

# The New Crossroads of American Music

Press Release



[www.EasternMusicFestival.org](http://www.EasternMusicFestival.org)

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## **GREENSBORO MAYOR YVONNE JOHNSON HONORS EMF'S MUSIC DIRECTOR GERARD SCHWARZ**

*Greensboro, NC*- In the opening to an exciting evening filled with brilliant music, last **Saturday July 11, 2009** in Dana Auditorium at Guilford College, **Mayor Yvonne Johnson** honored **Maestro Gerard Schwarz** for his active leadership in educational and musical endeavors in the city of Greensboro. The symbolic recognition included a brief speech highlighting Maestro Schwarz's reputation and outstanding achievements as a conductor, followed by the traditional handing-over of the key to the city.

Preceding the Eastern Festival Orchestra's concert, Mayor Johnson and her husband Walter took the stage to recognize Schwarz as the artistic figure that heads the organization's musical force. Mayor Johnson stated that: "Every day, I witness people who make a difference in our community. In recent years, I have taken note of Maestro Schwarz who has fostered a love of classical music in Greensboro through his leadership at EMF." Strongly involved with EMF, Mayor Johnson's relationship with the festival goes back to the 1980s when her husband participated as a member of the Board. Since then, both of them have developed a special bond with the organization that lasts to this day.

As Music Director of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra since 1985, Maestro Schwarz has a history of exceptional accomplishments as a renowned classical conductor. His contributions to the Eastern Music Festival have pioneered the musical and artistic growth of the community, gaining the attention of distinguished national and international names in the classical world. In addition, EMF has further reached the support of local music followers under his artistic leadership.

When the key was presented to Maestro Schwarz, Mayor Johnson remarked: "Tonight, I present the Key to Our City to honor you and your artistic achievements and contributions to Greensboro. Your stellar reputation brings international recognition to our City, and we thank you for the tremendous impact you have had on the arts and our residents." Maestro Gerard Schwarz gladly accepted the recognition, making mention to

the audience of the rich cultural life in the city, as well as his commitment to the festival and the community of Greensboro.

Mr. Schwarz has been the recipient of numerous accolades and awards:

- Under his leadership, the Seattle Symphony was recognized nationally for its adventurous programming in 1996 and 2004, when it received the First Place Award for Programming of Contemporary Music from ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers).
- In May 2002, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) recognized Gerard Schwarz as a champion of American music and the music of our time.
- In 1994 he was honored as Conductor of the Year by *Musical America International Directory of the Performing Arts*, the first American to receive this award.
- Honored last October with the 2009 Seattle-King County First Citizen Award

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<sup>®</sup> 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 Tokyu Bunkamura's Orchard Hall.

**Tickets:** Triad Stage Box Office 336.272.0160 or 866.579.TIXX or [www.EasternMusicFestival.org](http://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 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, Awadagin Pratt, 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 Dosett, 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. Single tickets and FlexPasses on sale now. [www.EasternMusicFestival.org](http://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](http://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.

All contributions are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

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