



CLASSICAL MUSIC Opportunities

BY SAMANTHA CROWNOVER

A study in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* reports happiness increases with age. How can you foster more happiness in your life? Curiosity is one way, says Dr. Barbara Fredrickson in her book *Positivity*.

Are you curious, and yet intimidated by classical music? Take in a concert by Bach Dancing & Dynamite Society (BDDS), a group that makes the serious fun. A chamber music festival based in south central

Wisconsin, BDDS is a homegrown summer staple in its 28th year.

BDDS has been performing “chamber music with a bang” since 1992 at Overture Center for the Arts in Madison, the historic Stoughton Opera House, and Frank Lloyd Wright’s Hillside Theater in Spring Green. Chamber music is generally performed by a small ensemble of musicians without a conductor in a smaller concert hall or

room. Combining both locally and nationally known guest artists, new and traditional chamber music, and delightful surprises, BDDS presents chamber music for three weekends in June.

Music critic for the *New York Times* Anthony Tommasini attests that no prior knowledge about classical music is necessary. “Yet I’ve found that many people assume that knowledge of the art form is a prerequisite to apprecia-

tion. I’d encourage those who are curious to just go to a performance and see what they think.” He asserts that a concert involving chamber music is not a test. “It’s an escape, an adventure, an enrichment.”

At a BDDS concert, you can hear a beloved piece for four stringed instruments and a piano by a Romantic-era composer, such as Johannes Brahms or Clara Schumann, as well as a new piece commissioned in the 21st century by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Kevin Puts.

Joining artistic directors Stephanie Jutt (flute) and Jeffrey Sykes (piano) are musicians Carmit Zori, Israeli-born violinist with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in New York City; Axel Strauss, a German-born violinist living in Canada; Ken Olsen, Scottish-born cellist from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; members of the University of Wisconsin–Madison Pro Arte Quartet; and other renowned musicians.

About 20 musicians make a pilgrimage to Wisconsin to perform in the prestigious festival every June. Throughout the concert, the musicians take time while on stage to tell the audience about who wrote the music, what the composers’ circumstances may have been at the time,



and why they love to perform it. Based on the theme of the season, a mystery guest or two might appear, or the audience might be invited to compose a haiku or fold a paper airplane and fly it onto the stage, as was the case in last season’s Toy Stories.

What never changes is BDDS’ commitment to the finest caliber musicians found in North America and some of the best and most exciting repertoire anywhere. The audiences are intrepid, curious, smart, and up for anything. Inevitably, they leave the concert hall walking on air after an evening of musical adventure. So whether it’s BDDS or an-

other live music event, treat your curiosity to an escape, an adventure, and enrichment!

Visit bachdancing.org or call Samantha Crowover at (608) 255-9866 for more information. Series tickets for three or more concerts start at \$109.50 and single tickets start at \$43. Tickets for the June 14 to June 30, 2019, season go on sale March 1.

Photographs provided by Bach Dancing & Dynamite Society.

Samantha Crowover has been the executive director of Bach Dancing & Dynamite Society for the past 22 seasons. She also consults on art projects and events and manages a historic property in downtown Madison.

