

## Breathing meaning into classical program

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Music sends different messages to different listeners, even when it contains no words to evoke specific thoughts, feelings or images.

What the sonic statements and swirls communicate is the basis of "Music From the Inside Out: Exploring the Realms of Imagination," a program Cleveland Orchestra hornist Eli Epstein and his windplaying colleagues will present tomorrow at Plymouth Church in Shaker Heights.

Like others in his field, Epstein is concerned that some works classical musicians perform may not seem accessible to certain listeners. But he believes classical music, while requiring concentration, is so richly expressive that it can touch concertgoers on many levels.

To make classical music more meaningful, he has devised a method of presentation that thrusts the audience inside the activity.

"We're trying to find ways to make music easily understandable to anyone," says Epstein, a member of the Cleveland Orchestra since 1986. "They don't have to know any music history or theory or anything about composers or instruments."

Before each piece, Epstein will describe important aspects of the music and encourage listeners to come to their own imaginative conclusions about the expressive elements. He'll have help along the way from Alan Bachers, a clinical psychologist, who will use what is called "guided imagery" to bring listeners deeply into the music.

"By focusing on the breath," Epstein says, "the listener will be assisted in getting comfortable enough to create an inner state of openness. Then Dr. Bachers will suggest thought prompts to help the listener produce mental images that will maximize the experience of the artistic expression created by the composer and the performers."

For example, Epstein and company will use J.S. Bach's Fugue in G minor (in an arrangement by Mordechai Rechtman) to show how a fugue is about building something. It could be "something cosmic, like creating a universe," says Epstein, "or concrete, like building a cathedral or planting a garden, or something more abstract, like building a relationship.

"What does it mean when Bach makes the theme come back in a major key? Maybe we're looking back at the progress we've made, and we're seeing the structure of the thing we're trying to build."

Along with orchestra colleagues Mary Kay Fink (flute), Jonathan Fischer (oboe), Barrick Stees (bassoon) and Baldwin-Wallace College faculty member David Bell (clarinet), tour guide Epstein also will probe possible meanings in Barber's "Summer Music," Ravel's "Le Tombeau de Couperin" (arranged by Mason Jones) and Nielsen's Quintet.

"The idea is that we have this vast world of feelings, impressions," Epstein says. "We're tapping into things and using all of that to enhance how people listen to classical music. What's so exciting is that there's such a great body of works out there."