

PENINSULA *symphony*

Symphony Sounds

June 2011

44th Season, Number 4

Editor: Kenneth Gash

Concert IV

Sunday, June 26, 2011, 7:00 p.m.

Rolling Hills Covenant Church
2222 Palos Verdes Drive North
Rolling Hills Estates

The Norris Foundation Concert

PROGRAM

Celebrating Youth

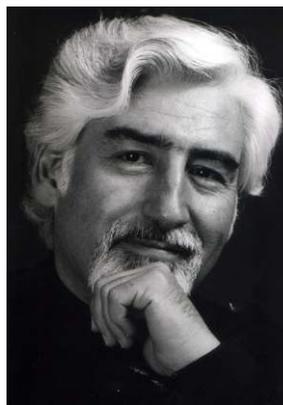
- Rossini *Overture to Il signor
Bruschino*
- Rachmaninoff *Rhapsody on a Theme of
Paganini*
- Stephanie Ng, Knox Competition Winner,
Piano
- Schubert *Symphony No. 4 in C
Minor, "Tragic"*

CONCERT DETAILS

Symphony Association members admitted at 6:00. Center-section priority seating is reserved for members at the Patron level and above. Concert Preview by **Maestro Berkson** at 6:15. General public admitted at approximately 6:50.

After the concert, the audience is invited to Carlson Hall for a reception for the Knox Competition and Rips Scholarship winners. Gary Berkson will also be there and you will have an opportunity to ask him questions and provide comments.

Dear Members of the Peninsula Symphony Association:



We are deeply saddened and regret to announce that our Founder and Conductor Emeritus Joseph Valenti passed away peacefully Monday, May 23rd, at 5:15 p.m. after a brief illness. A Celebration of his life

will be held at a future date.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations be made to the **Joseph Valenti Memorial Fund** through the Peninsula Symphony in the hopes of continuing Joe's dream well into the future.

The eighteenth variation of the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini will be dedicated to Maestro Valenti at the June concert.

Please call the Symphony office at (310) 544-0320 for further information or visit our Website:
www.pensym.org

Youth, in this case, is represented by two composers who were child prodigies and composed all their music when they were relatively young men. One of them, Rossini, stopped composing voluntarily in the first half of his life and the other, Schubert, lived only to the age of 31. The other celebration of youth is represented by this evening's soloist, this year's winner of the Edith Knox Performance Competition, which is only open to young musicians.

There are three pieces to be performed at this concert. The Rossini overture was composed when Rossini was twenty-one, and the Schubert symphony was composed when Schubert was nineteen. The Rachmaninoff rhapsody was written when the composer was sixty-one *but* it will be played by a twenty-one year old soloist.

Music Preview

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)



From an early age, Rossini was an accomplished performer on the harpsichord, violin, and piano, as well as being a boy soprano in the

opera. He composed his first opera at the age of fourteen, but it was not performed until years later. During his relatively short career as a composer, Rossini produced thirty-eight highly successful operas.

It is well known that in 1829, at the age of thirty-seven and at the height of his popularity, Rossini retired from composing. The only works he produced thereafter were for his own enjoyment, including two religious pieces, the *Stabat Mater* (1842) and the *Petite Messe Solonnelle* (1864).

Rossini, now a wealthy man, had no need to continue accepting commissions. A life of self-indulgent leisure had always greatly appealed to him. Furthermore, he didn't like the new directions in which singing -- and music in general -- were heading; he felt that his style of opera belonged to a past generation. For his remaining thirty-nine years, Rossini lived a life of indolence and pleasure.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)



Unlike Schubert, Rachmaninoff lived to the ripe old age of seventy and unlike Rossini, he kept composing and performing throughout his life. He gave his last performance on Valentine's day in 1943

and died exactly six weeks later on March 28.

Rachmaninoff was born into a family of the Russian aristocracy and his parents were both amateur piano players. He took his first lessons from his mother at the age of four and when he was nine his grandfather hired a professional teacher who remained in their home for almost three years.

When he was thirteen he wrote a number of pieces for piano and the Scherzo in D minor is Rachmaninoff's earliest surviving composition for orchestra -- composed when he was fourteen and a student at the Moscow Conservatory.

Rachmaninoff was considered one of the finest pianists of his day and perhaps of all time. In his piano compositions he made a point of writing music that would clearly demonstrate his own skills as a performer. Rachmaninoff possessed extremely large hands with a gigantic finger stretch which

allowed him to compose and play huge chord structures -- much to the chagrin of those who play his music.

