

Musicians do their research as they rehearse

by Natalie Johnson - Tuesday, February 05, 2008

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/412/musicians-do-their-research-as-they-rehearse/>

All the notes were played.

But that's not what a musician wants to hear following a concert, said University of Wisconsin Oshkosh music department chair Charles Isaacson.

"With music, each time you perform a piece, you play the same notes, but you get a very different outcome," he explained.

Isaacson, a trombonist, and several other UW Oshkosh music faculty members will provide insight into the creative process of composing, rehearsing and performing music at the second Research to Reception Speaker Series event Feb. 22.

Hosted by Chancellor Richard H. Wells and the UW Oshkosh Foundation Board of Directors, the series showcases how UW Oshkosh faculty members impact the community through their research as well as their artistic and creative endeavors.

During the Feb. 22 event titled "Infusion: It's not your grandma's chamber music," UW Oshkosh ensemble musicians will discuss how composition and rehearsal are their "research" and performances, their "results."

Upcoming Infusion concerts include "American Salute," 3 p.m. Feb. 17; and "The Three Bs: Bach, Beethoven, Brahms," 3 p.m. May 4, both in the Arts and Communication Center's Music Hall, 926 Woodland Ave.

At the Research to Reception event, Isaacson said the composers will describe the creative process of composing a musical work and then the players will speak to their role in the recreation of a piece in a performance.

"We need to live with the music long enough individually and as an ensemble before we can really recreate the piece with musical nuances," Isaacson said.

Many elements need to come together, agreed flutist Mihoko Watanabe, a founding member of Infusion — UW Oshkosh's resident-artist ensemble that uses varied instrumentation and creative programming to present four concerts annually.

"In putting together a piece, there are artistic discussions about the speed of the music, volume, tone color, breathing, balance of the instruments, articulations, phrasing and style," Watanabe said. "There also are discussions about staging, presentation and how the performers will introduce the piece to the audience. These rehearsals and discussions are collaborative and creative and represent the most exciting

part of preparing to perform.”

During a performance, a musical piece is reinterpreted a final time as active listeners filter the experience through their own senses and knowledge of music, Isaacson said.

Since it began in 2006, Infusion has taken a different approach to chamber music.

“The concerts are planned so that many different combinations of instruments and voices can be used, instead of the standard chamber groups like a string quartet or a brass quintet,” Watanabe said. “During an Infusion concert, you might hear one trio comprised of a flute, viola and percussion and another piece by a group with a horn, piano, oboe and cello.”

The variety of instruments combined with interesting musical choices has played with Oshkosh audiences, she said.