



"We'll do it live!"

It's a well-worn meme, part of a rant by pre-humiliation Bill O'Reilly. The anchor screamed the words, bracketed by unfiltered expletives, into a hot mic during an off-air recording session. Thus, angry Bill is the forever-source of "We'll do it live!"

("What's a meme?" you ask. According to Webster's second definition, it's "an amusing or interesting item, such as a captioned picture or video, or genre of items that is spread widely online." Search for O'Reilly's meme and watch the uncensored version, and you'll see that Webster's characterization is apt.)

There's no anger in this declaration, though, as I confirm that we'll do it live on September 7. On Labor Day, the Savannah Philharmonic presents live music, free and easily accessible to the public, outdoors, mirroring the beauty of the setting – Chippewa Square. "Labor of Love" is a pair of brass quintet performances, featuring five of the Phil's dedicated and talented horn players, conceived by our music director, Keitaro Harada. It's the first in a series – "Phil the Squares with Music" – of similar shows, spread over the next several months.

For many, classical music has long been perceived as symbol of privilege – exclusive, intimidating...perhaps even boring or of-another-time. SavPhil is committed to reshaping such perceptions. Music is fundamentally experiential, evocative and enriching. And each one of us, regardless of circumstance or predisposition, can benefit from it. Our mission is as simple as it is ambitious – to entertain, inspire and unite.

The logistics: On Monday, September 7,

Mike Daly, Jimmy Hendricks, Paul Lott, Carl Polk and Jonathan Swygert will bathe Chippewa Square in sounds both smooth and bold. The quintet will be perched on the above-street-level balcony at the square-facing side of The Parker Companies' corporate offices, in a beautifully preserved home built for Savannahian Moses Eastman in 1844. The players will deliver a compelling mix – from opera, to patriotic march, to spiritual, to Broadway, to jazz. Performances will run from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and 6 to 7 p.m. You don't need a ticket. You can stay for an hour or just pass through on a walk downtown.

SavPhil is a community asset, and music should be a source of shared joy and pride. So, we'll connect with you in various ways between now and the end of the year. Picnic in the Park – a different format from previous years, but live, with an enthusiastic audience, like always – is set for October. Additionally, we'll host relatively small, ticketed performances in venues that put patrons' safety ahead of other concerns. And, we'll produce and distribute superior digital content that you can enjoy at your leisure at home.

Music is a visceral delivery system for artistic intent. Using language to describe a sound is more difficult than doing the same with respect to the way a thing looks or tastes. We FEEL music, rather than rationalize it. Within music, there is math and logic and chaos and order and euphoria and pain. Why should anyone feel unwelcome to experience such a range of things?

An Atlanta-based organization called Masterpiece Mixers says, "Art influences society by changing opinions, instilling values and translating experiences across space and time. Art affects the fundamental sense of self. Painting, sculpture, music and literature are the repository of a society's collective memory. Art is communication; it allows people from different cul-

tures and different times to communicate with each other via images, sounds and stories. Art fosters the human need for self-expression and fulfillment; (and provides opportunity for the artist to work)."

Music makers are artists, down to their souls. And an organization dedicated to music should exude a soulful spirit, too. Artists are responsible for unearthing truth. Creating something, trying something new, doing something uncomfortable...it's the progression of artistic expression. An artist makes himself vulnerable, and he makes mistakes. But he doesn't stop expressing himself. This aspect of art resonates with people on a personal and global level, because it is empowering, yet it springs from inside ourselves.

Consider the history of art. Much of that which we enjoy today was created in service to a very small sliver of its societies. Fueled by patronage and limited in its inspirational impact by exclusion. And many of those patronage-driven systems – think Rome, for example – have crumbled under the weight of their own discord.

It's tempting to get high-minded about this stuff. But, like Emeril said about cooking (another art form), "We're not building rocket ships..." In the case of SavPhil, it's music. At its essence, it's meant to be enjoyed. But, if you're creating something worth hearing, then why not offer it to as many ears as you can?

So, we'll do it live, on September 7, and you're welcome to swing by. See you there.

Scott A. Lawrence

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