



Christopher Briscoe Photography

# New Music Director Moves to Rogue Valley

In June of this year, Martin Majkut became Music Director of the Rogue Valley Symphony after an intensive year-long search which brought five outstanding finalists to our concert halls. Audiences clearly enjoyed all five performances, presenting the Search Committee with a hard choice. Majkut was appointed on June 16. He has already proven a popular selection.

## From the heartland of classical music

A native of Slovakia, Majkut (pronounce his name my-koot) grew up and began his professional career in Bratislava, the capitol. An ancient city, complete with castles on the banks of the Danube River, Bratislava has a population of 590,000 and three full-time symphonic-size orchestras.

Slovakia lies in the heart of Central Europe, steeped in rich cultural traditions that flourish today as they have since long before the Renaissance. Poland lies to the north, Ukraine to the east, Hungary and Austria to the south, the Czech Republic to the west—the beloved homelands of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Dvořák, and so many other classical composers. From Bratislava, Vienna is a short 40-mile drive away. Prague, Budapest, and Salzburg are all closer to Bratislava than is Portland to Grants Pass.



A very happy board of directors lines up behind Martin Majkut on June 16, just after he signed his contract with the Rogue Valley Symphony. Scott Cole Photography

## Europe or America?

“I love the European culture and enjoy the distinctiveness of European nations,” Majkut says. “The differences may be vast even when the geographical distances are minimal.” When he first decided to expand his musical horizons beyond Central Europe, he thought of schools in Western Europe, perhaps Germany or France. But he needed a scholarship and, most unexpectedly, it was the Fulbright Commission that offered him one. The result was seven years in Tucson, Arizona and a surprising moment of self discovery—he had “found home” in the United States. He says now, “I should



Bratislava Castle on the shores of the Danube River in Slovakia.

have been born here—it fits my personality so well! I am an optimist and a can-doer.”

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## Home in the Rogue Valley

As you read this, Majkut is in the process of moving into his new home in the Rogue Valley. He says, "I felt right at home when I came to the Rogue Valley last fall. A big part of it was the wonderful people I met in and around the orchestra. Part of it was the healthy lifestyle I observed—people

walking a lot, eating healthy food, being connected to nature and their surroundings. And part of it was that it reminded me of Slovak mountains.

Bratislava is a busy city that feels much bigger than cities of a similar size in America. I love its vibe but even there I prefer to stay in the quiet coun-

tryside by the Danube River. The breadth of cultural offerings in the Rogue Valley is remarkable, as is the level of sophistication of its communities. I sense there will be an abundance of inspiration for me in the valley and I plan to give it all back to our audience!"

# Majkut's World In His Own Words



ABOVE *The earliest picture I could find. I may be two or three.*



LEFT *Me and Michal. I love this picture, it reflects the '80s socialism era so well. We are at a public pool. Playing cards was our favorite pastime. I think this is a double portion of the ice cream so it had to cost as much as six U.S. cents (\$0.06)!*



RIGHT *My brother [Michal] and I really look alike here, although I may be six and he three. I am the one on the left.*



RIGHT *On the balcony of our apartment in Bratislava with Michal. I may be 11 or 12.*



ABOVE *This is my 18th birthday party. Next to me is my best friend Peter. He comes to visit me in the U.S. regularly. When I go home I always call him my very first day there.*

LEFT *This is from a family vacation in Turkey. I am 16.*

# The Majkut Family Meets History



“Family plays an enormously important role in my life,” says Majkut. “After living in the U.S. for seven years, I am still in touch with my folks practically on a daily basis. I cannot wait for them to visit me in Rogue Valley. They are going to love it!”

**LEFT** Family in a park. Dad, Mom, me (four) and my little brother Michal (one). The park surrounds a castle in Southern Moravia. I still love to go there.



**ABOVE** By the Danube with Mom and Dad and our beloved Tibetan Mastiff Dasya.

## Living In History

For thousands of years, living in Central Europe has meant living in the center of conflict.

- 1919** Czechoslovakia created from Bohemia, Silesia, Moravia, Upper Hungary (Slovakia).
- 1938-39** Annexed by Nazi Germany, broken apart.
- 1945** Reunited as parliamentary democracy.
- 1948** Soviet coup d'état establishes Communist rule.
- 1968** Prague Spring – politicians try to soften communist policies.



