

The Orchestra On The Hill Premieres Original Music and Art

The Orchestra on the Hill began as a community orchestra but now plays exclusively original music and collaborates with visual artists in many mediums.

IPSWICH, MA, UNITED STATES, January 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Contact: Dan Lovy, danlovy1961@gmail.com 617-834-9597

Orchestra on the Hill Brings New Music and Mixed Media to Classical Performances

The Orchestra on the Hill is about to embark on its 2025 season. When the Orchestra was founded in 2007 it was similar to hundreds of community orchestras playing mainstays of the classical repertoire. Today the orchestra has evolved into one of the most unique and innovative ensembles in New England. They play exclusively new compositions by local composers. Their stable of composers create entirely new concert programs three to five times a year. In addition, the orchestra collaborates with different artists and arts groups in each concert.



Members of the Orchestra on the Hill before a recent concert.



Orchestra performing with dancers from Annalisa Ledson dance company.

“As we grew as an ensemble, we started expanding our repertoire with more ambitious works by composers like Igor Stravinsky and Aaron Copland and began introducing works by living composers”, says Artistic Director Thomas Palance. It soon became clear that there is an

amazing pool of talented composers in the area and it was much more satisfying to present entirely new works at every concert". Even major international orchestras like the BSO only premier one or two new works a year. We average six new works at every concert.□

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The orchestra began defining itself as a collaborative ensemble starting around 2015. "We initiated what are now biennial concerts called "Images", said Palance. In these concerts we compose new works with painters, photographers, animators, poets and dancers". The most recent of these

concerts "Images 2024" paired six of the orchestra's composers with members of the Ipswich Arts association. Over the course of the months before the concert the composers and visual artists traded ideas until the final works were completed. In the concerts the visual art was projected on three large screens around the orchestra. "Our goal is to have a collaborative aspect of each of our programs", said Palance, there is so much for musicians to learn by interacting with artists working in different mediums".

The Orchestra's latest performance is a collaboration with the Chorus North Shore a long-standing Ipswich institution best known for traditional classical performances such as their annual Handel's Messiah. In the upcoming concerts on February 8th and 9th, seven different composers have created new works for orchestra, chorus and soloists. "This is a wonderful opportunity for the chorus to collaborate and stretch their skills" says Chorus North Shore director Abby Frost. "It's been an exciting opportunity to expand our boundaries and cooperate with a wonderful and innovative music organisation", says Chorus board member and singer Eli Eberhardt.

Education is also an important component for the Orchestra. Once a year they create a new concerto to be performed by the orchestra with the local outstanding high school recipient of the Fredrick and Susan Winthrop Young Artist Award". This year Reilly Miner of Ipswich performed a piece for Oboe and Orchestra composed by Jerry Gates. "There are some wonderful musicians coming out of our local schools", says Donna Riccardi, Director of Development for the Orchestra. "It's been exciting to work with the Winthrops to develop this meaningful way to recognise young talent and help launch their professional careers."

For an April concert at Rockport's Shalin Liu theatre this year, high school students in the area are working with the orchestra. Since October, composers from the orchestra have been



The Orchestra Rehearsing under the direction of Thomas Palance for a concert at Gordon Conwell college

meeting with students affiliated with the Rockport Arts Association to create visual art and music on the theme "[The Sea of Life](#)." "We have met the students and discussed ocean life, conservation issues and their personal feelings about the sea," says composer and Assistant Artistic Director Chris Florio. "Some of these conversations have taken place while the students create ocean-themed visual art. I have learned a lot from their perspectives". These meetings are informing the music the composers are creating for the concert and the students will be showing their visual art as part of the event.

All members of the Orchestra on the Hill are comfortable with classical repertoire but increasing focus has been placed on integrating other genres including jazz, rock and world music. Palance has decades of experience as a jazz and classical trumpet player including 20 years playing with The Navy Band in Washington DC. Florio graduated from Berklee College of Music majoring in traditional composition and minoring in jazz composition and electronic music. Both Palance and Florio regularly perform jazz and rock in local venues. Orchestra composer Jerry Gates recently retired as member of the Contemporary Composition faculty at Berklee. A large percent of the orchestra's musicians are top notch improvisers.

This coming summer the orchestra will be stretching its jazz skills as well as its artistic collaborations when they at Jimmy's Jazz club in Portsmouth New Hampshire. The performances will be part of a show of works by painter Thorpe Feidt at the venue's gallery. For the opening of the gallery exhibit on June 27th a small ensemble from the orchestra will perform in the gallery. For the culmination of this event on August 6th, in the venue's theatre, the full orchestra will introduce an evening of new works composed on themes inspired by the paintings. "A great performance of a Mozart or Beethoven symphony is a wonderful thing, says Florio, but there are plenty of groups that do that well. I'd like to think we are injecting new excitement into the classical sphere".

The fact that they have succeeded in this for over ten years ,consistently filling theatres at their performances, shows that the Orchestra on the Hill is creating something unique and valuable that audiences enjoy.

[Voices of Our Town](#) – A collaboration between The Orchestra On The Hill and Chorus North Shore

February 8th at 7pm and February 9th at 3pm

Location: Our Lady of Hope Church
Pineswamp Road Ipswich, MA 01938

Featuring new works by

Thomas Palance

Chris Florio

Jerry Gates

Abby Frost

Mary Montgomery Koppel

Stephan Moore
G. Paul Naeger

For tickets and more information about The Orchestra on the Hill visit: OrchestraOnTheHill.org

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