



Rio Hondo Symphony offers night of music

By Karissa Nedeau, Correspondent

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WHITTIER - Residents no longer have to resort to singing in the shower for free concerts.

The 76th annual Rio Hondo Symphony is offering a night of free music and a raffle for one lucky kid to win a free iPod.

At 3 p.m. Sunday everyone is welcome to visit the Vic Lopez Auditorium at Whittier High School to see the concert themed "Those Romantic Germans" with guest conductor Hector Salazar.

"The goal is to bring beautiful music to the entire community free of charge," said Public Relations Manager Dorothea Cummings.

In addition to performing, the conductor of the symphony does all the program planning: they pick music that hasn't been used before, select the title, and line up a soloist, Cummings said.

This year, Salazar is replacing Wayne Reinecke, who retired last spring after 20 years as conductor and music director.

Salazar's program features soprano soloist Erin Wood and selected works by composers Brahms, Wagner and Carl Reinecke, who are all German and tie into the theme.

"I like to challenge myself and the orchestra to do something new and different, and challenge the audience to open up their possibilities to something new and fresh," Salazar said.

Ruth Haroldson started the symphony back in 1932 in the midst of the Depression, with a performance of "Hard Times," Cummings said.

Salazar tied those beginning times to the current state of the economy.

"With the economy and the world so topsy-turvy, it's great to be able to reach out to the community and offer free concerts like this to escape all of it for a moment," Salazar said.

Each concert costs about \$30,000 to stage, according to Cummings. The orchestra is sponsored by Whittier, Santa Fe Springs and Rio Hondo College, and is also paid for by donations from individuals and businesses in the community.

Already more than 400 people have contributed since the Rio Hondo Symphony's first concert on Sept. 28, which drew about 1,500 people, Cummings said.

For more information and upcoming concert dates, call (562) 698-8626.

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