

GRANT PARK ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS

Carlos Kalmar Artistic Director and Principal Conductor

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Wednesday, July 17, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

Jay Pritzker Pavilion

RAVEL MOTHER GOOSE

Grant Park Orchestra

Emmanuel Villaume Conductor

Yolanda Kondonassis Harp

Maurice Ravel

Suite from *Mother Goose*

Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty

Hop o' My Thumb

Laideronnette, Empress of the Pagodas

Conversations of Beauty and the Beast

The Fairy Garden

Alberto Ginastera

Harp Concerto, Op. 25

Allegro giusto

Molto moderato

Cadenza: Liberamente capriccioso —

Vivace

YOLANDA KONDONASSIS

Georges Bizet

Symphony No. 1 in C major

Allegro vivo

Adagio

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Finale: Allegro vivace

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CIBC USA
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in memory of Alyce DeCosta

Tonight's concert is being broadcast live on 98.7WFMT
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French-born **Emmanuel Villaume**, Music Director of the Dallas Opera and Prague Philharmonia, has conducted leading orchestras across Europe, North and South America, Asia and Australia, and led acclaimed productions at the Metropolitan Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Mariinsky Theater, Royal Opera House Muscat (Oman), Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, Hamburg Staatsoper, Cologne Opera, Opéra de Monte-Carlo, Teatro Colón, Teatro La Fenice, Bayerische Staatsoper, Opéra de Nice and other noteworthy

houses. Mr. Villaume has also served as Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the National Slovenian Philharmonic, Chief Conductor of the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, and Music Director of Spoleto Festival USA. Among his recordings on the Deutsche Grammophon and Warner Classics labels are collaborations with such preeminent artists as sopranos Anna Netrebko, Sondra Radvanovsky and Angela Gheorghiu, pianist Andrew von Oeyen, and tenor Bryan Hymel. Among his recent highlights is the Richard Tucker Gala at New York's Lincoln Center and a special New Year's celebration concert at the Royal Opera House Muscat. Born in Strasbourg in 1964, Emmanuel Villaume studied music at the Conservatoire de Strasbourg. He continued his education at Khâgne and the Sorbonne in Paris, where he received degrees in literature, philosophy and musicology. As author of noted articles of musicology, Mr. Villaume was appointed Dramaturg of the Opéra National du Rhin in Strasbourg at the age of 21. He holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Indianapolis. Emmanuel Villaume makes his home in Paris and Dallas.



Yolanda Kondonassis is celebrated as one of the world's premier solo harpists and widely regarded as today's most-recorded classical harpist. 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, Ms. Kondonassis is committed to the advancement of contemporary music for the instrument, with recent premieres of works by Bright

Sheng, Keith Fitch and Gary Schocker. Her current projects include a harp concerto commission with Jennifer Higdon. With hundreds of thousands of discs and downloads sold worldwide, Ms. Kondonassis' extensive discography includes twenty titles; her 2008 release, *Air* (Telarc), was nominated for a Grammy Award. Her latest album, *Ginastera: One Hundred*, which celebrates Ginastera's 2016 centennial, was released 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 instrument. The recipient of two Solo Recitalists Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and a 2011 recipient of the Cleveland Arts Prize, Yolanda 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, Ms. Kondonassis heads the harp departments at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and the Cleveland Institute of Music, and presents master classes around the world.



MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

SUITE FROM *MOTHER GOOSE* (composed in 1908 for piano; orchestrated in 1911)

Scored for: pairs of woodwinds plus piccolo, English horn and contrabassoon, two horns, timpani, percussion, harp, celesta and strings

Performance time: 16 minutes

First Grant Park Orchestra performance: July 28, 1965, Irwin Hoffman, conductor

Ravel's *Mother Goose* began in 1908 as a set of piano pieces for the young children of friends. In 1911, he made a transcription of the original five movements as an orchestral suite and then wove a ballet around them by adding a prelude, an opening scene and connecting interludes. The tiny *Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty* depicts the Good Fairy, who watches over the Princess during her somnolence. *Hop o' My Thumb* treats the old legend in Perrault's anthology of 1697. "A boy believed," Ravel noted of the tale, "that he could easily find his path by means of the bread crumbs he had scattered wherever he passed; but he was very much surprised when he could not find a single crumb: the birds had come and eaten everything up." *Laidronnette, Empress of the Pagodas* portrays a young girl cursed with ugliness by a wicked fairy. The tale, however, has a happy ending in which the Empress' beauty is restored. In the *Conversations of Beauty and the Beast*, the high woodwinds sing the delicate words of the Beauty, while the Beast is portrayed by the lumbering contrabassoon. At first the two converse, politely taking turns in the dialogue, but after their betrothal, both melodies are entwined, and finally the Beast's theme is transfigured into a floating wisp in the most ethereal reaches of the solo violin's range. The introspective *Fairy Garden* is Ravel's summation of the beauty, mystery and wonder of the fairy tale world of *Mother Goose*.



