

Tulsa-Based Orchestras Complement OK Mozart

By GLENDA RICE COLLINS
Contributing Writer

Three well-established Oklahoma orchestras recently played a significant role in advancing Oklahoma's premiere music festival OK Mozart (OKM) during a pivotal year for the week-long event, held June 11-18 at the Bartlesville Community Center (BCC). Those three orchestras are Tulsa Symphony Orchestra (TSO), principal guest conductor Daniel Hege; Signature Symphony at TCC (SSTCC), artistic director and conductor Andrés Franco; and Bartlesville Symphony Orchestra (BSO), music director and conductor Lauren Green.

Guided by OKM executive director Dr. Randy Thompson, OKM experienced some necessary tightening of its purse strings this year, which "means more money for Oklahoma musicians," says Thompson, while still celebrating the time-honored OKM tradition of involving stellar guest artists, though not the entire guest orchestra from New York, as during the festival's history over three decades.

And, Thompson adds in gratitude, "the Tulsa-based H.A. and Mary K. Chapman Foundation has been a wonderful OKM supporter this year."

Thompson, who for many years assumed the character of Mozart in OKM festival costumed portrayals, estimates the total economic impact for OKM's history to be "at least \$100 million."

Thousands Entertained at BCC

Main stage concerts for OK Mozart, Opus 32 featured not only musical journeys to and from Europe but also memorable flamboyance in dance music from the Americas: Peru, Cuba and Mexico -- from the German Dances of the revered festival namesake Mozart to the Danzones of Mexico's Márquez.

The Tulsa SSTCC launched the main stage 2016 OKM excursion with A Musical Voyage From The Americas to Europe: A World of Brilliant Sound with the OK Mozart College All-State Orchestra, presented by ConocoPhillips on June 12.

Members of the SSTCC Dance Band entertained with big band sounds at the OKM Gala Dinner-Dance, honoring 2016 OKM Festival Champions The John Mihm Family, at Hillcrest Country Club, June 13, presented by Larsen & Toubro Infotech, LTD.

Colombia-born maestro Franco is dedicated to preserving and performing the music of the Americas, as is the compelling, handsome Peruvian composer, conductor Miguel Harth-Bedoya (b. 1968).

The June 12 concert featured Harth-Bedoya's trans. Colección de Música Virreinal, three South American inspired dances accented by engaging maracas, followed by Six German Dances, K. 571 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to compare; and the Johann Strauss, Jr. Overture to Zigeunerbaron (Gypsy Baron), which exhibits both commanding flash and exuberant elegance, much like maestro Franco.

The concert concluded with the exquisite, commanding yet cerebral, Johannes Brahms Symphony No. 4 in E minor, op.98.

The TSO was featured for both the Classical Gold: Visionary Masterpieces concert June 15, presented by Phillips 66, and for the grand



Photos courtesy Mark Blumer

SIGNATURE SYMPHONY: Andrés Franco, artistic director and conductor of Signature Symphony at TCC, conducts the orchestra on stage at the Bartlesville Community Center during OK Mozart 2016, held June 11-18.

finale concert, A Return Voyage from Europe to the Americas, June 18, presented by Tulsa Bone and Joint, the Oklahoma Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Featured Classical Gold clarinet soloist Dr. David Carter excelled in Mozart's intricate Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra in A Major, K. 622, with skillful virtuosity. Bravo!

The Mozart concerto was sandwiched in between two contrasted Beethoven masterworks: "Egmont" Overture and the revered "Pastorale" Symphony.

With maestro Daniel Hege also at the helm for the TSO June 18 concert, the program ranged from Overture and 'Reformation' works, by Mozart and Mendelssohn, respectively, to flamboyant rhythms of dance, notably, the sensual, Danzon No. 2, an impassioned, refined fusion of dance music essences from Cuba and the Veracruz region of Mexico, scored for full orchestra by gifted Mexican composer Arturo Márquez (b. 1950). The music engages like a fiery, hot tango.

Featured, returning OKM guest artist, famed pianist Anne-Marie McDermott dazzled with her pianistic pyrotechnics to conclude the evening with the brilliance of George Gershwin's mesmerizing Rhapsody in Blue for Piano and Orchestra. Bravo!

It's Too Darn Hot!

Moved into the Bartlesville Community Center due to excessive heat advisories on June 17, the ever-popular Woolaroc Outdoor Concert, presented by Accenture, featured the BSO.

Vocals by 'hometown' guest artists, the featured sisters Caitlyn Caughell and Kennedy Caughell, taking a break from their cross-country Broadway musical tours, included the Broadway selections: Too Darn Hot, from Cole Porter's Kiss Me Kate musical, Irving Berlin's Sisters duet, and the moving rendition of Stephen Sondheim's emotional Being Alive, from his Company musical.

Diverse BSO concert music ranged from themes of Richard Rodgers from The Sound of Music to The Beatles and excerpts from Igor Stravinsky's The Firebird. Leroy



FESTIVAL SUCCESS: From left, Tulsa Symphony Orchestra principal guest conductor Daniel Hege, OK Mozart Executive Director Randy Thompson, and featured guest artist and pianist Anne-Marie McDermott pose backstage during OK Mozart 2016, June 11-18.



TULSA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: The Tulsa Symphony Orchestra is shown onstage at the Bartlesville Community Center with principal guest conductor Daniel Hege, a resident of Syracuse, New York, during OK Mozart 2016.

Anderson's The Syncopated Clock featured a surprise solo by maestro Green. The concert concluded with America the Beautiful and staged, indoor fireworks.

For additional OKM news and updates, please see From Menuhin to OK Mozart: Music as Therapy Prevails and visit glendaricecollins.com.

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