



Older Rainbow Community of Albuquerque, serving LGBTQ+ elders

FEBRUARY 2026

NO ONE IS ALONE

Community is vital as we age, and being around others who share similar experiences and interests is crucial for our well-being. ORCA provides a welcoming space for LGBT+ elders to come together, share ideas, and enjoy fun, meaningful activities tailored to your interests.

By joining ORCA MeetUp, you become a member of ORCA at no cost. This is your chance to meet new friends, exchange ideas, and participate in events designed for the LGBT+ elder community.

Sound interesting? Visit <https://www.meetup.com/Albuquerque-LGBT-Elders> to join today!

DID YOU KNOW?



**Are You Aging Well?
Try These Simple Tests to Find Out.**

While there's no crystal ball to predict your future health, there are a few basic tests you can give yourself to gauge your current strength, power, cardiovascular fitness and balance. These kinds of tests have been associated with longevity and independent living.

People naturally lose strength and muscle mass with age, so you want your starting point to be as good as possible. Getting a head start on training is “money in the bank.” There is data showing that people in their 10th decade of life, or in their 90s, can make gains in strength and function with just a little bit of even light activity.

Try these four tests to determine where you currently stand. If you don't perform as well as you might have hoped, don't worry: A few strength, conditioning and balance exercises, done regularly, can help you improve your score on each one.



1. Sitting-Rising Test

The goal is to go from standing to sitting on the floor, and back up again, using the least amount of support as possible. The test is scored on a 10-point scale — five points for sitting down and five points for standing up — and you lose a point for every hand, knee or other body part you use to help yourself. Subtract a half point if you're unsteady or lose your balance. Anyone over 60 who gets an 8 is in very good shape.

The test evaluates strength, power, balance and flexibility. It's a predictor of mortality. A recent study of more than 4,000 adults age 46 to 75 found that, over the course of 12 years, the people who scored 4 or below on the sitting-rising test had death rates **nearly four times higher** than those who scored a 10. That was primarily because people with low scores were at a higher risk for falls.



2. Walking Speed Assessment

How fast someone walks at their normal gait is a very important indicator of functional ability and vitality. It is predictive of future decline, it's predictive of mortality, nursing home placement, disability, a whole host of different things.

To assess your walking speed, measure out four meters, or about 13 feet, on a straight, flat surface, and time how long it takes you to cover the distance. (Remember, you're walking at your normal speed, not as fast as you can.) People of all ages should aim for a gait of at least just under 4 feet per second, a little over three seconds total.

It is recommended that people should retest themselves every few months. If the value changes, that can be a warning sign. That's because while walking feels like a simple task, **it requires proper functioning of the cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, vestibular (balance), sensory and nervous systems.** A slower gait could indicate that there's a problem in any one of those systems that may need to be investigated and addressed.



3. Grip Strength Test

Grip strength is also related to mortality. While that connection may seem far-fetched, experts say a grip strength test serves as a helpful indicator for how active a person is in their daily life.

When you're using your hands more, it's probably because you're doing things more. You're carrying groceries, you're opening the car door, you're picking up a grandchild. All those things work your hands, and the more you do them, the better your grip strength.

Grip strength is also important for maintaining independence with household tasks like cooking. (Think about pulling a heavy dish out of the oven.)

A doctor or physical therapist typically assesses grip strength using a special device called a dynamometer. To test yourself at home, try walking for 60 seconds while holding a heavy weight in each hand (also known as a farmer's carry). Start with lighter weights and work your way up to heavier ones over time. **If you experience hand or body pain, stop.**

There aren't age-related norms for the farmer's carry like there are with a dynamometer. But a 45-year-old man should aim to carry two 60-pound dumbbells, 65-year-old two 40-pound dumbbells and an

85-year-old two 25-pounders. For a woman at those ages, goal weights are 40 pounds, 25 pounds and 15 pounds in each hand.



4. Single-Leg Stand

Just as strength naturally declines with age, so does balance. And that raises the risk for falls — **a major cause of injury and death in older adults.**

Testing one's balance is as simple as standing on one leg. Adults should aim for a minimum of 10 seconds on at least one side. For an added challenge, attempt the test with your eyes closed.

