

TUSCARAWAS PHILHARMONIC

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THERE are few traditions that transcend cultures and generations quite like storytelling. And there are few stories that have withstood centuries of being revised and translated, remaining recognizable and popular. *One Thousand and One Nights* is one of the survivors.

Beginning in the eighth century when these Persian stories were new, they were told, retold and adapted to include Arab and Indian folklore. And variations eventually reached Europe, where Victorian writers added now-familiar characters like Aladdin, Sinbad and Ali Baba. Remarkably, what each edition of *One Thousand and One Nights* retains regardless of culture or language is the framing tale of Scheherazade who saved her life with storytelling.

The folklore collection begins with the tale of the Persian king Shahryar, embittered because of an unfaithful wife. The king began taking a new bride each evening and beheading the poor girl first thing

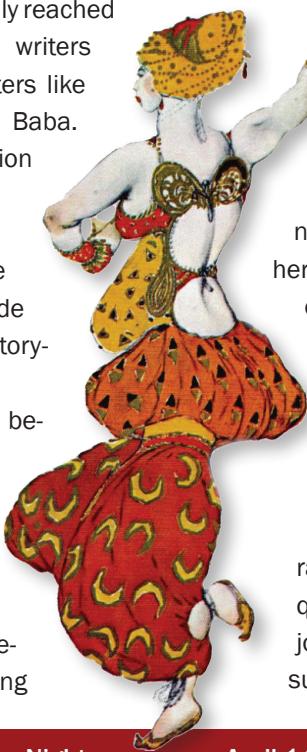
in the morning as a way to exact revenge on all womankind.

But Shahryar didn't count on the likes of Scheherazade, a courageous young woman who volunteered to be his next bride after he had done away with a thousand others. Scheherazade had studied history, philosophy, science and poetry; and with a head full of stories, she asked the king if she might tell him just one.

She told it well as if her life depended on it, but as dawn approached, she abruptly stopped before reaching the conclusion. The king, so engrossed in the story, had no choice but to grant Scheherazade another night to live. The new bride returned to finish her story and then quickly began another, again ending just before dawn.

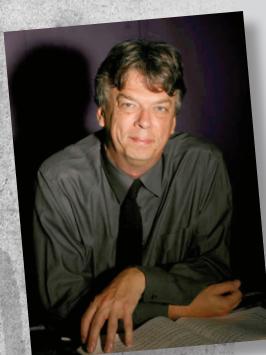
Shahryar granted Scheherazade another stay of execution, and then another and another until she had told him 1,001 stories, given him three children and become his favored and life-long queen.

Rimsky-Korsakov based his "Scheherazade" on the story of this quick-witted queen, and the Tuscarawas Philharmonic will join a long line of storytellers by performing the suite on April 14.



The Heroic Cello and Sultry Nights

April 14 || 7:30 P.M. || Performing Arts Center



Eric Benjamin
Conductor

■ Dear Tuscaffiliates

OLD WORLD AND NEW WORLD. In the house in which I grew up, classical music was not too present. After discovering that I could like orchestral music, I shuffled through a stack of old vinyl albums stored in a corner and came across a recording of Scheherazade. It was not a terribly good recording, and the surface was pretty scratchy, but I was enchanted by the melodies and invigorated by the rhythmic intensity of the final movement especially. It remains one of those old favorites that I don't often think about but am delighted to encounter again. It is music that is clearly designed to enchant the

audience and the players, and it fulfills that purpose admirably.

The Dvorak Cello Concerto is one of those great works by a well-known composer that I have not really encountered much over the years and have left in reserve for future acquaintance. The future is now, and the work is so impressive as a solo vehicle and an exquisite exploration of musical and emotional terrain. "New music" is, usually, music of recent vintage, so it is especially gratifying to "discover" a new piece that is over one hundred years old and to be overcome by its excellence.

