Since our last live Masterworks concert in February 2020, a sea change has shifted us all, in society, community, and art. Our season reflects that. We look at each Masterworks 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 warhorses: the rarely performed Triple Concerto and the Emperor. The Triple is a 37-minute feat, the only concerto Beethoven completed for more than one soloist. And ours will be performed by virtuosi as compatible as a hand and glove, concertmaster Suzanne Beia, principal cellist Karl Lavine, and UW-Madison Professor of Piano Christopher Taylor.

Our second season of the digital Musician Sessions returns this fall with three one-hour programs of chamber music performed by ensembles.

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
PRE-CONCERT EVENT & DISCUSSION

Enjoy a lively pre-concert discussion with cocktails and appetizers held in the Wisconsin Studio at the Overture Center. Maestro Andrew Sewell, Wisconsin Public Radio’s Norman Gilliland, and our concert guest artist will share insights and inspiration for the evening’s Masterworks concert repertoire.

Reservations for the intimate pre-concert event must be made at least one week prior to the concerts.

Pre-concert event tickets are $45. Cash bar is available. To reserve your spot, call 608.257.0638.

Doors open at 5:30 PM
Discussion begins at 6:30 PM

Please Note: We are committed to ensuring the safety of our patrons, musicians, and staff. For Handel’s Messiah in December 2021 and Masterworks I in January 2022, we will be requiring proof of vaccination against COVID-19 and to be fully masked while in the venue. Please visit wcoconcerts.org for more information.
Bill Banfield is one of the most original voices on the scene today. He tunes us into the conversation happening worldwide between the notes of contemporary musical culture. — Henry Louis Gates

William Banfield is an award-winning composer whose symphonies, operas, and chamber works have been performed and recorded by major symphonies across the country. He is one of the most performed, recorded composers of his generation. Banfield’s work to date includes twelve symphonies, seven operas, nine concerti, chamber, as well as jazz and popular forms.

Patrice Rushen’s Sinfonia, William Banfield’s Symphony No. 8, Here I Stand (world premiere), and Ludwig van Beethoven’s Triple Concerto are featured in the program.

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.

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

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

“Bill Banfield is one of the most original voices on the scene today. He tunes us into the conversation happening worldwide between the notes of contemporary musical culture.”

— Henry Louis Gates

Banfield joined the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra for a three-year residency partnership starting in July 2021. We are commissioning two major works for the WCO and the greater Madison community as well as significant community outreach while Bill is in residence.
Yolanda Kondonassis  
HARP

REPERTOIRE
Sergei Prokofiev | Sinfonietta
Alberto Ginastera | Harp Concerto
Joseph Haydn | Symphony No. 88
Run Time: 1 HR, 30 MINUTES

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 idiomatic 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.

Eric Silberger  
VIOLIN

REPERTOIRE
Christopher Blake | Kotuku (world premiere)
Niccolò 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, and featuring an original lament with indigenous flute. The work tells the story of the native white heron of New Zealand and its spiritual significance to Maoridom.

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.
SPECIAL PERFORMANCES

VERONA AREA PERFORMING ARTS SERIES
November 20, 2021 at 7:30 PM
Verona High School Performing Arts Center

REPERTOIRE
Tchaikovsky | Souvenir de Florence
A Set of Popular Songs with Sarah Lawrence, Soprano

Schubert | Octet
Copland | Appalachian Spring for 13 Instruments

HANDEL’S MESSIAH
December 8, 2021 at 7 PM
First Congregational Church, Madison

THE NUTCRACKER WITH MADISON BALLET
December 17–26, 2021
Overture Hall

FAMILY SERIES I: “EL SALÓN MÉXICO”
April 2, 2022 at 10 AM

MOZART’S REQUIEM
May 21, 2022
Hamel Music Center

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.
THE MUSICIAN SESSIONS

The Musician Sessions are an eclectic array of music performed in traditional and unusual ensembles, solo percussion to trios, quartets, quintets, and nonets. This recorded online concert series emphasizes works by contemporary composers, women, and composers of color and focuses the lens on conversations with our core musicians.

PRICING
3-Concert Pack: $75
Single Concert: $30

DIGITAL CONCERT ACCESS
Access will be granted on Fridays, with viewing open for 72 hours.

Concert I: Bach to Banfield
November 12-14, 2021

Bach to Banfield takes us on a journey from the Baroque period to the present day. The series opens with the third of Bach’s six famous Brandenburg Concerti Grossi from 1722. We perform two modern works from our Composer in Residence Dr. Bill Banfield’s woodwind quintet, entitled Four in a Car with some jazz influences, and a commissioned work for steel drums by Cliff Alexis, written specifically for our principal percussionist, Lana Wordel.

REPERTOIRE
J.S. Bach | Brandenburg Concerto No. 3
William Banfield | Four in a Car
Cliff Alexis | Solo for Lana
Bohuslav Martinů | Quartet, H. 139
Louise Farrenc | Piano Quintet No. 1

Concert II: Bohemian Blueprint
February 18-20, 2022

Bohemian Blueprint takes its title from two works on this program which features three living women composers. Stacy Garrop’s Bohemian Café is a wind quintet with bass in a popular style and Caroline Shaw’s Blueprint for string quartet, a rigorous and engaging tour de force. We conclude with the early nineteenth century German composer Louis Spohr’s Nonet, a grand work with virtuoso writing for all the instruments.

REPERTOIRE
Joseph Bologne | String Quartet No. 5
Gabriela Lena Frank | Quijotadas
Stacy Garrop | Bohemian Café
Caroline Shaw | Blueprint
Louis Spohr | Nonet in F major

Concert III: Forgotten Gems
March 18-20, 2022

Forgotten Gems showcases an early Piano Trio in D minor by Fanny Mendelssohn, sister of Felix Mendelssohn, and Florence Price’s String Quartet No. 2 in A minor from 1935, exploring elements of the spiritual and folk song.

REPERTOIRE
Fanny Mendelssohn | Piano Trio in D minor
Eric Ewazen | Mandala
Florence Price | String Quartet in A minor
Adolphe Blanc | Septet in E major
FAMILY SERIES

WCO’s Family Series is a free program for families with children of all ages. The format is different from typical concert settings, so moving around or making noise during the show is welcomed and encouraged! Join us for our next performance on April 2, 2022, “El Salón México,” a fictional story of two good friends, Aaron Copland and Carlos Chávez.

SUPER STRINGS

Developed by Maestro Sewell in 2016, the Super Strings Program connects early-elementary school children with a WCO musician who provides the students with violin lessons. While the context is music, the aim is to develop life skills and self-awareness using a strong mentor relationship as the foundation. We established a new partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONCERTS RETURN HOME TO THE SQUARE!

The Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra’s 39th Season of Concerts on the Square® returns to the Capitol Square next summer. We are eager to perform live for the community from the steps of the Capitol on Wednesdays beginning June 29, 2022.

2022 SAVE THE DATES
June 29 / July 6 / July 13 / July 20 / July 27 / August 3

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Contact Elliott Valentine / 608.257.0636 / elliottvalentine@wcoconcerts.org

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