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## IN *harmony*

### Kent/Blossom program celebrates 40 years of making music

When the sultry summer air meets the melodious sounds of strings and woodwinds, a certain magic permeates the grounds of Blossom Music Center and the recital halls in Kent State's Hugh A. Glauer School of Music. Eager college students and professional musicians take to the stages together, and each note, each movement, exudes a passion that is born from sharing — the folding of wisdom and fresh ideas into a seamless performance.

When the mercury rises in 2007, the Kent/Blossom Music program and concert series will celebrate its 40th anniversary. Patrons will tote picnic baskets, and audiences will crowd recital halls to savor the sounds of chamber

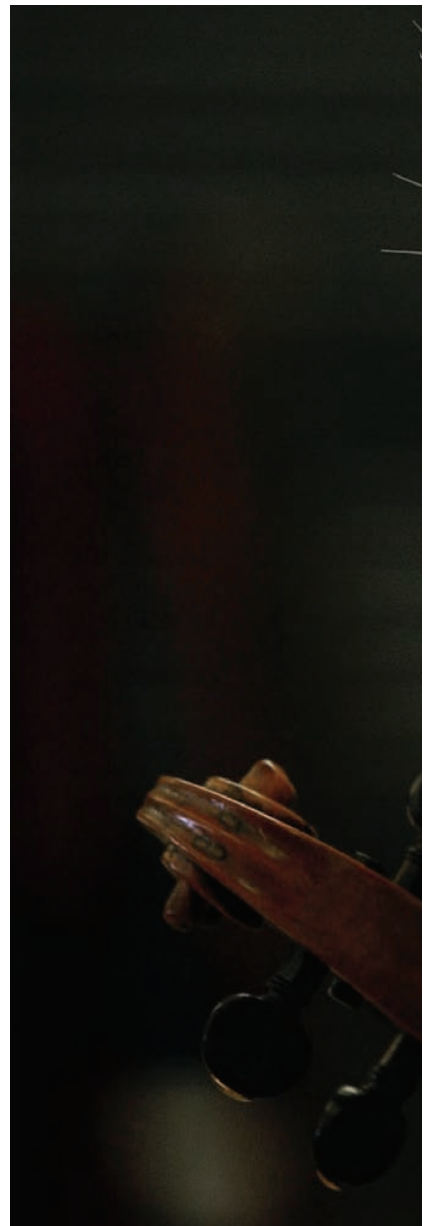
and orchestral music.

The Kent/Blossom Music program offers an advanced training institute for aspiring professional musicians, along with a series of public performances by distinguished faculty. A long-standing Kent State University and Cleveland Orchestra partnership, the program started in 1968 when the orchestra and its governing body, the Musical Arts Association, decided to expand the orchestra's season to 52

weeks. By utilizing Blossom Music Center, the orchestra could conduct a full summer season along with its winter season, explains **Jerome LaCorte**, director of the Kent/Blossom Music program.

Leading the charge to create the Kent/Blossom Music professional training program were George Szell, long-time conductor of The Cleveland Orchestra; Louis Lane, resident conductor of The Cleveland Orchestra in the late 1960s; **Lindsey Merrill**, then-director of the Kent State School of Music; and **John Flower**, then-dean of Kent State's College of Fine and Professional Arts. Since that time, college-level musicians from around the world have competed for

Kent State faculty member Jerry Wong instructs a student in a class as part of the Kent/Blossom Music program.



the opportunity to perform and train with professionals from The Cleveland Orchestra, one of the world's top orchestras. Roughly 20 percent of The Cleveland Orchestra's members are Kent/Blossom music alumni, LaCorte says.

Each year, hundreds of college students studying classical music audition to obtain one of the program's 44 prestigious slots. Selected students travel to Northeast Ohio for six weeks of training with professionals, performing primarily at Kent State in the Hugh A. Glauer School of Music and at Blossom Music Center. Visiting students stay in



**Kurt Loebel, retired from the Cleveland Orchestra, teaches a violin class for the Kent/Blossom Music program.**

Kent State residence halls and receive tutelage from School of Music faculty.

