

GENEVA CONCERTS

presents

ROCHESTER PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Christopher Seaman, conductor

Jon Nakamatsu, piano



Friday, May 1, 2015 • 7:30 p.m.
Smith Opera House

GENEVA CONCERTS, INC.

2014-2015 SEASON

Saturday, 20 September 2014, 7:30 p.m.

Canada's Ballet Jörgen

Cinderella

Friday, 14 November 2014, 7:30 p.m.

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

José Luis Gomez, conductor

Vadym Kholodenko, piano (2013 Van Cliburn Gold Medalist)

R. Strauss: *Death and Transfiguration*

Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No. 2

Mozart: Symphony No. 41, "Jupiter"

Saturday, 7 February 2015, 7:30 p.m.

New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players

I've Got a Little TWIST

Friday, 6 March 2015, 7:30 p.m.

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

Daniel Hege, conductor

Augustin Hadelich, violin

Smetana: Three Dances from *The Bartered Bride*

Dvořák: Violin Concerto

Diamond (100th Anniversary): Symphony No. 4

Copland: *Billy the Kid* Suite

Friday, 1 May 2015, 7:30 p.m.

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

Christopher Seaman, conductor

Jon Nakamatsu, piano

Elgar: *In the South*

Saint-Saëns: Piano Concerto No. 2

Stravinsky: *Petrushka* (1947)

Programs subject to change.

Performed at the Smith Opera House

82 Seneca Street, Geneva, New York

These concerts are made possible by generous underwriting from the Williams Family Foundation and by a continuing subscription from Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

GENEVA CONCERTS, INC.

Friday, May 1, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

Christopher Seaman, conductor

The Christopher Seaman Chair

Supported by Barbara and Patrick Fulford and the Conductor Laureate Society

Jon Nakamatsu, piano

EDWARD ELGAR
(1857 – 1934)

In the South, Op. 50, "Alassio"

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS
(1835 – 1921)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22

Andante sostenuto

Allegro scherzando

Presto

Jon Nakamatsu, piano

Intermission

IGOR STRAVINSKY
(1882 – 1971)

Petrushka (1947 revision)

The Shrovetide Fair

Petrushka's Cell

The Moor's Cell

The Shrovetide Fair (towards evening)

Patrons are requested to silence signal watches, pagers and cell phones.

The use of cameras and recording equipment is prohibited by law.

Christopher Seaman

Music director of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra from 1998–2011, British conductor Christopher Seaman has earned a reputation for inspirational music making. During his 13-year tenure at the RPO, he raised the artistic level of the orchestra to its present level of excellence, and has played a major part in its increased recognition and community support.



In May 2009, the University of Rochester made Seaman an Honorary Doctor of Music, acknowledging his outstanding leadership in music as a conductor, recording artist, teacher, and community arts partner. In the U.S., he previously served as music director to the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra, conductor-in-residence with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and artistic advisor of the San Antonio Symphony. In the U.K., he previously served as principal conductor with both the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the Northern Sinfonia.

2014–15 season highlights include the RPO and the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, Milwaukee, Nashville and Adelaide symphony orchestras, Auckland Philharmonia, and the Orquestra Filarmônica de Minas Gerais in Brazil. Recent guest conducting engagements include concerts with the orchestras in Pittsburgh, Detroit, Houston, San Francisco, St. Louis, Seattle, and Minnesota. He is also a regular guest at the Aspen Music Festival. He frequently visits Australia and Asia, and has conducted the Hong Kong Philharmonic and the National Taiwan, Sydney, Melbourne, and Singapore symphony orchestras.

Seaman's recordings with the RPO have received great critical acclaim, most recently the 2012 Harmonia Mundi recording featuring Vaughan Williams' *A London Symphony*. He has also conducted recordings with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, and National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain.

In July 2013, University of Rochester Press published Seaman's first book, *Inside Conducting*, a wise but entertaining look at the art of conducting.

Jon Nakamatsu

Gold Medalist in the 10th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 1997, Jon Nakamatsu is a frequent concerto soloist, chamber musician, recording artist, and solo recitalist throughout North and South America, Europe, and Japan, collaborating with such conductors as James Conlon, Marek Janowski, Raymond Leppard, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Osmo Vänskä, and Hans Vonk. He also performed at a White House concert hosted by President and Mrs. Clinton. His last performance with the RPO was in October 2012.



His extensive recital tours throughout the U.S. and Europe have featured appearances in New York City (Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center), Washington, D.C. (Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts), Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Paris, London, and Milan. Together with his duo partner, the renowned clarinetist Jon Manasse, Nakamatsu serves as artistic director of the Cape Cod Chamber Music Festival in Massachusetts.

Nakamatsu has recorded 13 CDs for Harmonia Mundi USA and his 2007 Gershwin recording with the RPO made it to the top five of the Classical Billboard Charts. Other acclaimed releases include an all-Liszt disc featuring the *Dante Sonata*, a recording of Brahms' Piano Sonata in F Minor, and Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 and the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini.

Since 1997, Nakamatsu has served on multiple international piano competition juries and has also been invited as a guest speaker at numerous institutions including the Van Cliburn Foundation, Stanford University, and the Juilliard School. He is a graduate of Stanford University with a bachelor's degree in German and a master's degree in education.

