

One in a *Ver*Million

Meet Stephen Yarbrough

By David Lias
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Stephen Yarbrough's decision to retire after a long career as an associate music professor at the University of South Dakota hasn't resulted in a life of leisure for him and his wife, Janis.

"I retired last May, and it's been wonderful. I became a member of the Ars Nova Composers' Group, and attended their annual business meeting in Missoula, MT," he said, describing one of his latest adventures in retirement that keeps him as busy as ever, "and had three of my best works accepted for publication by them, and I'm editing them now for publication."

Stephen also was invited by the Huron Symphony string section to conduct at their annual summer retreat last August at Blue Cloud Abbey in northeast South Dakota near the small town of Marvin.

"I conducted a piece of mine and I conducted another piece for them that featured John Casey who is a double bass player from Sioux Falls," he said. "I made lots of new friends -- Janis went with me; we spent three days at Blue Cloud Abbey doing rehearsals and two performances, and we just had a wonderful time."

Stephen describes Ars Nova as a group of composers, conductors, musicologists and music educators "who want to support contemporary music written by people who have a musical integrity of their own but aren't necessarily following the latest fads and fashions of the avante garde."

Stephen's career as a music educator at USD spanned 29 years, and as time went on, he only seemed to become more and more busy. In late 2009, he received three nominations for the 2009 Grassroots Music Organization Just Plain Folks awards.

Yarbrough received nominations for "Alleluias for Orchestra," which was nominated for Best Classical Contemporary Album of the Year; "Alleluias for Orchestra," for Best Contemporary Single Classical Song of the Year; and "After School," nominated for Best Contemporary Single Classical Song of the Year.

That year, he also received national recognition on the stage of the Kennedy Center when the National Symphony Chamber Ensemble played his composition, "Dakota Diary."

And the entire nation, beginning in 2009, began to become familiar with a short snippet of his orchestral composition, "Angel's Dances," as it served as the background music on a Welch's Grape Juice commercial featuring Alton Brown of the Food Network.

"They ran those for three years, and that piece, "Angel's Dances," was written for the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra," he said. "That was wonderful."

In 2010, Stephen received an Artist's Fellowship Award from the South Dakota Arts Council. "That's their big one - the award is given to support the ongoing work of an artist who has proved herself or



STEPHEN YARBROUGH

himself as a genuine artist."

Stephen has also just finished last month a 30-minute cantata commission by Peter and Katherine McGovern, with further support by a grant by a 2010 Artist Fellowship Grant from the South Dakota Arts Council, to help celebrate the upcoming 75th anniversary celebration of Mount Marty College in Yankton.

The work "Everlasting Is His Love," is a cantata for Festival Choir, Brass ensemble, mezzo-soprano soloist, baritone soloist, piano, and percussion. It has eight separate movements and is scheduled for a premiere sometime this April.

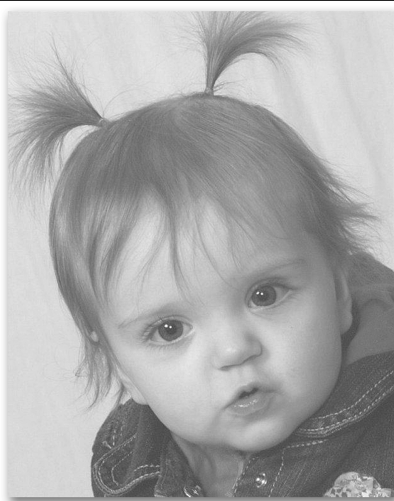
Add to that the plans of soprano Robin Leigh Massie, who teaches voice at

Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ, to perform his "Kenyon Songs" song-cycle on her fall recital this year, and it's clear that retirement hasn't slowed Stephen's pace or creativity.

The South Dakota All-State Orchestra performed a piece composed by Stephen at their concert last October, with Henry Charles Smith conducting. The South Dakota Symphony Orchestra also performed his "Alleluias for Orchestra" composition in the four holiday concerts they performed last month.

Retirement, he said, "is very rich and very wonderful, and I'm enjoying it immensely."

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New games at library's fun & games in January

If you're looking for some exciting entertainment this winter, there will be afternoons of fun and games in the Community Room of the Vermillion Public Library from 1 to 4 p.m. on the following Saturdays: Jan. 22 and Feb. 26 from 1 to 4 p.m. Engage in mental stimulation by playing board games and putting jigsaw puzzles together.

During each Fun & Games in 2012, the library will introduce a new game that has been added to their game collection. This provides individuals the opportunity to learn or to show others how to play new games. January will feature Dominos, for a variety of game options. Blurt, a popular vocabulary-building game will be introduced in February.

Anyone ages 12 and up is invited to attend this activity. There will be a wide variety of challenging and interesting games and puzzles available. Drinks and snacks will be provided. For more information about this enjoyable event, call the library at 677-7060 or e-mail vpl@sdl.n.net.

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