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2022-2023
38th
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Reynolds Performance Hall, Conway, Arkansas

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AND GLORIOUS PLACES

Conway Symphony Orchestra

Israel Getzov, Conductor

Ana-Maria Vera, Piano

Linda Hsu, Violin

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C major, Op. 15

Ludwig van Beethoven

- 1) Allegro con brio
- 2) Largo
- 3) Rondo: Allegro Scherzando

Ms. Vera

—Intermission—

Fratres (for violin, string orchestra & percussion)

Arvo Pärt

Linda Hsu

Pines of Rome

Ottorino Respighi

- 1) The Pines of the Villa Borghese
- 2) Pines Near a Catacomb
- 3) The Pines of the Janiculum
- 4) The Pines of the Appian Way

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Israel Getzov, Music Director

American conductor Israel Getzov begins his seventeenth season as Music Director of the Conway Symphony Orchestra. He also serves as Music Director of the Little Rock Winds, and Artistic Advisor to the Orquesta Filarmónica de Santa Cruz de la Sierra. He previously held the positions of Associate Conductor of the Arkansas Symphony and Principal Conductor of the Tianjin Philharmonic, the resident orchestra of the Tianjin Grand Theater.

Mr. Getzov has conducted orchestras throughout the United States and abroad, including Abilene Philharmonic, Asheville Symphony, Cleveland Pops, Monroe Symphony, Skokie Valley Symphony, Shanghai Philharmonic, Symphony of the Mountains, Tianjin Symphony, Zhejiang Symphony Orchestra, Bolivia Classica, University of Taipei Symphony, and the Encuentro Jovenes Musicos Festival in La Paz. As an opera conductor, he led the world premiere of *The Scarlett Letter* by American composer Lori Laitman, conducted works of Giancarlo Menotti at the Shanghai Oriental Arts Center and the Cleveland Institute of Music, and worked as Staff Conductor for Tianjin Grand Opera in productions of *La Traviata*, *Il Trovatore*, *Rigoletto*, *Bluebeard's Castle*, and *Oedipus Rex*.

Mr. Getzov was selected by Leonard Slatkin to conduct the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and was chosen by David Zinman for the American Academy of Conducting at the Aspen Music Festival.

Mr. Getzov started the violin at age 3, and later studied viola, piano and percussion. He has performed as an orchestral violinist with many renowned conductors including Barenboim, Boulez, Solti, Mehta and Rostropovich. He was a founding member of the Rockefeller String Quartet, a professional quartet with whom he gave over 200 concerts. Mr. Getzov holds a tenured professorship at the University of Central Arkansas and has given clinics at many conservatories in the U.S., China, Taiwan and Bolivia. An experienced public speaker, he hosted his own weekly radio program on Arkansas KLRE 90.5FM called "Izzy Investigates".



Linda Hsu Violinist

Violinist Linda Hsu is a professor at the University of Central Arkansas and concertmaster of the Conway Symphony Orchestra. Her numerous performances worldwide include New York Debut Recital at Carnegie Weill Recital Hall and recitals at the National Taiwan Recital Hall in Taipei. In addition, she has appeared as a concerto soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan, the Taipei Century Symphony Orchestra, the Greece Symphony Orchestra of New York, the Blue Lake Festival Orchestra, the Pine Bluff Symphony Orchestra, and the Conway Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Hsu received her bachelor's degree from Yale University and master's and doctorate degrees from the Eastman School of Music. Her violin teachers include Nien-Fu Liao, Albert Markov, Sidney Harth, Catherine Tait, and Jeremy Zhu. Ms. Hsu has presented at the American String Teachers Association National Conference, the Arkansas Music Educators Association Conference, and the Arkansas All-State Music Conference, as well as given violin and chamber music masterclasses in Mexico, Taiwan, and the US.

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Ana-Maria Vera, Pianist

Ana-Maria Vera, whose playing has been described as ‘pure aural silk’, and most recently by the London Times as ‘fierce and fearless, thrillingly mobile and sentient’ has been performing around the world since childhood. An American pianist of Dutch-Bolivian origin, Vera began her musical studies at the age of three and made her professional debut when she was eight. Her first recording, of Mozart and Haydn Concertos with the Rotterdam Philharmonic and Edo De Waart, was awarded a Gold Record by Philips. At age nine she made her televised debut with Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops, and at age twelve she was invited to give a recital at the White House for President and Mrs. Carter. At age sixteen she was honoured by the Bolivian state with a commemorative postage stamp.

