

State and Local



Photo by Tom Ownbey

Griffith Miller II, an occasional player with the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra prepares for Friday's performance.

'1812 Overture' stops show with blasts from 3 cannons Brazos Valley orchestra concert thrills crowd

By Karl Pallmeyer
Music Critic

It's quite an experience to hear Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" with full orchestra, bells, fireworks and cannons. That's the way it was performed Friday night when the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra, with 57 bell ringers from area churches and three cannons from Fort Hood, finished its benefit performance "Picnic with the Pops, a Concert in the Sousa Tradition."

About 1,500 people armed with blankets or lawn chairs spread out on the lawn of the Brazos Center for an evening of music. The concert, sponsored by the Friends Association of the Symphony Orchestra, was designed to raise money for the BVSO's next concert season.

The evening's entertainment began around 6 p.m. with music from the Bryan High School Jazz Band, the Pete Rodriguez Jazz Band and the A&M Consolidated High School Jazz Band. The BVSO took the stage shortly after 8 p.m.

Conductor Franz Anton Krager, dressed in a Sousaesque military band uniform, announced that the evening's program would follow the same format John Philip Sousa used when he directed his band during outdoor concerts. The format included Sousa marches, classical pieces and popular songs by contemporary composers.

After Dimitri Shostakovich's "Fes-

tive Overture," Krager introduced orchestra member Larry Campbell, euphonium soloist for Felix Alexandre Guilman's "Morceau Symphonique," a slow, lyrical piece, was highlighted by Campbell's beautifully sad, almost operatic solo.

The audience was asked to sing along on the next piece, Sousa's "U.S. Field Artillery March." Associate conductor George Adams dedicated the march to the soldiers and commanders from Fort Hood who supplied the cannons.

A salute to Leroy Anderson was made up of three pieces: "Fiddle-Fiddle," "Blue Tango" and "Bugler's Holiday." The violin section was featured during "Fiddle-Fiddle" and cornetists John McSpadden, Jim Zinecker and Jennifer Benardino got to show off with their fast and harmonic passages during "Bugler's Holiday."

Krager turned over the baton to Adams, who conducted Bagley's "National Emblem March," but came back onstage to conduct Morton Gould's "American Salute."

During the intermission, the chance to conduct the symphony during Sousa's "The Stars and Stripes Forever" went up for auction. When the bidding was over, local oilman Emil Odgen's \$525 bid won him the conductor's position. But he would have to wait until the orchestra played Sousa's "Semper Fidelis March," Pryor and Rodriguez's "Thoughts of Love," Khacha-

turian's "Sabre Dance" and Dinicu and Heifetz's "Hora Staccato."

Trombonist David Hass was the featured soloist during "Thoughts of Love." For "Hora Staccato," Krager put down the baton and picked up mallets for his incredible marimba solo.

Odgen was handed the baton with much ceremony and humor. Jim Butler, entertainment editor for the Bryan-College Station Eagle, also got a chance to conduct "The Stars and Stripes Forever," but was nowhere near as animated as Odgen.

For George Frederick Handel's "Music for the Royal Fireworks," woodwind players from local high schools joined the BVSO. Krager said Handel had to score the piece with an enlarged double-reed section in place of strings to satisfy the King of England. Handel later scored the piece for strings as well so Krager combined both scores for the performance.

The highlight of the evening, of course, was the performance of Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture." Members of area churches stood on both sides of the stage with hand bells for the finale. The cannons at the left of the stage and the fireworks, provided by members of the College Station Lions Club, at the right of the stage, made the evening a night to remember.

On its own, Tchaikovsky's music is powerful, but it becomes a totally new experience when punctuated with blasts from three howitzers. The audience was blown away.

Function of A&M cyclotron unknown to many students

By Tracy Staton
Reporter

On the outskirts of the Texas A&M campus lies a simple, unassuming structure — a structure that houses a forbidding hulk with the ability to reduce matter to its most basic sub-elements.

Students pass the building every day, oblivious to the power within. But little do they know . . . they will soon be entering . . . the nuclear research zone.

Although the Cyclotron Institute has been a fixture at A&M for 20 years, its function lingers in the twilight zone for most students. Dr. David Youngblood, the institute's director, said the cyclotron's operation defies explanation.

"My kids ask me what I do at work and I don't know what to tell them," Youngblood said. "It's difficult to explain the significance of what we do here."

A huge communication gap has been created by the scientists' tendency to the technical, he said. They worked for years to become familiar with nuclear physics and thus have a hard time putting their trade into layman's terms.

"We are doing basic research to learn how the nucleus of the atom works," Youngblood said. "By studying the behavior of various particles in the cyclotron, we obtain clues to the forces that hold the nucleus together."

The 35 scientists who are members of the institute will be able to study the atom under a much wider

range of conditions once a new cyclotron is put into operation sometime this year.

"The new cyclotron will give us more flexibility," he said. "We will be able to use a wider range of elements at much higher speeds."

The new machine will allow the scientists to ask new questions about the atom, Youngblood said.

"The cyclotron is a complex device. It's not a kit you order from Sears and Roebuck."

— Dr. David Youngblood,
Cyclotron Institute
director

"To continue to learn about the atom, we need a tool that will probe in different ways than the old machine allows us to," he said. "We will be able to probe much deeper with the new one because it will be much more powerful."

The institute began constructing the new cyclotron in 1982, but a precise completion date is impossible to determine, Youngblood said. Design decisions are being made every day, so the engineers are continually revising the machine.

"The cyclotron is a complex device," he said. "It's not a kit you order from Sears and Roebuck. We will be modifying the cyclotron for 12 to 18 months after we turn it on."

Modifications to the machine are necessary because the technology behind the design is so new.

"We were forced not to do everything right the first time because of the time factor," Youngblood said. "If we had taken the time to plan each step before we built it, we would be building the cyclotron for 20 years."

The device has been constructed entirely by A&M engineers, physicists, technicians and students. The students participating in the project will contribute to the reputation of the institute when they graduate, Youngblood said.

"Because of this project, we will have students who are more well-trained for research," he said. "And they will bring that training to the companies who hire them — whether for medical research or whatever."

The students definitely will be working with a unique machine. When the new cyclotron is operational, it will be one of only three of its kind in the world.

"A group from the Department of Energy came last week (the week of April 13-17) to inspect our work," Youngblood said. "And one member said that this cyclotron will be more powerful than any today for the type of research we are performing."

The Japanese spent \$80 million to build a facility with the capacity of the cyclotron here, he said. A&M's machine cost \$8 million to construct. The price difference can be attributed to superconducting technology.



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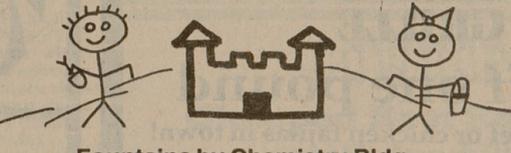
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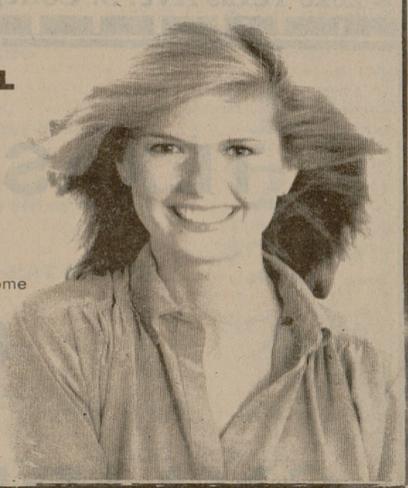
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