

GENEVA CONCERTS

presents

Symphor!a

Christian Capocaccia, conductor
Kenneth Meyer, guitar

Saturday, 5 May 2018 • 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.

Saturday, 5 May 2018 • 7:30 p.m.

Symphor!a

Christian Capocaccia, conductor

Kenneth Meyer, guitar

Suite No. 4, Op. 61, TH 34, G Major (*Mozartiana*) TCHAIKOVSKY

- I. Gigue [K. 574]
- II. Minuet [K. 355]
- III. Prayer, after a transcription by Liszt (*Ave verum corpus*, K. 618)
- IV. Theme and Variations (Variations on a theme of Gluck, K. 455)

Fantasia para un gentilhombre (Fantasia for a Nobleman) RODRIGO

- I. Villano y Ricercare
- II. Españoleta y Fanfare de la caballeria de Nápoles
- III. Danza de las hachas
- IV. Canario

Kenneth Meyer, guitar

INTERMISSION

Pulcinella Suite STRAVINSKY

1. Sinfonia
2. Serenata
3. Scherzino
4. Tarantella
5. Toccata
6. Gavotta con due variazioni
7. Vivo
8. Minuetto
9. Finale

Christian Capocaccia

Recognized as an “energetic” performer by *The New York Times*, Italian conductor Christian Capocaccia has distinguished himself as an artist of keen insight and musicianship. His ease on the podium and comfortable coaching style with players and singers alike have made him a favorite with orchestras, opera companies, and vocalists.



Capocaccia was appointed as the Symphoria Associate Conductor and Symphoria Youth Orchestra Music Director in 2017. He returned to Pittsburgh Opera in April 2018 for a production of Donizetti *l’Elisir d’Amore*.

In the 2016-2017 season, Capocaccia completed his 5th season as music director of the Stamford Young Artists Philharmonic. In the fall, he made his company debut with the Pittsburgh Opera, conducting *La Traviata*. In February, he returned to Syracuse Opera to lead performances of *Rigoletto*.

In the 2015-2016 season, Capocaccia took the Stamford Young Artists Philharmonic ensemble to New York City for their Carnegie Hall debut. For the spring semester of 2016, he served as adjunct professor and visiting conductor with Montclair State University’s opera department. In the fall of 2015, he returned to the Manhattan School of Music to lead the Philharmonia Orchestra in a symphonic concert, and in February 2016, he made his debut with Syracuse Opera in *La Boheme*. His performances with the Wallingford Symphony Orchestra in March marked his debut with that ensemble.

Capocaccia previously held positions as assistant conductor of the Dallas Opera, resident conductor of the Fischer Center at Bard College, assistant conductor of the IU New Music Ensemble, and assistant professor of conducting at the State University of New York College at Fredonia. He has regularly conducted AsLiCo, and has recently conducted operas with the Manhattan School of Music and the Welsh National Opera. He is a former Aspen Music Festival Conducting Fellow, where he studied with David Zinman and Murry Sidlin.

Born in Rome, he attended the Santa Cecilia Music Conservatory, studying under Paolo Ciociola, and completed his studies with world-renowned violinist Nina Beilina in New York. Subsequently he studied composition under Boris Porena and Luciano Pelosi, and conducting with Piero Bellugi and Donato Renzetti. A graduate of Indiana University Jacobs School of Music in Bloomington under David Effron, he has participated in master classes with Herbert Blomstedt, Gustav Meier, and Leonard Slatkin.

As a guest conductor he has appeared both in the United States and Europe, leading ensembles such as the Orchestra di Roma e del Lazio, Moscow Ballet Orchestra, Orchestra Sinfonica Città di Grosseto, Orchestra Città Aperta, International Chamber Ensemble, Orchestra da Camera delle Marche, and Orchestra Sinfonica di Pesaro, among others.

Kenneth Meyer

Kenneth Meyer, the national first-prize winner at the Music Teachers National Association Collegiate Artist Competition, is regarded by *The Washington Post* as, “A thinking man’s guitarist – he focuses on the inner structure of a piece...and plays with impressive gravity and power.” *The Buffalo News* has called him, “Impeccably articulate with superb technique.”



Since his professional concert debut at the Teatro de la Opera de Maracay, Meyer continues to appear in recital, as a chamber musician, and as a soloist with orchestra in venues throughout North America, South America, and Europe. Highlights include concerts in Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall and Zankel Hall (New York City), Wolf Trap (Virginia), the Skirbal Cultural Center (Los Angeles), the historic Basilica di San Clemente (Italy), the Museo de Barquisimeto, Museo del Teclado, the Sala José Felix Ribas, the Teatro de Teresa Carreño (Venezuela), Liviu Rebreanu, Gheorghe Dima Music Academy, the National College of Art Ion Vidu (Romania), the Fészek Művészklub (Hungary), and the Ford Center for the Performing Arts (Canada). In addition to live concerts, his performances have been featured on television, film, radio, and most recently, on the Albany and INNOVA record labels.

