

The festivities of Memorial Day mark the unofficial start of summer.

And for people in the South, songs, hot dogs and fireworks are the quintessential way to celebrate the holiday.

The Spartanburg Philharmonic Orchestra will give locals the opportunity to celebrate the patriotic holiday with its second annual Memorial Day Pops in the Park.

“This concert is a way that the SPO can give back to the community and (a way) to honor all of our military veterans,” said Kathryn Boucher, executive director for the Spartanburg Philharmonic Orchestra.

“(It) will be fun for the whole family and a way to enjoy time together before the summer madness begins!”

The performance will kick off at 7:30 p.m. Monday in the Zimmerli Amphitheater at Barnet Park.

Although it's officially the second year this Memorial Day Pops in the Park has happened, the concert itself was put on several years prior.

“We used to have annual concerts in the park,” said SPO music director and conductor Sarah Ioannides. “When I arrived in 2005, we did concerts the subsequent three years in the park around Memorial Day, but then due to the economic downturn there was a hiatus.

“To turn this around, we put a special effort into it last year to bring them back with the intention of it being an annual event.

“Barnet Park is the ideal place for summer concerts, and the Zimmerli Amphitheatre a great stage.

“We need to make use of these great spaces for free community events such as this.”

The SPO will perform a variety of American folk classics, jazz and film scores such as “America the Beautiful,” “You Raise Me Up” and “Washington Post March.”

The concert “will feature many well-known American works with a mixture of jazz, Broadway, film and patriotic numbers,” Ioannides said.

“We will also do a couple of lesser-known works that celebrate and recognize those who dedicated their lives to save our country.”

Some songs during the performance will be primarily instrumental, but the majority will have lyrics.

Boucher explained, “Many songs will be recognizable — patriotic tunes as well as several family-friendly songs. We will have some lyrics printed in the program for those who wish to sing along.”

The majority of the music will be sung by celebrated jazz singer Tish Oney and the young guest soloist Emma-Brooke Alley.

Of the concert and her duet with the child soprano Alley, Oney said, "I will be delighted to perform four well-known jazz standards from my jazz pops symphony show arranged by Grammy-winning large ensemble arranger and friend Chris Walden.

"These are always a joy to sing and will add some variety — and swing — to the traditional program of patriotic favorites.

"Folks will assuredly have several opportunities to sing along at this concert."

During preparation for the concert, Oney has been impressed with Alley.

"I was dazzled by Miss Alley when I first heard her. ... She is a youth with unusual talent and is a pleasure to sing with.

"I am excited to be performing two duets with her for this concert and look forward to hearing her lovely solo performances as well."

There will be plenty of vendors on site to purchase dinner and drinks during a wonderful evening of music.

"They don't want to miss the spectacular fireworks show just after dark."