

## Giancarlo Guerrero Discusses the 2019/20 Classical Series



### **Beyond the Score®: Shostakovich's Fourth — Is Music Dangerous?**

**Sept. 27 & 28, 2019**

Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony is dear to my heart. It has great history because it was banned in 1936 by the Stalin regime, which thought Shostakovich was too influenced by Western music. The Fourth Symphony was not premiered until 1961, only once Stalin was long gone — which is evidence of the danger and power of totalitarian regimes. This history raises the question at the heart of this program: Is music dangerous? With the Nashville Symphony's first "Beyond the Score" performance and my first encounter with the piece, the audience and I will get the opportunity to go on the journey together as we look at the history behind this masterwork and go beyond the music to give it context.

### **Beethoven's Birthday Bash**

**February 20-23, 2020**

In February 2020, we'll begin our celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Beethoven's birth, which we'll continue over the next year. Beethoven's music is immortal. This is the man who settled the form of the symphony. So our season is filled with symphonies by composers who were inspired by Beethoven — Bruckner, Tchaikovsky, Mahler and Brahms — as well as by Beethoven himself. We in the orchestra are so grateful to for his contribution to the form, so we are paying tribute to this great man who left us so much remarkable music.

### **Appalachian Spring, feat. Brad Warnaar's Cornet Concerto and Jennifer Higdon's Low Brass Concerto**

**March 6 & 7, 2020**

This concert is part of a long-term recording project showcasing principal players in the orchestra. We've gotten to hear from our principal clarinet, oboe and horn. This time, audiences will get to hear the Nashville Symphony's excellent low brass section, as well as principal trumpet Jeffrey Bailey on cornet.

## **Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony feat. Gabriela Lena Frank's Conquest Requiem**

**March 19-21, 2020**

These live recording sessions will continue the Nashville Symphony's commitment to highlighting our world-class, all-volunteer chorus with our GRAMMY®-winning orchestra — a process that began with their performances and recording of John Harbison's *Requiem* in 2017. Choral works by American and Latin American composers have been somewhat neglected, so given the Symphony's commitment to American music, it made perfect sense to perform this work.

Gabriela Lena Frank drew on her Peruvian roots for her *Conquest Requiem*. This subject material was very important to both of us, as we are from countries whose histories have been shaped by colonial conquest. The work combines the Catholic Mass in Latin, Spanish text, and Nahuatl poetry written during the colonial era. The Nashville Symphony Chorus is eager for the challenge of performing in three languages. Their work on the Harbison was nothing short of remarkable, and I could not imagine a better way to follow it than with the *Conquest Requiem*.

The second half of this program is Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony, which shares with the *Requiem* a respect for the Earth. Birds singing, rivers flowing, a country wedding and a summer storm — these all inspired Beethoven. While many listeners have heard the Pastoral Symphony before, my hope is that when we listen to it after Frank's *Conquest Requiem*, we will hear it in a new and revelatory way.

## **Mahler's Tenth**

**April 9 to 11, 2020**

I'm a very curious person, it is in my DNA. As much as I love Beethoven, Brahms and Rachmaninov, I am always looking for new music or standard repertoire that is new to me. This will be my first time conducting Mahler's Tenth Symphony. I will not know until the end of the week if it will remain in my repertoire or not. It is not entirely in my control. The musicians, audience, the evening itself, so many things go into the concert experience, and they all have to come together to make an unforgettable performance. I approach this with respect and know my job is to present the music in the best, most virtuosic, most honest way that I can. The rest is up to the audience.

Mahler is in the same pantheon as Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms, but he only wrote around 14 pieces, all of it in the repertoire. I believe it's because of the human connection. His music is so direct, almost autobiographical, about extremes of human emotions. The Nashville Symphony has done all of Mahler's numbered symphonies, but never the completion of the Tenth (this version by Deryck Cooke). After *Das Lied von der Erde* in March 2019, these performances of Mahler's Tenth will complete the Nashville Symphony's traversal of Mahler's symphonic works.

## **Guerrero Conducts Bruckner**

**May 29 & 30, 2020**

Collaborating with the guest artists is one of the most gratifying parts of my job. Most are great friends of the Nashville Symphony and have become favorites of the musicians and the audience. Nashville was one of the first American symphonies to engage Daniil Trifonov, and we are glad to welcome him back to close our 2019/20 season. As we were discussing his return in 2020, I asked what he wanted to do next. He said he wanted to expand his repertoire and introduced me to Mosolov, a little-known Modernist Russian composer of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mosolov gets overlooked because of other Russian giants like Shostakovich and Prokofiev. It takes soloists as well as conductors to make the case for undeservedly neglected composers.

### **On Performing Contemporary Music**

Music is a living organism. It took years for works by Beethoven, Mahler, Brahms or Stravinsky to become a part of the repertoire. Over time, they became standard fare as more conductors and musicians championed them and made them their own. And history has shown repeatedly that it could take years for a work to take hold. For music to speak to our own experience, it needs to evolve and respond to the times we live in. When composers write and orchestras perform contemporary music, they are creating a time capsule of the moment in which we are living, and they are creating a fresh context for hearing the work of the old masters.

I am most proud of the Nashville Symphony for championing the music of our time. This has been part of my vision for the past decade, and the fact that I am able to put forward-thinking programming on the stage is a testament to our audience. I wouldn't dare to do it if the musicians weren't immensely capable and the audience wasn't so ready to embrace it. As a citizen of Nashville, I am so proud of my city for embracing their Nashville Symphony.

During his lifetime, Mahler's music wasn't well received, so after his death, it took other conductors to champion his music. Mozart died penniless, so his music should have disappeared, but soloists and conductors insisted that someone needed to perform it. This is my role now: to champion the music of today's best compositional voices. It is not up to me what remains. I am aware that all I can do is bring it to the fore. What stays in the repertoire is what audiences connect to over time. The Nashville Symphony has the courage and vision to invest in the expansion of the art form. We believe in our hearts that this is how we invest in the future of classical music.