

Symphony 23rd Annual Independence Celebration set June 28 on square

Written by Terry Mathews

Wednesday, 11 June 2014 12:14



The Sulphur Springs Symphony League will host Independence Celebration 2014 on the square, Saturday, June 28, beginning at 8 p.m.

Northeast Texas Symphony Orchestra, led by Dr. Douglas Bakenhus, will perform prior to a fireworks display. The event is underwritten by Alliance Bank and GSC Enterprises Inc.

“The Sulphur Springs Symphony League Board of Directors is thrilled to present the annual Independence Day Celebration featuring the Northeast Texas Symphony Orchestra,” said Kayla Price, president of the league. “Some highlights of the program are sure to be Sulphur Springs’ own Kim Baxter leading the singing of the ‘Star Spangled Banner,’ sixth grader Mason Gillem serving as guest conductor and the grand finale of fireworks.”

In addition to the orchestra, Michael Rorex, associate professor of music — voice and opera — at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, La., is scheduled to perform several solos, including “God Bless America.”

“This will be Michael Rorex’s third appearance with NETSO,” Price added. “He is sure to be a welcome addition to the excitement and entertainment for the evening.”

Rorex has served on the NSU faculty since 1994. He teaches studio voice and directs both the Opera Theater and Northwestern State Men’s Chorus. He is a graduate of University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, and Indiana University, Bloomington, where he completed a master’s degree in vocal performance.

“I am happy to be singing with the Sulphur Springs orchestra for this great celebration,” Rorex said. “Patriotic music is always exciting, if for no other reason than it is about devotion to one’s country and the freedom of the American lifestyle. For this reason alone, a vocalist has to keep his emotions in check.

“Of all the pieces I am singing, I think the popular ‘God Bless America’ is my favorite,” Rorex noted. “It is a little like the famous hymn ‘Amazing Grace’ in that it never gets old and its message somehow seems new each time it is sung and heard. It is with the swelling of the orchestra and highest note for the vocalist on ‘God bless America, my home sweet home,’ that makes it always a thrilling number.”