ALBERTO GINASTERA (1916-1983)

HARP CONCERTO, OP. 25 (1956)

Scored for: pairs of woodwinds plus piccolo, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, percussion, celesta and strings

Performance time: 23 minutes

First Grant Park Orchestra performance: August 7, 1999, David Loebel, conductor and Kayo Ishimaru-Fleisher as soloist

The Harp Concerto marked a significant turning point in the development of musical style of Alberto Ginastera, Argentina's most famous and widely performed composer. He categorized his works before the mid-1950s as "Nationalistic," drawing inspiration and material for them from the rhythms and melodies of the Argentine folksongs and dances known as *musica criolla*, though he seldom used literal quotations. This nationalistic music is imbued with the symbolism of the pampas and the "gauchesco" tradition of the Argentinean cowboys, for which Ginastera became the leading musical spokesman. His second style ("Neo-Expressionism") began around 1958, and encompassed most of his later compositions, works in which he employed such avant-garde techniques as polytonality, serial writing, quarter-tones and other micro intervals, and an extension of instrumental resources. The Harp Concerto stands at the threshold between Ginastera's two musical idioms, blending the vibrant rhythms and characteristic melodic leadings of indigenous Argentine music with the expanded harmonic, textural and coloristic resources of his gestating later

manner. The strongest thread tying together his old and new modes of musical speech is not technical, however, but expressive, as he indicated: "A work must produce a feeling of comprehension, a flow of attraction between public and artist. One that speaks only to the intelligence of man will never reach his heart.... The perfect formula would be sensitive beauty plus technical skill." The Harp Concerto is such a work.

The opening movement follows the usual sonata-form pattern: a close-interval main theme is presented by the harp to the accompaniment of whirring figures in the strings and sharp punctuations from the winds and percussion; the second theme, marked in its first measure by a wide-ranging arpeggio from the harp, follows after some soft timpani taps, a brief silence and some simple prefatory chords from the soloist. The middle of the movement contains a passage of dynamic energy exploiting the rhythmic ambiguity inherent in the movement's meter (and calling for "col legno" — tapping with the wood of the bow — from the strings) and a development of the main theme initiated by string tremolos and flutter-tonguing on the flutes. The abbreviated main and second themes (separated by a brief cadenza) round out the first movement. The second movement consists of a large central section framed by strongly contrasting music. The principal part of the movement is given over to a paragraph of "night music" in which the harp's snapping figures are set against an eerie, rustling background, a quality perhaps indebted to the slow movements of several of Béla Bartók's orchestral compositions. The return of a string fugue from the beginning and the harp's comments upon it close the movement. A dramatic and virtuosic cadenza serves as the gateway to the finale, a rondo whose structure is marked by the sharp reports of the tom-toms heralding the appearances of the main theme.



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GEORGES BIZET (1838-1875)

SYMPHONY NO. 1 IN C MAJOR (1855)

Scored for: pairs of woodwinds, four horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings

Performance time: 27 minutes

First Grant Park Orchestra performance: July 13, 1945, Nikolai Malko, conductor

Georges Bizet lived for only three dozen years, and each of those dozens marked an important phase of his short life. During his first twelve years, little time was devoted to the usual activities of childhood, since Georges, the offspring of two talented musicians, was breathtakingly precocious in musical matters. He was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire at the age of nine and was winning prizes there within a year. He produced his earliest known works, two vocalises for soprano, at twelve.

The second dozen years of Bizet's life were the happiest he was to know. He studied at the Conservatoire until he was nineteen, garnering awards for piano, organ, fugue and solfeggio, and composing a variety of works. At nineteen, he won the *Prix de Rome*, which supplied him with a five-year stipend, a residency in Italy and France, and the opportunity to devote himself to composition. He completed several works during that time, establishing a modest reputation as a composer and an excellent one as a pianist. The years of planning, composing and travel came to an end when his prize stipend expired. At the age of 24 he was had to begin making his own living.

After 1863, Bizet gave much of his time to all manner of musical hackwork: private teacher, rehearsal accompanist, music critic, but mostly to transcribing popular pieces of the day for a variety of instruments. "It is maddening to interrupt the work I love for two days in order to write cornet solos. Still, one must live!" he lamented. He planned many works for both opera house and concert hall, but had to abandon most of those because of lack of time. From his later years date the works for which he is mainly remembered: *The Pearl Fishers*, *Jeux d'enfants*, the incidental music to *L'Arlésienne* and *Carmen*. None of those pieces provided him the success he worked so hard to achieve, however, and he lived in a state of continual frustration that Winton Dean described as "settled melancholy." Bizet died before he knew that *Carmen* would make his name famous around the world.

Bizet's Symphony in C, written in his seventeenth year, is a marvel of early musical maturation that rivals the precocity of Mozart and Mendelssohn. Curiously, the work seems not to have been performed during Bizet's lifetime. The manuscript became part of his estate after his death and passed into the possession of his wife, who did not fully appreciate her husband's genius. She bequeathed it to the composer Reynaldo Hahn, and he to the Paris Conservatoire Library, where it gathered dust until Bizet's first English biographer, D.C. Parker, unearthed it in 1933. It was finally premiered on February 26, 1935 in Basle, Switzerland by Felix Weingartner.

The Symphony in C opens with a movement in traditional sonata form, with a bubbling main theme outlining chordal patterns and a contrasting legato second theme, introduced by the oboe, in longer notes. The slow second movement contains a haunting, bittersweet serenade for oboe followed by a soaring melody for strings. The movement is rounded out by the return of the oboe theme. The concluding two movements are a sprightly scherzo with a rustic-sounding trio, and a vivacious finale, cast, like the first movement, in sonata form.

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