Missouri's Anderson says no to Oregon overtures

By ALAN SCHER ZAGIER (AP) – 17 hours ago

COLUMBIA, Mo. — For the second time in just over one year, Missouri coach Mike Anderson has turned down a hefty raise and the chance to revive a moribund power conference program to remain with the Tigers.

The latest suitor was Oregon, which fired Ernie Kent a month ago after a 16-16 season and ninth-place finish in the Pac-10. Anderson confirmed Sunday that the job was his if he desired.

"We listened," he said. "I owe it to my family."

Anderson met with former Oregon athletics director Pat Kilkenny on Thursday night while in El Paso, Texas, for a charity golf tournament hosted by his mentor, former Arkansas coach Nolan Richardson.

Anderson issued a statement Saturday night affirming his commitment to Missouri, but the two-day silence and the timing of the interview — Missouri hosted its year-end team banquet Sunday afternoon — raised concerns in Columbia.

Anderson just completed his fourth season at Missouri and has led the team to two consecutive NCAA tournaments after a five-year drought. He signed a seven-year, $10.85 million contract extension one year ago after leading the team to a record 31-win season that ended one game short of the Final Four.

That pay raise came soon after Georgia reportedly offered Anderson more than $2 million to lead its program. Oregon, which has tried to lure other high-profile coaches to replace Kent, was reported to be willing to pay even more, thanks to school benefactor and Nike founder Phil Knight.
Such overtures from other programs are the price of success, Anderson told reporters Sunday before the team banquet.

"There are going to be other (interested) schools," he said. "When you have success, that's what takes place."

Anderson said that all along his heart remains with Missouri. He hailed a "tremendous recruiting class" that ranks among the nation's best and includes point guard Phil Pressey of Dallas and his older brother Matt, a junior college transfer. Their father is former NBA guard and New Orleans Hornets assistant coach Paul Pressey, Anderson's former teammate and roommate at Tulsa.

"A lot of people fail to understand Mike Anderson, who he is," Anderson said. "My players are my family."

The recruiting haul also includes the nation's top-ranked junior college player, 6-foot-8 forward Ricardo Ratliffe from Central Florida Community College. He and Matt Presscy committed to Missouri the day before Anderson's Oregon interview.

Missouri was picked to finish near the bottom of the Big 12 this past season, but went 23-11 and advanced to the second round of the NCAA tournament despite the loss of three 1,000-point scorers. Anderson's 54 wins over the last two seasons is second-best in school history.

Anderson said he doesn't expect his flirtations with other job offers to cost him back home.

"I don't think there will be any backlash," he said.

There certainly was none at the Missouri team banquet, with speakers from athletic director Mike Alden to the state's top politician praising Anderson's work. The coach received a standing ovation when introduced.

Gov. Jay Nixon, an avid basketball fan, noted how Missouri toppled Oregon twice this season: a 37-point home drubbing in early December as well as victory in keeping Anderson off the annual coaching carousel.

"It was great to be here on Dec. 5 when we defeated Oregon. And it was nice to defeat them again yesterday," Nixon said.

University of Missouri system president Gary Forsee thanked Anderson and his team for their role in lifting "the spirits of our state." From a podium overlooking the Mizzou Arena floor, he reminded Anderson of a promise he made when hired four years ago.

"We're going to hang a national championship banner in this arena," Forsee said. "And it's going to happen because of Mike Anderson."
Anderson breaks silence, will stay at Mizzou

By MIKE DeARMOND

COLUMBIA | Mike Anderson will return to Missouri for a fifth season as its men's basketball coach, spurning what was widely reported to be a hefty salary increase had he accepted an offer from Oregon.

The word of Anderson's decision came from the MU athletic department via telephone just before 8:30 Saturday night.

"It's certainly flattering any time another university notices what your program is accomplishing and when I was approached by Oregon, I decided to listen, but it was simply with my family in mind," Anderson said in a statement released by the school later Saturday. "All that quick conversation did was reaffirm that Missouri is home to us."

Thus ended a nearly 48-hour span of speculation and — on the part of Missouri officials — consternation.

In several telephone conversations with Anderson in just the previous 24 hours, Missouri athletic director Mike Alden told The Star on Saturday morning that he hoped Anderson would not take the Oregon offer, believed to have been in the range of $2 million to $2.5 million a season.

"Mizzou is the place we want him to be," Alden said. "We want him here. We made that clear."

Alden said he believed MU had made that evident 11 months ago when it more than doubled Anderson's yearly guaranteed compensation to $1.55 million in a seven-year contract that came on the heels of MU reaching the NCAA Elite Eight.

The Eugene (Oregon) Register Guard newspaper, on its Web site Saturday, raised the possibility that Missouri might not be willing to raise Anderson's compensation again.

