

NBSO welcomes second aspiring director to the Z stage Saturday

Thursday

Posted at 2:01 AM

By Keith Powers, Contributing Writer

Music director audition, round two.

Maestro David Amado, longtime leader of the Delaware Symphony as well as Florida's Atlantic Classical Orchestra, comes to town this week to perform with the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra.

Amado is the second of four finalists for the permanent position of music director with the NBSO, part of a season-long public audition that will introduce the candidates to the orchestra, the staff and the community. Amado looks at the experience not as some hair-raising trial, but a necessary part of the process.

"It's kind of the only way you get it done," he says of the process. "I've been through them before. There's no perfect way of figuring it out. It's the same thing that musicians go through — auditions can be taxing and rigorous.

"The single most important thing is chemistry," he says. "Look, at this point, everyone is excellent at what they do. It's not an issue of who can run faster. It's an issue of finding out whose chemistry is the best. I'm honored to have the chance."

Amado's program — one of his choosing — includes pianist Diane Walsh, performing Mozart's piano concerto no. 20, Berlioz's colorful and graphic "Symphonie Fantastique," and a Hollywood rarity, Bernard Herrmann's "Psycho Suite," parts of which (think shower curtain) listeners of a certain age (and film buffs of any age) will recognize almost immediately.

Like all the music director finalists — indeed, like any conductor working today — Amado will have to juggle multiple appointments if he ends up leading the NBSO. He recently re-upped with Delaware, an orchestra he joined in 2003, extending his contract through 2023. His appointment in Florida is more recent: he was appointed this July. Previously, the Philadelphia-area resident was associate conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.

He acknowledges that schedule management comes with the territory. “I feel that all the things I do are a priority,” he says. “Planning is everything. There is enough space in the year, and I don’t put anything I do above the need for anything else.”

He makes interesting comparisons between his orchestras. “Delaware is a lot like New Bedford,” he says. “There is this incredible rich vein of talent that we draw from New York, Philadelphia and Washington and even beyond. Much in the way New Bedford draws from Boston and Providence.”

He is also firmly aware of the NBSO’s terrific educational programs, and has contributed to similar outreach with his own ensembles.

“Orchestras have begun to see education as far broader than just what we do onstage,” he said. “In Delaware, I try to make everything we do have some facet of enlightenment — I don’t even think of it as education, which sounds too pedantic. If we can coordinate something that provides added value, that makes the music speak more vividly.

“Education is part of the DNA in New Bedford,” he says. “It even goes back to the founder of the orchestra (Clarence Arey), who was a music teacher. Those things are incredibly important.”

Onstage this weekend, he’s hoping the program he chose will get him off on the right foot. “I requested the Mozart, so I’m delighted Diane was ready to do it,” he says of soloist Walsh. “We worked together a long time ago and she’s wonderful.

“I’m really glad the orchestra agreed to the program,” he says. “After I had the Mozart, and the Berlioz, I thought, ‘What new music can I do?’ So much music that came out of Hollywood never gets off the screen. This music is equally at home in the concert hall.

“And the Berlioz is like a funhouse mirror,” he says. “It has this off-kilter quality. I can’t wait to see what the reaction is.”

The New Bedford Symphony Orchestra's November program, with music director finalist David Amado conducting, will be Saturday, Nov. 12 at 7:30 p.m. in the Zeiterion Performing Arts Center. For information and tickets visit www.nbsymphony.org or call the Z box office at 508-994-2900.

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