It’s hard to believe that we founded Chamber Music Amici ten years ago in the midst of America’s greatest financial crisis since the Great Depression. You could say that we were foolhardy, but we thought we needed great music to lift our spirits. We had a vision of short, fun concerts that brought the community together and helped create a new generation of music lovers. You responded by coming to performances, lending your time, talents and resources to keep us afloat, and creating together what has become the Amici family.

Ten years later we are filled with gratitude. Without the generosity of Yvonne and Jim Wildish, there would be no Wildish Theater, our home, with its perfect size and acoustics. Says Jim, “We helped because we wanted the theater to be a classy place, and there is no classier act than Amici! It remains a treat for us to attend—we buy extra seats so we can invite friends to hear Amici.”

We are grateful to architect Otto Poticha for his stunning transformation of a former movie theater into a world-class performance venue. We are also grateful to the many local artists whose works have made Amici’s posters unique, and to over 100 guest musicians who have made our concerts constantly surprising and full of variety.

To celebrate, we have put together our best season ever. It begins with a collaboration with the Delgani String Quartet and special guest Pilar Bradshaw.

October 15 at The Richard E. Wildish Community Theater

We think Arensky and Mendelssohn make a great pairing. Their personal histories have some marked similarities: they both were child prodigies, they shared dizzying trajectories in their careers, they both had a genius for melody, and they both died far too young. There were also notable differences in their personalities and their approaches to life and music.

Arensky wrote his dark-hued quartet during his period of mourning for Tchaikovsky, while Mendelssohn wrote his sparkling Octet in the joy and confidence of youth.

Join us to celebrate these great works from the heart.

Delgani String Quartet: Wyatt True, Jannie Wei, Eric Alterman, Kim Uwate

Pilar Bradshaw

Felix Mendelssohn. Anton Arensky.

Creating Community Through Great Music

Creating Community Through Great Music

Fall 2018

Lynn and Dave Frohnmaier with Sharon Schuman, Spring 2009

Yvonne and Jim Wildish, Pilar Bradshaw and Tom Draggoo, June 1, 2009

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My Long Road Back to The Wildish Theater
by Pilar Bradshaw

One week before last October’s Amici opening concert, I was driving onto Beltline Highway when an unlicensed driver hurtled into my car. The accident closed the freeway, and I was transported by ambulance to RiverBend Medical Center with a concussion, speech and swallowing difficulties, and a shattered right arm.

Specialized hand surgeon Dr. Heather Campion described the injury as horrendous and a complex set of more than a dozen fracture lines. Dr. Campion was expertly able to reassemble my arm in the operating room with metal hardware. Rehabilitation from the brain injury took many months, the hardware from my arm was removed four months ago, and I am back in form now playing my violin.

The hardest part after the accident was wondering “Would my mind recover so I would be able to work again?” and “Would my arm heal?” and “Would I be able to play my violin again?” The injury and recovery was exquisitely painful, but the motivation to play music again pushed me forward. Prayers answered, I will be performing Arensky’s violin again?

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Mark Your Calendar for November

In something of an experiment, this season’s second concert comes in November rather than December. Make a note! We gave November’s concert of works by Haydn and Bruch the title “Mastery.”

Here’s what Wikipedia says about Joseph Haydn’s six quartets of Opus 20 (Amici will perform the second of them):

When Haydn published his Opus 33 quartets, ten years after the Opus 20, he wrote that they were composed in “an entirely new and particular manner.” But, if the Opus 33 was the culmination of a process, Opus 20 was the proving ground. In this set of quartets, Haydn defined the nature of the string quartet – the special interplay of instruments that Goethe called “four rational people conversing.” Many of the compositional techniques used by composers of string quartets to the present day were tried out and perfected in these works.

Liner notes for a recent recording of Bruch’s quintet give this history:

Max Bruch’s piano quintet in G Minor was published only a few years before the recording was made, almost exactly a hundred years after its creation... It took Bruch no less than nine years to complete his work, which ended up never even being printed during his lifetime. The posthumous publication of this unjustly forgotten gem did not appear until 1988.
Who Made Your Instrument?

Jannie Wei: “I am currently playing on a David Gussett violin I commissioned. It was made in 2018 as a copy of Guarneri’s ‘Pannett’ played by violinist Isaac Stern. I had been searching for a new instrument for the last few years and it has been hard to find one with a reasonable price and the sound characteristics I was looking for.”

Wyatt True: “I perform on a violin by Charles Brugrêve using Eugène Sartory bow, both from Paris in the 1920s. Both are relatively new for me — the violin was acquired in 2014 from a shop in Minnesota and the bow in 2018 from an individual in Eugene.”