Alden declined to comment on that question earlier Saturday. But more than half a dozen members of MU's academic and athletic administration and some influential boosters indicated to The Star that Missouri would likely not increase Anderson's compensation in response to Oregon's offer.
Several of those persons told The Star that to do so now risked setting a precedent in which Anderson could make new salary increases a yearly request in a time when economic conditions within the University of Missouri system were spartan at best.

Anderson remained early Saturday in El Paso, Texas, where he was taking part in a charity golf event organized by his mentor and former Arkansas head coach Nolan Richardson. Anderson twice on Friday refused comment when approached by reporters in El Paso. His agent, Jimmy Sexton, did not return a request for comment made by The Star.

The Eugene newspaper reported Saturday that Anderson met with former Oregon AD Pat Kilkenny in El Paso and that “it wasn’t a lengthy meeting,” according to an unnamed source, but one detailed enough to allow Kilkenny to outline Oregon’s proposal to Anderson.

After Anderson’s decision to stay at Mizzou, Oregon has now reportedly been turned aside by five coaches in which the school either offered or discussed with the job to replace Ernie Kent, fired at the end of the last college season.

As the news of Anderson’s decision came out, the general reaction of MU fans on Internet message boards seemed to be of relief. Earlier in the day, the tone of many of those posts was critical of Anderson’s decision not to comment.

Now, when Anderson takes the rostrum at Mizzou Arena at 1 p.m. today to open Missouri’s team basketball banquet, it will be as a coach looking forward to driving his team — which features a projected top-10 national recruiting class — to a third straight NCAA Tournament. Not as a coach trying to explain why he was leaving.

“We plan on taking Tiger basketball to new heights,” Anderson added in his statement. “Oregon is a great university, but Mizzou is a special place for me and my family and I’m proud to be your basketball coach here at Mizzou.”
COLUMBIA, Mo. — As he sought to explain what intrigued him about Oregon, Mizzou basketball coach Mike Anderson characterized his meeting with the school about its coaching job as a chat to "gather information" that he owed his family.

Stopping just short of calling it a courtesy interview, Anderson said Sunday the decision to stay at MU was "pretty easy" and trumpeted a future built on NCAA Tournament successes the last two seasons and a well-regarded recruiting class.

Yet left unclear after a brief meeting with reporters was why Anderson waited 48 hours before announcing Saturday night he was staying at MU and rejecting at least an implicit offer from Oregon at their meeting Thursday in El Paso, Texas.

"We listened (on Thursday)," he said. "Couple days (later), I came home. I visited with my wife, my family, and I made my decision."

Anderson said the job wasn't formally offered but added, "I'm not saying you can't say they did. ... (But) this is where I want to be."

Despite a time frame that indicates Anderson gave the idea consideration, he suggested Mizzou followers should have known he wouldn't leave — even for a school that was expected to be able to pay around $2.5 million a year, about a million more than he is making at MU.

"I think a lot of people fail to understand who Mike Anderson is and what he's all about," he said. "I'm ... a substance guy. It's a little deeper with me. ... My players are my family."

But even if they evidently are another branch of the family than the one he was considering when he met with Oregon, even if Anderson vexed some fans and administrators by entertaining Oregon, his decision represents the second year in a row he rejected the chance to make heaps more money.

Last year after MU's Elite Eight run, Georgia offered Anderson more than $2 million a year but couldn't entice him away from MU, which nearly doubled his salary to $1.55 million annually for seven years.

"I'm not a guy who goes out and tries to find jobs," he said, adding, "People that know
me, people that know me, (know) I'm not a money guy."

Nevertheless, according to The Associated Press, even Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon expressed relief at the team banquet Sunday at Mizzou Arena.

Noting MU had defeated Oregon on the same floor on Dec. 5, Nixon said, "It was nice to defeat them again." The AP said Anderson received a standing ovation.

Two media outlets, including the Post-Dispatch, requested and were granted permission to cover the banquet before the Oregon ruckus began last week. But attempting to keep focus on a team celebration, MU officials asked media not to attend the luncheon open to the public.

The hubbub began Wednesday with reports Oregon had targeted Anderson. Asked about Oregon at the end of a casual conversation with the Post-Dispatch in his office that day, Anderson laughed and dismissed the idea without comment.

Anderson spoke with Oregon the next day in El Paso, where he had traveled to play in a charity golf tournament.

On Sunday, Anderson said the Post-Dispatch's inquiry was the first he'd heard of Oregon's interest and that there would have been no purpose to commenting on something about which he knew nothing.

Anderson used a hypothetical situation to illustrate his point.

"Right now, you could say, 'The University of Hawaii, man, they want to offer you $5 million,'" he said, adding, "Now, you want me to address that?"

When a Columbia reporter tried to steer it back to Oregon, Anderson said with an uncharacteristic edge, "No, no, no — would you want me to address that? I'm asking you a question. Would you?"

The difference, of course, is that the "rumor" of Oregon's interest was at worst premature and ultimately true. Just how close Anderson came to reciprocating may never be known.