A former pupil of Ylva Novik and Leon Fleisher, Vera has appeared with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Tokyo Symphony and Baltimore Symphony amongst others, with conductors including Riccardo Muti, David Zinman, Eliahu Inbal, Ken-Ichiro Kobayashi, Sergiu Commissiona and James Conlon. She has given countless solo recitals in cultural landmarks such as the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Herkulessaal in München, the Salle Gaveau in Paris and London’s Wigmore Hall. She has also devoted much of her time to chamber music and developed close duo partnerships with Ivry Gitlis, Joshua Bell and Steven Isserlis.

Vera is the founder and director of Bolivia Clásica, a charitable organization with headquarters in London and La Paz which promotes cultural exchanges between Bolivia and the rest of the world. It includes an international music festival which brings world-class musicians to Bolivia, and a music academy dedicated to aspiring young musicians from across the country.

Her most recent solo recording, of the “Goyescas” piano suite by Granados, was released by Signum Classics. Ana-Maria now lives in London with her husband and daughter.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C major, Op. 15

Ludwig van Beethoven

1770-1827

The Piano Concerto No. 1 is among the works the young Beethoven composed after he had moved in 1792 from his native Bonn to Vienna. Like Mozart when he left Salzburg, also for Vienna, Beethoven had outgrown the musical establishment of his patron in Bonn, the elector Maximilian Franz, but he traveled to the Imperial capital not so much as a master but rather to study composition with Franz Joseph Haydn. At the end of 1793 Haydn wrote to the elector on his student's behalf for an advance in salary, enclosing five compositions "of my dear pupil Beethoven," who he predicted would "in time fill the position of one of Europe's greatest composers." The parsimonious elector was unimpressed.

Nevertheless, Beethoven quickly acquired a glowing reputation as both a pianist and composer. He had come already provided with important aristocratic connections that greased the way into the highest social circles, where noblemen were in competition with each other for the best in-house musical establishment. The period between 1792 and 1795 was probably the happiest in the composer's life. Signs of his deafness had not yet appeared, and his passionate nature – even affability – signaled a young lion, rather than the irascible, slovenly and sickly misanthrope of his middle and later years.

Originally composed in 1795, revised in 1798 and again before publication in 1800, this concerto is actually not the first Beethoven wrote, although it was the first to be published. What is known today as No. 2 preceded it by a year. In 1784, Beethoven had written a youthful concerto in E-Flat WoO (Work without opus number) 4, which was not published in its entirety until 1890.

Beethoven himself was the pianist at the premiere of the original version of this Concerto in Vienna in 1795, but the manuscript was barely finished before the concert. His close friend, the physician Franz Wegeler, described the scene: "Beethoven did not write the rondo... till the afternoon of the day before the concert...Four copyists sat in the room outside, and he gave them the pages one by one as they were finished."

By Beethoven's own admission, the First Concerto still reflects the styles of Mozart and Haydn. It begins with a lengthy and formal orchestral opening, ceremonial in style, after which the soloist makes his entry with a new opening theme. The interplay between the piano and orchestra is reminiscent of the Mozart concerti, where the orchestra provides quiet background accompaniment for the soloist when both play together. The slow movement, again, harks back to the Mozart model. If in the first movement soloist and orchestra are partners, in the second it is the piano that dominates and develops the themes, aided by the clarinet. The sparkling rondo finale is an orchestral romp, in which the soloist and orchestra engage in a dialogue, each trying to outdo the other.

A note about the cadenza to the first movement: Only incomplete fragments remain of the cadenza that Beethoven used at the premiere. In 1809 he wrote three new cadenzas of differing lengths and difficulty for pianists of varying abilities. But in the years 1798 to 1809, the piano underwent a rapid evolution, not in small part as a result of Beethoven's demands and specifications. While the concerto was written for a piano of five octaves, like Mozart's, by the time Beethoven composed the cadenzas in 1809, he was writing for a piano of 5 1/2 octaves, with power and sound to match. Consequently, a 1798 instrument for which the concerto was written, could not play the 1809 cadenzas.

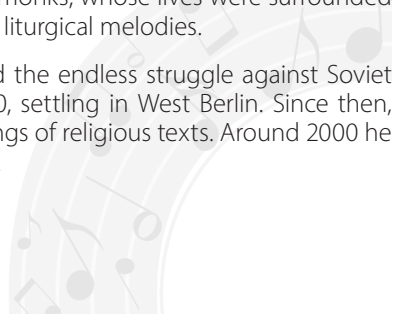
Arvo Pärt possesses one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary classical music. Born near Tallinn, Estonia's capital, Pärt began his formal musical education in 1954 at the Tallinn Music Secondary School, suspending it a year later to fulfill his National Service obligation as an oboist and side-drummer in an army band. He entered the Tallinn Conservatory in 1957 while working as a recording engineer with Estonian Radio. Although still a student, he composed music for the stage and film. By the time he graduated in 1963, he was already considered a professional composer.

