Brass Spectacular returns to PSU

The 2008 Brass Spectacular drum and bugle corps show will return to the campus of Pittsburg State University. The show, which features seven of the nation's top drum and bugle corps, will take place at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, July 23, in Carnie Smith Stadium.

The Pittsburg show is part of the Drum Corps International (DCI) Summer Music Games tour that concludes with the world championships in Indianapolis, Ind. The corps are made up of musicians between the ages of 14 and 22 from the U.S., Canada and around the world. The corps perform precision marching and formations while playing both original and well-known compositions.

"A drum corps show is the ultimate expression of power and pageantry," according to Doug Whitten, Director of Athletics Bands at PSU. "Some people have described drum corps performances as a cross between a Las Vegas show and a symphony orchestra."

Whitten said that drum corps are similar to marching bands in that they march on a football field and play music, but there are some key differences. A marching band usually provides entertainment at sporting events. In contrast, a drum and bugle corps is the main event.

The drum and bugle corps scheduled to compete at PSU on July 23rd are: The Academy, from Tempe, Ariz.; the Boston Crusaders, from Boston, Mass.; the Colt Cadets, from Dubuque, Iowa; the Colts, also from Dubuque, Iowa; the Crossmen, from San Antonio, Texas; the Santa Clara Vanguard, from Santa Clara, Calif.; and the Troopers, from Casper, Wyo.

Tickets for the show range from $10 to $25 and are available through the Pitt State ticket office at www.pittstate.edu/tickets or by phone at 620-235-4796. For more information visit the show's Web site at www.pittstate.edu/tickets.

Choir takes memorable European tour

Dr. Susan Marchant and nearly 50 PSU choir members and faculty traveled to Germany to perform concerts in Heidelberg and Munich. The choir typically tours some part of North America every other spring break, but going to Europe, and planning the trip during the winter break (Jan. 8-15), were new experiences.

The choir prepared more than an hour's worth of music they performed in churches they visited, including Wieskirche in Steingaden (made famous for its surviving example of Rococo architecture) and for the 1,800-seat Sunday morning service at Saint Luke's in Munich (the church played a significant role in aiding American troops during World War II). The group also took in the rich histories of Salzberg, Mainz, Munich and Heidelberg.

"At some of the venues we were completely unaccompanied, so we had to prepare a lot of a cappella music, which is a real challenge," Marchant said. "And we sang one song in German, so that was a new experience for some of our students."

For senior accounting major Beth Perrey, traveling and performing with the choir was something she'll never forget. "We got to see so much and sang in some of the most beautiful places I'd ever seen. I'm glad I didn't pass up the experience."
Professors join together in publication of violin concerto

Together, Dr. Selim Giray and Dr. John Ross have published with Peer Music Classical of Hamburg a piano reduction of A. Adnan Saygun’s Violin Concerto op. 44. For this 40-minute work, Dr. Ross prepared the piano reduction while Dr. Giray extensively edited the solo violin part, including fingerings and bowings. In addition, Dr. Giray wrote a preface explaining our editing philosophy in which he included notes on passages where the composer’s intentions were not clear. Dr. Ross added a paragraph on Saygun’s compositional style as it relates to this piece. Finally, all the above was translated into Turkish by Dr. Giray. The published version, with the preface in English, German and Turkish, made its debut at the International Frankfurt Music Fair this March. The score is available in Europe and Asia, and in America through Theodore Presser.

Percussion studio students visit schools

As part of an outreach program for elementary schools created by Mary Helen McCloud (BME ’08), numerous percussion students took time from their busy schedules to provide clinics for Pittsburg area students to raise awareness of music. Attalie Neal and DeAnthony Nelson traveled to Westside Elementary where they were very well received. Two fifth grade classes were combined for a half-hour lesson. Immediately following this session a presentation was given for a kindergarten class. In both class sessions students were allowed to play the instruments.

A similar presentation was given at Lakeside Elementary by Matt Esau, Daniel Warlop, Jason Lord and Andy Slater. The focus of this session was on world percussion instruments. Improvisation sessions were held and again the students were allowed to play the instruments.

Centennial event a success

The Department of Music Centennial Celebration and Reunion was held on Sunday, April 13. The event included a faculty recital, the Walter McCray tribute concert with portions of Handel’s Messiah, a banquet dinner, and a finale concert featuring a 70-piece alumni band. By all indications, the event was a success and the department thanks all of the individuals who attended and those who sent notes of support even though they could not attend.