At least for now, though, there's no denying the meaning of the outcome.

"At the end of the day," he said, "Missouri is a special place for Mike Anderson and his family."
MU's Anderson makes the wise choice by rejecting Oregon

By Bryan Burwell

COLUMBIA — Whenever Pat Kilkenny's private corporate jet glides off the tarmac in East St. Louis this afternoon, I am assuming that the pilot chauffeuring the man heading up the search for the University of Oregon's next basketball coach was not doing so blindfolded.

Though the way things have been going lately, there's really no guarantee.

It's been that sort of twisted process so far, with Kilkenny jetting willy-nilly across the country trying to find someone, anyone who actually wants to take the Ducks' job. So now Mizzou coach Mike Anderson is the latest name to pop to the top of Oregon's wish list — and ultimately disappear when he rejected Oregon's overtures on Saturday evening.

But in all honesty, this brief dalliance with the Ducks probably wasn't nearly as big a deal as we've all been making it out to be, because this was about as exclusive a list as a list of all the men in the world who think Halle Berry is drop-dead gorgeous.

If you haven't been paying attention, the news isn't who is on Oregon's wish list. It's who isn't. So far, Tom Izzo (Michigan State), Tubby Smith (Minnesota), Bob Huggins (West Virginia), Mark Few (Gonzaga), Brad Stevens (Butler), Steve Alford (New Mexico), Mark Turgeon (Texas A&M), Jaime Dixon (Pitt) and even the hopelessly unattractive Billy Gillispie (justifiably unemployed) have all at one time or another been connected (and quickly disconnected) with this job.

I fully expected Anderson to join the parade of men to say no to Oregon, thus ending five days' worth of hand wringing, indignation and confusion among Mizzou loyalists who can't quite figure what their basketball coach was doing extending this flirtation with the Ducks beyond a quick "thanks but no thanks."

Kilkenny met with Anderson on Friday in El Paso, where Anderson was participating in a charity golf event held by his old boss Nolan Richardson. Published reports indicate that Kilkenny was prepared to offer Anderson somewhere between $2-$2.5 million, which would be a bump up from the $1.7-$1.8 million (with bonuses) he earned this year with Mizzou.

But as someone close to the Missouri basketball program told me Saturday at the Black and Gold spring football game, "If he was going to leave for money, he would have done
that last year (when he was pursued by Georgia, Alabama and Memphis). But now? It
doesn't make sense. He just signed a great recruiting class, and has three or four guys on
the team who he's known since they were little kids. You don't walk away from that. Not
now."

Late Saturday night, Anderson got word to Missouri officials that he didn't want to walk
away from all this. So let's get to the question that has been eating at everyone since this
story broke on Wednesday: If it doesn't make sense for Anderson to go anywhere now,
why was he indulging Oregon in these exploratory conversations in the first place?

Two words: Phil Knight.

Knight, Nike's chairman of the board, is one of the most powerful forces in the business
of sports and he essentially runs the Oregon sports program with his limitless
checkbook. He also carries so much clout in college basketball because of those lucrative
shoe and apparel deals schools like Missouri sign with Nike. And if you weren't aware of
it before, Mizzou is considered one of Nike's favorite high-profile clients (remember the
special uniforms Nike designed for Mizzou football for the Kansas game last year? They
don't give that star treatment to every program).

The most popular theory in college basketball circles is that when the Nike chairman
beckons — particularly if you are working at a Nike school — you are obliged to listen.

So it wouldn't be unreasonable to assume that even if Anderson wasn't truly interested
in the Oregon gig, he had to at least go through the motions in deference to Knight.

That had to be the only reason Anderson did this little dance, otherwise he would have
put himself in a precarious position in Columbia. A year ago, he was seen as a humble,
smart and deserving coach who earned that contract renegotiation after restoring
respect to the program and leading the Tigers to a conference tournament
championship, a school-record 31 victories and an Elite Eight appearance.

This time Anderson had to be careful not to come off as someone overplaying his hand
at the wrong time. So far, the most productive consequences of Oregon's search have
only been to the men they've pursued. Dixon and Alford got extensions. Turgeon got a
raise. Stevens got a raise and an extension. Smith seems to be on the verge of getting
new facilities. Clearly Anderson is not a dumb man and must have noticed those
residual benefits.

However Anderson had one big problem. He cashed in 12 months ago, and the cupboard
at Mizzou seems to be bare.

Anderson always said that he is not only a coach, but a businessman. But being a
businessman doesn't mean he had to be a greedy man.

Anderson has worked hard to create an environment where it's now legitimate to harbor
national championship aspirations at Missouri. Oregon is light years away from that.

A smart man obviously knows that.

