

Sean Kubota, CSO Solti Conducting Apprentice debuts with Civic Orchestra

CSO Sir Georg Solti Conducting Apprentice Sean Kubota's Chicago conducting debut with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago at South Shore Cultural Center (SSCC) Sunday, March 10 resulted in a standing ovation by the more than 500 audience members present. Concert fare: Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op. 68 (Pastoral); Falla's "Seven Popular Spanish Songs" with mezzo-soprano Elizabeth Gray as soloist, and Ravel's "Bolero."

In opening remarks Kubota introduced the orchestral instruments replicating the woodland sounds found in the Beethoven work with the instrumentalists playing the appropriate passages. The "Pastoral Symphony," being one of the composer's most appealing works, was replete with excellent solo work especially that of the oboe, flute, clarinet and horn under Kubota's precise conducting skills. The young conductor was in full control from the beginning of the allegro ma non troppo introductory first



CELEBRATING A SUCCESSFUL CONCERT are (from l. to r.) Charles Grode, CSO Vice President; Sean Kubota, CSO Solti Conducting Apprentice; Barbara Wright-Pryor, Performing Arts Chair, SSCC Advisory Council; and Yoo-Jin Hong, Director Civic Orchestra and Training Programs.

movement throughout the entire work. The third movement thunderstorm interruption of revelry by country folk eventually subsiding into a peaceful ending of the shepherd's song was of exceptional musicality. Kudos to mezzo-soprano Elizabeth Gray for her insightful, ex-

pressive delivery of Manuel de Falla's "Seven Popular Spanish Songs!" Gray's voice is pleasing and projected easily throughout the great hall. A native of Detroit, Gray received a Bachelor of Music degree from Wayne State University and her Master of Music degree from the University of

Michigan, Ann Arbor.

The final work of the afternoon, Ravel's "Bolero," a favorite of audiences of all persuasions, was an instant hit with the diverse South Shore audience as well. Kubota conducted with ease, allowing each successive solo instrument to introduce the theme and only at the entrance of the english horn did he increase the tempo and, as former and present CSO Music Directors Barenboim and Muti respectively have done, relax on the back rail of the conductor's podium with arms at his side, allowing the orchestra "to go it alone" prior to the beginning of the gradual crescendo leading to the climactic key change from C Major into E Major. Electricity in the room!

Sean Kubota, a native of Japan now residing in New York City, was awarded the inaugural International CSO Sir Georg Solti Conducting Apprenticeship in 2011 after a rigorous competitive process. Kubota's two-year ap-



prenticeship concludes at the end of the 2012-13 season.

The Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the training orchestra of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, is a signature program of the Institute for Learning, Access and Training, Charles Grode, Vice President. Yoo-Jin Hong is Director of The Civic Orchestra and Training Programs. The concert was sponsored by the Advisory Council of South Shore Cultural Center (SSCC) and The Chicago Park District for the ninth consecutive year!

Chicago Symphony Orchestra Music Director Riccardo Muti awarded honorary degree in Naples

Monday March 11, 2013 the University of Naples "L'Orientale" (Italy) paid tribute to one of its most revered native sons, CSO Music Director Riccardo Muti, by presenting him with an honorary doctorate in Literature and Comparative Cultural Studies.

As a part of his keynote address, Maestro Muti led the Orchestra of San Pietro a Majella Conservatory in a performance of the first movement of Schubert's Symphony No. 8 in B Minor, (Unfinished). The ceremo-



Riccardo Muti

ny and performance took place in the renovated Basilica of San Giovanni Maggiore ramps to San Giovanni Maggiore in Naples.

Born in Naples, Italy, Riccardo Muti studied piano at the Conservatory of San Pietro a Majella under Vincenzo Vitale, graduating with distinction. He subsequently received a diploma in composition and conducting from the Verdi Conservatory in Milan, where he studied with Bruno Bettinelli and Antonino Votto.



PUCCINI'S 'LA BOHEME' opened its second run of the season of the season at Lyric Opera of Chicago, 20 N. Wacker Dr. Saturday, March 9 with soprano Anna Netrebko as Mimi and tenor Joseph Calleja as Rodolfo with performances through March 28 and alternating with Verdi's 'Rigoletto' with baritone Zeljko Lucic in the title role running through March 30. Other than the principals, both casts remained the same. For more information and ticket availability, call the Lyric Box Office at 312-332-2244. Photo/Dan Rest.

IN MEMORIAM: Dorothy Byrd Cressie

Dorothy Byrd Cressie passed away suddenly Saturday, March 9, 2013. A life-long member of St. Mark United Methodist Church, she was a member of the Chancel Choir and the United Methodist Women.

Ms. Cressie was an advocate and mentor for many young people, sharing of her time and substance to encourage them to pursue excellence. A member of Chicago Music Association, Br. No. 1, NANM, she also served as a member of its Advisory Council.

Dorothy Cressie was a musician and pianist "extraordinaire" earning degrees in music from Chicago Musical College (now Chicago College of Performing Arts of Roosevelt University). While a youngster, other pianists would not enter competitions if it became known that Dorothy Byrd was competing!-



Dorothy Byrd Cressie

Ms. Cressie served as church musician for several Chicago churches and retired from the Chicago Public Schools (Harper High School) where she taught music prior to being appointed School Counselor.

Ms. Cressie will lie in state Thursday, March 14 from 2:00 pm until 7:00 pm at Paradise Gardens Chapel, 11445 S. Forest, Chicago. Final services will be held Friday, March 15 with a Visitation at 10:00 am followed by the Funeral Celebration of Life at 11:00 am at St. Mark United Methodist Church, 8441 S. Saint Lawrence Avenue. Interment will be held immediately following the service at Lincoln Cemetery, 123rd and Kedzie Avenue.

Ms. Cressie's husband, James T. Cressie, preceded her in death. Survivors include a daughter, Rev. Allyson Cressie Talbert and a grandson, Matthew Talbert and other relatives.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to Wiley College, Marshall, TX or Chicago College of Performing Arts of Roosevelt University, 430 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60605.

Fifth House Ensemble to hold three Musical Story Workshops

Fifth House Ensemble (5HE) will hold FREE multi-generational Musical Story Circle Workshops as part of 5HE's 2012-2013 community-based, narrative chamber music series, "Caught."

The three workshops will take place during the following dates and times:

Tues., March 19 from 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. at Austin Town Hall

Park, 5610 W Lake St. Thurs., March 22 from 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. at Humboldt Park, 1440 N. Sacramento Ave.

Fri., April 5 from 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. at Washington Park, 5531 S. Martin Luther King Dr.

For more information, call Whitnie Crown at 312-380-9132.

Log on to www.chicago-crusader.com to see the full story.