

Arts & Community

SCHWARZKOPF RETURNS FOR RECITAL

by Elysia Conner

Former Casper resident Alexander Schwarzkopf has made his name in the international music world. This week Schwarzkopf will return to Casper for a concert.

The Colorado native graduated from Natrona County High School after his family moved to Casper and he attended Casper College for two years.

From a musical family including his father, Casper musician Rainer Schwarzkopf, he began playing violin at age 3 and piano at 4. As he got older he began winning competitions, leading to additional performances and studying with Susan Grace at Colorado College for several years.

"Music was always a big part of life," Schwarzkopf said.

He finished his bachelor's degree at the University of Wyoming and his master's from University of New Mexico. Then he freelanced in Boston.

He and his wife, Becky, have an 18-month-old daughter, Madelyn, who loves music too.

"She's not playing the piano yet," the proud father said, "but she's exploring it, she's doing her job."

Now, Schwarzkopf is finishing his doctoral studies in piano performance with a supporting area in piano pedagogy at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Ore., where he has been a past recipient of Graduate Teaching Fellowships in Piano Pedagogy and Collaborative Piano.

In the final throes of the program, he said, his busy recital schedule takes him back and forth between both coasts.

The busy pianist has appeared in concert in Germany, Italy and the former Yugoslavia.

He's also performed at such festivals as the College Music Society National Convention, DTKV Festival for Music at the Landemusikakademie in Heek-Nienborg, Germany, MTNA National Convention, Val Tidone International Music Festival in Italy, Mad Hatter's Piano Series in Boston, Sound-bytes New Music Series and the Oregon Bach Festival in Eugene, Ore.

In 2003, he was a finalist at the Val Tidone "Silvio Bengalli International" Piano Competition in Pianello, Italy.



Alexander Schwarzkopf attended Natrona County High School and Casper College before his music career took him all over the world. He looks forward to returning to Casper for a recital.

Courtesy photo

If you go...

ARTCORE presents

Alexander Schwarzkopf

On May 23, at 4 p.m.

First United Methodist Church

Ticket outlets are Ayres Jewelry, Hill Music, The Shade Tree, The Cadillac Cowgirl and Sonic Rainbow. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$11 for seniors, \$6 for students and school teachers and \$4 for children under 12.

Special offer:

ARTCORE will offer a free admission with the purchase of a five-admission pass or two free admissions

with the purchase of a ten-admission pass.

Five passes are \$55 for adults, senior \$50, student/teacher \$25 and 12 and under \$15.

Ten passes are \$105 for adults, senior \$95, student/teacher \$45 and 12 and under \$25.

Passes are available until July 1, when prices will go up \$1 for each event.

Master Class:

A Master Class with Schwarzkopf will be held on

On April 24, at noon at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church.

The class is open for the public to observe.

In 2008, Schwarzkopf was a guest artist and assistant to pianist Falko Steinbach at the DTKV Music Festival, where he taught Steinbach's book, "A Compendium of Piano Technique," to all pianists at the festival.

Schwarzkopf was awarded a grant from the Graduate School and the School of Music at the University of Oregon to support his travels to Germany. This summer, he will go to Germany again for a festival guest artist and faculty spot.

The musician has given premiere performances of his compositions in Albuquerque, Boston, Miami, San Francisco and abroad in Cologne and Heek-Nienborg, Germany.

Premiering his own composition internationally has been one of his best experiences. "It was one of the most incredible experiences I've had," he said.

A response not only to his performance but his own work and not that of another composer was amazing.

"If you're lucky enough for it to happen once," he said, "you're a lucky man."

He spends at least four to five hours practicing a day, to which he attributes his success.

"Work hard on the fundamentals," he said about

what a music career requires. "Understand the instrument to the deepest possible level. Understand all of the elements of music from a very deep level, not just how to play on the instrument, but find a deep connection with music and art itself. That will definitely be more telling than what you can do on your instrument when the sound comes out. And always fol-

low your heart rather than thinking of what the next greatest paying gig will be; the next possible thing."

Working hard and studying diligently is the most important thing, he said, and it doesn't end. He's not sure what's next, but he's ready to seize opportunities.

"My philosophy is to follow what comes my direction," he said. "I have no

idea what's going to come my direction because every day changes."

His interest in piano never wanes because, "It's such a sonorous instrument. The capacity for sound is incredible," he said.

It's all worth it and it's all about the music for Schwarzkopf.

"I love my life," he said. "It takes a lot of work but it's happening."