A greedy man probably wouldn't have cared.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

University of Missouri System curators freeze tuition for in-state students

By Katy Bergen
April 16, 2010 | 7:50 p.m. CDT

ROLLA — If you are a master’s of law student at MU, your tuition next year will increase next year by 19 percent. If you are seeking a law degree, your tuition will increase by 5 percent. The same is true if you are an out-of-state undergraduate, 5 percent.

These increases are part of an overall plan approved Friday by the UM System Board of Curators. Here’s a breakdown:

- In-state undergraduate tuition remains frozen.
- Out-of-state undergraduate tuition increases by 5 percent at MU and Missouri University of Science and Technology and 2.7 percent at the University of Missouri–Kansas City and University of Missouri–St. Louis.
- Graduate student tuition increases by 2.7 percent.
- Professional school tuition increases will vary by department. On the high end, out-of-state veterinary medicine students will see their tuition increase by 31 percent, although at the curators’ meeting, Nikki Krawitz, UM System vice president for finance and administration, who was presenting the budget to curators, made a point to say this affects a handful of students.
- A UMKC in-state tuition rate for four counties in the Kansas City area will expand to seven more counties.

The curators approved the tuition rate 7-to-1; David Wasinger of St. Louis voted against the resolution, and Doug Russell of Lebanon was absent.

The curators’ decision mirrors the state Senate’s incorporation of a tuition freeze in its budget recommendation this week.
In a deal made with Gov. Jay Nixon in November, public universities in Missouri have agreed to freeze in-state undergraduate tuition with the understanding that higher education cuts will not exceed 5.2 percent.

UM System President Gary Forsee said administration should be proud of working with the state to ensure access and affordability in higher education for the past two years. He also said there is no question that lack of state funding has directly correlated to UM's fall in rankings such as in the US News and World Report.

Forsee did not cite it, but this week the MU School of Law fell from 60th to 93rd in the magazine's annual graduate school rankings.

Increased tuition at professional schools and additional supplemental fees will vary according to the program.

Undergraduate Tim Noce, president of the Missouri Students Association and a student in the Trulaske School of Business, is one of the students who will be subject to a $75 per-credit-hour increase for the 2010-11 school year. Noce said although fiscal responsibility was his running platform and he hates seeing any fee increase, the consequences of limited state funding are evident.

"You have to see both sides of the story," Noce said. He said he's watched his professors have to apply for more grants and do work teaching assistants normally would do.

Other supplemental fees at MU include:

- School of Medicine lab/resource fee: $1,080 a year
- Undergraduate nursing fee: $60 per credit hour
The Board of Curators for the University of Missouri system voted, as expected, Friday to keep tuition flat for state residents at its four campuses.

The board, meeting in Rolla, voted 7-1 to leave tuition prices alone upholding its part of a deal struck last year with Gov. Jay Nixon. In exchange, campuses have been told that state funding for higher education will be cut by no more than 5.2 percent.

The cut, which is still working its way through the Legislature, will leave the four campuses needing to make up more than $23 million in shortfalls even after freezing merit raises. Out-of-state students will face a 2.7 percent per credit hour increase in Kansas City and St. Louis, while those at Rolla and Columbia will see tuition increase 5 percent.

Tuition for graduate students on all four campuses will increase 2.7 percent.
Dance therapy improves seniors' gait, balance

IANS, Apr 19, 2010

For seniors, dancing needn't be just for fun, it can also be therapeutic.

Two recent studies conducted by researchers at the University of Missouri (UM) found that participation in dance-based therapy can improve the balance and gait in older adults.

Improved functionality among seniors can decrease their risk of falling and reduce costly injuries.

"Creative interventions such as dance-based therapy have the potential to significantly reduce falls in older persons," said Jean Krampe, registered nurse and doctoral student in the Sinclair School of Nursing.

"In the studies, we found improved levels of balance, gait and overall functionality among seniors who participated in regular dance-therapy sessions. Nursing and eldercare professionals can help move these programmes into practice to reduce the detrimental burden caused by falls."

The researchers used a dance-therapy programme called The Lebed Method (TLM), which includes a combination of low-impact dance steps choreographed to music. Sessions were led by certified TLM instructors and adjusted to fit the specific needs of the seniors who participated.

The most recent study was conducted with residents at TigerPlace, an independent-living community developed by MU nursing researchers to help seniors.

The study included 18 dance sessions offered over a two-month period. Participants reported that they enjoyed the sessions and wanted to continue the programme.

"We found that many seniors are eager to participate and continue to come back after attending sessions because they really enjoy it," Krampe said.

"Among seniors who stand up and move during sessions, we found that dance therapy can increase their walking speed and balance, which are two major risk factors for falling,"
Krampe added.

In 2008, Krampe and MU researchers conducted a six-week pilot study with the Alexian Brothers PACE Program (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly) in St. Louis. More than half of the participants self-reported improvements in gait and balance.

TLM, also called Healthy Steps, was created by Shelley Lebed Davis and her two brothers who sought to improve range of motion and boost the spirits of their mother who was recovering from breast cancer.

