

REVIEW

Sizzling strings rock the Rockies



ERIK SEGALL

Life

Spinphony, the vivacious string quartet of extremely talented ladies, blew the doors off Hoag Hall Sunday afternoon with mashed-up, rocked-out versions of classical music. An audience of 500 was treated by Brett Omara, Michaela Borth, Hillary Flowers and Anna Morris, who were accompanied by the Pueblo Symphony Orchestra for its opening concert of the 2016-17 season.

Led once again by the incomparable Dr. Jacob Chi and Pueblo's finest emcee, the silky crooner-voiced Craig Eliot, together they launched the new season with the help of Craig's two lovely children, Sophia and Hayden.

Spinphony, the name derived from its early days of performing with a record-spinning DJ, opened with Michael Jackson's "Smooth Criminal." The audience half-expected to see them moonwalking across the stage had they not been wearing heels. However, their rendition of "Thriller" was complete with the zombie-shuffle dance routine incredibly done in heels and short skirts. And herein lies the majesty of Spinphony's electrifying performance: by reminding us that classical music was the pop songs of their day.

Imagine mixing AC/DC with Bach, or Aerosmith and Coldplay with Beethoven and Mozart, and you have what Spinphony calls Pop-Baroque. It is remarkable how in the emotionally moving rendition of Sam Smith's

"Stay With Me," the four women on stage could make their violins and violas sound as though they were crying. Equally incredible is the Herculean feat of dancing for two hours strapped to a stringed monstrosity known as the cello.

The members of the audience reflected those persons interested not in the simultaneously timed Broncos-Falcons gladiatorial contest but, instead, people drawn toward the refined arts. Their formal attire indicated they had either just come from church or were out on the town for the remainder of the evening. Regardless, this was the type of audience where everyone stood without hesitation for the national anthem.

The typically older crowd was interspersed with enough college music majors, high school musicians from both of Pueblo's school districts and elementary school kids to make the Sunday musical outing feel quite diverse. Yet, plenty of gray hair was head-banging to the thumping drumbeat of Journey's "Don't Stop Believing." It's actually quite funny to see grown men rockin' out to the teen phenomenon of "Call Me Maybe." In fact, so delightful was the event that one particular reviewer for The Chieftain forgot at times to take notes and simply enjoyed the show.

Catch the next performance of the Pueblo Symphony Orchestra in its 88th season on Nov. 12 with Eugenia Zukerman in "Magic Flute."

And to those who prefer football to strings, just know the deafening and discordant crowds are no match for the perfectly pitched ensemble of Pueblo's own symphonic harmony.