



## Spartanburg Philharmonic Orchestra kicks off new season

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By Leena Dbouk, For the Herald-Journal

Maestra Sarah Ioannides will kick off her final season with the Spartanburg Philharmonic Orchestra by using music she used in the first symphony she ever conducted.

The Philharmonic Orchestra will hold its first concert of the season at 7 p.m. Saturday in the Twichell Auditorium at Converse College.

The concert includes music by American composer Aaron Copland, Johannes Brahms and a new piece by composer Kenneth Fuchs.

Though Ioannides is excited about the season, it also is bittersweet for her. This is her final season as maestra and music director of the orchestra.

"This is the first of our concerts this season and I feel as excited about it as the first concert I performed with this orchestra," she said. "I can't wait to work together this week and explore the great music ... I will certainly be enjoying every moment of these wonderful musicians as they are the hardest workers and always seeking the best result."

The performance will pay homage to Ioannides' introduction into the U.S. as a conductor.

"In this program," Ioannides said, "I am honoring both great American music and the first symphony I ever conducted with symphony orchestra — a work that also brought me to the United States in 1996 on a Fulbright Scholarship to the Curtis Institute of Music."



"Brahms Symphony No. 1' is not only a very historic piece for my career as a conductor, but also a work that I have wished to conduct with Spartanburg Philharmonic since both are very close to my heart."

The program will also feature Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man" as well as a brand new piece by Fuchs titled "Piano Concerto," which was premiered earlier this year.

"(Fuchs) is a composer I have championed in Spartanburg at specifically commemorative and celebratory occasions," Ioannides said. "This time, we bring his music back with this fresh and endearing concerto. A work that I believe will hold a great place in the future of American Music.

"Fuchs continues to be celebrated as one of the great living American composers, as was Copland, and hence you see the connection to the opening work. A fanfare to celebrate the common man, to celebrate the American ideal and equality and democracy for all people."

The concert's guest performer, Jeffrey Biegel, will accompany the symphony on Fuchs' "Piano Concerto."

"Biegel is the pianist for whom this concerto was written," Ioannides said. "I had the thrill of attending the world premiere of this concerto and found Biegel's affinity and understanding of this work most impressive."

Despite it being her final season premiere, Ioannides said she wants the focus to be finding satisfaction in the concert.

"In a world of frenetic business and intense technology, might the concert hall not be our refuge? Somewhere to reflect on the multitude of choices we have as individuals and be an important and uplifting positive contribution through its ability to touch the heart and soul, and continue to inspire humanity to greater heights," she said.

