

# COMOX VALLEY RECORD



## Annual Symphony Cruise happens Saturday



By Comox Valley Record

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A group of supporters established a non-profit society last year to continue nine years of work by the Symphony Orchestra Academy of the Pacific (SOAP), a project of the Powell River Academy of Music.

Among its programs is the Symphony and Orchestral program.

"The program is pretty high level," said Brian Balfe, president of the board of the Pacific Region International Summer Music Academy (PRISMA). The board includes Arthur Arnold, chief conductor of the Moscow Symphony Orchestra, who was a co-founder of SOAP.

"We have some outstanding faculty and students," Balfe said. "This year we have Soyoung Yoon of South Korea. She's won every (violin) competition she's entered worldwide since 2002."

The academy brings in faculty from professional orchestras around the world to Powell River for a couple of weeks. By way of audition, master level students are also brought in for a series of classes and audition training as they prepare to embark on professional careers.

"And then put on a bunch of concerts, one of which is the Symphony Cruise," Balfe said.

The cruise brings hundreds of people from the Valley each year to attend a matinee performance of the Strathcona

Symphony Orchestra.

"Originally we tried to bring the entire orchestra to the Comox Valley," Balfe said. "Really there's not a stage in the Valley that can handle a full orchestra."

Despite its small population, Powell River has four such stages — a reflection of the town's commitment to music and performing arts.

During the cruise, the symphony plays at the front of the ferry on the way to Powell River. This year's event is Saturday, June 22. The ferry leaves Little River at 10:10 a.m. and returns at 5:15 p.m.

"It's been a huge success," Balfe said, noting the number of passengers has exceeded 500. "We've taken the largest group to ever go on a BC Ferry to Powell River. We might break that record again this year."

For more information about the Symphony Cruise, contact Karen Ray at 250-334-5605 or [karen.ray@rbc.com](mailto:karen.ray@rbc.com) or visit

[orchestra-academy.ca](http://orchestra-academy.ca).

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