Fortuna and the Wheel of Fortune

IF there is one question that has been asked by every human being ever to suffer, it’s this—why is this happening to me? Emphasis on “me.” The course of life’s events is so unpredictable, and its direction so mutable, ancient Man determined someone must be at the helm, someone who is, if anything, impulsive, possibly diabolical, occasionally benevolent.

That someone must be a woman, common logic would dictate. We’ll call her Fate, or Fortuna; and we’ll imagine her with a wheel, which she randomly spins to determine our ups and downs, wins and losses. Fortuna, with her Wheel of Fortune, is arbitrary in both timing and determination, and we are at her mercy.

Earliest images of the wheel were threatening, with victims being thrown off by centrifugal force or crushed by the rolling weight. And four characters populated the spokes—I Shall Reign, I Reign, I Have Reigned and I Have No Kingdom. Later, Romans and Greeks put the goddess on a sphere representing Earth. Blindfolded, she would step precariously in any direction with no regard for who is squashed under adversity or who is promoted to privilege.

During the Middle Ages, Fortuna and her Wheel were Christianized, permeating popular religious instruction and even affecting the designs of cathedral windows. The concept of the wheel was used to teach against the appeals of the temporal, warning against hoping for an earthly fortune but instead putting all hope in Heaven.

It was in this era when clergy began writing Carmina Burana, a collection of more than 200 poems and scripts. It included love songs, drinking songs, moral tales and spiritual theater, and it addressed the notion of Fate. “Monstrous and empty fate, thou, turning wheel, art mean, voiding good health at thy will. Veiled in obscurity, thou dost attack me also. To thy cruel pleasure I bare my back.”

Centuries later, Carl Orff excerpted 24 of these poems to create his Carmina Burana. Join us on May 12 when we perform it, and when we shout out the enduring petition, O Fortuna.

Carmina Burana—A May Festival || May 12 || 7:30 p.m. || Performing Arts Center

Dear Tuscaffiliates

It was in my sophomore year in high school that I encountered Nelhybel’s Estampie and Orff’s Carmina Burana, and the two linked in my mind as modern takes on the medieval world and its music. While I had learned that thundering choruses and massed wind groups were not part of the sound world of medieval Europe, I liked that modern composers could reference salient features of antique music and utilize them to create pieces that mixed the old and the new in ways that were vigorous and engaging.

Both works contain passages of delicacy and robust energy that are gratifying to hear, and the medieval atmosphere is just present enough to arouse curiosity and wonder in a high school kid.

We’ll see if it still works on adolescents (early signs are favorable) as the Philharmonic and the Philharmonic chorus will be joined on stage by the Dover High School Chorus and selected wind players from high schools around the area for this May Festival celebration of music old and new.
WHEN the Philharmonic takes the stage for its May Festival performance on May 12, nearly 125 high school students will be in the mix—local orchestra, band and choir students will perform shoulder to shoulder with the adults.

Members of the Dover High School chorus, all 75 of them, will join the Adult Chorus in singing *Carmina Burana*. With help from their director, Shawna Hinkle, the students began working on the music in January. Eric Benjamin has been rehearsing with the students as well; and when asked if he believes the experience is instilling in them the importance of community involvement and a life-long love of music, he said, “That is my goal, but it takes time to express that, and so often we have our heads down and are just learning the notes, words and rhythms.”

Benjamin told the students their contribution “was crucial to making something spectacular happen in this community.” The message seems to have gotten through, and the young singers are ready. Said senior Ben Wallace, “This is powerful stuff—everything from recording and rehearsals to singing with the adults. It’s going to be fun.”

Ask the students if they recognize the value of music in every stage of life, and you’ll get full nods all around. “With singing, you can express yourself in different ways,” said freshman Connor Limbaugh. “I doubt I’ll go into music as my career, but I will always do something with it.”

“I hope my students see that music can extend beyond high school. They will see local musicians performing, making music a life-long activity.”

—Ryan McPeeks, band director

Senior Abby Helbing mirrored Limbaugh’s passion for music, and she’ll be pursuing a music education degree in the fall. More immediately, however, she is looking forward to performing with the Philharmonic in its next concert. “Once the orchestra is there with us on stage, it will be a whole new experience when everyone comes together,” she said.

Four orchestra members from the Dover program will join the Philharmonic in performing *Carmina Burana*. And more than 45 wind players from seven local high schools, handpicked by their band directors, will join orchestra members to form a wind ensemble, performing Nelhybel’s *Estampie* and Respighi’s *Pines of Rome*. Ryan McPeeks, band director for Garaway Local Schools, has sent seven of his best musicians to join the group, saying, “I hope my students see that music can extend beyond high school. They will see local musicians performing, making music a life-long activity.”

“Ryan gets my point exactly!” said Benjamin. “It’s one of the main things I want students to know—art is for life, it’s not just something to do in school while waiting for the bell to ring.”

PATRON Spotlight

DAVID AND NELL WINSTON find the Tuscarawas Philharmonic an “easy” organization to support, and David said, “I’m glad to be a part of it because it’s a great asset to the community.”

Nell was born in Italy and moved to the States as a young girl, but David was born and raised in Dover. The two met at OSU and spent years living in Florida while David served in the Army. They didn’t move back to the Valley until 1973—David established a dental practice, Monroe Dental Arts, and Nell is a real estate agent with Pissocra Mathias Realty.

“We both always just enjoyed music,” said David; and as they are fans of classical music particularly, they make a point of attending Philharmonic concerts as often as possible. Although David has a “soft spot” for the Dover High School auditorium, he is pleased to have the orchestra performing in its new home, saying, “The Performing Arts Center is one of the most remarkable things that has ever happened in this county.”
The Tuscarawas Philharmonic is excited to introduce a MAY FESTIVAL, uniting local schools and organizations in a month-long celebration of the arts.

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THE LITTLE THEATRE production of “Chicago,” Performance Dates: (April 27, 28, 29) May 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13

The Annual Philharmonic Auction 2012
Your Bids Made It A Success

The gavel has fallen on our sixth annual online auction, and thanks to your generous donations and bidding, the Philharmonic raised approximately $4,800. We offered 150 items “on the block,” and according to our auctioneer, Bud Winn, 83 percent of those items sold.

Some of those sold items include a membership to Ancestry.com, Cleveland Indians tickets, a limited edition guitar, hotel stays, gift cards from local merchants and restaurants, housewares, original artwork and a get-away for two to Asheville, North Carolina.

Again, thank you all for another successful auction, and enjoy your winnings.

This year’s auction was sponsored by James and Linda Angel Rice, Allied Machine and Engineering Corporation and Bud and Melanie Winn.
Country roads bring her home again by popular demand!

Direct from Nashville, champion fiddler Liz Langford, a hometown girl, and Nashville talent Red Marlow, joined by singer/songwriter Amber Leigh White and multi-instrumentalist John Estes. Get your tickets early!

Featuring: Red Marlow • Amber Leigh White • Liz Langford • John Estes

THE TUSCARAWAS PHILHARMONIC IS FIRING UP THE GRILL, AND

You’re Invited

Join us for an old-fashioned barbeque before the Classic Country Concert on June 9.

Gather on the lawn at the Performing Arts Center and enjoy all the fixin’s.

Watch for details in the coming weeks.