



Harmonica player feels no limitations

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Mike Runyan doesn't know what all the fuss is about when he whips out a mouth organ at classical music concerts.

"It's like the difference between a jazz sax and a classical sax," said the San Diego native, whose harmonica skills will be the feature attraction at this weekend's Windsor Symphony Orchestra pops concerts at Chrysler Theatre.

Wild West: Harmonica Hoe-Down! on Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. has replaced the originally scheduled bluegrass performance by Jerusalem Ridge, who cancelled due to illness.

Runyan began studying piano at age six, eventually also adding trumpet and horn to his arsenal. It wasn't until high school that he got serious about the harmonica.

"It was lying around the house, so I figured why not," he said. He went on to compose works that explored its chromatic range.

While Runyan admits the repertoire of serious music is limited to a handful of works, the range of possibilities for the harmonica is endless.

"The instrument is capable of whatever the musician wants to do with it," he said.

Many concertos for other instruments have been successfully adapted to it.

Runyan employs a small legion of instruments when he performs, from the basic diatonic model most people associate with the harmonica to the larger and more sonically brilliant chromatic instruments.

Some have buttons to vary the sound, and Runyan regularly uses altered tunings. This weekend, he'll play a 61-cm chord harmonica which produces all the major musical chords, and a fat, "brick-shaped" bass harmonica.

In a featured segment on this weekend's program, Runyan will displace the orchestra's brass section by playing all three trumpet parts in Leroy Anderson's Bugler's Holiday.

"I hope they don't mind," he said.

While the harmonica is Runyan's claim to fame, he's is an accomplished composer and arranger, as well. His pops adaptation of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol will be performed by the symphony in December. By day, Runyan is librarian for the Indianapolis Symphony.

Joining Runyan this weekend are the Cincinnati Studio Cloggers.

The concert will be conducted by John Morris Russell. Tickets \$56-\$13 available at the door, or by calling 519-252-6579.

Windsor's other orchestra The Windsor Community Orchestra, comprised of amateur musicians and music students, performs its annual spring concert Sunday at 7 p.m. at Assumption University Chapel.

WSO principal trumpeter Ross Turner guest solos on Haydn's Trumpet Concerto. The program also includes Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and the overture to Die Meistersinger by Wagner. Peter Wiebe conducts.

Tickets \$10 at the door.

A dramatic 50 years University Players at the University of Windsor's school of dramatic art has announced the lineup of plays for its 2008-09 season, its 50th anniversary.

The season opens at Essex Hall Sept. 18 with Shakespeare's Measure for Measure. Other titles include: Don Juan on Trial, by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt, Oct. 20-Nov. 2; Agatha Christie's A Murder is Announced, Nov. 20-30; Ariel Dorfman's and Tony Kushner's Widows, Jan. 29-Feb. 8, 2009; The Man of Mode, by Restoration playwright George Etherege, Feb. 26-March 8, 2009; and Canadian Anne-Marie MacDonald's popular Good Night Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet), March 26-April 5, 2009.

The Players' final 2007-08 offering, Oscar Wilde's An Ideal Husband, opened Thursday at Essex Hall. It continues through April 20. Tickets \$19-\$17. Call 519-253-3000, ext. 2808.

CanCon in La Rondine Lotfi Mansouri, who was general director of the Canadian Opera Company for a dozen years, directed Michigan Opera Theatre's upcoming production of Puccini's La Rondine, April 19-26.

The cast also includes tenor David Pomeroy, the Newfoundlander who was supposed to perform in Windsor Symphony's Cavalleria Rusticana in March, but backed out at the last minute.

Tickets US\$117-\$25. Call 313-237-7464, or order online at www.motopera.org.

Rare prints coming Art Gallery of Windsor will offer a rare glimpse at the woodcuts and engravings of 15th-century Renaissance artist Albrecht Durer, April 19 to June 8.

The exhibit of 53 prints includes famous works The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Adam and Eve, and The Knight, Death, and The Devil. It is being circulated by the National Gallery of Canada.

An opening reception and private viewing, April 17 at 7:30 p.m., will be accompanied by music by Windsor's Early Music Ensemble and a lecture by the National Gallery's curator, John Collins. Tickets are \$100. Call 519-977-0013.

Pianos by Butler Students of Greg Butler Associates piano studio perform a gala concerto, Friday, April 18 at 7 p.m., at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 405 Victoria Ave. Among the performers is Ara Cho,

who will play two movements from Chopin's Piano Concerto in E minor and one of the Paganini Etudes by Liszt.

In other news, Butler's duet CD recorded with Windsor organist David Palmer, *Double Exposure*, will be released at a launch and performance, June 6 at 7:30 p.m., at Assumption University Chapel. Details are still being worked out, but Butler has said 50 per cent of the proceeds from the CD sales will be donated to the University of Windsor school of music and Humanities Research Group.

Both Butler and Palmer are former directors of the school of music.

Pink power Stephanie Allen Santos and Tracey Atin are teaming up to paint Kingsville pink April 26 in support of breast cancer research.

A revue celebrating women of the musical stage, *Broads on Broadway*, will raise funds to support the Wonderbroads charity dragon boat team. CKLW's Melanie Deveau will host the event at Migration Hall at 8 p.m.

Tickets are \$30 for the cabaret style performance. Tables are also available for discount. Tickets can be purchased at Kingsville Office Pro, 19 Main St. W., Kingsville, or by calling 519-733-8357.

Silver lining The music of Leroy Anderson will be performed by Windsor's Silver Ambassadors, a group of musical seniors, April 27 at 7 p.m., at Royal Canadian Legion, 12326 Lanoue St., Tecumseh. Tickets are \$8 and include light snacks. For more information, call Karen Barnes at 519-726-6723.

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