

The 2nd Annual Spring Recital Series Begins



Ellen Hamilton

Ellen Hamilton, a long time Winter Park resident has been involved with the arts for many years. A past Vice President of the Friends of the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, she is also a current member of the Bach Festival Choir. She edits music for the Moravian Music Foundation located in Winston-Salem,

North Carolina and received her Bachelor of Arts degree at Rollins College with a double major in Music and Humanities. Moving to England for two years Ellen received a Master's Degree in Music with Historical Musicology as her area of study at the University of Leeds. From her home in Winter Park, she is presently working on a PhD at the University of Leeds where she travels often. Ellen is well known in the arts community and Winter Park. She is often seen enjoying Park Avenue with her Bichon, Marais (name after a French composer, of course). When you visit her home the first things you notice are the piano and the walls covered in books; she is a perpetual student of history and music. Ellen studied piano in New York City in the early 70's with Russian pianist and composer Ariadna Mikeshina who was also a student of Ottorino Respighi.

While working on her degree in Leeds Ellen attended various piano competitions and one of the top piano competitions in the world, the Leeds Interna-

tional Pianoforte Competition, was of particular inspiration. After attending these competitions the seed was planted. The result is the Orlando International Piano Competition, Inc. It was not long before philanthropist Richard Kessler appreciated Ellen's vision for Central Florida and the Grand Bohemian Hotel became a major sponsor. The 2008 competition is named after its Title Sponsor, the Grand Bohemian Orlando International Piano Competition and debuts this fall.

A firm believer in working together with other arts organizations to bring unity of the arts to the community, Ellen has involved many local arts organizations in this visionary endeavor. Rollins College Department of Music has graciously agreed to allow the competition to be held at Tiedtke Concert Hall at Rollins College, Winter Park. The Bach Festival Orchestra has been invited to participate as well and will accompany the Finalists' concerto performances on September 20 followed by the highly anticipated Closing Ceremony where prizes will be presented. Prizes for First Place include \$20,000 and performance engagements arranged by the competition. Proudly, the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra is among the performance engagements listed. The competition begins September 15 and ends on September 21 at Rollins College with performances by the three finalists of the competition at the Winners Recital Gala. All levels of the competition are open to the public and tickets will be available at the competition office.

Ellen recently named Laurent Boukobza, who is Chair of Piano Studies at the University of Central Florida, as Artistic Director for the competition. Laurent brings his admirable talent and expertise to the competition and has assembled a panel of seven distinguished international jurists who will preside

at the competition, judging the contestants with the highest of standards. These judges will present Master Classes at Rollins College on September 19 that are free and open to the public but reservations are required. A world-class piano competition is a first for Central Florida and is sure to put our area on the global cultural map.

This spring Ellen is presenting recital benefits, The 2nd Annual Spring Recital Series, bringing talented prodigies from the famed Juilliard School to Central Florida. Two exciting piano recitals are upcoming: Sijing Ye, March 9, 5 PM at Steinway Piano Galleries recital hall and the April 6 debut of Ji Yong, at the Grand Bohemian Hotel Orlando. Ticket information and details about these upcoming events and the competition this fall can be found at the competition website - www.OrlandoPianoCompetition.org or by calling 407.645.2525. ♪



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