After seeing successful results, they shared the programme with hospitals. Today Healthy Steps is used by many cancer patients and in nursing homes worldwide. The MU study is the first to examining the benefits of the programme among seniors.

The first study was published in Nursing Administration Quarterly.

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Law school’s ranking falls

Slip blamed on funding woes.

By Janese Heavin

Friday, April 16, 2010

ROLLA — The University of Missouri School of Law is the latest casualty of a broken state funding system, UM administrators said this morning. MU’s law school tumbled in U.S. News & World Report’s annual rankings from 65th last spring to 93rd on a list released yesterday.

“The continued slide in funding mechanisms continues to show up in our rankings,” UM System President Gary Forsee told the Board of Curators this morning, referring to the latest rating.

Later, Forsee said the lack of funding translates into larger class sizes and less spending per student, all of which affects quality.

That said, Forsee noted that graduation and retention rates continue to rise at MU, as do ACT scores of incoming freshmen. Although campuses have kept quality up with less support, “what you risk over time is those metrics shifting,” he said.

U.S. News & World Report’s annual lists of the best colleges and schools often are a subject at UM curators’ meetings. Curator David Wasinger of St. Louis routinely refers to MU’s decline and mentioned the law school’s slip this morning. “I know everybody hates U.S. News & World Report, but there it is,” Wasinger said.

If declines in state support are to blame, MU might want to brace for future declines in national rankings. This coming fiscal year, the UM System faces a roughly $22 million cut in state funding, a decrease expected because of a tuition deal UM reached with state lawmakers. As part of that deal, UM won’t increase undergraduate tuition for Missouri students next year.

Campuses are trying to plug budget holes with increases in out-of-state tuition, course fees and graduate school costs. Curators this morning approved 5 percent increases in tuition for nonresident students coming to MU and the Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, and a 2.7 percent increase at UMKC and UM-St. Louis.

That increase will take its toll on out-of-state students looking at MU, said a former student from Washington who chose MU last year because of its journalism program. Emily Barrantes said she had to leave MU this past semester because out-of-state tuition rates were too high. She does not agree with UM balancing its budget, in part, on the backs of non-Missouri students.
“The students are already busting their butts to keep up with the extremely high rates that are already there,” she said in an e-mail to the Tribune. “Especially in this economy, there is no reason that there should be any increase in the tuition. Mizzou is already getting so much extra money from these students.”

Graduate students also will see spikes in course costs this coming year. Veterinary medicine students will pay an additional $10,000 a year, and medical and law school students will see costs rise. Undergraduate course fees are increasing, mainly in the business and engineering departments.

Wasinger was the lone dissenting vote on the tuition and course fee increases. After the meeting, he said he voted “no” because the increases were too “piecemealed.” Plus, he said, he’s concerned about increased costs hurting graduates who are having trouble finding work, as well as Missouri families.

Tuition and course fee increases are expected to generate about $19 million for the system. That’s still not enough to cover expected increases in operational costs, though, and the system is bracing for a $23.4 million shortfall that would require vacant positions and salaries to remain frozen in the coming year.

Reach Janese Heavin at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jheavin@columbiatribune.com.
Sharing life after a death

By T.J. Greaney

Saturday, April 17, 2010

They walked one-by-one to place paper roses inside a shadow box. Some wiped away tears. Others stared straight ahead, almost in a daze. One child accompanying his mother grasped her hand tightly as he watched the changing images of faces projected high on the hospital wall.

Each family at the ceremony yesterday in University Hospital had a story to tell, and many stories began with a sudden, gut-wrenching tragedy that turned into a priceless gift for a total stranger.

Ann Moeckli of Jefferson City wore a pin bearing a photo of her son Clint cradling the antlers of a big buck he shot in 2005. Tall at 6 feet 4 inches, with blue eyes and a love of the outdoors, she called Clint a “kind of a rebel.”

On Aug. 5, 2006, he was riding a four-wheeler when he lost control and flipped off backward, hitting his head on pavement. For three days, he lay unconscious as parents Ann and Dan Moeckli waited anxiously. On the third day, doctors pronounced him brain-dead. A transplant coordinator approached the grieving family to broach the delicate subject of organ donation. Luckily, Ann Moeckli said, Clint had made the decision an easy one.

“After he got his driver’s license at 16, he said, ‘Mom, I signed up to be an organ donor,’ ” she recalled. “But other than that, we didn’t really discuss it. And I had actually forgotten about it until” the coordinator “came up and told us. And it was just, like, ‘Wow, I guess he did.’ It made it a lot easier knowing that’s what he wanted.”

Both of Clint’s kidneys, his heart, pancreas, liver and one of his eyes were transplanted to patients across the country. His mother has exchanged letters with some of the recipients. She has never heard from others. However, all the recipients remain in her prayers.

