

PENINSULA *symphony*

Symphony Sounds

October 2013

47th Season, Number 1

Editor: Kenneth Gash

Concert I

Sunday, October 13, 2013, 7:00 p.m.

Redondo Union High School Auditorium

PCH at Diamond St
Redondo Beach

PROGRAM

Scotch on the "Rachs"

Mendelssohn *Symphony No. 3 in A minor,*
"Scottish"

Rachmaninoff *Piano Concerto No. 3*
Rufus Choi, Soloist

CONCERT DETAILS

Doors open at 6:00 pm. Center-section priority seating is reserved for members at the Patron level and above.

Concert Preview by **Maestro Berkson** at 6:15, open to all for this first concert!

PRE-CONCERT GALA

· Prior to the concert, there be a Gala Reception for members at the Sponsor level and above. This will be held at **the Bluewater Grill** starting at 4 pm. Directions to the reception will be sent with the membership cards to all who have contributed at the Sponsor level or above. Please call our office at 310-544-0320 if you have any questions about this event.

After the concert, the audience is invited to remain in the auditorium and meet informally with our conductor, Gary Berkson, and with our soloist, Rufus Choi for a question and answer session.

NEW BEGINNINGS!

Our long-time members will remember that thirty years ago, the orchestra moved from Redondo Union High School Auditorium to the Rolling Hills Covenant Church. In late May, the church informed us that, with their revised worship schedule, they were no longer able to accommodate outside organizations using their facilities.

We are therefore returning "home" to the newly renovated Redondo Union High School Auditorium. This renovation,



completed in 2010, completely modernized the auditorium's lobby, music and band rooms, seating, stage flooring, sound equipment and orchestra pit. The new state-of-the-art acoustics will allow our audience to experience the sound of our orchestra with wonderful clarity and balance. This is an exciting time for us as we expand our offerings of great music to a wider community .

In addition to using the wonderful new auditorium for our performances (including the Knox Competition Finals) we will now have the enthusiastic support of the **Redondo Union High School Band Boosters**. They will be providing refreshments at intermission for all concerts. You are encouraged to partake of their services since all proceeds will go to the support of their marching band and other musical activities. This is a marvelous opportunity to increase our outreach to the youth in our communities.

Music Preview

Felix Mendelssohn 1809-1847



Unlike the troubled, tormented artist that many consider to be the archetypical Romantic composer, Felix Mendelssohn was something of an anomaly among his contemporaries. He was born into a wealthy

family and his life was one of domestic tranquility and unhindered career fulfillment. Mendelssohn was the only musical prodigy of the nineteenth century whose stature could rival that of Mozart, but his parents resisted any entrepreneurial impulses and spared young Felix the grueling lifestyle that was the lot of many child prodigies. Indeed, several modern critics claim that his music lacks emotional depth precisely because he didn't have enough *angst* in his life!

His first piano teacher was his mother and by the time he was seven, he had private and prestigious musical tutors. In addition to formal education, Mendelssohn became self educated by befriending the frequent visitors to his parents' home. Musicians, artists, writers, and philosophers from all walks of

life--young and old--shared their experiences and knowledge with him. (One of his biographers wrote of the household that "Europe came to their living room").

In addition to his musical talent, Mendelssohn excelled as a painter, poet, athlete, and linguist. His musical interests ranged far beyond composition and performance. In 1829, Mendelssohn organized and conducted an acclaimed performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, which had by then been quite forgotten. Mendelssohn's revival brought the music of Bach, particularly the large-scale works, to public and scholarly attention. Appreciation, performance and study of Bach's compositions have persisted into the present era.

During his extensive travels to England, Scotland, Wales, Austria, Italy, Switzerland and France, Mendelssohn collected many images--some he portrayed in many of his 300 paintings and drawings, and others formed the basis for musical compositions. Three of the most famous of his musical pictures are his Symphony No. 3, "Scottish", Symphony No. 4, "Italian" and the remarkably evocative *Hebrides Overture (Fingal's Cave)*.

Sergei Rachmaninoff 1873-1943



Sergei Rachmaninoff was born into an aristocratic family that owned several estates but had very little monetary wealth. His father was a

neer-do-well who ran up massive debts and ultimately wound up selling their remaining estate at auction. The family moved to St. Petersburg where Sergei was granted a scholarship to

the local conservatory where he was a poor student and lasted two years. His mother then arranged for him to be accepted into the Moscow Conservatory to study with a strict disciplinarian, Nikolai Zverev. His skill at composition became apparent while at the conservatory.

After graduation, Rachmaninoff was an active composer until 1897 when his Symphony No. 1 was premiered and trashed by the critics. This disaster drove him into a depression during which he was unable to compose any major works. Through hypnotic treatment with psychologist Nicolai Dahl, he steadily recovered and began working on his Piano Concerto No. 2 in 1890.

