

Laurier's musical talents shine in upcoming concerts

By Martin DeGroot

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Three concerts coming up this week — two orchestral, one operatic — have common elements: dynamic programming, affordable admission, community connections and an association with the Wilfrid Laurier University Faculty of Music.

First up is *Our Exhilarating Winter Concert*, being presented by the Kitchener-Waterloo Community Orchestra. The concert, which starts at 8 p.m. tonight, will be held at Waterloo Christian Reformed Church, 209 Bearinger Rd., Waterloo.

The soloist is clarinetist Peter Shackleton, who was recently appointed musician-in-residence at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Shackleton will perform Carl Maria von Weber's *Clarinet Concerto No. 2*.

The program also includes *En Saga* by Sibelius, and Dvorak's *Symphony No. 9 "From the New World."*

The community aspect is embedded in the orchestra's name: 60 accomplished musicians playing for the love of it under the baton of Daniel Warren, who is also trumpet player with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. Cost is \$12 and \$10 for students (\$5 EyeGo also available).

What began as the Cambridge Community Orchestra in 2004 was renamed the Cambridge Symphony Orchestra at the beginning of the current season. Nevertheless, as music director Sabatino Vacca emphasized when he spoke with *Record* reporter Valerie Hill about the name change, "it's still a community orchestra."

This is a project that emerged from, and has been warmly embraced by, the Cambridge community.

Their next concert — *More From the Masters* — happens Friday, March 2 at the historic Central Presbyterian Church (the one with the landmark steeple near the Library & Gallery, the School of Architecture and the



OperaLaurier2. Opera Laurier performers Andrew Bailey (left) and Adam Dyjach are shown rehearsing for their production of *City Workers in Love*. Opera Laurier Source: Opera Laurier

Main Street Bridge) in Cambridge. Start time is 8 p.m.

Guest soloist is Boyd McDonald, a pianist and composer and Laurie's music professor emeritus. He'll play Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 4*.

The concert will begin with the Overture from *Donna Diana* by Emil Rezníček conducted by Josh Manuel, a recent WLU music graduate who is currently CSO Assistant Conductor and Board member.

The program will conclude with Brahms *Symphony No. 2*.

Cambridge Symphony Orchestra concerts are offered on a pay-what-you-will-or-can basis.

Meanwhile, Opera Laurier is getting ready to present a double bill of contemporary Canadian comic operas: *Gisela in Her Bathtub* and *City Workers in Love* by Neil Weisensel (music) and Michael Cavanagh (libretto).

Opera Laurier is made up of voice performance students enrolled in the opera program, along with some student volunteers.

It was Cavanagh who recommended these works when he was here last year to direct Opera Laurier's acclaimed production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. The creators expanded and revised both operas specifically for this performance.

In *Gisela in Her Bathtub*, a young woman reads a Norse saga while taking a bath, and the story comes to life around her.

This 15-minute, lighthearted opera serves as an introduction to the main piece: *City Workers in Love*, which "explores the lives, foibles and fortunes of a group of city workers" on a construction site.

City Workers in Love generated interesting involvement from the community at large: The public works departments of the cities of Waterloo and Kitchener provided authentic props. Each of the three performances will feature a cameo appearance by a special guest: Kitchener Mayor Carl Zehr, Waterloo Mayor Brenda Halloran or Laurier President Max Blouw.

Show times are Friday, March 2, Saturday, March 3 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, March 4 at 3 p.m. At Laurier's Theatre Auditorium.

Cost: free for Laurier students; \$5 other students and seniors; \$10 adults.

Also worth mentioning is the next orchestra@waterloo concert — *Nuages*. It takes place on Thursday, March 29 at 8 p.m. at the University of Waterloo's Humanities Theatre.

Soloist is Andrew Song, playing the violin. He was the first prize winner of the 2012 Concerto and Aria Competition. The program will feature Debussy's *Nocturnes*; Wieniawski's *Violin Concerto No. 2*; Schumann's *Symphony No. 4*. Cost: free.

In summary, there are four concerts to choose from — including three symphonies, three concertos, two operas and four other works — all for not much more than the price of a pizza or a bucket of chicken. Amazing.

Martin DeGroot writes about local arts and culture each Saturday. You can reach him by email at mdg131@gmail.com