

The geek is a much better character than his 'Role Model,' Page C2

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Marginalia



Holoman speaks

■ D. Kern Holoman, on being a good conductor: "You've got to know the score. You have to find the moves. And then you've got to have some sense of what the music *ought* to sound like. That's the hardest part. It really is difficult to think about the sound coming out."

■ On learning from unexpected developments: "Some of the most interesting things we've done came from things that happened in the course of rehearsing, that weren't planned for. That's something I've learned from the theater. Actors and directors always are discovering their role, whereas in music, we tend to think 'Mozart's 40th Symphony goes like this.'"

■ But then we find that Mozart's 40th Symphony goes like something else."

■ Among the conductors Holoman admires: "Claudio Abbado, above all. And Seiji Ozawa. And I'm astonished by Don Runnicles, in San Francisco. He has conducted things that you can't imagine you're hearing."

■ On compact personal music technology: "I actually think that iPods and plastic-in-the-ears are not the worst thing that happened to culture."

■ On the future of classical music (which some see as an endangered tradition):

"The public thirsts for good music. There will always be a market for literacy and art and taste: a counterfoil to the flip-flops mentality."

Busy times ahead

The 2008-09 UC Davis Symphony season schedule:

■ Nov. 23: the "Golden Jubilee Gala" with violinist Jorja Fleezanis and the University Chorus. The program will feature Beethoven's Gloria, from Missa solemnis, conducted by Jeffrey Thomas; and Brahms' Symphony No. 4, conducted by Holoman.

■ Dec. 5: a performance with the University Chorus. The program will feature Schubert's Mass in G, conducted by David Moschler; and Beethoven's Gloria, from Missa solemnis, conducted by Jeffrey Thomas.

■ March 8: a concert with the University Chorus and Alumni Chorus, along with soloists Robin Fisher, soprano; Catherine Cook, mezzo-soprano; Joseph Palarca, tenor; and Eugene Brancoveanu, baritone. The program will feature Mendelssohn's Elijah, conducted by Holoman.

■ May 2-10: "Oklahoma!," a fully staged production in tandem with the UC Davis department of theater and dance in Jackson Hall. The popular play — music by Richard Rodgers, book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein — will be choreographed and directed by Mindy Cooper, with musical direction by David Moschler.

■ June 2: a "Family Concert" with violinist John Abdallah. The program will feature Rossini's "Barber of Seville" overture; Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto; and Beethoven Symphony No. 6 ("Pastoral").

Tickets are available at the Mondavi Center Ticket Office, (530) 754-2787.

FRED GLADDIS/ENTERPRISE PHOTO



Baton no more

Celebrated local conductor anticipates a music-laden 'retirement' from UC Davis

By Jeff Hudson
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

2008 marks the 50th anniversary of the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra.

It also marks the 30th season with the orchestra for conductor D. Kern Holoman, who will retire this year. He recently took some time to reflect on the orchestra and his career as a conductor, educator and author.

Holoman arrived at UC Davis in 1975, as an acting assistant professor in the music department. At that point, he hadn't yet turned 30; he viewed Davis as a way station, rather than a destination.

"We didn't think we would stay very long," Holoman recalled, referring to himself and his wife, Betty.

Holoman was a young academic, raised in North Carolina, and educated at Duke University and Princeton. When he arrived in Davis, he was still finishing up his dissertation, "and the music department secretary wouldn't let me take the typewriter home."

As a result, Holoman spent a lot of time at the office. An energy crisis was in full bloom in those days, and the university turned off the heat as a conservation measure ... so working late sometimes was a chilly proposition.

But what began as a job with short-term expectations gradually turned into something long-lasting. So ... why *did* he stick around?

"In my early days at UC Davis," Holoman recalled, "I remember nobody said 'No, you can't do that.'"

For example, in 1975-76, he filled in on behalf of another faculty member on sabbatical, Duyong Chung, as conductor of what then was called the University Orchestra.

