

Efforts to Save the Eutin Summer Opera Festival Leads to an Invitation to the KU School of Music

The active programs of sister city exchanges, started in 1989, set the stage for the proposal to have the KU musicians help revive a defunct Eutin Summer Opera Festival. Hans-Wilhelm Hagen, president of Eutin's People's Bank (*Volksbank*) and an officer of the Eutin Rotary Club, was the dynamic force behind generating an active internship exchange between Lawrence and Eutin. When the Eutin festival ceased to exist in 2010, Mr. Hagen proposed a collaboration between the Eutin Trade Association and the KU School of Music. He was confident that this cooperation could save the sixty-year-old tradition. As a first step, the KU School of Music suggested a trial concert on January 15 to demonstrate to Eutin that our musicians were up to the task. The concert, with five graduate students, Dean Robert Walzel, and David Neely, director of KU's symphony orchestra, in St. Michael's church was a resounding success.



Martin Vollertsen, president of Friends of Lawrence, wrote the following commentary on the concert:

The concert was sold out and the audience was really not prepared to be offered such a powerful performance of great classical music. The program was well chosen and every piece was announced in an irresistibly charming manner by David Neely. Surprised by Robert McNichols' spirited "Champagne Aria," we "suffered" with Hugo Vera singing an aria from *Tosca*. We were impressed to hear Robert Walzel in Weber's clarinet quintet. For us personally it was an emotional experience to hear Lukasz Lagun's violin play *Salut d'amour*. This melody was played at the church wedding of our daughter Inga and her husband Kris Humbarger. Tears come back to my eyes as I write this. Robert McNichols brought us back to reality, singing "I got plenty of nothing." We were pleased with Kristian Bucy, singing "Meine Lippen, sie küssen so heiß," and we crossed fingers for Amy Cahill, who was looking for a peaceful place to live in "Somewhere" from *West Side Story*. The encore ("Home on the Range" and "Schleswig-Holstein Song") finally led to standing ovations and loooooong applause and countless "Bravos." Our old St. Michaelis church seemed to shiver in its foundations. Thank you KU School of Music for this gift! . . . After this concert the Eutin delegates to the state parliament from the three main political parties in unison declared that they are willing to give support!!!

Newsletter of the Max Kade Center

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Yesterday's concert of the KU musicians under David Neely was an overwhelming success of the attempt to rescue the Eutin Open Air Opera. Not only was St. Michael's sold out, but also several members of the Schleswig-Holstein Parliament and, of course, the leading representatives of the County of Ostholstein and the City of Eutin were in attendance. Moreover, a TV camera team was recording the concert and the whole event will be broadcast on Tuesday evening . . . The program revealed a wide range of musical talents and exceeded the expectations of the Eutin audience. Congratulations and thank you very much indeed!

See the television clip that reported on the concert.

<http://www.rtlregional.de/player.php?id=13836>



The Jan. 15 concert featured Amy Elizabeth Cahill, soprano; Kristian Bucy, soprano; Alberto Vera, tenor; Robert Walzel, clarinet; Lukasz Lagun, violin; David Neely, piano; and Robert McNichols, bass baritone.



Professor David Neely spoke at the meeting of the Friends of Eutin on Wednesday, March 30, 2011. He described the exciting plans for concerts and two opera performances (Hänsel and Gretel and Don Giovanni). They will take place in the context of the revived Eutin summer festival. For this ambitious program sixty-nine KU music students (voice and orchestra) and faculty members will travel to Eutin and reside there in July and August.

Over seventy KU student musicians and faculty members have been in Eutin for about six weeks in July and August. They worked very hard to make the project successful. Their summer program has included the organization of a summer music institute, preparations for two operas, and several public concerts. KU faculty members Margaret Marco and Richard Reber also took part. Hamburg Consul Immi K. Patterson, representing the United States at the opening concert, valued the musical accomplishment of the KU orchestra as proof of the strength of close bonds between our countries.

After the premiere of *Don Giovanni*, Conductor Rudolf Piehlmayer praised the KU orchestra for its hard work, dedication, and success. Hans-Wilhelm Hagen and Klaus Hoth, the prime movers behind the project, were more than satisfied: “Nine months ago we could not have dreamed that we would be standing here. We can be proud of what has been achieved.” The following video from a Hamburg television station shows the initial impression and impact of the KU participation in two operas:

[http://www.hamburg.1730sat1.de/aktuellhh.html?&cHash=1be321321b2f45eebcb30d1419b1ec8d&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=41&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=72194](http://www.hamburg.1730sat1.de/aktuellhh.html?&cHash=1be321321b2f45eebcb30d1419b1ec8d&tx_ttnews[backPid]=41&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=72194)

After the performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, the KU orchestra, in response to the demand of the audience, moved in front of the orchestra pit to receive applause. The reviewer for the *Eutin Ostholstein Anzeiger* wrote: “Without *Hänsel and Gretel*, made in the U.S., the sixty-first opera festival on the open air stage of Eutin could not have been possible.” Klaus Hoth, chair of the Eutin Trade Association, declared: “We have succeeded in overcoming the crisis of the festival.”

The Eutin newspaper photos display the colorful stage design of the *Hänsel and Gretel* production.



Etta Fung (Gretel), Annelize Sussmann (Hänsel), Kristian Bucy (mother), Robert McNichols (father), Scott Wichael (witch), Holly White (witch), and Ashley Benes (Sandmännchen and Taumännchen)
Photographs of the Ostholsteiner Anzeiger. Reprinted with permission.

http://www.ndr.de/wellenord/haenselundgretel159_p-13.html