

The New Crossroads of American Music

Press Release



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EMF WELCOMES RENOWNED PIANIST
HORACIO GUTIERREZ AND GUEST CONDUCTOR, BRIGHT
SHENG FOR AN EVENING OF BEETHOVEN, SHENG &
JANÁČEK

Greensboro, NC- EMF's **Lincoln Financial Festival Orchestra Series** continues on **Saturday, July 18, 2009 at 8pm**, with a concert featuring the technically superb pianist **Horacio Gutiérrez** in a special performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, op.58. Led by **Maestro Gerard Schwarz**, the Eastern Festival Orchestra will also present works by Beethoven and Janáček. A rare treat, **guest conductor, Bright Sheng will conduct his own Tibetan Swing**. The concert will take place in **Dana Auditorium at Guilford College** (5800 West Friendly Ave., Greensboro, NC 27410). There will be an additional performance on **Sunday, July 19, 2009 at Appalachian State University's "An Appalachian Summer"** in Boone, North Carolina. Immediately following the Boone performance the audience is invited to participate in a Question and Answer session with Mr. Gutiérrez and Mr. Schwarz.

For the Greensboro performance, tickets may be purchased for \$51 for reserved seating and \$41 for general admission by calling the EMF Box Office at Triad Stage at 336.272.0160 or 866-579-TIXX, or online at www.EasternMusicFestival.org. Pricing for the Boone performance varies with tickets available at 800.841.2787 or www.appsummer.org.

With a career of over three decades, Cuban pianist **Horacio Gutiérrez** has earned a critically acclaimed reputation, and has been praised as one of the greatest pianist of our time. His technical mastery and musicianship have allowed him to shine through a diverse range of repertoire. While performing Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, op.58 with the Eastern Festival Orchestra, Mr. Gutiérrez will bring the gracefulness and maturity that led him to appear with the greatest orchestras in the world.

The work at hand is a virtuosic display of the performer's capabilities. In its profoundness, Beethoven gives the soloist and the orchestra parts almost equally challenging, with the rhythmic and vital character that distinguish his compositions.

Also included in the program, is Beethoven's Leonore Overture No. 3, op.72b. Although opera was not Beethoven's forte, this well-known overture carries some of the stylistic traits that coin him as an admirable and influential composer. Leading composer Bright Sheng will join the Orchestra as guest conductor in a special performance of his work: Tibetan Swing, based on a typical Tibetan dance. The concert will culminate with Janáček's *Sinfonietta*, a brilliant work in the form of a short symphony. As a result of the composer's affinity with brass choirs, *Sinfonietta* features the amount and grandiosity of brass instruments above the rest of the ensemble.

A free pre-concert conversation with musicologist Dr. Greg Carroll, called Musically Speaking, explores the history of the evening's composers and repertoire in a casual, conversational atmosphere. Musically Speaking begins at 7pm in the Moon Room of Dana Auditorium and is free and open to the public. There is also a pre-concert prelude beginning at 7:15pm in front of Dana Auditorium to welcome concertgoers.

Well•Spring Retirement Community is the proud sponsor of Horacio Gutiérrez for his Greensboro performance.

The Boone performance and after-concert "Meet the Artist" are funded in part by a grant from the Southern Arts Federation in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the North Carolina Arts Council.

More about Horacio Gutiérrez

Considered one of the great pianists of our time, **Horacio Gutiérrez** is consistently praised by critics and audiences alike for the poetic insight and technical mastery he brings to a diverse repertoire. Since his professional debut in 1970 with Zubin Mehta and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Mr. Gutiérrez has appeared regularly with the world's greatest orchestras and on its major recital series.

In past seasons, Mr. Gutiérrez has given recitals at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Berlin's Philharmonie, the Schleswig-Holstein Festival and New York's Carnegie Hall and Avery Fisher Hall, as well as in Los Angeles, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco and Cleveland. In 2007 and 2008, he performed on subscription and on tour with the Cleveland Orchestra, and he returned for his bi-annual concerts with the San Francisco Symphony among many other orchestras, including Seattle, Utah, Pittsburgh and San Diego. During the 08-09 season, he opened the season of the Dallas Symphony and performed with the Milwaukee Symphony, the Detroit Symphony, the Atlanta Symphony, the Oregon Symphony, the Calgary Philharmonic, and the Nashville and Colorado Symphony orchestras among many others. He also performed and conducted master classes in Leon, Spain. In 2009-2010 he is already scheduled to tour in Europe with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic.

A favorite of New York concertgoers, Mr. Gutiérrez has performed on numerous occasions at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall and Carnegie Hall in recital and with orchestra. He has been a frequent soloist at the Mostly Mozart Festival and has appeared on its season-opening "Live from Lincoln Center" telecast. As a chamber musician, he has collaborated with the Guarneri, Tokyo and Cleveland quartets as well as the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. In 1982, he was the recipient of the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize.

