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Entertainment

CONCERT REVIEW: A classical display of enthusiasm

By Bill Peters

An enthusiastic board of the Crescenta Valley Arts Council, resident musicians and locals looking for an evening of outstanding classical music came together on Friday evening at the La Crescenta Presbyterian Church for the council's first concert in a series of five.

For its opening event, the Arts Council chose the title "Local Baroque" to let the community know that professional musicians bearing the best of credentials live in the community, but also to signal that the program would contain music from the Baroque era.

Crescenta Valley residents Kenneth and Jennifer Munday organized the event, persuading colleagues, neighbors really, to join them in presenting the program. Musicians were from the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Pasadena Symphony and others.

Following a stirring Trumpet Voluntary by John Stanley, performed with grandeur by trumpet player Rob Roy McGregor and organist Tom Brown, flutist Karen Hayhurst, violinist Jennifer Munday, cellist Debbie Kollgaard and harpsichordist Patricia Mabee played Johann Sebastian Bach's Trio Sonata III in G with precision and clarity.

Jennifer Munday, oboist Marylyn Schram, double-bassist Christian Kollgaard, bassoonist Kenneth Munday and Mabee played Jan Dismas Zelenka's Sonata III in B-flat.

Zelenka was a mere footnote of 18th-century music, Kenneth Munday conceded in remarks, but his music contains much inventiveness. The ensemble was successful in conveying the adventuresome nature of the Czech composer's works.

The balance of the program was Georg Philipp Telemann's Trionsonate in F, the Chaconne from J.S. Bach's Violin Partita #2, and Antonio Vivaldi's Concerto in D.

In the Chaconne, John Hayhurst played one of music's most difficult pieces bringing to the violin composition a warmer and deeper sound on the larger viola in a sensational performance.

The group concluded with Vivaldi's concerto, often called "La Pastorella," with an effete sound that pervades 18th-century music, to good effect.

These concerts are presented by the Crescenta Valley Arts Council, now enjoying its second year, and looking forward to the same packed-house crowd that enjoyed its first 2008 event.

"It has been an incredible first year," said Sharon Hales, board member of the council. "The community response has been just wonderful."

The next event, the second annual Springtime Gala, will be at 6 p.m. May 3 and will include a dinner,

entertainment and art exhibit in addition to the musical program. There will be a charge for the gala, as it is the major fundraising event for the council, Hales said, and more information will be provided shortly. Organist Daniel Kerr will be guest artist. It will be in the same venue, the acoustically well-balanced sanctuary of the La Crescenta Presbyterian Church, which just happens to have one of the finest organs found in the area..

The community has been very generous in responding to the call for donations to make the programs successful, Hales said. But, as always, more is needed to be able to continue to provide free or low-cost admission and to carry out the mission of the Crescenta Valley Arts Council.
