

San Bernardino Symphony to begin 87th season October 3 - Highland Community News: Entertainment

By Anne Viricel Executive Director San Bernardino Symphony

“Mosaico Latino” to feature Hagen, Hernandez

The San Bernardino Symphony will open its 87th season on Oct. 3 with “Mosaico Latino,” a captivating and sophisticated evening of music and art from Latin America.

In keeping with the season’s emphasis on highlighting the future of symphonic music, the concert will feature two celebrated young performers, violinist Will Hagen and operatic tenor Gustavo Hernández. Also performing will be the students of the Mariachi Youth Academy of Sinfonia Mexicana which originated with the San Bernardino Symphony 30 years ago this month. In addition, an exhibition of works by members of the Latino Arts Association will be featured at the event.

“We have brought together some of the most exciting talent available to showcase music that epitomizes the region’s rich cultural heritage,” said Symphony Maestro Frank Fetta who has begun his third year as the Symphony’s Conductor and Music Director. “Our goal is to dazzle the audience with a one-of-a-kind experience they will long remember!”

The concert will begin with Mateo Olivas’ arrangement of Suite de Lara, a melodic mélange of the music of incomparable Mexican actor, singer, and composer Agustin Lara. Hernandez will perform one of Lara’s most internationally popular pieces ‘Granada’ which closes the arrangement.

Hernández began his singing career through the Young Musicians Program of UC Berkeley, where he studied with David Tigner. He has been a featured soloist for the Young Musician’s Program, Bay Area Singers’ Forum, North Bay Opera, and the Oakland Youth Chorus, through which he performed for former president Bill Clinton, and has sung lead tenor roles in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *Norma*, and secondary roles in *Idomeneo*, *Tosca*, *Die Zauberflöte* and *Carmen*. Hernández’s forays into Oratorio include singing the tenor solos for Mendelsson’s *Elijah*, *The Messiah*, *The Mozart Requiem*, *Rossini’s Stabat Mater*, *Mozart’s Coronation Mass* and the *Mozart Vespers*. Hernández recently sang with the San Francisco Opera Chorus in *Götterdämmerung* and the Los Angeles Opera Chorus in *Der fliegende Holländer*.

Then, Hagen will take the stage to perform Edouard Lalo’s *Symphonie Espagnol*. This five-movement piece premiered in Paris in 1875 and is widely considered the work that launched an extended period of Spanish-themed music throughout Europe. The piece is also thought to have influenced the composition of Tchaikovsky’s *Violin Concerto in D Major* which the Symphony performed last season.

The 22-year-old Hagen is the third prize winner of the 2015 Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition (the highest ranking American since 1980). He has been hailed as a “brilliant virtuoso...a standout” (*The Dallas Morning News*) with “an intellectual command of line and score, and just the right amount of power” (*violinist.com*) who “plays with an obvious and sincere love for the very act of music making” (*North Texas Performing Arts News*). Hagen began studying the violin when he was just 4 and made his professional debut at age 15 with the Utah Symphony. He has performed throughout the world and will be coming to the Symphony directly from an engagement in Vienna.

Oliva’s arrangement of the “Mosaico Suite,” a bright symphonic celebration of folk themes from throughout Mexico, will follow.

“The Suite has its roots in what is essentially local folk music, but Oliva’s arrangement is absolutely brilliant, prioritizing the symphonic concepts while respecting the sweetness of the original themes,” said Maestro Fetta.

Then Hernández will return to the stage to sing Manuel Esperon’s romantic standard, *Amorcito Corazón*. Esperon wrote many acclaimed pieces of music for Mexican films, but American audiences may be more familiar with the award-winning composer’s work in Disney’s *The Three Caballeros*. *Amorcito Corazon*, translating approximately to “my little love and heart,” was made popular by actor and singer Pedro Infante to whom Hernandez is often likened.

