CAPITOL THEATER | MADISON

The Triple
JANUARY 28, 2022

Harp and Haydn
FEBRUARY 25, 2022

Paganini Passion
MARCH 25, 2022

The Emperor
APRIL 22, 2022
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A proud supporter of the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra. Enjoy the concert!
Since our last live Masterworks concert in February 2020, a sea change has shifted us all, in society, community, and art. This Masterworks season reflects that. We look at each season as unique, and this season is a mix of the familiar, the masters, and the unfamiliar finds so worthy of illumination.

Our return home to the Capitol Theater melds new works by the orchestra’s first-ever Composer in Residence Dr. Bill Banfield, with his impressive contemporary, Patrice Rushen, to the belated birthday boy himself, Beethoven. In his honor, we dedicate our first Masterworks and our finale to Beethoven’s war horses: the rarely performed Triple Concerto and the Emperor.

Thank you for your support of the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, your belief in our work, and for preserving and sustaining this premier ensemble for future generations.

Andrew Sewell
Music Director
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Maestro Sewell enters his twenty-second season as music director of the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra and fifth season with the San Luis Obispo Symphony, having had long tenures with the Wichita, Toledo, and Mansfield, Ohio Symphonies.

Known for his innovative programming and discovering new talent, Sewell is a highly skilled orchestra builder with a wide knowledge and range of repertoire. In demand as a guest conductor, he has led the Toronto, Detroit, Milwaukee, Columbus, Syracuse, Illinois, Monterey, Gulf Coast, and Eugene Symphony Orchestras, as well as the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia, Christchurch Symphony, National Symphony of Mexico, Kyushu Symphony (Japan), City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong, OK Mozart Festival, WI Peninsula Music Festival, and Masterworks Festivals in the US and London.

A native of New Zealand, Maestro Sewell received his music training on the violin, piano and cornet, and began conducting at age 16. Six years later, he made his professional opera debut with the Mercury Opera and the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. Winning the Australian Guarantee Corporation’s Young Achiever’s Award allowed him to further his studies abroad. Sewell holds a Master of Music degree with Honors in Conducting from the University of Michigan.

Over the years Andrew has been credited with numerous awards for services to music including the 2017 Service to Music Award from the Association of Wisconsin Symphony Orchestras, the 2013 Rabin Arts Youth Award for Individual Achievement by the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras, the 2005 Best Individual Artist Award by Wichita Arts Council, and 2005 Musician of the Year by the Wisconsin State Journal, for services to music and the greater arts community.

While not conducting, Andrew enjoys cycling the backroads of Wisconsin and San Luis Obispo and visiting family in New Zealand. He and his wife, Mary, have three grown children and reside in Madison.
In addition to being a vocalist, clarinetist, percussionist, and record producer, Patrice Rushen has also composed extensively for film and television. She was the first woman to serve as head composer and musical director for the Emmy Awards, the NAACP Image Awards, the People’s Choice Awards, and Comic Relief V. At the age of 17, she performed with her band at the Monterey Jazz Festival and went on to release three albums with the Prestige label. In 1978, when she was 23, she began recording with the major jazz label Elektra. Rushen says, “In 1999 I composed my first symphony, *Sinfonia*, I just wanted to experiment with using every part of the orchestra.”

Ludwig van Beethoven’s first published works were piano trios, his introduction to Vienna as a professional composer. So, when the time came for him to take on a concerto for multiple instruments and orchestra, a concerto for piano, violin, and cello was a natural choice. The *Triple Concerto* is in the tradition of the genteel Sinfonia Concertante, a form used by Mozart, Haydn, J.C. Bach, and others in the late 18th century. According to Beethoven’s friend and sometimes reliable biographer Anton Schindler, the first public performance of the *Triple Concerto* took place in Vienna in 1808. The pianist was Beethoven’s student and patron Archduke Rudolph, the violinist was virtuoso Karl August Seidler, and the cellist was Nikolaus Kraft, who was known for his technical skill and clear, rich tone.

The first movement is unusual in that it begins quietly and builds gradually into the main theme and then modulates into A minor instead of the more predictable G major. The slow movement has been described as an elaborate introduction to the finale, which follows it without a pause and breaks into a festive polonaise.

Detroit–born composer, guitarist, educator, author, and record company owner William Banfield has written seven books, thirteen symphonies, and eight operas. In 2014, Banfield launched JazzUrbane, a contemporary jazz recording label. He has also served on the Pulitzer Prize composition panel.