After thinking about what to program, Holoman decided to attempt the Berlioz Requiem: a huge piece that requires large forces. It was rather ambitious for a university then widely regarded as an "ag school" with a relatively small music department. Holoman therefore struck up a relationship with the music department at Sacramento State University, and the combined musical forces from the two universities performed the Berlioz Requiem in both cities.

"It was a crazy idea for a kid," Holoman admitted. "But the music department always has been a welcoming place."

"It still is."

Holoman recalled another early milestone: "There was a student production in the Main Theater of 'Guys and Dolls.' Something happened with the music director, who was a student."

Holoman was familiar with the score, having played in the pit

orchestra for another production. He stepped in on short notice and conducted the run.

"That introduced me to the theater department."

And thus began a long relationship, with Holoman providing music direction for multiple shows. He has been involved with several theater department shows through the years; he even served as interim department chair from 1994 to '95, "when they needed someone old enough to sign the checks."

Turning a bit more serious, Holoman added that teaming up with the theater department has been "deeply rewarding. I worked with important directors; I learned how theaters work, how costuming works. I've enjoyed every moment spent in the theater."

And before too many years passed, Holoman had decided to stay.

"It took awhile to stop thinking about returning back east. And if you're a Southerner, you're supposed to 'come home, come home, come home.'"

But Holoman had put down roots.

His career as a writer and musicologist advanced, particularly with respect to composer Hector Berlioz. Holoman did the first thematic catalogue of Berlioz's works, published in 1987. And Holoman's one-volume "life and works" biography, "Berlioz," published by Harvard Press in 1989, is widely cited as one of the best.

Holoman has worked on other Berlioz projects as well, and his interest continues to this day. Holoman was an honored guest at a Berlioz symposium last year, which drew conductor James Levine and others.

"Berlioz was the right subject at the right time," Holoman said. "I had the great good fortune of falling into the Berlioz community in 1969, the 100th anniversary of his death. The Berlioz community welcomed me, as another body willing to do the work. I became one of the American voices of Berlioz study, by virtue of the generosity of others."

"Harvard Press was a great coup for me," Holoman added, because it led to other projects related to France, including a book about the Paris Conservatory Orchestra, which later became the Orchestre de Paris.

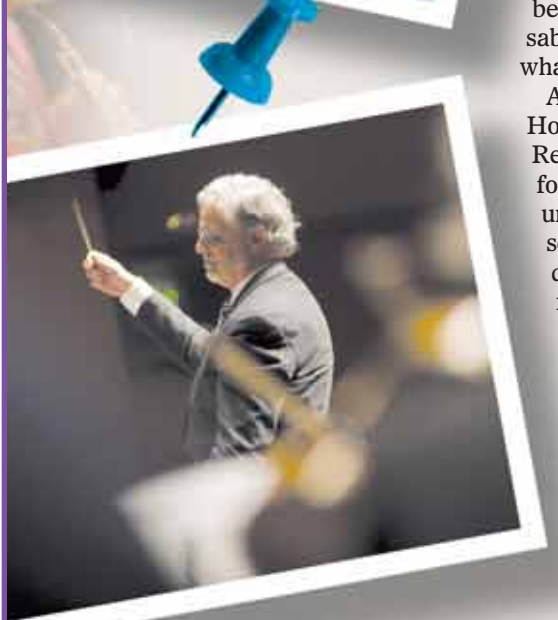
Holoman's current project also stems from those same French connections: a book about Charles Münch (1897-1968), who became conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (1949-1962) and a noted interpreter of French music, including (yes) Berlioz. Münch also helped launch the Orchestre de Paris in 1967.

"I've been trying to get into the mind of Münch the last couple of summers," Holoman said. "It was all about the music being born in his mind, each time he played it."

Many of the Boston Symphony Orchestra's performances under Münch were recorded for television broadcast by PBS affiliate WGBH; Holoman has been reviewing that old video to learn more about how Münch worked with a baton.

Holoman also used video technology to evaluate his own performances with the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra, and it has changed the way he conducts. He once was well known for his swooping gestures on the podium, but after seeing himself on screen in recent years, he toned down his moves.

