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The Snowman—Live Musicians, Live Music

WHEN the Tuscarawas Philharmonic takes the stage alongside the short film *The Snowman* at our annual Yuletide concert, we'll be delivering a performance reminiscent of silent-film days, as *The Snowman* is, in fact, a silent film. Picture sitting in a packed theater with a film projected on a large screen, all eyes aimed squarely at the action on stage; and instead of digital surround sound blasting you from all sides, a full orchestra and children's chorus sits front and center to bring you live music, punctuating and enhancing every scene in real time. Real live musicians. Real live music.

This is hardly a new concept, this business of musicians performing with film in theaters. In 1895, the Lumiere brothers, French film pioneers, hosted a screening and introduced live piano accompaniment at the event. The idea was a hit and soon spread to larger screenings and other cities. Theaters began hiring pianists or organists to accompany movie watching; and if it was large enough and wealthy enough, the theater would even hire an orchestra. Not only did the music enhance the movie-going experience, it also helped drown out the otherwise overwhelming sound of the earlier film projectors.

The music performed with the earliest silent films was gathered from familiar sources, classical music that was copyright free and easily

manipulated. A Bach chorale was cleverly retitled and reworked to become "Adagio lamentoso for Sad Scenes," for example. And the music selected would be different from theater to theater, as was the case with the release of *Birth of a Nation*. At its premiere in Los Angeles, the theater's orchestra performed works by Mozart, Rossini, Wagner and Beethoven; but when the film opened in New York, the orchestra played folk tunes blended with pieces by Grieg, Tchaikovsky and Weber to accompany the film.

Film music became more standardized when publishers began selling handbooks to accompany films, sorting available music into categories for portraying certain moods, such as "Happy," "Night," and "Impending doom." As film creators refined their craft, they began hiring composers to create original film scores, allowing movie greats like Max Steiner and Charlie Chaplin to usher in an entirely new art form.

Film music took on a different role with the invention of "talkies," but with our performance of *The Snowman*, we're bringing back the silent-film era, with music by Howard Blake composed specifically to accompany this delightful tale. We'll be joined by the Tuscarawas Philharmonic Children's Chorus and the Greater Tuscarawas Children's Chorus to complete the holiday scene.

Yuletide Celebration: Christmas In the Air!
December 14, 2013 • 7:30 PM

Kent State Tuscarawas Performing Arts Center
Tickets available at www.TuscarawasPhilharmonic.org
or by phone at 330-308-6400



Christmas In the Air

THE AIR trembles with anticipatory electricity—energized by falling snow and sparkling holiday lights, and set in motion by soundwaves carrying some very special music and words—this is something of what is referred to by “Christmas in the air.”

I have always felt that all concerts by the Tuscarawas Philharmonic are special events, and I delight in planning and preparing for them. Preparations for the Yuletide Celebration is a particularly energizing sequence that begins sometime after the Yuletide concert of the previous season, when I look over a file of discarded program ideas of past seasons and think about potential programs for the next. The sheer abundance of lovely music for the holidays can actually make the job more difficult, but the practicalities and logistics of the Yuletide Celebration narrows down the choices a bit.

First, there is the music to select for the young voices of the Philharmonic Childrens’ Chorus. The main criteria are: a) suitability for young voices; b) easy enough to learn in about eight rehearsals; c) not so easy that it sounds like a nursery rhyme; d) apologies to those of you who like nursery rhymes; e) traditional—the tried and true tunes are great; f) not traditional—the tried-and-true tunes can be heard in continuous loop at the shopping mall anyway; g) only 20 more letters to go... let’s see... g) orchestra arrangements readily available; h) if not available, does yours truly have time and interest in producing one? i) wasn’t done last year; j) was done last year and bears repeating so as to become a tradition of the Tuscarawas Philharmonic Kids Chorus; k)...you get the idea. I have to think about this a lot. Working with

the kids chorus is a particularly fun part of my job and I always want them to enjoy the process and be proud of the product. Hopefully the concert will be an occasion for wonder, joy and, perhaps, quiet reflection, all inspired by the voices of children singing.

