



Photo provided

Classical guitarist Robert Lunn will perform Thursday at the George Krasl Memorial Concert at the Krasl Art Center in St. Joseph.

Classical guitarist plays Krasl Memorial Concert

LMC faculty member Robert Lunn features originals and eclectic arrangements at Thursday performance

By **JEREMY D. BONFIGLIO**
HP Features Writer

ST. JOSEPH — Robert Lunn was talking music with his uncle, Merlin Lewis, when he spotted the 1972 José Ramirez guitar.

"He got it in Spain in the early '70s and then he never played it," Lunn says by telephone while traveling through Spokane, Wash. "So when he came to visit, he decided to give it to me."

Lunn, a classical guitarist who teaches at Lake Michigan College, found inspiration in the instrument, writing a 15-piece composition last year appropriately titled "The Red Guitar Suite." He will perform four of those original works Thursday as part of the George Krasl Memorial Concert, which also features harpist Megan Barrett, at the Krasl Art Center.

"It's kind of a reddish guitar,

which is why I called it that," Lunn says. "Every guitar has its own sound qualities, and it's a great sounding guitar so I wanted to write some specific pieces for it."

Lunn will open the concert with the classical guitar piece "Ebb & Flow," followed by his Halloween-themed "The Headless Horseman," the lighter "Clouds," and the Spanish-inspired "La Guitarra" — all from "The Red Guitar Suite." Other pieces on the program include his arrangements of Simon & Garfunkel's "Scarborough Fair," The Animals' "The House of the Rising Sun," and even "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star."

"That may seem like an odd choice," Lunn says of the children's classic, "but I'm doing it in the minor mode which gives it a mysterious kind of sound to it. Plus I use a slide, which isn't used

that much in classical guitar."

Lunn says he often develops different techniques to explore the scope of sounds he can create on a guitar.

"I started seeing what people were doing with other instruments and started experimenting to see what I could apply to the guitar, trying to come up with different sounds and trying to fit them together in a non-traditional way," Lunn says. "That includes using a slide. With 'Clouds' I pluck the strings on the left side of where my hand is fretting the notes, which is the opposite of what usually happens. And with 'The Headless Horseman,' I will actually hit the neck of the guitar to create kind of a bell sound."

Lunn, who grew up in Baton Rouge, La., first picked up the guitar in high school, but his focus was more on classic guitar riffs

IF YOU GO

What: George Krasl Memorial Concert featuring Robert Lunn and Megan Barrett

When: 7 p.m. Thursday

Where: Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph

How much: Free; donations accepted

Contact: 983-0271 or krasl.org

Artist info: robertlunncomposer.com

than classical technique.

"I'm a child of the '80s so when I heard Van Halen and Guns N' Roses, I just wanted to play the guitar," he says. "I saved my money up and got an electric

See LUNN, page D7

LUNN

From page D6

guitar when I was 15, and I just started learning on my own.”

After graduating from high school in 1992, Lunn and his family moved to Holland the summer before he began studying at Hope College. His father, who taught at Hope, knew there was a classical guitar teacher there, so his parents gave him a classical guitar as a graduation present.

“I started listening to recordings of classical guitar pieces, and I realized I wanted to learn how to play those pieces,” Lunn says. He studied

guitar with Larry Malfroid at Hope College and participated in a master class with Christopher Parkening in Montana during the summer of 1997. After receiving his bachelor’s degree in music at Hope and a master’s degree in music theory and composition from Penn State University, Lunn returned to Michigan to teach guitar, composition and music theory from the fall of 2000 to spring 2007 at both Hope College and LMC. Lunn, who received his doctorate in musical arts from Ohio State University in 2010, teaches music theory, music technology and guitar at LMC.

In fact, Barrett, who will

give alternating performances with Lunn, is one of his former students.

“She was in my theory classes,” Lunn says. “She was a lot of fun to have in class and is a great harpist so I’m looking forward to hearing her play as well.”

Barrett completed her bachelor’s in music from Indiana University South Bend, and has performed with the Elkhart Symphony, Andrews University Symphony Orchestra, Southwestern Michigan College Chorale and IUSB Philharmonic. She will be attending the University of Michigan to pursue a master’s degree in the harp this fall.

The annual George Krasl Memorial Concert

is held in memory of George Krasl, who along with his wife Olga, were, major benefactors of the Krasl Art Center. The event, which is held in the gallery, is funded in part by a memorial fund established by the late Olga Krasl in honor of her husband.

“We thought it would be interesting to pair two musicians who perform on stringed instruments,” says Larry Schanker, chair of the Krasl Art Center music committee, “but each performer is unique in terms of their instrument’s sound and shape and even the pieces being performed.”

Contact: jbonfiglio@TheHP.com, 932-0364, Twitter: @HPBonfiglio