17/10/2024

Greek Youth Symphony Orchestra to Make American Debut, Celebrate Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew’s Enthronement



The internationally-celebrated Greek Youth Symphony Orchestra (GYSO) will make its highly-anticipated American debut at Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall, New York City, in a one-night-only concert event, Sunday, November 3, at 7:30PM. For tickets and information, visit CarnegieHall.org, call CarnegieCharge, 212-247-7800 or visit the Carnegie Hall Box Office, 881 7th Ave (at 57th Street).

Under the direction of its Founder and Artistic Director, Dionysis Grammenos, Greek Youth Symphony Orchestra is comprised of 300 auditioned musicians, ages 18 – 26, from nearly 50 cities in Greece and throughout Europe. At Carnegie Hall, 95 GYSO musicians will present an eclectic evening of music including contemporary European and American popular symphonic works as well as a fresh new take on traditional Greek dance music through a symphonic lens.

The program will include ”<<rewind«” by acclaimed Grammy-nominated composer Anna Clyne; Leonard Bernstein’s celebrated “Symphonic Dances,” based on themes from his West Side Story; and a selection of Nikos Skalkottas’ “Greek Dances,” which premiered at Carnegie Hall exactly 70 years earlier, in November

1954, when performed by New York Philharmonic.

“We could not be more excited that Greek Youth Symphony Orchestra will make its American debut at Carnegie Hall this fall,” says Dionysis Grammenos Founder and Artistic Director of GYSO. “Just about 70 years ago to the date of our concert, the great Greek conductor, Dimitri Mitropoulos, lead the New York Philharmonic in the debut of Nikos Skalkottas’ “Greek Dances” on the stage of Carnegie Hall. Our performance of this work feels like a celebration of the legacy of Greek music and artistry to have played this fabled stage. That we also happen to be making our American debut in New York the same day as The New York Marathon, and just days before Election Day seems rather auspicious as well. After all, Greece is the birthplace of both marathons and democracy, so the timing could not be more ideal.”

This concert also celebrates the anniversary of the enthronement of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, a transformative leader in the Orthodox world. Born in 1940 on the island of Imvros, Patriarch Bartholomew ascended to the Ecumenical Throne in 1991, becoming the 270th Archbishop of Constantinople and spiritual leader of over 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide. His leadership has been marked by a tireless commitment to fostering Orthodox unity, deepening ecumenical relations, and advocating for the protection of the environment, earning him the title “Green Patriarch.”

For youth, Patriarch Bartholomew’s vision is particularly inspiring. He has championed the role of young people, emphasizing their importance in preserving faith while also encouraging them to engage with contemporary challenges. Through initiatives like the establishment of youth conferences and emphasis on education, and concerts like the GYSO at Carnegie Hall, His All-Holiness has consistently demonstrated his belief in the vitality and potential of the younger generations to lead and serve, ensuring that the Church remains a living, breathing witness to Christ’s love in the modern world. This annversary is not just a reflection on his historical legacy but a call for youth to be active participants in shaping the future of Orthodoxy.

The GYSO is supported by its Founding Donor, the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation and a range of individual and corporate donors including: Hellenic Parliament and the Ministry of Culture, Bank of Greece, The Hellenic Initiative, AEGEAS, Bodossaki Foundation, George Petrocheilos Family Foundation, Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, Social and Cultural Affairs Welfare Foundation and Aegean Airlines, as its official air carrier sponsor.

The GYSO Carnegie Hall debut this fall is hosted by The Hellenic Initiative (THI), a global nonprofit organization that brings together diaspora Greeks and Philhellenes to invest in the future of Greece through programs focused on crisis relief, entrepreneurship, and economic development.

The Greek Youth Symphony Orchestra (GYSO) was founded in 2017 by conductor Dionysis Grammenos, consisting of young Greek musicians from all parts of Greece and abroad. Based on the respective European standards of National Youth Orchestras, the GYSO aims to identify, train and promote young Greek musicians in the symphonic and operatic repertoire, while offering them the opportunity to participate in concerts and collaborate with internationally renowned artists, conductors, soloists and tutors. The GYSO's work has been recognized internationally with its selection as a member of the European Federation of National Youth Orchestras (EFNYO), where it is the only representation from Greece. Inter alia, this collaboration provides its musicians with the opportunity to represent the Orchestra abroad, collaborating with other National Youth Orchestras, in the framework of the MusXchange programme, which is supported by the European Union's Creative Europe Programme.

GYSO’s notable performances include its two concerts at the Konzerthaus Berlin, as part of the international Young Euro Classic festival. In 2021, the GYSO performed selected “Greek Dances” by Skalkottas and Beethoven’s “Eroica” Symphony. This concert was held as part of the Orchestra’s summer tour in Delphi, Corfu and Berlin, with an anniversary programme dedicated to the 200 years since the Greek Revolution, which took place under the auspices of HE the President of the Hellenic Republic, Katerina Sakellaropoulou. In 2023, the GYSO was invited for the opening concert of the festival, presenting works by Brahms, Liszt and Grøndahl. GYSO is also the first orchestra to be invited by the Hellenic Parliament to perform at the Parliament Mansion, as part of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament of CoE member states, in October 2021. The concert was broadcasted live via tv-channels and web to all the European Parliaments. GYSO has performed in the halls of the Greek National Opera at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center, as well as in collaboration with the Athens & Epidaurus Festival, where musicians of the orchestra participated in concerts in Athens and Ravenna, performing Beethoven’s 9th Symphony, under the baton of conductor Riccardo Muti. In July 2023, the GYSO was honoured to receive an invitation by HE the President of the Hellenic Republic to present a concert at the Presidential Mansion, as part of the celebration of the 49th anniversary of the Restoration of Democracy in Greece.

Other highlights of the Orchestra’s trajectory include the commissioning of new works to Greek composers, as well as video recordings, with the most prominent one being Mahler’s Symphony No. 1, conducted by Johannes Debus, Music Director of the Canadian Opera Company. Leading international artists have performed with the GYSO, including Johannes Debus, Anna Fedorova, Anneleen Lenaerts, Daniel Ottensamer, Vassilis Varvaresos, Hyeyoon Park, Eivind Ringstad, Alexandra Soumm, as well as actor Aimilios Chilakis. Being education the key focus, the GYSO also carries out a series of activities to familiarize young audiences with symphonic music, giving them the opportunity to interact creatively with the members of the orchestra through open rehearsals, seminars and workshops. At the same time, the GYSO is the first orchestra in Greece to use virtual reality technology through the innovative ELSON VR project, offering the audience an unprecedented experience of viewing classical music concerts. Since 2020, the GYSO is an Orchestra in Residence at Megaron – The Athens Concert Hall.

Tickets and further information here.

Photos courtesy of the Greek Youth Symphony Orchestra.

goarch.org