

Revolution makes classical music casual, fun

By Kaila White

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Four classical-music ensembles will perform back to back next week in an effort to break the stereotypes around seeing a classical-music performance at a museum. No gowns and tuxes, no hushed applause, no two-hour set of Pachelbel.

"This is like a classical Lollapalooza in one night," Joseph Kluesener said, referencing the annual rock and punk festival. "We're going to take the stage and encourage you to express joy. Make some noise! How do you feel? Be excited about the violins!"

The Classical Revolution PHX show for the I Am AZ Music concert series will bring four ensembles to the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix on Monday, Dec. 16.

Kluesener is the principal organizer of Classical Revolution PHX, a local chapter of a volunteer classical-music advocacy group that aims to make the music more accessible to the public. They put string quartets or marimba soloists in unconventional venues, such as the Lost Leaf bar in downtown Phoenix.

He said he loves to see people interact freely with classical music. His favorite example is from a Classical Revolution show last spring in Chicago, when an oboist was playing a scale with a pause in between each note, during which a woman in the audience repeatedly yelled, "Higher!"

"Classical music is supposed to move you, and typically when people approach concert settings they go, 'Ah! I'm so restricted. I don't want to be limited by the tie around my neck,'" Kluesener said.

"We're there to show them that this is a fun thing. They should enjoy themselves; they can express their enjoyment



Simply Three will be one of the four classical-music ensembles performing at Classical Revolution PHX at the Musical Instrument Museum. SIMPLY THREE

while they support the musician onstage, while they're respectful of the composer."

The four ensembles include Kluesener's own Paradise Winds reed quintet. Patrick Murphy, who is an artist coordinator at the MIM and member of Classical Revolution, will be performing with Paradise Winds as well as Estrella Consort, a saxophone quartet — "the world is super tiny in classical music," Kluesener

said.

Murphy said he is most excited to perform "Everything Must Go," by Martin Bresnick, a song that Estrella Consort performed on a recent tour in Ecuador that he said every audience loved.

"That will be a really fun challenge for the audience," he said. "It uses a lot of very unusual sounds, but the effect is one that draws the audience in."

Although most people might hear

CLASSICAL REVOLUTION PHX

When: 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 16.

Where: Musical Instrument Museum, 4725 E. Mayo Blvd., Phoenix.

Admission: \$17.50.

Details: 480-478-6000, mim.org.

"Musical Instrument Museum" and think "string quartets" and feel an immediate aversion, Kluesener said, the MIM actually rarely hosts classical music. Its repertoire is more global, with Turkish brass bands and African percussion ensembles.

This is the MIM's 17th I Am AZ Music concert, and the first to feature classical music. Murphy said that hearing classical music in the acoustically superb MIM Music Theater will be a treat because it doesn't require amplification.

"It's pure sound for the audiences," Murphy said, adding that it can be an auditory experience that can be transcendental.

The other ensembles are Urban Nocturne, which includes members of the Phoenix Symphony, and Simply Three, which performs classical arrangements of popular songs by Adele, Coldplay and others.

Classical music gives its listeners inspiration and pure joy, Kluesener said, as well as such "mechanical" incentives as improved intelligence and focus.

"I think people will love that classical music is not dead and it's very relevant," Kluesener said. "People will feel this music is them; they will self-identify."