Celebrating the Dutch Heritage

By Amber Vis

In the upcoming Spring Concert, NISO pays homage to the strong Dutch heritage of Northwest Iowa. Christopher Stanichar is excited to present this musical celebration and is also eager for the orchestra to perform with three choirs and seven soloists. Don’t miss this concert!

The concert will begin with Richard Wagner’s overture to his early opera, The Flying Dutchman. Stanichar observed that this opera tells an interesting story of a haunted Dutchman who can come onto land only every seven years. One year, he lands his ship in Norway, where he falls in love with a girl. However, the story does not simply have a happy ending. “It is an opera, after all,” Stanichar said.

NISO will perform two pieces composed by Ludwig van Beethoven. The composer was German, but the “van” within his name points to Dutch roots, which may make him the most famous composer with a Dutch heritage.

The performance of Beethoven’s Choral Fantasy and Hallelujah! from “Christ on the Mount of Olives” will involve an impressive array of musicians. NISO will join with the Dordt College Concert Choir, Northwestern College Heritage Singers, and Sioux County Oratorio Chorus for these pieces, as well as a talented group of soloists. These soloists include Jamie Reimer (Soprano), Debora Vogel (Soprano), Emily Lodine (Mezzo-soprano), Benjamin Kornelis (Tenor), Russell Svenningsen (Tenor), Brandon Hendrickson (Baritone), and John Walker (Piano). Choral Fantasy includes an extensive piano solo, which will be performed by Dr. John Walker from South Dakota State University.

The concert will end with Frank’s Symphony in D Minor. Stanichar states that this beautiful piece is not often performed. The symphony highlights solos by the English horn and the harp.

Stanichar noted that the challenging part of the concert may be trying to get all the choirs, soloists, and the orchestra on stage at once. “That will be a sight to see in itself,” Stanichar said.

The Spring Concert will be held on April 16 at 7:30 p.m. in the B.J. Haan Auditorium on the campus of Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.

Season tickets for 2013-2014 available on April 16
Three Concertmasters Collaborate
By Rhonda Pennings
The Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra has a unique organizational structure featuring three concertmasters. The concertmasters for NISO are violinists Lisa Miedema, Jennifer Frens, and Kathleen Broadwell. Their duties as concertmaster include assuming a leadership role in tuning the orchestra, leading their section, and filling in when the conductor steps down. When the previous concertmaster left, the conductor decided to experiment with having three individuals assume this role.

Lisa Miedema and Jennifer Frens alternate their concertmaster duties in the fall and spring seasons. When asked her perspective on being a co-concertmaster for NISO, Miedema replied, “Jennifer and I have similar backgrounds and passions. We bounce ideas off of each other in order to make good decisions. I consider it a blessing to work with her.” Miedema began studying the violin in second grade. In junior high, she played with NISO as a student violinist. While studying violin performance at Dordt College, she continued to play with NISO and the South Dakota Symphony. Currently, she teaches violin at Dordt College, Northwestern College, has her private studio, and is a member of NISO and the Sioux City Symphony.

Jennifer Frens also enjoys working with Miedema. She said, “Lisa and I have a great working relationship and are able to communicate with each other very well. Lisa is confident in what she is doing, which makes me want to strive to be my best.” Frens started playing the violin at age 6. She and her sister grew up playing violin at various community and NISO events. Frens won the South Dakota Young Artist Award in 1996, as well as the Cherokee Symphony Young Artist competition twice. She studied piano, organ, and violin at Dordt College. She is currently an adjunct faculty member at Dordt College, has a studio in her home, and leads music at Bethel Christian Reformed church.

Kathleen Broadwell serves as concertmaster for the NISO Pops Concert. Broadwell has been a member of NISO for 27 years. She received her bachelor’s degree from Grinnell College and her master’s degree from New York University. She has played with Miedema and Frens in NISO, the South Dakota Symphony, and the Sioux City Symphony. Regarding Miedema and Frens, Broadwell said, “We play as a team, no matter who is concertmaster, and I consider them both close friends and great musicians. Playing and sharing the joy of music with friends makes it even more rewarding.”

For the past several years, Miedema, Frens, and Broadwell have been successful in assuming the role of concertmasters. The key to their success is that they enjoy working together and are able to use their strengths in sharing their responsibilities. They exemplify leaders who challenge fellow NISO players to use their talents to the best of their abilities.

“Impressions”
Art Exhibit by Sara de Waal
in conjunction with the NISO Spring Concert
B.J. Haan Auditorium Lobby

Spring Concert
April 16
7:30 pm

The Backside of the Embroidery
By Karen DeMol
After many years of enjoying the NISO “embroidery,” I am now, as the new General Manager, developing an understanding of the backside of this embroidery—and deeply appreciating it.

The NISO embroidery is the beautiful sound design we all enjoy at the concerts: the intricate design of the music, the interweaving of musical lines, the various brilliant colors of strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. We arrive at the concert in expectation of an exciting performance, and we get it—a polished musical offering presented joyfully by our NISO musicians.

There’s a backside to that embroidery, an unseen network of the efforts of NISO staff, volunteers, and board. The “behind the music” scene includes the score study of the conductor and the practice of the musicians. It also includes the careful deliberation of the Board ticket committee to set ticket prices that are affordable and encourage attendance.

There are the persuasive efforts of those who apply for grants and cultivate donors. There are the poster designers, the creative folks who come up with fundraising event ideas, and those who find potential Friends and Board members in the community. And of course, the truffle-makers! In all, a host of dedicated and creative people devote time and effort to make sure those orchestral designs can appear on stage in our own community and by our community musicians for our musical delight. I give thanks for the backside of the embroidery!

There’s another backstage side as well: the careful planning of the next season by Music Director Bradley Miedema and Conductor Christopher Stanichar. The fruit of their collaborative and creative planning will be revealed at the Spring Concert, when the plans for the 2013-2014 season are announced. Make sure to be there to hear the announcement and to purchase your tickets for next season!