

...s Krager devoted to career

Conductor wrapped up in music

By Sue A. Krenek
Reporter

place is all the exceptional people who have a hand in making artistic things here happen," he says. "It's not old hat yet, where the status quo has been established and it goes on and on and on and on, year after year with about the same enthusiasm level. The excitement is so high that it just makes everything that happens just that much more special."

Krager's father and grandfather were named Franz, and although his parents chose to Americanize his name to Frank, he later decided he wanted to be known by his ancestral name. The foreign-sounding name is an asset, given the current trend toward hiring foreign-born conductors, but his name change is far less drastic than that of many aspiring conductors who have changed their names to help their careers.

The orchestra takes up much of Krager's time but his teaching job is the one that allows him to reach people who otherwise might not be exposed to classical music.

He brings enthusiasm and humor to his music appreciation classes, recently telling a class that crescendo and decrescendo marks on a musical score are "the ones that look like sideways ice-cream cones" and demonstrating how a composer of the Baroque period would go about his work at the piano.

The class is challenging, he says, because the students have widely varying degrees of musical knowledge before they enter the course. He says about a third of the students have experience on a musical instrument and about a third are what he calls "slightly exposed" to music — they have limited playing experience.

"And then of course you've got the third that basically play the radio and the television and that's it," he says.

Despite that imbalance in knowledge, Krager says he doesn't have a problem teaching the class.

"I've never had a problem trying to relate my thoughts to other people, and I think that helps the whole thing," he says.

This isn't to say Krager has never had problems with teaching. In going from college student to college professor at Missouri, he skipped a step in the traditional teaching ladder by not teaching in a public school setting.

"It was a rough first two years there (at Missouri) because I had no experience," he says. "I was thrown into a situation at the age of a very young 24 where I had graduate students under me who were older than I was, and I mean much older — early 30s in some cases."

"And that posed real problems, learning to find how far you could go with your authority and learning how far people would respect you. There were a lot of tense moments for those first couple of years."

Krager says he thinks those initial problems were due to his lack of teaching experience.



Photo by Anthony S. Casper

Franz Krager of the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra conducts orchestra members at practice.

"In this business, we're dealing so closely with people's feelings that in general you have to be a 'people person' to be really successful," he says. "And unless you know how to do that you're going to step on a lot of toes and hurt a lot of feelings and make a lot of people angry at you — and you're going to learn what not to do in a hurry."

Krager handles his classes with an ease that belies those early tense times.

He wasn't fazed when a student recently disagreed strongly with his evaluation of a performance.

"That's the thing about art," he told the class. "There is no one performance that satisfies everyone. That's the way art goes. But if you don't go, you won't have an opinion. So you need to go."

Krager is not afraid to make his students laugh — even if they're laughing at him. During a class discussion of the Vienna Choir Boys' performance, he launched into an explanation of what he termed "a very embarrassing moment."

He spent most of a day preparing a detailed lecture on the choir, to be presented at the A&M Opera and Performing Arts Society's Lagniappe Lecture Series. In what he called "the nightmare of all lec-

tures," the time of the lecture had been mispublicized. He stepped out on stage to give his lecture — and found himself face-to-face with a completely empty theater.

"Anyway, 20 minutes later there were 12 people in the audience so I went ahead with the lecture," he said. "The ushers, bless their hearts, came and sat in the back to make it look more crowded."

"This is embarrassing. I don't know why I'm telling you this. But if any of you have questions about the Vienna Boys' Choir, I have a very elaborate lecture."

"I try to tie what we study in depth into the whole art scene and how it's part of the human soul," he says. "I'm not concerned that people know details about remembering composers' dates and the key to the second movement of a symphony and how many measures make up a phrase and all that stuff, you know, how many sharps it takes to make up the key of whatever."

"When they can hear a piece of music on the radio 10 years from now and keep it on rather than turning it off out of boredom or say to themselves, 'Gee, that sounds like it's out of the Romantic period,' those types of things are the things that are important to me."

What's up

Monday

THE BATTALION: applications are being accepted for editorial cartoonist, columnists and photographers for the summer and fall. Applications can be picked up in 216 Reed McDonald.

The Medical Sciences Library will be closed to all but medical and veterinary medical students from 6:00 p.m. until closing May 4 to May 15. For more information, contact Virginia Algermissen at 845-7427.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT: will sponsor the mini writing-course, "Proofreading," at 6:30 p.m. in 120 Blocker. For more information call 845-3452 or stop by 227 Blocker.

CENTER FOR RETAILING STUDIES STUDENT ASSOCIATION: Samuel Spritzer will discuss the different aspects of the retailing business at 7 p.m. in 153 Blocker.

TAMU AGGIE MAJORITY FOR CLEMENTS: will sponsor a rally at noon at Rudder Fountain with free cokes and a live band. Everyone is welcome.

STUDENT Y: applications for public relations, cookie crew, freshman programs and Sesquicentennial chairmans are available through Monday on the second floor of the Pavilion.

EL PASO HOMETOWN CLUB: will meet at 7 p.m. in 204 Harrington.

AGGIE ALLEMANDERS: will meet at 7 p.m. in the lobby of Zachry Engineering Center.

MSC AGGIE CINEMA: will meet at 7 p.m. in 502 Rudder.

Tuesday

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT: will sponsor the mini writing-course, "How to Decode Your Writing," at 6:30 p.m. in 120 Blocker. For more information call 845-3452 or stop by 227 Blocker.

ADVERTISING ASSOCIATION: Bill Moffit and Charlie Moger form KSRR — 97 Rock in Houston will talk about advertising and promotions at 7:30 p.m. in 163 Blocker.

AGGIE G.O.P.: officer elections will be held at 7 p.m. in 401 Rudder at 7 p.m.

SPANISH CLUB: will elect officers at 8:30 p.m. in 410 Rudder.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION SOCIETY: will have a panel discussion at 6:30 p.m. in 127 Blocker.

AGGIE DEMOCRATS: will meet to discuss the primary at 8:30 p.m. in 502 Rudder.

Items for What's Up should be submitted to *The Battalion*, 216 Reed McDonald, no less than three days prior to desired publication date.

Jury selection continues in organized crime case

KERRVILLE (AP) — Jury selection resumes Monday in the state's organized crime case against a Hill Country family and a hitchhiker accused of torturing to death a drifter who had been forced to work on a ranch.

District Attorney Ron Sutton said the jury selection process, which began with the selection of an initial panel on March 24, probably will take a week to complete.

The state district court jury will consider the state's case against Walter Wesley Ellebracht Sr., his son Walter Wesley Ellebracht Jr., and the younger Ellebracht's wife, Joyce.

The three, along with hitchhiker Carlton Robert Caldwell, are accused of the March 1984 death of drifter Anthony Warren Bates.

Prosecutors say Bates was one of

several hitchhikers who went to the Ellebrachts' sprawling Hill Country ranch after he was promised work, and then was forced to stay. The state contends Bates was tortured to death with an electric cattle prod and his body burned.

The court summoned 500 potential jurors in March, and narrowed that pool to 140. Another 200 were to report for possible duty Monday, Sutton said.

Five other defendants, all drifters who at one time lived at the ranch, have been charged in the organized crime indictment.

A 10th defendant, Darryl Hunsacker, remains charged under the original murder indictment handed down before prosecutors obtained the organized crime indictment.

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