“I wish they would contact me more. I guess that’s what I would bring across as a message is for the recipient families to contact the donors as much as possible,” Ann Moeckli said. “Because it really helps. It helps us know that a piece of him is still living.”

The ceremony yesterday was a celebration of that unique bond.

In observance of Donate Life Month, dozens of families of donors and organ recipients met and shared stories near the main hospital entrance. In part of a tradition, the 80 families of University
Hospital donors in 2008 were each given roses. These donors were featured in January on the Donate Life float in the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, Calif. More than 120 University Hospital donors from 2009 will be commemorated at next year’s parade.

But officials said the demand for donors still greatly outpaces supply. Nationwide, 106,000 people are on waiting lists for a transplant they need to save their lives; 19 people die each day waiting for a transplant. A single donor can save the lives of as many as eight people and enhance the lives of 50 others through transplants of skin tissue and bone marrow.

Lisa Britt, a veterinarian and clinical assistant professor at the University of Missouri, said her story exemplifies this need. Cradling her four-year-old daughter, she told the crowd that in 1991, when she was a student, she suddenly began having trouble walking upstairs. She was soon diagnosed with a critical heart problem that gave her months to live. After waiting five months, she received a transplant from a 17-year-old girl, Jennifer Davis, who had died in a car accident.

Britt went on to achieve many of her personal and professional dreams, even defying clinical odds to give birth to two healthy children. Britt said she has never forgotten the gift, even inviting the parents of the donor to her wedding and naming her daughter “Jennifer” after the donor.

“She gift allowed me to become a mother myself, and words cannot express my gratitude.” Britt said in a prepared statement.

Stories such as Britt’s can help people trying to make sense of a tragedy.

Miranda Binney of Sedalia said she had to make the decision about organ donation in 2007 for her brother, Eric James Binney, 19, who was killed in one-vehicle accident. She was comforted after hearing that his two corneas helped give sight to a woman in Georgia and a teenager in Ohio. But meeting others at the Donate Life ceremony, she became more certain than ever that she had made the right choice.

“It meant a lot,” she said. “Listening to the stories about donating tissues and organs, it makes me feel better about the decision we made. Being here, you just realize that he gets to live on.”

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A Massing of Forces

Performance of Bach’s masterpiece Friday promises to be enlightening, awe-inspiring.

By Aarik Danielsen

Sunday, April 18, 2010

And so it begins. From the first note in the first measure on the first page, a chorus passionately erupts in pleading, their cry — “Kyrie Eleison,” Latin for “Lord, have mercy” — a container for all the aching and expectation a human heart can express or endure.

Facilitating the expanse between “incredible light” and “incredible darkness” inherent in Bach’s Mass in B Minor prompted the Columbia Civic Orchestra to revisit the Baroque period in more ways than one. The heralded composer wrote his masterwork for instruments of the day, at least two of which are now quite uncommon. To properly capture the mood and manner of the work, players will utilize the oboe d’amore and the piccolo trumpet.

Tuned approximately a third lower than typical oboes — and

a third higher than the English horn — the oboe d’amore is an interim instrument that contributes seriousness and richness to the orchestra’s sound, director Stefan Freund said. “That instrument has a very sorrowful tone to it,” he added. “I think it really communicates the darker moments of the piece.”

CCO will use two oboes d’amore — one purchased and played by member and MU Professor Dan Willett, the other a rental from an instrument emporium based out of Minneapolis. The parts Bach wrote could be played on a conventional oboe, Freund said, but it would require stooping into the extreme lows of the instrument’s register; the character conveyed by the more unusual vessel augments the beauty of the composition.

On the opposite end of the sonic spectrum is the piccolo trumpet, which represents “a much brighter quality in the sound,” Freund said. The piece was written for D trumpets, not invented until the 19th century, that instrument let players approximate the sharp sounds created by trumpeters in the Baroque period, earning it the fitting nickname “the Bach trumpet.” For this concert, CCO members will play the more modern piccolo trumpet in A.

Just as Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy” stands for human triumph and “Carmina Burana” universally signifies chaos and cosmic drama, “these opening bars of the Bach B minor Mass really
represent gravitas and the depth of human emotion," said Stefan Freund, University of Missouri professor and director of the Columbia Civic Orchestra.

And so it goes. For nearly two hours, Johann Sebastian Bach takes listeners on what Freund termed an “emotional roller coaster,” exploring spiritual and musical colors from crimson red to grim gray and sunburst yellow. Friday, nearly 300 musicians will join forces, enjoying the privilege of presenting this work that accomplishes a rare trifecta, engaging mind, body and soul. CCO, the MU Choral Union and MU University Singers will bring the resonant Mass in B Minor to the Missouri Theatre Center for the Arts.

