), Kristi Stanichar (oboe), Jennifer Frens (violin), and Anna Davis (flute), framed by Beethoven's rousing *Consecration of the House* overture and Brahms' warm-hearted *Symphony No. 2*.

In between, our guests the Euclid Quartet will present a concert called "American Faces." The Euclid writes that the program “features three classical works whose composers were all inspired by the sounds of America's musical roots: Charles Ives (borrowing from Protestant hymns as well as folk tunes), Wynton Marsalis (riffing on the sounds of his native New Orleans), and Antonin Dvorak (sketching out what he heard when he visited Iowa, although with a heavy Czech accent!).”

Celebrating music in a different style, the Pops Concert features pianist Rich Ridenour, who will play classical, jazz, and rock classics. I understand that he is also funny.

We look forward to a great year, all presented by our very own Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra.

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