

THE INDEPENDENT • SECTION A



Livermore-Amador Symphony Shares the Joy of Music

By Patricia Boyle

The Livermore-Amador Symphony (LAS) brought a full twenty-seven piece orchestra to three elementary schools on November 5, turning their multi-purpose rooms into concert halls, and taking the excitement and storytelling power of symphonic music into the school day for over 1,000 Livermore TK-5th graders.

The performances at Jackson Avenue, Marilyn Avenue, and Arroyo Seco schools featured Prokofiev's classic meet-the-orchestra piece: "Peter and The Wolf." Lara Webber, the music director of the Livermore-Amador Symphony, conducted. Livermore Mayor John Marchand narrated this imaginative tale of how a bright young boy outwits a big gray wolf with the help of his animal friends. Different instruments portray each of the characters in the story. Mayor Marchand says, "It's exciting to see the expressions on the children's faces when they experience a live performance for the first time, and when they are introduced to the various instruments in the orchestra."

Webber says of the assemblies, "Through these performances the Symphony hopes to introduce young listeners to the orchestra, and to the joy of making music a part of daily life. Many of the musicians in the orchestra work in the community as scientists, authors, lawyers, accountants, teachers, doctors, engineers, and so much more. Most of the musicians were first introduced to their instruments through music education programs during their elementary school years. Several of them began playing



Photos - Doug Jorgensen

LAS Music Director Lara Webber discusses the instruments (upper left), then conducts the Symphony (upper right).

instruments in 4th and 5th grade in Livermore schools."

She adds, "It is the mission of the Livermore-Amador Symphony to bring music and the arts to everyone in our community. Musical expression ignites the imagination and fuels creativity. Active listening in the audience automatically triggers critical thinking, analysis, and engages memory. These are all areas of academic performance that our educators are focused on improving as they implement the new Common Core curriculum in the district. Because opportunities for students to take cultural and artistic field trips are scarce, often due to transportation costs, the Livermore-Amador Symphony chose to bring a symphony concert directly to the students."

Beth Wilson, a member of the orchestra and Youth Outreach Committee chair, plays several instruments. She was responsible, along with Webber, for working out many of the details of making the assemblies a reality. Wilson reflected on what the performances brought to the musicians. "Members of the orchestra are thrilled to give kids the gift of music and see their response. They love getting together to play and share music with an audience that's excited and shows it."

The children were enchanted by the performance. Webber told them, "Music can take you places and tell stories." The students responded to Peter's adventure

with body language and enthusiastic applause. Students exclaimed when the oboe and bassoon were introduced, gasped when Peter caught the wolf, and bobbed and swayed in time with the music. More than one student 'conducted' along with Webber, keeping their hands low in front of their bodies as they imitated the music director.

The assemblies opened with the orchestra playing "The Star Spangled Banner," and concluded with John Phillip Souza's "Washington Post March," both of which produced cheerful appreciation in the students. This special event was sponsored in part by grants from the Livermore Valley Performing Arts Council Education Fund and Rotary Club.

The orchestra will present a free performance of "Peter and the Wolf" to the community at the Bankhead Theater on December 5 at 3:00, preceding the Livermore Holiday Parade. The concert will also feature a special guest, the Cantabella Children's Chorus and will conclude with an Instrument Petting Zoo. The afternoon concert is free, but tickets are required. The Livermore-Amador Symphony will open its regular season with a full concert: "Symphonic Stories," on December 5th at 8:15 pm. Ticket information for the afternoon and evening concerts can be obtained at either (925) 447-6454 or (925) 373-6800 or at www.livermoreamadorsymphony.org.