

**USA Weekend:**  
Can you name the five living legends of NASCAR? /inside



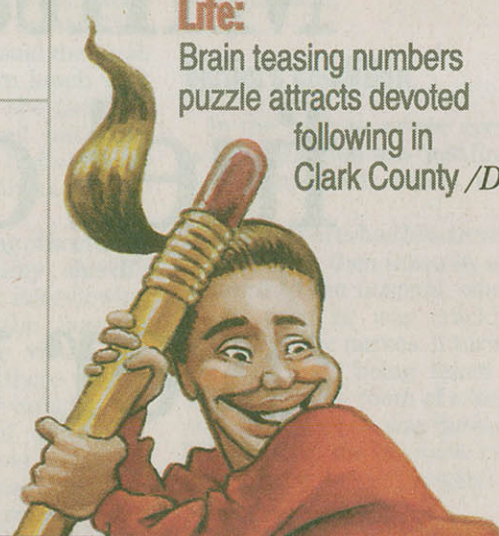
**Winter Olympics:**  
Shani Davis does it his way in winning gold medal /O1



**Business:**  
Public, private universities compete for local MBA candidates /E1

**DISCOVER SUDOKU**

**Life:**  
Brain teasing numbers puzzle attracts devoted following in Clark County /D1



# The Columbian

www.columbian.com

SERVING CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON ■ SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2006

\$1.50

**YOUR Guide:**

**News, A1-10**

**Close-Up:** U.S., Mexican leaders hail giant telescope /A2

**Nation:** At least one Powerball winner /A8

**Sports, B1-10**



Greg Biffle takes another ride around Daytona /B1

**Clark County, C1-10**

Failed plastic tanks doom \$50,000 restroom /C1

Hearing to discuss Corps' PCB cleanup project /C1

**Life, D1-13**



Beatles' meditation guru pitches peace plan /D1

Northwest Ireland offers walks, waterfalls /D5

**Business, E1-8**

Intel shifts focus to meet customer needs /E1

**Berko:** Pet-health stocks a viable option /E2

**At Home, F1-5**

Custom framing tips for the home decorator /F1

**Weather, D14**

High: 44 Low: 24



Mostly sunny.

**Index**

At Home	F1
Books	D10
Business	E1
Clark County	C1
Classifieds	E9, F8
Comics	inside
Crosswords	D2, E17
Letters	C8
Life	D1
Movies	D13
Obituaries	C4
Opinion	C7-9
Regional news	C2
Sports	B1
TV Times	inside
Travel	D4

We want to hear from you: See our service directory on A2



© 2006, THE COLUMBIAN

Salvador Brotons and Vancouver Symphony make an unlikely couple. An ambitious Spanish conductor leading a small suburban orchestra, with the ocean of separation merely magnifying the **mystery of the maestro**



STEVEN LANE/The Columbian

Salvador Brotons has become the most prominent cultural icon in Clark County, leading Vancouver Symphony to unprecedented successes while living abroad.

By BRETT OPPEGAARD  
Columbian staff writer

Unshaven. Shirt ruffled. Dazed from airsickness and weary from three connecting flights transporting him 6,000 miles in a day, Salvador Brotons arrives at Portland International Airport. His plane is late.

In an hour and a half, the conductor from Barcelona will lead the Vancouver Symphony in its first rehearsal of one of the late Romantic era's most endearing — and challenging — pieces. But the 46-year-old still has to get his bags, check into a hotel, change his shirt, splash water on his face and get to the music room at Clark College. Blearly. Nauseated. Exhausted, he really would rather rest. But there's no siesta on the itinerary.

Brotons has just five days, and 14 rehearsal hours, to prepare the local symphony to play a program that includes Maurice Ravel's "Daphnis et Chloe." French and impressionistic, the score presents a variety of

troublesome sections. It's heavy with notes, tricky rhythms and meter changes. It also requires more instruments than this group regularly uses, including a pair of harps.

In the morning, he has more than four hours of meetings scheduled with symphony staff, just the start of his commitments beyond the musical program. Between the dress rehearsal and first performance, at the end of the week, he's been asked to socialize with the county's mayors in a private session. After performing, he has a reception to attend, followed by a dinner with a potential

BROTONS, page A6

## Study scrutinizes schools for deaf, blind

Superintendents push to keep institutions open amid high costs

By KATHIE DURBIN  
Columbian staff writer

OLYMPIA — A new study commissioned by the Legislature weighs the pros and cons of closing the Washington State School for the Blind and the Washington School for the Deaf in Vancouver. The study by the nonpartisan Washington State Institute for Public Policy was triggered in part by the need for major capital investments on both campuses.

