

Walz joins Inland Valley Symphony for weekend concerts

By: CHARLES HAND - For The Californian

Cellist John Walz will join the Inland Valley Symphony on Saint-Saens' Concerto No. 1 and Bruch's Kol Nidri for its April in Paris program.

Walz is a local resident, but has toured Europe 25 times to play recitals and concertos in London, Paris, Zurich, Geneva, Lucerne, Rome, Vienna, and Australia.

Inland Symphony president Sharon Rollinson said Walz has proven a popular performer in the past, which led the organization to invite him back for this weekend's concert.

"He played with us once before and was very well received," Rollinson said.

As a young man, Walz heard French cellist Pierre Fournier play the Dvorak Concerto with Zubin Mehta and the Los Angeles Philharmonic and decided where his future lay. Seven years later he went to Switzerland to study with Fournier, then returned to the U.S. to take up a career that has spanned 30 years. Today, he is principal cellist with the Los Angeles Opera. He held the same position with the Long Beach Symphony of 20 years.

In addition to the pieces on which Walz will play, the Inland Valley Symphony will perform three pieces evocative of Paris in spring or written by French composers.

George Gershwin's "An American in Paris" expresses musically a young American's reactions to the sights and sounds of Paris. "Prelude to Afternoon of a Faun" was written by Debussy, a French composer. While Ravel's "Bolero" has a decidedly Hispanic flavor, it is drawn not from the Americas, but the Basque country in Spain. "Bolero" was chosen, in part, because of its broad popularity.

"We're always looking for ways to expand our audience," Rollinson said.

It was Walz who brought Kol Nidri into the program, Rollinson said, though it normally is played during the High Holy Days, not for a program on springtime in Paris. It is a short piece at 10 minutes. The Saint-Saenz concerto is 18 minutes long.

Before the start of the program, director Jeanine Trent Atwood will present a 30-minute talk on the music to be performed. In addition to conducting the Inland Valley Symphony, Atwood is on the faculty of the Idyllwild Arts Academy and is a minister of music for local churches.

This is the third of four concerts the symphony will present during the 2006-07 concert year.

"April in Paris"

When: 8 p.m. April 14

Where: St. Martha Catholic Church, 37200 Whitewood Road, Murrieta

When: 2:30 p.m. April 15

Where: Vista Murrieta High School Auditorium, 28251 Clinton Keith Road, Murrieta

Tickets: \$15 for adults, \$12.50 for students and seniors, and children 12 and under are free with a paying adult

Info: (951) 677-9465, inlandvalleysymphony.org