

The Music Department's Annual Spring Concert Arrives

Written by KIERA LANNI PHOTOGRAPHER/LEISURE EDITOR
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The University's music department will welcome the season with its annual spring concert, "Something's Happening Here," on the Wilson Hall Grand Staircase on Thursday, April 16.

The showcase will include the Chamber and Concert Choirs, Chamber Orchestra, Jazz Ensemble, student bands and soloists, according to Monmouth University's event page.

Dr. David M. Tripold, Producer of the Concert and Director of the Chamber and Concert Choirs, said, "We try to provide a show that would be appealing to a broad spectrum of people, so at least everyone would come away with something they knew, or liked, or could comment on."

While many of the pieces have yet to be decided, the spring show will be a mix of classic pieces and pop pieces. There is even a 14 minute 70s inspired rock cantata, sung with a large chorus, soloists, two guitarists and a drummer.

Preparation for the concert, however, happens well before spring. There is a lot of work to be done before the big show, which usually has an excellent turn out.

During the holiday concert last semester, 400 people showed up, which is Wilson Hall's capacity. Tripold said that attendees are beginning to buy standing tickets to view the concert from the second floor balconies.

"I have every reason to believe we will have the same amount of attendance for the spring concert," Tripold said.

In order to prepare for the concert, Tripold said, "We have to select the acts and the pieces, and we have to arrange them into a coherent program. We have to rehearse those acts, we have to put a program together, and we have to advertise the program, and sell tickets as well."

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Tripold has to hire a stage manager, lighting and sound enhancement crew, videographers, and numerous other folks, as he said. "It's quite a venture," Tripold said, "from the stand point of many people being involved with many different roles."

While all the background work is being prepared, professors like Tripold and Michael Gillette, an associate professor in the University's music department, have to make sure the students are prepared as well.

Gillette, an established violinist, keeps the orchestra in time and also acts as an inspiration for them. As a conductor, Gillette said, "Your job is to help everybody else play; to figure out what the beat is, to get the inspiration for the music. You keep everyone together so it doesn't go too fast or too slow; make sure it's not too loud or too soft. You're adjusting all that stuff like a traffic policeman."

Gillette, like all the conductors, helps the students connect with the audience through the music. Gillette said, "Music doesn't happen unless somebody's making it. Just the notes written on the paper doesn't mean anything unless they are brought to life."

However, this connection can only happen if the students practice. The members of Gillette's chamber orchestra meets only once a week during their allotted class time. Besides that, it is up to the students to practice on their own.

Gillette said, "Music takes a lot of practice because it's a performing art. You have to keep up your chops, as we call it in the music biz, on your instrument."

Gillette emphasized the point that it takes a lot of practice to become a great performer. He said, "Like an athlete's going to play for the team, you got to be in good condition, you have to do the drills, you have to do the calisthenics, you got to know the play book, you got to be ready."

Jennifer Weingarten, a senior music student and the Director of the Jazz Hawks, said that as the concert draws closer, the practicing gets more serious. "Usually I am very easy going while

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running rehearsals, however at the last few [rehearsals] before the concert I really crack down on them and really push them to perform their best," she said.

All the pressure to create a perfect show can be stressful on the music students. Tripold said, "Our students often burn the candle at both ends, meaning that they are working at many things at once. They're working, they're going to school, they're trying to have some fun, and so forth."

Weingarten noted, however, that a balance can be found. She said, "I used to find it difficult, but once I got into the swing of things (pun intended) I was all right." She started the semester a little apprehensive about balancing her job directing the jazz band and student teaching as well, but it worked itself out.

Moreover, Gillette said that the students' hard work does pay off when the show is over. He said, "Music is a joyful experience. You can play sad music, sure, but it's a privilege to be able to play an instrument or to sing; to make music. It's a great thing. They are understanding why a great piece of music touches you; you see that in their faces. That's the joy to me."

Additionally, Tripold had similar sentiment. He said, "I think that's a transforming experience. When students gain confidence and believe that they can do great things, for me, that's the most rewarding thing ever."

Once all the practicing is over and the show arrives, Gillette, Tripold, and Weingarten all hope that the Monmouth community will come out to concert.

Gillette said the concerts cannot happen without the electric go-between and emotional connection of an audience. He said, "I think it's important for people to come out to experience the emotion and feeling you get from great music, I think it's valuable for everybody."

Weingarten hopes the audience will end up snapping its fingers to the sounds of the jazz band and leave smiling. She said, "We have so much fun rehearsing together, and we want the audience to share in that fun and excitement."

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The "Something's Happening Here" Spring Showcase will offer more than just an evening off the couch. Gillette said, "Music, like other arts, has a lot to do with emotional reality. It's a way of letting you experience joy, or pain, a critical range of human emotion, without personally having to go through that. It's a great thing. You can feel loss, but you don't have to go through loss."

Lastly, Tripold hopes the audience is enriched by what the University's students have to offer. He said, "I want people coming away feeling they have had a variety of experiences, and generally very happy that they came of course."

Tickets are available at the box office. Regular tickets are \$15, and students get one free ticket with their student I.D. For more information call the box office at 732.263.6889.

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