Freund hears both a statement of longing and purpose in those first phrases. “Another thing these first few bars mean to me is, ‘I’m writing a great piece of music,’ ” he continued. “That’s what they say to me when I listen to them. ‘I’m not playing around with this one.’ Bach didn’t play around very much at all, but somehow, as great as all his music is, he tells you in these first few bars, ‘I’m really elevating my level to write my great masterwork.’ ”

Exhausting every effort to avoid overselling the piece, Freund was left to conclude the Mass in B Minor is among the most important pieces in the history of Western music. Bach’s position as a standard-bearer makes his greatest work all the more important. “The masterpiece from the composer holds a lot of weight,” he said, though he was quick to stress its importance should not equal intimidation; because of its use in cultural iterations, influence on beloved pieces and show of Bach’s signature, the Mass will ring with familiarity even to unfamiliar listeners.

A BEAUTIFUL, ‘SUPERHUMAN’ MIND

Hearers and performers alike are prone to walk away from the Mass with the same conclusion as Paul Crabb. “There’s no question this mind is in another category — it’s almost superhuman,” said MU’s director of choral activities and the other maestro convening this work.

A sure signpost of greatness, as seen in this piece, is Bach’s ability to unite musical ideas conceived over a span of decades. As National Public Radio reported last year, sections were composed as early as 1724, although finishing touches were applied some 25 years later. Freund said the piece amounts to two hours of very different music with “arcs from incredible light to incredible darkness,” expressing ideas from the “heavens opening” to the grave nature of crucifixion, but never sounds disparate or disjointed. Repetition of figures and a tonal axis that revolves around D major and its relative minor were key in this pursuit, he said.

Most essential to establishing unity while preserving necessary emotional and musical contrast was Bach’s commitment to symmetry, in structure and style. As both conductors explained, the composer alternates large and small groups of performers with astonishing equilibrium. Within and without movements, styles merge that, at the time, sounded modern and ancient to audiences, establishing dynamic range and Bach’s legacy in the process.

“He’s really saying, ‘I’m an old man — I’ve seen all this music. ... Let me show you what all of this means together,’” Crabb said, declaring this Bach’s swan song. “To me, that’s a really
important statement that somebody, at the height of their powers, has that energy and the sort of commitment to say, 'I really want something significant as part of my legacy.'”

Bach’s brilliance also is displayed in beautiful, purposeful puzzles that fill the piece, minor musical details that provide a major glimpse at genius. One such moment comes when Bach sets bassoon and bass parts in three against a horn in two; the figure is a natural musical palindrome — “up, down, up, down, so you have exact symmetry,” Crabb said, the perfection of the passage meant as a theological representation of the Trinity’s seamlessness. Similarly, a single bass line repeated 13 times acts as a numerical emblem of Christ and his 12 apostles.

“What kind of mind can do this on a large scale, in the most minutely detailed scale, and make it music that nobody else could?” he mused aloud. Crabb’s jaw quivered ever so slightly as he paused to consider his interaction with the force of beauty that is Bach’s music. “It’s pretty humbling,” he said, regaining composure. “It’s a great privilege to be able to do this. People in theater, you get to live with that character, you get to live with the meaning. You keep recreating, and it feels like that for me — that I just get a little bit closer to understanding what he was. It’s certainly a big responsibility.”

A responsibility made manifest as singers and players must remain fully alert, the great mental acuity required from them only a fraction of the thought Bach applied in composition. “You really never have time mentally to sit back and relax,” Crabb said. “As soon as you do that, you just missed two measures.”

FINELY TUNED INSTRUMENTS

Only vocalists with finely tuned tonal instruments, able to endure the rigorous, athletic routines Bach demands, need apply in bringing incredible melodic lines and evocative harmonies to life. Selecting soloists suitable for conveying the great passion and joy, tension and release woven throughout the work, Crabb sought out “four similar-type voices.”

“I wanted lyric voices, people that knew how to use different colors of the voice because Bach rarely asks for these big, bombastic sounds,” he said. “... He often wants things that are maybe a little more subtle.” Agility is required as soloists “may have long, very quick runs and quick ornaments, then he may make them hold a note for a long time.”

Proving equal to the task was a quartet with Columbia ties in their personal and performing histories. Both male soloists are professors Crabb identified as “crowd favorites” in past area concerts — baritone Stephen Swanson from the University of Iowa and tenor Steven Spears of Wisconsin’s Lawrence Conservatory; the female vocalists are MU alumnae now completing graduate study at prestigious institutions — soprano Emily Bennett of Florida State University and alto soloist/Columbia native Lindsey Lang of Indiana University. Technical rigors are especially present in the passages Swanson will undertake; these baritone solos have long been marked feats of singing strength, as he must maneuver from the soaring summits of his register to the resounding depths.
The chorus must be equally facile, engaging with five-part harmonies and twin soprano lines of equal weight and prominence; Crabb said they cross and overlap with great frequency, shooting to the stratosphere time and again. Requiring rapid skips within ample ranges, Crabb judged the choral parts almost Olympian in their degree of vocal gymnastics. Vocalists must also have well-disciplined ears — painting the spiritual poetry that guides the piece, Bach wrote "painstakingly torturous" harmonies characterized by close chromaticism. Listening well must be emphasized if the choir is to execute the beauty in dissonance without devolving into disarray.

