

Mystical Dreams

TUSCARAWAS PHILHARMONIC



A Conversation with Eric Benjamin

You titled this concert *Mystical Dreams*. How did you go about developing the program?

[Eric] The concert came together in my mind as an opportunity for players, singers and listeners to take a sonic, emotional bath. And I love being able to share this music with the people in our community.

The Debussy *Nocturnes* have been on my list of pieces I want to “live in” (study, rehearse, conduct) for four decades. “Clouds” is a wash of instrumental color that, to me, perfectly translates into sound the experience of looking at a Monet landscape. “Festivals”, the second of the *Nocturnes*, is fleet and buoyant and then becomes majestic—a singular moment in any work of Debussy. “Sirenes” refers, of course, to the femmes fatales in Greek mythology, who lure sailors on to the rocks with their singing.

It’s music that is, again, all atmosphere and orchestral colors, augmented by the timbre of the women’s voices.

So, you had Impressionism in mind when you selected each piece we’ll be hearing on March 9?

[Eric] Yes...musical Impressionism, which we normally think of as a French style, but English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams exemplifies it as well. His *Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1* (he never finished numbers 2 and 3, so the numbering is meaningless) is a wonderful evocation of the English seacoast—timeless solitude and isolation contrasting with a bustling fishing seaport and all rendered in English folksongs and orchestral colors.

***Five Mystical Songs* seems a perfect vehicle for our chorus and local vocalist Ron Barkett. Talk a bit about the experience of working with the larger ensemble.**

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“I love being able to share this music with the people in our community.”



[Eric] To pair with the *Rhapsody* and continue the Impressionist theme, I selected *Five Mystical Songs*—his settings of devotional poems by the 17th-century mystical poet, George Herbert. Here again, choral voices, and a solo baritone, drift in a stream of soft harmonies and dreamy orchestral sounds.

This experience continues the Philharmonic’s long relationship with Ron. Having trained talent like this available in the community is such a rich resource, along with the experienced and committed members of the Philharmonic Chorus and Kent State University Chorus. I especially love the opening of the work —“Easter” is an ecstatic expression of faith and emotion. Herbert’s words soar

Ron Barkett, baritone

on Vaughan Williams music, taking our hearts with them.

And you found another remarkable impressionistic piece to showcase more local talent. Tell us about Ravel’s “Pavane.”

[Eric] Ravel’s “Pavane pour une infante défunte” is a beautiful short work that will feature our principle horn, Steven Stroup. Again, a piece that is a gem, that we bring to life here in the community, by virtue of the pooled resource of local talent.

George Herbert

(1593 – 1633) was a poet and priest of the Church of England. He wrote poetry in English, Latin and Greek and focused on religious themes.

In some cases, he set his poems visually to match the meaning of the stanzas. A poem about the altar would be written and then set in the shape of an altar, for example. His poem “Easter Wings” was set horizontally across two pages to resemble open wings.

Vaughan Williams was one of several composers inspired to compose around Herbert’s poetry.



Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

For, if I imp my wing on thine,

And feel this day thy victorie:

Let me combine,

With thee

Moft thine.

That I became

Thou didst so punish finne,

And fill with ficknelles and flame

My tender age in forrow did beginne

Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

And fing this day thy victories:

As larks, harmoniously,

O let me rife

With thee

Moft poore:

Till he became

Decaying more and more,

Though foolishly he loft the fame,

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and flore,



Introducing the **NEW** Percussion Camp

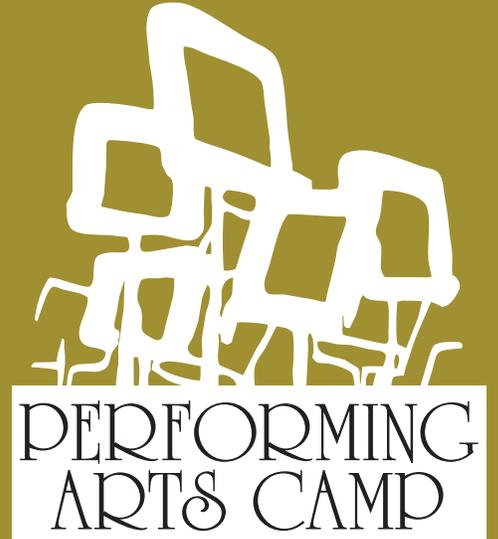
Our 2019 Performing Arts Camp will now include a new program specifically designed for percussionists in the 6th through 8th grades. Under the guidance of professional percussionists/educators Joan Wenzel and Thomas Roblee, students will experience and explore classical and world percussion through group lessons and ensemble experiences. They will develop greater skills on the snare drum, timpani, keyboard, and auxiliary percussion; and they will study the music and instruments of Ghana (African drums) and Trinidad and Tobago (steel drums.) Visit camp.tuscphil.org for more details and to register online. It's going to be great!

Children's Chorus to Perform March 9

Arrive early for the *Mystical Dreams* concert and hear the Tuscarawas Philharmonic Children's Chorus performing in the lobby beginning at 6:45. Under the direction of Laura Barkett, with Carolyn Wallace accompanying.



TUSCARAWAS PHILHARMONIC



The Tuscarawas Philharmonic will host its seventh annual Performing Arts Camp this June at the Kent State Tuscarawas Performing Arts Center. Registration forms are now being accepted for the string and chorus programs scheduled for June 10-13.

Mary Cooper, cellist with the Tuscarawas Philharmonic, coordinates the **STRING CAMP** held from 9 a.m. to noon. The program is open to all string players through 12th grade.

The **CHILDREN'S CHORUS CAMP** will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. and is designed for ages 7 to 14 with no auditions required. Laura Barkett, educator and director of the Tuscarawas Philharmonic Children's Chorus, will be coordinator for this camp.

The **PERCUSSION CAMP** will be held from 9 to noon at Buckeye Career Center. It will be open to percussionists in the 6-8th grades, and Joan Wenzel and Thomas Roblee will coordinate the program.

- Deadline: May 7
- Cost: \$105 (\$95 for registrations before April 15)

Visit the website at
camp.tuscphil.org
to register and pay online.

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