According to study in 2022, 20 percent of adults age 51 to 75 were unable to make it to 10 seconds. And those individuals had an 84 percent higher chance of dying in the next seven years, possibly because they were unhealthier at the start of the study.



You can't predict an individual's **precise mortality** with these types of tests, but if you're below average on any of them, it's likely you won't

fare as well long-term.

That said, **all these metrics — strength, fitness, balance — can be improved**, and as you improve, your risk of dying soon goes down.



Walgreens Pharmacist Denies Gender Affirming Meds, But Other Options Exist

Recently, one of the readers of Nob Hill News, who wishes to go unnamed, sent them the following email:

On the 24th when I went to pick up my testosterone prescription at the Walgreens on Lomas & Carlisle, I was asked by the pharmacist why I took it, and when I told him it was gender affirming, he told me he wouldn't fill it going forward... I want other trans+ folks in our neighborhood to know that this is not a safe pharmacy (I don't regret reacting by sobbing loudly in the middle of a Walgreens, but I don't want anyone else to have to go through that), and I want all our cis neighbors to know that this is a thing that is happening.

A reporter from the Nob Hill News reached out to the Walgreens location, and the person who answered (and who we will keep anonymous) confirmed that there is a pharmacist on staff who refuses to fill prescriptions for gender affirming medication due to their beliefs. However, they clarified that other pharmacists at the location would fill a gender affirming prescription if they were on duty, or the prescription could be filled at other Walgreens locations. Unfortunately, they were not able to provide further information as to the pharmacist's name or when their shifts might be.

Clearly, this is not an ideal situation for someone in need of medication prescribed by a medical professional, but is it legal? We asked Adrien Lawyer, [Executive Director of the Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico](#), for his thoughts. "I mean, that sucks so bad from a community point of view," he said. "We hate to see it happen, especially in a place like New Mexico that we think of as being really open minded and inclusive. We want trans and non-binary folks to be able to walk into any business or service provider and have access and safety and be able to get their needs met."

However, he added, "I don't believe it is illegal. My understanding of our law is that it's okay for a pharmacist to say no to something that conflicts with their beliefs, but the institution has to provide a remedy. So Walgreens can say 'this pharmacist doesn't have to fill your [testosterone], but somebody else here does have to.'"

Jazmyn Taitingfong, Reproductive Rights and Gender Equity Attorney at the [ACLU of New Mexico](#), agrees with Lawyer's assessment. "In New Mexico there are certain protections that allow for a pharmacist or provider to refuse to provide certain care or prescriptions based on their deeply held religious beliefs," she said. But, she explained, at the same time the business itself has to ensure that the patient can still get their medication. "The [New Mexico Human Rights Act](#) has protections for people against sex discrimination as well as discrimination based on gender identity. So, that is something where there should be some type of policy that makes it so people are able to get the prescriptions that they need while respecting the beliefs of the pharmacist."

According to Taitingfong, Walgreens' policy of having another pharmacist fill a prescription at a later time is within the law.

Although it is legal for a pharmacist to deny filling certain medications according to their beliefs, not all pharmacies in the NHN coverage area have employees with such beliefs on staff. [Highland Pharmacy \(717 Encino Pl. NE\)](#), for instance, assured us that they have no objection to filling gender affirming medications. “As long as it’s a valid prescription, we will fill it,” pharmacist and manager Ash Pothula told us.

As for our reader, they have already found another place to get their meds filled. “I will never go back to that Walgreens,” they told us. “I’ve switched to [Duran’s](#), where they’ve assured me that their pharmacists won’t deny me medication.” NHN called Duran’s and confirmed with pharmacist David Westfall that the pharmacy will fill all valid prescriptions.