ARTIST PROFILE SAWYER THOMSON

Left: Eric Benjamin and Sawyer Thomson discuss the finer points of Dvorak's Cello Concerto
Right: Sawyer and grandmother, Carol France



SAWYER THOMSON will perform Dvorak's *Cello Concerto* with the Tuscarawas Philharmonic on April 14; and according to Sawyer, "It is the concerto for cello. It has everything—lyricism and technical difficulty—and it's so rewarding." Even when simply talking about the music, Sawyer is visibly inspired by the intricate way in which it expresses the human condition. "The entire piece is such an emotional journey," he said. "It transports you to various walks of life."

Eric Benjamin remembers meeting Sawyer as a grade-school cellist. "Most young musicians, when they learn a masterwork, learn to play it one way, the way they learned it," said Benjamin. "It is a mark of Sawyer's extraordinary gift that he has the confidence to entertain a different concept of a phrase or passage and then has the technical skill to immediately incorporate the new idea into his performance. I value that we can collaborate and bounce ideas around."

As a student at Dover High School preparing for college auditions, Sawyer began studying the Dvorak concerto with his teacher at the time, Keith Robinson,

artist-in-residence at Kent State University.

Now a freshman at Indiana University, Sawyer studies with his former teacher's sister, world-renowned cellist Sharon Robinson.

As a young boy, Sawyer was given key advantages, beginning with a solid work ethic instilled by his parents, Scott and Kim. Sawyer cites his brother Connor's achievements as further evidence of the family's emphasis on personal discipline. Connor is an accomplished baseball player at the high school level, and Sawyer said, "He is an incredible athlete and equally as dedicated in his sport as I am in cello."

Also key to Sawyer's development as a musician was his family's decision to move from a school district with no orchestra program to Dover, where such a program flourishes. Sawyer joined the school orchestra while in the fifth grade, and his mother wonders what direction his life might have taken had he not had that opportunity.

Exchanging his small-town surroundings for a competitive collegiate setting—Indiana University has the largest music school in the U.S.—Sawyer quickly realized his competition and matched it with increased drive and dedication. "You can really see who you're up against," said Sawyer, finding his place among the 80 cellists gathered from around the world. There are, however, just eight students in Robinson's studio, and the young artist considers the group a supportive family.

His family back home in Dover cheers him on with their full support, including his grandmother, Carol France, who has played violin with the Philharmonic since 1947. France, who admires her grandson's maturity and discipline, will share the stage with him in April. ■

THE TUSCARAWAS PHILHARMONIC COFFEE HOUSE

APRIL 14 • 6:30 P.M. • PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

High school students are invited to a special event featuring a question-and-answer session with Eric Benjamin and Sawyer Thomson. Get an intimate view of the life of a young musician, and enjoy light coffee-house refreshments and a free ticket to the evening's performance. Reservations required—contact Bud Winn (330-364-1843 or bwinn@roadrunner.com).

M E E T Robert Henke, Timpanist

ROBERT HENKE, long-time timpanist for the Philharmonic, has built a life around orchestras both as performer and as administrator. He has been a member of the Philharmonic for 26 years, has served as general manager and has been finance manager for a long time running. But his love for classical music and the ensembles that perform it took root many years before he even discovered this local orchestra.

As a boy growing up in the early 1940s, Bob began taking drum lessons at a Canton, Ohio music store, marking the beginning of his love for percussion. "During high school, music was everything," Bob said, and he performed with many of his school's music ensembles. After WWII, he also joined a VFW drum and bugle corps, playing alongside returning soldiers.

Bob attended the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, Maryland, studying with the timpanist of the Baltimore Symphony and performing with the symphony as well. During his time at Peabody, he also received his draft notice, and after graduation, he enlisted in the Air Force.

He was stationed at Bryan Air Force Base in Texas where he remained for four years as a member of the Air Force band. 'I never got off the ground,' he said. "We went everywhere in a bus."

Bob moved back to Canton after the service, along with his wife Margery, a violinist whom he met at Peabody; and he became the buyer for his parents' clothing store, making frequent buying trips to New York. "This provided me with the opportunity to make regular visits to Carnegie Hall, the Met and the 92nd Street Y where I was able to see my favorite composer, Stravinsky, conduct a program of his works," said Bob.