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COURTESY PHOTOS



D. Kern Holoman rehearses, top, with the UC Davis Symphony. From top left, he stands against the open expanse of the Mondavi Center's Jackson Hall; Jorja Fleezanis will be the soloist at the UC Davis Symphony's 50th anniversary gala performance, taking place Nov. 23; two poses of Holoman, as he conducts the UC Davis Symphony at the 2007 Convocation ceremony; Holoman milks a cow during 2004's Picnic Day events; a young Holoman, right, poses in 1980 with Richard Swift and Anna Carol.



DCTV Channel 15

Thursday, Nov. 13

5 p.m.: "Guten Tag." German lessons.
5:30 p.m.: "Labor on the Job — Workers Memorial Day, Healthcare and Labor."
6:30 p.m.: "Get the Word Out!" Solar cooking.
7 p.m.: "Service Inc." Soroptimist International.
7:30 p.m.: "Davis Jazz Arts Festival 2007."
8 p.m.: "Slaughterhouse of Sacred Cows." Commentary.
9 p.m.: "Zen and the Art of Bicycle Commuting."
9:30 p.m.: "The Story of Stuff."
10 p.m.: "TWF Tower of Power Action Hour." Local wrestling!

Friday, Nov. 14

5 p.m.: "Technocultural Studies Documentaries 104." UC Davis program.
7:05 p.m.: "Methods in Land Conservation." An interview with Frank Maurer, of the Quail Ridge Wilderness Conservancy and the Environmental Education Farm Foundation.
8 p.m.: "Steal This Film II."
8:45 p.m.: "Davis Food Coop Sustainability Fair 2007."
9 p.m.: "EC's Jook Joint."
9:30 p.m.: "Reggae TV."

Saturday, Nov. 15

6 p.m.: "The Nexus Stage."

Sunday, Nov. 16

1 p.m.: "Meeting with Gangaji."
2 p.m.: "Yolo County Substance Abuse Summit 2008 — Day One."
3 p.m.: "Amazing Facts."
4 p.m.: "Yolo County Substance Abuse Summit 2008 — Day Two."
5:15 p.m.: "Up from the Understory." Calveras County restoration.
5:50 p.m.: "Sky Lines." Toxic chemtrails documentary.
6 p.m.: "Music and the Spoken Word."
6:30 p.m.: "The House of Yahweh."
7 p.m.: "On the Wire." Local issues, people and events.
7:30 p.m.: "On the Wire."
8 p.m.: "Media Edge." Independent progressive media.
10 p.m.: "Good Copy, Bad Copy." Copyright documentary.
11 p.m.: "Steal This Film II."

Tuesday, Nov. 18

5 p.m.: "Sacramento Soapbox — Network of Spiritual Progressives."
5:30 p.m.: "Sacramento Soapbox."
6 p.m.: "Service Inc." Soroptimist International.
6:30 p.m.: "15 Stories — The Depression Then and Now." Historian and educator Richard Livingston chats with Native American activist Barbara Risling.
7 p.m.: "On the Wire." Local issues, people and events.
7:30 p.m.: "On the Wire."
8 p.m.: "UCD Emeriti" — Robert D. Grey.
9 p.m.: "Get with the Program." Alternative viewpoints on current issues and events.
10 p.m.: "VegVideo."

Wednesday, Nov. 19

5 p.m.: "Running with Scientists." Going Green 2007; part 1 of 2.
5:30 p.m.: "Running with Scientists." Part 2.
6 p.m.: "15 Stories — The Depression Then and Now."
6:30 p.m.: "Perils for Pedestrians." Issues facing walkers.
7 p.m.: "Gospel Stage."
8:30 p.m.: "Libertarian Counterpoint."
9 p.m.: "On the Wire." Local issues, people and events.
9:30 p.m.: "On the Wire."
10 p.m.: "Undercover TV."
10:30 p.m.: "The Musical Drum Key." Expand your musical mind.
For program details, visit <http://www.davismedia.org>. For questions or comments, call 757-2419 or e-mail info@davismedia.org.

