Three February Events

Dear Friends and Supporters of the Yakima Symphony Orchestra:

It may be cold outside, but we have three February events lined up to keep you warm, enriched and entertained. On Saturday, February 8th at 7:30 pm we will continue with the Rosemary A.C. Gottlieb 2019-20 Season and the Yakima Valley Classical Series with Symphonic Dances. This program is an all-orchestral concert consisting of music with a connection to dance. The first one is music from Tchaikovsky’s famous ballet Swan Lake. This was Tchaikovsky’s first attempt at writing ballet music, and it has gone on to become one of the most popular and frequently performed ballets of all time. Next, we have Three Latin-American Dances by the very exciting female American composer of Lithuanian, Jewish, Peruvian and Chinese descent, Gabriela Frank. Finally, we will perform the Symphonic Dances by Sergei Rachmaninoff. This composer is best known for his piano compositions, but this, his final work, is one of his greatest orchestral compositions.

On February 29th at 7:30 pm we will continue the Gilbert Orchards Pops Series with a concert called Name That Tune! Many people have heard famous classical music on the radio, in a movie, on a TV show or in a commercial, and thought to themselves: “I know that music, but I don’t know the name of it.” Well, at this performance we will play an entire concert of pieces that will definitely be familiar to you but that you may not necessarily be able to name. One of the pieces is called Rhapsody in Blue by George Gershwin and will feature the amazing American pianist Steven Mayer. For the past forty years, this piece has been the theme song for United Airlines. Other very famous music on the concert has been used in the films 2001: A Space Odyssey, A Clockwork Orange, and will feature the children’s camp song “Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah,” and in nightclubs around the world. The Yakima Symphony Chorus also will sing on this concert, performing some of the most famous opera choruses ever written, including those by Verdi and Borodin. Come to this concert and see if you can Name That Tune!

While the pianist Steven Mayer is in town to perform the solo part on Rhapsody in Blue, he and I will perform a violin-piano duo recital at the Seasons Performance Hall on Thursday, February 27th at 7:30 pm. We will perform two of the greatest and most virtuosic violin-piano sonatas in the repertoire, by Brahms and Franck, and we will each also perform a solo work.

We look forward to seeing you on February 8th, 27th and 29th for Symphonic Dances, a duo recital and Name That Tune!

Sincerely,

Lawrence Golan
The Helen N. Jewett Music Director
Yakima Symphony Orchestra
Toward the end of this month, YSO is partnering with the Seasons Performance Hall to present the Golan-Mayer duo recital noted by Maestro Golan on the previous page. As a symphony organization, we are generally not in the presenting business outside of our own ensembles, but given our connection to these two artists it made sense to participate more directly in this performance.

But this does provide an opportunity to acknowledge a few local musicians who are responsible for outstanding musical presentations elsewhere around town. At the Seasons, YSO Principal Keyboardist Anne Schilperoort has for many years curated the Brown Bag Series, usually on the first Friday of each month at noon and often featuring YSO musicians. The program on February 7th highlights students who will compete in this year’s regional solo and ensemble competition that weekend. Over many years, Anne (and more recently YSO Concertmaster Denise Dillenbeck) has created a variety of imaginative evening programs for the Seasons around classical and contemporary music; and YSO violinist (and YAMA Teaching Artist) Vanessa Moss is working on programs for the coming months.

At Englewood Christian Church, Roger and Jane Finch have produced the Second Sunday series for many years—their next installment features the YSO cello section on the afternoon of Sunday, February 9th. In his ‘retirement,’ Scott Peterson continues to bring terrific choral presentations to Yakima, whether through his Canticus vocal ensemble or in collaboration with CWU. The next performance by Canticus will take place in early March.

Between these individuals and the work of Charlie Robin at the Capitol Theatre and Pat Strosahl at the Seasons, not to mention the many community and student ensembles performing in the area any given week, we have a remarkable variety and quality of musical programming in Yakima. While our focus at YSO is mostly on orchestral and symphonic choral music, we very much appreciate that what we do is stronger for the work of all these other people and organizations. Keep an eye on our Facebook page and the “Community Music” page on our website (under Connections), and let us know if there’s anything we’re missing.

See you at the symphony!

David Rogers, Executive Director
Yakima Symphony Orchestra
Affiliate & Partnership Updates

Yakima Youth Symphony Orchestra (YYSO) & Yakima Ensemble for Strings (YES!) YYSO.ORG
Bruce Walker, YYSO Conductor
Christy Baisinger, YES! Conductor

Congratulations to the winners of the 2020 YYSO Concerto Competition! We look forward to having these talented student musicians perform with the youth symphony on upcoming concerts. **Intermediate Division Winner**: Luke Kwon, piano; **Senior Division Winners – Tie**: Tate Schut, piano and Alex Kim, piano; Ethan Kim, cello.