During his three years as the WCO’s Composer in Residence, Banfield will write two pieces for the orchestra. One will be a work for narrator and orchestra featuring the words of Frederick Douglass for Summer 2022. The other will be a symphony intended to debut early in 2024. The orchestra will also perform existing works by Banfield over the next several seasons.

His *Symphony No. 8, Here I Stand* is a tribute to Paul Robeson, who was a celebrated bass baritone, actor, athlete, and activist for much of the 20th century. Originally commissioned and written in 2002, the work for narrator and orchestra was never performed. Lost and almost forgotten, it was a conversation in 2020 between the composer and Andrew Sewell that prompted interest in its revival using a multimedia platform.

The collaboration with the UW-Madison School of Communication Arts has produced this tribute in still photography and moving imagery to accompany the three movement Symphony highlighting the legacy of Paul Robeson: Triumph, Trial, and Resolution.
**MASTERWORKS I: THE TRIPLE**

Friday, January 28, 2022

**Suzanne Beia**  
**VIOLIN**

**Karl Lavine**  
**CELLO**

**Christopher Taylor**  
**PIANO**

**REPERTOIRE**

- Patrice Rushen | Sinfonia
- Ludwig van Beethoven | Triple Concerto
- William Banfield | Symphony No. 8, *Here I Stand* (world premiere)

Run Time: 1 HR, 45 MINUTES

**DIRECTOR’S NOTES**

Opening the season is Patrice Rushen’s *Sinfonia*. Patrice is a Grammy-nominated musician of the highest caliber straddling R&B, jazz, and classical genres as the triple crown of performer, conductor, and composer. She is the first woman music director and the first African American producer of The Grammy Awards.

Beethoven’s *Triple Concerto* is one for the record books as we celebrate Beethoven’s delayed 250th anniversary. Concertmaster Suzanne Beia, principal cello Karl Lavine, and UW Professor and Van Cliburn prize winner Christopher Taylor join forces to conclude our first concert of 2022.

Composer in Residence Dr. Bill Banfield’s *Symphony No. 8, Here I Stand*, in honor of the work of Paul Robeson, receives its long-awaited world premiere on January 28.

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Here I Stand and Testimony of Tone, Tune and Time

A Symphony, film accompanying
A Concerto work with spoken texts

Here I Stand, in honor of the work of Paul Robeson, and Testimony of Tone, Tune and Time, inspired by the writings of Frederick Douglass, are two new music, film, and words pieces compelling me to deal squarely with being a mature person, and making sense of being an artist who speaks in this season from that seasoning.

These new works are a “2-part music and words celebration” in the form of Symphony 8: Here I Stand, a symphony (multimovement orchestral concert form with connecting themes), and an instrumental concerto (orchestral concert work written highlighting an instrumental soloist, surrounded with music interchanges of orchestra), with spoken texts and film.

WCO is performing two world premieres by the Composer in Residence Dr. Bill Banfield in 2022. Banfield’s Symphony No. 8, Here I Stand is featured on January 28’s Masterworks I concert. Testimony of Tone, Tune and Time will premiere this summer at Concerts on the Square®.

Banfield’s inspiration and influences in composition run a chord of connectivity across the two substantial compositions, focusing the lens on the work and life of Paul Robeson and Frederick Douglass.
These two men had the advantage to develop their works, ideas, commitments over time, and to devote themselves to their principles, values, and passions. And they were unswerving. They as well never diminished their cultural voices, identity, and commitment to their people, other people and the critique of their nation to be a better place for all, as in equality. They are truly inspiring. They were calling on government, people of means, and power to truly be humane and purge themselves of the chains that bonded them to greed, hatred, oppression, and injustice. It wasn’t a correction minute; it was for the life, soul, or death of a nation.

They were truly statesmen, heroes and saints for real. They both used the arts as a calling symbol to humanity. They are causing me to really dive into values and evaluate how I will stand strong in my own time which still struggles with the meaning of liberty, and moves slowly to be in pulse with justice, peace, equality, with concern for the good of the people, in humility and with integrity.

How will we stand together today to ensure our art rings with their kind of Relevancy, their kind of note and song meaning, that kind of deep human courage, and that kind of finding resolve?

My primary interest artistically is how to tell a more honor-based and redemption story with these figures while being true to their themes and passions. These are not “social protest works,” but sound statues remembering these inspiring figures.

