

'Cowboys of the Americas'

Latin duo to present fun musical geography lesson in family concert

By MELODY PARKER

Courier Arts / Special Sections Editor

CEDAR FALLS — A lonely cowboy on the open range, riding fence rows and herding cattle along a dusty trail is an iconic theme.

Rooted in Hispanic history, the cowboy arrived in the New World with the Spanish and has been interpreted in North American, Mexican and Latin and South American cultures. Our traditional image of the cowboy was born in the 1850s with Mexican vaqueros, and has been celebrated throughout the Americas in books, films and music.

"The cowboy theme is common to the Americas, a shared theme and concept that is native to all of the Americas, and it's a theme that's appealing on so many different levels," explains Karin Stein of Grinnell, a self-described cowgirl from the Llanos (plains) of Colombia. "I grew up on a horse ranch, and cowboy music is in my blood."

Stein and Ed East of Waterloo, a Panamanian-native, are Calle Sur. The Latin duo will present a selection of cowboy tunes and Latin American acoustic music in a family concert, "Cowboys of the Americas," with the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony Orchestra. Music director is Jason Weinberger.

The concert promises to be a fun, entertaining musical geography lesson featuring music from such countries as Argentina, Colombia, Venezu-

Concert

■ **WHAT:** Calle Sur and "Cowboys of the Americas" with the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony Orchestra.

■ **WHEN:** 2 p.m. next Sunday

■ **WHERE:** Great Hall, Gallagher-Bloedorn Performing Arts Center, Cedar Falls

■ **TICKETS:** Concert tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for students. For tickets, call 273-4849 or (877) 549-7469 or visit wcfscsymphony.org

■ **DETAILS:** The concert is funded in part by the Iowa Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

ela, Mexico and Paraguay.

Joining Calle Sur will be acclaimed musician Alfredo Ortiz from Los Angeles, performing on the Paraguayan harp. Nearly 75 local schoolchildren also will participate in the concert. Calle Sur has presented programs at Orange, Edison, Southdale, Lincoln and Irving elementary schools over a four-week period, in collaboration with the symphony and sponsored by the Iowa Arts Council.

Special guest Pop Wagner, a lasso-throwing, story-telling cowboy who has been featured on "A Prairie Home Companion," will entertain families in the lobby at 1 p.m. The symphony's Instrument Petting Zoo will be available at 1:15 p.m., also in the lobby.

Calle Sur has traveled nationally and internationally, performing mostly outside of Iowa, including New York, Colorado, Costa Rica, Romania and Malaysia. They have



Calle Sur features Karin Stein and Ed East.

composed film scores for three documentaries, and one of Stein's composition was chosen for a feature-length film, "The Air I Breathe." She has won parent's choice awards for her trilingual children's album, "Camaraca."

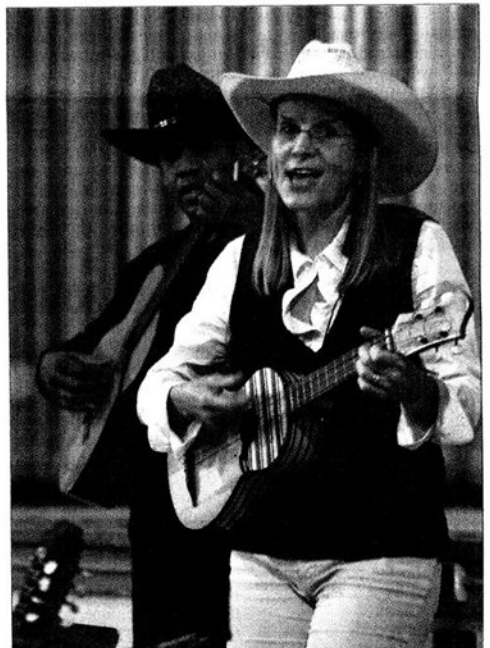
Stein confesses she's surprised to partnering on the cowboy project with an Iowa orchestra. "I've toyed with the idea of working with a symphony orchestra for many years. After a while, the idea crystallized around the concept of a common experience, the cowboy. Then I met Jason and thought, here was someone who could relate to crossing boundaries. That's wonderful to find here. He has treated our contribution with respect."

East, also a member of Orquesta Alto Maiz, says the duo will have one rehearsal

with the symphony before the actual concert. "There is a certain element of rigidity in an orchestra. It's a balancing act and a compromise because we're giving up some of our flexibility and improvisation to fit into their space," he explains.

Stein is an untrained musician, learning by ear. "All of a sudden, I have to fit my instinct to improvise into an orchestra which needs to read a score. That's new and different for me. I rely on Ed to help me, to make sure I know where we're at in the music."

The musicians met in Iowa, having both moved here for student scholarships and stayed. "I had been soloing when I heard the salsa band and met Ed. I thought he was a musician I could work with. He speaks the same language. I invited him to play, infor-



Ed East plays flute alongside Karin Stein on guitar in an assembly at Edison Elementary School. Calle Sur performed in residency prior to their performance with the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony Orchestra.

mally at first, but we jelled," Stein says.

East agrees. "We grew up in neighboring countries. We have a common past, common ground and we understand a humor that is not easily translated into English. We work well together, and we get many comments on the blending of our voices."

Calle Sur also will perform a piece with lyrics commissioned from Jon Schenette of Grinnell to a tune Stein wrote, "Macapay," named for the Colombian ranch where she spent her childhood.

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