

▶ music

MIM Presents... 30th Anniversary Concert

Submitted to Prospector

Music in the Mountains (MIM), the largest and longest continuously running classical music organization in the Sierra Foothills, will present a 30th Anniversary Concert on Thursday, June 23, featuring the Festival Orchestra and Chorale. The classical program of great classical works starts at 7:30 p.m. at the Amaral Family Festival Center at the Nevada County Fairgrounds.

The concert opens with "Happy Birthday Variations," the old favorite tune arranged by the celebrated John Williams, who has scored over 80 films, won five Oscars, three Golden Globes and 17 Grammys. Leonard Bernstein's "Candide Overture" is next on the program, from the 1956 Broadway hit. In these first two numbers, talented young musicians from MIM's extensive education programs will perform side-by-side with the professional players in the orchestra.

Third on the program is Johannes Brahms' "Double Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra," with soloists Robin Mayforth, MIM concertmas-



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Gregory Vajda is artistic director for Music in the Mountain.

ter, and Janet Witharm, principal cello. "From my early days playing the cello, I've thought this was the most beautiful, intense, romantic music I have ever heard," exclaims Witharm.

Next on the bill is the "Enigma Variations," by Edward Elgar (1857-1934), a piece with a theme with 14 variations, each one composed as Elgar envisioned various of his friends might have played them. Speculation as to which variation was for whom has been an ongoing mystery for many musical sleuths. Elgar provided manuscript hints, but only identified the first varia-

tion as a tonal painting of his wife and the last as a self-portrait.

The concert concludes with a great choral and orchestra masterwork, "Toward the Unknown Region," by Ralph Vaughan Williams, featuring the 85-voice Festival Chorale and conducted by Ryan Murray, choral director. Although rarely heard, it is a marvelous marriage of music with Walt Whitman's poetry. Vaughan Williams is considered by many to be the quintessential British composer and this probing, contemplative piece brings forth the transcendental nature of Whitman's spiritual adventure.

"Nevada County audiences have never heard choral music at this level," choral conductor Murray comments. "The chorus has fully embraced the drama and excitement of this score and has never sounded better." The 30th Anniversary Concert is sponsored by David Jones and also by Dr. Al and Beverly Erickson in memory of their son, Andrew.

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.

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4 | Ryan Murray, choral director for Music in Mountains.