

## **Toledo Symphony is “in the Midst of a Crescendo”**

When the members of the Board of The Toledo Symphony (TSO) sought new conductors, they invited several conductors to Toledo to lead one or more of their Neighborhood Concerts. In June 2002, Chelsea Tipton, II was invited to travel from Savannah, Georgia, where he was associate conductor with the Savannah Symphony.

His first assignment in Toledo was as guest conductor at the TSO Neighborhood Concert at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. It was obvious to the audience that this gentleman had already sparked the musicians to play at a higher level of excellence. And his engaging manner made it very easy for the patrons to listen to his every word. Before each musical selection in the program, Tipton spoke about the composer, what was happening in his life and times, and the importance of the composition in the music of its time. Several people who attended that concert contacted members of the TSO family to say, “We want more Chelsea Tipton!”

It was fortuitous that Tipton's first Toledo appearance was at a Neighborhood Concert because now, in his first year as the TSO resident conductor, neighborhoods and schools are benefiting from Tipton's musical knowledge and leadership. According to Kathy Carroll, TSO's executive vice president, development, “One of Chelsea's skills is the way he addresses a core value of the orchestra, that of community connection, education, and access to music.” Tipton is responsible for the program selections for neighborhood and school concerts. His talent for blending the right program for a particular occasion was evident in a recent concert in Archbold. Tipton invited Elaine Peterson, a local bassoonist who is a doctoral candidate in music at the University of North Carolina, in Greenville, to come home and play with the TSO in front of her family and friends.

Tipton exhibits a wonderful imagination in his program selections. At this year's annual celebration of Black History Month at St. Martin de Porres Church, he invited two community choirs to perform with the TSO.

Molly Smith, a senior at Central Catholic High School, really enjoyed the TSO performance where he invited the high school musicians to rehearse with seasoned members of the orchestra. “Mr. Tipton was very personable. He explained the significance of each piece selected for the performance. When he told me to close my eyes and feel the music, I truly felt the music!”

Tipton is also one of the two conductors for the several series of traditional TSO concerts. Stefan Sanderling is in his second full season as principal conductor and artistic advisor. Tipton believes that his role “is to support Sanderling's artistic vision. He leads the way and I help deliver.”

Stefan Sanderling has prepared a wonderful season for 2004-2005, which begins in September. Tipton asserts that “great things are on the horizon.” He especially looks forward to concerts with guests Bobby McFerrin and Itzhak Perlman. The Classics Series will culminate in a weekend festival featuring the beloved music of Rachmaninov.

The Family Series will also be on the upswing with a new location, day, and time. This series will be presented on Saturday mornings at the Peristyle at the Toledo Museum of Art, with the goal of exposing audiences to the orchestra and to classical music. A variety of artistic expressions will play an important role in this series. Tipton states it is his feeling that “Art is art. Music, literature, visual art, dance – it’s all related.” He believes that incorporating various forms of art into these performances will help capture the imagination of the youngsters and their parents.

Tipton describes The Toledo Symphony as being “in the midst of a crescendo.” He adds that his goal is to present the Symphony to the community of Toledo and, “we hope the community is going to get on board.” Because of the talent, leadership, and infectious enthusiasm of both Stefan Sanderling and Chelsea Tipton, more and more members of our community are experiencing the joy of attending a symphonic concert.

TSO ticket hotline: 419.246.8000. Visit TSO on the web at [toledosymphony.com](http://toledosymphony.com)

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*Photo by Lanie Kackmeister, taken at the Neighborhood Concert at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church*