



**KNOXVILLE  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA**

Aram Demirjian, Music Director

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# PRESS RELEASE

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## KNOXVILLE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA EXPLORES RHYTHM WITH LOCAL PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE, "NIEF-NORF"

Beethoven's Overture from *Prometheus*, Dorman's *Spices, Perfumes, Toxins!*, Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 performed by KSO and Knoxville's Nief-Norf

**Knoxville, TN – November 7** – In two weeks, the **Knoxville Symphony Orchestra** performs its third Moxley Carmichael Masterworks concerts of the season, entitled "Beethoven and the Art of Rhythm." **Music Director Aram Demirjian** leads the performance on **Thursday, November 21 and Friday, November 22, at 7:30 p.m. at the Tennessee Theatre**. These concerts are sponsored by Masterworks Circle of Friends. [View ticket and general information here.](#)

The program begins with Beethoven's Overture from *Prometheus*, bringing to life the Greek myth of Prometheus, who was credited with the creation of human life. The evening continues with Dorman's *Spices, Perfumes, Toxins!*, a showcase of percussive excellence featuring guest artist, Nief-Norf. The night concludes with Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, displaying the combined musicality of dynamic rhythms and compelling melody.

KSO Music Director, Aram Demirjian, noted "Rhythm lies at the heart of this program and fills nearly every inch of the Tennessee Theatre stage! Of all of Beethoven's symphonies, the Seventh -- or as Wagner called it, 'The Apotheosis of Dance' -- lives nearest and dearest to my heart because of the joyful rhythmic fire that simmers within it at every moment. I am also thrilled to be able to collaborate with my friend and colleague Andy Bliss and his contemporary music collective, Nief-Norf. Collaborating with other artistic institutions in Knoxville is a vital aspect of the KSO's mission, as is advancing the artform by championing living composers -- and in Avner Dorman's *Spice, Perfumes, Toxins!* we have the opportunity to achieve both."

Tickets may be purchased by calling 865-291-3310 or [visiting our website](#). Single tickets range from \$15.00 - \$85.00. Groups of ten or more can purchase tickets at a discounted rate by calling 865-521-2337.

### **About Nief-Norf**

As performers, educators, and curators, Nief-Norf delights in championing works from the established and emerging experimental tradition since their inception in 2005. Their flexible roster allows the collective to share their passion for adventurous programming concepts and

interdisciplinary collaboration whether as featured soloists, chamber musicians, or with larger ensembles. Immersive listening experiences like Michael Pisaro's *A Wave and Waves*, a work for 100 musicians spearheaded by Nief-Norf for Big Ears Festival 2017, have been a cornerstone of Nief-Norf's vision for contemporary chamber music in the United States.

With percussionists at its nucleus, the ensemble seeks opportunities to challenge and expand their ideas about what contemporary classical music is and can be in the 21st Century. Nief-Norf fosters collaboration and communication through its annual Summer Festival, Research Summit, and Call for Scores. Since its inception in the summer of 2011, the Summer Festival's performance and composition seminars have attracted undergraduates, graduates, and professionals from institutions across the United States and abroad. Creating opportunities for discourse and collaboration between scholars, performers, and composers is at the very core of Nief-Norf's purpose.

Andrew Bliss and Kerry O'Brien took the ensemble's name from a descriptor of strange sounds: some say "bleep-blop," they prefer "nief-norf." This onomatopoeic neologism came to stand for any new music that was experimental or unusual. Through its members' combined backgrounds in performance, scholarship, and technology, they bring a unique blend of knowledge and enthusiasm for this music. In essence, through active performance they celebrate open-mindedness in classical music by specializing in all things "norf."

[Full bio found here.](#)

### **About Aram Demirjian**

The Knoxville Symphony Orchestra is flourishing under the transformative leadership of Music Director Aram Demirjian. Aram has appeared with the nation's top orchestras and maintains a close relationship with The Philadelphia Orchestra, with which he appears three times in the 2019-20 season. He also makes subscription debuts with the Tucson Symphony, Portland Symphony and the Orlando Philharmonic. Other recent engagements include the Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Omaha, San Antonio and St. Louis symphonies, the Minnesota and Sarasota orchestras, and the Louisiana Philharmonic. A gifted public speaker, he is a passionate and vocal advocate for the arts, and he regularly addresses community and business organizations advocating for arts non-profits and arts education in our society. Aram is the winner of the 2019 Career Assistance Award from the Solti Foundation U.S. and the 2011 Robert J. Harth Conducting Prize from the Aspen Music Festival, and he has appeared in masterclasses with renowned conductors Bernard Haitink and Kurt Masur. Aram holds a joint Bachelor of Arts in Music and Government from Harvard University and a Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting from New England Conservatory.

### **About the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra**

Led by Music Director Aram Demirjian, the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra consists of 80 professional musicians and performs 300 programs throughout the region each season, reaching audiences of more than 200,000 people. The KSO performs in traditional venues such as the Tennessee Theatre, Bijou Theatre, and Civic Auditorium, as well as non-traditional places like hospitals, schools, city parks,

and churches. For more information regarding the KSO, please visit [www.knoxvillesymphony.com](http://www.knoxvillesymphony.com) or call 865-291-3310.

**Social Media Posts:**

@Knoxsymphony performs Beethoven's Overture from "Prometheus", Dorman's "Spices, Perfumes, and Toxins!," and Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 featuring Knoxville Music Ensemble, Nief-Norf. Nov. 21-22, 7:30 p.m., @tntheatre. Tix start at \$15, online here or by calling 865-291-3310.