The Kent/Blossom Music program is successful because it's executed at the highest level educationally, says Jonathan Martin, general manager of The Cleveland Orchestra. "The students involved become better musicians and are better prepared to go into their work when they graduate and become professionals."

What may not be readily apparent, Martin says, is that The Cleveland Orchestra is composed of a large number of educators, many of whom teach privately or as faculty. "They already have a deep

commitment to students and to music education. The orchestra members especially look forward to, and take very seriously, the opportunity to sit side-by-side and perform with the students."

**K**ent/Blossom Music provides chamber music within a structured, orchestral framework, which gives it discipline and a much broader perspective, says *Barbara Leibundguth*, a 1977 Kent/Blossom Music alumna who currently serves as co-principal flutist with the Minnesota Orchestra and is a member of the Kent/Blossom Music advisory council.

"Kent/Blossom gives

students everything they need, all in one place, and at the highest level of professionalism," Leibundguth says. "Students get to study and perform a full array of chamber music with other fine players from around the country and take lessons with players at the very top of the orchestral world."

Performing chamber music all summer changes a musician, she adds. "It's a pure form of music-making that allows one to develop the greatest respect and love for music."

Jorge Martinez, violinist for the La Catrina String Quartet, Kent State University's resident gradu-

ate quartet in the School of Music, became aware of the Kent/Blossom Music program while watching a performance by the Miami String Quartet at Western Michigan University. Martinez and his fellow La Catrina quartet members — violinists Daniel Vega-Albela, George Vigueroa and cellist Alan Daowz-Mendez — were working on their master's degrees in music performance at Western Michigan at the time.

After studying with Miami String Quartet violinist **Ivan Chan**, Martinez says the group became interested in making the move to Kent State where La Catrina's

members now are pursuing master's degrees in chamber music while studying with the Miami String Quartet, artists in residence in the Hugh A. Glauser School of Music. La Catrina has performed quartets written by Dr. **Thomas Jansen** and **John Ferritto**, professors in the School of Music, for the Kent/Blossom Music festival, along with performing with The Cleveland Orchestra and students, he says.

In the Kent/Blossom Music program, the proficiency of all of the participating students is high. Martinez says that performing with all of the other student musicians makes him think even more about his playing and helps to make him a better musician.


"Kent/Blossom Music's focus on chamber music makes musicians better players," he says. "In this setting, musicians must learn how to articulate, share and communicate together."

The Kent/Blossom relationship continues to flourish because of the excellent quality of the

concerts, the friendships forged among students from throughout the world and the unique opportunities that students are afforded, says Dr. **Timothy J. Chandler**, dean of Kent State's College of the Arts. "The long tradition that 40 years of the program offers these young people allows them the chance to develop a sense of accomplishment and perspective, as well as the inspiration to go on and challenge themselves to become the best musicians they can be."

Witnessing the thrill of the students performing with professional orchestra players on the Blossom stage is a personal highlight of the program, Martin says.

"The Cleveland Orchestra is thrilled that this relationship has thrived for 40 years, and we're certainly looking forward to the next 40," he says.

For more information and a schedule of upcoming concerts, visit [www.kent.edu/magazine](http://www.kent.edu/magazine). 



## MORE *than* music

*The Kent/Blossom partnership, although started as a training institute for musicians, has grown beyond the music program to encompass other arts, says **Jerome LaCorte**, director of the Kent/Blossom Music program.*

*"The Musical Arts Association directors felt it would be very important to have visual and performing arts along with The Cleveland Orchestra component, summer enrichment programs for the arts, visual and performing, and a summer training program," he says.*

*The Kent/Blossom partnership now includes training in art, with the founding of the School of Art's Eels Gallery in 1975, located inside the gates of Blossom, and in theatre at Porthouse Theatre, situated on university property adjacent to the Blossom grounds. The three programs split their time between Blossom grounds and the Kent Campus.*

*For more information, follow the links at [www.kent.edu/magazine](http://www.kent.edu/magazine).*

**Richard Weiss, first assistant principal cellist for the Cleveland Orchestra, conducts a master class during the Kent/Blossom Music program.**