Howard Blake’s score for *The Snowman* captures a sense of warmth and playfulness that is appropriate to the season. It also underlines a timeless story in a beautiful animated movie, which we’ll all watch together as we performers get to be part of the magic of storytelling. The actual plot is only tangentially about Christmas and ends with a sombre reminder of the value of relationships experienced in the context of mortality—not exactly “Ho-ho-ho, fa-la-la-la” but a valuable message any time of year. The tune “Walking in the Air” is a fanciful meditation on dreaming even as it comments on images in the film.

“Pigs Could Fly” is not seasonal in the slightest, except that it is fun, charming, imaginative and provokes smiles in performers and listeners—all qualities that are, at least, complimentary to the spirit of the holiday. And it’s about being “in the air,” which is the catchy title of this program, and that is enough of a literal tie-in for me.

And we’ll round out our program with a great work for chorus and orchestra — John Rutter’s 1974 setting of the *Gloria* is a festive work occasioned here by a happy collaboration between the Philharmonic and the choral programs of Dover High School and Indian Valley. It’s a holiday treat for all involved to be able to celebrate the season with this classic of the modern choral literature.

“Working with the kids chorus is a particularly fun part of my job and I always want them to enjoy the process and be proud of the product. Hopefully the concert will be an occasion for wonder, joy and, perhaps, quiet reflection, all inspired by the voices of children singing.”

with music director
Eric Benjamin





Messiah

Sunday, December 8, 2013 • 3:00 PM

First Baptist Church, New Philadelphia

Guest conductor: Robert Frankenberry

Join our community celebration as we perform portions of Handel's *Messiah*.

A free gift from the Tuscarawas Philharmonic.

Sponsored by Barbour Publishing, Inc.; The Geib Family and Staff; and BASEC Management, Inc. dba Wendy's

YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT

We offer a special thank you to the following sponsors for helping to make our Yuletide Celebration possible:

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The **Tuscarawas Philharmonic Children's Chorus** will participate in the annual Dover Christmas parade on December 7, riding high on the Big Red Sleigh on loan from Cheryl Graham. Eric and the children will be singing some of the songs they have been learning in rehearsals, so be sure to give them a big cheer as they pass through downtown Dover.

We sincerely thank all of our supporters, as our continued success would not be possible without their generosity. If you would like to be among those supporters, either as a concert sponsor or as a financial contributor, please visit our website for details.

Contribute online in just a few easy and secure steps, or make your donation by mail. There are many different levels from \$25 annually and above.

Please consider being a part of the
Philharmonic family.

It is truly a community treasure.

www.TuscarawasPhilharmonic.org

Coming February 15, 2014

SWINGING, SINGING SWEETHEARTS

The Big Band Sound featuring Vocalist Joan Ellison

For the ideal Valentine's Day celebration, come revel in the vibrant rhythms and memorable romantic melodies of symphonic *West Side Story* and the big band sound of wonderful standards with vocals by Joan Ellison.

But wait! That's not all! After the concert, we'll keep things moving in the lobby with dancing and lavish desserts to the music of The Great Big Band—the Philharmonic's jazzier side! Make your reservations early for the dance and buffet—seating will be limited. Special tickets available at TuscarawasPhilharmonic.org. Look for the hearts!

Dance/buffet
tickets just
\$10
per person



IN THE NEWS

The Philharmonic Board on the Move

We welcome our newest board member, Joan Wenzel of Dover. Joan recently retired after teaching 30 years in the public schools—seven years in New Philadelphia and 23 in Dover. She continues to teach in Dover, developing the steel band and percussion programs, and is a performing member of the Philharmonic (you may spot her in the percussion section). "I would like to further promote the orchestra and ensure its growth and appreciation through relationships established through community development, and develop educational outreach through partnerships with the public schools," said Joan.

Our complete list of board members is as follows:

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■ Tuscarawas Philharmonic • P.O. Box 406 • New Philadelphia, OH 44663 • 330.364.1843

■ www.TuscarawasPhilharmonic.org • State of the Art editor: Robyn Martins

■ Performing at the Kent State Tuscarawas Performing Arts Center • Box Office—330.308.6400