ALUMNI MAKING WAVES

David Pay’s concerts don’t necessarily give audiences padded seats, or musicians a stage. And they like it!

From stage managing the Wednesday Noon Hour series to becoming a world leader in bringing ideas, musicians, and audiences together, Dave Pay has created a life in music.
ALUMNI MAKING WAVES

Paying it forward

By contributing writer Emma Lancaster

When he graduated from the UBC School of Music in 1992 with a degree in saxophone performance, Music on Main. Artistic Director David Pay (BMus’92) never dreamed he was embarking on a career that would take him all over the world. But his time at UBC definitely helped him become the well-rounded, versatile, respected curator and arts leader he is today. He studied with Julia Nolan (BMus’81, PhD’12), performed with the Wind Ensemble and various choirs, played chamber music, and stage managed the Wednesday Noon Hour Concert Series () that continues today.

“It gave me an inside view of how concerts are put together, and let me think about what things were like from the other side of the stage—the experience you’re transmitting, rather than just the music that you’re transmitting.”

Music on Main, the organization he founded in 2006, is a perfect reflection of this care and attention to audiences. Created to deliver contemporary and classical music in casual environments, with top-flight musicians, and refreshing concert formats, this innovative approach to concert presentation is “pay”ing off.

“2014 was the biggest year we’ve ever had,” says Pay. Between the site-specific Orpheus Project at the Cultch; a regular series of presentations at Heritage Hall and other, more informal venues; a move to a new co-location space in the CBC building downtown; and a successful bid, in partnership with the Canadian League of Composers (composition.org/), to host the International Society for Contemporary Music World New Music Days 2017, (www.iscm.org/). Pay has a lot on his plate, but he couldn’t be happier.

Read more about David Pay online at music.ubc.ca/highnotes

EARLY MUSIC

Riding the wave of baroque music

Nearly every major city in North America and Europe is home to a baroque orchestra. Organizations including Toronto’s Tafelmusik, Boston’s Handel and Haydn Society and San Francisco’s Philharmonia Baroque have become major players in their respective cultural scenes.

Recognizing the chance to provide students with more professional opportunities, the UBC School of Music has partnered with the Pacific Baroque Orchestra and Early Music Vancouver to create the Baroque Orchestra Mentorship Programme. This immersive, yearlong experience enables students to train and perform alongside five professional musicians led by internationally renowned conductor and harpsichordist Alexander Weimann.

“Alex Weimann leads the orchestra with energy, fire and pizzazz. He’s really imaginative and creative, and the musicians feed off his enthusiasm,” says Alexander Fisher, who spearheads the Baroque Orchestra Mentorship Programme, which consists of select students in the Early Music Ensemble at UBC and members of the community.

“To see him deploying his talent with our students is an absolute delight.”

By learning to play instruments from the baroque period (1600-1750) and music not often heard, students have increased their employability by taking a step back in time.

“The programme has expanded my understanding of historical context, and what it means to play in the period style,” says Billie Smith, a second-year violin student, who has previously served as concertmaster of the UBC Symphony Orchestra. “I am gaining the knowledge to make more informed decisions when it comes to musical interpretation, especially knowing more about the nature of the baroque violin.”

The instruments—replicas of their baroque counterparts—require students to play delicately and with particular attention to phrasing, detail and expression. To aid in this learning curve, students receive face-to-face coaching, three times a week.

“I constantly gain ideas about how to manipulate ornamentation and phrasing, as well as advice on the different effects I can get on my instrument by experimenting with techniques,” says Smith, who considers playing alongside Chloe Meyers (violin) and Paul Luchkow (violin and viola) the highlight of her experience. “I get to see their thought processes behind musical decisions, which are often based on the unique way period instruments are built. They have greatly influenced my playing and encouraged my ongoing fascination with early music.”

Read more about Early Music online at music.ubc.ca/highnotes
UBC Opera presents Mozart’s comic masterpiece, *The Marriage of Figaro*, which promises to take audiences on a ride through schemes, disguises and surprises.

This aristocratic farce recounts a single day of madness in the palace of Count Almaviva where he desperately tries to obtain the favour of Figaro’s bride-to-be, Susanna, despite the couple’s attempts to thwart his plans.

An unlikely cast of misfits promises to take audiences on an entertaining ride through a choir rehearsal. From the onset, everything appears to go downhill: the choir is terrible; the philandering conductor has no conducting skills; and two competing soloists attempt to kill each other. A stuttering tenor, a blind woman, a diva, a belly dancer and a clown round out the hilarious cast.