The study does not make a recommendation to lawmakers, but it notes the high cost of keeping the two residential schools open — \$8.4 million for the school for the deaf and \$5.1 million for the school for the blind this year — in an era of increasing costs and flat or declining enrollment at both schools.

In the 2004-05 academic year, the school for the deaf enrolled 96 students and the school for the blind enrolled 70. Enrollment at the school for the blind has been steady for several years, but school for the deaf enrollment has declined from 200 in 1981 to less than 100 today.

At a Thursday hearing before the House Children and Family Services Committee, school for the deaf Superintendent Todd Reeves defended his school as an essential option for hearing-impaired students and a cultural center for deaf children and adults in the Vancouver area. Reeves

SCHOOLS, page A5

**Legislature**

INSIDE: The Washington State Institute for Public Policy lists options for the two schools. page A5

## Homeless seek shelter as cold spell continues

By JUSTIN CARINCI  
Columbian staff writer

Although low-temperature records stayed intact, the area's cold streak continued Saturday.

Vancouver reached a low of 27 degrees early Saturday, six degrees warmer than the 21-degree reading for that date in 1990 and well above the predicted low in the teens.

But winds kept up, giving the chill a bite. Steady winds between 20 and 30 mph stirred things up, with gusts in the 40s.

Eastern Clark County's Larch Mountain, the county's windiest spot Saturday,

WEATHER, page A5



STEVEN LANE  
The Columbian

Chilly weather didn't stop Cameron Yao, 2, from playing in Vancouver's Esther Short Park with his mother, Leslie, on Saturday.

## JUDGE: 'FOLLOW THE LAW, SAVE THE SALMON'

Redden puts damper on Federal interests

By JEFF BARNARD  
Associated Press writer

PORTLAND — The man holding the Bush administration's feet to the fire on restoring Columbia Basin salmon, even if it means breaching some hydroelectric dams,

doesn't like to eat the Northwest's signature fish.

U.S. District Judge James Redden finds it too oily, unless it has been barbecued in the Indian fashion on planks around an open fire.

At 78, he doesn't consider himself much of a salmon fisherman, though he cast spinners into the Rogue River in the 1950s.

But in finding the Bush ad-

ministration's latest attempt to protect cheap hydroelectric power from the demands of restoring the Northwest's depleted salmon runs violated the Endangered Species Act, Redden sees himself as part of a "thin black line" of the judiciary that protects the public from the excesses of government.

"They say there's a thin blue line that protects the public from the criminals. There's also a thin black line that separates and protects the public from the state."

Judge James Redden  
U.S. DISTRICT COURT

JUDGE, page A5



RICK BOWMER/The Associated Press

U.S. District Judge James Redden would rather restore salmon than eat them.

# Salvador Brotons



**Age:** 46, born Dec. 7, 1959 in Barcelona.

**Family:** Wife Melissa Mercadal teaches music therapy at the University of Barcelona; their 12-year-old daughter Clara studies violin.

