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September 12, 2011

## **Award Winning Violin Virtuoso Ilya Kaler joins Missoula Symphony Orchestra in “Gypsy Serenade” Season Opener**

(Missoula, Montana) – While temperatures may have been hot at the uber-popular Symphony in the Park in August, the Missoula Symphony Orchestra promises a heat of a different kind as it kicks off the 2011/2012 concert season with a fiery “Gypsy Serenade.” Along with award-winning violin virtuoso Ilya Kaler, MSO will heat up the stage on Saturday, September 24 and Sunday, September 25, at 7:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. respectively, in the University Theatre on the UM campus.

In case the audience doesn’t think the MSO means business, gypsy business that is, here’s what they have in store:

- *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2*, by Franz Liszt—heavily influenced by the gypsy music of Liszt’s native Hungary.
- *Zigeunerweisen*, by Pablo de Sarasate—AKA “Gypsy Airs.”
- *Carmen Fantasy*, by Pablo de Sarasate—based on the sexy gypsy heroine of Bizet’s opera *Carmen*.
- *Les Preludes*, by Franz Liszt—see above.
- *Hary Janos Suite*, by Zoltan Kodaly—begins with the musical equivalent of a sneeze, coming from the old Hungarian folk belief that a story told after a sneeze is always true, even though the exciting escapades in this story are told by an inveterate liar!

According to Music Director Darko Butorac, the gypsy/folk theme for the show was an easy choice. “We had a number of things going on,” he says. “One, it was the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Franz Liszt, who was fascinated and ultimately musically influenced by the gypsies of his homeland, Hungary. Two, our soloist Ilya Kaler’s technique and artistry are fantastically showcased in both of Sarasate’s works, *Zigeunerweisen* and *Carmen Fantasy*. And three, who doesn’t love the energy and depth of emotion expressed in gypsy music?”

Russian-born violin virtuoso Ilya Kaler, the only violinist to have won Gold Medals at the industry renowned Tchaikovsky, Sibelius and Paganini Competitions, is a “feather in our cap,” according to Butorac. “We are incredibly fortunate to have Ilya Kaler. The fact that he has won three of the top competitions in the field is herculean to say the least,” he says. “The pieces I selected for this concert are designed to show off the pyrotechnics of his virtuosity—his fingers will be flying.”

“Gypsy Serenade” marks the beginning of the Missoula Symphony’s concert season, running September through April. In recent years, the season offerings have grown beyond the traditional five concert pairs to include a boisterous Family Concert, the free Symphony in the Park, a monthly Downbeat Downlow podcast, and pre-concert chats. Because of increased attendance, the pre-concert chats, known as *Downbeat Downlow Live!*, will be held next door to the University Theatre in the Music Recital Hall one hour before show time.

Tickets for this show and season tickets are available online at **[missoulasympphony.org](http://missoulasympphony.org)**, by phone at **721-3194**, or in person at the **Symphony office at 320 East Main Street**.

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