The orchestra, its musical themes and movements, are again simply sound paintings of the life and workings of Paul Robeson.

For Douglass, our saxophone soloist is the strong, defiant, and soulful spirit, Frederick himself, the speakers share boldly his message to the world, and the world that surrounds him (saxophone, Frederick) is the orchestra.

**My process belief;**

**Music is tones and rhythms organized to tell human stories.**

I am given the inspiration from an idea, a personality, a poem, story, a concern, a feeling, and I dream up my music to carry the ideas forward in sound. I hear and imagine the textures, colors of instruments in the orchestra to help me tell the stories.

**WILLIAM BANFIELD, COMPOSER**
Meet the Triple Soloists

SUZANNE BEIA | VIOLIN

Suzanne Beia, Concertmaster of the WCO, celebrates her 26th year with the orchestra. Suzanne also serves as the Co-Concertmaster of the Madison Symphony Orchestra. She is second violinist in the Pro Arte Quartet and performs regularly with the Chicago Philharmonic.

Suzanne held the position of Principal Second Violin in the Wichita Symphony and concertmaster positions with the Reno Chamber Orchestra, Bay Area Women’s Philharmonic, Spoleto Festival Orchestra, and Chamber Symphony of San Francisco. She also held the Assistant Concertmaster position in the New World Symphony.

KARL LAVINE | CELLO

Karl Lavine is the principal cellist for the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra and Madison Symphony Orchestra. Karl is also a member of the Milwaukee-based new music ensemble Present Music and appears regularly at John and Rose Mary Harbison’s Token Creek Festival. He has held faculty positions at Luther College and Illinois Wesleyan University and is currently teaching a private studio in Madison.

As a member of Present Music, Karl has recorded many compositions with the ensemble as well as solo repertoire. With the help of a generous grant from the Aaron Copland Recording Foundation and support from New World Records, the Kepler Quartet is recording the complete string quartets of American composer, Ben Johnston.

CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR | PIANO

Professor of Piano, UW-Madison Mead Witter School of Music

Hailed by critics as “frighteningly talented” (The New York Times) and “a great pianist” (The Los Angeles Times), Christopher Taylor has distinguished himself throughout his career as an innovative musician with a diverse array of talents and interests. He is known for a passionate advocacy of music written in the past 100 years — Messiaen, Ligeti, and Bolcom figure prominently in his performances — but his repertoire spans four centuries and includes the complete Beethoven sonatas, the Liszt Transcendental Etudes, Bach’s Goldberg Variations, and a multitude of other familiar masterworks.

Christopher has appeared with such orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony, and the Milwaukee Symphony. As a soloist he has performed in New York’s Carnegie and Alice Tully Halls, in Washington’s Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and the Ravinia and Aspen festivals.
Violin 1
Leanne League, Concertmaster
Hillary Hempel, Assistant Concertmaster
Xavier Pleindoux
Clayton Tillotson
Katherine Floriano

Violin 2
Gerald Loughney, Principal
Tim Kamps
Anna Carlson
Wes Luke
Paran Amirinazari
Laura Burns

Viola
Nora Frisk, Principal
Diedre Buckley
Christopher Dozoryst
Katrin Talbot

Cello
Robin Hasenpflug, Principal
Tim Archbold
Karen Cornelius
Lindsey Crabb

Bass
Charles Block, Principal
Ben Jensen
Kris Saebo

Flute
Elizabeth Marshall, Principal
Dawn Lawler

Oboe
Laura Medisky, Acting Principal
Lindsay Flowers

Clarinet
Nancy Mackenzie, Principal
JJ Koh

Bassoon
Amanda Szczys, Principal
Midori Samson

Horn
Linda Kimball, Principal
Mary Buscanics-Jones
Dafydd Bevil
Matt Beecher

Trumpet
Robert Rohlfing, Principal
Dave Cooper
Matthew Onstad

Trombone
Michael Dugan, Principal
Eric Larsen
Brian Whitty

Tuba
Tom Curry

Timpani
Kent Barnhart, Principal

Percussion
Lana Wordel, Principal
Cindy Terhune

Harp
Johanna Weinholts
An 18-year-old Sergei Prokofiev wrote his Sinfonietta in A in 1909 and dedicated it to fellow composer Nikolai Tcherepinin, his conducting professor at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He revised it in 1914 and again in 1929, which accounts for the split opus number 5/48. The Sinfonietta is sometimes compared to Prokofiev’s Classical Symphony of 1917 because it’s rather light-hearted. But it has some of Prokofiev’s characteristic motor rhythms and abrupt transitions. It ends suddenly and without fanfare. Its lack of take-home melodies may account for its relative obscurity. Its five movements are scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two trumpets, four horns, and strings.