Schools Channel 17

Daily schedule

for Thursday-Wednesday, Nov. 13-19
Midnight: "Classic Arts Showcase"
6 a.m.: "Deutsche Welle TV"
7 a.m.: "DJUSD Bulletin Board Announcements"
8 a.m.: "Classic Arts Showcase"
10 a.m.: "Deutsche Welle TV"
11 a.m.: "Announcements"
Noon: "Deutsche Welle TV"
1 p.m.: "NASA"
3 p.m.: "Classic Arts Showcase"
4 p.m.: "Announcements"
5 p.m.: "California Arts," 2 hrs. (Th)
 "The Road to Recovery," 1 hr. (F)
 "Satellite Field Trips," 2 hrs. (Sa)
 "Howard Hughes Medical Institute," 60 mins. (M)
 "National Gallery of Art," 1 hr. (Tu)
 "The Kennedy Center Performing Arts Series," 1 hr. (W)
6 p.m.: "Friday Night Student Flick," 10th annual North American All Youth Film and Education Day, 2 hrs. (F)
 "Arts in Our Schools," "Jazz-N-Pops 2008," Act 1, featuring the Davis High School Jazz Choir Combo and the Concert Choir, recorded June 7, 2 hrs. (Su)
 "Tuesday Night Sports," DHS Football vs. Nevada Union High, recorded Nov. 14, 2 hrs. (Tu)
 "Arts in Our Schools," "Jazz-N-Pops 2008," Act 1, featuring the DHS Jazz Choir Combo and the Concert Choir, recorded June 7, 2 hrs. (W)
6:30 p.m.: "France Feelings," French culture, 1 hr. (M)
7 p.m.: "Satellite Field Trips," 1 hr. (Th)
 "The Kennedy Center Performing Arts Series," 1 hr. (Sa)
 "Authors and Poets Speak," 1 hr. (W)
8 p.m.: "UCTV Series"
11 p.m.: "DJUSD Bulletin Board Announcements"
11:30 p.m.: "Classic Arts Showcase"

See <http://www.djusd.tv> for details and descriptions of this week's programming. For further information, call 757-2419 or e-mail channel17@djusd.k12.ca.us.

Nine bottles and only one turkey

As families grow, age or otherwise change, the logistics of holiday celebrations become more and more complicated.

The Leonardi-Pope-Foley clan has, therefore, resolved to be flexible.

Julian, Heath and Sylvie in Chicago for Thanksgiving? No problem; we had a Harvest Dinner instead, on Nov. 1.

Getting a fresh, free-range turkey for the early occasion presented a small challenge, but the Davis Co-op came through with a fine hen (which, though severely tried by a malfunctioning oven, emerged moist and flavorful).

And as long as we're giving thanks for our great good fortune several weeks early, we may as well take the opportunity to try out holiday wines and share the results with Wineaux readers.

The rules: Everyone brings a dinner dish, a small contribution to the appetizer spread, and (most important) a bottle of wine. Not just any wine, of course, but one that comes highly recommended as good company for turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, goat cheese, pumpkin pies and whatever vegetables can be plucked from the soil of the Mendocino County farm, where several family members live and work.

We all acknowledge that such a versatile wine probably doesn't exist in one bottle, but we'll see what comes close. The wines must be accessible, affordable and (preferably) local. Affordable, we decide, means less than \$20. Less than \$15 gets you extra kudos.

These parameters eliminate 1) the \$50 Goldeneye Pinot Noir that doubtless would enhance our festivities; 2) Jakob's own brew, accessible to us but not to my readers; and 3) the German Rieslings that always appear on critics' holiday lists.

Oh yes, and we're trying for bottles from independent wineries.

The cast of characters is too complicated to explain in any detail, but we range in age from 14 months to 63 years. (The eldest's birthday just happens to fall on our chosen feasting day.) The tasters, half male and half female, range from 32 to 63 ... unless you count the fingertips of Pinot Noir I apply to Sylvie's teething gums. (Clearly, the child has a happy future as a red wine fan.)