Frequently in demand as a guest artist at colleges and universities across the country, Meyer has given concerts and lectures at, among others, the Eastman School of Music, the State University of New York College at Fredonia, Syracuse University, Cornell University, the University of Southern Mississippi, North Carolina School of the Arts, the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, Hochstein School of Music, Delta College, Canisius College, Finger Lakes and Saint Joseph’s Community Colleges, and the University of Caracas in Venezuela. In addition, he is an active performer and teacher at music festivals and has been featured at the Eastman Guitar Summerfest and the Rome, Alexandria, and Alirio Diaz guitar festivals.

Mr. Meyer’s commitment to the cultivation and performance of new music has led to awards from the Barlow Endowment, the Argosy Foundation, and the Eastman School’s Hanson Institute for American Music; interpretive instruction from Milton Babbitt; and premiere performances of compositions by, among others, Leslie Basset, Edward Green, Andrew Waggoner, Gregory Mertl, Edie Hill, Kevin Ernste, Nicolas Scherzinger, Jesse Benjamin Jones, Donald J. Sparr, James Piorkowski, and Canadian composer Robert Baker. His diversity as a musician has led to performances on mandolin, banjo, and electric guitar with, among others, the Syracuse Opera, the Syracuse Society for New Music, and the Broadway touring production of The Who’s rock opera, *Tommy*. In addition to performing new concerti for electric guitar and wind ensemble, Meyer was recently featured with Cornell University’s Ensemble X

under the direction of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Steven Stucky in a new concerto for guitar and chamber ensemble composed by Andrew Waggoner.

Kenneth Meyer holds degrees in music composition and performance from the State University of New York at Fredonia and master of music and doctor of musical arts degrees from the Eastman School of Music. He has served on the faculties of East Carolina University and SUNY at Fredonia and most recently held visiting professorships at the Eastman School of Music and SUNY Potsdam's Crane School of Music. Currently, Meyer directs thriving guitar programs at Onondaga Community College and Syracuse University's Setnor School of Music.

Program Notes

It's not news, but it bears repeating: the act of composition is never individual or solitary. Composers are inevitably in conversation with other composers, living and dead—conversations that are sometimes cordial, sometimes heated, sometimes uncomprehending. And any work inevitably involves learning from, borrowing (or even stealing) from, and pushing back against your contemporaries and predecessors. This evening's concert focuses on a particular kind of relationship among historically separated composers. Each of our offerings involves the transformation of music written by someone else in a prior century—and does so in a way that leaves the voices of both the original composer and the borrower clearly audible. Thus, although there are three composers on the program listing, there are actually six composers on the concert. Or, more accurately, seven or eight or nine or... The network of musical conversations gets more and more dizzying the closer you look.

We begin with the **Orchestral Suite No. 4 (*Mozartiana*)**, composed in 1887 by **Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840-1893) and based on four mainly lesser-known works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791). You might expect an interaction between Tchaikovsky and Mozart to be contentious rather than cordial. Tchaikovsky, especially at that time (in between the *Manfred* Symphony and the Fifth Symphony), was the master of heightened, even excessively raw, angst-filled drama; Mozart, even at his most emotional, was a model of clarity and moderation. Yet in fact, Tchaikovsky idolized Mozart—and he renovated these works with surprising tact. Yes, he added a romantic warmth and color, but his interventions were always under control.

The Suite begins with colorful orchestrations of two daring piano works that Mozart wrote late in his career. The first is especially shocking—a canonic Gigue that's harmonically so disorienting you might momentarily think it was written in the twentieth century. The chromatic Minuet that follows is not so extreme, but it too is exploring new expressive territory. At this point, another composer enters the Suite. For although the third movement, subtitled "Preghiera" ("Prayer"), is ostensibly based on Mozart's choral *Ave verum*

corpus, it is actually based on an adaptation of that piece by Franz Liszt (1811-1886). And a fourth composer's voice joins in for the finale, the longest movement, which is an orchestration of Mozart's variations on an opera aria by Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787).

The central work on this evening's concert is the ***Fantasia para un gentilhombre*** for guitar and orchestra by **Joaquin Rodrigo** (1901-1999). Rodrigo is best known for his 1939 *Concierto de Aranjuez*, perhaps the most widely performed guitar concerto ever written. (It gained additional fame through a jazz adaptation by Miles Davis and Gil Evans.) Still, the *Fantasia* has been nearly as popular. Composed in 1954 for the great guitarist Andres Segovia, it is based on historically pivotal guitar music by 17th-century Spanish composer Gaspar Sanz (c. 1640-1710)—music that in turn took off from older folk dances. Rodrigo's score takes more liberties with his sources than Tchaikovsky's does; but despite Rodrigo's expansion and development of the originals, despite his spiffy orchestration and often spiced-up harmonies (especially in the last movement), the melodic profile and spirit of Sanz's originals remain front and center. This *Fantasia* was itself later adapted for flute and orchestra. Given Rodrigo's inspiration, however, it's no surprise that the guitar version is more effective.

