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Eastman comes to Albion

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A series of three concerts by Eastman Community School of Music faculty is set to take place in Albion this spring. According to organizers, the mission is to “promote the performing arts in our community by offering a series of professional music concerts. We hope to educate and inspire through exposure to musical excellence. In using our historic churches as musical venues, we will more greatly appreciate the cultural heritage of our community.”

The first concert is at 3 p.m. Sunday in the First Presbyterian Church of Albion with the Bob Sneider Quintet, a jazz ensemble, performing. Tickets are available at Elsewhere Cafe and Blooms Flower Shop in Albion and The Book Shoppe in Medina, or at www.eastmanatalbion.com.

The second concert in the series will be at 3 p.m. May 9 in the Pullman memorial Universalist Church. At that time, “Serenade with Six Strings” will feature classical guitar and a soprano.

The third concert, at 3 p.m. June 13, is “Quartets, Upbeat Innovations.”

This series of concerts has been promoted as Eastman at Albion Courthouse Square.

While the focus is on the professional performance of each concert by trained musicians, there is another point of interest: Albion’s three extraordinary Medina sandstone churches.

All three, built in the fourth quarter of the 19th century, are in the Gothic Revival-style and manifest different components of Gothic architecture from the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries. Each church also has a wealth of stained glass windows unusual for a small rural community.

So not only will there be

will be beautiful art and architecture as well.

Sunday’s program includes a note by this writer about the First Presbyterian Church in Albion.

When Elizur Kirke Hart died in 1873, he left \$50,000 to the Presbyterian Church, directing that a new edifice be erected. According to legend, he also stipulated that he wanted the new church to have a steeple taller than the one on the local Baptist Church. Hence, the most dominating landmark at the Courthouse Square is the Presbyterian Church spire, reaching 175 feet in height.

This is entirely made of brown Medina sandstone quarried locally in 1874. The church was designed by A.J. Warner, a noted Rochester architect in the late 19th century. The Gothic Revival-style emulates European cathedrals of the 13th century.

The magnificent interior displays many gothic arches, supporting a clear story. The stained-glass windows in the Tiffany style were installed 100 years ago, replacing the original stained glass. At that time, decorator Charles Howard Allen was hired to paint the interior walls and ceiling.

In 2007, the congregation of this church, at great expense, had the interior painting totally restored to its 1910 grandeur — a spectacular achievement!

The Albion community is fortunate to have such a caring congregation that sees their landmark as an enhancement of our heritage.

This photo, taken in 1903, shows the Courthouse Square with the Presbyterian Church in the center