25-26
GALE MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES

OUT OF BOUNDS
Expanded practice in contemporary art

Antonius-Tín Bui

Gale Memorial Lecture Series

February 18, 2026

5:30pm - 6:30pm @ UNM ARTSLab

SPONSORED BY UNM ARTSLAB, UNM ART MUSEUM,
UNM DEPT. OF ART, UNM TAMARIND INSTITUTE &
UNM WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

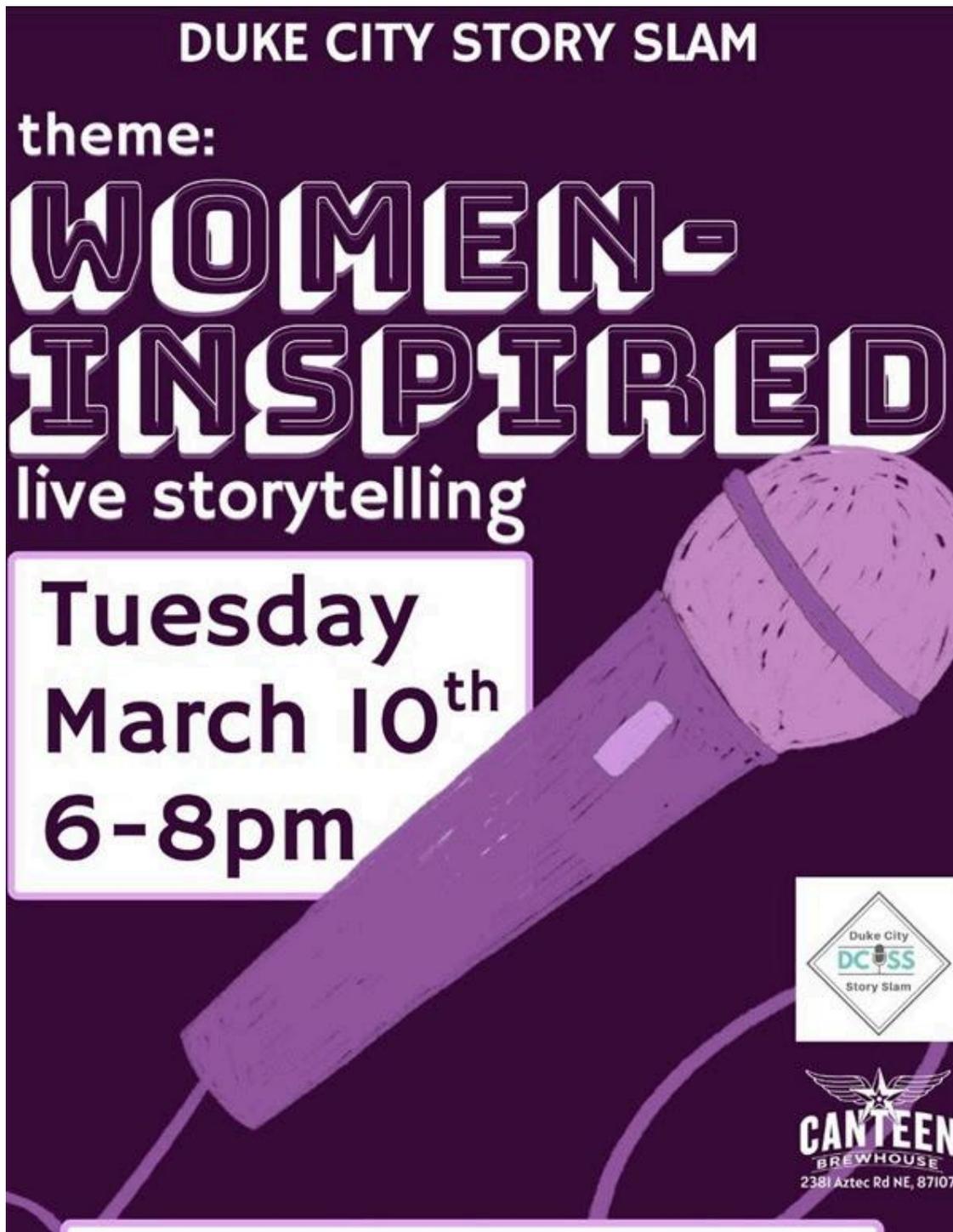
Antonius-Tín Bui (they/them) is a multidisciplinary artist whose work traverses the realms of hand-cut paper, community engagement, performance, and soft sculpture to visualize hybrid identities or histories that confront the unsettling present.



