

Bach Fest highlights classical community

My high school math teacher, Mr. McCall, once played a classical song off the radio and offered extra credit points to anyone who could name it correctly. I'm sure my dad could have guessed it – he's half the reason I love classical music – but I certainly couldn't, and leave it to me to hope the mystery song would turn out to be the easy pick, "American in Paris." It wasn't.

Having visited Paris and many other historic places associated with the heroes of classical music – not to mention my several trips to the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Symphony and other venerable venues – my appreciation for classical music has increased over the years. It's an appreciation I share with soprano Robin Fisher, who will give a concert and offer a special master class as part of this month's Sonora Bach Festival.

"The Sonora Bach Festival is a wonderful testament to the passion Americans have for exquisite classical music," Fisher said. "I lived in Europe for nine years as a student and professional singer. I have performed and travelled in cities where Bach, Handel, Mozart and Schubert lived and composed. Certainly those places inspire my love and dedication to classical music. But unique to our country is the fresh, uninhibited and innovative way Americans embrace the music of these composers. The Sonora festival offers a chance to celebrate this phenomenon."

Coming to Sonora from the Sacramento area, Fisher has performed both internationally with the Vienna Chamber Orchestra and closer to the Mother Lode with groups like the Sacramento Opera and Townsend Opera.

"Bach and Handel were from northern Germany, where I spent a

Salon Concert

WHEN: 6 p.m.
Saturday

WHERE: A private Sonora residence

TICKETS: \$35 at sonorabach.org or 536-6330

great deal of time as a student," Fisher said. "Following the strict musical rules of the Baroque period, they found ways to express the heights and depths of the human experience in ways that every person could understand. Even if one doesn't know the rules of the music, the listener instinctively knows what these composers intended. That, in my opinion, is the hallmark of great music."

But although founder Carl Anton Wirth named the Sonora Bach festival after the infamous composer, Executive Director Diane Wright said much of the music performed during the festival won't come from Bach, although it will come from the Baroque and Classical periods. Fisher's salon concert features several of her favorite Handel opera arias and groups of American art songs that she said "carry on the tradition of communication by joining American poetry with American music."

"Listeners can expect to delight in quality texts from our country's great poets and music that conveys America's innovative musical language," Fisher said. "My choice to

Master Class

WHEN: 2 p.m. Sunday

WHERE: Church of the Forty-niners, Jackson and Gold streets, Columbia

TICKETS: Participation is \$25; viewing is \$5 at sonorabach.org or 536-6330

program American art songs comes mostly from the recent publication of 'American Art Song & American Poetry,' a book I wrote together with scholar Ruth Friedberg. It also reflects my desire to celebrate how Americans continue the great traditions of Bach and Handel in their mission to express the human experience through music."

The Sonora Bach Festival gives Mother Lode residents the chance to

be a part of that experience in an intimate setting. According to Wright, organizers of the festival also hope to extend that experience to its educational offerings. Wright, herself, credits her high school choral director as a reason for her ongoing love of classical music.

"With the monetary cuts to many school systems, the music programs have suffered," Wright said. "There may be some future divas or divos or French horn players or classical music conductors out there who will never know that they want to be a classical musician because they have never experienced classical music. Just go to the (festival's) Youth Concert once and you will be hooked watching these kids perform. Some can't even reach the piano pedals. If you go to the Locals Concert, you will see and hear the wonderful talent that exists in this community."

The festival held its youth concert last weekend, but there's still time to take in the remaining events. Fisher gives her Salon Concert at 6 p.m. Saturday at a private home. Admission is \$35. She then offers a

Tuolumne Talk

Harmony Wheeler



master class on Sunday at 2 p.m.; there is a \$25 participation fee and observers can attend for just \$5.

Other festival events include the Locals Concert at 3 p.m. Oct. 21 at the Church of the Forty-niners in Columbia (\$10) and a brunch with music from The Three Guitars – David Chapman, Guy Powell and Travis Silvers – happens on Sunday, Oct. 28 at the Twain Harte Golf Club (\$30). All reservations may be made at sonorabach.org or call 536-6330.

"Why not Sonora?" Wright said. "We have many talented people who live here and many schoolchildren who are studying classical music. Music is in our souls. It's a wonderful gift to share with others."

Send your Tuolumne County events to Harmony Wheeler at hwheeler@sierralodestar.com and mtaylor@sierralodestar.com.



Livanos
LANDSCAPING

A DESIGN & INSTALLATION COMPANY

- Water features, ponds & waterfalls
- Rock walls, patios & specialty gardens
- New installation & yard makeovers

Creating a yard that fits your lifestyle and budget!

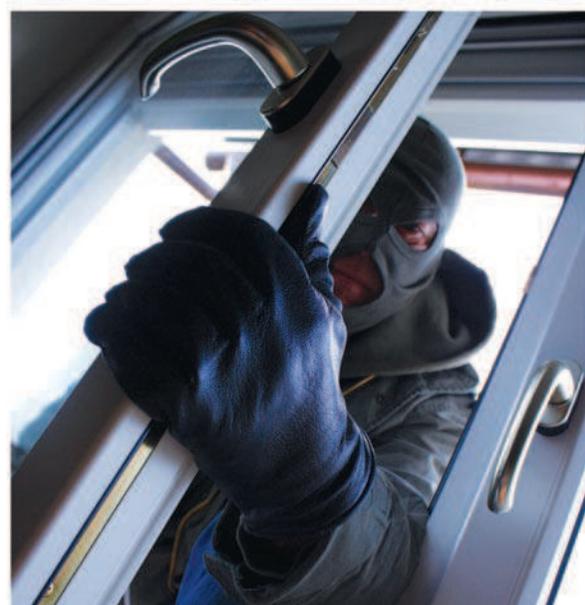
(209) 743-3770

www.livanoslandscaping.com

Licensed, Bonded and Insured • Lic#688617

BREAK-INS ARE ON THE RISE... DON'T LET IT BE YOU!

97% of all burglaries occur at properties without a Security System



LIMITED TIME SECURITY SYSTEM OFFER ENDS SOON!

\$199⁰⁰* Installed:

- (3) Doors Contacted
- (1) Motion Detector
- (1) Security Keypad with Panic Button
- (1) Wireless Key fob Remote
- (1) Control Panel with Battery Back Up
- (1) High Decibel Siren

MOUNTAIN ALARM

* Monitoring term applies
ACO #3058 • C-10 #555389

Protecting Homes & Businesses in the Mother Lode For Over 23 Years Since 1989

(209) 754-0459 • www.mountainalarminc.com • (209) 532-9662