



Aram Demirjian, Music Director

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KNOXVILLE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES 2020-2021 CLASSICAL SEASON

KNOXVILLE, TN – February 11, 2020 – The **Knoxville Symphony Orchestra** has announced the lineup of its 2020-2021 classical season. Subscriptions to the Moxley Carmichael Masterworks Series and Sheena McCall Chamber Classics series are on sale now and can be purchased by visiting the [KSO website](#) or calling the KSO box office Monday-Friday, 9 AM- 5 PM, at (865) 291-3310. Individual concert tickets go on sale in August.

Aram Demirjian, Knoxville Symphony Music Director, stated, “Next season is the clearest realization of what I envisioned the Knoxville Symphony would be doing when I started as music director. It’s collaborative. It’s artistically ambitious. And it’s extremely fresh in terms of what we are programming, while still maintaining the romantic symphonic repertoire that lies at the core of what orchestras do.”



KNOXVILLE SYMPHONY MASTERWORKS SEASON INCLUDES:

- Eight pairs of concerts held at the Tennessee Theatre on Thursday & Friday evenings at 7:30 p.m.

- Each concert includes a 30-minute pre-concert chat at 6:30 p.m. with conductor and guest artist(s), allowing an up-close Q&A session, insights and background to the music
- The Masterworks series includes the Tennessee premiere of Chris Rogerson’s concerto for PROJECT Trio (KSO co-commission)
- Subscriptions now on sale starting at just \$102; single tickets will go on sale in August 2020

TESSA LARK & THE PINES OF ROME

September 17-18, 2020

7:30 p.m. Tennessee Theatre

Aram Demirjian, conductor

Tessa Lark, violin

The Knoxville Symphony opens its 85th season with a program described by music director Aram Demirjian as “colorful and festive, [containing] musical fireworks.” Opening the program, Ravel’s “choreographic poem” *La valse* evokes a world in transition at the start of the 1920s. Violin virtuoso and Kentucky native Tessa Lark (who made a triumphant Knoxville debut in January of 2019) returns with a concerto written for her by acclaimed American composer Michael Torke. Inspired by Tessa’s bluegrass training, *Sky* employs banjo-picking techniques and fiddle licks for a piece critics hail as “...energetic, tuneful, and brilliantly orchestrated.” Duke Ellington’s last major work, *The Three Black Kings*, was conceived as a eulogy for Martin Luther King, Jr., and creates portraits in sound of Balthazar (King of the Magi), King Solomon (King of Israel), and Dr. King, himself. The evening concludes with another quintessential piece from the ‘20s, Respighi’s majestic *Pines of Rome* and its signature blazing brass finale, an immersive musical experience facilitated by brass players positioning themselves all around the audience.

CHOPIN AND TCHAIKOVSKY

October 15-16, 2020

7:30 p.m. Tennessee Theatre

James Fellenbaum, conductor

Michelle Cann, piano

Though not contemporaries, Chopin and Tchaikovsky had much in common: both died young, had a series of tumultuous personal relationships, and wrote enduring works of searing passion. Pianist Michelle Cann makes her second appearance on the KSO stage following a 2018 debut in which she was hailed as a “dynamic musical storyteller” (*Arts Knoxville*). This program opens with *Watercolors* by Knoxville’s own composer/painter Dusia McKay, sharing in both the color and deep texture of Chopin and Tchaikovsky’s compositions. The program closes with Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 6 (Pathétique), his final completed work known for its psychological depth and extremes of triumph and tragedy.

COMPOSERS WHO SERVED: A Veteran’s Day Tribute

November 12-13, 2020

7:30 p.m. Tennessee Theatre

Aram Demirjian, conductor

Andrew Staupe, piano

Aram Demirjian and the KSO honor local veterans in a program of moving works written by, or inspired by, those who served. This evening includes: Bernstein’s Three Dance Episodes from famed Broadway classic *On the Town*, which tells the story of sailors on 24-hour leave from the Navy; American composer and veteran Samuel Barber, whose “Night Flight,” was commissioned by the Air Force; *A Shropshire Lad* by George Butterworth, a casualty of World War I and budding composer; *Born on the Fourth of July* by Air Force veteran John Williams, inspired by veterans’ chronic struggle of PTSD; Concerto for Left Hand by Maurice Ravel, who joined the French Army at 39 and wrote this piece for Austrian concert pianist Paul Wittgenstein who lost an arm in World War I, played by pianist Andrew Staupe; Copland’s *Appalachian Spring*, written and premiered during WWII, as a tribute to the volunteer spirit of the volunteer state.

