

Diablo Symphony's All Beethoven Concert features award-winning Campo choir



Photo provided

Submitted by Helen Duncan

The award-winning concert choirs of Moraga's Campolindo High and Danville's San Ramon Valley High join the Diablo Symphony Orchestra and four Bay Area soloists in performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 8 and at 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 9 at Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church, 1801 Lacassie Ave, Walnut Creek. Featured in the final movement's musical setting of Schiller's poem "Ode to Joy" are soloists Carrie Hen-

nessey, Soprano, Betany Coffland, Mezzo-Soprano, Michael Jankosky, Tenor, and Zachary Gordin, Bass. One of the most recognized melodies in Western music, this setting symbolizes a search for joy and unity throughout the world, while the text celebrates the moment when "all men become brothers."

Honoring Beethoven's 250th birthday, the concert also features his Prometheus Overture and Opferlied ("Song of Sacrifice") with soloist Betany Coffland.

The concert is presented under the direction of Matilda Hofman, music director and

conductor of the Diablo Symphony Orchestra. The choirs are currently preparing for their significant roles in Beethoven's monumental "Choral Symphony" under the direction of Mark Roberts, director of choral activities at Campolindo High and Ken Abrams, choral director at San Ramon Valley High.

Advance tickets are available at the Leshner Center box office, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, (925) 943-7469, or by visiting <https://www.diablosymphony.org>. Adults, \$35; Youth 13-17, \$10; Children 12 and under, free. Tickets will also be sold at the door.



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No sweets for our sweet dogs for Valentine's Day

(Toxicities to know)

By Mona S. Miller, DVM

It's the sweet time of year, with Valentine's Day as the reminder to love and be loved, and to present sweet gifts upon those we cherish. With Americans spending record amounts on the care of their beloved dogs, cats and other pets, it's fair to say that some of those lucky animals will receive a special Valentine's treat. It's also fair to say that some of those pets might find their way into a supply of candy, cookies and

other treats meant for someone else. I'd like to review two of the most common "sweets" toxicities in dogs that I handle in general practice: chocolate and xylitol.

Almost everyone knows that chocolate can be a problem for dogs. Chocolate contains methylxanthines called theobromine and caffeine – these are the same stimulation compounds found in tea and coffee. At low doses, these can cause stomach upset or agitation. With moderate amounts ingested, signs can progress to increased heart rate, urination and muscle tremors. Larger amounts ingested result in irregular heart rates, difficulty breathing, seizures, high body temperature and potentially death. Symptoms develop within four to six hours, and can last for a few days, depending on the severity.

Chocolate toxicity is directly related to the weight of the dog, the amount of chocolate consumed (in ounces or grams), and the type of chocolate. The more pure and dark the chocolate, the higher the level of toxicity. For example, the worst combination is a small dog eating large amounts of cocoa powder or dark bitter-sweet baking chocolate. Conversely, a tiny amount of white or milk chocolate in a large dog will rarely result in a problem.

In the event of a suspected ingestion, it is important for your veterinarian to know what type of chocolate and how much might have been ingested. It's safest to assume the maximum amount consumed, in order to determine if this might be a problem. In most cases of moderate ingestion, the recommendation will be to get the dog to your vet in order to induce vomiting and remove any chocolate not yet absorbed, and then to administer an activated charcoal to absorb any ingredient left over. Other recommendations might include hospitalization, monitoring for progression of symptoms, and intravenous fluids and other supportive medications.

Xylitol is a sugar substitute found in a variety of products such as sugarless gum, toothpaste and peanut butter. It has some interesting beneficial properties in humans – it is antibacterial and may help with osteoporosis. However, in dogs,

it is potentially fatal. It causes a huge response of insulin release from the pancreas, resulting in sudden life-threatening levels of low blood sugar, as well as a delayed liver tissue destruction. The mechanism for liver destruction is not known, but it occurs eight to 12 hours after ingestion, so ongoing monitoring and care is very important in patients.

It takes only a small amount of xylitol for toxicity to develop – it is possible for one small piece of Orbit chewing gum to cause severe low blood sugar in a 10 pound dog. Unlike chocolate toxicity, in which a few minutes on the phone can be spent figuring out how much and what type was ingested, and how big the dog is, xylitol ingestion is always an emergency until proven otherwise. If you suspect or know that your dog ate xylitol, it's best to call your veterinarian (or local veterinary emergency center) and bring your dog in right away. In some cases, your vet will induce vomiting if ingestion has occurred within the past one to two hours. Further treatment is almost always recommended for this problem – hospitalization, intravenous fluids and monitoring bloodwork for the next one to two days. As with any suspect or known toxicity, bring the package that identifies the product and amount of xylitol contained in the product.



Dr. Mona Miller lives in Lafayette with her son, two cats and yellow Labrador. She attended UC Berkeley as an undergraduate, and received her DVM from UC Davis. She has been happy to call Lafayette home since 2001. She can be reached via email at MonasDVM@aol.com. She welcomes questions from readers that may get incorporated into a column.

Is this too young to go to Cal?



Actually, it's just the right age to get an eye exam at the University of California Eye Center. And again at three years. And regularly after that. (We developed ways to test kids' eyes while they play!) We're part of the UC School of Optometry, and offer you LASIK surgery, contact lenses, and an Eyewear Center with a vast collection of designer frames, too. We take most insurance plans, and major credit cards. It's time for your whole family to go Cal!



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An informative website for these toxicities is [veterinary partner.com](http://veterinaryclinic.com/chocolate/calc.html). Here is the specific link to the Chocolate Toxicity Calculator: