

“Madison Symphony Orchestra looks ahead to 2009-2010 season”

Isthmus

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3/25/09

At a gracious press reception Tuesday, maestro John DeMain laid out the Madison Symphony Orchestra concert season for 2009-2010.

The established pattern of three performances of each program over a weekend (Friday and Saturday evenings, Sunday afternoon) will be maintained. Six of the eight programs will be conducted by maestro DeMain, the other two by guests. There will be 10 visiting soloists: some new talents but mostly established stars, the majority familiar from past appearances here.

At the schedule's center is the annual Christmas Spectacular program in December, with the Symphony Chorus, several local choirs, and the distinguished soprano Sylvia McNair as guest singer.

Of the three autumn programs, two will be in October. The first brings the eminent Peter Serkin in the monumental “Piano concerto No. 1” by Brahms; DeMain will lead the orchestra in Beethoven's “Consecration of the House” Overture and Richard Strauss' “Death and Transfiguration.” For the other, colorful violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg will play a new piece by tango-master Astor Piazzolla, “Four Seasons of Buenos Aires,” while maestro DeMain directs a Glinka overture and returns to Mahler's “Symphony No. 1.”

In November cellist Ralph Kirshbaum is to perform Ernest Bloch's Hebraic Rhapsody, “Schelomo,” plus a short Dvorak piece, “Silent Woods,” framed by two popular blockbusters, Respighi's “Fountains of Rome” and Tchaikovsky's “Symphony No. 5” under DeMain.

February will be another two-program month. In the first, popular violin virtuoso Pinchas Zukerman will play Mozart's “Concerto No. 5” and join his wife, cellist Amanda Forsyth, in a duo by Saint-Saens, while the latter is to solo in Bruch's “Kol Nidrei,” the our local organ master, Samuel Hutchison, will join DeMain in revisiting Saing-Saens' spectacular “Organ Symphony” (No. 3). Those who remember Anu Tali's splendid podium debut with the MSO last November will welcome her back for the second February concert in music by fellow-Estonian composer Heino Eller and Sibelius' “Symphony No. 1.” Maestro DeMain will return in April, to salute the season with Rimsky-Korsakov's colorful “Russian Easter Overture,” then to welcome two soloists: pianist Philippe Bianconi in Rachmaninoff's “Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini,” and bass-baritone Dean Peterson, with the Symphony Chorus, in excerpts from Mussorgsky's opera “Boris Godunov.”