- **YYSO Season Finale: Spring Concert** on Sunday, April 19, 3:00pm at the Capitol Theatre. FREE!
- **2020-21 Season Auditions**: Monday evenings on April 20 and 27 and May 4, 11 and 18. For information visit [www.ysomusic.org/connecting/youth-symphony](http://www.ysomusic.org/connecting/youth-symphony). To schedule an audition, send an email to yyso.yes@gmail.com. Auditions are open for the following instruments: violin, viola, cello, double bass, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, timpani and percussion.

Yakima Symphony Chorus (YSC) / Justin Raffa, Chorusmaster

We have nearly 75 singers preparing for this month’s **Name That Tune** performance on February 29th, which includes music sung in Russian and Italian. In April, we will begin preparations for the YSO season finale, with Beethoven’s Choral Fantasy.

The Yakima Symphony Chorus currently has 125 active members on our roster, but we are always happy to have more (especially men!). Members are invited (but not required) to sing each of four or five projects each season—most with the YSO, but usually at least one without orchestra. Rehearsals take place on Monday evenings at St. Paul Cathedral; contact chorusmaster Justin Raffa for more information: chorusmaster@ysomusic.org.

Yakima Music en Acción (YAMA) / Josh Gianola, YSO Teaching Artist

YAMA is an after-school orchestra program serving 3rd–12th graders in the Yakima Valley. Students are exposed to high level music-making in a variety of settings, and work with professional musicians every day of the week. An artistic partner of the Yakima Symphony Orchestra, YAMA strives to provide high quality music education to all students, while disrupting barriers to educational access.

YAMA and the YSO are proud to provide hundreds of tickets to live performances, events, and opportunities in our community. In our fall term, over 150 YAMA students and family members were invited to YSO shows in November and December free of charge. In February, YAMA will be visited by YSO Principal Clarinetist Angelique Poteat, who will provide professional insights into the world of orchestral performance and composition.

Please join us for these upcoming performances!

- **March 22nd @ 6PM** – YAMA Upbeats Show @ Englewood Christian Church
- **May 16th @ 2PM** – Spring Showcase @ The Seasons Performance Hall

Enjoy the YSO’s weekly column, *forte*, published on Thursdays in the Yakima Herald-Republic’s SCENE section (yakimaherald.com) Past columns may be accessed via links on our website, [www.ysomusic.org](http://www.ysomusic.org)
Program Notes

This concert features three dance works for orchestra, including Tchaikovsky’s famous ballet suite and two collections of symphonic dances by American Gabriela Frank and Russian Sergei Rachmaninoff.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(April 25/May 7, 1840—October 25/November 6, 1893)
Swan Lake Suite, op. 20a
(1882)

Tchaikovsky’s famous ballet Swan Lake was commissioned by Vladimir Begichev for the Bolshoi Ballet, composed in 1875-1876, and premiered in 1877. The story is based on an old folk tale of a beautiful princess turned into a swan by a magician’s curse to prevent her from marrying a prince. Tchaikovsky admired ballet composers of the time but was hesitant to try his hand. Eventually, the temptation and opportunity proved too much, and Swan Lake became his first complete ballet. Despite initial lukewarm reviews, this ballet has become one of the most popular in history.

A few years later, Tchaikovsky considered creating a concert suite, including versions for orchestra and for two pianos, but there is no record of the composer completing or authorizing such a suite. In 1900, his publisher, Jurgenson, released a suite of six numbers from the ballet. It is not known who chose the numbers to be included. The eight numbers included in the suite performed tonight, with original placements in the ballet, are: Scène [Act II, No. 10], Valse [Act I, No. 2], Dance of the Swans [Waltz; Act II, No. 13, part 4], Scène [Pas d’action; Act II, No. 13, part 5], Czardas (Hungarian Dance), Spanish Dance (Tempo di bolero), Neapolitan Dance, and Mazurka [Act III, Nos. 20-23].

The earliest known performance of the suite was in London in September 1901. Tchaikovsky’s marvelous melodies and lush orchestrations show that the composer was in his prime when the original appeared, and the combination of the music and story is timeless.

