

Sharing classical music across Eastern Oregon

By **Daneli Atilano**
Go! Magazine

HERMISTON — Upon its founding in 1999, Inland Northwest Musicians decided that one of the group's core values was to educate and share classical music with people of all ages and geographic backgrounds.

The goal, representatives say, is "to continue an inclusive atmosphere at every level in our program."

The INWM encompasses three different ensembles, all under the direction of conductor R. Lee Friese.

The Willow Creek Symphony is for novice musicians of all ages to hone skills and grow as classical musicians. This ensemble is open to 30 volunteer members and encourages musicians of less advanced skills from all backgrounds to join.

There are two ensembles for advanced musicians: the Inland Northwest Orchestra, with 50 members, and the Inland



Inland Northwest Musicians/Contributed image

The Inland Northwest Musicians formed in 1999, and offers musical opportunities for a variety of ages. Concerts are planned in March and April.

Northwest Chorale, which has 40 singers. These ensembles travel across Eastern Oregon and Southeastern Washington performing individual concerts and combined holiday performances for the enjoyment of a variety of communities.

As part of the group's focus on education, the Willow Creek Symphony and members of the Inland Northwest Orchestra hold a Young People's Concert in the Wallowa Valley and Hermiston

area each year. These concerts are meant to expose young students to classical music, explain the various instruments and answer questions — with the hope of sparking an interest in classical music.

To highlight and foster young talent, the Inland Northwest Musicians hosts a yearly Young Artist Competition. Young musicians compete for cash prizes and the opportunity to perform as a guest artist with the orches-

tra. The winners are divided into elementary, junior, senior and young adult categories.

"We plan to be able to serve our population for an unending time into the future," Friese said.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- March 12: The Inland Northwest Orchestra performs Beethoven's Symphony #1 and Beethoven's Piano Concerto #1 accompanied by guest pianist Harriet Wong, beginning at

INLAND NORTHWEST MUSICIANS

The Inland Northwest Musicians formed in 1999 and welcomes musicians to three ensembles: Willow Creek Symphony, Inland Northwest Orchestra and the Inland Northwest Chorale.

For information, visit www.inlandnorthwestmusicians.com or the INWM Facebook page.

4 p.m. at the Hermiston Community Center, 415 S. Highway 395.

- March 27: The Inland Northwest Chorale will perform at the Sage Center in Boardman at 4 p.m.

- April 14: A Young People's Concert will be held by the Willow Creek Symphony for students in fourth through sixth grades at the Hermiston Community Center.

- April 16: A public concert will be held in Morrow County (location and time to be determined).



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a series of oil paintings
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Untitled (detail) by Sarah Bird