Alberto Ginastera was born in Buenos Aires. He was well-traveled, with sojourns in the United States in 1945–47, when he studied with Aaron Copland, and 1968–70. Because of political unrest at home, Ginastera spent most of his remaining years in Switzerland. His works evoke the sounds of Argentinian popular music, sometimes in the form of recognizable melodies, sometimes in more abstract ways.

Edna Phillips of the Philadelphia Orchestra commissioned Ginastera’s Harp Concerto in 1956. He labored over it for years in consultation with the Spanish virtuoso Nicanor Zabaleta and later called it the most difficult composing he had ever done. Zabaleta was the first to play it because Edna Phillips had retired by the time of the 1965 debut, which took place at the Philadelphia Academy of Music with Eugene Ormandy conducting.

The concerto is in the standard three movements with a cadenza before the third movement that calls on the harpist to use a variety of special effects. Among them are glissandos, guitar imitations, pedal-glissandos, harmonics, playing near the soundboard, playing with the fingernails, and “whistling sounds,” which the harpist achieves by rubbing her hands over the wire braiding of the bass strings. The percussive orchestration makes it tricky to balance the harp and the orchestra.

Riding high on the success of six symphonies that premiered in Paris in 1787, Joseph Haydn was quick to write two more symphonies suited to Parisian tastes. His Symphony No. 88 in G won over audiences with its tunefulness, wit, and vigor. All along, the emphasis is on suspense and drama. After a stately introduction, Haydn builds a powerful first movement upon a slender scrap of a theme, shifting from D into the distant A-flat and working in counterpoint and modulations. In the slow movement to follow, Haydn startled and delighted his first audiences with the entrance of trumpets and timpani, a novelty for a slow movement at the time. The minuet is a typical Haydn heavy-footed country dance with offbeat accents accompanied by a drone effect. But an abrupt change from D to B-flat injects a note of seriousness into the dancing. And the finale sets contradanse melodies against complex counterpoint in a blend of the popular and the learned.
DIRECTOR’S NOTES

We welcome the return of harp virtuoso Yolanda Kondonassis to perform Alberto Ginastera’s *Harp Concerto* of 1965, written for the great harpist of the twentieth century, Nicanor Zabaleta. Written in an idiomic style for the harp, including many special effects, it is a spectacular work to enjoy live.

Prokofiev’s *Sinfonietta* is an early work from 1909 and was dedicated to his conducting teacher, Nikolai Tcherepnin of the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Following further revisions, this version from 1930 shows a lighter, more humorous side to Prokofiev’s nature.

Haydn’s *Symphony No. 88* from 1787 follows his six Paris Symphonies and is one of his more popular symphonies with an exciting moto perpetuo finale. Combining two twentieth century works and finishing with Haydn is classic WCO fare, inspiring our musicians to come alive with spectacular vitality.
Soloist Yolanda Kondonassis
HARP

Yolanda Kondonassis is celebrated as one of the world’s premier solo harpists and is widely regarded as today’s most recorded classical harpist. With “a range of colour that’s breathtaking” (Gramophone), she has been hailed as “a brilliant and expressive player” (Dallas Morning News), with “a dazzling technique unfailingly governed by impeccable musical judgment” (Detroit News).

She has appeared around the globe as a concerto soloist and in recital, bringing her unique brand of musicianship and warm artistry to an ever-increasing audience. Also a published author, speaker, professor of harp, and environmental activist, her many passions are woven into a vibrant and multi-faceted career.

The first harpist to receive the Darius Milhaud Prize, Kondonassis is committed to the advancement of contemporary music for the instrument, with recent premieres including works by Bright Sheng, Keith Fitch, and Gary Schocker. Current projects include a Harp Concerto commission with Jennifer Higdon.

With hundreds of thousands of discs and downloads sold worldwide, Kondonassis’ extensive discography includes twenty titles and her 2008 release, Air (Telarc), was nominated for a Grammy Award. Her album, Ginastera: One Hundred, celebrates Ginastera’s 2016 centennial and was released in October 2016 on Oberlin Music. Her many albums have earned universal critical praise as she continues to be a pioneering force in the harp world, striving to push the boundaries of what listeners expect of the harp.