Rachmaninoff was widely considered to be one of the greatest pianists of all time. Although he wrote three symphonies, three short operas and numerous songs, his body of work consists primarily of works for piano, either solo or with orchestra. He wrote four piano concertos and while the second concerto is the most popular, the third concerto is considered by many to be the most technically difficult of them all. Rachmaninoff composed the piece to show off his prodigious performance skills and he considered it his favorite.

While any concerto in the modern concert repertoire demands great skill from the soloist, a good performance of the *Rach 3* requires significant risk taking and usually engenders fear in the performer. The performer knows that the listener is expecting to be dazzled by feats of pianistic skill demanded by the music. The performer must therefore push the bounds of technique to the limit while plumbing the depths of color and feeling in the music.

Rufus Choi

Our soloist for this concert will be familiar to many in the audience. Mr. Choi performed Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 at the February, 2009 concert. This concert was



conducted by David Weiss, one of the candidates for the position of Music Director/Conductor of the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra.

Rufus Choi is a graduate of The Juilliard School (Bachelor and Master of Music) where he studied with Oxana Yablonskaya, an internationally renowned interpreter of the music of Rachmaninoff. His musical training reflects his international outlook. He is unique for an American pianist in that he identifies strongly with the Russian school of technique and artistry.

Past Events: Final Concert(s)

The last two concerts held in the Rolling Hills Covenant Church concluded our thirty-year tenure at that performance site.

On June 2, 2013, Maestro Berkson introduced us to the music of Richard Wagner and also that of Karl Jenkins. *Palladio*, by Jenkins grew out of a theme written for a television commercial for De Beers diamond company and the opening movement was familiar to many.



We heard excerpts from each of Richard Wagner's four operas comprising the *Ring of the Nibelungen* finishing with the dramatic (and noisy) *Ride of the Valkyries* from *Die Walküre*.

The highlight of the evening was a remarkable performance of the rarely played, extremely difficult first violin concerto of Henri Wieniawski. The featured soloist was the sixteen-year old winner of the Knox Performance Competition, Hao Zhou.

A reception was held in Carlson Hall after the concert honoring the Rips Scholarship winners, Nick Harrington, PV High School and Lauren Oye, Chadwick. At the reception, Knox winner Hao Zhou was presented with his First Place award of \$1500, and a beautiful cake (which he shared with the audience).

Summer Pops Concert



A fun time was had at our last Pops concert held in the Rolling Hills Covenant Church on July 14. Gary Berkson led us down memory lane with an eclectic assortment of themes from some of his favorite movies.

We heard renditions of music from *Murder on the Orient Express*, *James Bond: 007*, *Rebecca*, *Somewhere in Time*, *Titanic*,

Dances with Wolves and *Double Indemnity*. The concert ended with an encore: the *Pink Panther* theme by Henry Mancini.

Have you sent in your Membership?

If you haven't made a contribution to join the Peninsula Symphony Association for the 2013-14 season, then you are no longer a member and **this is the last issue of *Symphony Sounds* that you will receive.** You will also lose your invitation to the pre-concert lectures - and a valuable tax deduction! To join, just call or write to the Peninsula Symphony Association (see the last page for phone and address). We now have the convenience of electronic subscription through our Web site at www.pensym.org. Just click on Membership. You will be sent to a page where you can securely and easily join through PayPal or, if you wish, print out a copy of the membership form, and mail it in. If all else fails, you can come to the concert on October 13, and make your contribution at the membership desk in the lobby.

Matching-Gift Programs Membership contributions also qualify for employer matching-gift programs. Call the Peninsula Symphony Association office for details.

Peninsula Symphony Association Board of Directors

This year we have one new Director: **Inga Liden**. Four Directors have retired: **John Copper**, **Duane Conover**, **Chuck Klaus**, and **Bob Coffey**. We thank them for their dedicated service to the Peninsula Symphony Association and hope to work with them again. Please remember that all members of the Board of Directors of the Peninsula Symphony Association are volunteers and receive no compensation for their work to bring wonderful music to the community.

OFFICERS:

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2013 - 2014 Schedule

All concerts, including the Young Artists
 Showcase, are held at:

Redondo Union High School Auditorium
PCH and Diamond Street
Redondo Beach

Concert II

February 2, 2014, 7 p.m.

MOZARTIAN MELODIES

Elizabeth Pitcairn, Violin
Brett Deubner, Viola
Linda Muggeridge, Oboe
David Nicholson, Clarinet
John Campbell, Bassoon
Lisa Cherry, Horn

Mozart *Masonic Funeral Music*

Mozart Sinfonia Concertante for Oboe,
 Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn and
 Orchestra

Mozart Sinfonia Concertante for Violin,
 Viola and Orchestra

Young Artists' Showcase

March 30, 2014, 2 p.m.

