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Music News

30.6.05

New Chicago event promotes cultural understanding

Acclaimed Middle Eastern composers and poets stage innovative event



James Conlon
Picture: Ext

Acclaimed Middle Eastern composers and poets stage innovative event.

Works by acclaimed Middle Eastern composers and poets as well as insights from highly regarded religious and cultural leaders in Chicago are woven together to build understanding and to share cultural treasures in Bridging Cultures: Building Peace by the Fulcrum Point New Music Project.

Conducted by artistic director Stephen Burns, the concert will be performed on Tuesday, July 19, 2005, at 8 p.m. at the Ravinia Festival Martin Theatre, Chicago.

Fulcrum Point's ensemble will be joined by special guests including the 28-member Chicago Chamber Choir directed by Timm Adams and a solo performance by renowned Palestinian composer, oud player and teacher Issa Boulos, who is the director of the University of Chicago Middle East Music Ensemble. To create a context for understanding the musical program and explore ways in which peace may be attained-an ever-more urgent need during this period of

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global unrest, Stephen Burns will lead a pre-concert discussion for ticket holders only in the Martin Theatre from 7:00 until 7:40 pm to discuss a context for understanding the programme and explore ways in which peace can be achieved through such events.

A host of key speakers and performers will be involved including James Conlon, Ravinia Festival's new music director - Dr. Esmail Koushanpour, executive director of the Islamic Cultural Center in Northbrook and Rabbi Steven Stark Lowenstein, senior rabbi of Am Shalom congregation in Glencoe.

One of classical music's pre-eminent conductors, Conlon has distinguished himself internationally with a highly diverse repertoire of symphonic, operatic and choral works. Additionally, he works around the world to raise public consciousness of the significance of works by composers whose lives were cut short by the Holocaust.

Koushanpour, professor emeritus at Northwestern University Medical School, is a leader in interfaith programs designed to build bridges between Islam and other religions. Lowenstein has a wealth of experience in rabbinic and pastoral service. Prior to his appointment at Am Shalom, he served as associate rabbi at Temple Shalom of Chicago, the largest Reform congregation in Illinois.

Stephen Burns speaking about the event commented saying, "Bringing people together to share culture and ideas is critical in divisive times. Music offers a powerful way to underscore our common humanity and at the same time celebrate our unique cultural heritage."

Tickets to Bridging Cultures: Building Peace for the Martin Theatre are \$30 and for lawn seats, \$10. To order, visit www.ravinia.org or call 847.226.5100.

See page two for the innovative programme >>>

By: News Desk

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