

music

MIM presents powerful line-up this week

Submitted to Prospector

Music in the Mountains' (MIM) two-week

SummerFest concert series is in full swing this week with a variety of extraordinary offerings for the music lover.

Tonight's 30th Anniversary Concert with the Festival Orchestra and Chorale was featured in last week's Prospector. This program includes pieces by John Williams, Bernstein, Brahms, Elgar and Vaughan Williams.

Saturday night is an outdoor concert featuring orchestra classics and the visiting troupe, Cirque de la Symphonie. (Story on page 3.)

The impressive series continues with a Sunday matinee concert, "Orchestra Masterworks," with Gregory Vajda conducting the Festival Orchestra. Vajda will also play the clarinet and debuts a piece he wrote for MIM's 30th birthday. Other pieces on the program include Wagner's "Flying Dutchman Overture" and a Liszt piano concerto performed by the world-renowned James Dick.

Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 will be the icing on the cake. "Believe it or not, this huge classic has never been performed by Music in the Mountains," says Vajda.

A "talk-back" session will take place immediately after Sunday's concert. Audience members are invited to stay and ask questions of Vajda and the instrumentalists in an informal setting. "People can ask anything about the performance or about the way the instruments are played, and some of the questions and answers can be quite amus-



Submitted photo

Tonight's 30th Anniversary Concert with the Festival Orchestra and Chorale includes pieces by John Williams, Bernstein, Brahms, Elgar and Vaughan Williams.

ing," says Vajda. The "Orchestra Masterworks" concert starts at 2 p.m. at the Amaral Family Festival Center at the Fairgrounds and is sponsored by Sherman Clay and the Nevada County Composers' Cooperative.

Tuesday, June 28, the MIM brass section brings back a concert that's always a hit with local audiences. "All That Brass" includes pieces by Giovanni Gabrieli, William Byrd, Leonard Salzedo and Eduard Grieg, plus Bizet's Carmen Suite and the well-known Londonderry Air (Danny Boy) and more. This concert starts at 7:30 p.m. at the Amaral Family Festival Center at the Fairgrounds and is sponsored by Commonwealth Financial Network and John Hagele, M.D.

Audiences will pack the house Thursday, June 30, when the Festival Chorale and Orchestra bring back the hugely popular "Carmina

Burana" by Carl Orff (see sidebar). Baritone Richard Zeller of Metropolitan Opera fame, returns as a featured soloist. "Parts of Carmina are

widely used as background music in commercials and movies. So everyone recognizes some of the movements of this work," explains Vajda.

'Carmina Burana' — Intoxicating tales of Spring, The Tavern and Love

By Charles Atthill
Special to Prospector

Ask choral singers to list their favorite works — "Carmina Burana" will be up there. And not surprisingly. It is an exhilarating piece for performers and audience alike.

"Carmina Burana" (1935-6) is Carl Orff's best-known work (some might think his only work, so little else of his is heard), a setting of mainly mediaeval Latin texts discovered in the Bavarian monastery of Benedictbeuern from which it gets its name.

Originally intended for stage performance, "Carmina" is usually performed as a concert work, a secular cantata for chorus, soloists, large orchestra and an enormous

array of percussion.

"Carmina's" three parts, Spring, The Tavern and Love, are filled with intoxicating impact and freshness. The harmonies are simple, the language direct (and sometimes ribald). It is full of infectious rhythms, over which voices chant mediaeval-style, sometimes blossoming into the flowery. Rejecting musical fashion, Orff's music is like no one else's.

With its jazzy syncopations and prominent percussion writing (influenced by Stravinsky), "Carmina" was initially condemned by the Nazis. But once it became an unexpectedly popular hit, far from Hitler's favorite Wagner, Nazi aesthetics were adjusted to accommodate it. The rest is musical history.

Mozart's "Overture to The Marriage of Figaro" and Haydn's "Sinfonia Concertante for Oboe, Bassoon, Violin, Cello and orchestra in B-flat Major" complete the program. This concert is at 7:30 p.m. and is sponsored by Robert and Carol Hamilton.

Music in the Mountains is the largest and longest continuously running classical music organization in the Sierra Foothills.

These two weeks are a wonderful opportunity to hear remarkable classical music performed locally. "With this bold line-up right at your doorstep, there's no reason to drive to the Bay area or pay high ticket prices," says Vajda.

Tickets for Music in the Mountains' concerts and events may be purchased online at www.musicinthemountains.org or by calling the box office at (530) 265-6124.