SOUND AND SPIRIT

Although an exercise in the glorious possibilities of composition, the piece’s ultimate strength is felt in its remarkable ability to speak to the soul, both in barely audible whispers and loud, affirming declarations. Translating deep expressions of devotion through musical language, Bach could make even "lightly plucking" strings speak volumes about the incarnation of Christ.

“It’s almost like the elements of the spirit floating through the air, and then it comes to the end, and there’s sort of this sense that it is real, a sense that you can almost touch and feel those harmonies compared to the beginning, where you’re not quite sure how this spirit is going to transform itself,” Crabb said of one such passage. A faithful Lutheran creating art married to traditional Catholic texts, the center of Bach’s affections come through each note and phrase.

“To him, this was beyond truth, fact — this was the word of the Lord.” Freund said. “Every word in it had some meaning that was beyond a simple statement or phrase or word. It was the way to live your life, the way to believe and just incredibly important to understand. This is his musical communication of those facts, beliefs, ideas, and that’s why the music has this wide expanse of emotion, because the text does.”

In composing the work, he made seemingly unattainable queries, considering deeply nuanced, somewhat lofty concepts such as forgiveness, prayer, death and resurrection, tribulations and peace, then asking, “What do those ideas sound like?” Freund said. His ability to provide reasonable, resonant answers is proved in the way his work reaches people of all belief systems and backgrounds.

“We can, as a human being, as a listening, sensitive, feeling, touching human being, ... listen to this music, and you can look at this text, and you can say, ... ‘I’ve never thought about the text,’ or ‘I’ve never thought about a human reaction to this,’ ” Crabb said. “We are getting one of the great minds of the arts, and we are getting a chance to look into his soul and to feel what he interpreted. We may be religious, we may not be religious. We may be musical, we may not be musical, but all of us can get a sense of what this person responds to.”

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Death of Mark Twain reaches its 100th anniversary

By Stephanie Charsha, Mariah Henry
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COLUMBIA—In November 1835, Mark Twain was born under the glow of Halley's Comet.

As it would turn out, the comet's appearance would serve as a bookend to his life. When Twain died 74 years later in 1910, it was again shooting through the sky.

Wednesday marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Samuel Langhorne Clemens, the man from Missouri who adopted the name Mark Twain and become a humorist, global lecturer and author of widely celebrated novels.

He once wrote to his wife, "Manifestly, dying is nothing to a really great and brave man," and most centennial events, almost in response to this quote, have focused instead on his remarkable life.

MU invited scholars to speak at a series of lectures in March, and the State Historical Society is planning an exhibition of artist Thomas Hart Benton's illustrations for Twain's books this year.

On Tuesday, the Columbia Public Library will hold a discussion of his short stories, and the library will show the documentary, "Mark Twain Tonight," on April 28.

Twain became famous as a literary master who wrote two especially enduring books, "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" and "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn."

During his lifetime, he achieved celebrity status. He dined with Theodore Roosevelt, met Mahatma Ghandi, Sigmund Freud and the Prince of Wales, and knew the corporate titans of his era.
He also worked with abolitionists, suffragists and scientific geniuses. All this was accomplished with a fourth-grade education, apprenticeships and evenings spent alone in a public library. (MU gave him an honorary degree in 1902.)

Born in Florida, Mo., he moved with his family at age 4 to Hannibal where his father opened a general store.

After the death of his father at age 11, Twain dropped out of school. His first jobs were as a printer in Hannibal and several East Coast cities.

Tom Quirk, an English professor at MU and a Mark Twain scholar, said he was fascinated with fiction from the beginning. The writer's first piece of published work, when he was 16, was a magazine piece titled "The Dandy Frightening the Squatter."

Twain was also attracted to the life of adventure, such as riverboat piloting on the Mississippi River.

He and his brother, Henry, both worked on steamboats. Once, they plotted the course of action they would follow if there was an explosion — they would help the passengers rather than escape themselves.

An explosion on a steamboat eventually did kill Henry, and Twain blamed himself, saying he had foreseen the death in a dream.

After the Civil War ended Twain's days on the river, he followed his brother, Orion, to Nevada. He tried his luck at prospecting, then began a journalistic career in California, traveled to Europe and the Middle East and wrote "The Innocents Abroad." The novel later became a bestseller.

He left a body of work that includes not only influential American novels, but also essays, articles, short stories and speeches. He wrote about travel, civil rights, women's rights, pacifism, anti-imperialism, the existence of God and science fiction.

Twain could have been talking about himself when he wrote, "There are basically two types of people. People who accomplish things, and people who claim to have accomplished things."

"The first group is less crowded."