**Speaks:** Spanish, English, Catalan, French and Italian.

**Career highlights:**

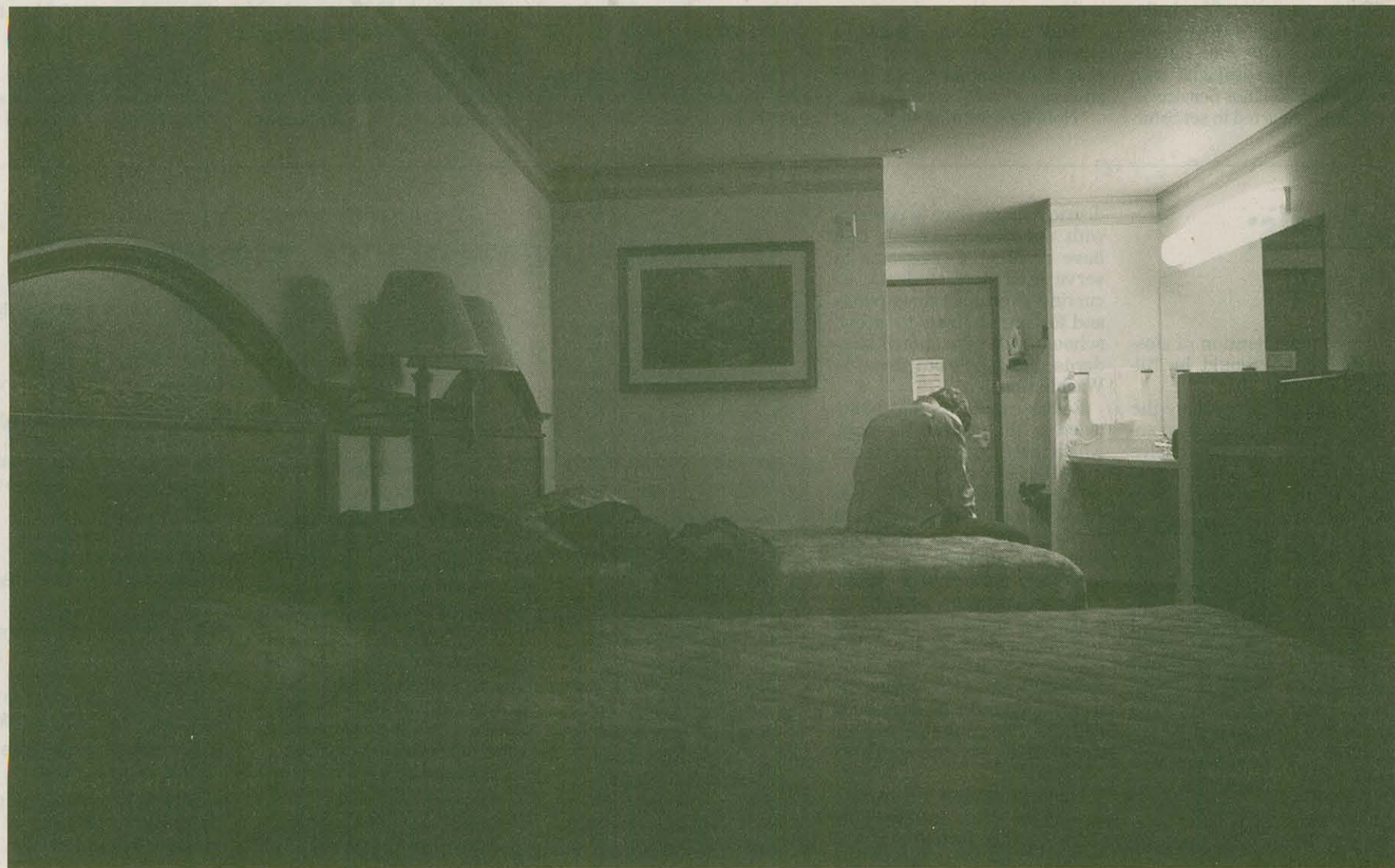
◆ **As flute player:** principal flute for the Orchestra of the Liceu (Barcelona Opera) from 1977 to 1985; a member of the Orquestra Ciutat de Barcelona (Barcelona City Orchestra) from 1981 to 1985.

◆ **As teacher:** When in Spain, he teaches part-time at Escola Superior Musica Catalunya (The Higher School of Music of Catalonia). Before moving back to his homeland in late 1997, he taught for a decade at Portland State University.

◆ **As music director/conductor:** Besides stints as conductor and music director of the Valles Symphony Orchestra (1998-2002) and the Balearic Islands Symphony Orchestra in Palma de Mallorca (1998-2001), Brotons has served as a guest conductor with such groups as the Ra'anana Symphonette in Ra'anana, Israel; the Moscow Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra (while that group was touring Spain); I Pomeriggi Musicali in Milan, Italy; The National Symphony Orchestra of South Africa; and the Filharmonica de Montevideo in Montevideo, Uruguay.

◆ **As composer:** Brotons has created more than 100 original pieces of music, including three symphonies and two operas, "The Dream Merchant" and "Reverend Everyman."

◆ **Pay:** Vancouver Symphony paid Brotons at first per service (rehearsal/performance), amounting to less than \$2,000 per season. By 1995, that compensation system had been changed to a stipend (\$4,000 per year). As he began commuting from Spain in 1997, the stipend started growing but also required him to provide his own airfare (which costs about \$4,000 per year) and meals. Hotel, local transportation and visa paperwork currently are provided by Vancouver Symphony through in-kind donations. This season, Brotons received a 10 percent raise and now makes \$20,000 per year.



