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The Golden State Pops Orchestra

The film music label partners with the Golden State Pops Orchestra for another 'Music of the 'Star Wars' Universe' concert.

Film music label Varèse Sarabande Records is celebrating its 35th anniversary at home and abroad.

The Golden State Pops Orchestra's June 15 concert *Music of the 'Star Wars'*

Universe commemorated the milestone with a performance of **Joel McNeely's** score, released on Varèse, for the 1996 multimedia project *Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire*, alongside pieces from **John Williams'** iconic *Star Wars* film scores -- not released on Varèse, though the label has distributed other orchestras' renditions of Williams' *Star Wars* compositions.

Hans Zimmer, Danny Elfman, Michael Giacchino, John Powell and other guest composers came out for the GSPO's previous concert, a Varèse Sarabande 35th anniversary revue on May 11. Varèse executive producer **Robert Townson**, who hosted the revue, says he opted to work with the GSPO to bring Varèse's anniversary festivities back to the label's Los Angeles roots.

“I sent an email to the conductor and said, ‘we’d like to do something locally. To be honest, your orchestra came to mind because of the attitude and the degree to which you’re making a point of celebrating the aspects of film music I really appreciate, the artistry,’” Townson says.

Two more concerts will partner the GSPO with Varèse: the orchestra’s annual Halloween and winter holiday performances, held October 19 and December 21.

Plans for a single revue concert grew into a yearlong Varèse celebration when GSPO conductor **Steven Allen Fox** realized how much Varèse-released music was already on the GSPO season’s programs. He had Townson host the orchestra’s February concert tribute to **Alan Silvestri** -- at which the *Avengers* composer himself conducted a piece -- as well as integrating *Shadows of the Empire* into the *Star Wars Universe* concert.

“It just made sense. The chemistry was there,” Fox says.

The Varèse concerts will continue in Europe this summer. Fimucité 7, a film music festival on Tenerife in the Canary Islands, will include a Dreamworks Animation concert and an **Elmer Bernstein** big band tribute; Townson has also organized festival showcase concerts on July 12 for **Marco Beltrami** and **David Arnold**, who have released scores on Varèse. And at the Transatlantyk festival August 2-9 in Poland, Townson says, at least one concert will be devoted to Varèse music.

Established in 1978, Varèse Sarabande was the first label to dedicate itself solely to film music. Its discography includes scores by **Jerry Goldsmith, John Williams, Patrick Doyle, Michael Giacchino, Thomas Newman**, and others.

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