

Malfunction delays Scotty's blast off

CELEBS • Scotty's return to space has been delayed — again. Ashes of the Vancouver-born actor James Doohan — famous for playing chief engineer Montgomery Scott on the original Star Trek TV series — had been scheduled to be launched into space today, but a malfunction during a recent test flight has caused a delay. Doohan died July 20, 2005, at age 85.

"That rocket went 7½ nautical miles up and it developed a wobble... they are correcting the problem," said Susan Schonfeld, spokesperson for Space Services Inc. The flight, from a New Mexico launch site, is now expected to take place sometime before the end of the year, Schonfeld said Friday. The date will be posted when known to the website www.spaceservicesinc.com. — Canadian Press

Ford says he's 'fit' for Indiana Jones

FILM • Harrison Ford says he feels "fit to continue" to play Indiana Jones, despite growing older. Ford, 64, said at the inaugural Rome Film Festival on Friday that he was delighted to team up again with directors Steven Spielberg and George Lucas for the film. Lucas co-wrote and executive produced the earlier films, which Spielberg directed. "We did three films that stay within the same block of time. We need to move on for artistic reasons and obvious physical

reasons," Ford said at a news conference. Indiana Jones has been in development for over a decade, but the production has recently gained momentum. Lucas has said he and Spielberg, who would direct, are working on a script, though no details have been disclosed. Ford declined to provide details about a shooting schedule or film locations, adding that the directors were not yet finished with the script. — Associated Press

Michael says pot keeps him 'sane'

CELEBS • George Michael praised marijuana and apparently smoked a joint during a recently taped television interview, prompting criticism from anti-drug campaigners Friday. British television network ITV said the singer lit up while being interviewed for the program The South Bank Show. The interview is due to be broadcast Oct. 31. "This stuff keeps me sane and happy," Michael, 43, told the program. "I'd say it's a great drug — but

obviously it's not very healthy. You can't afford to smoke it if you've got anything to do." A spokeswoman for The South Bank Show said the interview had been conducted in Madrid, Spain, where marijuana consumption is legal. Earlier this month, the former Wham singer was given a formal warning for possessing marijuana, after police found him slumped over the steering wheel of his car in north London. — Associated Press

MUSIC

Pianist delivers Hungarian rhapsody

KENNETH DeLONG FOR THE CALGARY HERALD

This weekend's CPO Classics Horizon Series concert celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Hungarian uprising of October 1956. The all-Hungarian program also featured two prominent Hungarian performers, conductor Zsolt Hamar and pianist Jenő Jando.

Even in the over-crowded world of the concert pianist, Jando has carved out for himself a special niche with his polished performances of an astonishingly wide-ranging repertoire that includes the full set of Beethoven sonatas, the Mozart piano concertos, and many Haydn piano sonatas. Among the best-selling performers on CD, Jando sells about 350,000 discs per year. He is also a notable performer of the music of his countryman Franz Liszt.

Displaying the fleetest of fingers, wrists of steel, and a total command of virtuoso piano technique, Jando wowed the audience with his masterful performances of two Liszt works on the program, the rarely played Fantasy on Themes from Beethoven's Ruins of Athens and the popular Hungarian Fantasy. Both works find Liszt at his bravura best, and Jando, vaulting the difficulties with ease, delivered the piano parts with the effortless ease. From the most delicate of passages to the most thundering, Jando showed himself to be the total artist, his playing masterful in every way.

The major work of the second half was Kodaly's Psalmus Hungaricus, one of the composer's most important choral works but, because of its fear-some difficulties, little performed. The CPO Chorus bravely tackled the Hungarian text and sang with authority and conviction. Even the high-lying soprano parts were handled with fine tuning and commanding tone.

Despite a somewhat rough tone, tenor Thomas Cooley sang the challenging tenor solo part cleanly and in a suitably histrionic style, his voice easily carrying over the orchestra. The are many beautiful moments in this thrilling work, and it was here, perhaps more than elsewhere, that one had the sense of conductor Zsolt Hamar's ability to shape a large musical structure.

The climaxes, both choral and orchestral, were exciting, and the hushed, poignant end made its mark. For a first performance (I believe) by the CPO, this was a memorable account of a major work.

The concert also included a crisply played account of Bartok's attractive Dance Suite, as well as a performance of Erkel Festive Overture. While both performances did not achieve quite the standard of the Liszt and Kodaly pieces, there was still much to enjoy, especially in the little-heard Erkel Overture.

Squarely romantic in style, this charming concert overture deserves to be heard more often than only on speciality programs. Its melodic content and scoring are both attractive and made a fine concert opener.

The entire concert was very warmly received, not just the spectacular playing of Jando, but the other works as well. In all, the concert was a fine tribute to the sacrifice and dedication of those who gave their lives 50 years ago in the fight for freedom.

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