- 1968** Russia invades, occupies.
- 1989** Velvet Revolution returns country to democracy.
- 1993** Velvet Divorce splits country into Czech Republic and Slovakia

## The Velvet Revolution

“My Dad was a foreign correspondent for the Czechoslovak State Press Agency. When the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968, he signed a protest note, lost his job, and had to go to work to a chemical factory where he spent the next 20 years. [He] retired just before the Velvet Revolution of 1989. In an amazing turn of destiny, people like him, highly educated and in great command of German language, became sought-after when the wall came down and [he] started a whole new career as a representative of Austrian and German chemical companies in Slovakia.... His story taught me a lesson: be patient and never give up. Things may look bleak and hopeless at times, but the good fortunes may be just around the corner.



### “Ode to Joy” in the streets of Bratislava

“The events of that time (the Velvet Revolution) belong to my most cher-

ished memories. For several months the life was like in the Beethoven Symphony No. 9: all people were brothers! Strangers would spontaneously chat in the streets. People went out of their way to help each other. There was practically no crime for some time. It was an ‘ideal’ state and we all thought it would remain like that forever. The human nature would of course not permit that; eventually the greed, materialism, and petty political quarrels, all inescapable byproducts of a free society, cured us all of the elevated feelings. It was still thousand times better than the totalitarian oppression of Communism, but it was no Beethoven’s Ninth anymore. Nevertheless, it was the most inspiring time of my life and it shaped me in a very profound way.”

# Majkut and His Music



ABOVE *The earliest picture of me playing piano. I am probably nine or ten here.*

**I** began studying music when I was six years old. The main reason was that we had a piano at home. Back in the era of socialism, the education was free and quite excellent, one of few good things in the otherwise rotten system.

I got an excellent teacher. . . . I was never forced to practice so I only played as much as I wanted. I certainly cannot claim a title of *wunderkind* but I have no regrets: I am grateful for having a normal childhood.



LEFT *This is the Amadeus Choir from Bratislava. I am 16, fourth on the right, bottom row. We toured Belgium, Germany, and France singing Mozart and Christmas carols. I ended up singing with the Slovak Philharmonic Chorus and Munich Philharmonic under James Levine. [Later] I established my own choir specializing in early music.*

**I**n Slovakia there is a sense of shared responsibility in raising a young artist. The orchestras are expected to give the gifted individuals a chance to present themselves in professional situations. That is how I was able to finish my Master's Degree with a concert with the Slovak Philharmonic.

"I had my first concert with a professional orchestra in 1997. I did not know how I am going to fare in a professional environment; however the performance was a success. It was not until that concert that I became convinced that I indeed might have a chance of making my living as a conductor. I was 22 when I became fully focused on achieving that dream.

"I never paid a dime for my education. In Slovakia, schools are free, including the universities. In the U.S., I had scholarships—first Fulbright, then a scholarship from the University that covered my tuition."



ABOVE *From the concert with the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra featuring Jon Lord, the legendary keyboardist of [the rock group] Deep Purple.*

RIGHT *For one of my first concerts in Arizona I dressed up as a cowboy to conduct Copland's "Billy the Kid."*



**NOTE** Lord writes symphonic music, as well as rock music. In December Majkut will return to Bratislava to conduct a similar concert to be recorded on CD and DVD, this time with Marian Varga, Slovakia's virtuoso of absolute rock improvisation.

The Rogue Valley Symphony mission is to be the catalyst that inspires audiences of all ages and stimulates dialogue through live performances of diverse music and educational programs. We succeed by cultivating growth in artistic excellence, in our audiences, in community support, and in organizational sustainability.

# Welcome to the Rogue Valley Symphony's 2010-2011 Season

*Alive and gorgeous the sound of SYMPHONY*

As we enter our 43rd year, the Rogue Valley Symphony continues as a leader at the forefront of the cultural arts in Southern Oregon. Under the leadership of Martin Majkut, our new music director, the Symphony will continue to be a creative force like never before in its history.

With you, we will set the stage for decades to come. Without patrons — audiences to hear their music and sponsors to fund their careers — Mozart, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky might never have pursued their passions and the world would be a very different place. Together we carry the vision of the orchestra into the future! We are in the final stages of completing a new strategic plan with a wonderfully clear vision for the future of the Symphony. We will pursue excellence in innovative orchestral programming and performance of contemporary works by living composers, collaborating with other arts organizations, engaging with all peoples in our communities, and advocating for arts education in our schools.