Mr. Gutiérrez is a strong advocate of contemporary American composers. Of special importance were his performances of William Schuman's *Piano Concerto* in honor of the composer's 75th birthday at New York's 92nd Street Y and of André Previn's *Piano Concerto* with the New York Philharmonic with Mr. Previn conducting. He frequently includes George Perle's *Phantasyplay* on his recital programs, and Mr. Perle has recently written a set of nine bagatelles dedicated to Mr. Gutiérrez.

Mr. Gutiérrez's Telarc recordings include Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concertos Nos. 2 and 3* with Lorin Maazel and the Pittsburgh Symphony, nominated for a Grammy Award. Also available on that label are separate discs of the two Brahms *Concertos*, both with André Previn and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1* and Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini* with David Zinman and the Baltimore Symphony. For the Chandos label he has recorded Prokofiev's *Concertos No. 2 and 3* with Neeme Jarvi and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. His most recent recording, *George Perle: A Retrospective*, was named one of the ten best recordings of 2006 by *The New Yorker*. His next recording, of solo repertoire, will be released in 2009. His television performances in Great Britain, the United States and France have been widely acclaimed, and won him an Emmy Award for his fourth appearance with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He has also been welcomed three times by Johnny Carson on "The Tonight Show." A great film and theater fan, he has performed in recital with Irene Worth and Mariette Hartley.

Born in Havana, Cuba, Horacio Gutiérrez appeared at the age of 11 as guest soloist with the Havana Symphony. He became an American citizen in 1967. A graduate of The Juilliard School, he is married to pianist Patricia Asher and resides in New York City.

More about Bright Sheng

Bright Sheng is respected as one of the foremost composers of our time whose stage, orchestral, chamber, and vocal works are performed regularly throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. Sheng's music is noted for its lyrical and limpid melodies, a Shostakovich sense of breath in music phrases, a Bartokian sense of rhythmic propulsion, and dramatic and theatrical gestures. Many of Sheng's works have strong Chinese and Asian influences, a result of his diligent study of Asian musical cultures for over three decades. He was proclaimed by the MacArthur Foundation in 2001 as "an innovative composer who merges diverse musical customs in works that transcend conventional aesthetic boundaries." His music was further described as "a fresh voice in cross-cultural

music.” The Foundation predicts that “Bright Sheng will continue to be an important leader in exploring and bridging musical traditions.”

Born on December 6th, 1955, in Shanghai, Sheng began studying the piano with his mother at age four. During China’s infamous Cultural Revolution, at fifteen he was sent to the remote province of Qinghai—a bordering state of China and Tibet—where for seven years he performed as a pianist and percussionist in the provincial folk music and dance theater and studied folk music of the region. When China’s universities reopened in 1978, he was among the first students admitted to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music where, from 1978-82, he studied composition with Wang Jianzhong before earning his B.M. He moved to New York City in 1982 and, at Queens College, CUNY, he studied composition with George Perle and Hugo Weisgall, Schenkerian Analysis with Carl Schackter, and piano with Morey Ritt, and he earned his M.A. in 1984. He earned his D.M.A. in 1993 from Columbia University where he studied composition with Chou Wen-chung, Jack Beeson, and Mario Davidovsky. During that period, as a student fellow at Tanglewood Music Center in 1985, he met Leonard Bernstein who later became Sheng’s mentor. Sheng studied composition and conducting with Bernstein privately until Bernstein’s passing in 1990.

During his student years, Sheng’s talent already emerged of its own accord, receiving many honors in China, as well as three fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Charles Ives Scholarship Award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and the awards from the Jerome Foundation, Guggenheim Foundation, Naumburg Foundation, and Rockefeller Foundation.

In 1999, at the invitation of President Clinton, Sheng received a special commission from The White House to create a new work honoring the visiting Chinese Premiere Zhu, Rongji. The resulting *Three Songs for Pipa and Cello* was premiered by Wu Man and Yo-Yo Ma during the state dinner hosted by the Clintons. In 2001, Sheng received the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship and the American Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and an ASCAP Achievement Award the following year. Sheng has taught composition at the University of Michigan since 1995, where he was professor of music from 1997-2003 and has been the Leonard Bernstein Distinguished University Professor of Music since 2003. Sheng was the recipient of the Michigan Arts Award and a Rackham fellowship from the University of Michigan in 2000.

Sheng’s works are well known for their dramatic style and historical significance. Two of his major orchestral works: *H’un: In Memoriam 1966-76* (1988) and *Naking! Nanking!*—a Threnody for Pipa and Orchestra (2000)—and his opera *Madam Mao* (2003) were indeed inspired by events in recent Chinese history. *H’un*, commissioned and premiered in 1988 by the New York Chamber Symphony, is Sheng’s landmark portrait of the Chinese Culture Revolution. Kurt Masur and the New York Philharmonic performed *H’un* in six cities on their 1993 European tour after giving performances in New York City and in Washington, D.C. It established Sheng’s reputation as a composer and has been programmed by the Chicago Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Tokyo Philharmonic, and many other major orchestras around the world.