The recipient of two Solo Recitalists Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and a 2011 recipient of the Cleveland Arts Prize, Kondonassis has been featured on CNN and PBS as well as Sirius/XM Radio’s Symphony Hall, NPR’s All Things Considered and Tiny Desk Concerts, St. Paul Sunday Morning, and Performance Today.

In addition to her active solo, chamber music, and recording schedule, Kondonassis heads the harp departments at Oberlin Conservatory of Music and The Cleveland Institute of Music and presents masterclasses around the world.
## ORCHESTRA ROSTER

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New Zealand composer Christopher Blake studied engineering and music at the University of Canterbury and composition at the University of Southampton School of Music. Blake wrote Kotuku on a commission from Andrew and Mary Sewell in 2019. It features an original lament with indigenous flute. Kotuku tells the story of the native white heron of New Zealand and its spiritual significance to Maoridom.

Niccolò Paganini was the greatest violin virtuoso and musical showman of his day. Among the works for his spectacular performances is a series of violin concertos, most of which were first published by his heirs more than a century after Paganini composed them.

Paganini was so secretive with the orchestral and solo parts of his compositions, that he often collected them right after a performance so that no one could copy his tricks of the trade or perform his works. One of his tricks was to use unconventional tunings for his violin in order to make brilliant passages easier to play.

He wrote his Violin Concerto No. 1 sometime between 1811 and 1818. The concerto begins with what an early reviewer called “a grand military movement” that moves into a lyrical section and a solo tour de force rich in thirds, octaves, tenths, and harmonics. The second movement has an Italian sonorous bel canto style popular in the operas of Paganini’s younger contemporary Gioachino Rossini. And the finale returns to the dazzling virtuoso demands of the first. When Paganini played the concerto in London, the orchestra members were so astonished that the audience had to inform them that one of the music stands had caught fire.

By 1891, when he was 16, Anglo-African composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was a published composer. He became quite popular in America, most notably in 1899 with his setting of Longfellow’s narrative poem The Song of Hiawatha. He wrote his Petite Suite de Concert in 1910. It includes the whimsical “La caprice de Nanette,” the graceful “Demande et réponse,” which was popular enough that it was arranged as a song called “Question and Answer,” and the wriggling “Tarantelle frétillante.”

The festive Symphony No. 34 in C by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is said to signal the end of his apprenticeship as a symphonist. It’s the last symphony that Mozart wrote as a resident of Salzburg, and he took particular care to write something that stood out from all of his previous symphonies. The first movement begins in a grand style, combining overture and march styles, but quickly turns dark and dramatic. The second movement, a minuet, has been torn out of the original score, and selecting a substitute has been a matter of considerable conjecture. Most performances—including tonight’s—simply leave it out, which may be what Mozart had in mind in the first place.
Friday, March 25, 2022

MASTERWORKS III:
PAGANINI PASSION

Eric Silberger
VIOLIN

REPERTOIRE
Christopher Blake | Kotuku (world premiere)
Nicolò Paganini | Violin Concerto No. 1
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor | Petite Suite de Concert
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart | Symphony No. 34

Run Time: 1 HR, 50 MINUTES

DIRECTOR’S NOTES

It is with great pleasure to introduce violin phenom Eric Silberger. This is our third attempt at a concert date as with many of our guest artists, the pandemic has forced us all to be very patient. The wait has been worth it with Paganini’s tour de force Violin Concerto No. 1.

The program opens with a world premiere performance of Christopher Blake’s Kotuku, commissioned by Andrew and Mary Sewell in 2019. Kotuku is based on an original violin solo composed and performed by Mary Sewell for her award-winning 2019 short film, Let Your Sisters Be. The story unfolds dramatically at a graveside showdown where the Kotuku (white heron) takes flight, circling above the mourners, and with it, the departed spirit. The original puturino (Maori flute) will be performed on the wooden flute by guest performer Darren Thompson of the Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe Nation.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor has been featured on numerous Concerts on the Square for larger orchestra forces. We welcome his four-movement Petite Suite de Concert for chamber orchestra. Mozart’s Symphony No. 34 in C major has just three movements yet packs a punch, as C major was considered a triumphal key in classical psyche.
Virtuoso violinist Eric Silberger is a prize winner of the XIV International Tchaikovsky Competition and the Michael Hill International Violin Competition in 2011. His performances have been described by critics as “spine-tingling…astonishing” (The Guardian), “dazzling virtuoso playing” (The Washington Post), “impeccable level of playing, a wonderful musician” (Heather Kurzbauer, The Strad), and “He has got everything in his favour, technique, composure, and personality. We are on the eve of a great soloist” (El Pais, Spain).

