

SHEARER ENERGY At NMSU, trio debuts new musical works

DAVID SALCIDO
For the Bulletin

Modern music with a local vibe will once again fill NMSU's music halls this weekend.

As middle and high school students from all across the country gather for a weekend of high intensity learning, Las Cruces' own musical couple, Jim and Celeste Shearer, will take the stage for a free tuba, french horn and piano concert at Atkinson Recital Hall on Sunday, April 21.

Joining them for this performance will be NMSU pianist-in-residence Laura Spitzer, with works including the world premiere of a new piece commissioned by the Shearers – "Two Suite," by Memphis composer Tom Clary.

Also included will be an encore performance of another commissioned piece – "Suite for Horn,

Tuba, and Piano," by noted Arkansas composer Lester Pack, which originally appeared on the "Haunted America Suite" album released in 2015. Both composers will be in attendance as part of a weekend of events with NMSU students and faculty.

Tom Clary's "Two Suite" is an extension of a previous piece titled "Two Lovers Dream," which the Shearers and Spitzer recorded and released last year on Summit Records. How that extension came about is a story unto itself.

"Tom wrote 'Two Lovers Dream' a couple years ago and we recorded it at the same time we did Celeste's solo album, 'Sultry and Eccentric,'" Jim explained. That might have been the end of the story, but then, while on sabbatical in Pittsburgh last fall, the Shearers were at one of their favorite taverns when they were intro-



COURTESY PHOTOS BY JIM SHEARER

Top: Composer Tom Clary's "Two Suite" will be part of the free tuba, French horn and piano concert at NMSU's Atkinson Hall on Sunday.

Bottom: Celeste and Jim Shearer appear in a publicity photo.

duced to a drink called the Fallen Angel.

So taken were they by this drink that they immediately texted Tom to tell him about it. As the night wore on, and the texts mounted, the creative bug struck. "That's how we came up with 'Two Fallen Angels (A Night at the Bar),' and 'Two As One,'" Jim explains. "Tom ended up writing two more movements, and now it's a three-movement suite."

The other suite in the program, "Suite for Horn, Tuba, and Piano," is the first of two commissions of the Shearers by Lester Pack, who is currently on the music faculty of the University of Arkansas-Monticello. The movements within that suite are "Chaconne Mulata," "Hope is the Thing..." "Santa Fe Fantasy" and "March."

"Lester's piece started with the 'Haunted America Suite,'" Jim said. "We were commissioning pieces to flesh out the album, and I've known Lester for years. We've done several gigs together, and he wrote a piece for the 'Tuba Strings Quartet' album, too. These are all really deep cuts, man. Both Tom and Lester are buddies of mine I've known since my college days."

The final two pieces

rounding out this performance are "Perpetual Providence," by Joseph T. Spaniola, and "Big Sky," by Frank Gulino, both living composers. They also happen to be friends of the Shearers.

"Joseph's piece was actually written for euphonium, tuba, and piano," Jim said. "When we started putting this program together, I contacted him and asked if he would consider a French horn, tuba, piano version. Literally a day later, he had a French horn part arranged and in my email for Celeste. So, that's our opener."

"Frank Gulino, same thing," he continued. "He's written several pieces for various instruments and tuba, with piano. We used to do a French horn, trombone, piano piece for which I reworked the trombone parts for tuba. This one we're doing over the weekend, 'Big Sky,' was originally written for another group called Eastern Standard, which is another horn, tuba, piano trio."

"I don't know either one of those guys in person, but we know each other pretty well because we spend a lot of time emailing back and forth, and

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READY, SET, LAUNCH

Mobile children's museum hits the road

ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH
Las Cruces Bulletin

Vamos Niños - Play to Learn Mobile Children's Museum is hitting the road with a focus on serving rural and remote communities. The museum is set to make a lasting impact on childhood education throughout the region and our most rural communities.

"It's been a long time coming," Communications Coordinator Sommer Mitchell said. "The museum that we have now has exceeded all of our initial expectations."

The mobile museum started rolling April 6 in Anthony and is launching in Las Cruces 4-7 p.m. Friday, April 19 at Young Park, 850 S. Walnut St. The museum is a product

of Ngage New Mexico and the Success Partnership starting from a seed question: "How do we get resources to the families in the rural parts of Doña Ana County?"

Mitchell said Ngage New Mexico has several focuses in its broad mission to build capacity for non-profits and be a catalyst for change.

"Education needs to be thought of in a holistic point of view as far as the health of the family, including mental health, early child education and physical health," she said. "Whatever is happening, children can't learn in fight-or-flight mode. So, it was like we should do a museum and it has got to be accessible in to people in rural communities."

Thus, the mobile chil-



COURTESY PHOTO

Vamos Niños - Play to Learn, Mobile Children's Museum, heads out on the road to communities across Doña Ana County.

dren's museum emerged and there is a resource center inside of it, she said. The idea is to take a caravan of services to locations where families can engage with their children in meaningful ways as well as gain access to the early childhood development.

SHEARER

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we do each other favors. We're just good friends in the music business, man."

All of which makes this particular concert a

very personal one for the Shearers. "It was all written for us, arranged for us, or was written for our type of trio, so it is very personal," Jim said. "It's also very accessible music. It's all music you can really

listen to and enjoy. There are some toe tappers, but there are also some slow and pretty pieces, like love music, as well."

The Shearer/Spitzer Horn, Tuba and Piano Trio Concert will take

Michelle Simon, part of the museum team, said the museum includes indoor and outdoor exhibits such as a bubble table, giant blocks for building structures, a video microscope and much more.

"It's a place for parents to engage with their children," she said. "No parents on cell phones."

The exhibits are designed for 3- to 5-year-olds, "but really we saw kids in there under a year enjoying the sensory things and 8-year-olds were having a blast," Simon said.

When the museum travels on its regular stops across the county, including Hatch and Anthony, it is a free resource for the community, she said.

More information is available at VamosNinos.org.

place at Atkinson Recital Hall on the New Mexico State University campus, on Sunday, April 21, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. More information is available via the music department at 575-646-2601.

'In the Next Room' opens at the Black Box



IMAGE COURTESY OF NO STRINGS THEATRE COMPANY

William Harrold and Lisa Taylor are among the cast of 'In the Next Room,' opening at the Black Box Theatre on Friday.

BULLETIN REPORT

This weekend, the No Strings Theatre Company opens its production of the Tony-nominated play, "In the Next Room, or The Vibrator Play" by Sarah Ruhl.

According to the producers, the play is set during the 1880s in an upscale suburb of New York City, and addresses subjects of sexuality and female emancipation as well as marriage, intimacy, infidelity, jealousy and race.

"As strange as it may seem in today's world, there was once a time when physicians diagnosed and treated 'hysteria' in female patients by manually stimulating them by hand," the company wrote in a news release. "This unusual medical period also overlapped with a time when electricity first became widely available in American homes and businesses."

Although the themes are mature, the company made clear, "anyone expecting an X-rated performance will be disappointed."

The production is directed by Joshua Taulbee and features a cast of local actors including Rachel Thomas-Chappell, Cassandra Galban, William Harrold, Rachel Maze, Lisa Taylor, Dezz Martin and Orlando Rodriguez.

The show opens Friday at 8 p.m. and runs through May 5: Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 2:30 p.m. (except April 21) and a special Thursday performance on May 2 at 7 p.m.

The performances are at the Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main Street in downtown Las Cruces.

Ticketing and other information are available through the theatre's website, No-Strings.org, or by calling the theater at 575-523-1223.



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