Pilar Bradshaw: “The violin was made by my great-grandfather, Carl C. Holzapfel, in 1926. It won the gold medal that year at the Sesquicentennial instrument competition in Philadelphia, beating out a Stradivarius violin. His son, my grandfather, played it in the National and Baltimore Symphonies in the 1930s and presented it to me on my sixteenth birthday. It is my pride and joy, with its powerful sound modeled after Guarnerius del Jesu instruments.”

Women Create Music

Amici’s April concert presents works by Fanny Mendelssohn, Amy Beach, and Jennifer Higdon. The careers and fame of Fanny Mendelssohn and Amy Beach were limited by societal conventions regarding the proper sphere of women. They both did an inspiring job of moving beyond those barriers and creating a place for themselves in the artistic life of their times, and there were plenty of music lovers who accepted and respected them as the great artists they were. Nonetheless, their works are less likely to be performed than they deserve to be, even today.

We can contrast the experience of Mendelssohn and Beach with that of Higdon, who laments in a New York Times article that she has received belittling comments from colleagues based on her background and gender. That said, Higdon is also a professor at the Curtis Institute of Music who won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Music, a 2009 Grammy Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Pew Fellowship, a Koussevitzky Fellowship, and awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She is an internationally celebrated composer, constantly receiving commissions for her new work.

Amici looks forward to sharing with you the works of these spectacular composers!

“Everyone runs into naysayers, but if you love something enough and feel passionately enough, you just go on ahead, walk right round the person saying it, proceed down the road and don’t look back.”

Jennifer Higdon

 TICKETS: CHAMBERMUSICAMICI.ORG  541.953.9204
A Wide Array of Guest Musicians

The range of works you hear at Amici concerts is wide, thanks to the varied instruments and repertoires brought forward by our talented guest musicians. After each concert, please take a moment and thank them! And if you especially appreciate a particular musician’s talents, consider sponsoring him or her. Call the Amici office for details.

Guest musicians this season, upper left to upper right: Pilar Bradshaw, October; Carolyn Huebl and Hung-Yun Chu, November; Victoria Wolfe, February; Delgani String Quartet, October; Grace Ho, February; Eunhye Grace Choi, April; Tyler Abbott and Guy Few, June.

Music as Dialogue

by Sharon Schuman

When Amici performs, do we create a dialogue? Jessica Lambert wondered if I thought our concerts were opportunities for the dialogic freedom I advocate in Freedom and Dialogue in a Polarized World. There I argue that we are more free the better able we are to see from the perspectives of others and co-author decisions in a world we share. Jessica’s question: does this work for music?

I think so. Here’s how. Most musicians learn from teachers how to play an instrument. Even if we teach ourselves, we imitate what we hear. From the word go, we are in dialogue with others. By the time professionals reach a stage, they have navigated myriad dialogues: with composers, whose notations give only the barest hint of their intentions; with earlier performers, whose concerts or recordings we love or hate; with each other, whose ideas we test in rehearsals.

In this process the musicians of Amici learn that the sounds and ideas that any one of us has brought to the table—themselves the products of countless influences—never wind up exactly as intended, because the piece we are performing takes on a life of its own that is greater than the sum of our individual parts. In anticipation of performance, the not-yet-assembled audience also takes part. Will they like this piece? In the performance itself, their confidence, boredom, curiosity, pleasure, or cheers are as eloquent as any sound that comes from a violin or piano.

So yes, chamber music is dialogic, and as we sharpen our abilities not just to hit notes, but to see from the perspectives of composers, other musicians, audiences, and people beyond the stage or the concert hall, we become freer to co-author the best possible concerts.

Two Visits to Cottage Grove

Last April, Amici guest musicians again traveled to Cottage Grove High School and Lincoln Middle School. As always, it was for band and orchestra students to hear chamber music and converse with the musicians.

In June, the “Brahms on Vacation” players traveled to Steve and Vera Kilston’s home west of town for a Saturday afternoon performance of Brahms’ Piano Trio in C Minor and his Sextet No. 2—both of which Brahms composed away from home during the summer. Thank you, Kilston family, for your hospitality!

Free Concert at the Mims House

This summer, thanks to a collaboration with the NAACP of Lane County, a selection of works by Chevalier de Saint-George and William Grant Still were performed in the dining room of the home on High Street that is known as the historic Mims House. Only a few months earlier the works of these two Black composers were performed by Amici in The Shedd a few blocks away, and it seemed fitting that this reprise, open to the public at no charge, took place in the home that housed visiting musicians Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong and others in an era when African-Americans were denied lodging in area hotels. C.B. and Annie Mims owned the house from 1948 to 1966.

Funding for the concert and the Mims House appearance was provided by the Lane County Cultural Coalition and the Mildred Baker Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation.

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