The *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini* was written in 1934. It is a set of 24 variations on the twenty-fourth and last of Niccolò Paganini's Caprices for solo violin, which has inspired works by several composers. You won't hear the theme at once because the piece opens with the first variation and Paganini's theme is stated on strings with the piano picking out salient notes, *after* the first variation. From here the piece moves forward without pause through the remaining 23 variations. These are brilliant and at the same time, difficult, going from deceptively simple beginnings and growing steadily more complex and ingenious.

In the seventh variation, a new theme intrudes, the *Dies Irae*, the "day of wrath" plainchant from the medieval Mass of the Dead. Rachmaninoff was very preoccupied with the idea of mortality and used the *Dies Irae* theme in one-third of his numbered works. This theme continues to be heard throughout many of the remaining variations.

In variation 18, Rachmaninoff created something magical. He took the original Paganini theme and *turned it upside down* and changed it from minor to major. The result is perhaps the most cherished Romantic melody ever penned. Rachmaninoff, who absolutely lived and breathed melody, wrote his most famous melody using somebody else's tune.

From this point on the music proceeds swiftly to its conclusion, each variation more scintillating than the last. The gathering momentum and dazzling passage work for the soloist lead one to expect a conclusion of overwhelming bravura and force but at the last moment, Rachmaninoff pulls back and, with a

chuckle, ends his *Rhapsody* quietly with a last fragment of the memorable theme.

I have listened to the *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini* countless times and never tire of it. I envy anyone hearing it for the first time.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)



The Schubert Thematic Catalog by Otto Erich Deutsch lists almost *one thousand* works written by Schubert over a period of about seventeen years. Even accounting for the

fact that the majority of these works are songs and some of them are fragments and incomplete works, this would be an amazing output for someone actively composing for fifty years!

He composed his first complete song in 1811 when he was fourteen and by 1813 (when the picture above was sketched) he actively composed on a daily basis. Nearly half of the works in the Deutsch catalog were written in the three years from 1813 to 1816 and they included five symphonies, four masses, six operas, four string quartets, and 270 songs.

His first two symphonies were written for his school orchestra and the next four (written in his teens) for an amateur group he was able to assemble, all intended to be heard once and then forever forgotten. Schubert never tasted even a hint of his current fame and died an abject failure. During his lifetime, there had been only a single public concert of his works, and only a few songs had been published.



Stephanie Ng

The soloist for this evening's performance of the *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini* is Stephanie Ng, the winner of this year's Edith Knox Performance Competition.

A native of the San Francisco Bay area, Stephanie Ng is currently a third-year piano performance scholarship student of Professor Walter Ponce at UCLA. She began her piano studies at age five and her previous teachers have included Aida Chanco and Mark Anderson. In addition to winning the Edith Knox Performance Competition, she has been the top prize winner of UCLA Benno Rubinyi Piano Competition, Pacific Musical Society Piano Competition, UCLA Atwater Kent Piano Concerto Competition, Brentwood-Westwood Symphony "Young Artists of Tomorrow" Concerto Competition, Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council Music Competition and the Sylvia M. Ghighlieri Piano Competition. She made her orchestral debut at age seventeen with the Saratoga Symphony performing Kabalevsky's Piano Concerto No. 3, and will be performing in 2011 with the Brentwood-Westwood Symphony, Peninsula Symphony, and UCLA Philharmonia.

Stephanie is also an avid chamber musician, and participates in the UCLA "Camarades"

chamber music concerts and Gluck Music Performance Program. She is a recipient of the Sophia Guzik Foundation Music Scholarship and the Benno Rubinyi Scholarship.

After completing her baccalaureate, Stephanie plans to pursue a Master's degree in piano performance, performing - both solo and chamber music

Past Events Third Concert

The third concert of the forty-fourth season was presented on Sunday, May 8 (Mother's Day). The program, entitled *Once Upon a Time*, included the Prelude to *Hansel and Gretel* by Humperdinck, *Peter and the Wolf* by Prokofiev, *Funeral March of a Marionette* by Gounod and Selections from *Sleeping Beauty* Ballet by Tchaikovsky.



Gail Eichenthal Rehearsing *Peter and the Wolf*

According to Kari Sayers, who reviewed the concert for the *Daily Breeze*, "The

highlight of the concert was Sergei Prokofiev's beloved *Peter and the Wolf*, narrated with great dramatic effect by Gail Eichenthal, program director at radio station KUSC (91.5 FM) and former anchor and reporter at KNX (1070 AM)."

