

CLASSICAL MUSIC PREVIEW

Latino Music Festival gets ready to cover 6 centuries in city

By John von Rhein
TRIBUNE CRITIC

This year Chicago music is moving to a Latin beat—a Latin classical beat, that is—as never before. And you will want to put on your dancing shoes and join in.

The 2008 Latino Music Festival covers such a rich and varied repertory—spanning six centuries of Latin-American symphonic, chamber, vocal and instrumental music—that it's being spread over 16 concerts beginning this weekend and running through Nov. 24 at venues throughout the metropolitan area.

The kickoff will be a pair of free performances of 20th Century symphonic works by the Grant Park Orchestra under Costa Rican conductor Giancarlo Guerrero, Friday and Saturday nights at the Harris Music and Dance Theater in Millennium Park. All of the works on the program—composers include Silvestre Revueitas, Osvaldo Golijov, Gustavo Leone, Elbio Barilari and Ricardo Lorenz—enjoy strong Chicago connections.

Barilari, the Uruguayan-born Chicago composer who again organized the festival in tandem with Leone, says this third annual edition is as much about building bridges among local musical institutions and musicians as it is about showcasing the staggering richness and diversity of classical music from South and Central America.

He also promises that music by the city's Latin-American composers will be well-represented.

"Chicago is an ideal place for such a festival because we have so many musical organizations that are receptive to Latin-American music and are eager to participate," says Barilari, program coordinator for the International Latino Cultural Center, the fest's umbrella organization.

Although both Miami and New York City present festivals of Latin-American music, neither has anything near the scope or reach of Chicago's, which is budgeted at \$140,000.

Musicians and ensembles taking part in this year's festival include Mexico's Orquesta Sinfonica de Michoacan, the Millennium Chamber Players, CUBE Ensemble, guitarist Francisco Navarro, Baroque Band, MAVERICK Ensemble, members of the Civic Orchestra and pianist Alexandre Dossin. Most of the concerts will be free; donations will be accepted at others.

Barilari and Leone are part of a collective of 13 Chicago-based composers who



Tribune photo by Antonio Perez
Composer Elbio Barilari helped organize the festival.

2008 LATINO MUSIC FESTIVAL

An aural tapas menu

When: Friday through Nov. 24

Where: Opening concerts by Grant Park Orchestra; 6:30 p.m. Fri., 7:30 p.m. Sat.; Harris Music and Dance Theater, 205 E. Randolph St.

Price: Free; latinoculturalcenter.org

call themselves, quite logically, Chicago Latino Composers. Their efforts to make more audience members aware of the past and present contributions of Latin-American composers and performers are paying off: Last year's festival events attracted packed houses of enthusiastic listen-

'Chicago is an ideal place for such a festival.'

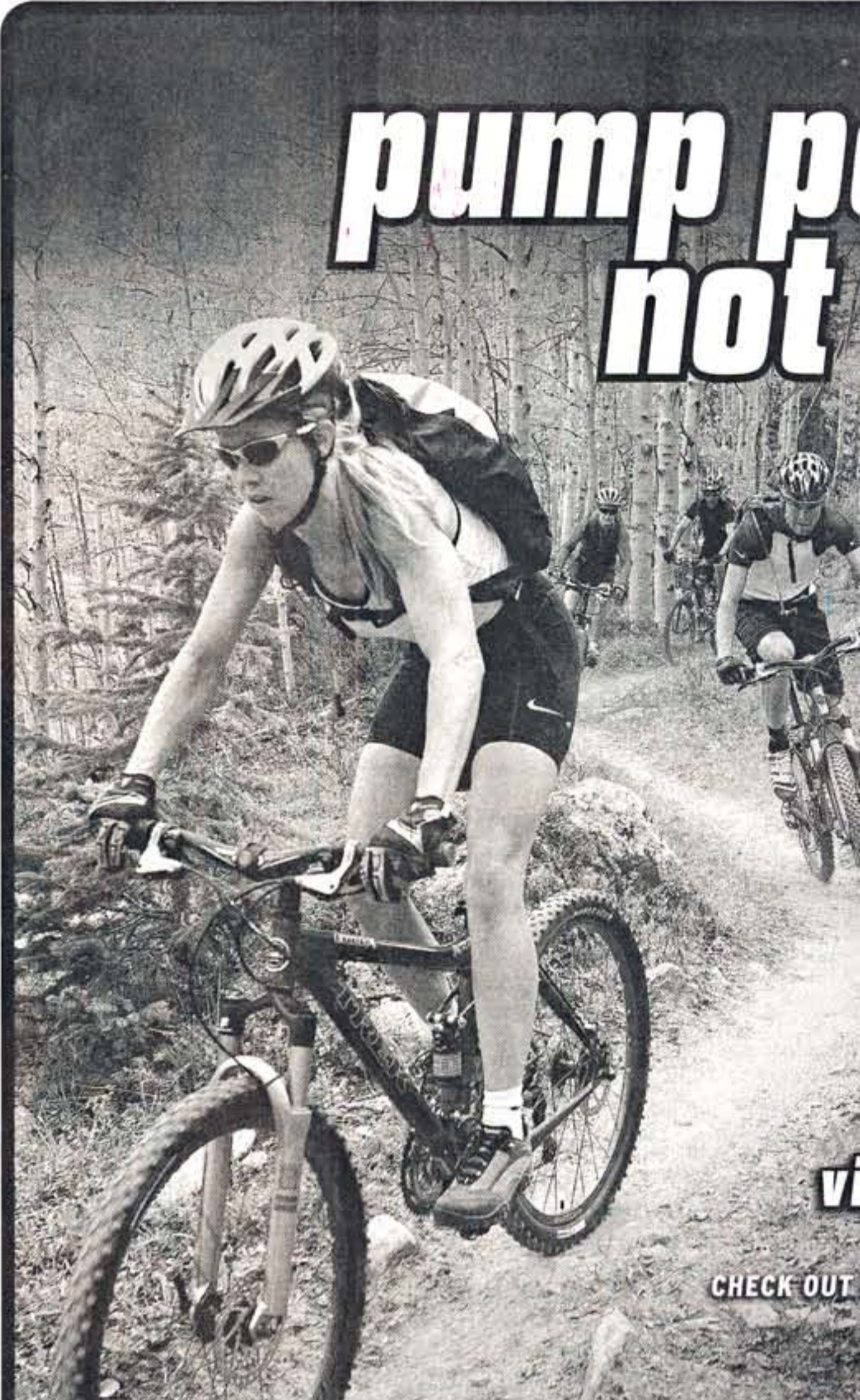
—Elbio Barilari, organizer

ers, and some would-be attendees had to be turned away at the door. The organizers expect similar-size crowds this year.

Among the highlights of the 2008 festival is the premiere of a new Barilari work—its working title is "Lincolniana"—tied to the Ravinia Festival's celebration of the 2009 Abraham Lincoln bicentennial. The piece will include texts by Carl Sandburg and Walt Whitman, and the performers will include Chicago's Ondas Ensemble with Chicago jazz trumpeter Orbert Davis. The free concert, which also holds music by Barilari's mentors, Astor Piazzolla and Paquito D'Rivera, is set for Sept. 7 in Ravinia's National City Bank Private Dining Pavilion; call 847-266-5100.

For a complete listing of 2008 Latino Music Festival events, visit latinoculturalcenter.org.

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