Eric has performed as soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician throughout the United States and around the world, including solo performances with the St. Petersburg Philharmonia, Mariinsky Orchestra, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Chamber Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre, London Philharmonia, Danish National Symphony, Orquesta Sinfónica de México, Munich Chamber Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, among others.

Conductor collaborations include Lorin Maazel, Valery Gergiev, Dimitri Kitajenko, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Donald Runnicles, Robin Ticciati, and others. He has appeared at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Louvre in Paris, the Great Hall of the St. Petersburg Philharmonia, The Moscow International House of Music in Russia, Shanghai Grand Theatre in China, Royal Festival Hall in London, Seoul Arts Center in Korea, the National Arts Centre in Canada, and more. Among numerous television and radio appearances in the United States, Asia, and Europe, he was featured on Radio France, STV in China, KBS in Korea, and WQXR, WFYI, FOX 59, WISH-TV, and NPR, among others.

An avid chamber musician, Eric frequently performs chamber music internationally. He also has a special collaboration with bandoneonist and composer JP Jofre and the JP Jofre Hard Tango Chamber Band.

Eric received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Columbia University and a Master of Music degree from The Juilliard School. Mentors have included Glenn Dicterow, Itzhak Perlman, Robert Mann, and Dorothy Delay, among others. He was also mentored by Maestro Lorin Maazel.

Eric plays on a rare J.B. Guadagnini violin from 1757 on generous loan from the Si-Yo Music Society Foundation Sau-Wing Lam collection.
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Leanne League, Assistant Concertmaster  
Cindy Whip  
Hillary Hempel

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Tim Kamps  
Anna Carlson  
Wes Luke

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Diedre Buckley  
Janse Vincent  
Christopher Dozoryst

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Tim Archbold

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Elizabeth Marshall

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Linda Kimball, Principal  
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**Trumpet**
Robert Rohlfing

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Kent Barnhart, Principal

**Percussion**
Lana Wordel, Principal

**Puturino (Maori Flute)**
Performed on the wooden flute by  
Darren Thompson of the Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe Nation
Twenty-three-year-old Leoš Janáček wrote his first orchestral work in 1877 and conducted its debut that year in Brno. From time to time, the six short movements of his *Suite for Strings* may remind a listener of Beethoven, Wagner, or Tchaikovsky, and later in life Janáček disdained the suite. Nonetheless, it’s performed fairly often and shows the talent of a composer who would become one of the great figures in Czech music.

Luigi Cherubini lived from 1760 to 1842, a contemporary not only of Mozart and Haydn but also of Beethoven, Rossini, Schubert, and Schumann. His most significant compositions are his operas, masses, and requiems. Beethoven regarded Cherubini as the greatest of his contemporaries, and Rossini admired his operas. He was not always easy to get along with, however. He talked back to Napoleon at least twice and failed to get an important job because of it. And a generation later, an infuriated Cherubini chased a young Hector Berlioz around a table. Composer Adolphe Adam wrote of him, “some maintain his temper was very even, because he was always angry.”

Cherubini wrote his only symphony in 1816, well after Beethoven had revolutionized the genre and just a year before Beethoven premiered his groundbreaking *Choral Symphony*. By comparison, Cherubini’s modest *Symphony in D* may seem like a charming memento of the previous century.

It was not a pleasant year for Beethoven. On May 10, 1809, Napoleon’s army captured Vienna, disrupting the composer’s already chaotic life. He wrote to a publisher on July 26: “We’ve passed through a heavy concentration of misery. Since the fourth of May I’ve produced very little coherent work, no more than a fragment here and there. The entire course of events has affected me body and soul. Nor can I give myself over to the enjoyment of country life, which is so crucial for me.”

The loss of his country walks might have been a blessing in disguise because it forced Beethoven to spend his time composing his *Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat*. He may have begun the concerto with the idea of being the soloist in its first performance, but by the time of its debut in Leipzig in 1811, embarrassing experiences with his deafness had forced him to give up public performance, and the pianist for the occasion was the little-known Friedrich Schneider.

