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GSO plans inspiring season of music

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Music is meant to help the human spirit transcend life's struggles, and that's the reason the Greenville Symphony Orchestra's 2009-2010 season is designed to inspire, says music director and conductor Edvard Tchivzhel.

"Following each concert, we'd like for the audience to leave in a mood of hope and renewed spiritual strength," Tchivzhel says.

The GSO will present both well-known pieces and lesser-known works in its upcoming season, "all jewels from the classical repertoire," Tchivzhel says.

Here's what's in store.

Six masterworks

Each of the masterworks concerts is presented twice at the Peace Concert Hall.

The first, on Sept. 26-27, "Tchaikovsky's Fifth," not only features the composer's fifth symphony, but also returns to Greenville the vivacious and talented violinist, Chee-Yun. Tchivzhel says he's especially keen on making the opening concert thrilling and exciting, and he expects Chee-Yun to dazzle the audience with Alexander Glazunov's A minor Violin Concerto. Also on the program is Georges Enesco's Roumanian Rhapsody No. 1 in A major.

"Mendelssohn's 200," Nov. 7-8, honors the great German composer Felix Mendelssohn's 200th birthday, which is celebrated the world over, says Tchivzhel. He will lead the GSO in the composer's third symphony, the "Scottish." Also on the program is Franz Liszt's 7th symphonic poem, "Festklange," and Camille Saint-Saens' Cello Concerto No. 1, featuring rising star soloist Umberto Clerici in his Greenville debut.

Tchivzhel says the third masterworks, "A Hero's Inspiration," Jan. 23-24, is designed to introduce three heroes celebrated through musical compositions: William Tell, the leader of Swiss independence, with Gioacchino Rossini's beloved Overture; Spartacus, who led a slave uprising against Rome and was martyred and, centuries later, was paid musical homage by Soviet composer Aram Khachaturian's "Spartacus: Suite No. 1"; and one of England's greatest composers, Sir Edward Elgar, whose Symphony No. 1 is the GSO's third selection.

"Romance From Abroad," Feb. 27-28, welcomes to the GSO guest conductor Francesco La Vecchia, artistic and music director of the Orchestra Sinfonia di Roma. La Vecchia will lead the performances of two works focused on romantic love, Richard Wagner's "Siegfried Idyll" and Anton Bruckner's Symphony No. 4, the "Romantic."

"Champion of the Keyboard," March 27-28, will feature one of the medalists of the 2009 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in an as-yet unnamed work. The concert also presents Charles Ives' "The Fourth of July" and Antonin Dvorak's Symphony No. 7.

YOU CAN GO

- For season tickets to the masterworks or chamber series, call 864-467-3000 or 800-888-7768. For season tickets to the Spotlight Series, call 864-233-6733. Single tickets go on sale Sept. 8.
- For more information: www.greenvillesymphony.org



Rawlins Photography

Greenville Symphony conductor Edvard Tchivzhel

"Inspiring Voices," May 1-2, is the traditional co-performance of the GSO and the Greenville Chorale, under the direction of Bingham Vick Jr., in a program of sacred and theatrical works by Leonard Bernstein and Giuseppe Verdi.

Chamber series

These Friday-Sunday concerts at the Peace Center's Gunter Theatre are on the lighter side of the classical repertoire and feature the talent of GSO's principal players.

The first concert is the traditional post-performance, free beer "Oktoberfest," Oct. 16-18, with music by Germany's greatest composers. On tap is Beethoven's Symphony No. 4, Haydn's Trumpet Concerto featuring co-principal trumpet Phil Elkins, Brahms' 3 Hungarian Dances and "Variations on a Theme of Joseph Haydn."

"Mozart the Master," Nov. 20-22, includes the composer's Symphony No. 39, "The Impresario" Overture and Serenade No. 10, the "Gran Partita" scored for 12 woodwinds and double bass.

"With Strings Attached," Jan. 8-10, features GSO principal viola Katie Dey in Georg Phillip Telemann's G minor Viola Concerto. It also pays homage to Benjamin Britten with the composer's "Variation on a Theme of Frank Bridge" and closes with Tchaikovsky's C minor String Serenade.

The final concert, "Baroque and Beyond," April 16-18, features principal flute Caroline Ulrich in Lukas Foss' "Renaissance Concerto" and further celebrates Baroque Era music with Henry Purcell's "Dido and Aenas," Richard Strauss' "Divertimento" and George Frideric Handel's "Royal Fireworks Music."

'Holiday at Peace'

The GSO celebrates Christmas Dec. 18-20 with its festive pops concert "Holiday at Peace," featuring guest singer Jodi Benson, the voice of Ariel in Walt Disney's "The Little Mermaid."

GSO Spotlight Series

The popular morning and evening performances at Centre Stage will move to Saturdays for the new Spotlight Series season. Three programs will be offered, each at 10:30 a.m. and again at 7 p.m.

First up is "Musical Gems" Oct. 3; the second is "An American Story" on Feb. 6, and the third, "Treasures Old and New" is March 20. The concerts are casual, social and fun and feature an hour of light chamber music performed by GSO musicians.