

## San Bernardino Symphony celebrates Black History Month

By Michel Nolan , *The Sun*

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Here is the perfect opportunity to immerse yourself in some of America's greatest music.

San Bernardino Symphony launches its celebration of Black History Month with a three-day tribute Feb. 5, 6 and 7 to the musical contributions of African-American composers.

Beginning Feb. 5, the tribute kicks off with a 6:30 p.m. event to honor local arts and education supporters, Assemblywoman Cheryl Brown and her husband, newsman Hardy Brown Sr. at the California Theatre for the Performing Arts.

The uniquely American music harmonizes perfectly with the current symphony season theme, "By Request: The Music You Want to Hear."

Attendees will sample local restaurant fare and enjoy the smooth sounds of the Cal State San Bernardino Jazz Ensemble, under direction of Symphony board member Dr. Bob Knop.

According to Symphony Conductor Frank Fetta, "The Browns have actively supported the region for many years, setting the consummate example of selfless and focused community service."

Maestro Fetta said it was a true privilege to be able to set aside an evening to say thank you to these pillars of the community.

The next morning, Maestro Fetta will again lift his baton to conduct back-to-back student concerts as the Symphony performs "Musical Genius in America," which will include Ragtime selections from Scott Joplin, a medley of tunes from Duke Ellington, and William Grant Still's Afro-American Symphony.

The free student concert came out of a series of conversations with the San Bernardino City Unified School District as the two organizations worked to build an academically meaningful musical experience for the annual school event.

"We felt this set of selections would both support and broaden the multi-cultural emphasis in the classroom during Black History Month," said Symphony Executive Director, Dr. Anne Viricel.

As in years past, the schools will also be provided with corresponding teaching materials. Students will learn about the composer, the historical context of each piece, and the contributions of American musicians to the various genres of orchestral music, as well as the historical venue.

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Then, at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7, the community is invited to a traditional symphony concert at the California Theatre for the full presentation of Musical Genius in America, which will also include Gershwin's iconic Rhapsody in Blue," interpreted by gifted pianist Yana Reznik.

The young Russian-born classical pianist has performed as a soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Toyota Concert Series at Disney Hall, in addition to appearances with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra, San Bernardino Symphony, and the Redlands Bowl Orchestra.

The list goes on and on.

Presenting sponsor for the concerts is the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians.

“This wonderful organization never fails to support activities that benefit the vitality of our community and we are so thankful to have them as part of our symphony family,” Dr. Viricel added.

“This year, 3,400 students are benefitting from a concert experience — twice as many as in the past,” she said.

And here’s a thought for the day: Success is often the result of taking a misstep in the right direction.



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