

SoBe Institute of Arts launches ambitious string fest

BY LAWRENCE BUDMEN
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Serendipity has become an artistic way of life for Carson Kievman.

He first came to Miami in 1990 as resident composer for the now-defunct Florida Philharmonic Orchestra. When Kievman returned to South Florida 15 years later after a teaching stint at Princeton University, he intended to concentrate on creating new works.

But what he terms "a quirk of life" led him to found the SoBe Institute of the Arts when a music-teacher friend needed working space. Then, three years ago, a release party with violinist Anastasia Khitruk for one of her recordings started the ball rolling for SoBeArts' ambitious festival of string music, which opens Monday.

The American Masterworks String Festival is a five-day series of concerts, lecture-demonstrations and master classes at the school's Miami Beach campus and the Colony Theater. Kievman has attracted several renowned artists for this event: cellist Matt Haimovitz, violist Kim Kashkashian and violinists Lara St. John and Khitruk. Pulitzer Prize winner John Corigliano will be composer-in-residence.

"We wanted a forum for great American music and a high-profile composer for a celebration of his work," Kievman said.

Each of the artists will present a solo recital and then join forces for the festival finale on Dec. 10.

The festival programs encompass a wide-ranging survey of American composers from familiar names such as Stephen Foster and Aaron Copland to Ned Rorem, Elliott Carter, Stephen Paulus and Zhou Long, a recent winner of the Pulitzer Prize.

Corigliano will be represented by performances of his Violin Sonata, *The Red Violin Caprices and Stomp*, a violin piece that Lara St. John recently premiered in Canada.

Kievman's own *Sine Nomine*, a string arrangement of a vocal work based on plainchant, will also be heard. The festival con-



KASHKASHIAN

American Masterworks String Festival

Monday: Artists' welcome reception 7:30 p.m. (VIP festival pass required).

Weekday lecture-demonstrations (free)
4:30 p.m. at Carl Fisher Clubhouse, recitals (\$35, \$15 students and seniors)
7:30 p.m. at Little Stage Theater, 2100 Washington Ave., Miami Beach.

Tuesday: Lecture-demonstration by violinist Anastasia Khitruk, recital by violinist Lara St. John.

Wednesday: Lecture-demonstration by cellist Matt Haimovitz, recital by violinist Kim Kashkashian.

Thursday: Lecture-demonstration by St. John, recital by Khitruk.

Friday: Lecture-demonstration by Kashkashian, recital by Haimovitz.

Saturday: Pre-concert lecture by composer John Corigliano 7 p.m., festival finale concert with Haimovitz, Kashkashian, Khitruk and St. John 8 p.m., Colony Theater, 1040 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach; \$65, students and seniors; \$25, VIP \$125 (includes post-concert reception).

FYI: VIP pass \$200 (other packages \$100-\$150).

Weekday recitals followed by artists' reception; tickets also include parking.

Contact: 305-674-9220, www.sobearts.org; tickets available through Ticketmaster.

cludes with a performance of *Black Angels*, octogenarian George Crumb's rarely heard 1970 score for amplified string quartet.

For Kievman, the festival is only part of SoBe Arts' larger mission. When he proposed renovation of two abandoned buildings in the convention center area to the Miami Beach City Commission, he envisioned a campus that would combine education with high-level performance events in an environment that would foster the creation of new works.

With the support of then-Commissioner Saul Gross, he obtained a capital improvement grant to rehabilitate the historic Carl Fisher Clubhouse, built in 1915, and the long-dormant Little Stage Theater, originally constructed in 1937. Converting the two buildings into classroom space and a black box-theater, Kievman launched an ambitious arts education program, drawing faculty from the New World Symphony and the local arts community. Classes in music and drama are offered for children and adults.

Kievman believes this type of education and performance facility is necessary for the arts to continue flourishing in South Florida.

"Lack of arts education equals lack of arts lovers," he said. "We want to instill a lifelong love of the arts in our students."

Despite the ailing economy, he has continued to expand the campus, opening the theater and concert space in 2010.

"If the economy improves, we should be in a great position," Kievman said, calling the string festival a milestone for his vision of building a world-class conservatory and an enclave for the artistic community where creativity will flourish.

He hopes to make the festival an annual event, and is planning the premiere of his opera *Hamlet*, a long-delayed project, for February at the SoBe campus.

"We are keeping an open mind about what great ideas and opportunities will develop in the future," he said.