Geneva Concerts

presents

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

Ward Stare, Music Director
Jon Nakamatsu, Piano

Friday 1 February 2019 • 7:30 p.m.
Smith Opera House
Thursday 27 September 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

Chanticleer

*Then and There, Here and Now—celebrating Chanticleer’s 40th year*

Called “the world’s reigning male chorus” by *The New Yorker*, the San Francisco-based Grammy Award-winning ensemble is known around the world as “an orchestra of voices” for its seamless blend of twelve male voices.

Friday 9 November 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

**Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra**

Carlos Kalmar, conductor; Ahrim Kim, cello

KODÁLY *Dances of Galánta*

SCHUMANN Concerto in A Minor for Cello, Op. 129

HAYDN Symphony No. 98 in B-flat Major

LISZT Hungarian Rhapsody No. 1 in F Minor

Friday 1 February 2019 at 7:30 p.m.

**Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra**

Ward Stare, Music Director; Jon Nakamatsu, piano

RACHMANINOFF *The Isle of the Dead*

BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19

STRAVINSKY *The Rite of Spring*

Saturday 2 March 2019 at 7:30 p.m.

**Darrah Carr Dance**

*Ceilidh: An Evening of Irish Music and Dance*

The champion Irish step dancers are acclaimed for their lightning-fast renditions of both hard-shoe and soft-shoe styles set to live music on fiddle, accordion, spoons, and guitar.

Friday 12 April 2019 at 7:30 p.m.

**Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra**

Michael Francis, conductor

Yekwon Sunwoo, piano (2013 Van Cliburn Gold Medalist)

WALTON Symphony No. 1 in B-flat Minor

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

*Programs subject to change.*

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

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 1 February 2019 • 7:30 p.m.

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra
Ward Stare, Music Director
Ward Stare, conductor
Jon Nakamatsu, piano

The Isle of the Dead, Op. 29
Sergei Rachmaninoff

Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19
Ludwig van Beethoven
Allegro con brio
Adagio
Rondo: Molto allegro

Jon Nakamatsu, piano

*Intermission*

Le Sacre du printemps (The Rite of Spring)
Igor Stravinsky
Part I: The Adoration of the Earth
Introduction
Augurs of Spring
Ritual of Abduction
Spring Rounds
Ritual of the Rival Tribes
Procession of the Sage: The Sage
Dance of the Earth
Part II: The Sacrifice
Introduction
Mystic Circles of the Young Girls
Glorification of the Chosen One
Evocation of the Ancestors
Ritual Action of the Ancestors
Sacrificial Dance

Patrons are requested to please turn off cell phones and beepers during the concert so as to not disrupt the concert. Audio and video recording of the concert is not allowed. Thank you for your cooperation.
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 past December, Stare made 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 recent seasons have seen a number of highly anticipated debuts with orchestras around the world, including performances with the Baltimore Symphony, Sydney Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Toronto Symphony, and the Calgary Philharmonic. Last season he made his debut with the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra followed by his return to the St. Louis Symphony in December.

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. See wardstare.com.
Jon Nakamatsu

American pianist Jon Nakamatsu continues to draw unanimous praise as a true aristocrat of the keyboard, whose playing combines elegance, clarity, and electrifying power. A native of California, Nakamatsu came to international attention in 1997 when he was named Gold Medalist of the Tenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, the only American to have achieved this distinction since 1981. Nakamatsu has performed widely in North and South America, Europe, and the Far East, 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.

Nakamatsu’s extensive recital tours throughout the U.S. and Europe have featured appearances in New York’s Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, Washington D.C.’s Kennedy Center, and in Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Paris, London and Milan. He has worked with various chamber ensembles - among them the Brentano, Tokyo, Kuss, Jupiter, Cypress, Prazak and Ying String Quartets - and has toured repeatedly with the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet. Together with clarinetist Jon Manasse, Nakamatsu tours continually as a member of the Manasse/Nakamatsu Duo. The Duo also serves as artistic directors of the esteemed Cape Cod Chamber Music Festival in Massachusetts.

Nakamatsu records exclusively for Harmonia Mundi USA, which has released 13 CDs to date. His all-Gershwin recording with Jeff Tyzik and the Rochester Philharmonic featuring Rhapsody in Blue and the Concerto in F rose to number three on Billboard’s classical music charts, earning extraordinary critical praise. Other acclaimed releases include an all-Liszt disc featuring the Dante Sonata; a recording of Brahms’s Piano Sonata in F minor; and Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 3 and the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini. Nakamatsu’s 2008 recording of Brahms’s clarinet sonatas with Jon Manasse was chosen by The New York Times as one of its top releases for the year. His latest disc with Manasse, released in August 2012, includes both the Brahms Clarinet Quintet and the Piano Quintet with the Tokyo String Quartet. Of his most recent release on the label, a 2014 solo disc of the piano works of Robert Schumann, BBC Music Magazine states that “Nakamatsu clarifies Schumann’s mid-range saturated textures to a remarkable degree, reveling in its fantastic imaginings with rapier-like precision and effortless command.”

Nakamatsu studied privately with Marina Derryberry and has worked with Karl Ulrich Schnabel, son of the great pianist Artur Schnabel. He is a graduate of Stanford University with a bachelor’s degree in German studies and a master’s degree in education.
Rachmaninoff had been searching for a suitable subject for a tone poem for several years when, on a visit to Paris in the summer of 1907, he found his inspiration in the painting *The Isle of the Dead* by the Swiss artist Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901). He composed his intense, quasi-Wagnerian musical response to it in Dresden, Germany, during the first three months of 1909.

