

LANSING SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

TIMOTHY MUFFITT • MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

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LANSING SYMPHONY OPENS 2008/2009 SEASON ON SEPT. 6 WITH “MASTERWORKS 1: THE GYPSY LIFE” IN WHARTON CENTER’S GREAT HALL

LANSING, MI – August 14, 2008 – As fall begins to set on mid-Michigan, with families gearing up for back to school and loading the car for one last summer trip, the Lansing Symphony Orchestra invites you to “Begin Your Journey” with the opening concert of its 2008/2009 Season. Whether you’re an orchestral aficionado or planning your first excursion with the symphony, the LSO and Music Director Timothy Muffitt can provide you with opportunities to “Begin Your Journey” in a variety of ways. This season, the LSO will present a six-concert MasterWorks Series, a three-concert Pops Series, a four-concert Chamber Series, two Big Band concerts, a Halloween Spooktacular! Family Concert, and An Evening of Sacred Music.

The Lansing Symphony Orchestra will present its Season Premiere - MasterWorks 1: The Gypsy Life - on Saturday, September 6th at 8 p.m. at the Wharton Center’s Cobb Great Hall. The program includes Brahms’s Hungarian Dance No. 5 as well as his Violin Concerto in D Major. The “Gypsy” theme will continue with the Intermezzo and Spanish Dance from Falla’s *La Vida Breve* and Ravel’s exciting *Rhapsody Espagnole*. Tickets start at \$10 and are available by calling the Lansing Symphony at (517) 487-5001 or online at www.lansingsymphony.org. The concert is sponsored by the Delta Dental Plan of Michigan.

Johannes Brahms became familiar with gypsy music as teenager in Hamburg, accompanying Hungarian musicians that came to town. His fascination with an urbanized version of Hungarian folk music lasted far beyond his teenage years. Even after he had established himself as an accomplished composer, Brahms would entertain his friends with his “gypsy” inspired piano variations. Eventually, they were arranged for piano and, later, for full orchestra. Brahms called them “Hungarian Dances,” and the one the LSO will perform (No. 5) is perhaps the most famous.

One of the works Brahms wrote as an “accomplished composer,” the Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 77 will feature guest artist David Kim. Featuring the expansive, lyrical melodies and lush harmonies we expect from a true Romantic like Brahms, this concerto will also provide Kim an opportunity to demonstrate his impressive skill with some technical fireworks in the last movement.

David Kim has been Concertmaster of the Philadelphia Orchestra since 1999. Born in Carbondale, Illinois, he started playing the violin at the age of three, began studies with the famed pedagogue Dorothy DeLay at the age of eight, and later received his bachelor's and master's degrees from The Juilliard School. In 1986, he was the only American violinist to win a prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, and in 1990, was a prize winner at the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis. Mr. Kim is founder and artistic director of the Kingston Chamber Music Festival at the University of Rhode Island. He also holds the position of Special Guest Artist there, and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Arts degree in 2001. Mr. Kim appears as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra each season as well as with numerous orchestras around the world. Conductors with whom he has performed include Christoph von Dohnanyi, Charles Dutoit, Christoph Eschenbach, Vladimir Jurowski, Andrew Litton, Peter Oundjian and Wolfgang Sawallisch. He also appears internationally at festivals throughout the world.

In 1904, Manuel de Falla wrote his first serious work for the stage, a short opera called *La Vida Breve* (*The Short Life*.) To open the second half of “The Gypsy Life,” the LSO will perform the Intermezzo and Spanish Dance from *La Vida Breve*'s orchestral suite. These two pieces, full of the rhythms and

melodies of Falla's native Spain, will set the tone perfectly for the last stop on the concert's journey:

Ravel's *Rhapsody Espagnole*.

Though Maurice Ravel is considered one of the greatest French composers, he held a lifelong fascination with all things Spanish. His first full-scale orchestral work *Rhapsody Espagnole* is an exciting manifestation of that fascination. The four movements of this work take the audience through a journey all its own: from a mysteriously beautiful prelude, to the spirited dance of the Malagueña, to the slow and sensuous Habanera, and finally concluding with an explosion of festival music to bring the journey to a powerful end.

Individual tickets to the Lansing Symphony's **MasterWorks concerts** range from **\$10 to \$43**, depending on seating. **Subscriptions** to the six-concert **MasterWorks Series** range from **\$58 to \$240**. A four-concert **Sampler Subscription** is also available. Student discounts available on all concerts. Subscriptions and single tickets for the 2008/2009 Season can be purchased by calling the Symphony office at (517) 487-5001 or by ordering online at www.LansingSymphony.org. Brochures and order forms are also available at the Symphony office. **First-time subscribers receive a 25% discount on their subscriptions.**

This is Music Director Timothy Muffitt's third season with the Lansing Symphony. In addition to his role with the LSO, Muffitt is in his tenth season as Music Director and Conductor of the Baton Rouge Symphony. In the summer, he also serves as Music Director of the Chautauqua Institution's Music School Festival Orchestra, one of the country's premiere orchestral training ensembles. Previously, Muffitt served as the Associate Conductor of the Austin Symphony and as Artistic Director of the Louisiana Philharmonic's Casual Classics Series, for which he was awarded a Certificate of Meritorious Service from the American Federation of Musicians. Muffitt has appeared with leading orchestras throughout the country and is recognized as a strong proponent of community arts education. He also has appeared with the San Francisco Symphony, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, the Long Beach Symphony, Columbus Ohio's Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Virginia Symphony, the Grant Park

Music Festival Orchestra in Chicago, and the Symphonies of Houston, Phoenix, Edmonton, Harrisburg, and Spokane. He has worked with many prominent performers, including Renee Fleming, Yo Yo Ma, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Andre Watts, Alicia de Larrocha, Pinchas Zukerman, Van Cliburn, Lynn Harrell, and Itzhak Perlman; and many prominent composers, including John Cage, Joseph Schwantner, Ellen Taffe Zwilich, John Harbison, Joan Tower, and Bernard Rands. Born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, Timothy Muffitt studied at the Eastman School of Music, where he earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree.

The Lansing Symphony Orchestra was established in 1929. More than 20,000 people attend LSO concerts each year, and more than 50,000 listeners are able to hear broadcasts of the Orchestra's concerts by NPR affiliate WKAR-FM Radio. The Symphony's highly acclaimed education programs reach 15,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade in five counties.

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