

GENEVA CONCERTS

presents

Hungarian Virtuosi



Miklós Szenthelyi, Conductor

Thursday, November 20, 2008 • 8:15 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

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GENEVA CONCERTS, INC.

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

Hungarian Virtuosi

Miklós Szenthelyi, conductor

Antonio Vivaldi

Concerto for Violin and Cello in B Major

Allegro moderato

Andante

Allegro molto

Soloists: Miklós Szenthelyi, violin and Judit Faludi, cello

Franz Liszt

Mephisto Waltz

trans. Sandor Devich

Franz Liszt

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 in C minor

trans. Peter Wolf

Intermission

Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky

Souvenir de Florence, Op. 70

Allegro con spirito

Adagio cantabile e con moto

Allegro moderato

Allegro vivace



Discography: Hungaroton, Naxos, Gloria, PROdigital
Exclusive Management: Arts Management Group, Inc.
37 West 26th Street, New York, NY 10010

Hungarian Virtuosi

Conductor-violinist: Miklós Szenthelyi

First violin

Roman Oszezsinszkij, Concertmaster

Csaba Czenke

Zsuzsanna Czikos

Anna Fehér

György Lakatos

Second violin

Tamás Rigó, Section-leader

Judit Holló

Krisztina Dulay

Ildikó Kovács

Viola

István Rajncsák, Section-leader

Judit Nemesi

Lóránt Veres

Cello

Endre Balog, Section-leader

Judit Faludi

Előd Balog

Double-bass

Vilmos Buza

Miklós Szenthelyi

Miklós Szenthelyi graduated from the Franz Liszt Academy of Budapest in 1973 where he was a pupil of Dénes Kovács. That same year he was appointed an Assistant Professor.

Szenthelyi (together with András Schiff) won the Leo Weiner Sonata Competition and was the winner of the Hungarian Radio's violin competition 1975. His solo career has taken him to many countries in Europe as well as to the United States, Australia, and Brazil. Szenthelyi was a soloist with Hungary's National Philharmonia from the mid 1970s until 1988 when he founded the Hungarian Virtuosi, of which he is still its artistic director, soloist, and since 1999 its conductor.

Szenthelyi has been teaching violin at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music since 1973, since 1978 chairs his own class of extraordinarily talented violin students, and was appointed Dean Professor in 1987. He has taught in Finland, in Brazil, and at the Greensboro Festival (USA).

Miklós Szenthelyi was awarded the Liszt Prize in 1986, and the Star of Hungary Commander Order by the President of Hungary in 1994. He plays on a G. Guarneri master violin (1723) donated to him by the government of Hungary.



Judit Faludi

Judit Faludi is a 1993 graduate of the Franz Liszt Music Academy of Budapest, where she completed her cello studies. She is a frequent concert performer at the Academy as well as for the Hungarian Radio (where she was named Musician of the week in 2005 and 2007), and in the Houses of Parliament.

Recently Ms. Faludi completed concert tours in Germany, India, and Egypt, and will undertake a tour of Japan in January 2009. In the spring of 2008 her first double CD was issued including repertoire by Brahms, Handel, Kodaly, Smetana, Saint-Saëns, Bruch, Fauré, and Weber.

In August 2008 Judit Faludi was awarded the Silver Medal of the Hungarian Republic, presented to her on Constitution Memorial Day.

Hungarian Virtuosi

The Hungarian Virtuosi was formed in late 1988 by violinist Miklós Szenthelyi from graduating students of the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest where he is professor of the string faculty. The orchestra is an all-string ensemble and has built, in the course of the years, a vast repertoire with a special emphasis on the romantic compositions.

In the years since its inception, Hungarian Virtuosi has scored numerous successes at home and abroad. It has completed four tours each of the U.S., Canada, Japan, and South Korea, and numerous tours in Europe, including the countries of Germany, Austria, Holland, France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. In Hungary, the orchestra regularly performs at the Franz Liszt Academy, the Vigado-Redoute concert hall, at other concert venues in Budapest, and in the sacred music programs of the Matthias Church. The ensemble participates every summer in festivals throughout Hungary, most notably the Budapest Spring Festival, as well as on the programs of the Hungarian Radio and Television.

Hungarian Virtuosi has recorded eight CDs for Hungaroton, Naxos, Gloria, and PROdigital.

Program Notes

ANTONIO VIVALDI

Concerto for Violin and Cello in B Major

We know very little about Vivaldi, the man and his life. Even the date of his birth was learned only recently, and we still do not know the precise date of his death. He was buried in a pauper's grave in Vienna on July 28, 1741, in a cemetery that has since disappeared – an ignominious end for a great musician.

Vivaldi studied with his father, who was a respected violinist in the orchestra of Saint Mark's in Venice, and eventually he was ordained a priest. For many years he was director of music, staff composer, teacher, and violinist at a home for foundling girls in Venice, an important institution that came to be called "conservatory" of music. His contract required him to compose at least two new concertos per month for the girls, and he wrote dozens of oratorios and cantatas, and more than five hundred concertos – the exact number is not known – for almost every imaginable combination of instruments. Dozens of them were published during his lifetime, but after his death, in an age that was interested only in new music, he was almost entirely forgotten. When popular interest in the works of Bach was revived, in the nineteenth century, the surprising discovery was made that several concertos thought to be by the German master were in fact by the Italian, and musicians and scholars gradually came to realize that the history of the era would have to be restudied and rewritten. This began in earnest in the 1930s but it is only since the Second World War that the world has come to know more than a few of Vivaldi's countless compositions.

