

The 2009/2010 Seattle Symphony subscription season at a glance



Raymond Chen

Every year, I put together a little pocket guide to the Seattle Symphony subscription season for my symphony friends to help them decide which ticket package they want. As before, you might find it helpful, you might not, but either way, you're going to have to suffer through it. Here's the at-a-glance season guide for Gerard Schwarz's 25th and penultimate season as the orchestra's music director.

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| Week | Program | Comments | 22 | 13 |
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| 09/24 2009 | § Brahms: <i>Variations on a Theme by Haydn</i> Mozart: Concerto for Two Pianos #10 § Golijev: <i>Fantasia sobre La Pasión según San Marcos</i> Brahms: Symphony #1 | Awesome Awesome Nervous Excellent | § § | * |
| 10/01 2009 | Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto Mahler: Symphony #5 | Awesome Polarizing | | * |
| 10/08 2009 | Ravel: <i>Alborada del gracioso</i> Poulenc: <i>Aubade</i> Prokofiev: Piano Concerto #1 Dvořák: Symphony #8 | Awesome Okay Good Excellent | | |
| 10/22 2009 | Prokofiev: Symphony #1 " <i>Classical</i> " Martinů: Oboe Concerto Dvořák: <i>Legends</i> #6, 7, 9 Haydn: Symphony #88 | Awesome Okay Excellent Excellent | | |
| 10/30 2009 | Handel: <i>Alexander's Feast</i> | Excellent | | |

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| 11/01 2009 | Beethoven: <i>Coriolan Overture</i> Beethoven: Piano Concerto #2 Beethoven: Symphony #6 " <i>Pastoral</i> " | Excellent Excellent Awesome | | |
| 11/05 2009 | § Beethoven: <i>Leonore Overture #1</i> § Borodin: Symphony #3 Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto § R. Strauss: <i>Ein Alpensymphonie</i> § Shostakovich: Symphony #15 | Good Good Awesome Good Okay | | § § § § |
| 11/12 2009 | § Brahms: <i>Variations on a Theme by Haydn</i> § Mendelssohn: Overture <i>Die Heimkehr aus der Fremde</i> Spohr: Violin Concerto #8 § Brahms/Schoenberg: Piano Quartet in g minor § Orff: <i>Carmina Burana</i> | Awesome Good Good Awesome Awesome | | |
| 11/19 2009 | Jensen: <i>The Drover</i> Mozart Piano Concerto #21 Tchaikovsky: Symphony #6 | Okay Awesome Excellent | | * |
| 12/03 2009 | § Glinka: <i>Ruslan and Ludmilla Overture</i> Vivaldi: Viola Concerto, RV 417 § Tchaikovsky: Three Dances from <i>Nutcracker</i> Dukas: <i>The Sorcerer's Apprentice</i> § Dvořák: Three <i>Slavonic Dances</i> § Bizet: <i>Farandole</i> from <i>L'Arlésienne</i> § Humperdinck: Prelude to <i>Hansel und Gretel</i> § Smetana: <i>The Moldau</i> § Rimsky-Korsakov: Polonaise from <i>Christmas Eve</i> Tchaikovsky: <i>Swan Lake Suite</i> | Excellent Excellent Excellent Awesome Awesome Awesome Good Excellent Excellent Awesome | | |
| 12/30 2009 | § Bach: Orchestral Suite #3, BWV 1068 § Brahms: <i>Liebeslieder Waltzes</i> Beethoven: Symphony #9 | Excellent Excellent Awesome | | |
| 01/07 2010 | Mozart: Symphony #40 Bruckner: Symphony #4 " <i>Romantic</i> " | Excellent Good | | |
| 01/17 2010 | Purcell: <i>Indian Queen Suite</i> Corelli: Concerto Grosso Op 6 No 4 Handel: Organ Concerto Op 7 No 1 Handel: Organ Concerto Op 4 No 5 Rameau: <i>Les Indes galantes Suite</i> | Wildcard Good Good Good Good | | |
| 01/27 2010 | Mozart: Symphony #27 Mozart: Adagio for Violin and Orchestra § Mozart: Rondo in C major for Violin and Orchestra Beethoven: Romance #2 Mendelssohn: Symphony #4 | Excellent Excellent Excellent Excellent Awesome | | |