A few minutes in a hotel room is the rest Salvador Brotons gets between flying from Barcelona to Portland and leading Vancouver Symphony's rehearsal.

## Brotons:

From page A1

donor. Unlike Europe, where conductors routinely get left alone, America is the land of Leonard Bernstein accessibility, where every person wants a moment with the man holding the baton.

By being open and liberally sharing his passion for the art form, Brotons has developed a devoted following. Audiences during his 15-year tenure have grown from 250 per performance to 850, the annual budget from \$10,000 to nearly \$500,000, at a time nationally when orchestras are struggling to retain relevance and audiences.

Special circumstances attracted a talent like him to a place like this. Each year, he has just as many reasons to leave as to stay; the trans-Atlantic commute, the lack of a public performing arts center, part-time musicians and conflicts this job creates with his commissions for music. History and hope for the future underpin this curious connection.

Few on either continent track what he's doing here or over there, to each that part of his life is a mystery.

Friend Anne Esch has been pacing near baggage claim at the airport ever since Brotons' flight didn't arrive as planned. When she and Brotons at last spot each other, they smile in relief. They hug. Esch quickly leaves to get the car while Brotons collects his bags.

The 81-year-old Esch has provided Brotons' airport shuttle for several years, one of the many volunteers and donors that bolster Vancouver Symphony's bonds to the maestro. Homewood Suites provides his lodging and Hannah Motors Co. the cars. Countless other supporters, like Esch, make him feel at home.

As Brotons navigates the airport, his body language reveals the burdens of the occupation. Diagnosed with diabetes a couple of weeks ago, he has been urged by his doctor to take better care of himself, exercise more, cut out snacks, get rest. It's not just the travel that takes its toll. Tonight will be the first time the orchestra's players will perform the program together, including "Daphnis et Chloe." Are they ready for this?

Each musician is expected to know a part. Brotons must know them all. But bringing together the notes of nearly 80 musicians, precisely and with feeling, is only the beginning. Above all, he needs to conjure the energy that excites a community.

On the way to the hotel, Brotons recounts his past month to Esch. Concerts with two different orchestras in Israel. Concerts in Barcelona, including on both of the days before the flight to Vancouver.

He reaches for the volume on the car radio, turns it up a bit and picks up the tune. "Paganini Variations" by (Sergei) Rachmaninov," he says, "in the last section." A few seconds later, the music ends, with the announcer confirming it was "Paganini Variations" — but by Franz Liszt.

Brotons spends half of his year on the road, including a dozen weeks in Vancouver and another 14 or so traveling around Spain and other parts of the world. Gigs in South Africa, Venezuela, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Switzerland and Poland.

He explains to Esch how expensive it is to use his Barcelona-based cellular telephone in the United States. So most of the time, he just keeps it turned off, which — combined with the nine-hour time difference — complicates keeping in touch with his wife of 22 years, Melissa Mercadal, and their 12-year-old daughter, Clara. The teenage



Brotons acts peppy at the rehearsal but can't suppress all signs of fatigue.

years of his only child on the horizon, Brotons anticipates parenting from afar only will get tougher.

To fight homesickness, he keeps photographs of his wife and daughter in his briefcase as well as a picture of himself, dressed in hiking gear, at the summit of Mount Pedraforca in Spain. It's sunny in the photo. Vancouver on this night is rainy, part of the recent stretch of 35 straight days with at least a trace of moisture. Journalists in Spain get really excited about the rain, he says, like broadcasters here get thrilled by the sun.

His hometown of Barcelona has about 1.6 million people, three times the size of Portland. Brotons guest conducts the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, one of Spain's top artistic organizations, at least once a year. Two other professional orchestras in the area use him more regularly. In Spain, he's one of the most well-known composers. Doors are open. He has no such stature in America. He struggles with that. He wonders if he'll ever get the chance to try something big in the United States.

The cultural richness of Barcelona is reflected in its many opulent concert halls. Brotons conducts at the best: The Palau de la Musica (1,970 seats), LAuditori (2,200 seats) and the Gran Theatre del Liceu (2,300 seats). With Vancouver Symphony, he started in a church and now

performs in a high school auditorium.

**Back and forth**

In the hills of Barcelona, he lives with his family in a three-bedroom apartment, with a view of Mount Tibidabo, a grand piano in the living room and a studio in the back, where he composes. He and his wife are building a vacation home in a coastal town on the border between Spain and France. But comfort doesn't drive him. Music does.

