

PCO performs ‘Schubert – The Sublime’ at LLLC



Lawrence Kohl

Photo provided

Submitted by Lawrence Kohl

Pacific Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Conductor Lawrence Kohl, will perform Schubert's Octet, Ravel's Introduction and Allegro, and Francaix's Dixtuor, at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 23 in the Community Hall at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

Maurice Ravel's Introduction and Allegro flows like a delightful afternoon conversation between the harp, flute, clarinet and strings from the dreamy opening to the lively and buoyant conclusion. The Erard piano company, inspired by Debussy's Danses Sacree et Profane, commissioned Maurice Ravel to write a piece for its new double-action pedal harp to display the harp's extensive range, encourage more works to be written and, of course, sell harps! The new harp's range, subtle colors and textures are

displayed throughout from the dreamy opening to the buoyant conclusion.

Ravel's musical ideas, often stemming from his love of childhood fairy tales and stories of faraway lands, flowed during his solitary excursions through the countryside or while roaming the streets of Paris, oblivious to the hubbub around him. Featuring Dan Levitan, his "impeccable virtuosity" has made him the most sought after solo and orchestral harpist throughout Northern California from the Santa Rosa and Napa Symphonies, to the San Francisco Opera Orchestra to San Jose's Symphony Silicon Valley.

Early on Jean Francaix caught the society's attention. Ravel pronounced, "Among the child's gifts I observe above all the most fruitful an artist can possess, that of curiosity." Francaix's Dixtuor for wind quintet and string quintet begins in the French countryside – tranquil, calm, re-

laxing and closes, it's as if bird calls wake us for a brisk walk back to the city. Indeed, as one musical genius recognizes another Francaix went on to become one of France's most celebrated composers.

The exuberant opening in Franz Shubert's Octet for Clarinet, Bassoon, French Horn and Strings moves into a silver-lined melody for the clarinet and continues through a walking-bass which lightens your heart; it ends on notes of jubilant delight.

Schubert's genius lay in translating the direct experience of nature's breathtaking beauty into music. One is whisked away into the sublime. Franz Schubert passed away at age of 31, officially due to typhoid fever. However, some have said it was actually syphilis. Still, Schubert managed to write over one thousand pieces in his short lifespan. Schubert idolized Beethoven. Influenced by his work, he built on it as he struggled to further develop the Romantic spirit in music. Such was they kindred spirit that they are buried next to each other in Vienna.

The members of the Pacific Chamber Orchestra also appear in such prestigious groups as the San Francisco Symphony, Opera and Ballet Orchestras, touring Broadway shows, and feature films recorded at Skywalker Ranch. They are touring soloists and chamber musicians.

PCO will also perform at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 24 in the Bankhead Theatre, 2400 First Street in Livermore. Tickets may be purchased for "Schubert – The Sublime" online at www.pacificchamberorchestra.org and additionally for the Livermore performance by calling or visiting the Bankhead box office (925) 373-6800 or www.bankheadtheater.org.

With summer fast approaching, lifeguard slots open at regional parks



Bigstock image

By John T. Miller

Ever consider becoming a lifeguard over the summer? If so, the East Bay Regional Park District is recruiting 40-60 new full-time lifeguards for the 2019 swim season at its 11 facilities in the East Bay. But the application process isn't easy. Participants must swim 500 yards in under 10 minutes, carry a rescue board 50 feet, retrieve three dive rings under 4-7 feet of water, tread water for two minutes using only their legs, and retrieve a 10-pound brick from under water. A short interview will follow successful completion of the swim test.

Four different testing dates remain on Saturdays and Sundays over the last two weekends in March. Participants who pass will receive paid training and certification in open water lifeguarding at the District's Lifeguard Academy, which takes place over five weekends in April and May. The swim season begins in May for most facilities.

The remaining testing schedule includes Saturday, March 23 at Livermore High School, and on March 24, 30 and 31 at Roberts Pool in Oak-

land. All sessions start at 1 p.m.

Lifeguards can work at any of the District's 11 swim facilities: Lake Del Valle in Livermore (East and West Beach), Shadow Cliffs in Pleasanton, Quarry Lakes in Fremont, Lake Don Castro in Hayward, Cull Canyon in Castro Valley, Roberts Pool in Oakland, Lake Anza in Berkeley, Castle Rock in Walnut Creek, and Contra Loma in Antioch.

