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Budapest on the Bluff

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Once again, The Mary Pappert School of Music brings the bluff alive with a series of concerts based upon an eastern European theme. This year’s series, Budapest on the Bluff, includes five concerts that focus on renowned Hungarian composers and works inspired by Hungarian and Gypsy folk music.

The series, under the artistic direction of David Allen Wehr, features a wide range of musical pieces, each with a distinctly eastern European flavor. Performers include Mary Pappert School of Music faculty, members of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (PSO), and special guest artists. Pieces by Béla Bartók, Franz (Ferenc) Liszt, Ernő von Dohnányi and Zoltán Kodály, as well as Franz Joseph Haydn, Franz Schubert, Johannes Brahms, Karl Maria von Weber, Maurice Ravel and many others are featured in the series.

On Sunday, September 9, Budapest on the Bluff kicked off with Fife and Drums, a concert of music ranging from 17th-century dances through pieces with dazzling Romantic virtuosity. Some of the works performed included Ferenc Farkas’ Old Hungarian Dances for Woodwind Quintet; Franz Doppler’s Hungarian Fantasy for Two Flutes and Piano, op. 35; and Karl Maria von Weber’s Hungarian Rondo for Bassoon and Piano.

Performers included Wehr along with members of the PSO and the Wheeling Symphony; and James Houlik, professor and chair of winds at the Mary Pappert School of Music. Guest artists at the concert included David Sogg, co-principal bassoon with the PSO and pianist/international concert artist Cynthia Raim.

On Sunday, October 21, Purely Piano, the second in the series, showcased Mary Pappert School of Music faculty members Wehr and Natasha Snitkovsky and guest artist Barbara Nissman in a program that focused on pieces played solely on the piano. Featured were works by Franz (Ferenc) Liszt, Johannes Brahms, Franz Schubert and Béla Bartók.

The third concert, held on Monday, November 26, was Dominantly Dohnányi and featured music written primarily by composer Ernő von Dohnányi including Piano Quintet #1 in C Minor, op. 1; Sextet in C Major, op. 37; and Harp Concertino, op. 45. Rounding out the program was Béla Bartók’s Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano. Mary Pappert School of Music Faculty members Wehr, Charles Stegeman, Rachel Stegeman, Marylène Gingras-Roy, Ron Samuels, Zachary Smith and Gretchen Van Hoesen were joined by Randolph Kelly and David Premo, guest artists from the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

Upcoming concerts in the series include String Theory on Sunday, January 6, at 3 p.m. and Hungarian Harmonies on Sunday, February 10, at 3 p.m.

Sunday afternoon concerts in the Budapest on the Bluff series feature various Mary Pappert School of Music faculty presenting pre-concert events designed to provide an educational look at key aspects of that afternoon’s performance.

All Budapest on the Bluff concerts take place in the newly renovated PNC Recital Hall in the Mary Pappert School of Music. Admission is a suggested donation of $10. For more information on Budapest on the Bluff, call 412.396.6083 or visit www.duq.edu/budapest.