

GENEVA CONCERTS

presents

Ward Stare, Music Director
Olga Kern, piano

 **Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra**

**ROCHESTER
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA**

Friday, 10 November 2017 • 7:30 p.m.
Smith Opera House

GENEVA CONCERTS, INC.

2017–2018 SEASON

Saturday, 23 September 2017, 7:30 p.m.

Ballet Jörgen Canada

Anastasia

A Russian Grand Duchess, born to privilege, is cast out into a post-revolutionary world. What will become of her? Canada's Ballet Jörgen brings *Anastasia*, a full-length ballet rich with incredibly detailed costumes, versatile sets, and exquisite lighting. Set to an original orchestral score.

Friday, 10 November 2017, 7:30 p.m.

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

Ward Stare, Music Director; Olga Kern, piano

BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 5, "Emperor"

MUSSORGSKY *Pictures at an Exhibition*

Friday, 9 February 2018, 7:30 p.m.

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

Ward Stare, Music Director; David Halen, violin

Rochester City Ballet

DVOŘÁK *Slavonic Dances*, Op. 46

BARTÓK *Miraculous Mandarin* Suite, Op. 19

TCHAIKOVSKY Violin Suite from *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*

RAVEL *La Valse*

Saturday, 10 March 2018, 7:30 p.m.

Cantus

Discovery of Sight

Acclaimed as "the premier men's vocal ensemble in the United States" (*Fanfare*), the eight male voices will perform seasoned masterpieces like Richard Strauss's *Traumlicht* and Franz Schubert's *Die Nacht*, and break new ground with Eric Whitacre's *Lux Aurumque* and a brand-new commission from Gabriel Kahane.

Saturday, 5 May 2018, 7:30 p.m.

Symphoria

Christian Capocaccia, conductor; Ken Meyer, guitar

TCHAIKOVSKY *Mozartiana*

RODRIGO *Fantasia para un gentilhombre*

STRAVINSKY *Pulcinella* Suite

Programs subject to change.

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

This concert is 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, 10 November 2017 • 7:30 p.m.

ROCHESTER PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Ward Stare, Music Director

Ward Stare, conductor

Olga Kern, piano

Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73, "Emperor" Ludwig van Beethoven

Allegro

Adagio un poco mosso

Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo

Olga Kern, piano

Intermission

Pictures at an Exhibition

Modest Mussorgsky

Promenade (arr. Lawrence Leonard)

Gnomes (arr. Vladimir Ashkenazy)

Promenade (arr. Lucien Cailliet)

Old Castle (arr. Sergei Gorchakov)

Promenade/Tuileries (arr. Leonidas Leonardi)

Bydlo (arr. Sir Henry Wood)

Promenade/Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks (arr. Cailliet)

Two Polish Jews (arr. Gorchakov)

Promenade (arr. Cailliet)

Limoges: The Market (arr. Mikhail Tushmalov)

The Catacombs (arr. Leopold Stokowski)

Cum Mortis in Lingua Morta (arr. Sir Henry Wood)

Hut on Fowl's Legs: Baba Yaga (arr. Maurice Ravel)

Great Gate of Kiev (arr. Ravel)

Ward Stare



Appointed the 12th music director of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra in July 2014, Rochester native Ward Stare has been described as “inspiring musicians to impressive heights” by *The New York Times* and “a dynamic music director” by Rochester *CITY Newspaper*. This December, Stare will make his debut at the Metropolitan Opera for nine performances of Franz Lehár’s *The Merry Widow*, with Grammy-winning mezzo-soprano Susan Graham in the title role.

This season at the RPO, Stare will collaborate with Itzhak Perlman and returning favorite pianists Olga Kern and Misha Dichter. Stare will also lead a Beethoven Festival, Bizet’s *Carmen* in Concert, and two world premieres by celebrated composers Allen Shawn and Jennifer Higdon. 2016-17 season highlights included collaborations with Yo-Yo Ma and Grammy-winning violinist James Ehnes. Stare also led a three-weekend salute to the music of American composers, as well as Puccini’s *La Bohème* in Concert, and a world-concert premiere by Academy Award-winning composer Eliot Goldenthal.

Stare’s frequent collaboration with the Lyric Opera of Chicago began with his debut in 2012, conducting performances of *Hansel and Gretel*; he returned in 2013 to lead *Die Fledermaus*, and again in November 2014 to lead *Porgy and Bess* to rave reviews. He made his debut with the Washington National Opera, conducting Donizetti’s comic opera *L’Elisir d’amore* in 2014.