Bui's hybridized identity as a queer, genderfluid, and Vietnamese-American informs the way they employ beauty as a refuge for fellow marginalized communities. Their intensive paper-cutting process is exceptionally meditative; each sheet of paper represents an archive of memories and oral histories, mirroring the intergenerational trauma that so many refugee communities are faced with. Through their rigorous and reductive process, they deconstruct the white canvas, metaphorically carving out space for the narratives that are so often omitted from recognized histories.

Gale Memorial Lecture Series was established in memory of Dr. David his wife, Sylvia, whose generosity made the series possible. All Gale Memorial Lectures are free and open to the public. This event is

sponsored by the Department of Art, ARTSLab, UNM Art Museum, Tamarind Institute, and UNM Women's Resource Center.



DUKE CITY STORY SLAM

theme:

**WOMEN-
INSPIRED**

live storytelling

**Tuesday
March 10th
6-8pm**

Duke City
DCSS
Story Slam

**CANTEEN**
BREWHOUSE
2381 Aztec Rd NE, 87107

DUKE CITY STORY SLAM
Tuesday, March 10
6-8 PM

Canteen Brewhouse
2381 Aztec Road NE Albuquerque, NM

Theme: WOMEN - INSPIRED

Born of a woman: This experience touches all of humanity, with a myriad of outcomes. We invite **anyone, regardless of gender identity**, to engage with this topic in honor of International Women's Month.



UNM INTERNATIONAL STUDIES INSTITUTE

2026 LECTURE SERIES: FILMS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

February Line-Up

February 3: *The Syrian Bride* (Israel/Palestine & Syria), discussion with Les Field, Anthropology Professor, UNM

February 10: *West Beirut* (Lebanon), discussion with Hossam Abouzahr, founder of The Living Arabic Project

February 17: *Turn Left at the End of the World* (Israel), discussion with Amit Sadan, Post-Doctoral Fellow, UNM

February 24: *Battle of Algiers* (Algeria), discussion with Niko Dozema, French & English teacher and



ALL ONLINE FILM SCREENINGS BEGIN AT 12PM

FILM DISCUSSIONS TO FOLLOW AT 2PM

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW TO JOIN IN!



Scan me!

If the Q-Code doesn't work for you, below is the Zoom link for the Middle East Film and Lecture Series.

<https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fqrfy.io%2Ffv4Ah9w5rW&data=05%7C02%7Cmschwartz5%40unm.edu%7Ceef0701768be4a05617b08de627a999c%7C25aa9830e0f9482b897e1a3b3c855e5c%7C0%7C0%7C639056475919174948%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOilwLjAuMDAwMCIslI>



All participants who attend ORCA meetup events are expected to RSVP.

Thanks for RSVPing - this lets the Host know you'll be attending.

When you RSVP, please do so for yourself and any **non-ORCA** member who is attending as your guest. ***All ORCA members should RSVP for themselves.*** This helps us identify how many members are attending events, statistics that are essential for future planning and grant writing.

However, **if your plans change**, just open the event homepage in the ORCA Meetup site, **click Edit RSVP**, and

either change the number of guests or cancel your own attendance.

To change the number of guests who'll be going with you (if any), click "**Update**".

To cancel your own attendance, click "**Not going**".

Thank you for following good RSVP etiquette.

West Side ORCA Women (WOW)



This event meets the first Wednesday of every month at Books on the Bosque, 6261 Riverside Plaza Lane NW, Suite A-2. This month it is on Wednesday, February 4th, from 11am to 1.

There is no set topic for discussion. If anyone has a story to tell, we're ready to listen. This is a place to get together, meet other women and chat. There will sometimes be an announcement about ORCA and its activities.

There are drinks and goodies available for purchase. The bookstore is woman owned and is welcoming to the LGBTQ community.

So, please join us.

RSVP Now



ORCA Men's Coffee

Men's Coffee will meet on February 4th and on February 18th at the Highland Senior Center, 131 Monroe St NE, from 10am to 11:30.

Join us for a fun time socializing, schmoozing, complaining and celebrating our senior days. Topics ebb and flow as different ideas are brought up. We can't promise great coffee, but we guarantee an entertaining hour and a half.