The first movement of the concerto proclaims the prowess of the new six-octave piano. The second takes on the profundity of a meditation while demonstrating the instrument’s songlike tone, and the finale, which bounds directly out of the second movement, is a tour de force of rhythm and suspense. No one knows who gave the concerto the nickname Emperor, but it wasn’t Beethoven.
**MASTERWORKS IV:**
**THE EMPEROR**

Friday, April 22, 2022

**John O’Conor**
*PIANO*

**REPERTOIRE**
Leoš Janáček | Suite for Strings
Luigi Cherubini | Symphony in D major
Ludwig van Beethoven | Piano Concerto No. 5, *Emperor*

Run Time: 1 HR, 45 MINUTES

**DIRECTOR’S NOTES**

John O’Conor’s gift for Beethoven never disappoints. Loved by our orchestra and audience alike, O’Conor is a statesman and musical icon. Beethoven’s *Piano Concerto No. 5, Emperor* is gargantuan, so named for its grandeur and highly sophisticated form. This is Beethoven at his most intense, personal, and sublime. So much so that in this capacity we are treating it as the main course or the steak, putting it in the second half, more like a symphony, with Janáček and Cherubini as appetizers and a salad.

Czech composer Leoš Janáček’s *Suite for Strings* (1877) was inspired by his friendship with Dvořák. A work in six movements, it joins a growing list of forgotten yet brilliant string compositions performed by the WCO in recent years.

Luigi Cherubini’s *Symphony in D* was commissioned by the London Philharmonic Society in 1815. A composer mainly of operas, he was well respected in Paris and other world capitals and was in the employment of Napoleon while in Vienna. Cherubini’s symphonic literature reveals much more about this often overlooked composer.
Soloist John O’Conor
PIANO

“This artist has the kind of flawless touch that makes an audience gasp.”
(Washington Post)

The Irish pianist John O’Conor has been gathering wonderful reviews for his masterly playing for over 40 years. Having studied in his native Dublin, in Vienna with Dieter Weber, and been tutored by the legendary Wilhelm Kempff, his unanimous 1st Prize at the International Beethoven Piano Competition in Vienna in 1973 opened the door to a career that has brought him all around the world.

He has performed with many of the world’s leading orchestras, including the London Symphony, Royal Philharmonic, Czech Philharmonic, Vienna Symphony, l’Orchestre National de France, the NHK Orchestra in Japan, and the Atlanta, Cleveland, San Francisco, Dallas, Montreal, and Detroit Symphonies in North America. He has given concerts in many of the world’s most famous halls including Carnegie Hall and the Lincoln Center in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington, Wigmore Hall, and South Bank Centre in London, the Musikverein in Vienna, the Dvořák Hall in Prague, the Seoul Arts Centre, and the Bunka Kaikan in Tokyo.

O’Conor first gained widespread attention in the USA in 1986 with the release of his first volume of Beethoven Sonatas on the Telarc label. He went on to record the complete Sonatas, and these were issued as a box set in 1994. CD Review described Mr. O’Conor’s performances as “recordings of the highest calibre and Beethoven playing at its best” and went on to say, “by now he should be recognized as the world’s premier Beethoven interpreter.”

For his services to music, he has been awarded Honorary Doctorates by the National University of Ireland, by Trinity College Dublin, by the Dublin Institute of Technology, and by Shenandoah University, the title “Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres” by the French Government, the “Ehrenkreuz für Wissenschaft und Kunst” by the Austrian Government, the Order of the Rising Sun by the Emperor of Japan, and has received many other awards. In 2015 he was made an Honorary Life Member of the Royal Dublin Society. In October 2016 he was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland. In November 2017 he was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award of the National Concert Hall in Dublin by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins.
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Your financial support of the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra has kept the music playing throughout the last two years, the most challenging in our more than 60-year history. Thank you to all the individuals, businesses, foundations, and government entities who, through their giving, enrich the lives of thousands through music.

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Sat. · Apr. 23, 2022 · 7:30 PM
With “the kind of flawless touch that makes an audience gasp” (Washington Post), Irish pianist John O’Conor has been honored for over forty years of service to music.

**Bill Charlap**
Sat. · May 21, 2022 · 7:30 PM
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Pianist Bill Charlap is a two-time Grammy nominee and jazz legend from New York, making his long-awaited first appearance in Madison.

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