Grand historical or political themes are absent—but a blind lady transforms the choir.

“The idea is to entertain people,” says Wohlberg, a writer, poet and educator who started to pen the opera in 2006. “It’s pure whimsy—and just a really farcical comedy.”

“In the great tradition of comedic operas,” adds Chatman, one of Canada’s most celebrated composers and a professor of composition at the UBC School of Music. A multi-Juno award nominee, Chatman has achieved international fame for his work, including approximately 100 published choral works. He was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2012.

Set in Vancouver, circa 1985, warm-ups, roll call and a healthy dose of sexual innuendos follow as the rehearsal for the national competition in Toronto begins.

“There will be a laugh for everybody. You don’t need to know anything about Wagner or German lied or art song to have a good time for an hour,” says Wohlberg.

To learn more about *Choir Practice* and support the production, go to startanevolution.ubc.ca/projects/choir-practice-makes-perfect/ or visit Highnotes online at music.ubc.ca/highnotes

**World Premiere of Choir Practice**

**May 8, 9 | 7:30 pm**

**Old Auditorium**

**Spotlight on Opera**

**Exploring the meaning behind rhythm**

**February 5, 6, 7 | 7:30 pm**

**February 8 | 2:00 pm**

**Chan Centre for the Performing Arts**

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Bass-baritone Scott Brooks (BMus’08), who made his international debut at the Wexford Festival Opera in 2010, hopes to share his affinity for the mischief-inducing Figaro: “I enjoy his subtle irreverence and generally ironic disposition, and the fact that he always has to have the last word in a debate, even if uttering it might be a brash tactical blunder.”

A master of character, director Nancy Hermiston helps students develop a fresh take on timeless characters in this double casted production.

Susanna is one of the smartest characters in the opera. She is quick physically and mentally, but sometimes lets her temper get the best of her,” says soprano Tamar Simon, who rarely sets foot off stage as Figaro’s betrothed, one of the most demanding roles for a female lead. “This production is traditional yet highly entertaining, dramatic yet comedic. Nancy Hermiston has done a wonderful job in helping us build our characters and audiences will have a great time.”

Hermiston’s staging deftly handles the complicated comings and goings of the cast, presenting chaos in an entertaining way.

To purchase tickets, please visit us online or call the box office at 604-822-2697.

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Teaching at the heart of giving

Musicologist Elizabeth Lamberton (MA’78, PhD’88) fondly recalls her time at UBC. She credits her inspiring professors with helping her to discover her own lifelong passion: teaching.

“I immediately felt that being in front of a class was where I was meant to be,” says Lamberton, who began her career as a sessional lecturer at UBC in 1989, teaching courses in music history. In 1993 she joined Kwantlen College (now Kwantlen Polytechnic University), where she taught music history until 2012, when she gave up teaching for health reasons.

Lamberton’s interest in the development of young people and her appreciation for her alma mater led her to establish student scholarships through a significant gift from her estate. “It gives me such a great sense of fulfillment because I can continue to help students in perpetuity,” says Lamberton, whose gift will establish scholarships in musicology and voice, reflecting her belief that historical research informs performance practice. “UBC gave so much to me and I am happy to give back.”

After studying piano at the University of Regina, Lamberton came to UBC to begin graduate studies in musicology. Her master’s thesis developed from her interest in the Romantic period, and focused on Brahms’s piano quintet. Her doctoral dissertation on the 19th-century French critic Ernest Reyer eventually took her to the libraries of Paris, and reflected her fascination with French music and language, which continues to this day. While still a graduate student, she also developed a deep appreciation of early music, in part inspired by her UBC mentor, Professor Emeritus J. Evan Kreider. The musicology scholarship to be established from Lamberton’s estate is expected to serve as one of the largest awards for students in the discipline at UBC.

The establishment of a scholarship in voice reflects Lamberton’s abiding interest in opera. During her student days she went to Minneapolis to attend performances by New York’s Metropolitan Opera on tour, an experience which sparked her love of the genre and led to a great awareness of the need to support gifted young singers.

“It is our duty as alumni to provide the ways and means for students to succeed and continue their studies,” Lamberton says. “It is very difficult to persevere through many years of study without the encouragement and validation of financial support.”

When she talks about helping students, Lamberton’s face lights up. A teacher to the core, she considers the scholarships a completion of her life’s work: “This is a way to perpetuate my love of teaching and to fulfil my desire to help students.”

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