Garden Cabaret features harpsichord and organ music

Orit A Eylon, University of Texas at El Paso
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The ‘Ivories on the Border’ performance will be at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 8 at the Fox Fine Arts Building, band room 140.

By Stephanie Soto
The Prospector

The ‘Ivories on the Border,’ a show filled with more than 17 different instruments and performances by UTEP professors and more will offer at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 8 at the Fox Fine Arts Building, band room 140.

“The first half is indoor, and we have three instruments, two which were rebuilt, the harpsichord and the piano forte, and one which was a gift to UTEP, the organ,” said Dena Kay Jones, organizer of the event. “I thought it would be great to utilize and perform with (those instruments) so people could see what they sound like, and I got to learn how to play them better.”

Ivories on the Border is a piano guild that is affiliated with the UTEP department of music and more specifically the piano department. The vision first started when Jones came to UTEP after being at the University of Arizona, an institution where the local citizens were very involved with music students. “I guess to get the community involved with piano events here at UTEP,” Jones said. “What we have done so far, there have been scholarships, money donations from the community and it is a great way to help young talent flourish and be successful.”

The concert will be divided into two halves, one inside the building, the other outside. The first one includes a piece by composer Chris DeBlasio, with Jones on the organ and John Siqueiros on an amplified guitar.

“It is a well balanced piece, but the guitar needs to be amplified because the organ is so loud, but the instruments have a dialogue throughout the whole piece,” Siqueiros said.

That is something that “Ivories on the Border,” a show filled with more than 17 different instruments and performances by UTEP professors and more will offer at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 8 at the Fox Fine Arts Building, band room 140.

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Dena and Azar will be performing Sebastian Bach’s Major Concerto for two harpsichords with string accompaniment, BWV 1061. “My part and Dena’s create quite an extravagant fabric, our parts are coercive, and often interrupt the other,” Azar said. “The second movement is like a two-part invention, quiet and understated in its balanced beauty. The fugue, the third movement, has a busy character. Sections seem to reach higher and higher, always building tension. These sections are interspersed with rhapsodic episodes.”

Another indoor performance includes the collaboration between Jones and Joy Zalkind of the El Paso, Juarez, and Las Cruces Symphony and the El Paso Opera. They will perform the piece Afternoon of a Faun by Claude Debussy.

“The piece we are playing was originally written for an orchestra, but it is one of the most important repertoire pieces for the flute historically speaking,” Zalkind said. “It has become a staple of what we’re supposed to do it highlight the flute’s low register and vibrato.”

There will be an intermission with doughnuts and coffee for that French bistro feel. After intermission the concert will move to the outside atrium. There Jones will perform a song cycle, a set of songs based off a theme that the composer writes, with Orit A. Eylon a mezzo-soprano and professor at UTEP.

The song cycles chosen are by the French composer Francis Poulenc, which are Banalites and Fiancailles Pour Rire, both are cabaret “let your hair down” songs. The first song cycle which consists of five pieces, is based on poems by the French poet Apollinaire.

“He set silliness to it, he has one piece called Hotel which is very straight forward, the people just want to smoke cigarettes in his hotel room all day and not work, and the music reflects that very much so,” Eylon said.

The second song cycle, which consists of six songs, was written for female singers in mind. It relates to women type topics, where the composer did not want women to sing and refer to them as love objects.

“The poetry is kind of elegant and reflective especially with the second song cycle. It is a hard piece to express. He wanted to write a song cycle for women so he kept femininity in quality,” Eylon said.

With all of the performances over, the night will end with a happier note with a surprise performance by Eylon.

Tickets will be $12 for general admission, $10 for military and senior citizens, and $5 for students and Ivories on the Border members.

“The best part of music is art happening in front of you without the audience it is nothing. It’s not like an art gallery or looking at a painting, with the art is unfolding right in front of you,” Zalkind said.