The eldest alum in attendance was Maeda Kirk. The alum who traveled the farthest to attend was Eugenia Allen-Egbert who traveled all the way from Milpitas, Calif. by Amtrak. In total, approximately 105 people attended the banquet dinner, which was highlighted by an historic presentation of the department by Randy Roberts, curator of the Special Collections at the PSU Axe Library.

Another highlight was the creation and performance by the alumni band. A three-hour rehearsal was held the previous day to prepare for the concert, followed by an informal pizza dinner with plenty of time to reminisce. The band performed wonderfully and the music making was deeply meaningful for those involved.
Corcoran conducts Four State Band Festival

Former PSU Director of Bands Gary Corcoran served as the guest conductor for this year’s annual Four State Honor Band Festival held on May 1. Dr. Corcoran served as the director of bands from 1972-1990 and started the Four State Festival in 1983, making this the 25th year of the event. Gary and his wife Kenda were invited back to Pittsburg and a reception was held in his honor the night before the festival. Although attendance at the reception was small, those who came enjoyed great food and conversation while remembering their times together when Dr. Corcoran was on faculty.

On Thursday, Dr. Corcoran rehearsed with the guest high school students in preparation for the evening concert. His command of the podium and musical insights were well received by the students and the concert performance was one of the best ever. In addition to conducting the Crimson Band, Dr. Corcoran also conducted October by Eric Whitacre with the PSU Band. As a special treat, Kenda brought along her oboe and played with the PSU group throughout the concert.

Dr. Corcoran currently serves as director of bands at Plymouth State University in Plymouth, N.H.

Honors Convocation held

One of the special events that brings each academic year to a close is the Honors Convocation held each May. During the event, student and faculty achievements are recognized. Outstanding Student awards are presented, Pi Kappa Lambda inductions are held, and the Priscilla Schrag Outstanding Student of the Year award is presented. This year’s award went to Rebecca Cutler, who graduated this spring with a bachelor of music in Violin.

The award is based on outstanding musicianship, service, and leadership within the program. Students are nominated by faculty and a vote is taken to determine the recipient. Rebecca received an individual plaque and her name will be added to the plaque in McCrory. She will also be awarded a $100 scholarship this fall when she returns to PSU to work on a master’s degree in violin performance.
PSU well represented at International Trombone Festival

The 2008 International Trombone Festival was held in Salt Lake City at the University of Utah on May 28-31. PSU was well represented by University Professor of Trombone Robert Kehler and music alumni Josh Dempster.

Kehler gave a presentation titled "Alto Trombone Literature with emphasis on the Americas." The lecture was the only presentation on the alto trombone and was very well received.

Josh Dempster was performing in a local trombone choir, the Utah's Ultimate Trombone Ensemble. Not only did Josh play bass trombone with the group that includes members of the Utah Symphony, he also arranged the opening number for their first performance. His arrangement of Copland's Fanfare for the Common Man was a great festival opening.

Calendar

SUMMER 2008
7-4 Summer Band Concert, 3 p.m. – Lincoln Park
7-21 Cutting Edge Camp
www.cuttingedgeauxiliaries.com

FUTURE DATES
(Subject to change.)
9-28 *SEK Symphony, 3 p.m. – Memorial Auditorium
10-6 Jazz Ensemble Concert, 7:30 p.m. – Overman Student Center
10-17 Opera Scenes 7:30 p.m. – McCray
10-19 Opera Scenes 3 p.m. – McCray
10-30 Chamber Orchestra 7:30 p.m. – McCray
11-7 PSU Choirs 7:30 p.m. – McCray
11-13 Wind Ensemble 7:30 p.m. – Memorial Auditorium
11-20 *SEK performances with Ballet of the Nutcracker 7:30 p.m. – Memorial Auditorium
11-21 *SEK performances with Ballet of the Nutcracker 7:30 p.m. – Memorial Auditorium
11-22 *SEK performances with Ballet of the Nutcracker 7:30 p.m. – Memorial Auditorium
11-23 *SEK performances with Ballet of the Nutcracker 2:30 p.m. – Memorial Auditorium

Unless otherwise noted, all concerts are in PSU's McCray Hall at Broadway & Lindburg Street.

*Ticket(s) required. They may be purchased at the door. All other concerts are free.

SCMS: Solo & Chamber Music Series; SEK: Southeast Kansas Symphony.

Call the PSU Music Department at 620-235-4466 for more information, possible schedule changes, and to confirm concert(s). A complete listing of performances, including senior recitals, visit www.pittstate.edu/music/calendar.html.

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