Stare served as resident conductor of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra from 2008 to 2012. In 2009, he made his highly successful Carnegie Hall debut with the orchestra, stepping in at the last minute to lead H. K. Gruber’s *Frankenstein!* The 2013-14 season saw his return to the Atlanta and Detroit symphony orchestras, as well as his debuts with the Syracuse Symphoria, the Jacksonville Symphony, and the Naples Philharmonic with Lang Lang as soloist.

Stare was trained as a trombonist at The Juilliard School in Manhattan. At 18, he was appointed principal trombonist of the Lyric Opera of Chicago and has performed as an orchestral musician with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic, among others. As a soloist, he has concertized in both the U.S. and Europe. wardstare.com

Olga Kern

Russian-American pianist Olga Kern is recognized as one of her generation's great pianists. She jump-started her U.S. career with a Gold Medal win at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in Fort Worth, Texas — the first woman to do so in more than 30 years.



First-prize winner of the Rachmaninoff International Piano Competition at 17, Kern is a laureate of many international competitions. In 2016, she served as jury chairman of both the Seventh Cliburn International Amateur Piano Competition and the first Olga Kern International Piano Competition, where she also holds the title of artistic director.

Kern serves as artist-in-residence to the San Antonio Symphony's 2017-18 season, appearing in two subscription weeks as well as a solo recital. This season she also performs with the Madison Symphony, Copenhagen Philharmonic, Austin Symphony, New Mexico Philharmonic, Arizona Musicfest Orchestra, Colorado Symphony, and Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. She will also premiere her first American concerto, Barber's Piano Concerto, with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Leonard Slatkin. A frequent performer with the RPO, Kern's last appearance with the Orchestra was in 2016. She will also give recitals throughout the U.S. and abroad in Mainz and Turin. Additionally, she will perform in the Huntington Estate Music Festival with Musica Viva in Australia.

Olga Kern is represented by Columbia Artists Management LLC
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Olga Kern's dresses are designed by Alex Teih

Program Notes

Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73, “Emperor”

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

b. December 15, 1770, Bonn, Germany

d. March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

The “Emperor” Concerto is Beethoven’s final work for solo instrument and orchestra. He composed it in 1809, against the backdrop of French leader Napoleon Bonaparte’s rise to the zenith of his power. In May 1809, French troops besieged and captured Vienna. Rather than reflecting Beethoven’s deep distress, the concerto is proud and defiant. Perhaps he intended it as a hopeful vision of Bonaparte’s ultimate defeat, or a manifesto praising the virtues of the common man over those of a dictator.

It displays a major shift in character from the Fourth Concerto. The earlier work begins quietly, almost modestly. In the “Emperor,” Beethoven wheels out the big guns right off the top. After the commanding opening flourish, the first movement proper unfolds with unhurried majesty. There are no solo cadenzas in the concerto, Beethoven having lost patience with the liberties soloists had taken with those he had provided for his previous concertos. In its own serene way, the slow movement is every bit as assured as the first. A simple bridge passage (its magic undimmed no matter how many times you hear it) leads to the exultant, dance-like finale.

Pictures at an Exhibition

MODEST MUSSORGSKY

b. March 21, 1839, Karevo, Russia

d. March 28, 1881, St. Petersburg, Russia

Tonight you will hear the RPO perform Modest Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition* like never before, with arrangements by nine different composers (in order of appearance): Lawrence Leonard, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Lucien Cailliet, Sergei Gorchakov, Leonidas Leonardi, Sir Henry Wood, Mikhail Tushmalov, Leopold Stokowski, and Maurice Ravel.

This vibrant gallery of music pictures sprang from a personal friendship. Mussorgsky met Victor Hartmann, a brilliant young artist and architect, in 1862. The 39-year-old Hartmann's death from a heart attack in 1873 plunged Mussorgsky into a deep depression. The following year, a memorial exhibition was held in St. Petersburg, displaying over 400 of Hartmann's paintings, costumes, architectural designs, and sketches for ornamental household objects. Mussorgsky's visit to that display, combined with his desire to compose a piece in his friend's memory, led to the creation of the piano suite *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

The most popular orchestral transcription of the suite is the one that French composer Maurice Ravel prepared in 1922, but there have been more than 20 others. Maestro Stare introduces the fascinating multi-arranger version you will hear at this concert. "I've loved the classic Mussorgsky/Ravel *Pictures* for as long as I can remember," wrote Stare. "I was first inspired to perform a version with multiple arrangements when I learned about a similar program that was done by Leonard Slatkin at the BBC Proms back in the early 1990s. I've been in touch with Leonard frequently about it, and he has been most generous in sharing his research over the years.

