

## Highly orchestrated

### Area volunteers help keep classical traditions, culture alive

BY TRAVIS IRBY  
The Battalion

In the age of MTV and Top 40 radio, students seeking a more classical sound may find their options limited.

The Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra expands those options offering people a chance to play as well as partake of classical music.

The non-profit organization is

not a part of Texas A&M, but its ties to the school are strong. Of the 55 members who are volunteers, 31 are A&M students and staff.

The orchestra also contracts about 23 musicians from Austin and Houston when necessary.

Many students get involved with the orchestra to exercise their musical talent.

Jim Bankson, cellist and an electrical engineering graduate student, played the cello in high school, but put it down after graduating. Then, last January, he joined the orchestra.

"I enjoyed it in high school and missed it so much," Bankson said. Bankson said the orchestra provides him with a way to relieve the pressures of school.

"It is a great release for me," he said. "The whole week I have classes and work, and the stress builds up, but when I play music, it all fades away."

Arywin Hood, a violinist and junior molecular biology major, said she was excited to join the symphony.

"I have always been involved in music," Hood said. "It has been a wonderful experience. Everyone you work with is very nice."

Sunday, the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra will open its 1998-99 season with its "Letters from the Old World" concert at 4 p.m. in

Rudder Auditorium. Student tickets cost \$5.

The soloist, Metropolitan Opera Soprano Emily Pulley, will perform Mozart's "Exultate Jubilate," K. 165.

In addition to the Mozart piece, the orchestra will play Brahms' 2nd in D Major and Beethoven's "Egmont Overture."

The orchestra's board of directors are responsible for choosing the pieces and artists.

Managers from all over the world send the musical compositions from their composers.

This provides the orchestra with information about artists in America and abroad.

Marcelo Bussiki, the music director of the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra, said the orchestra usually picks artists with which it is familiar.

"The best way to assure quality of the program is to invite artists you already know in performance, or have come through recommendation," Bussiki said.

He said the pieces for the opening concert help define the general theme of the upcoming season.

"The idea of this year's season is a trip around the world by means of music," Bussiki said. "We decided to begin our trip from the old world, with some of the finest music they produced."

Bussiki said the addition of

Pulley will only strengthen the performance.

"She is a top-quality artist in every sense of the word," Bussiki said. "Her performance with us last year was a tremendous success."

Hood said the pieces add their own touch to the overall performance.

"The Brahms has so much energy, I think it will blow people away," Hood said. "The Beethoven is a nice piece with lots of energy, but it is very different form the Brahms."

Bankson said he is looking forward to the new season.

"The entire season is fantastic," Bankson said.

He said the orchestra offers students a listen to some great music.

"At the very least it offers students exposure to more forms of music," Bankson said. "They might find they like a particular piece and see fellow students. Plus it is cheap to listen to."

Hood said some people who may have thought of classical music as boring might change their minds when they see the orchestra's performance.

"It is important we keep this culture alive, it is a different experience," Hood said. "It gives a feeling of culture. You can get dressed up."

Bussiki said the orchestra will



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRAZOS VALLEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Jennifer Anderson, a nuclear engineering major, and Mark Holtapple, a chemistry professor, perform with the Brazos Symphony Orchestra.

help to enhance the experience by giving listeners a chance to learn more about the music.

"Since one can only appreciate music they know, we will have guest speakers talking about the program one hour prior to every performance," Bussiki said.

He said attending the performance is a worthwhile endeavor because of the quality of the scheduled acts.

"This season has a magic to it," Bussiki said. "It is charged with energy and expectation. Students who enjoy classical music have a rare chance to go to a high-quality performance at a very reasonable price."

"Those who are not classical music lovers could use this opportunity to get to know the richness of this inspiring musical language."



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