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2009-'10 season

Saint Saens to green eggs, Milwaukee Symphony programs offer something for everyone

By [Tom Strini](#) of the Journal Sentinel

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The classical subscription series is the Milwaukee Symphony's cornerstone, but the orchestra does lots of other things.

Milwaukee Symphony Pops

People like Marvin Hamlisch.

The Milwaukee Symphony had some nice gains at the box office during Hamlisch's first year as principal Pops conductor.

Naturally, the Broadway legend will be back in that capacity in 2009-'10 and will conduct three of the six Pops programs. The Milwaukee Symphony Chorus, led by Lee Erickson, will play an unusually large role in the Pops next season.

Here is the lineup:

- **"Nothin' But the Blues,"** Sept. 18, 19 and 20, Jeff Tyzik, conductor; Wycliffe Gordon, trombone; Byron Stripling, vocals and trumpet.

Tyzik's low-key presence was a surprise hit at last year's bare-bones, recession-special Holiday Pops.

- **"Holiday Pops!"** with conductor Marvin Hamlisch and the Milwaukee Symphony Chorus, Dec. 4, 5 and 6.

The MSO, as of now, is playing this one close to the vest, promising only "surprise visits and special performances."

- **"Cirque de la Symphonie,"** Jan. 1, 2 and 3, with conductor Stuart Chafetz.

Chafetz, as the orchestra's resident conductor, oversees lots of run-out and school concerts. This very capable musician will step up to the big stage as aerialists fly overhead.

Yes - it's a circus at the symphony.

- **"S'ens Wonderful: The Music of George Gershwin,"** Feb. 5, 6 and 7, with Hamlich and pianist Kevin Cole.

Gershwin is exactly in the Hamlich strike zone.

- **"Hooray for Hollywood,"** April 9, 10 and 11, with conductor Jack Everly and the MSO Chorus.

Everly is a stalwart of the Pops circuit and a frequent visitor in Milwaukee. He'll bring the music from the big ones: "Ben-Hur," "Titanic," "Doctor Zhivago" and "Star Wars."

- **"Stars & Stripes,"** June 11, 12 and 13, 2010, with Hamlich and the MSO Chorus.

Memorial Day, the Fourth, summer, Americana, Sousa - all that patriotic stuff.

Performance times are 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 2:30 p.m. Sundays.

Subscriptions are \$132 to \$468; single tickets are \$25 to \$93.

Classical Connections

The MSO has experimented with relatively brief, inexpensive, chatty programs on Thursday evenings for a few years now. The symphony targets these events to those who might not attend concerts otherwise, with an emphasis on young professionals.

Sociability is an important part of it. A cocktail hour with live jazz, hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar in the Marcus Center's Magin Lounge precedes every concert, and a complimentary dessert bar at the InterContinental Hotel follows.

The programs are generally condensed, narrated versions of the more formal Friday and Saturday concerts.

Oct. 15, conductor Edo de Waart, Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2.

Jan. 28, de Waart, Henk de Vliieger's orchestral treatment of Wagner's "Die Meistersinger."

Feb. 18, conductor/harpsichordist Nicholas McGegan; violinist Frank Almond; Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons."

May 27, 2010, de Waart, Saint Saens' Symphony No. 3 ("Organ").

Performance times: 6 p.m. cocktails, 7 p.m. concerts, 8:30 p.m. desserts.

Subscriptions are \$52 to \$148; single tickets are \$15 to \$45.

Joan Steele Stein Kinderkonzerts

The performances are tailored to children ages 3 to 10, with hands-on activities - wash-off tattoos, arts and crafts and so on - starting one hour before concert time.

"**Holiday Pops**" for kids, Saturday, Dec. 5, with no less than Marvin Hamlisch leading the festivities.

"**B Is for Bob**," Sunday, March 14, with "Sesame Street's" Bob McGrath and conductor Stuart Chafetz.

" **'Green Eggs and Ham' and 'Gertrude McFuzz,'** " Sunday, May 2, with Chafetz. Two Dr. Seuss stories, set to music by Rob Kapilow.

Performances are at 2 p.m. Subscriptions are \$30 to \$75; single tickets are \$10 to \$40.

All programs are at Marcus Center Uihlein Hall, 929 N. Water St. To subscribe or buy tickets, visit www.mso.org or call the MSO ticket office, (414) 291-7605.

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