RSVP Now

LBGTQ+ Caregiver Support Group



Support for people in the LBGTQ+ Community caring for someone with dementia. Share concerns, challenges, successes and strategies with other caregivers.

To join, email us at nmsupportgroups@alz.org. (You'll have to "connect" the first and last parts of that email address in your

email program.) We will arrange a meeting with the Programs Director and Support Group Leader to discuss the group.

The facilitator is Daniel White. The meeting link will be provided by the Alzheimer's Association.

The group will begin meeting Friday, Jan 9th from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM MST and will meet every 2 weeks on Friday.

ORCA Monthly Board Meeting



The ORCA Board of Directors, the governing body of Older Rainbow Community of Albuquerque (ORCA), holds its monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of each month. That is February 10th this month.

ORCA Board meetings are inclusive events that are open to the public, primarily ORCA participants. You are all very warmly invited to attend! You can do so either via ZOOM or in-person.

The ZOOM meeting number is 906 560 9861. There is no Passcode. The link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9065609861?omn=89591456885>.

AGENDA

- Introductions and comments from guests
- Contractor Reports
- Financial Reports
- Upcoming Events
- Longer Term Issues
- Questions and Answers

The meeting will take place at Steering Committee member's house, 2025 Erbbe St NE.

RSVP NOW



ORCA In-Person

Always the second Thursday of the month. This month, it's on February 11th from 2-3:30.

Join us at the Highland Senior Center, 131 Monroe St. NE for conversation, guest speakers on various topics, upcoming events for seniors in Albuquerque and NM, and just plain socializing.

In celebration of
BLACK HISTORY MONTH and **VALENTINE'S DAY**
TEA DANCE

Hosted by
 **AND** *In, Out, & About*

Join in for dance music by LGBTQ African Americans and allies!
Featuring artists Luther Vandross, Shea Diamond, Nona Hendryx,
Zenobia, and more!
A collaboration with **DJ Agua**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH, 2026
2:30PM - 4:30PM
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
2801 LOMAS BLVD NE, ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87106
(NW CORNER OF LOMAS AND GIRARD)



FREE event (donations accepted)!
Everyone is welcome! Refreshments will be served!

UNM Wind Symphony



On February 18, 2026, at 7:30pm in Popejoy Hall on the UNM campus, the incredible conductor, Dr. Emily Moss, will take us on a musical journey. The thing about a wind symphony concert is that it takes you some place else and, when it finishes, you feel energized and renewed.

Below is a list of the selections to be played with links to hear them on YouTube. Take a moment to sample this amazing concert and then join us for this for an evening of musical ecstasy. You will not be disappointed:

David Gillingham's New Century

Dawn https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNR9xfe_o0Y&list=RDRNR9xfe_o0Y&start_radio=1

Samuel Adler's Southwestern Sketches https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRnxnjgwuZc&list=RDbRnxnjgwuZc&start_radio=1

Joel Puckett's it perched for vespers

nine https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3gHhCpkiWU&list=RDo3gHhCpkiWU&start_radio=1

John Mackey's Kingfishers Catch

Fire https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLhmHJ0LM0Y&list=RDSLhmHJ0LM0Y&start_radio=1

Tickets are \$11.50 and can be purchased at the box office before the concert.

Make an evening of it by joining us at 6pm for Middle Easter/Greek food at Gyros, 106 Cornel Drive SE, across the street from the UNM Campus.

RSVP NOW

Community Plate



What is Community Plate?

Getting older and often living alone brings feelings of isolation and disconnectedness. **Community Plate is dedicated to fostering connection and creating community through shared meals and stories.** Together, we reimagine the community potluck using **food and storytelling as a source of connection and entertainment.**

Human beings have always gathered around food and stories. This combination **brings us closer to one another and reminds us of our shared humanity.** At the same time, it

gives us an opportunity to express who we are as individuals, our personal tastes, and our history and experiences.

Plus, the food is delicious! Because you made it!



How does this work?