Program Notes

In the South, Op. 50, “Alassio”

EDWARD ELGAR

b. June 2, 1857, Broadheath, England

d. February 23, 1934, Worcester, England

First performed by the RPO February 8, 1990;

Andrew Litton, conductor

Last performed by the RPO April 17, 2010;

Christopher Seaman, conductor

In November 1903, Elgar and his wife embarked upon a two-month holiday in the town of Alassio on the Italian Riviera. This exuberant and richly scored overture presents his impressions of the region and its history. He conducted the premiere in London during March 1904.

Precise inspiration came to Elgar during an afternoon stroll near Alassio. “I was by the side of an old Roman way,” he wrote. “A peasant stood by an old ruin and in a flash it all came to me—the conflict of armies in that very spot long ago, where now I stood—the contrast of the ruin and the shepherd.”

The exultant opening theme was originally inspired by his friend George Robertson Sinclair’s bulldog Dan, previously immortalized in the “Enigma” Variations. Next comes a gentle portrait of “a shepherd with his flock straying about the ruins of the old church—he piping softly and occasionally singing.” This is followed by a massive, menacing march-like section that Elgar intended to portray “the relentless and domineering forces of the ancient day, and to give a sound-picture of the strife and wars, the ‘drums and tramlings’ of a later time.” A lovely contrast follows in a nocturne-like interlude. The theme, inspired by Neapolitan song, is introduced by solo viola. Numerous requests led to its separate publication under the title “In Moonlight.” Elgar developed all the main themes and crowned them with a truly grandiose conclusion.

Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

b. October 9, 1835, Paris, France

d. December 16, 1921, Algiers, Algeria

First performed by the RPO February 3, 1927;

Eugene Goossens, conductor, Raymond Wilson, piano

Last performed by the RPO March 17, 2007;

Gerard Schwarz, conductor, Stewart Goodyear, piano

This most popular of Saint-Saëns' five piano concertos resulted from his friendship with the great Russian pianist and composer, Anton Rubinstein. The prospect of an appearance in Paris during the spring of 1868 inspired Rubinstein to ask Saint-Saëns to compose a concerto that they could perform together. Rubinstein insisted that Saint-Saëns play the solo part, reversing roles from previous joint performances. By the time they had agreed to pursue this project, just three weeks remained before the scheduled concert. Saint-Saëns completed the concerto in 17 days. The audience at the premiere on May 13 received it with indifference, but countless others have embraced it with delight.

The three movements offer an exceptionally wide range of moods, leading one clever writer to say that it "starts with Bach and ends with Offenbach." The first movement alternates austerity with tenderness. The second is a playful scherzo, featuring gossamer orchestration and a gracefully waltzing second theme that lingers long in the memory. Saint-Saëns concludes the concerto with a breathless tarantella whose energy never flags from first bar to last.

***Petrushka* (1947 revision)**

IGOR STRAVINSKY

b. June 17, 1882, Oranienbaum, Russia

d. April 6, 1971, New York, New York

First performed by the RPO November 4, 1948;

Erich Leinsdorf, conductor

Last performed by the RPO October 23, 2010;

Christopher Seaman, conductor

In 1910, Stravinsky found fame with *The Firebird*, a dance score commissioned by Sergei Diaghilev, impresario of the renowned company Les Ballets Russes. For his next project, he and Diaghilev agreed on an evocation of pagan Russia, but *Petrushka* was destined to come first.

“Before tackling *The Rite of Spring*, I wanted to refresh myself by composing an orchestral piece in which the piano would play the most important part—a sort of *Konzertstück* (Concert Piece),” wrote Stravinsky. “In composing the music, I had a clear picture of a puppet, suddenly let loose, trying the patience of the orchestra with devilish cascades of arpeggios. There follows a tremendous brawl which ends with the sad collapse of the poor puppet.”

After hearing Stravinsky’s materials for a piano concerto, Diaghilev persuaded the composer to turn them into a ballet score. Diaghilev assigned Alexander Benois to create the scenery and costumes (Benois also collaborated on the scenario), and Mikhail Fokine, the choreography. The premiere in Paris on June 13, 1911 scored a tremendous success for all concerned, including Vaslav Nijinsky, who danced the title role.

Stravinsky’s score is one of his most brilliant achievements, bursting with the energy and inventiveness of youth. The depth of characterization is astonishing, no more so than in regards to the leading figure *Petrushka* (Punch), adopted from the pathetic clown puppet familiar from fairground shows in many lands. Stravinsky gives the melancholy puppet enough personality to make listeners care about

him, without letting us forget that he is made of straw and cloth, not flesh and blood.

The setting is a Shrovetide fairground in St. Petersburg, about 1830. Amidst the hustle and bustle of the carnival is a puppet show, overseen by a mysterious, aging charlatan. His flute brings to life three characters: Petrushka, the handsome Blackamoor, and the lovely Ballerina. The three puppets perform a vivacious Russian Dance, which is based on an authentic folk tune. The action moves backstage to Petrushka's small, bare room. He professes his love for the Ballerina but she rejects him coldly. The next stop is the Blackamoor's quarters, where he and the Ballerina are enjoying an amorous rendezvous. Petrushka bursts in, only to be chased away by his rival.

Back outside, evening is falling and the fair is in full swing. Suddenly Petrushka appears, running through the crowd. The Blackamoor pursues him, then strikes him down with a sword. The charlatan demonstrates to the shocked crowd that the apparent murder victim was only a puppet. But as he drags the body away, Petrushka's ghost appears above the theatre, rudely mocking his former master.

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