

Washington Island Music Festival  
2018 Artistic Director's Report

The 2018 season of the Washington Island Music Festival included four programs of classical chamber music, one children's concert, a Children's Music Camp, a lecture discussion ("Double Trouble") featuring Rudi and Meaghan Heinrich, three "Inside the Notes" music-appreciation sessions at the Red Barn, four pre-concert lectures, and a Big Top at the TPAC event featuring Island talent. Meaghan Heinrich and Samantha George hosted Red Barn and pre-concert talks. Cindra Hokkanen and Julian Hagen hosted the Big Top performance.

The festival offered a wide selection of compositions, including music from the Baroque period (Vivaldi) and Classical period (Mozart and Haydn), but primarily featured music from the Romantic period and beyond: Rimsky-Korsakov, Brahms, Agay, Águila, Strauss, Stravinsky, Piazzolla, Britten, Albert, Larsson, Grieg, Hansen, Dohnányi, Doppler, and Rutter. Composer Adrienne Albert visited the Island for the performance of her piece "War Stories" on August 5. The audience enjoyed meeting Ms. Albert and hearing about her lifetime of rich musical experiences. Composer Miguel del Águila sent an email to festival musicians wishing them a great performance of his piece "Nostálgica" on August 2. His email was read aloud during the pre-concert talk that evening. These personal connections with composers create meaningful relationships between the festival and the international music community.

Nineteen festival musicians performed, including two new violinists (Claude Sim and Hanna Hurwitz) and one harpist (Serena Kamps). Part-time Island resident Steve Tobey played an optional handbell part in Doppler's "Souvenir du Rigi." The chorus consisted of over thirty participants. They sounded fabulous on a selection of songs from John Rutter's "A Sprig of Thyme."

Audience members seemed enthusiastic and engaged throughout the festival, and I received the most positive comments about the programming, presentation, and performance on the "Let's Dance!" (August 2) concert and the strong showing by the chorus on the "Friday Finale" (August 10) concert.

Many were disappointed by the small audience size (114) for the children's concert, and we continue to search for ways to generate larger audiences for all of our events. Children's concerts with strong themes seem to be more successful, so we will try that next season. Otherwise, audience numbers by concert and year seem to ebb and flow without a consistent recipe for success. We will continue to reach out to a more diverse audience by experimenting with pop-up concerts, different types of educational programming, and unconventional concert formats.

This was my first season as Artistic Director, and I would like to thank my wonderful musician colleagues, the chorus members, our Festival Manager (Liz Pratt), board president (Ham Rutledge) and our amazing, hard-working volunteer board members. Your support and energy allowed us to have a successful and inspiring 2018 season.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha George  
Artistic Director, Washington Island Music Festival