Visitors to Venice in Vivaldi's time marveled at the music they heard his students perform. One wrote that the young women sang like angels and played every instrument with incomparable perfection of ensemble. "They are cloistered like nuns, and each concert is [played by] about forty girls. Nothing is more charming than to see a young and pretty nun dressed in white, a sprig of pomegranate blossom behind one ear, leading the orchestra and beating time with all imaginable grace and perfection." That is how many of Vivaldi's concertos were first performed.

Virtually nothing is known about the Concerto for Violin and Cello in B Major except that it was discovered very recently in a library in Italy.

FRANZ LISZT

Mephisto Waltz

Franz Liszt is one of the greatest figures in the history of music. As a pianist he is pre-eminent, and in his compositions for the piano he revolutionized the technique for that instrument. He loved the magnificent, the splendid and the fancifully decorative, and these qualities characterize his compositions for the piano. He delighted in writing compositions involving technical demands which were the consternation of his confreres, but which he executed with ease. His complex developments, however, give way at times to melodies of utterly simple, yet haunting beauty.

The Mephisto Waltz was inspired by the episode of the village tavern in Lenau's Faust. Its virtuosity makes it a work of "tempest and dread" to the uninitiated; it figures Mephistopheles and Faust mingling in the dance at a peasant wedding. The dancing increases in its vigor and the love of Faust and a dark-eyed maiden adds romance to the compositions. There are few compositions which present such a wealth of dazzling pyrotechnics in so few minutes. It is a grand showpiece and the technical problems for the performer are truly diabolical.

FRANZ LISZT

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 in C minor

Liszt's nineteen published Hungarian rhapsodies for piano were composed in the enthusiastic belief that the supposed Gypsy melodies incorporated into some of them represented the true spirit of the Hungarian people. Although the idea appealed to those who shared Liszt's Romantic nationalism, twentieth-century scholars (among them Bartók and Kodály) have shown that many of the "Gypsy" melodies are in fact descended from Hungarian folk and light classical music of the eighteenth century. Taken up by Romany (Gypsy) musicians, these melodies acquire new color, as well as a distinctly nineteenth century Romantic character that presumably added to their attractions for Liszt, who although Hungarian by birth, did not speak the language and spent most of his career in Germany and Italy.

Most of the fifteen rhapsodies derive from an earlier set of "Hungarian" melodies that Liszt had arranged for piano during the early 1840s. These were reworked as virtuoso piano pieces beginning in 1846; the remaining rhapsodies date from the 1880s. In addition to the use of "Hungarian" melodies, most of the rhapsodies include imitations of the instruments and musical style of the many Romany musicians,

such as the cimbalom, a sort of large hammered dulcimer, and scales whose inflections sounded exotic to one accustomed to the musical language of Western Europe. But Liszt's rhapsodies also owe much to contemporary Western European virtuoso music; in particular, the violin sonatas and concertos of Paganini.

Rhapsody No. 2 in C-sharp minor dates from 1847, a year that had seen a particularly extensive concert tour that brought the composer to parts of Central and Eastern Europe rarely visited by "classical" musicians. This is one of the few rhapsodies whose material cannot be traced to earlier works. It consists, in essence, of an extended *accelerando*: a brief *Lento* introduces an expressive *Andante* that is interrupted by several short *cadenzas*; a lively *Vivace* follows, leading to the *Finale* (in C-sharp Major) with its well-known "Hungarian" theme.

PETER ILICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Souvenir de Florence, Op. 70

The genesis of Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence* dates to 1886, when the Saint Petersburg Chamber Music Society conferred honorary membership upon the composer. In return, Tchaikovsky promised to write a sextet for strings, but for several years made little progress on it. Finally in the early summer of 1890 he set to work on the piece in earnest and completed it, as he described in a letter, "with the greatest enthusiasm and without the least exertion." But in the end, the composition proved not so effortless. Upon hearing the music in a private performance the following winter, Tchaikovsky felt dissatisfied with the final two movements and withdrew them for revision. He completed this task over a year later, and the work was published as his Op. 70.

The first of the composition's four movements opens with dramatic music full of Russian pathos and passion. Although Tchaikovsky introduces more lyrical ideas as the movement unfolds, he nevertheless maintains a high level of emotional intensity throughout. Next comes a slow movement beginning with an expressively harmonized introductory passage that will recur again later in the composition. The main feature, however, is one of those long, singing melodies at which Tchaikovsky excelled. According to the composer's brother, this was sketched during a visit to Italy and consequently prompted the title *Souvenir de Florence*.

The third movement begins with a scurrying tremolo figuration before proceeding to a broad theme for the cello. A subject that we might easily take for a melody from a Russian folk dance launches the finale, whose subsequent developments also seem balletic or otherwise suggestive of choreographic movement.

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