



Submitted photo

Gregory Vajda, Music in the Mountains artistic director, has a busy slate – and many miles of travel – ahead before returning to Nevada County for Music in the Mountains' WinterFest concert series.

MIM director adds new conducting venues

BY JENNIFER DAHLGREN
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You might say, “now you see him, now you don’t” about Gregory Vajda, the globetrotting Music in the Mountains artistic director.

Since wrapping up the organization’s successful SummerFest series of concerts here in Nevada County, he has been in and out of town several times and many places in between.

Vajda was on hand for the annual celebration and presentation of MIM’s Maestro Award to Jeff Leiter in August and he was back for the party marking the 30th anniversary of Music in the Mountains in September. In between he’s been back and forth to his U.S. home in Portland, to Alabama and to his native Hungary.

Vajda’s travel schedule over

the coming two months will be equally varied and challenging. Earlier this year he was named music director for the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra in Alabama and he conducted his first concert in that role on Oct. 1. He then immediately flew to Hungary for a studio recording session with the Hungarian Radio Symphony, conducting Act 4 of *Phaedra*, a contemporary opera by Hungarian composer Gyula Csapo.

“My engagements in Hungary are an important part of my year,” says Vajda. “I get to see friends and family while getting a ‘refill’ of my country’s rich musical culture.”

In November, Vajda will be back in Portland with the Oregon Symphony for an evening with Herbie Hancock playing Gershwin and later in the month conducting the von Trapp

Family Christmas concert. November will also find Vajda in Ohio with the Toledo Symphony, conducting two performances of Rachmaninoff piano concerti with the renowned Russian-American pianist, Kirill Gerstein.

He will also travel back to Huntsville to conduct his second major concert with that orchestra,



“Symphonic Serenades,” and will attend a major fundraising event for this organization, the annual Debutante Ball.

“My engagements in the United States have primarily been in the northern tier of states and I am looking forward to experiencing this debutante tradition, widely celebrated in the South,” he said.

Finally, before returning to Nevada County for Music in the

Mountains’ WinterFest concert series, Vajda will travel back to Hungary again for another engagement with the Hungarian Radio Symphony in Budapest, which will feature Franz Liszt’s Piano Concerto No. 2. Vajda conducted this work here in June with visiting pianist James Dick.

“I really look forward to returning to Nevada County for holiday celebrations,” Vajda said. “The Music in the Mountains organization is filled with great people who have just rallied to present an incredibly successful year of music. It will be good to see my many good friends.”

“One of the things we enjoy is the worldwide experience that Gregory brings to our community,” explained Sherry Bartolucci, president of Music in the Mountains. “Every time he returns he has new ideas to share.”