Pärt's early compositions, including his first two symphonies, employed serial techniques, but he soon tired of the rigid rules of twelve-tone composition. After studying French and Flemish choral music from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, including the great composers of this period, Guillaume de Machaut, Johannes Ockeghem, Jakob Obrecht and Josquin Despres, Pärt began in 1971 to incorporate the style and spirit of early European polyphony into his own compositions.

After a lengthy period of silence during which he attempted to develop his personal voice, Pärt emerged in 1976 with a technique he called *tintinnabuli* (little bells), to which he has mostly adhered to this day. He describes the technique as follows: "I have discovered that it is enough when a single note is beautifully played. This one note, or a silent beat, or a moment of silence, comforts me. I work with very few elements – with one voice, two voices. I build with primitive materials – with the triad, with one specific tonality. The three notes of a triad are like bells and that is why I call it tintinnabulation." The guiding principle behind the technique involves composing two simultaneous voices as one line – one voice moving stepwise to and from a central pitch, the other sounding the notes of the triad (chord) containing that pitch. The first products of Pärt's new voice were the moving *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten*, and the popular *Tabula Rasa* and *Fratres*.

Fratres (brethren), originally composed in 1977 for three unspecified instruments, has been transcribed and "re-composed" by the composer for many instrument combinations, including chamber orchestra. All of these versions have in common a hypnotic sense of timelessness created by the slow tempo and a mathematically determined rotation of harmonic chord progressions over a drone of an open fifth, the nine segments separated by a brief percussive interlude for contemplation. The harmonic sonority and suggestion of plainsong chant and twelfth-century polyphony seem to explain the title's reference to medieval monks, whose lives were surrounded and shaped, in part, by the continuous singing of liturgical melodies.

The forced isolation behind the Iron Curtain and the endless struggle against Soviet bureaucracy forced Pärt to leave Estonia in 1980, settling in West Berlin. Since then, the majority of his compositions have been settings of religious texts. Around 2000 he returned to Estonia, and is now living near Tallinn.



***Pini di Roma* (Pines of Rome)**

Ottorino Respighi

1879-1936

Ottorino Respighi was one of the most imaginative orchestrators of the first part of the twentieth century. While most of his musical studies were undertaken in Italy, he spent two crucial years in Russia where he took lessons in orchestration from Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov. Respighi developed a masterful technique in the use of instrumental colors and sonorities. Firmly rooted in the late-Romantic tradition, he maintained this style with only marginal influence from the revolutionary changes in music that occurred during his lifetime.

Respighi was also keenly interested in reviving Italy's musical heritage, especially its instrumental music. Indeed, most of his compositions are based on the music of the past. Beginning in 1906 he undertook to transcribe and arrange music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, editing the works of Claudio Monteverdi and Tomaso Antonio Vitali. In 1917 he published the first of his three suites of *Ancient Airs and Dances*, based on Italian and French lute music, mostly from the early seventeenth century. In 1927 he composed *Gli uccelli* (The Birds), a suite using eighteenth-century keyboard works imitating birdsongs.

Respighi loved Rome and its history. Between 1916 and 1928 he composed three tone poems celebrating the city and its environs. Composed in 1924, *Pini di Roma* is the second of the three, describing four locations in the city, each of which has historical and cultural significance. Respighi provided in the score a detailed description of this programmatic music:

The Pines of the Villa Borghese (a country estate with enormous grounds belonging to one of Rome's most notable Renaissance families): "Children playing in what are now public gardens, they mimic marching soldiers and battles, twittering and shrieking like swallows then they swarm away and the scene changes abruptly to..."

Pines near a Catacomb (the underground burial sites for the early Christians): "We see the shadows of the pines, which overhang the entrance to a catacomb. From the depths rises a mournful chant that reechoes solemnly, like a hymn, and then dies away mysteriously."

The Pines of the Janiculum (the highest hill in Rome, but not one of the famous seven, the location of a cult worshiping the god Janus): "Moonlight and the song of a nightingale enfold the pines on the Janiculum hill with mystery. There is a thrill in the air." The voice of the nightingale is provided by a recording.

The Pines of the Appian Way (one of the great Roman roads leading south from the city): "Misty dawn on the Appian Way. The tragic country is guarded by the solitary pines. Indistinctly, incessantly, the rhythm of innumerable steps...visions of past glories: trumpets blare, and the army of the Consul advances brilliantly...in the rising sun...mounting in triumph the Capitoline Hill."

Program notes by:

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