

Picninc, Pops and a world premiere

By Amy Welch

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WOODBURY — This year's Waterbury Symphony Orchestra Picnic & Pops concert will include a world premiere and electric violins, as well as some American favorites.

Sabrina Berger, a member of the orchestra's violin section, will premiere "Hasana Tanz," a new piece written for electric violin by David Snow. The piece, whose title means "Wedding Dance" in Yiddish, was originally written as a violin solo for Berger, but Snow wrote orchestra parts at Berger's request. The piece is a raucous, klezmer-infused dance that would have fit into an Old World wedding celebration.

Berger will be joined by Alyce Cognetta Bertz, the symphony's concertmistress, for an electric violin performance of the first movement of Bach's "Double Concerto."

A member of orchestras in Connecticut and New York, Berger has already recorded one CD of music for electric violin. She often performs traditional repertoire — such as the Bach "Double Concerto" — with this new sound, as well as pieces written especially for the electric violin.

Her first CD, "Eclectic Electric," shows the range and capabilities of the electric violin.

Other selections scheduled for the concert include Leroy Anderson's "Bugler's Holiday" and "Belle of the Ball," Sousa's "Fairest of the Fair" and other pieces such as "Salute to Fats Waller," "Flying Music from 'E.T.," and "Highlights from 'Rocky.'"

If you go

What: Picnic & Pops with the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra

When: 4 p.m., Saturday

Where: The Hollow, Hollow Road, Woodbury. Rain location, Pomperaug High School, Southbury

Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$15 at the door; \$50 advance patron tent seating; children under 18 get in free. Available at Final Touch Antiques in Middlebury; Westbury Music in Watertown; Canfield Corner Pharmacy and Woodbury Drug Store in Woodbury; Koenig Art Emporium and Down on Main Street in Southbury; or by calling the symphony box office.

Phone: (203) 574-4283

Lynne Strow, an internationally known opera singer who now makes her home in Southbury, will join the symphony as well to conduct a piece — an honor she won as highest bidder for the position at the symphony's fund-raising auction in April.

This will mark the eleventh year of Picnic & Pops, the symphony's annual outdoor concert in Woodbury. This year's concert is sponsored by O & G Industries and New Milford Savings Bank.



Soloist Sabrina A. Berger will perform at Picnic & Pops with the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra on Saturday in Woodbury.

THIS WEEKEND

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A promise to be electric

Picnic and Pops concert to feature electric violin

By Amy Welch

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WOODBURY

Remember the stir when Bob Dylan went electric at the Newport Folk Festival? Imagine what will happen Saturday when J.S. Bach does the same at the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra's Picnic and Pops concert in Woodbury.

Sabrina Berger and Alyce Cognetta Bertz, the orchestra's concertmaster, will perform the first movement of Bach's "Double Concerto" on electric violin. To Berger, who will also premiere David Snow's "Hasana Tanz," a klezmer-style wedding dance on Saturday, it's no big deal.

"I know electric violin scares a lot of people in classical music," Berger said in a phone interview from her Norwalk home. "It's not a gimmick, which is the nice thing about it." Berger plays in orchestras in Connecticut and New York, including Waterbury's and has recorded "Eclectic Electric," a CD of electric violin music.

Berger said comparing acoustic and electric instruments is like comparing Baroque instruments and contemporary ones: technological advances simply make the instruments capable of more sound and emotional output. Her electric violin, for example, has a 10-button foot pedal that allows her to sound as if she's in a cathedral or a small room — or play heavy-metal violin.

In addition to a new twist on an old favorite, Saturday's program will also include Leroy Anderson's "Bugler's Holiday" and "Belle of the Ball," Sousa's "Fairest of the Fair" and movie music such as "Flying Music from 'E.T.'" and "Highlights from 'Rocky.'"

And Lynne Strow, a former opera singer from Southbury, will take the baton from Leif Bjaland, the orchestra's conductor and music director, and lead the orchestra in Sousa's "King Cotton" march. Strow said she's eager to put to rest the rumor that singers can't read music, and she's thrilled, as a woman, to take the podium. Strow earned her temporary conductorship by placing the highest bid for it at the symphony's annual fund-raising auction.

Berger said she thinks the electric violin will help revive flagging interest in classical music. Her recitals combine acoustic and electric violin, giving people a chance to see what her instrument can do. As one example, she plays a section of Bach's solo



Waterbury Symphony Orchestra

Sabrina Berger, will premier David Snow's 'Hasana Tanz' during the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra's Picnic and Pops concert Saturday in Woodbury.

sonata for violin on her wooden instrument at the beginning of the program, and plays it on the electric instrument at the end.

Younger listeners, kids especially, love the instrument.

And if she can interest someone in having a symphony experience, she'll be happy. When Berger first went shopping for her electric violin, she took

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