

# The Weekender

## Top violinist to play for charity

**V**IOLIN virtuoso Don Schläffer's life is the stuff of Hollywood movies.

He was born in America after his Jewish family fled Salzburg and the Nazi regime.

A child prodigy, he lived his mother's dream of becoming a concert soloist.

And music was in his blood. Mr Schläffer (64) is the grandchild of Lily Weisberg, an operatic singing teacher whose pupils included Luciano Pavarotti and Maria Callas.

He grew up to be a concert soloist performing with the likes of Yehudi Menuhin. He has also played as violin soloist under the baton of Sir Georg Solti.

His star-studded career has included concerts with film star Danny Kaye and singers Dionne Warwick and Diana Ross.

He has won many prizes including the Stilian Kelly Award, which led to him being selected as a concert soloist for the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra.

And to add the necessary romance to any Hollywood blockbuster, seven years ago Mr Schläffer moved thousands of miles to England to wed his penfriend, Sue.

He said: "We wrote to each other for more than five years, we met, then I moved 8,500 miles to be with her."

Schläffer now hopes to make it big over in the UK and enjoy the same success he had in the States.

"I would like to play before the Queen," he said.

He is keen to use his talents to help children appreciate classical music and would like to set up a fund to pay for professional musicians to play in schools.

In the meantime Schläffer, who lives at Suple Hill, is giving back something to the community by supporting deserving causes.

He said: "I have always wanted to feel that I can contribute."

He is to appear in concert at Chipping Sodbury town hall on Friday, October 15, in support of the Meningitis Research Appeal.

Joining Schläffer on the bill is mezzo soprano Pamela Rudge.

A former Chipping Sodbury Grammar School pupil, she trained at the Royal College of Music and has performed at Salisbury and Wells cathedrals and St George's, Brandon Hill, Bristol.

Concert pianist Christopher Northam will provide the accompaniment.

The concert will include popular classics and speciality pieces and include songs from the shows.

Tickets cost £6.50 (£5 for children and senior citizens) and are available from Gimby's Books, High Street, Chipping Sodbury and The Compleat Cookshop Ltd, 51 Mary's Street, Thornbury.

They are also available by calling 0117 979 1564 and on the door.



● Don Schläffer