

Symphonic Winds is an energetic success

by Shane Parreco
Contributor

On Tuesday November 14, 2006 the Paul Porter Center hosted an evening with the Brevard College Symphonic Winds Ensemble. Conducted and directed by Dr. Susan Nicholson, the Performance was entitled *Pictures at an Exhibition* after the ten-movement piano cycle originally composed by Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881). Of the ten original piano movements, seven were slated to be part of the symphonic program. The work, finished in 1874, is Mussorgsky's greatest solo piano composition and has become a showpiece for virtuoso pianists. It is also known through various orchestrations and arrangements produced by other musicians and composers. The arrangement for symphonic band was completed by Erik Leidzen who adapted the original orchestral arrangement by Maurice Ravel.

The concert was opened with a traditional march by Henry Fillmore entitled *His Honor*. As is the case with most symphonic concerts the opening march serves the memory of our war-filled American history. The next piece, *At Morning's First Light*, was one of the more interesting of the evening. Written by David Gillingham (b. 1947), it is a good example of program music — music used to refer to something other than the music itself. In this case, there were many nature sounds imitated throughout the piece including song-bird-like flute lines, and the overall feeling of a bright beautiful day breaking.

Another of the more



Symphonic Winds Concert

distinctive pieces performed was *Old Churches* by Michael Colgrass (b. 1932). The unique aspect to this particular piece is its foundation in Gregorian chants and the recommended use of a specially designed percussion instrument called a "bowl tree." It is essentially several common, kitchen mixing bowls hung upside down by a string and struck with a percussion bell hammer to produce the ethereal sounds of a reverb-laden monastery from the days of the chant. The effect was impressive. There was a bit of worry that the small sounds produced by this unique instrument would not be heard over the rest of the band, so a bit of technical genius by David Tate amplified the sound so it would be an effective instrument for the show.

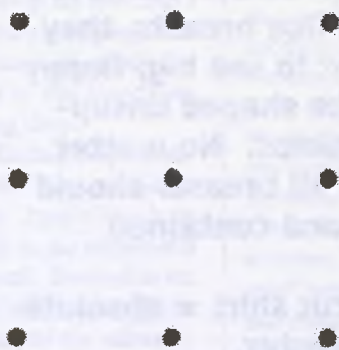
The concert ended with a strong version of Frank Ticheli's (b. 1958) *Vesuvius*. The piece was inspired by the eruption of the named Italian

volcano that buried the town of Pompeii in 79 CE. The arrangement incorporated many effective instrumentation tools including the use of the marimba played by freshman Jason DeCristofaro. Played in an earlier piece by senior Kenya Webster, the marimba has the tone color and appeal for more modern pieces written for Orchestra or Symphonic Band.

Overall the performance was a success. The effect that energetic and motivated director/conductor Dr. Susan Nicholson has on our recovering music program is really quite amazing. If you see her around campus commend her on the work she has already done and will obviously continue to do. *Bravo Dr. Nicholson!*

Photo by John Billingsley

Dimensions Puzzle of the Week



P2. Draw four straight lines so as to pass through every dot. You must not cross any dot more than once, nor retrace any line, nor lift the pencil from the paper until all 9 dots have been crossed.

Dimensions Math Club challenges you to solve a weekly puzzle. The first to respond with correct answer will win a prize.

Email answers to
Ryan Fiffick at: fifficra@brevard.edu