

around town: EVENT

STANDING Ovation

BRAVO! Arts festival returns to the Lowcountry

Just as the MCI Heritage golf tournament offers amusement beyond the sporting fare, so does the fourth annual BRAVO—Celebrate the Arts! Festival offer entertainment that promises a little something for everyone. The month-long cultural celebration, presented in partnership with the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, invites residents and visitors to enjoy the diverse blend of arts on Hilton Head Island.

“The Hilton Head Island area is known for its great golf, tennis and beaches. Now we can pride ourselves as an arts and cultural destination,” said Gloria Daly, co-chairwoman of the chamber’s Arts and Cultural Committee. “With our variety of arts and cultural offerings, we truly are an island for the arts.”

The festival begins Friday, April 23, with “Promising Picassos,” a student art exhibition, and continues throughout May with the play “Annie Get Your Gun,” a Family Fiesta Latina celebration, the Hilton Head Orchestra’s season finale concert, “The Music Man” musical, and an evening of folk storytelling, to name a few highlights.

The celebration culminates Thursday, May 27 through Monday, May 31 with this year’s signature event the International Young Artists Music Festival. World-renowned concert pianist Christopher O’Riley will serve as artistic director of the five-day music festival, showcasing the talents of six young musicians from the United States and abroad.

The festival is held under the auspices of the Hilton Head Orchestra and features the musicians performing in young artists ensembles, and with O’Riley and the orchestra during the Festival Finale Concerto Concert, under the direction of Conductor Mary Woodmansee Green.

O’Riley, host of the nationally distributed radio program “From the Top,” which also features performances by school-age musicians, chose the six young musicians who will perform during the festival from a pool of students across the globe. He said the six students represent the “cream of the crop” of pre-college musicians who cherish classical music. The musicians include Caitlin Tully and Melissa White, violinists; Bela Hristova, violinist and violist; Deanna Talens, cellist; Johnny Tessier, clarinetist; and Alisa Jordheim, soprano.

The BRAVO—Celebrate the Arts! Festival was created four years ago to promote the arts on the island, in Bluffton and throughout the Lowcountry and to showcase the visual and performing arts and the cultural heritage of the Lowcountry, according to Daly.

Adding the International Young Artists Music Festival not only brings another international flair to the arts events, but it also adds originality, according to Nina Rodman, chairwoman of music festival. Pairing the young artists and O’Riley with the Hilton Head Orchestra makes the festival that much more unique.

“A music festival on Hilton Head Island ... It’s been a dream for a long, long time,” Rodman said, adding that the dream became a reality



Above: Music, performance, dance, and more await you as the Hilton Head Chamber of Commerce presents BRAVO! during April and May. Photos courtesy Chamber / Arts Center

when O’Riley became involved in planning the event. His participation is a testament to the Arts and Cultural Committee’s goal of giving Hilton Head Island residents and visitors a chance to experience the arts, according to Rodman and Daly.

Tickets to the International Young Artists Music Festival can be purchased in advance at Hilton Head Orchestra concerts by phone through the Hilton Head Orchestra box office at 843-842-2055 and at each festival recital. Concerts are held at different island venues with Providence Presbyterian Church hosting the afternoon series, St. Luke’s Episcopal the evening series and First Presbyterian Church hosting the Festival Finale Concerto Concert.

Prices for the recitals are as follows:

Afternoon recitals: \$10 (\$25 for three afternoon recitals)

Evening Recitals: \$15 (\$40 for three evening recitals)

Festival Finale Concerto Concert with the Hilton Head Orchestra: \$30

All-event Ticket: \$95 (\$105 value, seven concerts)

— Wendy Scott Huston