The finalists in the Edith Knox Performance Competition will play with their accompanists in a full-dress stage performance for professional judging. The first-prize winner will be selected at the end of the program, and will perform as soloist with the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra at our June 22 concert. This event is open to all members.

Concert III

April 13, 2014, 7 p.m.

SPRING CLEANING

Schumann Symphony No. 1, ("Spring")

Copland *Appalachian Spring*

Concert IV
The Norris Foundation Concert
 June 22, 2014, 7 p.m.

AN IDYLLIC EVENING

2013 Edith Knox Competition Winner Soloist

Larsson	<i>Pastoral Suite</i>
TBA	Concerto performed by the Knox Competition winner
Beethoven	Symphony No. 6 ("Pastoral")

Summer Pops Concert
 July 27 2014, 5:00 p.m.

Guest conductor Wayne Abravanel will return to the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra to present a program of popular favorites - details to be announced.

***Friends* of the Peninsula Symphony**

The *Friends* of the Peninsula Symphony welcomes men and women interested in providing an extra measure of support to the Peninsula Symphony and having fun while doing it. The *Friends* perform an essential function for our Symphony by raising funds and providing a variety of volunteer opportunities to suit your time and talents.

The *Friends* music education outreach program which began as the Mozart Program has expanded. Starting in January, first-and-second grade students at all ten Palos Verdes elementary schools will listen to Peter and the Wolf performed by a woodwind quintet. The music teachers

work with classroom teachers to prepare students in advance of the performance with knowledge of the composer, the instruments and how to listen. This preparation provides students with an enriched listening experience at the live performance.

Friends membership donation is **in addition** to your membership in the Peninsula Symphony Association and is open to any current Peninsula Symphony Association member. If you have not already responded to our membership mailing, we urge you to join now with your tax-deductible donation (Tax ID# 23-7008895).

Stop by the membership table in the lobby at intermission. We hope you will join us. Our suggested donation levels are:

Best Friend(s) - \$125
Good Friend(s) - \$75
Friend - \$50

Membership donations can also be mailed to:
Friends of the Peninsula Symphony
 PO Box 3961
 Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

***Friends* Events**

Friends members have fun while raising funds. At the end of June, our final activity for the year involved taking an excursion to the historic Saban theater to see *Casablanca* in a beautiful setting. Gourmet snacks and beverages were enjoyed on the return trip.



This season's annual membership party will be held at The Admiral Risty on Saturday, November 2. Join us for lunch and music and help celebrate the start of our new season in our new home at the Redondo Union High School Auditorium.

In February 2014, the *Friends* will be invited to a musical salon at a lovely private home. Other exciting and fun events are planned for later in the season including another trip to the historic Saban theater in Beverly Hills.

John R. Williams



John Williams is the President of the Board of Directors of the Peninsula Symphony Association and also the Chairman of the Community Affairs Committee.

Through his efforts, the Symphony received a grant of \$2000 from Morgan Stanley Smith Barney where he is Vice President of Wealth Management. The grant is based upon the John's community service and the appropriate nature of the recipient, the Peninsula Symphony. This is at least the third grant that John has obtained for us.

John has been an active member of the Peninsula Symphony Association for over twenty years and has served as President in the past. One of the main reasons that the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra has thrived for forty-seven years offering free concerts is the generous dedication of volunteers like John Williams.

Reflections on our Relocation

When we received the news that the Rolling Hills Covenant Church was no longer able to allow outside organizations to use their facilities, we were shocked. We realized that in four months we had to find a new performance venue and to make all the arrangements for the transition.

Through the dedication and perseverance of members of the Board and the Music Director, we obtained the use of the Redondo Union High School Auditorium for our concerts. This is a *real* auditorium, designed to provide an exceptional listening experience for our audience. The administration of the school was enthusiastic about our move to their facility and they were able, with the exception of the first concert, to accommodate our season schedule. We were also able to reschedule the first concert after the soloist agreed to the new date.

All of us - the Board of Directors, the Music Director and the orchestra members - are truly excited about this new venture. We are sure that you, as an audience member, will share this excitement as well. We encourage you to invite your friends to come with you to the first concert on October 13. We believe they will then wish to become members too.

The auditorium may be a slightly longer drive than to the church but it still is a short trip. There will be plenty of parking but some of it may not be quite as convenient as before. You should have received a map of the parking lots with your membership card. Car-pooling is encouraged.

Ken Gash, Editor



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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 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:

Peninsula Symphony Association President, John Williams
310-544-3681 john.r.williams@ms.com

Friends of the Peninsula Symphony, Mona Gifford, Chair
310-377-7711 monagee@cox.net

Music Director/Conductor, Gary Berkson conductor.pensym@verizon.net