

Oregon East Symphony cancels remainder of season

HERMISTON HERALD

Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the Oregon East Symphony has announced it will be canceling the remainder of its 2019-20 season, after the online presentation of its Spring Chamber Music Concert on Saturday, April 18.

The cancellation affects the previously postponed "Winter Moons" concert, scheduled for March 14 in Pendleton and March 15 in Hermiston, and the season finale, "Blow it Up, Start Again," scheduled for a Pendleton performance on June 13. Symphony staff and board of directors volunteers have been reaching out to season ticket holders and individual concert ticket holders to inform them of the development.

To close out the season this year, OES's annual Spring Chamber Music Festival will be held online, streamed Saturday, April 18 at 6:30 p.m. from the front page of their website, www.OregonEastSymphony.org. The online concert will be free to view for anyone with an internet connection.

Musicians at this year's concert will produce HD video recordings of themselves performing chamber works from their homes or private



Photo contributed by Ric Walters

Hermiston-based mezzo-soprano singer Alexis McCarthy will perform as part of Oregon East Symphony's Spring Chamber Music Festival Concert. The concert will be live-streamed on Saturday, April 18 on the symphony's website.

studios. These prerecorded performances will be edited together into the video that will be streamed on OES's website.

Performances this year include OES violist Aurora Torres on "Two Rhapsodies for Oboe, Viola, and Piano" by Charles Martin Tormov Loeffler, with Ryan Klein (oboe) and Chad Spears (piano); OES

conductor and artistic director Dr. Beau Benson presenting a selection of classical guitar repertoire from 16th and 19th century Spain; OES assistant concertmaster Viet Block and OES principal cellist Zach Banks performing "Duo for Violin and Cello, Op. 7" by Zoltán Kodály; mezzo-soprano Alexis McCarthy performing Saint-

Saëns's aria "Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix" with piano accompaniment by Rachel Pariseau; and Pendleton-born Hollywood composer Chris Thomas providing a film scoring performance.

Even regular OES concert emcees Bill Mayclin and Murray Dunlap will prerecord their pre-concert announcements in their trademark tuxedos.

A feature of the Chamber Music Festival that can't be replicated in a virtual environment is the spread of hearty hors d'oeuvres and wine and beer provided by OES's volunteer board of directors. This year the board of directors will be compiling a recipe book of hors d'oeuvres that will be electronically submitted to those on the symphony mailing list prior to the concert.

Meanwhile, OES Education Director Zach Banks has been adapting as much of the symphony's educational activities as possible to an online environment. The Oregon East Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Symphony's intermediate level youth orchestra, kicked off its first "OESYO Virtual Jam Session" last week. The goal of the weekly online classes, held at the same time as regular OESYO rehearsals, is to sustain student engagement through play-

ing assignments and an in-depth look at music theory and history surrounding the pieces scheduled to be performed at the OESYO's Spring Concert.

Banks has also been emailing students in both OESYO and Preludes, the beginner level preparatory orchestra, links to useful, free online content like free streaming concert recordings by the Berlin Philharmonic, online master classes, and free sheet music suitable for participants' skill levels. For the Preludes Orchestra, conductor Melinda Tovey has been producing short "play-along" videos for each of the students in her ensemble.

Another educational activity OES provides that is moving online is OES's private lesson financial assistance program. OES will cover partial or the full cost of private strings instruction with an approved instructor for students who lack the financial means to afford private lessons on their own.

For more information about the Oregon East Symphony and its concert and education programing, email the office at info@oregonEastSymphony.org. The office at 345 S.W. Fourth St. in Pendleton is closed until further notice.

Hermiston runner gets creative after Las Vegas marathon was canceled

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

When the thing you were looking forward to gets canceled, sometimes you have to just make do with what you've got.

For Liz Sharon, that meant a "mini marathon" in Hermiston on Friday after her real marathon, the Revel Mt. Charleston Marathon in Las Vegas, was called off because of COVID-19.

Sharon had been in training since December and planned to run the full marathon on Saturday with her younger sister, followed

by some vacation time together. Instead, on Friday she ran a half marathon (13.1 miles) up and down the bicycle lane on Highland Avenue in Hermiston, being careful not to touch things along the route or get too close to any passerby.

"When the race got canceled I was so sad, but I felt so silly being sad when so many more serious things are going on in the world, with people losing their jobs and all the deaths," she said. "But it's hard when you work so hard for something, and have a goal."

Trying to make lemonade out of lemons, her hus-

band Joseph Sharon and their children did what they could to help create a race atmosphere. They took turns running segments with her, handed out water along the way and were there to cheer for her at the "finish line."

Her sister called her to cheer her on.

After her husband posted about the family activity on Facebook, several family friends also took the time to drive by and honk or cheer from a safe distance away.

"That meant so much to me," Sharon said. "I wanted to give them a hug, but of course you can't."



Contributed photo by Kim Puzey
Liz Sharon runs a half marathon along Highland Avenue in Hermiston on Friday.

U.S. Cellular offers youth sponsorships

HERMISTON HERALD

For the sixth year in a row, youth-focused organizations in northeast Oregon communities can earn up to \$1,000 through U.S. Cellular's Community Connections program.

Whether it's a Little League baseball team, high school debate team, marching band, youth cheer squad or a variety of other groups, organizers can sign their group up at uscellular.com/

communityconnections to start earning sponsorship support without the need to sell candy bars, wash cars or sell coupon books.

Once registered, local nonprofit academic and athletic groups representing youths up to 12th grade have 14 days to rally their friends, families and supporters to complete online activities that include taking short surveys, watching videos or following U.S. Cellular on its social channels. Each com-

pleted activity earns money that goes directly to the organization — up to \$1,000 — and the website makes it easy to spread the word on social media.

"Six years ago, we decided that in addition to sponsoring college and professional sports teams across the country, we wanted to support youth programs that provide kids here in Eastern Oregon with fun and meaningful experiences every day," said Erryn Ander-

sen, director of sales in the Northwest at U.S. Cellular. "We know there are several groups in need of financial support, and by investing in them we can help ensure that all kids get a fair shot to achieve their goals."

Since launching the program in 2015, U.S. Cellular has awarded \$1.4 million to nearly 3,000 groups nationwide. For more information and to view the official rules, visit uscellular.com/communityconnections.

Electric cooperative to distribute \$2.5 million

HERMISTON HERALD

Umatilla Electric Cooperative announced Tuesday that its board of directors approved the distribution of \$2.5 million to the cooperative's members in April.

The distribution is part of UEC's Capital Credits program, and refunds will be based on the amount of power customers consumed in 2018. According

to a news release, a member consuming an average amount of energy during 2018 will receive a check for about \$70.

The refunds apply to all classes of customers — 9,905 accounts overall. Checks should appear in mailboxes in mid-April. Refunds of less than \$10 will be retained in the customer's account and added to future refunds.

Because UEC is a not-for-profit, member-owned company, the cooperative operates at cost and returns its net operating revenues to members through the Capital Credits program. According to UEC, they have returned more than \$80 million to members since 1960.

In a statement, CEO and General Manager Robert Echenrode said employ-

ees' hard work and fiscal responsibility have a positive effect on the bottom line, making such distributions possible.

"We are proud to be able to make this distribution in a time of need to help stimulate a portion of the economy," he said.

For questions, call 541-567-6414 or email customer.service@umatillaelectric.com.



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