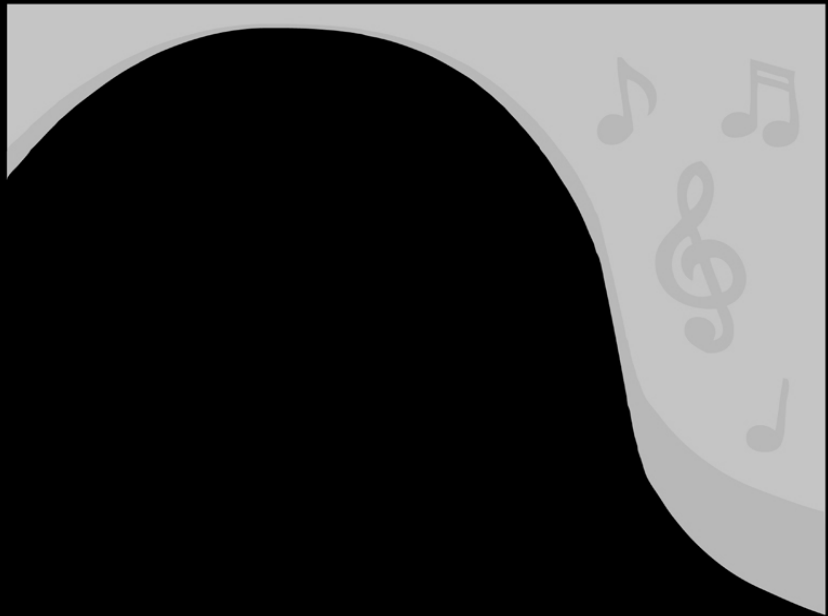


# GENEVA CONCERTS

presents



*Syracuse Symphony Orchestra*

*Daniel Hege, conductor*

*Jon Nakamatsu, piano*



Sunday, October 19, 2008 • 3:00 p.m.  
Smith Opera House

# GENEVA CONCERTS, INC.

## 2008-2009 SEASON

Saturday, 20 September 2008, 8:15 p.m.

### **Paul Taylor Dance Company**

Sunday, 19 October 2008, 3:00 p.m.

### **Syracuse Symphony Orchestra**

Daniel Hege, conductor

Jon Nakamatsu, piano

Music of Johnson, Ives, and Rachmaninoff

Thursday, 20 November 2008, 8:15 p.m.

### **Hungarian Virtuosi Orchestra**

Music of Vivaldi, Liszt, and Tchaikovsky

Friday, 13 February 2009, 8:15 p.m.

### **Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra**

Christopher Seaman, conductor

Los Angeles Guitar Quartet

Music of Butterworth, Assad, Bizet, and Prokofiev

Thursday, 2 April 2009, 8:15 p.m.

### **Syracuse Symphony Orchestra**

Peter Bay, conductor

Deborah Coble, flute

Music of Elgar, Jacob, and Holst

Performed at the Smith Opera House, 82 Seneca Street, Geneva, NY

These concerts are made possible, in part, with public funds from the  
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# GENEVA CONCERTS, INC.

Sunday, October 19 at 3:00 p.m.

## Syracuse Symphony Orchestra

Daniel Hege, Music Director

**DANIEL HEGE, conductor**  
**JON NAKAMATSU, piano**

JAMES JOHNSON  
1894-1955

Victory Stride

CHARLES IVES  
1874-1954

Symphony No. 2, S.2  
Andante moderato  
Allegro  
Adagio cantabile  
Lento maestoso  
Allegro molto vivace

### Intermission

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF  
1873-1943

Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 30  
Allegro ma non tanto  
Intermezzo  
Finale

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Syracuse Symphony Orchestra performances are made possible with public funds from Onondaga County, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Natural Heritage Trust, and the New York State Council on the Arts, a State agency.

# Daniel Hege

Now in his ninth season as Music Director of the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Daniel Hege is recognized as one of America's finest young conductors, and has earned acclaim for his fresh interpretations of the standard repertoire and his commitment to creative programming. In 2001, he finished a five-year tenure as Resident Conductor of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, where he worked closely with David Zinman and Yuri Temirkanov.