"Promoting water safety and educating park visitors on how to safely recreate around the water is paramount in what a lifeguard does," says EBRPD Aquatics Manager Pete DeQuincy. "Working as a lifeguard is one of a few ways a young adult can give back to their community and learn about public service."

Anyone age 16 or over by April 20 is encouraged to apply. Applicants must submit an EBRPD job application online and a supplemental questionnaire included in the application. For more information, call (510) 690-6625 or visit www.ebparks.org/activities/swimming/lifeguard.htm.

'Lamorinda Teens Read' program returns for second year



Nic Stone

Photo provided

By John T. Miller

Following the successful launch of the Lamorinda Teens Read program last year, the school libraries of the Acalanes Union High School District and the Lamorinda community libraries of Contra Costa County have teamed up again to offer "One Community, One Book" to local teens.

The program, which runs through March 29, offers free copies of "Dear Martin" by Nic Stone to teens living in the Lamorinda community or attending schools in the AUHSD. So far, over 600 books have been given away. Copies are available at any of the four high school libraries, or from the community libraries in Lafayette, Moraga or Orinda. Copies can also be purchased at local bookstores.

The book revolves around Justyce McAllister – a straight-A African-American student at a mostly white prep school – who encounters racial profiling when he helps his drunk girlfriend into a car. As Justyce tries to reconcile the experi-

ence of being thrown into handcuffs while attempting to do a good deed – and his subsequent struggles with injustices and aggression – he addresses letters to the memory of Martin Luther King, Jr. The book has some scenes with violence, teen fights, police brutality and clear examples of racism, while also addressing issues of underage drinking, stereotypes, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

As part of the program, Patrick Turner, a counselor at Campolindo High School who also serves as the Black Student Union Advisor and Diversity Chairman for the school, led a panel discussion on "A Race to Racial Harmony" at the Moraga Library earlier this month. About 25 community members ranging in age from 13 to 65 and representing many diverse races attended the discussion. Commenting on the evening, Turner said, "Adults and students who read "Dear Martin" say that it painted the perfect picture for an African-American student in a school

community similar to ours."

The group brainstormed how to improve the social conditions that students of color experience in the community. Some of the ideas included: hosting similar assemblies at each school site; enforce mandatory diversity training for all AUHSD staff; create policies and consequences to hold students and staff accountable for verbal assaults stemming from racial slurs; abolish books with the N-word; incorporate more diverse literature from authors of color, women and LGBTQ; add an ethnic studies class; and hire more people of color to present multiple perspectives.

The suggestion to abolish books with the N-word, however, would include the very book that brought up the discussion, as the dialogue in "Dear Martin" includes its usage.

"Making changes for all will better suit our district for many years to come," summed up Turner. "Hopefully, this session will encourage friends

and family of the participants to attend more events and create a different narrative for the future."

About 16 participants – again of all races, ages, and genders – joined facilitators Kat Culberg, David Dean, and Julie Shackleford-Bradley from the East Bay group Circles for Social Change on March 13 for a workshop on "Racial Harm and Healing, A Restorative Approach" at the Orinda Library. The group focused on microaggressions and how these have happened to them, or how they themselves may have hurt someone, knowingly or unknowingly.

According to David Wing Sue, Ph.D., writing in Psychology Today, "Microaggressions are the verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership."

The point of the session

was to create a safe space where participants can talk about difficult subjects in an authentic and vulnerable way.

There is also a writing contest for students between the ages of 12-18 to write a letter to a particular person who has greatly inspired them, just as the main character in "Dear Martin" does. The hero can be someone alive, deceased, a relative, a teacher, mentor, or famous person, etc. The deadline is at 8 p.m. Monday, March 25. Complete rules and guidelines for the contest can be found at cclib.org. Click on Lamorinda Teens Read, scroll down to Lafayette: Writing Contest, and follow the link to Full Contest Rules.

Finalists in the "Dear Hero" writing contest will read their letters during a movie screening event featuring short film "Think of Calvin," where racial profiling escalates to a night in jail. The event will take place from 5:30 to 7 p.m. April 11 at the Lafayette Library, with prizes awarded to the writing contest winners.

