



TOPIC: Undertones of Europe
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Director finds undertones of Europe in local church

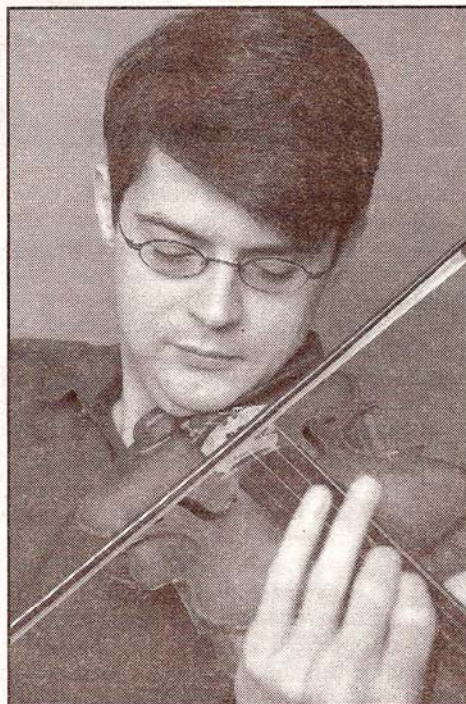
For the past seven years, classically trained violinist Hristo Popov has been dedicated to sharing chamber music with the community. As artistic director for the Chagrin Valley Chamber Music Concert Series, he strives to create an atmosphere for classical music that is reminiscent of traditional European performance style. He said he has found a worthy home for the series at Valley Lutheran Church in Chagrin Falls.

"In Europe, churches have long served as venues for professional concerts," Mr. Popov said. "St. Martin in the Fields in London, Matthias Church in Vienna and St. Nicolas Church in Berlin are prime examples of churches associated with high-caliber music. Valley Lutheran Church provides the acoustics and warmth that remind me of these respected European sites and offer the perfect atmosphere for a concert.

"In this intimate setting, the experience becomes personal for patrons, who are able to feel and see the emotion of the music as it is being performed. In fact, our audience often likens the experience to days of yore when royalty would invite guests to premier concerts in their chambers. This inspires me, and, through our concert series, I aspire to have Valley Lutheran Church become a recognized and respected performance hall for music."

An educational connection is also paramount to Mr. Popov. In addition to private lessons and summer-school programs, he and concert series performers continue to partner with area schools, including the Orange School District, to offer master classes to young musicians.

The concert series features performances by musicians who were trained or have performed in Europe, as well as local talent. Past performances include the Biava Quartet, La Catrina Quartet, New York Empire Trio, Yoko Moore,



Violinist Hristo Popov is artistic director for the Chagrin Valley Chamber Music Concert Series.

Jerry Wong, Paul Schenly and Peter Rejto.

"We showcase musicians who are well versed in the traditional European music scene so that we can create the same atmosphere here," Mr. Popov said.

Through the support of patrons, the concert series is free and open to the public.

Upcoming concerts include a piano recital by Per Enflo on Feb. 21 and a "Chamber Music Extravaganza" on April 18, featuring violinists Mr. Popov and Andrew Sords, cellist Michael Gelfand and pianist Eriko Izumida.

Valley Lutheran Church is at 87 E. Orange St. For additional information, call (440) 247-0390.