## **Vibrant classics**

We are thrilled that our new music director is participating in every aspect of this exciting creative endeavor from day one, and we invite you to join us on his journey:

- At every concert he will offer his fresh, deeply personal interpretations of such masters as Beethoven, Schumann, Brahms, Sibelius, Mozart.
- He will bring us the world premiere of local composer Mark Eliot Jacobs' newest piece, *Las Ranas de Katanchel* (The Frogs of Katanchel).
- He will conduct young artists from the Youth Symphony of Southern Oregon playing Dvorak's Hungarian Dances on stage with our orchestra.

## **Music for young people**

As always, we will be making music for young people and their families. Students will enjoy live performances by our Chamber Players Quintet classroom programs, as well as fascinating new age-appropriate programs for the Family Discovery Concert and A Day of Music (the day when the orchestra performs four full concerts in one day for 3rd through 6th grade students who come in to Medford from all of Southern Oregon). Finally, we hope that our longstanding free voucher program will attract more families than ever to the orchestra's regular concerts in Medford and Grants Pass.

## **Collaborating with the arts**

Next winter we will also collaborate with 17 local artists who will show paintings inspired by Stravinsky's picturesque *The Firebird*. You will see their exhibit, share their visions, purchase if you like. Later, in April, we will exhibit art created by kids who have attended the *Firebird* concert.

Exciting times, a new era for the Rogue Valley Symphony! We invite you to become a modern-day "patron of the arts." If you have not already purchased season tickets, please call now to reserve your seats.

Tickets 541-552-6398

See next page for the full season schedule.

# Majkut Announces 2010–2011 Season

## NEW CONCERT TIMES

**PLEASE NOTE** All evening concerts in Ashland and Medford will start at 7:30pm. Sunday afternoon concerts in Grants Pass remain at 3:00pm.



Alexander Tutunov

## SEPTEMBER CONCERT SERIES

**Ashland Sep 24 ■ Medford Sep 25 ■ Grants Pass Sep 26**

Novák, *In the Tatra*s

Gershwin, *Piano Concerto in F* ~ Alexander Tutunov, Piano

Beethoven, *Symphony No. 5*

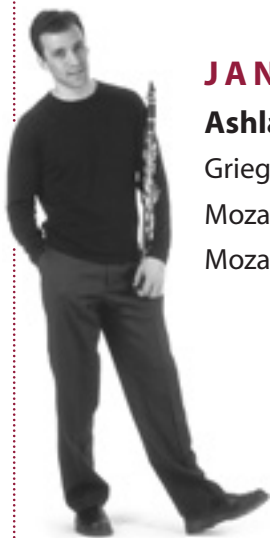
## NOVEMBER CONCERT SERIES

**Ashland Nov 5 ■ Medford Nov 6 ■ Grants Pass Nov 7**

Schubert, *Symphony No. 4 "Tragic"*

**World premiere** ~ Mark Eliot Jacobs, *Las Ranas de Katanchel* (The Frogs of Katanchel)

Elgar, *Enigma Variations*



Jon Manasse

## JANUARY CONCERT SERIES

**Ashland Jan 28 ■ Medford Jan 29 ■ Grants Pass Jan 30**

Grieg, *Holberg Suite*

Mozart, *Clarinet Concerto* ~ Jon Manasse, Clarinet

Mozart, *Symphony No. 41 "Jupiter"*

## FEBRUARY CONCERT SERIES

**Ashland Feb 25 ■ Medford Feb 26  
Grants Pass Feb 27**

Dvořák, *Slavonic Dances*  
with the Youth Symphony  
of Southern Oregon

Schumann, *Cello Concerto*  
Elinor Frey, Cello

Stravinsky, *The Firebird Suite*



Elinor Frey

## APRIL CONCERT SERIES

**Ashland Apr 15 ■ Medford Apr 16 ■ Grants Pass Apr 17**

Berlioz, *Roman Carnival*

Sibelius, *Violin Concerto* ~ Steven Moeckel, Violin

Brahms, *Symphony No. 1*



Steven Moeckel

Save 10% on  
Five-Concert  
Season Tickets

First-Time  
Season Tickets  
Save 50%

### Ashland Concerts

7:30pm  
SOU Music Recital Hall

### Medford Concerts

7:30pm  
Craterian Gingers  
Rogers Theater

### Grants Pass Concerts

3:00pm  
GP PerformingArts Center

### Tickets

541-552-6398

Students \$5 ~ All Concerts

# Where's Martin?

**B**ecause of Majkut's longstanding commitment to be in Bratislava for the month of July, we have just completed a thorough test run of our virtual office. It has been a joy.

