

FAYETTEVILLE

A Sampling of Sweet Sounds

By Becca Bacon Martin

What can I do to pack the first season with as much music that people have been craving as possible? How do I give them everything they want in one season?

“It’s an impossible task.”

But Paul Haas, music director of the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas, admits he enjoyed the challenge of putting himself in his audience’s shoes.

What the 40-year-old graduate of Yale University and The Juilliard School finally decided was to give supporters of SoNA’s first full year of performances “a sampling of all the different styles people love, all the composers people love, all the emotions people want to feel.”

“When we were searching for a music director, the programming was a critical part of our decision-making process,” admits Karen Kapella, SoNA executive director. “Paul gets it. He has the desire to bring moving, emotional, magnificent pieces to our audience.”

But Haas also likes surprise, and he promised they will continue in the 2011-12 season.

“We had a couple of surprises in our first concert, and that was really fun, both for us as an orchestra and for the audience, to have that element of surprise,” he says. “I’ve built that into this season as well. Each concert, in some way, will have something that happens that you just can’t predict.”

What Kapella says supporters can expect is the caliber of the musicians performing as SoNA, a continued partnership with the Walton Arts Center and that audiences will “walk away craving the next concert.”

“The orchestra,” says Haas, “is only going to get better.”

Season subscriptions range from \$100 to \$200 and are available by calling the Walton Arts Center box office at 443-5600 or at www.waltonartscenter.org. Tickets for individual concerts will be available on Aug. 2.

FYI

Symphony of Northwest Arkansas

2011-12 Season

All concerts take place at the Walton Arts Center in Fayetteville.

MASTERWORKS I

7:30 p.m. Sept. 19

Mozart Overture to Marriage of Figaro

Elgar Cello Concerto in E Minor

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 6 in B Minor (“Pathétique”)