"For me, this is a great opportunity to give both our audience and our orchestra a fresh take on a familiar and much-loved work. The interpretive process has always been one of my favorite things about music-making. In any given program we, as musicians, are always probing and searching for our own collective voice and approach to a work—it is a never-ending, exhilarating voyage of discovery! Presenting multiple arrangements of a famous work brings this process to a whole new level. It gives us all the chance to experience the creative ideas of many great artists in a single evening and to hear first-hand the infinite variety of sounds and colors an orchestra can produce. For those who know *Pictures at an Exhibition* well, this will be an opportunity to hear the work as they never have before!"

The suite opens with a majestic theme called "Promenade," depicting visitors strolling between displays. It recurs at several early points in the music. The first picture, "The Gnome," describes in vivid

fashion a grotesque nutcracker which Hartmann designed as a children's Christmas present. Hartmann's watercolor painting "The Old Castle" portrays a troubadour serenading his loved one by moonlight. The melancholy tone implies that his attempts at wooing prove unsuccessful.

"Tuileries" is a miniature scherzo, depicting children and their nurses strolling gracefully through a Parisian garden. "Bydlo" follows the lumbering approach and retreat of a Polish oxcart with large, heavy wheels. This is followed by another light scherzo, "The Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells." Mussorgsky's inspiration was Hartmann's costume sketch for a ballet in which dancers were dressed in large eggshells topped by the heads of canaries.

"Two Polish Jews" describes Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle, whom Hartmann had sketched in pencil while visiting that country. The first fellow is rich and pompous, the second poor and excitable. After a bustling portrait of the marketplace in the French city of Limoges (complete with a raucous dispute between rival female vegetable vendors), the scene switches abruptly to "Catacombs" (A Roman Sepulchre), a stark, menacing portrait of an ancient underground tomb. In the second half of this section, "With the Dead in a Dead Language," the music drops to a ghostly whisper for an eerie vision of skulls glowing in the dark.

Next comes a dynamic, phantasmagoric picture of "Baba-Yaga," the evil witch of Russian folklore, who flies about in a magic hut built on chicken's legs. Hartmann used this image as the design for an elaborate clock. The suite concludes with a stirring evocation of Hartmann's plan for an immense stone gate, in the massive old Russian style with a crown in the shape of a Slavonic helmet. It was intended for the Ukrainian city of Kiev but was never built. By way of compensation, Mussorgsky and Ravel together constructed upon its spirit a grander work than any tradesmen could ever hope to build. For sheer orchestral spectacle, "The Great Gate at Kiev" has few rivals. It recreates the sounds of a Russian church service. The quieter passages evoke the voice of the officiant; the grander ones, the full chorus and congregation lifting their voices in praise.

Geneva Concerts Outreach



Spencer Tulis / *Finger Lakes Times*

Geneva Concerts presented performances by the Wassa Pan Afrika Dance/Drum Ensemble led by Nana Kwasi Anim for over 600 students and staff at St. Francis/St. Stephen's School and at Geneva Middle School on September 28.

Both performances began with the ensemble entering the performance spaces playing traditional African rhythms using Djembe and other African drums and percussion instruments. This was followed by demonstrations of African poly-rhythms using three sizes of authentic African drums.

Mr. Anim and a female dancer demonstrated the energetic, exuberant style of dancing that is part of African culture. During the assembly at the Geneva Middle School, students were invited on stage and, after some brief tutoring, performed a traditional African dance step.

The various sizes of drums in use were explained, including the commonly known Djembe, popular in America, and the "Talking Drum" which changes pitch as the player presses and releases tension strings that are wound around the sides of the drum.

The African tradition of call and response was demonstrated effectively with Mr. Anim singing a set of simple phrases which were echoed by the students. The entire student body seemed to enjoy and participate in this.

Mr. Anim is a citizen of Ghana, West Africa. For six months each year he is in residence in Ithaca, New York, from where he and his company travel to perform at colleges, public schools, and special events, as well as doing workshops in Ithaca.

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