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PRISMA will return next year

Pacific Region International Summer Music Academy finishes in the black

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Arthur Arnold woke up in the middle of the night many times over the winter, wondering about the wisdom of trying to resurrect a summer symphony music program in Powell River.

“I had moments when I wondered are we going to make it? Moments when I wondered how are we going to do this? Moments when I wondered are we going to get applications?”

It turns out that he wondered needlessly. For every concern, Pacific Region International Summer Music Academy (PRISMA) board of directors came up with a solution.

“It’s incredible how everything came together,” said Arnold.

The only thing that remained unknown after months of preparations was if community members would purchase tickets to concerts in large numbers.

“I’m so happy and so thankful not only because we achieved something we wanted to achieve,” said Arnold who is PRISMA’s music director, “but also because the whole community decided to take action to save something so important.”

Compared to other small towns, Powell River has the facility and environment to provide a summer escape for the symphony students and faculty who love to come here. In all more than 110 students applied and 65 attended.

“As a community Powell River did this on our own and should be proud of what we have done,” said Arnold. “We’re so thankful to everybody: students, faculty, sponsors, volunteers and people who bought tickets to concerts and paid to watch masterclasses.”

For many patrons, sitting in on the masterclasses was a highlight. They were able to watch faculty members share their ideas, knowledge and passion to help students. Arnold said he noticed many new faces in all the audiences.

Arnold also said he was thrilled with the turnout to A Celebration of the Senses, a free concert at Willingdon Beach for the community. “Shared experience is what music is all about.”

In spite of intermittent rain, hundreds turned out to listen to the symphony, faculty members and other entertainers from the community.

“I knew when I saw all the people that they had come for the music,” said Arnold. “It was PRISMA’s opportunity to give back to the community.”

Audience and student surveys were circulated throughout PRISMA and were “very positive, including some



PRIZE WINNER: Clarinetist Stephani Feldman was winner of PRISMA’s concerto competition that began with 53 entries. She will perform with the Moscow Symphony Orchestra conducted by Arthur Arnold.

suggestions we can learn from,” Arnold said.

He is thrilled that violinist Soyoung Yoon has committed to returning in 2014. She is among a talented faculty, Arnold added.

Also in 2014, the orchestra will play at the Chan Centre in Vancouver at the end of PRISMA. The majority of students come to Powell River via Vancouver so the travel logistics are simplified.

PRISMA’s inaugural season “ended in the positive,” Arnold told the audience at the final concert, “and will be back next year.”

People were making donations throughout the two weeks and even at that last evening.

“As I said at Willingdon Beach, this is only the beginning,” Arnold said. “It is something that will be happening for the next 50 or 100 years. Our goal, our vision is to make PRISMA the premier summer music academy on the west coast of Canada and the United States.”

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