

EL OBSERVADOR

CLASSIFIEDS/BIDS

Orchestra Performs "Mexican Traditions" Symphony concert to feature charismatic composer

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's Silver Anniversary concert season celebration continues in January with the much-anticipated "Mexican Traditions," an intriguing classical program imported from exotic Mexico and featuring the charismatic Guillermo Salvador from Guadalajara, Jalisco as guest conductor.



Guillermo Salvador

Maestro Guillermo has a professional background as a brilliant pianist, both in recitals and as a soloist with the most important orchestras in Mexico and abroad. The Government of Mexico named him best musician of the year in 2001.

The symphony will feature a diverse selection of music by Mexican composers, including Silvestre Revueltas. As a child, Revueltas played the violin and organized orchestras among his playmates.

He went on to develop a highly unique musical language rooted in the folk idiom of his native land.

Other selections include "Moncayo's Haupango"; a folk-medley based on three well-known melodies from the port city of Alvarado. This brilliant rhapsody has become one of the most well known symphonic works written in Mexico.

The concert will also include works of a Cuban origin. The "danzon" typically features instrumental solos. The dance begins formally and restrained then picks up as the Afro-Cuban rhythms bring

a pronounced sensuality to the surface.

The "danzon" became popular in Mexico almost as soon as it gained notoriety in Cuba.

The program concludes with George Bizet's Symphony #1 in C. Composed when he was only seventeen and still a student at the Paris Conservatory, the music has a youthful feel, rich in freshness and charm.

Performances will be held Saturday, Jan. 25 at 3 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 26 at 7 p.m. A "Musical Conversation," an informal talk about the music and composers, begins at 2 p.m., preceding Saturday's concert.

Few Graduates Earn High School Certificate

AP) — Only 27 percent of Oregon's most recent high school graduates earned the certificate of academic proficiency issued by the state in 2002, up slightly from 24 percent the year before.

The credential, known as the Certificate of Initial Mastery, or the CIM, carries no state mandated penalties if students don't take it, and no rewards if they do.

But teachers and principals,

who would like to see more students earn a CIM, say it is valuable and that state colleges are increasingly using it to make decisions about enrollment and scholarships. The CIM certifies that students who have earned it meet state standards in reading, math, writing and public speaking.

The state found vast disparities in which students earn CIMs: Whites, Asians and American Indians in the class

of 2002 all earned certificates at roughly the statewide rate of 27 percent. But only 8 percent of black and Hispanic students got CIMs, the state reported.

"This really gives us a road map of where we need to put our efforts," said Gene Evans, communications director for the Oregon Department of Education. Oregon's class of 2001 was the first eligible to earn the certificates, which grew out of Oregon's 1991 school reform

law. To earn a certificate, students must pass multiple-choice tests in reading, math and science and essay tests in writing and problem-solving. They also must complete eight samples of classroom work judged by their teachers to meet state standards: three essays or papers, three speeches and two complex math problems. The certificate is not required for graduation.

Florida Prepares for Eventual Travel to Cuba

AP) — Whenever Congress debates an end to the ban on U.S. travel to Cuba, Maria Aral's charter flight company gets calls from Americans eager to book a trip to Havana.

Aral's ABC Charters and other tourism companies and state and local officials are preparing for the day when people might be free to travel to the island that is only 90 miles from Florida.

Since 1963, most Americans have been prohibited from visiting Cuba. Only people with relatives in Cuba, U.S. government officials and professionals such as journalists and doctors can make the trip. President Bush said earlier this year that a substantial softening of U.S. policy would only come after the communist government of Fidel Castro is out of power.

When that day comes, Florida officials hope for a jump in tourism. The state's tourism marketing

agency, Visit Florida, commissioned a survey that found many people who want to visit Cuba would prefer to combine a weeklong trip to Florida with an excursion to the island. Fewer than one in 10 would skip the state altogether to visit Cuba.

But some parts of the state — for example, the Florida Keys — fear they could lose business to Cuba. Key West is closer to Havana than to Miami.

Harold Wheeler, who heads the Monroe County Tourist Development Council, said his group has created a plan to market trips to Cuba as an ideal side trip from the Keys, and vice versa. He expects Cuba's shortage of high-quality hotels would help keep the Keys as the main destination.

"We realize there's going to be a great curiosity to go to Cuba," Wheeler said. "The key is how we position ourselves."

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