THE FOUR SEASONS

January 21-22, 2020

7:30 p.m. Tennessee Theatre

Aram Demirjian, conductor

William Shaub, violin

This first Masterworks performance of 2021 mirrors the transformation found in the new year with pieces that embody the shifting seasons in nature. “Petrichor” is defined as “a pleasant smell that frequently accompanies the first rain after a long period of warm, dry weather.” In her eponymously-titled piece, East Tennessee native and 2019 Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Ellen Reid creates a multidimensional experience that literally envelops the audience as the orchestra will be positioned throughout the hall. KSO Concertmaster William Shaub takes center stage for Antonio Vivaldi’s vivid masterpiece, *The Four Seasons* and Music Director Aram Demirjian conducts the bracing Fifth Symphony of Jean Sibelius, with its epic “swan theme,” inspired by the composer’s experience of seeing 16 swans taking flight.

MOZART & SCHUMANN

February 18-19, 2020

7:30 p.m. Tennessee Theatre

Sameer Patel, conductor

Weiyin Chen, piano

Fantasy and reality intermingle on this February Masterworks program, which features two pivotal works of early romanticism by Schumann and Wagner. Conductor Sameer Patel leads the KSO in a program featuring Wagner’s Overture to *The Flying Dutchman*, the classic opera that tells the story of a ghost ship destined to forever roam the seas. Pianist Weiyin Chen makes her Knoxville debut with Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 25, a piece that displays a heroic quality that influenced a young

Beethoven. This program also features contemporary composer Al-Zand's *Visions from Another World*, a piece based off of three drawings by the 19th century caricaturist, J.J Grandville.

BEATS & BOLERO

March 25-26, 2020

7:30 p.m. Tennessee Theatre

Aram Demirjian, conductor

Indigenous Vibes

Aram Demirjian leads a propulsive program all about the power and movement of rhythm in classical and contemporary pieces. This program features James DeMars' *SABAR: Concerto for African Drums*, performed by Indigenous Vibes, a professional drumming ensemble comprised of alumni of Austin East High School's West African Drum program, directed by Obayana Ajanaku. This concert also features the beloved music of *West Side Story*, Bernstein's "Symphonic Dances." The program begins with "Drums: A Symphonic Poem" by the "Dean of Jazz Pianists," James Price Johnson, and closes with Ravel's timeless *Bolero*, a ballet composition that carries the drumbeat of this program to the last moment of the evening.

MOZART REQUIEM

April 22-23, 2020

7:30 p.m. Tennessee Theatre

Aram Demirjian, conductor

Knoxville Choral Society

Webb School of Knoxville Chamber Singers

In the summer of 1791, a mysterious stranger commissioned Mozart to write a mass. Six months later, the legendary composer was dead – and what would become his greatest religious work was an unfinished manuscript. This program features Mozart's Requiem performed by the Knoxville Choral Society and Webb School of Knoxville Chamber Singers. Also left an unfinished work upon its

composer's death, Schubert's Symphony No. 8, coined his "Unfinished Symphony," is performed by the Chamber Orchestra and is accompanied by the contemporary work of Atlanta native TJ Cole in her composition, *Death of the Poet*.

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE & PROJECT TRIO

May 20 – 21, 2020

7:30 p.m. Tennessee Theatre

Aram Demirjian, conductor

PROJECT Trio

The season finale of the Masterworks series features three pieces that are departures from convention. PROJECT Trio, who electrified audiences with their January 2018 KSO debut and whose performances have been hailed in the press as "packed with musicianship, joy and surprise," return for a concerto written especially for them by dynamic young American composer Chris Rogerson. The concert continues with Berlioz's fiery *Symphonie fantastique*, a spectacle in its time, written as a performative declaration of love to a Shakespearean actress the composer knew. The evening concludes with "Dance of the Seven Veils" by composer R. Strauss, a piece inspired by the opera *Salome*, known similarly for its themes of passion and obsession.



