NISO salutes “The Three B’s”
By Amber Vis

The Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra’s Spring Concert features three of the best composers of all time: Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. “The Three B’s” refers to Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Johannes Brahms. The title comes from a conductor who was a personal friend of Brahms. He thought that Brahms, Bach, and Beethoven were the prime composers in classical music.

The concert will feature all three composers. The first piece of the evening will be Beethoven’s Consecration of the House. “This is a very rousing and exciting piece,” Conductor Christopher Stanichar said.

The second piece is Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto No. 2, which features four NISO musicians: Kristi Stanichar on the oboe, Jennifer Frens on the violin, Anna Davis on the flute, and Richard Bogenrief on the trumpet. Christopher Stanichar noted that the trumpet solo is particularly difficult because of how high and exhausting it is. “They are all very fine performers. It will be fun for the audience to see how talented all these musicians are,” Stanichar said.

The last piece of the evening will be Brahms’ Symphony No. 2. This piece was inspired by Brahms’ visit to the Austrian Alps. Stanichar noted that the symphony has a “very haunting melody.” “This is one of my favorite symphonies,” Stanichar said. “It is forty minutes of just beauty.”

During intermission of the Spring Concert, Stanichar will be previewing the upcoming NISO season. “A lot of exciting things are planned,” Stanichar said.

The Visual Arts Auction will also take place this evening. Area artists have contributed their talent by creating art using string instruments and furniture as the canvas. Eleven works will be available for purchase.

The artists of these works will be our guests at the Spring Concert, and bidders will have the opportunity to visit with them and hear about the inspiration for their work. Be sure to come early to view the art, visit with the artists, and put in your bids.

The Spring Concert will be held in the B.J. Haan Auditorium at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa at 7:30 p.m. on April 15.
Scholarships Provide Lessons and Strengthen NISO

By Amber Vis

Each year, Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra gives scholarships to high school students to help pay for private lessons.

“The scholarships benefit NISO by enabling student members to take private lessons on their instrument, thus becoming better players, which strengthens their contribution to NISO, making NISO a stronger orchestra,” Karen De Mol said.

Students apply for the scholarships, and if their application is approved, the selection committee informs the NISO office of who their private teacher is and of how many lessons they have taken over the course of the year.

The cost of the lessons is then paid directly to the teacher by NISO Friends, whose fundraising efforts go toward the scholarship fund.

The scholarships are reserved for high school students and even students in NISO who are not in high school yet.

The 2013-2014 scholarship winners are four high school students: Nancy Shih from Hull, Emma Jensen from Orange City, David Mortenson from Orange City, and Maria Koenen from Rock Valley.

Nancy Shih goes to Boyden-Hull High School and has been playing the violin for 11 years. She takes private lessons with Dr. Eunho Kim, and she appreciates the scholarship because it can help her continue improving. This is her third year playing with NISO. “My favorite thing about NISO is the opportunity to play with outstanding musicians that push me to improve my own musicianship skills,” Nancy said.

Emma Jensen attends MOC-Floyd Valley High School, and she has been a part of NISO for two years. She has been playing the French horn for eight years, and she takes private lessons with Dr. McGarvey at Northwestern College. Her favorite part of NISO is the opportunity to play in an ensemble that challenges her.

David Mortenson also attends MOC-Floyd Valley High School. He plays the violin in NISO, but he also enjoys playing the alto sax, the tenor sax, and the soprano sax, as well as a couple other instruments that he doesn’t play often. He has played the violin for almost ten years, the alto sax for six years, the tenor sax for two years, and the soprano sax for one year.

“My favorite thing about NISO is the challenge that the music provides, as well as the quality of the orchestra. It’s not just another high school honor orchestra, and the music is the real music that the composers wrote,” David said.

David takes private lessons with Gary Vander Hart, the current 2nd chair violist in NISO and the previous concertmaster for NISO. This is David’s third year with NISO, and he was a member of Northwest Iowa Symphony Youth Orchestra (NISYO) for three and a half years before joining NISO.

Maria Koenen goes to the Netherlands Reformed Christian School, and she has been playing the violin for about ten years. She takes private lessons with Sheri Boone. “The thing I love the most about NISO is when everything comes together; the music becomes incredibly powerful, and I get an exhilarated, shaky feeling,” Maria said. This is Maria’s second year in NISO. Before NISO, she played in NISYO for five years.

Part of NISO’s success and future success is the involvement of younger members. We appreciate the talents and contributions that these four high school students bring to NISO.

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(continued: “The Three B’s”)

Anna Davis, flute; Kristi Stanichar, oboe; Jennifer Frens, violin; and Richard Bogenrief, trumpet.

Ludwig van Beethoven’s greatness lies in transitioning from the orderly balanced music of Haydn and Mozart to the vastly expanded and passionate forms of the Romantic Period. Beethoven used a wide range of chromatic harmonies, massively extended standard forms, and an expanded orchestra. For instance, the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart usually take no more than 20 minutes, while Beethoven’s last symphony runs to an hour! The Beethoven piece on the NISO program on April 15, however, is a shorter one—The Consecration of the House Overture, written shortly after Beethoven had studied the music of J.S. Bach. The title tells the story: the overture was commissioned for the opening of a new theatre in Vienna, the Theatre in de Josefstadt. It’s a curtain-raiser! At the other end of the 19th century and inheritor of the Romantic expansions of harmony and form, Johannes Brahms employed the rich Romantic expansions of harmony and its emotional warmth but returned to classical forms. For many years, he avoided writing a symphony; he heard “that giant at his back”—Beethoven, of course—and did not dare to attempt symphonies. When he did, he composed four masterpieces, rich in lush harmony and gorgeous melodies, and showing off the individual colors of various instruments at their best. NISO will play one of these four, the lyrical Symphony No. 2 in D Major.

That’s a brief look at these three greats. On April 15, we have the opportunity to “have a listen” as well. It will be a fine evening!

Visual Art Auction

Tuesday, April 15, 2014
in conjunction with NISO’s Spring Concert

Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra
498 4th Ave NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250
712-722.6230 - niso@dordt.edu
http://niso.dordt.edu

(continued: “The Three B’s”)