'German Giants' take center stage

Greenville Symphony performs classical jewels

YOU CAN GO

What: The Greenville Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Edvard Tchivzhel, performs "German Giants"
When: 8 p.m. Saturday; 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 4 (a free pre-concert is presented by The Greenville News' arts writer, Paul Hyde, an hour prior to the concerts)
Where: Peace Center Concert Hall
Tickets: $15 to $60
Information: 864-467-3000 or www.peacecenter.org



The Greenville Symphony Orchestra will perform its second Masterworks concert of the season, "German Giants," next weekend. FILE

By Paul Hyde
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Two Hamburgers comprise the main course on the Greenville Symphony Orchestra's plate this weekend.

Both Felix Mendelssohn and Johannes Brahms were born in Hamburg, Germany.

The orchestra will perform Mendelssohn's "Italian" Symphony and Brahms Symphony No. 1 in a program called "German Giants."

"These are real jewels of the German classical repertoire," said Edvard Tchivzhel, the orchestra's conductor and music director. "It's a very attractive program. You can

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hardly find more popular pieces than these."

The program, on Saturday and Sunday, opens with Beethoven's "Leonore Overture No. 3."

Beethoven famously wrote no fewer than four overtures for his opera "Fidelio," originally titled "Leonore."

The "Leonore Overture No. 3" proved too dramatic for the opera, but it now serves as a popular opener for orchestral concerts, Tchivzhel said.

"It was too overwhelming to be the overture to the opera because after this overture the first act would sound very light," Tchivzhel said.

One of the more notable effects in the overture is a trumpet call that suddenly bursts into the musical proceedings — and in the opera heralds the arrival of the good guys.

Often the trumpet call is played backstage. Tchivzhel, known for embracing the dramatic potential of any music he is conducting, will have the trumpet player posted in the upper balcony.

"It's a nice theatrical and stereophonic effect," Tchivzhel said.

Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4 is subtitled "Italian" because it was inspired by the German composer's trip to Italy in 1830-31.

"It's a very sunny and energetic symphony," Tchivzhel said. "It's a very true impression of Italy."

The "Italian" Symphony's vivacious first movement is balanced by a third movement that evokes a solemn religious procession and a fiery fourth movement dance.

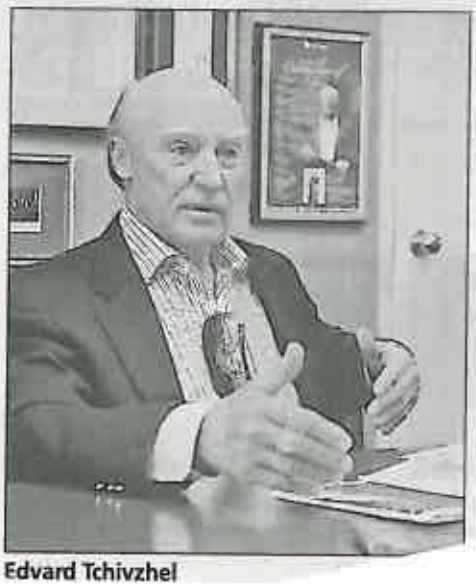
The concert closes with Brahms' monumental Symphony No. 1.

"Of Brahms' four symphonies, this is the grandest," Tchivzhel said.

Conductor Hans von Bulow, a famous contemporary of Brahms, referred admiringly to the Symphony No. 1 as "Beethoven's Tenth Symphony."

Tchivzhel noted that Brahms' symphony reflects Beethoven's concern with minor-major-key tension, while a flowing hymn-like melody in the finale bears a resemblance to Beethoven's "Ode to Joy."

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Edvard Tchivzhel