The Symphony will then perform Mozart Camargo Guarnieri’s fourth symphony, *Danza Brasileira*, a bright and vivacious composition written in 1963. The prolific Brazilian composer and conductor produced over 700 compositions during his extensive career including operas, as well as orchestral works, chamber music, and concertos. In 1993, he was recognized by the Organization of American States as the “greatest contemporary composer of the Americas.”

Hernández will then sing Maria Grever’s beautiful *Jurame*, (*Promise, Love*) a rhythmic ballad with instrumental roots in Spanish and Cuban composition. Grever was the first female Mexican musician to become a successful composer. A student of Debussy, she wrote more than 800 songs. Her first, *A Una Ola*, (*To a Wave*) was written when Grever was just 18; it sold three million copies. “*Jurame*” was her first international hit, and was quickly followed by a number of pieces for movies and performers, including “*Tipitipitin*” recorded by the Andrews Sisters.

To close the show, the Symphony will perform Juan Pablo Moncayo’s colorful orchestral fantasy, *Huapango*, which premiered in 1941 at the Palace of Fine Arts by the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico. Renowned as representing one of the most important legacies of Mexican nationalism in art music, Moncayo was a contemporary of Copland, Chavez, and Revueltas and began his career at age 14 working as a jazz pianist to finance his studies at the prestigious National Conservancy of Music in Mexico City. His promising career was brief, hampered by a difficult cultural and political environment in his native country, and his death at age 46 is thought to have marked the end of the Mexican nationalist composition school. *Huapango* was written when Moncayo was just 29 and, due to its popularity and nationalistic theme, is often considered the unofficial second national anthem of Mexico.

Maestro Fetta believes audiences will be more than pleased with this outstanding evening of art and music.

“We have carefully chosen inspiring music and sought out the finest young talents available in what has become our quest to uplift the arts in the Inland Empire,” said Fetta. “I am so proud to work with the San Bernardino Symphony and hope that by seeing and hearing these amazing performers in our unique and historic venue that audiences might gain renewed inspiration and pride in their community.”

Up-Coming Concerts

“We believe this will be an outstanding season full of beautiful music and many exciting surprises,” said Fetta, “and we invite the community to come and enjoy all their San Bernardino Symphony has to offer.”

December 12, the Symphony will offer their second annual holiday concert with “*Home for the Holidays*.” This year’s concert will include selections from Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Puccini, Leontovich, Berlin, Williams, and more. A number of seasonal surprises have also been planned for this family-centric event.

On February 6, the Symphony will perform a patriotic concert with an emphasis on the American Southwest. “*Echoes of America*” will include the music of Ives, Grofe, Gould, Rodgers and Bennett, Still, and Sousa. February 5, this concert will also be performed for students in the San Bernardino City Unified School District and surrounding districts as part of the Symphony’s award-winning student enrichment program.

Both the December and February concerts are sponsored by the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians.

March 26, the Symphony will present “*Masterwork Melange*” featuring outstanding young pianist Rufus Choi performing Rachmaninoff’s *Piano Concerto No. 2*. Also on the playbill are Humperdink’s *Hansel and Gretel Prelude*

and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 9. will also be performed.

Wrapping an amazing year will be the "Finale Bravura!" on May 28. The concert will include Mozart's Magic Flute Overture and Dvorak's Symphony No. 8. Emotive Russian cellist Ruslan Biryukov will perform Popper's Hungarian Rhapsody and Tchaikovsky's Rococo Variations.

Concert Information

All regular season concerts will be performed at the historic California Theatre, 562 W. 4th Street, San Bernardino. Concerts begin at 7:30 p.m.; a pre-concert lecture begins in the concert hall at 6:30 p.m.

Both season and individual tickets may be purchased by calling (909) 381-5388 or visiting the Symphony box office at 198 N. Arrowhead Ave., San Bernardino. Season and general admission tickets are also available on line at www.sanbernardinosymphony.org, and with limited availability at the theater box office the evening of each event.

In addition to the regular concert season, this year, the San Bernardino Symphony will also be featured in concerts throughout the region. Visit the Symphony's website for more information.