Through his compositions, he aspires to create a lasting legacy. "Conductors," he says, "They die, and nobody remembers them." Yet he also knows conducting and working with musicians around the world ultimately creates a network for pieces to be played and heard. He gets to make those choices for Vancouver Symphony, including picking his own work on occasion. He wants to meet and know other people who can get his work played.

"I'm not doing conducting for the money," he says. "I love to conduct. I cannot spend the whole day composing. I would become crazy. ... And there's no one better to conduct your work than yourself." He's been told by many in the business that the best opportunities for composers often come at the end of their careers, as appreciation slowly grows. But he acknowledges, for him, "I don't know if life will be long enough."

With Spanish orchestras, Brotons has a sterling reputation. El Valles Symphony spokesman Jauma Lleixa says a journalist once dubbed him Salvador "enshopassaremmlolbe" Brotons, translating to "we/are/going/to/have/a/good/time."

His character. His optimism. His positive attitude in front of the orchestra makes him so easy (to work with)," Lleixa adds. "He gives solutions, when others make troubles."

When Brotons started at El Valles, the group was producing four concerts a season, Lleixa says. When he left four years later, that number had grown to 12. Audiences also grew from filling 80 percent of seating capacity to 95 percent.

With Brotons as the draw, Vancouver Symphony's staff and board hope to double the organization's budget, to \$1 million, within five years. Including "Daphnis et Chloe" (and Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 1 in May), the symphony's programs keep getting tougher.

Brotons is proud of what's been accomplished in Vancouver, but he yearns for more. He first wants to match the size of Oregon Symphony, one of the largest 25 orchestras in

the country, then keep growing.

**From the beginning**

Two decades ago, such a goal would have been preposterous. Vancouver violinist Romana Smith had just started music lessons and joined the club-like Vancouver Symphony in the late 1980s, when one of her teachers told her, "If you want to play in an orchestra, you should play under Salvador Brotons."

After finishing his doctoral studies at Florida State University, Brotons was teaching at Portland State University and conducting the school orchestra. He started looking for other groups to lead and joined the Mittleman Jewish Community Center Orchestra.

Brotons' work with PSU and Mittleman created a buzz in music circles. At that time, Vancouver Symphony was looking for a conductor to replace retiring founder Walt Cleland. Impressed by Brotons, Smith and her husband, Tim, approached the conductor after a Mittleman rehearsal, flatly told him that he deserves better audience support and started selling him on the prospects at Vancouver Sympho-



"I can't believe what he's done. ... He's a miracle worker."

Anne Esch, opera singer and converted Vancouver Symphony supporter

ny. At the very least, Smith recalls saying, a couple of hundred people would come to listen. And, most importantly, the group has dreams.

Esch, who would later become Brotons' friend and shuttle driver, moved to town around the same time as Brotons and also had decided to look into Vancouver Symphony. She wasn't impressed.

The singer had performed throughout the East, including a stint with the Kentucky Opera, before moving to Clark County in 1990. Her church choir joined the local symphony for a Christmas program that year, and Esch was asked to solo during "O Holy Night."

When she started singing, the orchestra stopped playing as musicians looked up to see whose voice it was. Esch, aghast at the lack of etiquette during the performance, didn't give the orchestra another thought until she heard from friends a few months later that he had hired an exciting new conductor, Brotons. Tickets were only \$6 for his debut, so she decided to give the group another chance.

"I was curious about what could happen, and it was an electric performance," Esch says. "I thought, 'I can't believe what I'm hearing. I can't believe what he's done. ... He's a miracle worker.'"

Before Brotons, Vancouver Symphony didn't hold auditions. Anyone who showed up with an instrument and paid a nominal membership fee could play. Principal roles were based on longevity, not skill.

That all changed. Rehearsals now are refinements. Everyone's paid. A couple of years after the "O Holy Night" fiasco, Vancouver Symphony accompanied Columbia Dance Ensemble in its annual production of "The Nutcracker." Because of a glitch, the keyboard

used to make celesta sounds during the dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy didn't operate properly, creating silence during one of the show's signature moments. Brotons immediately began singing the musical part to give the dancers cues to continue. The orchestra kept playing, like nothing had happened, making the goof as seamless as possible.

**Optimism and gains**

While contributions have come from all levels — staff, musicians, volunteers, donors — Brotons has been the propelling force, providing artistic vision, oversight and leadership by example. He leaves his troubles outside of the rehearsal room.

