A Celebration 10 Years in the Making

On June 3rd, as a capstone to our first decade, hundreds of friends gathered to celebrate with a gala dinner and concert.

It was a chance to share favorite stories and memories and look to the future. The artwork for this program, “Yellow Music Room” by Thomas McKnight, was the painting used for Amici’s very first concert.

The gala opened with dinner and silent auction in The Shedd Institute’s dining room. Then trumpeters Guy Few (from Toronto) and David Adee (from River Road Elementary School) signaled the start of the program with a fanfare from Rossini’s “William Tell Overture.”

Emcee for the evening was Fred Crafts, who introduced Peter van de Graaff, who reflected on the nature of chamber music, including observations like Friedrich Nietzsche’s, "Without music, life would be a mistake."

In turn Sharon Schuman, Jessica Lambert, and Lillie Manis described the past, present and future of Amici.

Then Sharon announced, with gratitude, the inaugural winners of the Yvonne and James Wildish Award for Support of the Arts.

Guy and David took the microphone a second time to describe this season’s educational outreach and school visits—and thanked this year’s donors gala attendees. The live auction was conducted by auctioneer Sid Voorhees.

At the close of the program, patrons made their way upstairs to the newly-renovated Jaqua Hall to hear a riveting concert of Lussier’s Impressions de l’Alameda and Schubert’s Trout Quintet.

Dessert and conversation followed, as they have since the very first Amici concert in 2009.

James and Yvonne Wildish
James and Yvonne Wildish Recognized, by Sharon Schuman

A high point of our Gala Dinner on June 3rd was awarding the Yvonne and James Wildish Award to its first recipients: Yvonne and Jim Wildish. The purpose of this award is to honor those who have supported not just Amici but our whole community. Who better to receive it than Yvonne and Jim? Without them and their family, there would be no Wildish Theater. Without the theater there would be no Amici. Among our joys as performers in this remarkable space is seeing Jim and Yvonne in the audience at almost every concert and feeling their encouragement as sponsors of our opening performance each season.

In 2008, Oregon Mozart Players was asked to test out the brand new Wildish Theater by conducting a rehearsal there. At that moment, several of us noticed the remarkable acoustics. I decided to perform a string quartet concert there as part of OMP’s Chamber Music and Chocolate series. After that concert, which sold out, listeners from all over the hall said, “I had a perfect seat! What acoustics!” This experience led me to talk with violinist Pilar Bradshaw, oboist Amy Goeser Kolb, cellist Steven Pologe, and pianist Victor Steinhardt about creating Chamber Music Amici. We also decided to request from the Wildish Theater Board of Directors that they designate us their first resident company. They did, and the rest is history. Without Jim and Yvonne’s commitment to turning a defunct movie theater into an acoustical gem, and without their vital support and encouragement year after year, none of this would have happened.
Thank you for supporting Amici in time, talent and treasure!

Remarks by Peter van de Graaff

When there is something stressful or discordant in my life, I most often find myself turning to chamber music for solace. I think I know why. Have you noticed that many of the great composers turn to chamber music late in life? Beethoven, Saint-Saens, Brahms, Faure, Haydn. Without getting too maudlin or philosophical, I think it's because chamber music represents the best in humanity. By that, I mean that it is a few people playing different parts, but coming together to create something more beautiful than any of them could alone—working together for the greater good, but as individuals. To make a masterpiece work, they must listen to each other carefully, not interrupting or disagreeing, but adding to what the other has to say. In that way, I think that chamber music transcends the other arts. Isn't that the kind of civility and dialogue that this world needs right now? I dare say that you will be a better person for supporting Chamber Music Amici and attending their concerts this coming year, and I encourage you to do so.