The menu: the usual, with the additions of fresh figs, Jakob's lush winter squash and wild mushroom soup, Allegra's dramatic apple-cranberry pie, Carissa's pumpkin soufflé — which, thanks to above-mentioned oven malfunction, refuses to rise —

and Benedicta and Jeff's cabbage-kale medley.

Variations include sliced persimmons on Sara's green salad, chipotle in Julian's tangy cranberry relish, and the substitution of sweet potato for pumpkin in pie No. 2.

You can imagine a bottle of wine trying to live up to this multi-flavored challenge. The wines: a 2007 Dry Creek Dry Chenin Blanc, an '07 Frey Sauvignon Blanc, an '06 Patiana Sauvignon Blanc, an '06 McFadden Riesling, an '06 Handley Gewürztraminer, an '04 Red Square Pinot Noir, an '07 Edmunds St. John Bone-Jolly Gamay Noir, an '07 Edmeades Zinfandel and an '03 Watts Dos Amores Cabernet Sauvignon.

Jakob conveniently forgets the rules and provides us with that Pinot Noir, which comes from New Zealand; and the Cab, which, though local, cost \$23. Do we therefore refuse to drink them? Of course not. Who cares about rules, after a few mouthfuls of good wine? Allegra suggests that drinkers taste as many wines as possible with each dish, and jot notes on recycled 3-by-5 cards. We eschew wine jargon in favor of uncensored comments, so we end up with "honeylicious" (the McFadden Riesling), "dish-soapy" (Handley Gewürz), "ocean spray mellow" (Gamay Noir), "gothic" (Watts Cab) and "not very sauu" (Frey Sauvignon Blanc).

The latter also garners a "too sauu for my taste!" from the Sauvignon Blanc hater in our midst.

The Patiana Sauvignon Blanc pleases everyone but him: "great with figs and turkey," "excellent with soft cheese" and "yummy with (Sara's homemade) goat cheese." I like it, as well, although — being unreasonably fond of the grassy and grapefruit-y sauu — I'd have preferred more citrus. Still, it's an organic, biodynamic Mendocino wine from Patti Fetzer, and a good buy at \$15.

The other whites fare less well, with the exception of the Chenin Blanc — more on that shortly — although each has its fans and detractors. The Frey meets with near-unanimous boredom. All of us, especially the Mendocino contingent, want to like this organic, no-sulfite wine, but "totally decent" gets trumped by "aftertaste of stale beer." "Food ruined it," someone scribbles, though one person liked it with the figs and cheeses.

The Riesling, for which I have great hope, elicits both "yummy" and



HEATH MADDOX/COURTESY PHOTO

Despite his goofy grin, young Sasha did not participate in the Dionysian revels ... although he does like turkey, sitting on tables, eying bottles and posing for pictures. Your columnist thanks him and the other kids — Thea, Ari, Erowyn, Seda, Nico and Sylvie — for their cheerful indulgence of adults acting weird.

"goes great with paté, figs and cheese." Most admire the way this Potter Valley wine enhances the flavor of the soup. Other tasters, myself included, find it too sweet, both on its own and with all the food. It exhibits such classic Alsatian Riesling fruit that with less sugar, it would, I suspect, be a universal hit.

It isn't. The halbtrocken fan, though, jots down "not too sweet, not too dry, just right; delightful before a meal with family and friends!" So, if you like off-dry, don't hesitate.

The even sweeter Gewürztraminer faces similar obstacles. While one person says "delicious, crisp, complete," the rest of us say too sweet at best, and bitter at worst. Too bad, since something like the Navarro dry-style Gewürz would, I'm pretty sure, have fared well in this little trial-by-turkey.

The red selections work better overall. Tied with the Frey for best price (around \$10), the Red Square Pinot Noir is "tasty and fun." Although I've had Pinot Noirs that I could drink forever, the inexpensive ones, alas, usually taste only thin and dull to me. ("Sideways" has a lot to answer for.)

But I like this one; the "yum — spicy smoke" comment expresses my own response pretty accurately.