Gabriela Lena Frank
(b. September 26, 1972)
Three Latin-American Dances for Orchestra
(2003)

Gabriela Lena Frank was born in Berkeley, California. Cultural identity is at the center of her music as a result of her upbringing: her father is of Lithuanian/Jewish descent and met her mother, who is Peruvian of Chinese descent, in the 1960s while working for the Peace Corps in Peru. Her music combines traditional South American musical elements with classical styles. Frank has received numerous commissions from individuals, chamber groups and orchestras, including Yo Yo Ma, the Kronos Quartet and the San Francisco Symphony, and she has served as composer-in-residence for the Aspen Music Festival, the Seattle Symphony, the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the Houston Symphony, among many others.

In 2004, the Utah Symphony and conductor Keith Lockhart premiered and then recorded her Three Latin-American Dances for Orchestra. Of the first movement, “Jungle Jaunt,” Frank writes: (www.muscisalesclassical.com):

This introductory scherzo opens in an unabashed tribute to the Symphonic Dances from West Side Story by Leonard Bernstein before turning to harmonies and rhythms derived from various pan-Amazonian dance forms. These jungle references are sped through (so as to be largely hidden) while echoing the energy of the Argentinian composer Alberto Ginastera who was long fascinated with indigenous Latin American cultures.

Of “Highland Harawi,” she says:

This movement evokes the Andean harawi, a melancholy adagio traditionally sung by a single bamboo quena flute so as to accompany a single dancer. As mountain music, the ambiance of mystery, vastness, and echo is evoked. The fast middle section simulates what I imagine to be the ‘zumballyu’ of Illapa—a great spinning top belonging to Illapa, the Peruvian-Inca weather deity of thunder, lightning, and rain. Illapa spins his great top in the highland valleys of the Andes before allowing a return to the more staid harawi. The music of the Hungarian composer, Bela Bartok, is alluded to.

Of “The Mestizo Waltz,” she says:

As if in relief to the gravity of the previous movement, this final movement is a lighthearted tribute to the ‘mestizo’ or mixed-race music of the South American Pacific coast. In particular, it evokes the ‘romancero’ tradition of popular songs and dances that mix influences from indigenous Indian cultures, African slave cultures, and western brass bands.

In 2017, Frank was included in the Washington Post’s list of the 35 most significant women composers in history. She is a member of the Silk Road Ensemble under the direction of cellist Yo-Yo Ma.

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(April 1, 1873-March 28, 1943)
Symphonic Dances, op. 45
(1940)

A precocious talent, Rachmaninoff entered the Moscow Conservatory at age 12 to study both piano and composition. Upon graduation, he achieved success writing piano pieces, songs and orchestral music, until a disastrous performance of his first symphony in 1897 put him into an emotional tailspin lasting several years. He eventually recovered and in the early 1900s arrived at a personal style featuring broad,
lyrical melodies, full-bodied, large-scale orchestration, and consistently melancholy and sentimental moods which brought him widespread success on both sides of the Atlantic. He left Russia during the Revolution and wound up settling in New York by 1918.

The Symphonic Dances is Rachmaninoff’s last composition. Its original title was Fantastic Dances, with movements titled “Noon,” “Twilight” and “Midnight.” It was premiered by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, to whom it is dedicated, on January 3, 1941. The first movement begins as a sinister march with some surprising harmonic twists. The oboe announces the second theme, one that is gentler yet more mysterious, further enhanced by the use of solo alto saxophone. This section gradually becomes more lush and full, with a soaring melody in the strings. The march re-emerges from this quiet, re-asserting itself. At the end of the movement, he quotes his First Symphony (1897). At this time, the First Symphony was still being withheld from public performance by Rachmaninoff; its second performance would not take place until 1945, two years after his death.

The second movement is an unsettled waltz, with various starts and stops, harmonic instability, and interesting combinations of timbres elicited from the orchestra. Melancholy and mystery pervade the movement even at its most expressive moments.

Scholars have described the final dance as a struggle between two themes, the Dies irae melody from the Requiem mass, representing Death, and a quotation of the chant “Blessed be the Lord” from the ninth movement of his All-Night Vigil (1915), representing Resurrection. The Resurrection theme proves victorious in the end—he even wrote the word “Hallelujah” in the score where this victory is achieved. This is the longest movement, and it goes through a number of emotions, from sadness to nostalgia to conflict and finally to triumphant resolution.

With the various moods and occasional quotations, the composition can be regarded as a summing-up of his career as a composer. Michael Steinberg, program notes author for the San Francisco Symphony, characterizes this piece as follows (www.sfsymphony.org):

*Given what we know of Rachmaninoff’s state of mind in 1940, it is likely that he thought of this as his last composition. We see him then taking leave of his craft with a hymn of thanks and praise. Perhaps it is not too much to imagine that the symbolic victory of the exultant theme over the Dies irae is Rachmaninoff’s own affirmation of the faith that ‘Death shall be swallowed up in Victory.’*