

Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

Concert Program



Sunday, October 14, 2012

Edward R. Appel Memorial Concert

4:00 P.M.

**St. Georges Episcopal Church
550 Ridgewood Road
Maplewood, New Jersey**

Harold D. Slapin, CPCU, CIC
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"In everyone's life, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit."

Albert Schweitzer – Nobel Peace Prize winner, 1952.
German musician and philosopher

EDWARD APPEL was a man who was able to share his passion and was then able to motivate those around him to work towards the same goal. His leadership and dedication for the Society of Musical Arts was constant and will always be a part of what SOMA is today. We are here to keep his dream alive in our mission to perform classical music for friends and neighbors in our community. Words to describe Ed are many. He was loyal, compassionate, dedicated, intelligent and most of all a dear friend. He will surely be missed, but always remembered for his ability to "rekindle the inner spirit".



Laura Papparatto – President, Society of Musical Arts

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Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

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Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

Sunday, October 14, 2012

4:00 pm

Eastern European Masterpieces

Khovantchina Overture

“Dawn on the Moscow River”

Modest Mussorgsky

Piano Concerto No. 1 in E Minor

Frédéric Chopin

Allegro Maestoso

Romanze

Rondo

Irina Nuzova, piano

~~ Intermission ~~

Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88

Antonín Dvořák

Allegro con brio

Adagio

Allegretto grazioso

Allegro ma non troppo

Program Notes

by Stephen Culbertson

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)

Prelude to Khovantchina “Dawn on the Moscow River” (1880)

We open today's program with this short and beautifully atmospheric prelude. It is unmistakably Mussorgsky (as filtered through Rimsky-Korsakov and — later — Shostakovich). The subtitle says it all. Without getting into the very complicated plot based on Russian history and politics, suffice it to say that the opera opens with an early-morning scene on Red Square, and this music literally “sets the scene.”

Fredéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Piano Concerto No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 11 (1830)

Chopin wrote this work at age 20 and performed it in a “farewell” concert in Poland before leaving his homeland to find fame and fortune. His purpose was to show off his amazing piano virtuosity. We would have to acknowledge that he succeeded!

Over the years, many critics (and conductors) have said that the orchestra part is not very interesting, not fun to perform, and so on. I disagree! The orchestra serves a very important function in this work. First, we introduce most of the thematic material, which the pianist then extends, elaborates, ornaments, modulates and reharmonizes. Then, the orchestra supports and encourages the pianist. The simplicity of the orchestral fabric allows the listener to concentrate on not only the musicality and virtuosity of the pianist, but also the complexity and beauty of the harmony and ornamentation.

In the opening, majestic, first movement, the orchestra introduces the three main themes. The piano writing begins boldly but is full of poetic lyricism and several sections have a “perpetual motion” feel. The second movement is a beautiful nocturne. One of Chopin's favorite composers was Bellini (he especially loved Norma). This shows throughout the concerto, but especially here: a seamless, ornamented, bel canto melody over the most serene accompaniment imaginable. Note the beautiful bassoon countermelodies. The third movement is a robust and spirited polka-like Rondo. The main theme is full of syncopations (accenting what are normally weak beats), contrasting the more tender second theme. Chopin's countrymen considered it patriotic, as it was surely intended to instill pride in their music and culture.

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88 (1889)

Many, if not most, of the late romantic symphonies that are still in the repertoire tend toward the dramatic, tragic or even somewhat melancholic. This is certainly true of Dvořák's earlier 7th Symphony and other contemporary works such as Tchaikovsky's 5th, Franck's D minor. The exception to prove the rule is the Brahms 2nd Symphony, which SOMA performed 2 seasons ago.

Likewise, Dvořák's 8th Symphony (composed and orchestrated in a little over two months) literally bursts with melodies that flow in (at times) rapid succession, starting with the beautiful cello theme that opens, leading into the rather playful flute "bird-call" theme. These two very contrasting themes set up the rest of the movement. Not so much *sturm und drang* (storm and stress) here; even the minor sections are slightly whimsical.

The second movement starts out a little more on the dark (minor) side, but we quickly get to C Major and the music is, in turn, lyrical, passionate, powerful and tender. The third movement starts as a sweet and lilting waltz, then the trio turns to a more folk-dance character (listen for the cello *obbligato*). After the return of the waltz, there is a very fast coda, which is exactly the way Brahms treated his theme in the corresponding movement of his 2nd Symphony. The fourth movement opens with a ringing trumpet fanfare, then turns to a rather complex theme and variations form that puts Dvořák squarely into the Beethoven and Brahms tradition. But not quite! Dvořák sounds different because of the influence of the Bohemian folk-music that he loved. My two favorite parts of this movement are the opening cello statement of the theme and the truly outrageous horn riff and trill in the first loud and fast section. It repeats several times: don't be afraid to smile!