KNOXVILLE SYMPHONY CHAMBER CLASSICS SEASON INCLUDES:

- Five concerts on Sunday afternoons at 2:30 PM. Four concerts will occur at the Bijou Theatre and one performance will take place at the Tennessee Theatre
- Fifth Annual Classical Christmas concert, which SOLD OUT its first four years!
- Subscriptions now on sale starting at \$101.50; single tickets go on sale in August 2020

MOZART & SCHUBERT

September 27, 2020

2:30 p.m. at the Bijou Theatre

Aram Demirjian, conductor

Gordon Tsai, violin

KSO kicks off the Chamber Classics series with a program that can only be described as a supreme delight, featuring pieces that will lighten the mood and put a smile on your face. Knoxville Symphony Associate Concertmaster Gordon Tsai takes the stage as soloist for Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 2 and the KSO performs Valerie Coleman's ebullient "Nonet" and Schubert's charming Symphony No. 5 to round out the program.

CLASSICAL CHRISTMAS: HANDEL'S MESSIAH

November 29, 2020

2:30 p.m. at the Tennessee Theatre

Aram Demirjian, conductor

Knoxville Choral Society

The KSO renews its December tradition of "A Classical Christmas," featuring Handel's *Messiah* with the **Knoxville Choral Society**, at the Tennessee Theatre. The *Messiah* performance will, of course, feature the Hallelujah Chorus! This performance also includes Victor Hely-Hutchinson's "A Carol Symphony," a combination of well-known Christmas carol melodies. "A Classical Christmas" comes just in time to get you and yours in the holiday spirit. This popular performance sold out the past five years, so patrons should be sure to secure their subscriptions early.

MENDELSSOHN'S "ITALIAN"

January 10, 2021

2:30 p.m. at the Bijou Theatre

Aram Demirjian, conductor

Sean Claire, violin

Andy Bryenton, cello

This program showcases the sounds of Italy, beginning with the Overture to *The Italian Girl In Algiers* by composer Gioachino Rossini. The Chamber Classics series continues to promote Knoxville collaboration with solos by KSO violinist Sean Claire and KSO's Principal Cellist, Andy Bryenton, in Italian composer Vivaldi's Concerto for Violin and Cello. Contemporary composer Anna Clyne's *Within Her Arms* calls for a fifteen player string orchestra that is reminiscent of the *concerto grosso* that you would find in Vivaldi's time. The program concludes with Mendelssohn's vivid depiction of an unforgettable vacation in his Symphony No. 4 ("Italian") and takes the audience on the journey there and back.

THE SOLDIER'S TALE

February 7, 2020

2:30 PM at the Bijou Theatre

Aram Demirjian, conductor

Marble City Opera

KSO Principal Quartet

This performance features a staged performance of Stravinsky's neoclassical theatre piece "The Soldier's Tale" with a seven-piece orchestra on stage. Musicians will be joined on stage by Knoxville's Marble City Opera performers as they relate the story through narration and dance. This charming cautionary tale tells the story of a soldier who trades his fiddle to the devil for fame and fortune (reminiscent of "The Devil Went Down to Georgia"!) allowing audiences to join in the story through live storytelling set to music. This program also includes Mendelssohn's String Quartet No. 6 *featuring the KSO Principal Quartet*.

TCHAIKOVSKY'S ACCORDION

March 7, 2020

2:30 PM at the Bijou Theatre

Aram Demirjian, conductor

KSO Woodwind Quintet

This final performance of the Chamber Classics season features works centered on a lesser celebrated instrument in the classical world: the accordion. Audiences will be introduced to David Bruce's *Groanbox*, which he noted was "a sort of imaginary folk-music...played by the largest and most virtuoso village band you've ever seen." This performance will also celebrate the 100th anniversary of Piazzolla's birth, known as the "King of the Tango," who played the bandoneon, an accordion-like instrument. Acclaimed American composer Christopher Theofanidis has reimagined Tchaikovsky's First String Quartet, ("The Accordion"), a piece that evokes the sound of an accordion.

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 or call 865-291-3310.

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