

Bassoonist ANDREW CORDLE

is also a virtuoso on the harp, viola da gamba, dulcian, baroque bassoon, clarinet, among other instruments.

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From the subways of New York to the salons of Geneva, the Springfield Symphony's **Andrew Cordle** brings music to life. This Saturday, Cordle will step to the front of the Symphony Hall stage as concerto soloist with the orchestra he has served for 26 years as principal bassoonist, playing Jan Antonin Kozeluh's *Bassoon Concerto in C Major*. Cordle was hired in 1976 by former SSO Music Director Robert Gutter after a whirlwind audition played immediately after his return from Europe where he had shared the top spot with a French competitor in the International Bassoon Competition in Geneva. "I could hardly see, I was so jet-lagged," Cordle recalled in a recent telephone interview, "but I borrowed my roommate's car and drove to Springfield." Having played every excerpt his future colleagues placed in front of him, Cordle was subsequently told he had the job of SSO principal bassoonist. Interestingly enough, the bassoon is neither his first nor main instrument. "I actually play more harp than bassoon," he said, adding that in early music circles, he is known as an able viola da gamba player as well. Add to those instruments the dulcian, clarinet, saxophone, recorder, and pennywhistle and a picture begins to emerge of Cordle's many and diverse musical talents. "Carol Hutter (SSO violist) once quipped that there were three of me going around," Cordle said with a chuckle.

Cordle's harp has brought him to interesting places. "I was walking in the 42nd Street tunnel (in the New York subway station) and came upon this violinist - he was playing so beautifully - I stopped to talk, and he said 'no English, no English!' Luckily, there was someone with him who translated and I introduced myself and told him I played the harp." Thus, Cordle and Ukrainian immigrant Marian Pidvirny launched the Aurora Ensemble, playing classical and folk music in Grand Central Station and at many of 23 underground locations managed by the Metropolitan Transit Authority's "Music Under New York" program.



Irish tunes interwoven with strains of Bach and Vivaldi sometimes netted the duo up to \$100 a day in rush hour crowds. Above ground, Cordle has toured the world with his bassoon and harp. The Arioso Duo (soprano and harp) with Barbara Ann Peters of the Berkshire Choral Festival and the Berkshire Ensemble with former SSO principal flutist William Wittig and mime Jody Scaless are only a few of his legion collaborations. He has composed chamber works for many combinations of instruments, and arranged reams of music for his ensembles. Cordle has performed with L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the Festival Orchestra in Torremolinas, Spain, L'Orchestre Mondiale des Jeunesses Musicales, the Festival de Due Mondis in Spoleto, Italy, and has worked with conductors Leonard Bernstein, Sixten Ehrling, James Conlon and Eve Queler, among others. He has recorded for Columbia Records, Orion Master Recordings and Aurora Recordings.

Among his more intriguing engagements was a 30-day stint spent aboard the Queen Elizabeth II, back when it was a Cunard liner. "They asked me five times before I was even free to go," Cordle said. "It seemed that the call always came on a Monday just before I had to leave for Springfield." He eventually made two Atlantic crossings and a cruise to Bermuda on the venerable vessel, playing at noon, afternoon tea and two evening sets of Medieval and Renaissance lute music interweaved with folk tunes and new age music.

The Kozeluh *Concerto* he will perform Saturday was written in the 18th century, but the score was only recently discovered (in 1952), according to Cordle, in a castle in the composer's native Bohemia. The work's outer movements demonstrate the bassoon's virtuosic capabilities and the central Larghetto exhibits its lyrical, expressive ability.

"There's a wealth of bassoon literature that should be played" Cordle said, explaining (in part) why he did not choose better known concerti by Vivaldi, Mozart and von Weber. Kozeluh was a contemporary (and apparent rival) of C.P.E. Bach whose choral works won him greater favor than his instrumental compositions, one of the exceptions being this concerto.