

World renowned clarinetist joins Cambridge Community Orchestra

By Valerie Hill, Record staff

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CAMBRIDGE — In a recent rehearsal, members of the Cambridge Community Orchestra were stunned when they heard clarinetist Zoltan Kalman play a particularly challenging Gershwin solo requiring a slide down two octaves.

“When he did that opening of the Gershwin, the orchestra just gasped,” said conductor Sabatino Vacca, a long time fan of the great clarinetist.

And Vacca is thrilled his amateur orchestra is polished enough to perform with a musician of Kalman’s calibre Friday, in a concert entitled Hot Classics, Cool Jazz.

Kalman laughs when told of the impact he had on the orchestra, recalling when he was first asked to perform the piece in the 1980s in his native Hungary. He had received a phone call only days before a concert tour of Germany where he would have to play the highly technical and difficult solo from *Rhapsody in Blue*.

“I’d never done it before,” he said, adding “I practised four to five hours a day. I’ve spent so



Zoltan Kalman: Clarinetist Zoltan Kalman will perform with the Cambridge Community Orchestra. Submitted photo Source: Submitted

much time on it.”

Needless to say, the piece is now fully ingrained in his musician’s heart and he admits to lo opportunity of a solo, something that is rare for a clarinetist.

Born in Hungary, Kalman was principal clarinetist with the Hungarian State Orchestra and Budapest Opera Orchestra. He has won numerous Hungarian and international awards and musician of the year in 1988 by Hungary’s cultural ministry. But life had become very diffic post-communism and he had a wife and baby son to support.

“I couldn’t make enough money,” he said. The only solution was to tour nearly constantly, in Europe and then one day after returning from a long tour, his baby son didn’t recognize

“That was it,” he said. Kalman, along with his wife and son immigrated to Canada in 1989, had visited only once before and where he knew nothing about its music scene.

“The first couple of years were rough,” he said.

After auditioning, Kalman became principal clarinetist with both Symphony Hamilton and th Symphony and he started teaching at the university level as well as continuing his career a Canada and abroad.

In 2006 he was named one of 50 Hungarian-Canadians to have made a significant contribu

Friday’s concert will also feature the Guelph Youth Music Centre Youth Symphony which Va highlighted with a performance by 15 year old cellist Noah Schuster.

“He’s a very talented young man,” said Vacca.

The unusual evening brings together jazz and classics, a blend that Vacca explains blends s

“Two composers, Bernstein and Gershwin, they are still considered classical composers with idiom.”

So what can the audience expect?

Selections will include Vacca’s favourite: Bernstein’s *West Side Story Overture* as well as th *Vocalise*, Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue* and Weber’s romantic *1st Concerto*.

The Cambridge Community Orchestra was founded in 2004 and comprises both professiona musicians.

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Cambridge Community Orchestra

Presents Hot Classics, Cool Jazz

Friday, 8 p.m.

Forward Baptist Church

455 Myers Road, Cambridge

Admission is pay as you can, donations are gratefully accepted

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