The canniest act of ventriloquism on this evening's concert is ***Pulcinella*** by **Igor Stravinsky** (1882-1971). Like *The Rite of Spring*, which we performed on Masterworks 5 just two months ago, it was commissioned by Sergei Diaghilev for his Ballets Russes in Paris; and like *The Rite*, it took its audience by surprise. But whereas *The Rite*, in 1913, used unparalleled vehemence, weight, dissonance, and driving rhythmic force to shove its listeners forward into modernism, *Pulcinella*, in 1920, used lightness, wit, and an ostentatious reliance on eighteenth-century sources to cajole its listeners to think back in musical history.

There were other major differences in the scores that might well have tripped up the expectations of its first listeners as well. Instead of a scenario of pagan brutality, *Pulcinella* took its inspiration from *commedia dell'arte*; and instead of the huge, post-romantic orchestra demanded by *The Rite*, *Pulcinella* called on a smaller ensemble that, except for the presence of a single trombone, could well have been used by Mozart. (The post-War economy may have had some influence here). Stravinsky was obviously moving in a new direction—and while *The Rite* continued to influence composers, Stravinsky himself never again wrote anything like it, turning instead, for the next few decades, to neo-classicism. The term “neo-classicism” has a variety of meanings, and various versions of the style have been around for nearly two centuries. *Pulcinella*, however, is arguably the work in which the Stravinskian brand of the technique reached its full flowering.

In *Pulcinella*, Stravinsky didn't simply borrow old musical procedures. Like the other two works on the concert, the score filches actual musical material. At the time, everyone involved in the project believed that Stravinsky was

recasting music by the short-lived Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736). It turns out, though (and a few more voices now enter the conversation), most of it was falsely attributed (for financial reasons?) to Pergolesi, having in fact been written by minor composers like Domenico Gallo and Carlo Ignazio Monza, who would be nearly forgotten were it not for their reappearance in modern garb here. In fact, just to add a twist to this already complex web, it's probable that one piece Stravinsky borrowed was actually itself a conscious counterfeit by late nineteenth-century composer Alessandro Parisotti.

What's the difference between the originals and Stravinsky's revisions? As the composer himself put it, "I knew that I could not produce a 'forgery' of Pergolesi because my motor habits are so different; at best, I could repeat him in my own accent." And that accent, even though it's often subtle, makes all the difference. The source material is, to be honest, fairly unremarkable; Stravinsky's alchemistic re-imagining, which turns rhinestones into the highest quality diamonds, is one of the treasures of twentieth-century orchestral repertoire. The original ballet included a number of vocal movements; Stravinsky later made a condensed suite for orchestra alone. That's the version that's most often encountered, and the one being offered this evening.

Peter J. Rabinowitz

Have any comments or questions? Please write to me at prabinowitz@ExperienceSymphoria.org

Geneva Concerts Announces the 2018-2019 season

Chanticleer Thursday, 27 September 2018

Then and There, Here and Now—Celebrating Chanticleer's 40th year

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Friday, 9 November 2018

Carlos Kalmar, conductor; Ahrim Kim, cello

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Friday, 1 February 2019

Ward Stare, conductor; Jon Nakamatsu, piano

Darrah Carr Dance Saturday, 2 March 2019

Ceilidh: An Evening of Irish Music and Dance

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Friday, 12 April 2019

Michael Francis, conductor; Yekwon Sunwoo, piano

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Geneva Concerts Outreach

In conjunction with his concert, Geneva Concerts presented guitarist Ken Meyer in various outreach events and master classes in the community.

The first segment of Meyer's outreach took place on Friday, April 27 in Froelich Hall on the Hobart and William Smith campus. Meyer performed a selection of pieces starting with a prelude by J.S. Bach originally written for the lute and then ranging through tango, flamenco, and so on up to the present day. He discussed the upcoming performance with Symphoria, as well as the history and practice of the guitar in general.

Also at HWS, in the guitar studio of Ben Ellis, applied guitar instructor, Meyer heard HWS guitar students perform in preparation for their final performance exams.

On May 3 and 4, Meyer presented lecture/demonstrations at North Street and West Street elementary schools and at St. Francis/St. Stephen's School. These presentations demonstrated a portrait of the guitar "through time," beginning with music from the Renaissance and Baroque, moving through the Romantic period, and ending with guitar repertoire from the 20th and 21st centuries. These demonstrations were facilitated with discussion between the pieces and question and answer periods throughout the lectures.

Coming up on Thursday, May 24, Meyer will give a master class at Geneva High School for the students in Steve Palumbo's guitar class as well as other students who take guitar lessons or who are interested in playing the guitar. This will be a teaching session and will be an opportunity to address general and specific questions students may have about the guitar, their own development, and the world of music in general. Students may sign up for the class in the GHS office or by speaking with Mr. Palumbo.



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