On the car ride from the airport to Clark College, Brotons takes just a moment at his hotel to regroup. He has the initial rehearsal of "Daphnis et Chloe" to launch. He grabs an apple and an orange to eat in the car. When he arrives at campus and gets out, rain pouring, he gains strength each sloshy step toward the doors.

By the time he reaches the building's lobby, he's energetically shaking hands, mingling with the musicians. Patting backs. Giving hugs. The session starts spirited.

After two hours of intense listening and instruction, Brotons tries resting on a stool. A few minutes later, he pops back up.

"I couldn't let them know I was tired," he says afterward. "When I sat down, the energy (of the group) just dropped." Ruminating about the music on the radio on the way to the college, he accidentally refers to "Daphnis et Chloe" as the "Liszt piece." Rehearsal ends. He heads to the hotel to collapse. He has four hours of meetings in the morning.

Like the musicians, Brotons gets



Brotons, recently diagnosed with diabetes, travels half of the year, making regular exercise a logistical chore.

nally bonded through quirks of fate, interweaving ambitions over the years. Vancouver wants more cultural development without paying for it. Brotons wants a significant place to showcase his skills. Neither wants this symbiosis to slow.

Vancouver Symphony should at least have a concert a month, Brotons says, and he wants performances in east Vancouver and other places in the county, better pay for the musicians, to start a children's series. If this metropolis and the rest of the Northwest can ever match even half of his opportunities in Spain, then he says he would commute the other direction. Hopeful of such possibilities, he gives Vancouver Symphony first crack at his calendar each year. He acknowledges that he might not ever have the connections to get the top jobs in this country. Oregon Symphony didn't consider him for its conductor opening in 2002. But in America, he knows, people create opportunities.

"The most important thing for me (with Vancouver) is attitude," he says. "I want to move forward, artistically growing, better facilities, that's what really counts. I'm very much looking toward the future."

With concerts here next weekend, and a Young Artists competition to oversee today, Brotons latest flight to Portland International Airport is expected to land some time around noon. Esch, now among a legion of symphony supporters, won't be the only one eagerly awaiting his return.

Brotons and Clark County origi-

ally bonded through quirks of fate, interweaving ambitions over the years. Vancouver wants more cultural development without paying for it. Brotons wants a significant place to showcase his skills. Neither wants this symbiosis to slow.

Vancouver Symphony should at least have a concert a month, Brotons says, and he wants performances in east Vancouver and other places in the county, better pay for the musicians, to start a children's series. If this metropolis and the rest of the Northwest can ever match even half of his opportunities in Spain, then he says he would commute the other direction. Hopeful of such possibilities, he gives Vancouver Symphony first crack at his calendar each year. He acknowledges that he might not ever have the connections to get the top jobs in this country. Oregon Symphony didn't consider him for its conductor opening in 2002. But in America, he knows, people create opportunities.

"The most important thing for me (with Vancouver) is attitude," he says. "I want to move forward, artistically growing, better facilities, that's what really counts. I'm very much looking toward the future."

With concerts here next weekend, and a Young Artists competition to oversee today, Brotons latest flight to Portland International Airport is expected to land some time around noon. Esch, now among a legion of symphony supporters, won't be the only one eagerly awaiting his return.

Brotons and Clark County origi-

ally bonded through quirks of fate, interweaving ambitions over the years. Vancouver wants more cultural development without paying for it. Brotons wants a significant place to showcase his skills. Neither wants this symbiosis to slow.

"Conductors. They die, and nobody remembers them."

Salvador Brotons

sharper as the week progresses. His movements become more animated. His shirt comes untucked as he contorts his body in various ways to try to inspire each player. Sweat drips off of his face. His accented Rs roll, keeping commentary concise and to the point: "In measures one through four, I heard some wrong features." "Three trumpets, you were thinking of something else?" "Second time sounds double well." "You need to practice (that part)." "No, no, no, AGAIN!"

After the final rehearsal before the first performance, principal French horn Allan Stromquist finds Brotons in his dressing room and asks him about one of his parts. Brotons answers, points to a page in the score and adds, "I noticed you didn't play that note."

Stromquist's face reddens, as he acknowledges, "I was resting." He later says, "I was surprised he noticed. ... That just shows how in touch he is with what we're doing all of the time."

