

Greeley Philharmonic

by Maryjo Faith Morgan

ONE DICTIONARY DEFINES PHILHARMONIC:

phil•har•mon•ic [fil-hahr-mon-ik] – *adjective*

Fond of or devoted to music; music-loving.

Fond? Music-loving?

Yes, but the Greeley Philharmonic Orchestra (GPO) is much more than merely fond of their music and the community with whom they share it. They are charged up, ecstatic, ready to forge ahead.

The GPO has plenty to be enthusiastic about this year. Their 2-year search and arduous process of sifting through 200 applicants is over. They have unanimously chosen a new music director/conductor. They've prepared a dynamic program for this 2007-2008 season. And they are launching an enterprising outreach to families and children. No wonder there is so much buzz.

"These are exciting times." Executive Director Jeannette Kolokoff is sincere in her fervor about the orchestra's direction with Maestro Glen Cortese in the lead. Genuine welcome, burgeoning with hope and elation bridges the 1750 miles between Greeley and New York, where Maestro Cortese currently resides. Physically at least.

A part of his heart will always be in Colorado as he commutes back and forth. So much so that he composed "Garden of the Gods" to express his impressions of the powerful and profound landscapes he experienced as a 24 year-old driving cross-country. The piece is but one delight this season's offerings.

A Secure Future

Kolokoff points out a part of the GPO vision not necessarily visible by simply looking at their list of concerts -- their expansive children's programs.

"When we work with children, we are creating future musicians and future audience members."

Although the word work expresses the sincere effort and attention the GPO invests in enlightening local children about music, what Maestro Glen Cortese and the orchestra exude is fun. They have fun with their music. They have fun with the kids experiencing their music. And they want the kids to have fun listening and learning.

Their dynamic program puts concert music and study guides in teachers' hands in the fall. Twenty-three schools in the Greeley/Windsor area participate. By the time the family concert comes up in February, the kids know the pieces. They have ownership. They will feel a strong sense of belonging in the concert hall, recognizing the familiar, not confused by the foreign.

It is evident that the orchestra knows how to connect with youth. Kolokoff talks about incorporating an entertainment element whenever children are involved and not only expecting them to sit quietly. Certainly a part of the orchestra's plan is to teach youth proper etiquette in a concert hall. "But not uptight so they don't enjoy things. We use actors and dancers, different kinds of theatrical crossover into the music within the family concert."

This season for the first time in Greeley, an "up close and personal" introduction to the orchestra puts kids in the middle. In small group settings the kids are surrounded by musicians who enjoy initiating them into the philharmonic experience. The kids can touch the instruments, feel the vibrations and see how each instrument produces sound.

"In 45 minutes of fast-paced interaction with orchestra members, older kids conduct, younger ones dance, and all of them have fun being so close to the musicians."

Fine Tradition

At GPO, tradition and innovation enjoy a fine-tuned balance. Maestro Cortese expresses how fortunate he feels to inherit such a well built, well maintained orchestra.

"Howard Skinner spent so much time and energy here - what an intense labor of love. He will always be a part of what the GPO is."

Since 1911 there have been only five to wield the baton. That's what happens when you acquire and retain excellent musicians. Dr. Howard Skinner initiated a 37-year tenure when he stepped in as music director and conductor of the GPO, joining the distinguished ranks of John C. Kendel, DeForest Cline, Richard Ellinger, and Henry T. Ginsburg.

The recent bestowing of the title Conductor Laureate honors Skinner's untiring efforts in the educational and musical communities at UNC. It is both a fond farewell and an open invitation for him to guest conduct the GPO, which he will do twice this season.

Giving is Fun

For Maestro Cortese, it is a great gift to give audiences the total experience of hearing music that is all at once an emotional, physical, and psychological encounter. "I enjoy performing for





Glen Cortese was just named Music director of the Greeley Philharmonic and will conduct his third season as artistic director of the Western New York Chamber Orchestra, his fifth season as artistic director of the Oregon Mozart Players, and his twenty-first season as music director of the New York Chamber Sinfonia.

the sheer joy of it and feel very fortunate doing what I do."

He goes on to explain that for musicians it is never just about the performance. It is more about what the performance achieves within the people who are listening.

"Music effects us on many different levels and brings up different kinds of emotions."

Maestro Cortese sees nothing stuffy or stilted about classical music. Nor it is something written

by old dead guys. Classical music was not classical when it was written. It was the popular music of the day. He believes it is just as contemporary today as it was then.

"These composers lived very colorful lives politically, personally, and in their interactions with other people. Their music is very much alive and vital."

The process is interactive across time. Musicians and conductors are constantly deciphering the information classical composers have left. This gives music an ability to be fresh and new as different people take same source material and interpret it uniquely.

"It is great privilege to perform music in that way. Part of what makes it exciting is the personal involvement of performer."

In this process Maestro Cortese invites listeners to create your own internal experience. "In the visual arts, a film leads us where they want us to go. With concert music we are not handed a story. We can sit and develop the story ourselves. [It is] very abstract but within a very specific time frame. The music lets us take our own direction."

No matter which direction you choose, the Greeley Philharmonic Orchestra is here, now, to set you upon a path to greater fulfillment and enjoyment of music presented in their time-honored tradition. Don't miss it!

Freelance writer Maryjo Faith Morgan adds her welcome to Maestro Cortese and bids him safe travels. Visit her website: www.maryjofaithmorgan.com.

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<p>CONCERT 1: JUST ANOTHER VARIATION Saturday, September 22, 7:30pm Glen Cortese, conductor / Nathaniel Rosen, cello</p>	<p>POINSETTIA POPS: MAGIC OF THE SEASON Saturday, December 1 David MacKenzie, conductor / Alex Ryer, soprano / Randy St. Pierre, tenor</p>	<p>SPRING POPS: CELEBRATING BERNSTEIN Saturday, March 8, 7:30pm Glen Cortese, conductor</p>
<p>CONCERT 2: VIVE LA FRANCE Saturday, October 20, 7:30 pm Glen Cortese, conductor / Roberto Plano, piano</p>	<p>CONCERT 4: CHINA PAST AND PRESENT Saturday, January 12, 7:30pm Glen Cortese, conductor / Marc Deaton, tenor / Emily Johnson, mezzo</p>	<p>CONCERT 5: AMERICAN GENERATIONS Saturday, April 12, 7:30pm - Glen Cortese, conductor / Amy Burton, soprano / John Corigliano, guest composer</p>
<p>CONCERT 3: SYMPHONY SUPREME Friday, Nov. 9, 7:30 pm Howard Skinner, conductor</p>	<p>FAMILY CONCERT: FAIRY TALES & LEGENDS Saturday, February 16, 7:30pm Glen Cortese, conductor / Dulcie Camp as Mother Goose</p>	<p>CONCERT 6: SEASON FINALE "THE CREATION" Tuesday, April 29, 7:30pm / Howard Skinner, conductor / Elena Batman, soprano / Christopher Job, bass / Matthew Potterton, tenor / with UNC Choirs</p>

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