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Henry Charles Memorial Concerto Aria-Concert Spotlights Three IWU Students

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--The Illinois Wesleyan Civic Orchestra, conducted by IWU Professor of Music Steven W. Eggleston, and the Alpha Lambda chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia will present The Henry Charles Memorial Concerto-Aria Concert Feb. 16 at 7:30 p.m. at the Scottish Rite Temple, 110 E. Mulberry St., Bloomington.

The annual event showcases three of IWU's finest student-soloists on their primary instrument. All soloists are chosen by audition.

The event is named in memory of the late Henry Charles, a Phi Mu Alpha brother. The Alpha Lambda chapter has been a contributing sponsor of the concerto -aria concert since 1979.

Currently in its 16th season, the IWU Civic Orchestra (IWUCO) is comprised of IWU students and volunteer players from the area. The IWUCO has performed with several acclaimed soloists and conductors, including: Armando Ghitalla, former principal trumpet of the Boston Symphony, cellist Lazl Varga, baritone Roger Roloff, pianist Awadagin Pratt and former British Prime Minister Sir Edward Heath. Community musicians are encouraged to inquire about becoming a part of the orchestra in its service to the Bloomington-Normal community.

Founded in 1898, the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity stands for the encouragement and promotion of education, creativity, performance and research in music in America. The Alpha Lambda chapter at IWU was founded in 1924. Its members number over 25 men pursuing a variety of majors, but sharing a common interest and love for music.

The chosen soloists for the concerto-aria concert are:

About Emily Meyer

A first-year violin performance major at IWU, Meyer comes from Oak Park, Ill., where she began her studies at the age of nine. Throughout her musical career she has performed with a number of orchestras including the Windy City String Ensemble, Chicago Youth Concert Orchestra, Oak Park Symphony, Illinois Music Educators Association (IMEA) District and All-State Honors Orchestra and the West Suburban Youth Orchestra. Meyer has performed in Chicago's Orchestra Hall and the Sydney Opera House in Sydney, Australia. Her awards include the OPRFHS Concerto Competition (1998) and the MacDowell Young Artists Competition (1999). Meyer will perform Ludwig van Beethoven's "Violin Concerto" at the concerto-aria concert.

About Edward Stevens

Originally from LaGrange Park, Ill., first-year student Stevens is a performance major at IWU. His cello studies began at the age of five at the Western Springs School of Talent Education. In eighth grade, Stevens began studying with Ingrid Krizan at the Hinsdale Center for the Arts and the First Conservatory of LaGrange. He has performed with the Chicago Youth Symphony, the IMEA All-State Honors Orchestra, Chicago Youth Chamber Program, West Suburban Youth Orchestra and the Lyons Township Symphonic Orchestra. Stevens will perform Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky's "Pezzo Capriccioso."

About Benjamin Weber

Also a native of Oak Park and first-year IWU violin performance major, Weber began his violin studies at the age of four. He has performed with the OPRFHS Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra, the IMEA District, All-State and Honors Orchestras, the Nova Scotia Youth Orchestra and the Windy City String Ensemble. Weber also has traveled with the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra to Eastern Europe and with the Windy City String Ensemble to Sydney, Australia. He has received the Follet music award and the National School Orchestra Award. Weber will perform Sergei Prokofiev's "Violin Concerto No. 2" at the concerto-aria concert.

About Steven W. Eggleston

Eggleston earned a bachelor of music education degree from Butler University and a master of music degree in conducting from the University of Michigan where he studied with H. Robert Reynolds. He began teaching at IWU in 1979. He also is a professor of trumpet at the university.

Eggleston maintains an active schedule as guest conductor and clinician throughout the United States. Eggleston has been a guest conductor for Illinois and Indiana All-State Orchestras and Bands and the University of Illinois String Consortium as well as the Peoria Symphony and Champaign-Urbana Symphony. He also has served as a guest conductor on the summer music faculty at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, Butler University and Indiana University.

With the chamber orchestra, Eggleston recorded Mendelssohn's "Italian Symphony" and concert aria, "Infelice," for a compact disc project with IWU's music label Novitas Records.

Eggleston's trumpet teachers have included Frank Kaderarbek (Philadelphia Orchestra), Clifford Lillya (University of Michigan) and Delbert Dale (Tokyo and Indianapolis Symphonies).

The Program

In addition to the pieces featuring IWU student soloists, the civic orchestra will perform "La Forza Del Destino" by Giuseppe Verdi and "Pictures at an Exhibition" by M. Mussorgsky, orchestrated by Maurice Ravel.

Verdi's "La Forza Del Destino," rarely performed in its original form, first premiered in 1862 at the Imperial Italian Theater in St. Petersburg, Russia. Though the debut was not considered a failure or a success, Czar Alexander II presented Verdi with the Order of Saint Stanislas, an honor not usually received by an artist. The composer revised the work in 1869 for a production at La Scala in Milan and included a more prominent overture based on the prelude of the original production.

After Russian architect Victor Hartmann died in 1873, his friends arranged and displayed a memorial exhibition containing over 400 of the architect's works. Musorgsky, an admirer of Hartmann's work, was one of the visitors to the exhibition and his visit became the inspiration for his 1874 piano suite entitled, "Pictures at an Exhibition." Comprised of 10 movements, the piece was dedicated to Vladimir Stasov, a writer and close friend of Hartmann. Maurice Ravel's 1923 orchestration of the piano suite is the most well-known today.

With four of the 10 original exhibition paintings lost, the musical descriptions in "Pictures at an Exhibition" are one of the few lasting memories of Hartmann and his influence in the world of art. The recurring promenade through the movements reflects the composers walk from one painting to the next.

Beethoven's "Violin Concerto" was the composer's only violin concerto. It was dedicated to and premiered by violinist Franz Clement in 1806. It challenges the soloist in both technicality and musicality. Prokofiev's "Violin Concerto No. 2" was composed in 1935, around another of Prokofiev's well-known pieces, "Romeo and Juliet." The concerto was commissioned for violinist Robert Soetens in Paris--his last non-Soviet commissioned work. Tchaikovsky's "Pezzo Capriccioso" premiered in Moscow on Dec. 7, 1889. Written for and premiered by cellist Anatoly Brandukov, "Pezzo Capriccioso" gives the soloist the opportunity to display both musical expression and virtuosity.