

# Singing some different tunes

## Chorale performs works with a Western theme

By **CLEVE TWITCHELL**

of the Mail Tribune

The first Rogue Valley performance of "Hiawatha's Wedding Feast," a Victorian cantata, will highlight concerts by the Rogue Valley Chorale this weekend.

The program, entitled "How the West Was Sung," also features music from Aaron Copland's opera "The Tender Land," cowboy songs and hymn tunes.

The Chorale, directed by Lynn Sjolund, performs at 8 p.m. Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday at the Craterian Ginger Rogers Theater in Medford.

The performance of "Hiawatha's Wedding Feast" will feature Rex White, tenor, and Andrea Brock, pianist.

The cantata was composed by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, who was born in 1875 to an English mother and African father.

He was intensely interested in civil rights issues in the United States, reports Chorale publicist Karen Foster, and made three trips to the U.S., the first in 1904. He admired and met with African American poets and writers, also met with Theodore Roosevelt and performed with the New York Philharmonic.

Coleridge-Taylor also wrote "The Death of Minnehaha" and "Hiawatha's Farewell." All three were

often performed together under the title of "Scenes From the Songs of Hiawatha," and that work was one of the most popular in Victorian England, surpassed only by Handel's "Messiah."

Kathryn Gordon, soprano, will be a soloist for the Copland work, along with pianists Mark Reppert and Brock.

The opera, the last of Copland's Americana works, has its base in Native American lore. It was commissioned for television in 1954, Foster notes, but was rejected by the TV networks and eventually premiered at the New York City Opera.

Both "Hiawatha" and the Copland opera will be discussed in pre-concert lectures by Keith Campbell, retired Medford School District music specialist. They will be at 7 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday.

Several have been arranged by Chorale member Carroll Graber — "Abide With Me," "We Shall Walk Through the Valley," "The Cowboy

### Don't miss it

**WHO:** Rogue Valley Chorale, "How the West Was Sung."

**WHEN:** 8 p.m. Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday.

**WHERE:** Craterian Ginger Rogers Theater in Medford.

**TICKETS:** \$12 general, \$5 for students. Phone orders/information: call 779-3000.

Medley" and "Down the Oregon Trail."

Soloists are David McFadden and John Gilsdorf in "Cowboy Medley" and Phil Lind in "Down the Oregon Trail."

Other pieces will include special arrangements by Bill Esser on banjo and guitar, David McFadden on guitar and bass, Luna Bitzer on flute, Mike Knox on tubs and Doris Sjolund on melodica. Diane Newland and John Gilsdorf will be soloists in "Red River Valley."

5/14/99