- Communication has been fast, easy, efficient, and even fun.
- We got it all done on time! All of the major planning for next season has been completed on schedule. Ideas have been discussed, information has been exchanged, contacts have been made. Wherever Martin may be, we're cooking!

## The next few months

**AUGUST** ~ Moves from Tucson to Rogue Valley. Guest conducts at closing concert of the Ashland City Band.

**SEPTEMBER 10** ~ Conducts concert of Copland, Kupkovic, and Brahms for the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra.

**SEPTEMBER 18** ~ Begins rehearsals in Ashland for Rogue Valley Symphony Concert Series I.

**SEPTEMBER 24-26** ~ Conducts Concert Series in Ashland, Medford, Grants Pass.

**OCTOBER** ~ Presentations and appearances in the Rogue Valley.

**OCTOBER 30** ~ Begins rehearsals in Ashland for Rogue Valley Symphony Concert Series II.

**NOVEMBER 5-7** ~ Conducts Concert Series II in Ashland, Medford, Grants Pass.

**NOVEMBER** ~ Presentations and appearances in the Rogue Valley.

## DECEMBER

- Conducts concert with Slovak rock star Marian Varga and the Slovak Radio Symphony, to be recorded and released on CD and DVD.
- Conducts concerts with the Slovak Sinfonietta featuring Suk, Bach, and Ryba. The Ryba piece is a Baroque Christmas mass with choir and four soloists.

## JANUARY TO APRIL

- Discovery Concert and Day of Music (dates tba).
- January, February, and April series concerts in Ashland, Medford, and Grants Pass.

Christopher Briscoe Photography



## Professional Profile

### DEGREES

University of Arizona, Tucson.

- 2008, D.M.A. Orchestral Conducting, Piano.

University of Music and Performing Arts, Bratislava.

- 2007 Ph.D. Orchestral Conducting.
- 2000 M.M. Orchestral Conducting.
- 1998 B.M. Choral Conducting.

### CONDUCTING

In 2000 became the youngest ever assistant conductor of the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra.

In U.S. has conducted for the Arizona Opera and the Southern Arizona Symphony Orchestra.

In Slovakia has conducted for the Slovak Philharmonic, Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, Slovak Sinfonietta (Žilina), Slovak State Philharmonic Orchestra (Košice), Symphony Orchestra of University of Music and Performing Arts, Youth Choir ECHO, Camerata Slovaca, the Chamber Opera Orchestra, and three early music ensembles—Musica Aiterna, Solamente Naturali, and his own group, Voci Festose.

### PIANO AND VOCAL PERFORMANCE

1995 to present

- Multiple solo and accompanist recitals in Slovakia, Czech Republic, Arizona.
- Tenor with choral groups in Slovakia and Arizona.

### EDUCATION PROJECTS

- Arizona Opera~Music director and accompanist, performing for 45,000 students, two years.
- Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra~Script, moderator, and conductor for three Concerts for Young Audiences.
- Slovak State Philharmonic Orchestra~Script, moderator, and conductor for series of educational concerts on "Romanticism."

### LANGUAGES

Speaks seven languages: Slovak, English, Russian, Czech, French, German, Italian.

Meet our new

# Music Director Martin Majkut

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*Symphony*

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## Please Welcome Two New Staff Members



Kristin Kessler

We are proud to introduce two staff members who have come on board this summer. They are old friends from the orchestra—Kristin Kessler, second oboe and English horn, and Bruce Dresser, principal trumpet. Both will continue to play with the orchestra.

- As Patron and Marketing Services Administrator, Kessler is the go-to person for tickets. She also handles press relations and program advertising. Her office hours are 9:00am–1:00pm daily. Please call her at 541-552-6398.
- Dresser has been named Personnel Manager for the orchestra. He is responsible for making sure that the orchestra has all the musicians it needs for every concert, and that the musicians have everything they need in order to perform.

These positions, like that of music director, are part-time.



Bruce Dresser

We would like to extend our special appreciation to Barbara Johnson, long-time treasurer of the Symphony's board of directors. After many years of volunteer service, both as treasurer and as supervising bookkeeper, she has turned over these essential, and very time-consuming, chores to others. She will continue to serve as an active board member.