

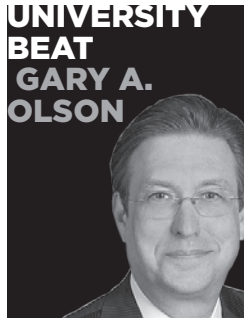
ISU music faculty make impact

At national research universities like Idaho State University, “research” takes many forms, from traditional scientific endeavors to the creative work associated with the arts.

In ISU’s Department of Music, for example, faculty use the stage as a kind of laboratory, creating new music and pushing performance standards to a new level. Their creative efforts result in greater appreciation for high-quality music in our community and beyond.

Dr. Chung Park, who is an ISU faculty member and director of the Idaho State Civic Symphony, is a good example. Since arriving on campus in 2008, Maestro Park has furthered the symphony’s tradition of excellence. The symphony now regularly performs to a packed house in the Jensen Grand Concert Hall of ISU’s world-class Stephens Performing Arts Center.

Park studied at the Peabody Conservancy and the University of Miami, and he continues to serve as the music director of Project Copernicus, a program he co-founded in 2006. This Miami-based professional ensemble performs music by living composers, ranging from popular to experimental, with the goal of introducing new music to a broad audience. The group also provides educational outreach to underserved populations, such as children with developmental disabilities.



Maestro Park’s focus at Idaho State University is education as much as it is performance. Before and after each concert, he takes the time to talk with the audience, answering questions and discussing the music. This is a way to make the musical selections more accessible to music-appreciating non-musi-

cians without compromising the sophistication of the works he and the symphony pursue.

The magic of many world-class musicians is that they share the fruits of their studies with others in a very public way. Dr. Randy Earles, chair of the music department, has composed many original works that have been published and recorded commercially. Several of them have received national recognition, and Earles has been honored with an award from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers every year since 1997—an impressive feat, indeed, and an indication of his national reputation.

His composition, “Sing the World Together,” was performed by choirs from around the world and as the grand finale for the Idaho International Choral Festival. His latest band composition, “Idaho Celebration,” was commissioned by the State Department of Education, and will be performed throughout Idaho.

Earles’ colleague and fellow composer, Thom Hasenpflug, turned heads internationally with his percussion compositions. His works

have received top honors from the Percussive Arts Society, a worldwide percussion organization. Hasenpflug was also a featured composer-artist at both the 2006 and 2007 International Percussive Arts Society conventions. Artists have performed his work in London, Barcelona, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Dublin, Rio de Janeiro, Venezuela and Sweden.

Another colleague, Dr. Kori Bond, is a nationally-renowned pianist who joined the ISU faculty in 1999. Her recording of the Complete 24 Preludes and Fugues of Dmitri Shostakovich was released on Centaur Record and received national acclaim. Only seven recordings of these pieces have ever been made, and Dr. Bond was one of a very few pianists who have ever performed the complete set live.

Professors in ISU’s Music Department have been trained at some of the country’s premier music institutions, such as the Yale School of Music, the Eastman School of Music, and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. With their expertise, they are recruiting and training the next generation of musicians right here at ISU, and they are giving local audiences the pleasurable privilege of witnessing breathtaking performances in a magnificent venue.

Clearly, ISU’s music faculty are contributing to the university’s growing reputation as a first-rate public university, not only regionally but nationally.

Gary A. Olson is provost and vice president at Idaho State University.