EPIC Beethoven and Ukrainian wartime poster exhibit in Colorado Springs

By STEPHANIE EARLS stephanie.earls@gazette.com Nov 11, 2022 Updated Nov 14, 2022 View Comments

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Sergei Vassiliev
Courtesy photo

IF YOU GO

What: EPIC Beethoven

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Where: Ent Center for the Arts, Chapman Recital Hall, 5225 N. Nevada

Info and tickets: Epicmusisee.org; tickets.entcenterforthearts.org/3890

Something else: Ukrainian wartime posters at Ent, opening reception 5 p.m. Friday; gocadigital.org/exhibitions

MORE INFORMATION

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Walk back with me for a moment to late September 2020. I know — we would all rather run screaming than walk back to those frightening, apocaly...

The idea for Educational Partnerships in Immersive Concerts started small, with a cool acronym, a Ukrainian-born clarinetist and a dream in Colorado Springs.

"This has been a lifelong dream for me to run a chamber music concert series, the kind of concert I would want to go to as a musician," said EPIC co-founder and artistic director Sergei Vassiliev, principal clarinetist for the Colorado Springs Philharmonic since 2008.

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He envisioned a classical chamber music series that would bring in world-class musicians from all over the globe, pairing them with the best local musicians for a really "high-end" — but not-at-all "stuffy" — classical music experience.

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"The idea was that we'll break down that wall you have in a classical music concert setting between the musicians and the audience," Vassiliev said.

Ukrainian Sergei Vasiliev, a clarinetist for the Colorado Springs Philharmonic, plays music Thursday next to the flag of Ukraine outside Colorado Springs City Hall. Vassiliev is leading efforts to raise funds to help Ukrainians called Kharkiv Help. For more information, visit http://www.sergeiclarinet.info/ukraine.
Chancey Bush, The Gazette

"It's very interactive, and it's also immersive in the sense that we actually have a pretty strong visual component to our concerts."

There's even a PowerPoint presentation that plays behind the musicians, with the name of the piece and an image of the composer.

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"When you see who composed the music, somehow you connect better — maybe be more curious to look them up afterward."

The 3-year-old EPIC plays its first show in a new venue — Ent Center for the Performing Arts' Chapman Recital Hall — 7 p.m. Friday, when select members of the Colorado Springs Philharmonic will join with musicians from the Colorado Symphony, on Beethoven's Sextet for two horns, two bassoons and two clarinets.

Sergei Vassiliev, left, principal clarinetist with the Colorado Springs Philharmonic and artistic director of EPIC.
Courtesy photo

"Before, we performed at Almagre, which is known mostly as a wedding and event venue ... and it worked well for our purposes then, but the Ent Center and its world-class acoustics is just more fitting for classical music," Vassiliev said.

The venue might be more classically upscale; the vibe is not, he said.

"We're still going to make it a very informal and very intimate experience. They can clap at any point, they can talk to us, and we talk to the audience a lot," Vassiliev said.

Bestselling essayist David Sedaris to read new, old work in Colorado Springs

One thing he'll be talking about is a global issue that's close to his heart, and coincidentally playing out right next door, in spirit and complementary form, inside EPIC's new home.

"So our first concert at the Ent Center happens to coincide with the opening of an exhibit of Ukrainian anti-war artworks," said Vassiliev, who still has family trapped and struggling to survive in the war-torn nation.

Ten Ukrainian contemporary artists created posters interpreting the "truth about war crimes committed by Russia on the territory of Ukraine" after the superpower began a full-scale invasion on Feb. 24.

The free, traveling exhibition, presented as part of the effort to fight Russian propaganda, opens with a 5 p.m. reception Friday and runs through Dec. 3 in the Sheppard Project Space Gallery at Ent Center.

Nastya Gaydamska is one 10 Ukrainian contemporary artists who created posters interpreting the "truth about war crimes committed by Russia on the territory of Ukraine," after the super power began a full-scale invasion on Feb. 24. The exhibit of Ukrainian wartime posters, presented as part of the effort to fight Russian propaganda, opens Friday and runs through Dec. 3 in the Sheppard Project Space Gallery at Ent Center for the Performing Arts.
Courtesy image

"I think it'd be a really cool thing for people to go see that," Vassiliev said, "and then go to our concert, where I'm probably going to talk about Ukraine as well."

Stephanie Earls
Reporter
Stephanie Earls is a news reporter and columnist at The Gazette. Before moving to Colorado Springs in 2012, she worked for newspapers in upstate NY, WA, OR and at her hometown weekly in Berkeley Springs, WV, where she got her start in journalism.
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- Dan Quinn, Dallas Cowboys defensive coordinator
- Sean Payton, former New Orleans Saints coach
- Jim Harbaugh, University of Michigan coach
- Leslie Frazier, Buffalo Bills defensive coordinator
- Frank Reich, former Indianapolis Colts coach
- Someone else

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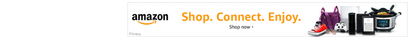
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