The painting shows a tiny, bleakly rocky island, with its dark cypress trees and tombs, on a sunless day. It is seen from across a body of water, presumably, mirroring Classical mythology, the river Styx. Charon the boatman crouches in the stern of a tiny boat. A figure draped in white stands in front of him, likely the soul he is bearing to the island. A coffin draped in white rests in the bow.

In his music, Rachmaninoff quoted the *Dies irae*, the sombre theme from the Gregorian chant *Mass for the Dead* that Hector Berlioz had used in the final movement of the *Symphonie fantastique*. Rachmaninoff employed it throughout his career, most audibly in such late compositions as the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* and the *Symphonic Dances*.

The slow, rocking rhythm that opens *The Isle of the Dead* may suggest the motion of the waves, and of the boat as it is being rowed across the water to the island. The dark, muted orchestral colors enhance the desolate, doleful mood. Once the island has been reached, in a fulsome climax of sound, Rachmaninoff briefly departs from Böcklin’s conception by offering contrasting music of a warm, hopeful nature. He revealed that it represented the recollected joys of a life lived. A furious climax negates such feelings. The *Dies irae*, appearing undisguised for the first time in this work, heralds the return of the sombre opening section, and a gradual fading away into silence.
Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
b. Bonn, Germany / December 15, 1770
d. Vienna, Austria / March 26, 1827

Beethoven won his first fame in Vienna as a pianist. He gradually made a name for himself through his outgoing performing style and through solo piano works that he composed for his own performance. He revised certain of his existing creations as well, including the Piano Concerto “No. 2,” his first work of this kind. In order to retain the performing rights, he delayed its publication until 1801. This explains why it is numbered higher than Concerto “No. 1,” which he composed from 1796 to 1797 but which saw print nine months earlier than “No. 2.”

The first movement opens with an arresting call to attention, followed by a vigorous first theme and a relaxed second. The slow movement is rather formal but still expressive, with a particularly poetic concluding section. The finale is a witty romp with a charming falling interval in the main rondo theme. The intervening episodes include a zesty minor-key excursion into the exotic “Hungarian” style that Mozart, Haydn and other composers had employed to great effect during the preceding decades, and which Johannes Brahms would continue to advocate decades later.

The Rite of Spring

IGOR STRAVINSKY
b. Oranienbaum, Russia / June 17, 1882
d. New York, New York, USA / April 6, 1971

Stravinsky shot to fame in 1910, when Les Ballets Russes premièred his dance score, The Firebird, in Paris. During the final stages of composing it, Stravinsky had a vision: “I saw in imagination a solemn pagan rite: wise elders, seated in a circle, watching a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of spring.” Sergei Diaghilev, impresario of the company, sensed the choreographic possibilities in this material and asked Stravinsky to develop them. The composer and scenic designer/archaeologist Nicolaus Roerich collaborated on the scenario of
Le sacre du printemps (The Rite of Spring), fleshing out Stravinsky’s original conception and placing it in an ancient Slavic community.  

Stravinsky began the score in Russia but composed the majority of it in Clarens, Switzerland. Diaghilev entrusted the choreography to Vaslav Nijinsky, one of his company’s most gifted soloists, but an inexperienced dance master. The rehearsals degenerated into little more than frantic exercises in counting, resulting in frayed nerves and explosions of temper. Still, the final run-through went off smoothly, without a hint of possible controversy.  

All that changed at the first performance, in the Théâtre du Champs-Elysées in Paris on May 29, 1913. “Mild protests against the music could be heard from the beginning,” Stravinsky wrote. “Then, when the curtain opened on a group of knock-kneed and long-braided Lolitas jumping up and down the storm broke.” The infuriated composer rushed backstage, where Diaghilev was turning the house lights off and on in an attempt to quiet the audience. Nijinsky stood on a chair in the wings, shouting instructions to the dancers; Stravinsky stood behind him throughout the performance. Meanwhile, the auditorium was in an uproar, the production’s supporters and detractors clamoring to make their feelings known. Overnight, The Rite of Spring transformed perceptions of Stravinsky from a talented if dutiful follower of Rimsky-Korsakov and Debussy to the ranks of such “wild men” of music as Bartók and Schoenberg.  

In 1921, choreographer Léonide Massine mounted an entirely new stage production, one which dispensed with prehistoric associations and turned the piece into an abstract ballet. Stravinsky preferred this edition to the original. It also confirmed in his mind a view which he had begun to hold shortly after the première: that the music’s true home lies in the concert hall. Away from the theatre, listeners are free to make with it whatever associations they wish, or can simply react in a non-specific way to this propulsive, literally earth-shaking score. Its ability to astonish and electrify remains undiminished, more than a century after it took the world by storm.
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Geneva Concerts has brought live music and dance to the community since the 1940s, especially encouraging young people to attend through the Sponsor-A-Student program and educational outreach programs brought to the schools.

Our next presentation is Darrah Carr Dance. In advance of the main performance for the public on Saturday, March 2 at the Smith Opera House, the champion Irish step dancers will present a lecture/demonstration in the Geneva High School gym for all GHS students (grades 9 - 12), and a masterclass at the Gearan Center for Hobart & William Smith dance students, school-aged area dance students, and adults.

In April, the all-female jazz quintet Ladies First will present an assembly for all North Street students (grades 2 - 5) and for West Street students (grades K, 1, and Head Start).

For more information, contact Tom McClure, Geneva Concerts Vice President for Outreach, at (315) 789-6283.
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