The *Funeral March of a Marionette* brought chuckles of familiarity when the orchestra played the tune of the *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* program. The selections from the *Sleeping Beauty* Ballet were chosen from the complete score and included some very beautiful pieces not normally in the suites derived from the ballet.

Once again, Gary's pre-concert talk was informative, detailed and also humorous. The audience was much better prepared to enjoy the nuances of the performance after hearing it.

After the concert, members of the audience remained behind to participate in a lively and informative question-and-answer session.

Dress Rehearsal

Elementary school students from San Pedro were able once again to attend the dress rehearsal preceding the concert. There were also a few adults in attendance but there were still plenty of seats left. The informal setting and the opportunity to ask questions when the orchestra takes a break provides a relaxed atmosphere to hear some great music and see how an orchestra prepares to perform it.

The dress rehearsals are held in the same auditorium as the concert. They start at 2:00 p.m. and are open to the public. Please join us at the next one on June 26.

Thanks to our Supporters

At the end of each season, we take the opportunity to express our appreciation to all of the organizations and individuals who donated their time and money, without which we would not be able to provide our exhilarating concerts. I have tried, in the following lists, to thank every person and organization, and I apologize in advance for any error or omission.

The primary group of supporters are our almost 500 members of the **Peninsula Symphony Association** whose donations (in the form of Symphony Association memberships) provide the majority of the funds needed for operations. In addition, many of our members belong to the **Friends** of the Peninsula Symphony. These volunteers have annually raised up to \$20,000 to augment the membership donations!

Our beautiful Program Book contains advertisements from over eighty local organizations and businesses who provide much-needed support. You can find their names listed on page 50, and we encourage you to patronize these supporters.

There are a large number of organizations and individuals that have provided services or donated money:

Opus Bank, Boeing, City of Rolling Hills, City of Torrance, CMS Design Portraiture, County of Los Angeles Supervisor Don Knabe, Daily Breeze, Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, Edler Realty Center, Harbor College, Malaga Bank, Helene Mirich-Spear, Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation, Law Offices of Conover and Grebe LLP, Palos Verdes Peninsula News, Peninsula People, Peninsula Seniors (Karen Goularte), Recording Industries' Music Performing Trust Funds, Marshall and David Rips Fund.

This year's **Edith Knox Performance Competition** had the largest audience ever. If you were not there, please plan to attend next year. The prize money for the finalists was provided by the generous donations of the Competition Angels: **Duane Conover, Dr. and Mrs. William Horowitz, Betty Belsky, Bob Coffey, Larry and Roberta Dumas, Jackie Crowley, Midge and Jack Trost, Lee Dorsey, Dwight and Kay Yamada, Pearl Kim, Lester and Pearl Kim, Robert and Helene Reid, and Carol and Roger Schamp. This year's first prize was given in honor of Helene Reid for all of her efforts over the years in support of the competition.**

Duane Conover, the Performance Competition Chair also thanks the dedicated volunteers who helped him this year. They are: **Ken Gash (MC), Kay Yamada (Artists' Coordinator), Helene Reid (Office Coordinator), Carol Schamp (Publicity), Ben Loughrin and June Schwarzmann (Publications), Jeffrey Yakubik (Staff Asst.), Jackie Crowley, (Receptions), Charles Kraus, Marion Ruth, Roger Schamp, and Jack Trost.**

Finally, we thank everyone who made donations to one of the designated accounts that were created to fund specific activities managed by the Peninsula Symphony Association. These include: **the J. William Finkel Concert Quality Endowment** (helps fund extra rehearsals and other quality improvements), **the Elizabeth Holborn Chair** (helps pay the cost of the concertmaster), **the Julian Spear Chair** (helps pay the cost of the principal clarinetist), **the Marshall and David Rips Fund** (helps pay for the Rips scholarship), **the Edith Knox Fund and the Mimi Horowitz Fund** (both of these help cover costs of running the Performance Competition). Everyone is encouraged to contribute to these accounts to both honor the named individuals and help us continue – and eventually expand - these activities.

Thanks to Our Volunteers

Time is a precious commodity, and dozens of individuals in our community donate large portions of their time as volunteers to enable the Peninsula Symphony to operate.

The Peninsula Symphony Board of Directors, listed on Page 51 of the Program Book, are a group of multi-tasking volunteers who, in addition to managing the operational and fiscal affairs of the organization also do many of the tasks that might be done by paid employees. As you read the names of volunteers below, note how many of them are on the Board.

