

Secrets of the Cabrillo Music Festival

I just got back from a music-filled vacation—more about that in following weeks.

For now I'm plunging into the Cabrillo Music Festival.

The first concert is this Friday, Aug., 3, but I start "doing" the Festival tomorrow. You can too.



PHYLLIS
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Classical beat

I love the Festival's open rehearsals at the Civic, to experience the hot-off-the-press music, hear conductor Marin Alsop's pithy comments, and watch the orchestra members interact.

The first rehearsal is at 10 a.m. tomorrow. You can pick up a rehearsal schedule at the Civic then, or any time thereafter.

Or check the Festival's Web site under educational events at www.cabrillomusic.org.

The open rehearsals give you a taste of the Festival's 20th (and now 21st) century music — whether or not you plan to attend any of the concerts. Just walk in, take a seat, listen and leave whenever you want. No questions asked.

I sometimes bring a grandchild with me. It's a great way to introduce kids to orchestral music. It's free, and you stay only as long as the child is interested.

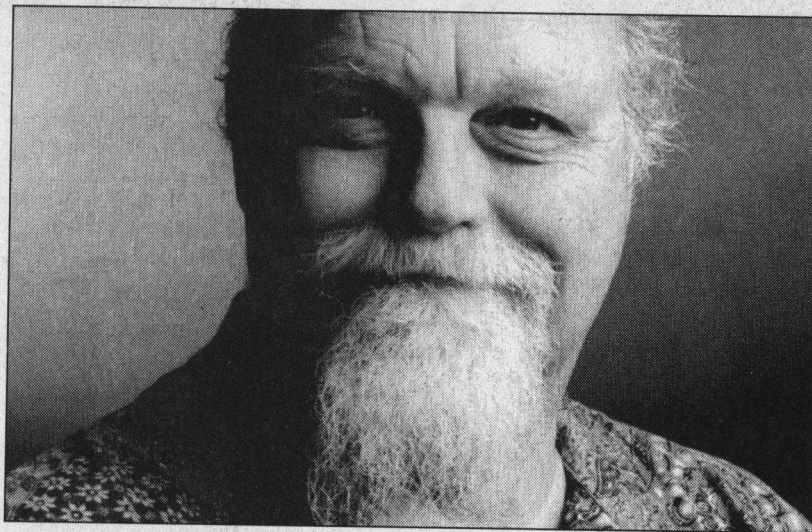
Pre-game

More Cabrillo Music Festival freebies:

Before three of the evening open rehearsals, there will be half-hour talks at 6:45 p.m. on music being performed at the Festival.

I'm giving the first one, this Tuesday night, on Philip Glass' "The Photographer," a one-of-a-kind music/theater production. I'm busy learning more about it, and looking forward to sharing my thoughts. Hope to see you there.

On Tuesday, Aug. 7, Eugene Kingdon, a long-time music commentator,



Local composer Lou Harrison will be the subject of a talk by biographer Leta Miller on Aug. 8.

Contributed photo

go-round.

The band organ can still be played by the old piano-type rolls, but MIDI software offers hundreds more songs as well as jukebox-type control.

For a dollar, you can choose a selection of your own favorites to accompany the merry-go round.

Staab told me Ragtime West threw in an extra song just for them.

"Under the Boardwalk."

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will talk about "Music at the Mission," which features works by Christopher Rouse, James MacMillan and Einojuhani Rautavaara.

On Wednesday, Aug. 8, Leta Miller, author of the biography "Lou Harrison: Composing a World," will talk about Harrison's opera "Rapunzel."

The music goes round and round

This past weekend, we went on one of our not-frequent Boardwalk visits with grandchildren. (Though our own kids claim we take *their* kids to the Boardwalk lots more often than we ever took *them*.)

We started with the merry-go-round, and after a full-family ride, we let the kids go it alone.

While watching and waving, I noticed the new mechanical music machine at the carousel's left side. I knew the old one at the right was still working because I'd been admiring it during my own up-and-down spin.

The new machine has organ pipes, xylophone, drums and cymbals similar to the old. But it also sports a guitar with automatic pluckers and string dampers, and an accordion whose brightly colored strings busily pull down the keys — fascinating to

watch.

Old fashioned high-tech

Later, I talked with the Seaside Company's Jan Bollwinkel-Smith and also with Donaven Staab, who does the Boardwalk's technical support.

They told me that Charles Canfield, Boardwalk owner (and, incidentally, a major Santa Cruz Symphony supporter), had seen the new unit at an amusement park trade show and wanted one for Santa Cruz. It was installed this past spring.

Bollwinkel-Smith told me that the old-time music machine ("band organ" is the term) is an example of the Boardwalk's overall philosophy of keeping things traditional.

Our horse-loving grandkids, Becca and Alex, had admired their carousel mounts' authentic horsehair tails.

Staab explained that the old and new band organ units are linked together and run by a computer using MIDI (Music Instrument Digital Interface) software.

He once hooked in his own MIDI keyboard and played the band organ himself. "It was a real trip," he said.

To see (and hear) band organs, go to the manufacturer's Web site: www.ragtimewest.com.

Or just go on down to the Boardwalk and take a spin on the merry-