

ENCHANTING and EXOTIC: FIREBIRD, ALADDIN and RACHMANINOFF

Friday and Saturday, January 25-26, 2019 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, January 27, 2019 at 2 p.m.

MICHAEL STERN, conductor

ALON GOLDSTEIN, piano

NIELSEN

Seven Pieces from *Aladdin*, op. 34

- I. Oriental Festive March
- II. Aladdin's Dream and Dance of the Morning Mist
- III. Hindu Dance
- IV. Chinese Dance
- V. Marketplace in Ispahan
- VI. Prisoners' Dance
- VII. Negro Dance

RACHMANINOFF

Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp Minor for Piano and Orchestra, op. 1 (1919 rev.)

- I. Vivace
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro vivace

ALON GOLDSTEIN, piano

INTERMISSION

GRIFFES

The White Peacock

STRAVINSKY

Suite from *The Firebird* (1919 rev.)

- I. Introduction and Dance of the Firebird
- II. Dance of the Princesses
- III. Infernal Dance of King Kastchei
- IV. Berceuse
- V. Finale

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Danish composer Carl Nielsen created incidental music for a 1919 Copenhagen production of the play “Aladdin.”

Later, Nielsen selected seven excerpts from his colorful “Aladdin” score to create an orchestral suite.

CARL NIELSEN (1865-1931)

Seven Pieces from *Aladdin*, op. 34 (1919)

23 minutes

Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, castanets, cymbals, field drum, snare drum, tam-tam, tambourine, triangle, xylophone, celeste and strings.

Between 1918 and 1919, Danish composer Carl Nielsen created incidental music for Adam Oehlenschläger’s play “Aladdin.” The first performance took place on February 15, 1919, at the Royal Theater in Copenhagen (seven years later the same theater would premiere Jean Sibelius’ incidental music to Shakespeare’s “The Tempest”). For “Aladdin,” Nielsen composed some 30 numbers, comprising 80 minutes of music. Later, Nielsen chose seven excerpts from his original score to

create an orchestral suite, which was published in 1940.

The suite includes a march, several character dances from Act III, and a few other excerpts. All feature Nielsen’s magical use of the orchestra and unerring sense of atmosphere. The most striking of the excerpts is the fifth movement, “Marketplace in Ispahan.” There, Nielsen evokes the marketplace’s beehive of activity by dividing the orchestra into four groups, each simultaneously playing independent music.

RECOMMENDED RECORDING

NIELSEN: *Aladdin Suite*

Gothenburg Symphony / Neeme Järvi, *conductor*

Label: Deutsche Grammophon Catalog # 447757



Rachmaninoff originally composed his First Piano Concerto while still in his teens, and revised the work during the outbreak of the Russian Revolution.

The three-movement work features Rachmaninoff's synthesis of melodic inspiration, rich orchestration and thrilling virtuosic display.

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF (1873-1943)

Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp Minor for Piano and Orchestra, op. 1 (1891, rev. 1919)

26 minutes

Solo piano, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, cymbals, triangle and strings.

Rachmaninoff originally composed his First Piano Concerto in 1891, when he was 18. The composer and pianist revised the work during the turmoil of the Russian Revolution. In his revisions, Rachmaninoff sought to lighten the textures of the writing, both for the orchestra and the solo piano. The most extensive revisions occurred in the final movement.

Rachmaninoff was quite pleased with the results. As he informed a friend, “I have rewritten my First Concerto; it is really good now. All the youthful freshness is there, and yet it plays itself so much more easily.” Still, the F-sharp Concerto failed to win the adulation shared by its more famous successors. Rachmaninoff

lamented, “When I tell them in America that I will play the First Concerto, they do not protest, but I can see by their faces that they would prefer the Second or Third.”

Still, the work deserves more than an occasional hearing. In addition to the “youthful freshness” noted by the composer, it offers the beguiling synthesis of melodic inspiration and thrilling virtuoso display that would reach its apex in the great Second and Third concerti.

The work is in three movements. The first opens with a bold orchestral fanfare and grand flourish by the soloist. The violins

introduce the movement's principal themes, developed in virtuoso fashion by the soloist. A solo horn launches the beautiful slow-tempo second movement. The finale begins with a vigorous dialogue for soloist and orchestra. The work concludes with a breathless dash to the finish.

RECOMMENDED RECORDING

RACHMANINOFF Piano Concerto No. 1

Sergei Rachmaninoff, *piano*

Philadelphia Orchestra / Eugene Ormandy, *conductor*

Label: RCA Victor Gold Seal Catalog # 61658



The White Peacock, by American composer Charles Tomlinson Griffes, originated as a work for solo piano. Griffes, a master of instrumental colors, created a version for orchestra to be the score for a ballet.

CHARLES TOMLINSON GRIFFES

(1884-1920)

The White Peacock (1915, orch. 1919)

5 minutes

Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, timpani, cymbals, tam-tam, celeste, 2 harps and strings.

As with many of the orchestral works by American composer Charles Tomlinson Griffes, *The White Peacock* originated as a work for solo piano, part of his Roman Sketches, op. 7. Griffes orchestrated the piece at the request of his friend, the renowned ballet dancer Adolph Bolm, for performance by his company, Ballet Intime. The premiere took place in New York on June 22, 1919, with Erno Rapee conducting the Rivoli Orchestra.

