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### [Oregon Mozart Players end season on high note](http://www.registerguard.com/csp/cms/sites/web/news/sevendays/24779127-35/bach-music-omp-evening-movement.csp)

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**BY JOHN FARNWORTH**

*For The Register-Guard*

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Having been a self-described “Bach junkie” for the past 60 years, I was a happy fellow when asked to review the Oregon Mozart Players’ season finale “Baroque Reflections” in the Soreng Theater on Saturday evening.

The centerpiece of the program was J.S. Bach’s Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B Minor. And it was flanked by two pieces that were written by composers profoundly influenced by Bach and his music. Nineteenth century Felix Mendelssohn’s very youthful Sinfonia No. 6 in E-flat Major; and 20th century’s Ernest Bloch’s Concerto Grosso No. 1.

The concert was dedicated to the memory of Peter Roberts. Eugene’s most ebullient classical music lover, a well-known and easily recognizable figure at all OMP and Eugene Symphony concerts for the past many years. Moving dedications were presented by OMP President Robert Canaga, OMP bass player and personnel manager Richard Meyn and OMP artistic director and conductor Glen Cortese. Peter died just two weeks ago.

All the music was scored largely for strings — first and second violins, violas, cellos and bass, plus flute and harpsichord in the Bach, and piano in the Bloch. No brass, no tympani or percussion, no other woodwinds. There were never more than 14 players on the Soreng stage.

The Mendelssohn Sinfonia was marked throughout by its lovely melodies, some stately, some coquettish and bouncy, and very Bachian in its contrapuntalism and fugal sequences. Barely 13 minutes long it served as an effective opener to the evening’s program. The strings played crisply and succinctly.

The Bach Orchestral Suite is essentially a concerto for flute and string orchestra. OMP’s principal flautist, Jill Pauls, caused an audible gasp in the audience when she walked on stage, blond, beautiful and wearing a stunning sleeveless electric blue gown! She proved herself complete master of her instrument, playing the most difficult passages with precision and fluidity.

Harpsichordist John Jantzi and the string orchestra provided well-played accompaniment to the soloist’s brilliance, though one violin lost its way briefly in the Bourree movement. The suite closed with a brilliant rendition of the quite famous Badinerie, a dance movement that

would test the mettle of even the greatest of dancers!

The concert closed with the Bloch Concerto Grosso, a powerful four movement piece in which Jantzi emerged to show us what a superb pianist he is. The opening Prelude was a dramatic exposition showcasing the pianist's skill and authority. The strings were equal to their task, giving us their best playing of the evening.

The second movement, Dirge, was sad and dramatic at the same time, and featured an interesting descending Bachian motif. Again, the piano played a prominent part.

In the Pastorale, a sequence of several Swiss folk dances skillfully weaved together, the Allegro was particularly arresting.

The work ended with a Fugue, dramatically commenced by the violas, the whole framework very Bachian, very contrapuntal, very satisfying. Maestro Cortese showed his leadership skills here, very much in charge and drawing the best out of his players.

A wonderful evening's entertainment. Beautiful music, beautifully played.

John Farnworth of Vida reviews classical music for The Register-Guard.

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