Stephen Culbertson

Conductor

Stephen Culbertson, currently Music Director for the Society of Musical Arts, has conducted over 35 orchestras, opera productions, and ballet companies, ranging from major to community level, in Europe and the United States. Major engagements include a Spoleto USA debut on the 20th-Century Perspective Series and a new production of Prokofiev's *Cinderella* for the San Joaquin Ballet in California. In recent seasons, Culbertson has appeared with the Montclair Chamber Orchestra and Orchestra Society of Philadelphia. He has served as Music Director of the Sussex County (New Jersey) Community Orchestra and Associate Conductor of the Bergen (New Jersey) Philharmonic Orchestra. With the latter two orchestras, he conceived and conducted a series of family concerts for the community to great acclaim. He served on the board of Unity Concerts of NJ and was its Artistic Director for the 2002-3 season. Culbertson's most recent activities include leading the New Jersey Reading Orchestra and a third stint as interim Music/choir director at the Presbyterian Church of Upper Montclair.

After graduating from University of the Pacific in his native California, Culbertson was awarded a scholarship to study at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki (Finland) with famed conducting teacher Jorma Panula. During his five-year stay, he studied the works of Sibelius with the composer's son-in-law, Jussi Jalas, and conducted most of Finland's major ensembles: The Finnish National Opera, the Helsinki Philharmonic, The Finnish Radio Orchestra, The Vaasa and Tampere Operas, and the Oulu Philharmonic. In addition to conducting, he gained valuable experience (not to mention much-needed income) by singing in a number of professional choruses, including the Finnish Radio Choir, Savonlinna Opera Chorus and the Helsinki Festival production of Britten's Church Parables.

Culbertson introduced Finnish audiences to works by Copland, S.R. Beckler, John Forsman and many others. He introduced local listeners to American music by writing a six-hour series of radio programs entitled *A History of American Music* for the Finnish Broadcast Corporation. As a guest conductor, Culbertson has worked for the Netherlands Opera and appeared in Czechoslovakia (with the Košice State Philharmonic), Italy, Hungary, and England.

Culbertson has been a strong advocate of American music as both a conductor and a publisher. In 1993, he co-founded Subito Music Publishing and became its President in 1997. From 1987 to 1992, he was director of the rental and publications departments for G. Schirmer, Inc., where he supervised the music preparation of, among others, John Corigliano's opera *The Ghosts of Versailles* (for the Metropolitan Opera) and *Symphony No. 1* (for the Chicago Symphony).

Irina Nuzova

Pianist

Critics have applauded classical pianist Irina Nuzova for her “rise above mere virtuosity” (The Washington Post), “intensity of feeling” (La Nazione, Italy) and “profound interpretation” (Il Resto de Carlino, Bologna).

Nuzova has appeared in recital as a soloist and as a chamber musician in the United States, Europe, and South America. In Europe, she has performed as part of the Amici della Musica concert series in Florence; at the Teatro Massima in Catania, Italy; Hermitage State Museum in St. Petersburg; the Moscow Conservatory, and in the Netherlands. In the United States, she has played at the Phillips Collection in Washington D.C., Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall and the Kosciuszko Foundation in New York; and as part of chamber music series including the Rhode Island Chamber Music Concert Series and the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series in Chicago. In recital with Wendy Warner, Nuzova has performed at the Music Institute of Chicago, the Phillips Collection in Washington D.C., and as part of the Rockefeller tri-Institutional series in New York City.

This season Nuzova appears as soloist in numerous venues; and will also be featured with her duo at St. Paul's Music in the Park Series; in Chicago's Music Institute, and at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., presenting the complete Beethoven sonatas cycle. Ms. Nuzova also appeared in live radio interviews and performances in Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington DC, among others. WarnerNuzova played the five Beethoven cello/piano sonatas for a live broadcast on WFMT in Chicago; and was invited by Fred Child of Performance Today -- a program that was syndicated nationwide.

The recipient of the Bruce Hungerford Award at the Young Concert Artist Auditions in New York, Nuzova has won top prizes in competitions such as the Vincenzo Bellini and Citta di Senigallia International Competitions in Italy and the Beethoven Piano Sonata International Competition in Memphis, Tennessee. As a chamber musician, she has won top prizes at the Vittorio Gui and the Premio Trio di Trieste International Chamber Music Competitions in Italy. Nuzova's performances have been broadcast live on WFMT in Chicago, WGBH in Boston, and Italian TV.

Nuzova is a native of Moscow, Russia. Her mother was a professional piano instructor who took her daughter for her first piano lesson at age five. Nuzova made her debut with the Omsk Philharmonic at the age of 14. She studied at the Gnnessin Academy of Music under the guidance of Alexander Satz before moving to the United States. She continued her musical education at the Manhattan School of Music with Lev Natochenny, and at Juilliard where her teachers were Oxana Yablonskaya and Jerome Lowenthal. To further herself as a musician she worked for many years in the cello studio of Harvey Shapiro at Juilliard and pursued individual studies with pianists Jean-Bernard Pommier, Eteri Andjaparidze, and Vladimir Feltsman. Nuzova earned her Doctorate of Musical Arts degree from the Hartt School of Music (University of Hartford, Connecticut).

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who we are

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Laura Papparatto, President



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