

Press Release
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Spartanburg Philharmonic To Celebrate 100 Years of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* with Concert and Art

Egyptian Guest Pianist to Play Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme Paganini*

It's hard not to see images in your mind's eye when you hear Igor Stravinsky's famous *Rite of Spring* symphony. If nothing else, you remember seeing Disney's 1940 cartoon movie *Fantasia* that used the score to depict the dramatic creation of the universe and prehistoric Earth.

In celebration of *The Rite of Spring*'s 100 birthday, the Spartanburg Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Music Director, Sarah Ioannides, will perform this passionate and Avant-garde symphony Saturday, May 4, at 7 p.m. in Twichell Auditorium at Converse College. In addition to hearing this emotionally stirring concert, patrons will also get a glimpse into the mind of students who will exhibit their visualization of the music in an art exhibit.

"This concert will touch people on many different levels," conductor Sarah Ioannides said. "*The Rite of Spring* is historically important and actually quite popular with young people. It is music that changed the course of classical music, and in addition it is music that nearly everyone has heard one way or the other. It's like Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* or *Berlioz Symphonie Fantastique*. Everyone has heard it and most nowadays like it. But have taken the music to another step by presenting it as a visual arts project to the community. We will show people what this music might actually look like from the young artists perspective."

For the past several weeks, high school students in Spartanburg School Districts 1, 2 and 7 have been asked to listen to the recorded symphony and to create visual art—paintings, drawings, sculptures—that reflects the music. This exhibit will be shown in part on the night of the concert. It will be shown in its entirety at Chapman Cultural Center starting April 18.

"Making classical music accessible and relevant to students is very important to the work we do," Keysie Maddox, director of The Music Foundation of Spartanburg, said. "There's a lot more to the Spartanburg Philharmonic Orchestra than playing a few concerts each year. It is our job to make music important to the Spartanburg community any way we can. This art

exhibit happens to be one of our most creative efforts. The arts in Spartanburg will definitely come together at this concert.”

The Rite of Spring is a ballet and orchestral concert by the Russian composer Stravinsky, first performed in 1913 in Paris. Because the work was so passionate and unusual for the time, it caused a near-riot in audience. But the popularity of the symphony grew and has been sustained for now 100 years and is among the most popular and reproduced pieces of classical music. The symphony has significant roots in Russian folk music, and music scholars have written much about the intended meanings and storylines behind the work. At the most elementary level, it is believed the music tells a pagan story about the welcoming of spring, the abduction of young girls, warring tribes, and sacrificial death.

“It doesn’t take a degree in music to feel the emotional power of this music,” Ioannides said. “It just takes over your mind and you feel your own heart beat rise and fall in time to the music.”

The accompanying art exhibit is being created by students in grades 9 through 12, involves six schools, and both music and art teachers. More than 300 pieces of artwork are anticipated being produced. From that large pool of contributors, four local judges—Kathy Zimmerli Wofford, Arts Teacher for the Chapman Cultural Center; Sarah Ioannides, Project Director for the Rite of Spring Schools Arts Project; Richard Higgs, Dean of Arts at Converse College; and Tom Rickis, incoming president for the Artists’ Guild of Spartanburg—will select the final exhibitors. The exhibit of semi-finalists will be at Chapman Cultural Center, starting April 18, with a public reception on April 23, at 6 p.m.

The first, second and third place winners will be recognized at the May 4 concert, each receiving cash prizes of \$300, \$200 and \$100 respectively. The prize money was provided Chapman Cultural Center through a grant.

To give all the students who participated the opportunity to have their work shown, a comprehensive slide show is being created and shown at the Chapman exhibit, during the concert, and at other related events, such as Spartanburg High School’s Spring Concert on April 11.

“As our last concert of the season, and we are excited to celebrate this important anniversary with something that involves and reaches so many teenagers, families and art enthusiasts.” Ioannides said. “This is some of the most vibrant and exciting classical music. With Rachmaninoff’s Rhapsody On a Theme of Paganini with Wael Farouk, who also trained at Converse, an art exhibit that utilizes the talents of our young people, this concert will be an special event. *The Rite of Spring* changed the world of music....” and Spartanburg Philharmonic Orchestra is changing the world of music right here in Spartanburg, making it relevant to our community.

Tickets are \$35, \$25 and \$10, and can be purchased through Converse College by calling (864) 596-9725. As part of the Symphony's Big Red Ticket program, any child can attend this concert for free, when accompanied by a ticket-buying adult.

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