

Symphony celebrates virtuosity — in music, public safety

By Michel Nolan , The Sun

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When: 7:30 p.m. Saturday; pre-concert lecture, 6:30 p.m.

Where: California Theater of the Performing Arts, 562 W. Fourth St., San Bernardino

Tickets: \$20-\$55 adults; \$11 students; season and individual tickets may be purchased by calling 909-381-5388, or visiting the symphony box office, 198 N. Arrowhead Ave., San Bernardino

Information: 909-381-5388

Under the baton of Maestro Frank Fetta the San Bernardino Symphony opens its 86th season Saturday with a spectacular display of “Virtuosity,” a musical experience beyond the imagination.

So hang on to your seats.

“Virtuosity” takes center stage at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at San Bernardino’s California Theatre of the Performing Arts.

It is especially fitting that the music to be performed is some of the most beautiful ever written, requiring considerable mastery.

Tchaikovsky’s “Violin Concerto,” one of the most technically difficult works for the violin, will spotlight renowned violin soloist Roberto Cani, widely known for his role as concert master of the Los Angeles Opera.

Maestro Fetta said this is the ultimate season opener.

“We believe this concert will inspire both our beloved returning audiences and new attendees to come and be amazed at the quality of symphonic music available right here in the Inland Empire,” Fetta said.

The theme of virtuosity was set by the Symphony’s Artistic Committee many months back, but the application of the virtuosic concept — synonymous with skillfulness, mastery, proficiency, ability and excellence — does transcend the musical genre.

Judith Valles, symphony board president and former San Bernardino mayor, said the symphony also wanted to recognize the virtuosic efforts of local public safety officers.

As a result, the symphony joined with local restaurant, The Mexico, to offer “An Evening Out for Officers” on Saturday.

With the concert’s “Virtuosity” theme, the symphony is also paying tribute to San Bernardino city police officers and school police, who will be provided with free concert tickets and reduced-price dinners.

“This has been a difficult year for the people who keep our city safe,” Valles said “We wanted them to be aware that their work is valued by their community, and we hope people from throughout the community will come out, shake a hero’s hand, and enjoy a wonderful concert together.”

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The concert will also feature Dvorak's "Symphony No. 9, From the New World," a popular symphony composed in 1893.

The symphony was such a favorite with audiences, that astronaut Neil Armstrong took a recording of the New World Symphony to the moon during the 1969 Apollo 11 mission.

A pre-concert lecture, featuring symphony pianist Michael Tacchia, starts at 6:30 p.m. in the California Room of the theater, 562 W. Fourth St., San Bernardino.

Symphony Executive Director, Anne Viricel, said the salute to the city's public safety officers is a way for the symphony to say "thank you."

Viricel, who has served as executive director for one year, has a doctorate in public administration and teaches mathematics at the University of Redlands — in her spare time.

She is looking forward to the symphony's exciting 86th season:

- Dec. 20: "Home for the Holidays" will feature selections from Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker," Handel's "Messiah," and Anderson's "A Festival of Carols."
- Feb. 7: More favorites arrive with "Musical Genius in America," including Ragtime selections from Scott Joplin, tunes from Duke Ellington, William Grant Still's "Afro-American Symphony" and George Gershwin's iconic "Rhapsody in Blue."
- April 11: Two symphony musicians — Concert Master Tudor Pelev and First Chair Cellist Ana Maria Maldonado will team up to play Brahms' "Concerto for Violin and Violincello" as part of the "Beethoven, Brahms and Bartholdy" concert.
- May 23: The "Triumphant Season Finale" ends on a high note with Mozart's "Symphony No. 30 in G Minor"; Beethoven's "Symphony No. 7"; and Strauss' "Horn Concerto No. 1", with talented horn soloist Joseph Ognibene.

The 2014-15 Season, "By Request — the music you wanted to hear," is custom designed for us, the symphony's local audiences.

Custom concerts — what a wonderful concept.

And here's a thought for the day: A procrastinator's work is never done.

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