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| 02/04 2010 | Busoni: <i>Turandot</i> Suite R. Strauss: Violin Concerto Schumann: Symphony #3 " <i>Rhenish</i> " | Okay Okay Good | | * |
| 02/11 2010 | Barber: <i>Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance</i> Barber: Violin Concerto § Shostakovich: Symphony #15 § Brahms/Schoenberg: Piano Quartet in g minor | Okay Okay Okay Awesome | § § | |
| 02/26 2010 | Mozart: Symphony #34 Mozart: Violin Concerto #5 " <i>Turkish</i> " Mozart: Serenade #9 " <i>Posthorn</i> " | Awesome Excellent Excellent | | |
| 03/05 2010 | Rameau: <i>Les Paladins</i> Suite Mercadante: Flute Concerto in e minor § Handel: Concerto Grosso, Op 3 No 2 Rossini: String Sonata #1 in G Telemann: Suite in C major, TWV 55:C6 | Okay Excellent Good Excellent Okay | | |
| 03/11 2010 | Mendelssohn: Sinfonia #12 Haydn: Piano Concerto in D, Hob. XVIII Mozart: Divertimento, K136 Mozart: Symphony #29 | Good Excellent Awesome Awesome | | |
| 03/18 2010 | Brahms: Double Concerto Ravel: <i>Daphnis et Chloé</i> | Excellent Excellent | | |
| 03/25 2010 | § Lutoslawski: Symphony #4 Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto #4 Sibelius: Symphony #5 | Nervous Good Excellent | | |
| 04/01 2010 | Janáček: <i>The Cunning Little Vixen</i> Suite Prokofiev: Piano Concerto #5 Mussorgsky/Ravel: <i>Pictures at an Exhibition</i> | Okay Okay Awesome | | * |
| 04/15 2010 | Enescu: <i>Romanian Rhapsody</i> Beethoven: Piano Concerto #4 Stravinsky: <i>Pétrouchka</i> (1947) | Excellent Awesome Excellent | | * |
| 04/22 2010 | Haydn: Symphony #93 Dutilleux: Cello Concerto Beethoven: Symphony #5 | Excellent Nervous Awesome | | |
| 04/29 2010 | Sibelius: <i>Pohjola's Daughter</i> Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto #2 Adams: <i>Harmonielehre</i> | Okay Awesome Polarizing | | * |

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|---------------|--|---|-----------|-----------|
| 05/06 2010 | Corelli: Concerto Grosso Op 6 No 3 Tippett: <i>Fantasia Concertante on a Theme of Corelli</i> Tallis: <i>When rising from the bed of death</i> Elgar: Introduction and Allegro Vaughan Williams: <i>Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis</i> | Good Wildcard Wildcard Good Excellent | | * |
| 05/13 2010 | Wagner: <i>Siegfried Idyll</i> Schumann: Piano Concerto Beethoven: Symphony #4 | Good Excellent Excellent | | |
| 06/10 2010 | Debussy: <i>Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un faune</i> Saint-Saëns: Piano Concerto #2 § Ravel: <i>Pavana pour une infante défunte</i> Chausson: Symphony in B-flat major | Awesome Excellent Excellent Okay | § | |
| 06/17 2010 | § Messiaen: <i>Oiseaux exotiques</i> § Mozart: Rondo for Piano K382 § Wagner: <i>Parsifal</i> excerpts Mendelssohn: Symphony #2 | Nervous Awesome Nervous Good | | |
| 06/24 2010 | Bernstein: <i>Chichester Psalms</i> § Bernstein: <i>Serenade</i> § W. Schuman: Symphony #3 Bernstein: Symphony #2 " <i>The Age of Anxiety</i> " | Okay Okay Okay Okay | | |
| | | | 22 | 13 |

† Premiere

MS Musically Speaking

BB Basically Baroque

MM Mainly Mozart

PC Popular Classics

SS Symphony Specials

Notes:

This chart doesn't include "one-off" concert series such as the Visiting Orchestras or Distinguished Artists series.

The comments column very crudely categorizes the works to assist my less-classically-aware friends. This is, of course, a highly subjective rating system, but I tried to view each piece from the ears of somebody new. Thus, I rated downward pieces that I personally like but which others might not and rated up pieces that I may not find musically satisfying but which

nevertheless tend to be crowd-pleasers. These predictions have, of course, proven wrong in the past. For example, my assessments of Bruckner have always been optimistic. (And I haven't learned my lesson, because this year, I'm rating the Bruckner Fourth Symphony as *Good*, because this time I *really* think they will like it.)

Here's what the comments mean. Note that they do not indicate whether the piece is significant in a musicological sense; they're just my guess as to whether my friends are going to like it.

- **Awesome:** Guaranteed crowd-pleaser.
- **Excellent:** You will definitely like this piece.
- **Good:** You will probably like this piece.
- **Okay:** You may like this piece.
- **Nervous:** I have a bad feeling about this one.
- **Polarizing:** Some people will love it; others will hate it.
- **Wildcard:** I have no idea what will happen.

In many cases, I am not familiar with the piece and am basing my evaluation on what I know about the composer (or am just guessing).

Seattle Symphony notes: Principal Second Violin Elisa Barston had worked under the shadow of heartthrob Joshua Roman, but with Roman's departure last year, she has inherited the mantle of taking the lead in appealing to the "youth audience." She's been given increasingly visible solo performances and even authored an entry on the symphony's blog. I for one am pleased by her more prominent profile. She always seems to be genuinely enjoying herself when I see her performing.

Update: Minor corrections as noted in comments.

* **Update:** Changes were made to the subscription schedule for the UBS Masterworks 13 series after the brochures were printed. (Thanks to Greg for pointing it out.) They have been updated in the chart above. Note that five concerts were deleted but six were added, so the Masterworks 13 concert series actually has 14 concerts.

§ **Update:** Many changes were made to the subscription schedule in July 2009. They have been updated in the chart above. The concert for the week of October 30, 2009 has been cancelled; ticket-holders will be given tickets for the concert on the week of May 6, 2010.



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