Mr. Hege first attracted attention when he won the post of Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Young Musicians' Foundation Debut Orchestra in Los Angeles. He served, concurrently, as Director of Instrumental Music at the Orange County High School of the Arts and Assistant Conductor of the Pacific Symphony Orchestra. Since then, he has served as Music Director of the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra (where he was twice honored by the American Symphony Orchestra League for innovative programming), Encore Chamber Orchestra of Chicago, Haddonfield Symphony Orchestra in New Jersey, and Newton Mid-Kansas Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Hege has guest conducted leading orchestras including the Baltimore, Columbus, Colorado, Detroit, Houston, Louisville, Oregon, San Diego, and Seattle Symphony Orchestras, the Rochester, Calgary, Naples, and Louisiana Philharmonics, and has won acclaim abroad for his performances with the Leicester Orchestra of England, Singapore, and St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestras, Auckland Philharmonia, and the Symphony Orchestra of Lima, Peru. He has guest conducted at the Music Academy of the West, National Orchestra Institute, the National Repertory Orchestra, the Aspen and Grand Teton music festivals, and in most recent years, has regularly conducted opera and ballet performances.

Under Mr. Hege's artistic leadership, the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra performed a critically acclaimed concert to a sold-out audience at Carnegie Hall in April 2003. He oversaw the release of the SSO's live Classics Concert CD in 2000, the *Holiday Pops* release just two years later, and the SSO's July 2006 release, *Big Band Bash*. Other recordings include *Done Made My Vow*, a CD of works by Adolphus Hailstork with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Morgan State Choir; *Violin Concertos by Black Composers of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Cedille), with violinist Rachel Barton Pine and the Encore Chamber Orchestra (nominated for a 1998 NPR Heritage Award); and *The Gift*, a collection of Christmas arrangements on Woodland Records with oboist Brad Smith.

Mr. Hege studied with Daniel Lewis of the University of Southern California and with Paul Vermel at the Aspen Music Festival and holds degrees in history and music at Bethel College and a masters degree in orchestral conducting at University of Utah.

A 2001 40 under 40 Honoree, Mr. Hege received an honorary doctorate in Humane Letters from Le Moyne College in 2004. He is active as a guest clinician and adjudicates various musical competitions nationally. He resides in Jamesville, New York with his wife, Katarina Oladottir Hege, and their three daughters.

## Jon Nakamatsu

Named Gold Medalist of the Tenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 1997, Jon Nakamatsu has subsequently appeared as soloist with major orchestras across the globe. This season, he has orchestral and recital appearances slated from coast to coast; of special note are his world premiere performances of David Amram's Piano Concerto with Symphony Silicon Valley, and he continues to tour as half of the Manasse/Nakamatsu Duo with clarinetist Jon Manasse.



Jon Nakamatsu's extensive recital tours have featured performances in New York City (Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall), Washington, D.C. (Kennedy Center), Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Miami, Houston, San Francisco, Paris, London, and Milan. The recipient of the Steven De Groote Memorial Award for his semifinal round chamber music performances at the Cliburn competition, he has since collaborated with various chamber ensembles, among them the Brentano, Ives, Manhattan, Miami, St. Lawrence, Prazak, Tokyo, and Ying String Quartets and the Stanford Woodwind Quintet. Mr. Nakamatsu has also made four United States tours as the guest soloist with the Berlin Philharmonic Woodwind Quintet.

Mr. Nakamatsu records exclusively for harmonia mundi usa, which has released six CDs, including an orchestral album containing Rachmaninoff's *Third Piano Concerto*, the piece with which he won the Cliburn Competition. His most recent release is his second orchestral album with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, featuring Gershwin's *Concerto in F* and *Rhapsody in Blue*, conducted by Jeff Tyzik. His first CD with clarinetist Jon Manasse, a recording of the Brahms *Clarinet Sonatas*, was released earlier this year.