After the orchestra successfully performs "Daphnis et Chloe" — in a program that also featured a long-haired percussion soloist, Joel Bluestone, wearing bright red tennis shoes, and a surprise encore of one of Brotons' original compositions — backstage is abuzz about the standing ovations. Musicians are congratulating each other. The trumpet section asks Brotons to stop and pose for a picture with them.

Barcelona awaits.

Brotons and Clark County origi-

ally bonded through quirks of fate, interweaving ambitions over the years. Vancouver wants more cultural development without paying for it. Brotons wants a significant place to showcase his skills. Neither wants this symbiosis to slow.

Vancouver Symphony should at least have a concert a month, Brotons says, and he wants performances in east Vancouver and other places in the county, better pay for the musicians, to start a children's series. If this metropolis and the rest of the Northwest can ever match even half of his opportunities in Spain, then he says he would commute the other direction. Hopeful of such possibilities, he gives Vancouver Symphony first crack at his calendar each year. He acknowledges that he might not ever have the connections to get the top jobs in this country. Oregon Symphony didn't consider him for its conductor opening in 2002. But in America, he knows, people create opportunities.

"The most important thing for me (with Vancouver) is attitude," he says. "I want to move forward, artistically growing, better facilities, that's what really counts. I'm very much looking toward the future."

With concerts here next weekend, and a Young Artists competition to oversee today, Brotons latest flight to Portland International Airport is expected to land some time around noon. Esch, now among a legion of symphony supporters, won't be the only one eagerly awaiting his return.

Brotons and Clark County origi-

## Vancouver Symphony

◆ **1978:** Vancouver Strings is founded by retired music teacher Walt Cleland. He hosts a citywide meeting of musicians. Five people show up: three violins, a viola and a cello.



Walt Cleland

◆ **1980:** Woodwinds, brass and percussion players are added; the name is changed to Vancouver Symphonette.

◆ **1986:** Vancouver Symphonette's membership tops 50 musicians. Name changed to Vancouver Symphony.

◆ **1990:** Vancouver Symphony's 80-year-old director, Walt Cleland, retires. At this point, all jobs are volunteer. Four finalists to replace Cleland, including Brotons, are each given the chance to guest conduct and Brotons is later selected.

◆ **1992:** For "Virtus," Brotons wins Queen Sofia's Prize for Music Composition, one of Spain's top annual awards. His piece "Phaedo" premieres at the Olympic Festival of the Arts, held in conjunction with the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, and his Cantata for Chorus and Orchestra premieres at the World Expo in Seville.

◆ **1993:** Vancouver Symphony plays its first piece by Brotons, "Catalan Lands," giving the work its American premiere.

◆ **1997:** Brotons is hired to conduct two professional orchestras in Spain. Leaves his post at Portland State University to return to Barcelona. Begins commuting to Vancouver.

◆ **1999:** Vancouver Symphony hires its first paid staff member, general manager Rachel Dobrow.

◆ **2000:** Dobrow leaves. Vancouver Symphony hires its first paid executive director, Jill Botvink.

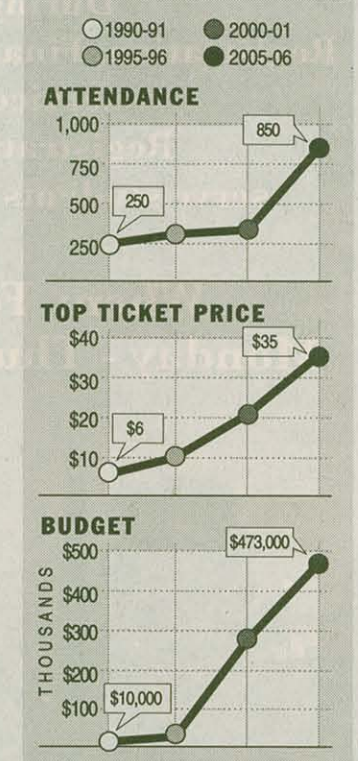
◆ **2002:** Brotons receives Florida State University's School of Music Graduate Alumni Award.

◆ **2004:** Executive director Jill Botvink leaves. Jennifer Teisinger, who had been overseeing the Youth Orchestra division of the San Francisco Symphony since 1999, is hired to replace her.



Jennifer Teisinger

◆ **The Brotons era:**



The week begins with a larger than usual orchestra, small rehearsal space and a tough program to master.

After another rousing concert and significant developmental step for the symphony, Brotons celebrates backstage with violinist Carolyn Sheffer.