Thanks to those who served as ushers at the concerts: **Elsa and Bert Wertz, Jim Jones, Corwin White, Jackie Crowley, Dick Chaussee, Mary Graff, Ginny Bleier, Wally Christmas, Roger Schamp and Carole Low.**

Thanks to the volunteers who helped us with intermission refreshments at the concerts: **Jane Jones, Joan Ballreich, Virginia Butler, Jackie Crowley, Les Fishman, Nancy Mahr, Hugh Pendleton, Marion Ruth, Anita Gash, Lilli Tom, Midge and Jack Trost, Sue Williams, Kay and Paul Nibarger, Faye Schwartz, George Camisa, Mary Chunko, Marilyn Camisa, Flora Hummel and Jean Shriver.**

Our Program Book is created through the efforts of the following: **Nancy** (Editor) and **Jackie Crowley** (Advertising), **Steve Ozawa**, Design EDGE (the Program Book Art Director, who provided design and printing assistance), **Helene Reid** (who handled Symphony Association office support), **Chris Stillians**, CMS Design Portraiture (who did the cover photography – and some of the interior photos too), **Sue and Larry Andrews, Ken Gash** (who also provided photography), and **Carole Westberg** (who continues her many-year effort of writing our program notes).

For each concert, publicity flyers must be printed and distributed, detailed inserts are printed and inserted in the program books and the books must be stored and retrieved. We thank the volunteers who do these tasks: **Ken Gash, Helene Mirich-Spear, Helene Reid, Jack and Midge Trost, James and Margaret Vuncanon, Neville Howarth, Jane Copper, Charlie Shriver, Eugene McAdoo, Carol and Roger Schamp, George Bender, Ben Pogorelsky, Bruce Erickson, Brendon Bond, Bert Wertz and Chuck Klaus.**

We also thank the organizations that either allow us to place flyers at their facilities or help us distribute flyers to the community. These include: **Amuse Music, The Canterbury, Harbor College, Marshall Music, Palos Verdes Estates City Hall, Peninsula Seniors, Rancho Palos Verdes City Hall, Rolling Hills City Hall, Rolling Hills Covenant Church, Rolling Hills Estates City Hall, Palos Verdes Library, St. Luke's Presbyterian Church, Torrance City Hall, Torrance Library, San Pedro Library, First Presbyterian Church of San Pedro and 15th Street Elementary School in San Pedro.**

This year we had a grant from the California Arts Council which supported the bringing of children from the Lomita Math and Science school to enjoy the orchestra's music at dress rehearsals. Among the many volunteers who helped with this were: **Jane and John Copper, Ken Gash, Rebecca Rutkowski, David Nicholson, Sophia Momand-Bunker, and Terry Zinkiewicz (both from the orchestra) and principals Louie Mardesich, Jennifer Mak, Sandy Du (Principal) and Helene Webster.**

There are many others who provide time and expertise, among whom is **Bruce Erickson** who maintains www.pensym.org Website (which you should visit often), and the staff at Rolling Hills Covenant Church,

especially **Ellynn-Marie Artuccio and Ken and Diana Bauma.**

Finally, I thank those people without whom I could not have done this job - my proof readers, contributors, folders and mailers, and critics: **Helene Reid, Faye Schwartz, Jane Jones, Anita Gash, John Copper, Jim Vuncanon, Harriet Servis, George Bender, Brendon Bond, Roger and Carol Schamp, and Charlie and Jean Shriver.**

Summer Pops Concert

July 24, 2011, 4:30 p.m.

An afternoon of familiar (and not so familiar) music by Duke Ellington, Leroy Anderson, Richard Rodgers, Max Steiner, Alfred Newman, and Morton Gould.

Rolling Hills Covenant Church
2222 Palos Verdes Drive North
Rolling Hills Estates

2011 - 2012 Concert Schedule

A full schedule for the exciting Third Season of the orchestra under the direction of Maestro Gary Berkson will be available at the Membership Desk at the June 26 concert. Gary has prepared a wonderful program with soloists at all four concerts. Be sure to get one, read it and then renew or upgrade your membership.



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Contact Information

Any questions or requests about the Peninsula Symphony, the Peninsula Symphony Association, ***Symphony Sounds***, or the *Friends* of the Peninsula Symphony should be sent to the Peninsula Symphony Association office. We will route your message to the appropriate person.

The Peninsula Symphony Association
Post Office Box 2602
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

The office is normally staffed from 9:00 a.m. to noon on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. You may call at any time (310-544-0320) and leave a message on our answering machine, but phone replies will usually be made only during normal staffing hours. You can e-mail us at music.pensym@verizon.net. General information about the Symphony (current season schedule, etc.) can be found on our website (www.pensym.org).

Other Contacts are:

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