## Program Notes

JAMES P. JOHNSON

b. February 1, 1894 in New Brunswick, New Jersey

d. November 17, 1955 in Jamaica, New York

### *Victory Stride*

James P. Johnson was an important figure in the jazz culture of New York during the 1920s. His 1921 recording of his own composition "Carolina Shout" is believed to be the first solo jazz-piano recording. He often accompanied Ethel Waters and Bessie Smith, and his students included Fats Waller and Duke Ellington. He wrote all or part of the music for numerous Broadway revues, including 1923's *Runnin' Wild*, from which his song "Charleston" became

a runaway hit and popularized the dance that epitomized the Prohibition era.

Johnson grew up with both classical and popular music. He studied piano with Bruno Giannini. One of his mentors was Eubie Blake, who is said to have encouraged him to develop his wide-ranging “orchestral” approach to piano playing. Although he became famous for his popular music, he aspired to be remembered for his concert works, which include *Harlem Symphony* (1932, only a year after William Grant Still’s ground-breaking *Afro-American Symphony*) and the piano concerto *Jassamine* (or *Jazz a Mine*, 1934). His one-act blues opera *De Organizer*, with libretto by Langston Hughes, was performed in Carnegie Hall in 1940. According to commentator Scott E. Brown, “He intended his music to tell a story, the story of America’s ethnic heritage, especially the distinctive role of his race.”

While Johnson worked hard at producing and promoting his concert works, it was his popular songs and recordings—some 200 songs and dozens of piano rolls—that secured his fame and put bread on the table. During World War II, he was part of an informal jazz repertory ensemble making recordings at Blue Note Records.

*Instrumentation: flute, piccolo, oboe, 2 clarinets, bassoon, 4 saxophones, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, drum set, piano, harp, and strings.*

CHARLES IVES

b. October 20, 1874 in Danbury, Connecticut

d. May 19, 1954 in New York, New York

## **Symphony No. 2, for Large Orchestra**

Ives’s first and most influential teacher was his father, George E. Ives (1845-1894). The elder Ives had been the youngest Union bandmaster during the Civil War, leader of a band recommended to General Grant as the best in the army. He was not himself a composer, but he had definite and original ideas about ear training

– as well as such ahead-of-their-time notions as polytonality (music in more than one key at the same time), microtones (notes that fall “between the cracks” of piano keys), and widely separated groups of performers.

Charles Ives remembered that he and his brother Moss were taught by their father that “man as a rule didn’t use the faculties that the Creator had given him hard enough.” Their home musical training included not only Bach and traditional harmony, but also such exercises as singing a tune in E-flat while their father accompanied in C. Before he went off to Yale University to formalize his education, Charles was writing fugues in four simultaneous keys and dissonant choral settings of Psalms.

His father died only three months after Ives entered Yale, leaving an “awful vacuum,” but George Ives’s musical ideas, his flinty New England independence, and his love for the music of the people had all made lasting impressions on his son. Charles Ives was the first major composer to write music in quarter-tones, but his father had long ago experimented with a contraption of 24 violin strings tuned to various microtonal pitches. Charles would compose unbelievable dissonances that did not resolve, just as years earlier his father had written to him, “tell [Yale professor Horatio] Parker that every dissonance doesn’t have to resolve, if it doesn’t happen to feel like it, any more than every horse should have to have its tail bobbed just because that’s the prevailing fashion.” In a certain sense, Charles Ives spent his life writing his father’s music.

At Yale Ives quickly learned to compose in accepted style for the European-trained Parker, while sharing his wilder experiments with his flatmates. (They didn’t really understand his “stunts” either.) It was a precursor of the double life he would lead throughout his working years. In his free time he was the independent but unknown composer of thrillingly original music; during office hours he was New York City’s most successful insurance man, half-owner of his own firm, innovator of training courses, and author of well-regarded aids for insurance salesmen.

He had realized early on that he would never make a living from his music, but he probably didn’t fathom just how hard his struggle would be. For decades he kept up the double life, while



trying to get his music played. When recognition finally started to come, it was almost too late. By then he had already retired from business and his health was fragile. He wouldn't allow himself to hope too much. Thirty-five years after his Third Symphony ("The Camp Meeting") was finished it received its first performance, and he was promptly awarded the Pulitzer Prize for music. His reaction: he gave the money away, saying, "Prizes are for boys. I've grown up."