More about Gerard Schwarz

Born to Viennese parents, EMF music director **Gerard Schwarz** has served as the Seattle Symphony Orchestra's music director since 1985. He is a recipient of the Ditson Conductor's award from Columbia University and was the first American to be named Conductor of the Year by *Musical America*. He holds numerous honorary doctorates, including ones from The Juilliard School, Cornish College of the Arts, Seattle University, University of Puget Sound, and Fairleigh Dickinson University. Recent highlights for Maestro Schwarz include two consecutive Emmy Awards in 2007 and 2008 for televised performances with Seattle Symphony; leading Seattle Symphony in its recent Southern California Tour; and conducting Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with the 600-member community orchestra and chorus for His Holiness the Dalai Lama during the recent visit to Seattle sponsored by Seeds of Compassion.

Maestro Schwarz has received 12 GRAMMY[®] nominations, six ASCAP awards, and numerous *Stereo Review* and Ovation awards. In June 2007, he received an Emmy for his performance with Seattle Symphony of Shostakovich's *Eighth Symphony*. Moreover, Maestro Schwarz won critical acclaim that season for his remarkable collaboration with Dale Chihuly to present Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*. His extensive discography of some 250 releases showcases his collaborations with some of the world's most prestigious orchestras, including The Philadelphia Orchestra; the Tokyo, Czech and Royal Liverpool philharmonics; the London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra National de France and Berlin Radio Symphony; the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; and the New York Chamber and Seattle symphonies. Soon to be released are works by Mahler, Arthur Foote, Bright Sheng, and Samuel Jones, as well as Deems Taylor's *Peter Ibbetson* and the first complete recording of Kurt Weill's *Eternal Road*.

In addition to his leadership at Eastern Music Festival, Maestro Schwarz has also served as music director of New York's Mostly Mozart Festival, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and New York Chamber Symphony, as well as artistic advisor to Tokyo Bunkamura's Orchard Hall.

Tickets: Triad Stage Box Office 336.272.0160 or 866.579.TIXX or www.EasternMusicFestival.org.

*a service fee will apply

Discounts are available for full-time students with a valid ID, seniors aged 65 or older, and groups of 10 or more for most performances. Young Artists and EMF*kids* concerts offer family-friendly packages. Please call the box office about packages. This season most discounts will be available at the door. Discounts and gift certificates will not be accepted for concerts designated as special events.

**Dates, programs, venues, and artists are subject to change.*

More about the Eastern Music Festival

Now in its 48th year, the Eastern Music Festival & School is recognized for its prodigious contributions to the field of American music and its commitment to nurturing talented American and international youth through a collaborative learning process. The program brings together a cross-section of America's most sought-after artists with pre-professional students in a five-week schedule of 100 concerts and music-related events. **Music Director Gerard Schwarz** heads a distinguished list of participating artists scheduled for 2009, including **Peter Serkin, Sarah Chang, Horacio Guti rrez, Nadja Salerno Sonnenberg, Xavier Phillips**, plus many others.

The Festival also produces a popular EMF*fringe* series of alternative programming, featuring everything from Americana to alt country, blues, jazz and gospel with artists such as **Mike Cross, The John Cowan Band, Laurelyn Dossett, Steep Canyon Rangers, Waybacks, The Chris Hicks Band**, blues artist **Larry McCray** and more. EMF*kids* offers camps and concerts with each uniquely designed to foster a love and knowledge for classical and non-classical music. This year's concerts are **Shana Banana** and **Dan Zanes**. EMF*jazz&blues* runs each spring and EMF Fringe on the Fall each autumn. Season tickets on sale through June 27th (EMF*fringe* season tickets on sale through July 9th); single tickets on sale now. www.EasternMusicFestival.org; Box Office 336.272.0160 or 866.579-TIXX.

The 2009 Eastern Music Festival season is sponsored in part by the United Arts Council of Greater Greensboro, the North Carolina Arts Council, Lincoln Financial Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Southern Arts Federation, WFDD Triad Arts Station, Greensboro's News and Record, Continental Airways, Yes! Weekly, and Piedmont Music Center (Steinway Pianos).

For more information about EMF or its programs, please visit www.EasternMusicFestival.org, or call toll free: 1.877.833.6753

The Eastern Music Festival's mission is to promote musical enrichment, excellence, professional collaboration, innovation and diversity through a nationally-recognized teaching program, music festival, concerts and other programs which will enhance the quality of life, health and vitality of our region.

EMF is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.
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