- **First comes the food.** Each participant brings a dish, preferably prepared by them rather than store-bought. But if store-bought works, bring it. **This month we are celebrating Mardi Gras. And so, you are encourage to bring a dish that speaks New Orleans.** Otherwise, bring your favorite specialty. **If you have a special diet, please bring a dish for yourself or one you can share with the community.**
-
- **Next comes the theme.** Each event will have a theme, giving participants a chance to share their personal stories about the theme. It's a prompt, a starter to get the conversations going. Because Valentine's Day is in February, **the theme is "My Most Memorable Love."** It

doesn't have to be a romantic love. It could be knitting or singing or your career or doing charity work. How did this become your most memorable love, why it's your most memorable love and what it means to you. We want to know. And in the telling, we learn more about who you are. Share your story with your table mates and together you will create community.

-
- **Finally comes the formal stories.** The meal concludes with **2-3 volunteer storytellers**, organized and rehearsed ahead of time, entertaining the gathered community with stories on the event's theme that are performed or read. If you want to be one of this month's storytellers, contact Barry at barryearle77@gmail.com. But please don't wait until the last moment. **We already have two volunteer storytellers.**



Time and Place: On Saturday, February 21, 2026, Community Plate will be held at the **First UCC Congregational Church, 2801 Lomas Blvd. NE, from 1-3pm.**

We will be meeting in the church's Choir Room. As such, **there**

are only 30 spaces available for this event. Given the turnout for other food oriented events, **it is suggested you RSVP now. Don't wait until the last moment.** And if you do RSVP but have a change of plans, definitely cancel your RSVP on the event's page. Someone else can use your space.

Volunteer Event Supporters: As you know from other ORCA food oriented events, we will need a handful of volunteers to help set up at 12:30 before the event and to help cleanup after the event at 3 when it's over. Please help us make Community Plate a success by helping.

We look forward to seeing you in February and **every other month following.** Come with an open mind, an open heart, a great story and an empty stomach.

RSVP NOW

Oscar Nominated Animation Shorts



On Friday, February 20, 2026, join Dennis Weber for the Oscar Nominated Animation Shorts at the Guild Cinema. This is your chance to see these amazing works of visual art while enjoying

the best fresh popcorn in ABQ.

We will gather by 3:15 PM outside the Guild Theater, 3405 Central Ave NE, in Nob Hill. Dinner afterwards in Nob Hill if anyone wants (about 5:30 PM).

General Admission \$10, Seniors \$7

For your further enjoyment: The Guild is also showing Oscar nominated documentary films on the following Monday & Tuesday and live action shorts on Wednesday & Thursday.

Support our independent theater!!

RSVP NOW

UNM Symphonic Orchestra



The second amazing conductor/professor in the UNM Department of Music is Dr. Karin Hendrickson, who has total

control of her musician students.

On February 24th at 7:30, she will conduct the UNM Symphony Orchestra in a stunning example of 19th and 20th century music by three of the Western world's most illustrious composers.

Take a listen below at these samples on YouTube and then join us for this thrilling concert:

Excerpts from Tchaikovsky's ballet Swan Lake-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GsajWIF3ws>

Two songs by Richard Strauss- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvctAVRq1VE&list=RDrvctAVRq1VE&start_radio=1

Brahms: Symphony No. 1- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILD_2vnMkL8&list=RDILD_2vnMkL8&start_radio=1

This is an amazing survey of classical music perfect for student musicians at the height of their skills and audiences seeking a memorable evening of musical perfection. And the price is right: \$11.50! Tickets can be purchased at the box office on the night of the performance.

And if you like Italian food, join us at 6pm at Saggio's on Cornell, across from the UNM campus.

RSVP NOW

Our new website is www.orcaabq.org.

Email SC@orcaabq.org to reach the Steering Committee.

We welcome suggestions about events you'd like to see

offered or things you'd like to see on the website. The ORCA website lists a variety of resources that may be helpful:

<https://orcaabq.org/resources/>

Questions about ORCA Albuquerque and the events

listed above? Email us: sc@orcaabq.org.

ORCA seeks diverse community groups to partner on common projects. Please contact sc@orcaabq.org, if you'd like to explore collaborating with us.

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