For the Second Symphony it was much the same. Not long after it was written, in the early 1900s, he sent the only clear copy of the score to Walter Damrosch, conductor of the New York Philharmonic Society. It was never acknowledged, never returned, and Ives never made another copy. The symphony finally got a hearing almost 50 years later, for which a conductor's score had to be prepared from his original pencil manuscript. Despite conductor Leonard Bernstein's pleading, Ives refused to attend the premiere. In the privacy of his home he listened to the broadcast, and Henry Cowell reported that the 77-year-old composer danced a jig "of pleasure and vindication."

The Symphony No. 2 has been called the first really *American* symphony. Ives's First was written at Yale under the watchful eye of Parker. The Second, written not long after his Yale days, naturally shows the benefit of the classical training he received from Parker, but Ives allowed himself much more freedom.

In a biographical memo, the composer explained the reason for the symphony's many musical quotations, writing that the work "expresses the musical feelings of the Connecticut country around here (Redding and Danbury) in the 1890s, the music of the country folk. It is full of the tunes they sang and played then." He went on to say that much of the music in each movement was a reworking of older pieces (all now lost) from his student days and before:

- I. An organ sonata and "Down East" Overture
- II. Overture, "In These United States"
- III. "... a reflection of the organ and choir music of the 'Long Green Organ Book' of the [eighteen-]sixties, 'seventies, and 'eighties," as well as an organ prelude (1896)

IV. “Town, Gown, and State” Overture (1896)  
Overture, “The American Woods (Brookfield)” (1889)

*Instrumentation: 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, snare drum, and strings.*

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

b. April 1, 1873 in Semyonovo, Russia

d. March 28, 1943 in Beverly Hills, California

**Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30**

A good friend of Rachmaninoff’s once revealed that the most important thought behind the composer’s first American tour – and behind the creation of the Third Piano Concerto for that tour – was the dream of owning an automobile. Very few Russians had cars in 1909. Rachmaninoff is known to have had a passion for fast travel, and this story of wanting to earn enough money to buy a motorcar may just be true.

The American concert tour was a busy one. Rachmaninoff appeared sometimes as pianist, sometimes as conductor. Besides performing with the orchestras of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Buffalo, and Cincinnati, he made a 20-concert tour with the Boston Symphony.

The Concerto No. 3 had been started in April 1909 and was completed shortly before he left for America in October. Having had little time to practice the difficult solo part, he took a silent keyboard with him and practiced on the ship. He played the premiere in November, with Walter Damrosch conducting the Symphony Society of New York. Two months later he played the concerto again in New York, this time with the New York Philharmonic under Gustav Mahler.

Reviewers noted the deep impression it made on audiences and agreed that this was a work of great musical interest. Although it was once surpassed in popularity by the composer’s Second Concerto, the Third has never been out of favor and has received

increased attention in recent years, being performed and recorded by such renowned interpreters as the Chinese pianist Lang Lang. Known informally among musicians as “Rach 3” or even “Rocky 3,” it achieved widespread public fame as the centerpiece of the 1996 film *Shine*.

Rachmaninoff dedicated the work to Josef Hofmann, whom he considered the world’s greatest pianist, but Hofmann decided this concerto was just not for him and never played it. Its first great interpreter aside from the composer himself was Vladimir Horowitz, who initially played it at the age of 16 for his graduation from the Kiev Conservatory. In his last years, Rachmaninoff declined to play it at all, saying that both Horowitz and Walter Gieseking could do greater justice to its technical difficulties.

Those difficulties stem from the creation of a mature and complex work by a composer who was, himself, a consummate pianist. Add to this that fact that it was written for his own gigantic hands, said to be able to reach four notes past an octave with ease. As a composer of orchestral as well as piano music, Rachmaninoff was able to produce an integrated, balanced concerto, neither piano-dominated nor with the piano engulfed by the orchestra. His musical ideas were so abundant while composing it that he wrote out two versions of the first-movement cadenza, one longer and more elaborate than the other.

*Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, and strings.*

Program notes by Nick Jones

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