

Music for the Masses

Texas Music Festival features orchestral performances

BY BRIAN FLEMING
The Battalion

For the past 10 years, the Texas Music Festival has brought to the Texas A&M community the opportunity to experience the arts.

The Festival includes many events, all of which give audiences an opportunity to hear some of the greatest music history has to offer, while simultaneously providing an impactful learning experience for all involved.

The Texas Music Festival first began in Houston under the title of the Lyric Art Festival. Conceived in 1984, it has since grown to be a well-known celebration of music.

Since that first concert season, the Festival has featured internationally known artists and ensembles, members of the Houston Symphony and Houston Grand Opera Orchestras and performing faculty from the University of Houston Moores School of Music.

In 1988, the Lyric Art Festival expanded to also entertain the students and faculty of Texas A&M University when festival organizers formed a partnership with the College of Liberal Arts.

Werner Rose, coordinator of the Texas A&M concerts of the Texas Music Festival and professor of music, witnessed the festival's growth.

"Over the 10 years, I have seen it get better. The arts level has grown and it has become well-known," Rose said.

Rose said bringing the Festival to Texas A&M was a good idea because it provides an opportunity for students at A&M to hear classical music.

"There is also local high school involvement as well," Rose said.

The event takes place over the course of June. There are many concerts, six of which are performed in College Station.

The remainder of the events take place in Houston.

The festival attracts people from all over the world to take part in the events, which include intense master classes and concerts featuring some of the world's premiere artists.

"Auditions are held internationally. Once students are accepted, all they have to do is get to Houston," Rose said.

From that point, students from many places including Mexico City; Kamakura, Japan; New York City and Sugar Land, Texas (to mention a few), study and perform in the south Texas area.

On June 21, the music festival will present "An Evening with Violinist Andrzej Grabiec & Friends." Grabiec, an internationally recognized performer and educator, will perform various works by such



JEFFERY SMITH/THE BATTALION

composers such as Milhaud, Bacewicz and Brahms.

Also performing in the June 21 event is Rose, whose talent not only has impacted the A&M community, but the international community as well.

"Pianist Werner Rose proved a treasure in interpretation and dynamic control," a press release from Australia said.

The festival will return to the Brazos Valley June 25 and 28 following Monday's events.

These events will feature such works as "Symphonic Dances" from *West Side Story* by Leonard

Bernstein and "Symphony No. 5" by Tchaikovsky. The music festival has become widely respected in the south Texas area over the years.

A 1998 Festival audience information survey of 98 attendees said that of those surveyed, 28 were students at A&M and 67 were residents of local communities and other communities as well.

This event serves as a useful pedagogical tool for A&M professors as well.

"All teachers make the concerts an intricate part of the summer music courses at A&M," Rose said.

"For many students, it's the first time to hear this music."

"I feel that we need to keep the prices reasonable," Rose said. "For the money, it's the best deal in town."

The Texas Music Festival is a long-standing tradition in this area.

It offers a variety of music at reasonable prices and provides a learning experience as well.

For anyone who loves music, seeks enrichment, and values culture, the Texas Music Festival is a perfect outlet.



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