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## Triad of talent

"Triple Treat" concert tonight brings together 200 musicians for a spellbinding performance.

By **SETH ASHLEY** of the Tribune's staff

*Published Sunday, February 26, 2006*

Many college towns in America likely possess a disproportionate amount of artistic talent in their residents. Academia tends to attract those who thrive on cultural richness, and that richness seems to beget even more richness. Columbia always seems to be deeply saturated with artistic and cultural opportunities and resources, and this weekend is no exception.

Of course, the True/False Film Festival is sort of an annual anomaly. But just in case that blast of culture isn't enough for one weekend, this evening offers a special concert at Jefferson Junior High School, mere blocks away from the film festivities.

For the first time ever, Columbia's three community music groups — the Columbia Civic Orchestra, the Columbia Community Band and the Columbia Chorale — will unite on a stage in a momentous display of local talent. Each group will perform separately for about 20 minutes each, and then the three groups will come together as one; some 200 musicians will hail their allegiance to the North as they perform Julia Ward Howe's patriotic Civil War anthem, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

In an ingenious display of crossover marketing, the three diverse groups have spent months organizing the "Triple Treat" concert, which aims to gather the groups' different audiences together in one place and expose them to the other ensembles. And the organizers hope that the giant gathering of musicians will attract new audience members as well.

"We have wanted to get together for a while," said Stefan Freund, who directs the Columbia Civic Orchestra. "I think there's a great amount of mutual admiration among us, between the directors and the personnel, and we wanted to have an opportunity to put the three community organizations on display at the same time. And the goals are to let our audiences meet the other ensembles that are out there and try to get them interested in the other community groups. And also, to try to get the community at large interested in what we have going on musically in our community, which I think is quite substantial."

More than a marketing ploy, the concert offers a chance for Columbia musicians to share their love of music with their friends and neighbors. The idea started with Charlie Kyriakos, who plays trumpet in the community band and serves on the board of directors for the orchestra.



*Don Shrubshell photo*

From left, Columbia Chorale tenors, Celeste Mazzacano, Ted Willmore and Mark Woodward practice for tonight's "Triple Treat" concert at Jefferson Junior High School.

**True/False Festival**

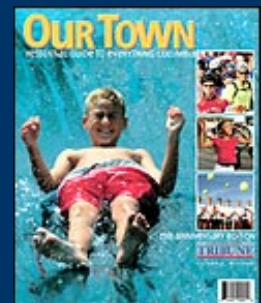
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"I just thought it'd be a fantastic idea to have all three civic groups on one program and sort of showcase what we have here in the way of cultural events," Kyriakos said.

Before his retirement, Kyriakos taught music theory at the University of Missouri-Columbia and directed the choir at Missouri United Methodist Church until 1998. The current musical director at the church is Alex Innecco, who also leads the Columbia Chorale. He is excited to show off his group's talents.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to share audiences," Innecco said. "We want to convince the other audiences that we have a good product, too." For his part, Innecco also sees the concert as imbued with a bit of healthy competition so that it's kind of like a "battle of the bands," where each group wants to be viewed as the best at what it does.

Innecco told his choir group: "A choir competing with a band and an orchestra? We lost before we even got on stage. There's no way for us to make as much noise as they make, so we're going for the opposite approach and doing things that orchestra and band cannot do."

The chorale will perform first, and they've got a few tricks up their sleeve, including a spoken-word piece and a wordless piece that aims to sound like an a cappella orchestra.

The band performs second, led by director John Patterson. Its program will consist of a piece by Holst, followed by Alfred Reed's "A Festival Prelude" and ending with a march by John Philip Sousa.

After the orchestra performs a program that will include Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's "Sheherazade," Patterson will return to the stage to conduct the combined band and orchestra for the "Battle Hymn" finale.

"I was happy to have anybody conduct it, but somehow I wound up with the stick in my hand, so I'll do that," Patterson said. He's been busy this week, working to develop a seating chart that will accommodate the 120 musicians who make up the band and orchestra. "It's kind of a problem when you consider we're putting the ensembles together," he said.

Fortunately, the auditorium at Jefferson Junior is reportedly quite large, as it used to be a basketball court and has seating for nearly 700. In the future, the groups hope to perform together again in the acoustically excellent Missouri Theatre. But for now, each volunteer group is working hard to make sure tonight's performance goes well.

Many audience members are likely to be surprised by the level of talent present right here in their own community.



*Gerik Parmele photo*

The Columbia Civic Orchestra, directed by Stefan Freund, practices Tuesday at the Missouri Theatre for the upcoming "Triple Treat" concert.



*Ed Pfueller photo*

Dan Harsbaugh, right, plays the timpani during practice of the Columbia Community Band at Hickman High School.

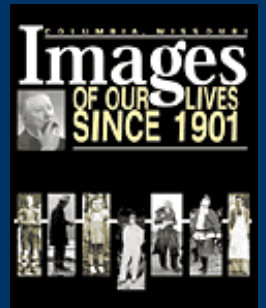
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Frances Dickey, an assistant professor of English at MU, plays viola in the civic orchestra and believes it to be among the best she's heard. She checked out the group when she first moved to Columbia in 2002 after living in several other university communities.

"I was very pleased by what I found," she said, "because even though it's an immature group, they hold themselves to high standards, and people take their commitment to the orchestra very seriously. Everyone plays because they love music, and they're not doing it to advance their careers but only for pleasure."

Sustaining that level of commitment can be difficult for community groups that operate on a volunteer basis, but in Columbia, the dedication of the players seems to be firm.

"We have no incentive to make sure people come to rehearsal," Freund said. "We have no incentive to make sure people come to concerts, really! I definitely feel that everyone gets a great emotional reward from performing this music. I have no question about that."

Indeed, music helps the Columbia arts community to thrive, and the reward is great for players and audience members alike. Innecco put it even more strongly.

"I know it's naïve and corny," he said, "but I honestly believe if everybody just got involved in some community art group, that we would solve all the world's problems."

#### "Triple Treat" Concert

- When: 7 tonight
- Where: Jefferson Junior High School, 713 Rogers St.
- With: Columbia Civic Orchestra, Columbia Community Band and Columbia Chorale
- How much: \$10
- Tickets: Advance tickets available at D&H Prescription Drug Store, 1001 W. Broadway, and Bluestem Missouri Crafts, 13 S. Ninth St. Tickets will also be available at the door.
- Columbia Community Band: <http://ccb.coin.org/>
- Columbia Chorale: <http://www.columbiachorale.com/>
- Columbia Civic Orchestra: <http://cco.missouri.org/>

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