

Musicians bound by love of chamber sound

BY LINDA ANN CHODIN
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Felix Resnick, Hart Hollman and Bob Bergman never tire of talking about and playing classical music. After spending the morning rehearsing Cesar Franck's *Symphony in D Minor* for last weekend's concert at Orchestra Hall, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra members enthusiastically sat down to chat about chamber music and their upcoming concerts with the Emerald Sinfonietta.

All three have performed with the chamber orchestra since its founding in 1999, Resnick as conductor, Hollman as violinist, Bergman on cello. The April 14 concert at First United Methodist Church in Birmingham and April 21 concert at Kerrytown Concert House, Ann Arbor, marks the end of a 6-concert season for the 25 to 30-member Emerald Sinfonietta.

"It's an all-Bach program by three different Bach composers (Johann Sebastian and sons Carl Phillip Emanuel and Wilhelm Friedemann)," said Resnick who's conducted the Birmingham Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra since 1976. "We chose two venues to test audience reactions to find out where the best audience base is. We hope that they'll like the kind of music we're doing, music that sometimes lies around unheard."

Audiences and critics seem to be taking note of the Emerald Sinfonietta's baroque, classical and contemporary repertoire. In 2001, their *Homegrown* recording won the Motor City Music Award for Best Classical CD.

It's no wonder they're attracting the atten-

tion of classical music lovers. Resnick earned a master's degree in conducting from The Juilliard School after taking a leave from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in the late 1940s. Bergman performed with the Sacramento Symphony before becoming a member of the DSO 13 years ago. Originally from Long Island, N.Y., he and world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma were classmates in Juilliard's pre-college program in 1982. Hollman originally joined the DSO 29 years ago after playing with the North Carolina and Baltimore symphonies.

But the underlying theme, their love of chamber music, is what makes the Emerald Sinfonietta a hit with audiences.

"It's unusual music written for chamber orchestra. It's halfway between orchestral and chamber music," said Hollman, a Bloomfield Hills resident. "As long as your life is music you'd like to experience as much as possible. When you play in an orchestra you don't have a chance to solo. Being in a chamber orchestra is a wonderful opportunity for musicians. It's more intimate. You can be a soloist and ensemble player at the same time."

Bergman will enjoy performing both roles at the April 14 and 21 concerts as he moves into the spotlight for C.P.E. Bach's *Concerto for Cello & Strings*. Bergman suggested the difficult piece to music director Resnick.

"I first studied the concerto in 1983," said Bergman. "It showed the talent Bach produced in all his children."

Bergman, who has children of his own, turns out a cello in the workshop at his Berkley home every few months.

"My dad made cellos and was unable to



Bob Bergman

Felix Resnick

Back to Basics

What: Emerald Sinfonietta performs the music of W.F., C.P.E. and J.S. Bach

7:30 p.m. Sunday, April 14, at First United Methodist Church, 1589 Maple, Birmingham

4 p.m. Sunday, April 21, at the Kerrytown Concert House, 415 North Fourth, Ann Arbor

Tickets: \$20, \$15 students/seniors. Call (313) 438-0780 or visit www.emerald-sinfonietta.org

finish one so I did," said Bergman who also plays with the Southfield Philharmonic. "It's a lot of work but it taught me a deeper respect for the instrument and its makers because of the labor and skill involved in creating these instruments."

"Once again, it all goes back to a love for the music."

"It's nice to have an outlet. In an orchestra you tend to lose sight of individual interests," said Bergman. "With a chamber orchestra it's a smaller sound but our interaction is more important. The feeling and energy is completely different. The ensemble element of playing becomes critical as the orchestra gets smaller."

Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival announces artists for its 9th season

The Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival will present more than 20 concerts during its ninth season, scheduled this year from June 15-30.

A coalition of Catholic, Protestant and Jewish congregations sponsor the secular event, which is recognized for its dedication to excellence and intimate dialogue between artists and audience.

St. Hugo of the Hills, Kirk of the Hills and Temple Beth El join together with host ensemble, Detroit Chamber Winds & Strings, to bring the Festival's music to venues throughout metropolitan Detroit, Ann Arbor and East Lansing.

Pianist Ruth Laredo, and sisters Ani and Ida Kavianian, violinists, will join pianist James Tocco and conductor Phillip Greenberg. Also returning to the Festival will be violinist Jeffrey Multer, cellist Paul Katz, soprano Linda Hohenfeld and members of the Detroit Chamber Wind & Strings.

Violinist Shmuel Ashkenazi, cellist Andrea Diaz and pianist Sandra Rivers will perform at the festival for the first time this year. The contemporary music sextet eight blackbird will join the Festival performers this year. The group appeared in 1997 as part of the Festival's

Shouse Institute training program.

This year's composer-in-residence, John Harbison, is one of the country's most prominent composers. His opera, *The Great Gatsby*, commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera, premiered to worldwide acclaim in December 1999. The Lyric Opera of Chicago performed Harbison's opera in October 2001. It returns to the Met stage next month.

Harbison has been composer-in-residence with the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Tanglewood, Marlboro and Santa Fe Chamber Music Festivals and the American Academy in Rome.

The Festival's concerts have been featured on National Public Radio's Performance Today and the Festival has released two compact discs on the Gasparo label. A third disc, featuring the music of 1999's composer-in-residence, Neil Rorem, was released in 2000 on the Newport Classics label.

Tickets for the ninth annual Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival will be available for individual concerts or a series subscription basis. For more information, call the Festival office at (248) 659-2097.

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