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Enriching and Educating Classical Music Connects Andrews and the Community

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Enriching and Educating

CLASSICAL MUSIC CONNECTS ANDREWS AND THE COMMUNITY

BY BECKY ST. CLAIR

It started as an amateur student project in a dorm room in 1923. Today, Andrews University's professional classical music radio station reaches more than 30,000 listeners a week in the South Bend, Indiana, area alone. "The University felt that a professional station would aid in positioning itself in its rightful place as a serious academic institution," explains Sharon Dudgeon, WAUS general manager. "We wanted to build bridges to people who were unaware of Andrews and Adventists."

Part of their goal is to reach more of the community by coordinating and hosting events that encourage and foster community involvement on campus and across the region. Regular events include "Second Sunday Concerts" every month, a reception following the last big Department of Music concert of the academic year, and an annual overnight trip to the Ravinia Festival in Chicago to hear great musicians such as James Galway, Lang Lang and Midori. These Chicago trips include a special activity the day after the concert such as a museum, the Chicago Botanic Garden or Navy Pier.

"Research has proven classical music to be mentally beneficial to one's emotional well-being," says Wanda Poole, underwriting director. "We're not just filling a hobby or interest niche; WAUS contributes to the overall health of the community we serve."

WAUS also has sponsored local health-focused events, such as "Health in a Hurry," a six-week health seminar for busy people, and cooking demonstrations at Pioneer Memorial Church on the campus of Andrews University.

"These events are what bring people onto the Andrews campus," says Sharon. "So, in a way, it's fantastic public relations for the University, not just WAUS, and we're proud to offer that conduit between our public and campus communities."

Keeping up with the 21st century, the station is not only on the radio; WAUS has a livestream option on its website and a free mobile app, as well.



The staff at WAUS feel what they do is not only a joy and a blessing to them, but also a ministry of which they are proud to be a part.

Though thousands of people enjoy the music on WAUS every day, the station isn't just meant for entertainment. To the radio staff, what they do is a ministry.

"WAUS is part of the Sabbath ritual for our Adventist audience. Listening to this station is a part of their entry into Sabbath rest and letting the big world around them worry about itself for a while," says Jeff Smith, program director. "Since our Adventist listeners are so vocal about WAUS, I

often get a chance to share with them one of the best parts of reaching beyond the Adventist circle and into the rest of the world: We get to share some of that Sabbath rest with an audience who may not even realize they need it."

"God has given us opportunities to grieve with people who have lost loved ones, to minister to people who were hurting for various reasons," says Sharon. "He has also given us joy in working here, with each other, for our listeners. It's wonderful to work in a public radio station where my faith is an important part of my job."

To listen to WAUS online, to learn more about events and programming, and to support WAUS, visit <http://www.waus.org>. To find the free mobile app, search for "wau" in your device's app store.

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