The Edmunds St. John Gamay Noir from El Dorado County — technically a rosé — recommended to us by a new Berkeley wine boutique, is cranberry-forward in an "understated" way, and well-liked by everyone as an "alone" wine. Alas, the food overtakes it.

The earthy Edmeades Zin (Mendocino), on the other hand, "holds up well" and is, as someone notes, the first bottle to be finished. One taster calls it "clove tasting" — a great Christmas choice." I concur; its lively, mixed-berry middle suggests holiday lights and the smells of spicy cookies straight from the oven.

The Watts Cabernet, from family-owned vineyards near the Mokelumne River, confuses us.

"Not an easy wine," someone scribbles, and I nod. Jakob opines that "it may be better with cow and Bambi."

BATON: Holoman is absolutely delighted with the Mondavi Center

From Page C1

"I try to keep more still on the podium than I used to. That's partly television."

Holoman's conducting career also has been transformed by a change of venue. From his arrival in 1975 until 2002, the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra performed at Freeborn Hall ... which was, to be honest, a lousy environment for classical music. Local music lovers still shudder a bit when the topic of Freeborn comes up.

"One of the things I remember about Freeborn Hall was sitting in the bassoon section and having no idea what it sounded like," Holoman said. "None."

In the late 1990s, plans for a new "Center for the Arts" began to firm up, and decisions had to be made. Holoman recalled attending meeting after meeting, at which the mission of the building and the budget for the project were discussed.

"We truly made hundreds of compromises with other partners and stakeholders," Holoman said.

And again and again, "I was thinking I was compromising something terribly important. And there must have been many turning points and turnback points at levels way above me."

But the excitement grew when groundbreaking

ceremonies were held in 2000. Holoman was one of several university dignitaries putting a symbolic shovel — topped with the scroll from a cello — into the ground.

When the Mondavi Center opened in October 2002, Holoman was delighted with the results. The venue is widely regarded as one of the best-sounding halls in Northern California.

"When the doors opened, there was nothing not to like. I still pinch myself about the place. This is my institution's home."

For the first time, people in the audience — and musicians on stage — could hear how good the UC Davis Symphony could sound. Attendance at concerts went up, and prospective music majors started picking UC Davis over other schools.

"It's a classic case of 'If you build it, they will come,'" Holoman said.

The orchestra itself hasn't changed all that much.

"One of the things I see, looking back from this 50th anniversary, is that the orchestra has had something like its current profile all along, with leading faculty members, members of the community, and students playing together. It has been like that from Day One; it's always been a town/gown aggregation."

At the same time, the

orchestra was able to bring in some notable names with international reputations, as with last year's appearance by legendary pianist Leon Fleisher. Mezzo-soprano Stephanie Friedman, who created roles in operas by John Adams, sang with the UC Davis Symphony while a faculty member here.

"There was no question about the soloist for our 50th anniversary: Jorja Fleezanis," Holoman said.

She was the associate concertmaster with the San Francisco Symphony for eight seasons in the 1980s, and has been the concertmaster of the Minnesota Orchestra since 1989. She's also been a friend of Holoman's for some years, and has appeared with the UCD Symphony at Mondavi before.

Holoman is stepping down as the orchestra's conductor, but he may have a hand in future projects in the music department. He also recently became a grandfather — Jackson Aaron Klein was born in late October — and of course he has the residence in France.

"One of the things I want to do in retirement is see other people's orchestras, all the way through a season. I'd love to live in New York or London or Cleveland, going to the concert hall every Saturday night, and seeing how those orchestras play under a

season's worth of conductors."

Holoman also has an idea for another book, related to the pioneering RCA "Living Stereo" recordings.

But he'll miss the daily contact with university students, and the opportunity to make music while leading the orchestra.

"There's something satisfying about watching young people, and the satisfaction that comes from having a role in creating beautiful things."

— Reach Jeff Hudson at jhudson@davisenterprise.net or (530) 747-8055. Comment on this story at www.davisenterprise.com

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