Both Bob and Margery joined the Canton Symphony; and Bob stayed with the group for 25 years, earning a silver baton for his committed service. He was also the general manager of the Akron Symphony for 11 years beginning in 1972, the year E. J. Thomas Hall opened.

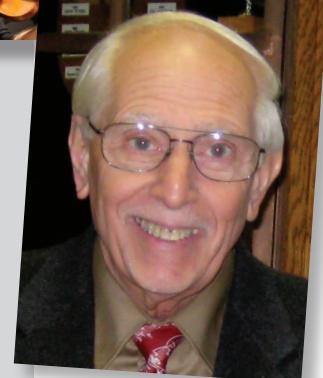
Margery became conductor of the Tuscarawas Philharmonic a few years later, and Bob began playing with the orchestra soon after. Following his wife's passing in 1996, it was Bob who



recruited Eric Benjamin to take over as conductor of the Philharmonic.

Music is not Bob's only interest—he has filled his life with a variety of hobbies, one of which is model train collecting, which has earned him the nickname "Boxcar Bob." And although he no longer has a pilot's license, he flew private planes in earlier years in keeping with a life-long love of flying. Bob also has fond memories of water skiing and fishing for walleye with his wife and three daughters while on family vacations.

Throughout his many years with the Philharmonic, Bob has seen the orchestra grow in numbers and level of professionalism, he said. And after watching the public's appetite for classical music diminish, he believes we might be reversing course. "There seems to be a swing back in the other direction," he said with optimism. ■



SHIRLEY WAGNER, a life-long resident of New Philadelphia, has sponsored the first concert of the season for many years. "I believe in contributing to the community in many ways," she said, "And people enjoy the Philharmonic." While she appreciates the orchestra programming, she is quick to say she enjoys a variety of musical styles. "I even enjoy some of this modern music," she added. Shirley's involvement with the Philharmonic dates back decades. Many years ago, Shirley, at one time a health and physical education teacher at New Philadelphia High School, was a lifeguard at Tuscora Park; and she volunteered as a lifeguard at Camp Muskingum, the summer arts camp operated by the orchestra from 1944 to 1965.

"I think we live in the best place in the world," said Shirley, and her commitment to the community is evident in her involvement with local organizations, both in time and financial support. We are grateful to have her as part of the Philharmonic community.

PATRON Spotlight



Featuring
William Marshall, bass/baritone
Laura Schupbach, soprano
Timothy Culver, tenor
And the
Tuscarawas Philharmonic Chorus
with the
Dover High School Concert Choir

COMING MAY 12, 2012

CARMINA BURANA

A May Festival

Majestic, mysterious, with an incredibly powerful impact—*Carmina Burana*, the greatest piece of rock-and-roll ever written for chorus and orchestra. These 13th-century poems celebrate earthly pleasures with a cynical bent—rock lyrics if ever there were any—written by young men about to take monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience! Carl Orff's robust and almost universally-known music makes a crowning moment for a May Festival.



IN THE NEWS

Plenty to see at www.TuscarawasPhilharmonic.org

• Pre-Concert Chats are Back

Beginning this month, pre-concert chats with Eric Benjamin will return in the form of a video to be displayed in the Performing Arts Center lobbies before each concert. The videos will also be viewable on the Philharmonic website—be sure to watch the eight-minute chat to discover some insightful program details.

• Join the Adult Chorus

April 14 is the final day to join the adult chorus, now rehearsing for the May 12th performance of *Carmina Burana*. The chorus rehearses Saturdays 10 to 11:30 and Sundays 2 to 3:30 (attend one or both at your convenience) at the First United Church of Christ in New Philadelphia. At the Philharmonic website, click the Who We Are tab and proceed to the Adult Chorus page for more details.

• Annual Auction Opening Soon!

The Philharmonic's annual online auction will open April 9 and continue through April 23.

At the Philharmonic website, you'll find a link to all items on the auction block:

- Housewares and home decor
- Gifts cards and certificates
- Sports tickets
- Get-away packages
- Miscellaneous items

All proceeds will support the Philharmonic Orchestra, Adult Chorus and Children's Chorus.