In program notes for a subsequent Philadelphia Orchestra performance of *The White Peacock* conducted by Leopold Stokowski, Griffes offered the following:

The piece was inspired by William Sharp's (1855-1905) poem of the same title, from "Sospiri di Roma." It pictures a wonderful garden filled with gorgeous color, where a white peacock moves about slowly "as the soul, as the breadth of all this beauty." The music tries to evoke the thousand colors of the garden and the almost weird beauty of the peacock and these surroundings.

RECOMMENDED RECORDING

GRIFFES: *The White Peacock*

New York Philharmonic / Leopold Stokowski, conductor

Label: Cala Records Catalog # 533



Stravinsky's ballet *The Firebird* was the work that catapulted the young Russian composer to international stardom.

The Firebird, based on a Russian fairy tale, juxtaposes lyric and dramatic elements adorned in dazzling orchestral colors.

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)

Suite from *The Firebird* (1910, rev. 1919)

19 minutes

Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine, triangle, xylophone, piano, celeste, harp and strings.

Igor Stravinsky composed his ballet *The Firebird* at the invitation of Sergei Diaghilev, impresario of the Ballets Russes. The triumphant premiere took place in Paris on June 25, 1910. *The Firebird's* winning synthesis of lyric and dramatic elements, adorned in dazzling instrumental colors, captured the imagination of the Paris audience and catapulted the young Russian composer to national and international prominence.

I. Introduction and Dance of the Firebird — Stravinsky based *The Firebird* on Russian folk legend. While wandering in the

forest at night, Prince Ivan encounters a magic Firebird. The Firebird's beauty captivates the prince, so he captures her. However, the prince takes pity on the Firebird and sets her free. In gratitude, the Firebird gives the prince one of her feathers and promises to aid him in his hour of need.

II. Dance of the Princesses — The prince comes to the courtyard of an enchanted castle, where he finds 13 beautiful princesses, captives of the evil magician Kastchei. The princesses warn Prince Ivan not to enter the castle, for Kastchei has the power to turn intruders to stone. The prince boldly ignores their warnings.

III. Infernal Dance of King Kastchei — The prince suddenly encounters Kastchei's horrible servants, and ultimately, the magician himself. Kastchei tries to turn the prince into stone, but the hero produces the Firebird's magic feather. The Firebird appears and forces

Kastchei and his followers into a frenetic dance.

IV. Berceuse — When Kastchei and his followers are exhausted, the Firebird lulls them to sleep.

V. Finale — Kastchei and his entourage are destroyed. All of the prisoners are set free, including the 13th princess, whom the prince weds.

RECOMMENDED RECORDING

STRAVINSKY: *Firebird Suite* (1919)

Chicago Symphony / Carlo Maria Giulini, *conductor*

Label: Warner Classics Catalog # 317522

About ALON GOLDSTEIN, piano

ALON GOLDSTEIN IS ONE OF THE MOST ORIGINAL AND SENSITIVE

artists of his generation, admired for his musical intelligence and dynamic personality. His artistic vision and innovative programming have made him a favorite with audiences and critics alike throughout the United States, Europe and Israel. He made his orchestral debut at age 18 with the Israel Philharmonic under the baton of Zubin Mehta. In recent seasons, he has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, and the San Francisco, Kansas City, Baltimore, St. Louis, Houston, Vancouver, Indianapolis and North Carolina symphonies as well as orchestras on tour in Paris, Russia, Romania and Bulgaria.



His 2018/19 season includes appearances with the Kansas City, Ann Arbor, Illinois, Spokane, Bangor, Augusta and Pensacola symphony orchestras, as well as a performance of Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto on fortepiano

with Mercury Houston. Recital and chamber music performances, including tours with the Goldstein-Peled-Fiterstein Trio, will take him to Cleveland, Shreveport, Burlington, Key West, Sarasota, Melbourne and Duluth, among other cities. His 2018/19 season also will include the release of Mozart's Piano Concertos Nos. 23 and 24 with the Fine Arts Quartet and Scarlatti's Piano Sonatas on the Naxos label.

Goldstein has appeared at the Gilmore, Santa Fe, Tanglewood, Ravinia, Marlboro, Seattle and Steamboat festivals in the United States as well as Prussia Cove, the Verbier Festival and the Klavier Festival in R uhr. He performed at the Hollywood Bowl with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Millennium Park in Chicago with the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra. Over the past several years, he also has taught and played at the Tel Hai international piano master classes held in Israel.

He is the winner of numerous competitions, among them the Arianne Katcz Piano Competition in Tel Aviv, the Nena Wideman Competition in the U.S. and the Francois Shapira competition in Israel. He is also the recipient of the 2004 Salon di Virtuosi Career Grant and the America-Israel Cultural Foundation Scholarship. The Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C. chose a live recording of one of Goldstein's recitals there for its first CD release. Other recordings include solo recitals with the Jerusalem Music Center Mishkenot Sha'ananim and the Israeli Music Institute featuring works by Israeli composers. Goldstein graduated from the Peabody Conservatory, where he studied with Leon Fleisher and served as his assistant — a position assigned only to his most exceptional students. ■