

Best Bet

Symphony conductor celebrated

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A roller coaster of a year has led the Mississauga Symphony Orchestra (MSO) to *The Grand Finale*.

After auditioning three prime candidates to take the role of musical director and conductor and finding out they were no longer available to accept the position, the group is leaning on John Barnum once again.

The musical director and conductor for the past 34 years will continue on an interim basis for part of next season with four guest conductors helping him take up the slack.

What was supposed to be his final concert will now be a celebration of his dedication to MSO.

The Grand Finale takes place at the Living Arts Centre tomorrow at 8 p.m. Tickets cost \$15-\$51.50.

"John's lifetime of service for the MSO and for the people of Mississauga has been a vital element in the relevance and presence of the arts in Mississauga," said the symphony's general manager, Eileen Keown.

"John's expertise and dedication have really developed and supported the MSO throughout the years."

A collection of Barnum's favourite pieces will be performed including a selection from Holst's cosmic opus *The Planets (Venus/Mars/Jupiter)*, Elgar's *Enigma Variations Op. 38*, along with the premiere orchestral performance of *Song from the River* with MSO principal violinist Ruth Fazal, and the world premiere of *Concertante for Orchestra*, composed by MSO composer-in-residence Kevin Lau.

The concert is also a coda to the group's 40th anniversary season. Following the concert will be the unveiling of the MSO's new logo, which is part of the group's rebranding initiative.

"The MSO was recognized as the city's Best Established Performing Arts Group at the 2011 Marty awards," said MSO president Paul Weston. "We've managed to achieve this kind of long-standing success thanks to Maestro Barnum's efforts, the efforts of every MSO musician, volunteer and staff members, and a shared belief in the enduring importance of arts in the community. My hope is that the MSO will continue to be a shining example of musical excellence in Mississauga for many years to come."

A reception with coffee and cake will follow the performances and unveiling in the atrium.

For tickets, call 905-306-6000 or visit www.livingartscentre.ca.

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Conductor John Barnum will lead the Mississauga Symphony Orchestra through *The Grand Finale* tomorrow at the Living Arts Centre.

