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 1889, 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 summer festival ceased to exist in 2010, Mr. Hagen proposed that a collaboration between a newly formed festival sponsoring group (the Eutin Trade Association) and the KU School of music. He became confident that this cooperation might save the sixty-year old tradition of Eutin music festivals. As a first step, the KU School of Music suggested a test concert on January 15, 2011 to demonstrate to Eutin that our musicians were up to the task. The concert, with five graduate students, Dean Robert Walzel and David Nealy, director of KU’s symphony orchestra, performing 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 classic music. The program was well chosen and every piece was announced in a irresistible charming manner by David Neely. Surprised by Robert McNichols spirited “Champagner aria”, we “suffered” with Hugo Vera, singing an aria from “Tosca”. We were impressed to hear by Robert Walzel’s busy fingers on the clarinet in Weber’ clarinet quintet. For us personally it was an emotional experience to have Lukasz Lagun’s violin play “Salut d’amour”. This melody was played at the church wedding of our daughter Inga and 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 flirted (at least the the males in the audience) 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 her song “Somewhere” from the West Side Story. The encore (“Home on the range” and “Schleswig-Holstein-Lied”) finally led to standing ovations and a looooooong applause.
and countless “Bravo’s”. 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 of the state parliament of the 3 main political parties have in unison declared that they are willing to give support!!!”

Helmut Scheewe, the “father” of the sister-city program between Lawrence and Eutin, commented: “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 of the NDR was recording the concert and the whole event so that a report will be broadcast on Tuesday evening...The program revealed a wide range of musical capacities and precisely meeting 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

Over seventy KU student musicians and faculty members have been in Eutin for about six weeks in July and August, working 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.

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 youthful 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, (Don Giovanni by Mozart and Haensel Gretel by Humperdinck).

http://www.hamburg.1730sat1.de/aktuell hh.html?cHash=1be321321b2f45eeeb30d1419b1ec8d&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 with all instruments to receive an appreciative applause. The
reviewer for the *Eutin Ostholstein Anzeiger* wrote: “Without *Hänsel and Gretel*, made in the US, 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 KU performances have received enthusiastic reviews. 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 (Sandmädchen and Taumädchen)

Photographs of the Ostholsteiner Anzeiger. Reprinted with permission.

http://www.ndr.de/wellenord/haenselundgretel159_p-13.html
Congratulations to the KU School of Music!

It has been rewarded for its hard work and outstanding talent. It can now count on Eutin’s support for its summer institute in that city and is in a good position to plan future operas there.

Internship Exchanges Eutin-Lawrence

The numbers of interns has increased dramatically since the founding of the sister-city partnership. In summer 2010, 10 interns from Lawrence worked in Eutin; Lawrence hosted three. For the summer of 2011, Lawrence sent nine interns. Law student Petrea Klein was in Lawrence in the spring.

Eutin Interns in Lawrence during the Fall

Ann-Katrin Schumann and Philip Eulert will arrive on August 12. Ann-Katrin will work at Goldmakers and Philip will be at Peoples Bank.

Jana Scheele will arrive on August 29. She will be an assistant for KU orchestra director David Neely.