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**Armenio Suzano
Conductor**



**Guest Artist:
Dr. William John Newbrough,
piano**

plays Rachmaninoff

**Pre-Concert
Event
at 6:15 pm**

Sunday, April 5, 2020 | 7 PM

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AMHERST SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Sunday, April 5, 2020 at 7 pm

“FROM RUSSIA, WITH LOVE...”

Featuring: **Armenio Suzano, Conductor**

Guest Artist: **Dr. William John Newbrough, piano**

Ruslan and Lyudmila (Overture)

Mikhail Glinka

Scheherazade, Op. 35
IV: Festival at Baghdad

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Piano Concert No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Dr. William John Newbrough, Piano

I. Moderato

II. Adagio sostenuto; Piu animato

III. Allegro scherzando

Intermission

Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

I. Andante; Alegro con anima

II. Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza; Moderato con anima

IV. Andante maestoso; Allegro vivace

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Armenio Suzano, Conductor



Dr. Armenio Suzano was born in Brazil and at the age of 15 won a competition to become the youngest member ever of the renowned Rio de Janeiro Opera House Symphony Orchestra (Orquestra do Teatro Municipal). He served as their Assistant Principal Clarinetist for 9 years.

Dr. Suzano's accomplishments include the Outstanding Music Graduate Award as well as the President's Award for Outstanding Performer of the Year from Stephen F. Austin State University (TX) and the 1st prize at the Sul-America International Competition in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. An avid soccer player and accomplished clarinetist and saxophonist, Suzano has conducted symphony orchestras and wind ensembles throughout the U.S., Russia, and Brazil.

Armenio Suzano is the winner the Solo and Aria Competition at Northwestern University and the winner of the Concerto Competition at the University of Michigan, where he was also a Humanities Fellow. He holds degrees from Stephen F. Austin State University (B.M.), Northwestern University (M.M.) and The University of Michigan (D.M.A.). He serves as Dean of the Greatbatch School of Music @ Houghton College in Houghton, N.Y. where he lives with his wife, Kelly VanKirk Suzano.

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Guest Artist:

Dr. William John Newbrough

Dr. William John Newbrough is Professor of Piano and Director of Piano Studies at Houghton College, NY, and is a piano faculty member at the Csehy Summer School of Music. He was awarded the Horne Blanchard Endowed Chair of Music at Houghton College in 2014, and was named the Mabel Barnum Davidson Distinguished Professor of Fine Arts in 2012. He has earned the Artist Diploma, Doctor of Musical Arts degree, and Master of



Dr. William John Newbrough is Professor of Piano and Director of Piano Studies at Houghton College, NY, and is a piano faculty member at the Csehy Summer School of Music. He was awarded the Horne Blanchard Endowed Chair of Music at Houghton College in 2014, and was named the Mabel Barnum Davidson Distinguished Professor of Fine Arts in 2012. He has earned the Artist Diploma, Doctor of Musical Arts degree, and Master of Music degree from the Peabody Conservatory of Music/ Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD, and the Bachelor of Arts degree with honors from the University of California at Berkeley. Newbrough studied piano with Leon Fleisher, Haggai Niv, Yoheved Kaplinsky, Dominique Weber, and Gilbert Kalish, and has participated in master classes with Richard Goode, Earl Wild, and Malcolm Bilson.

A veteran performer, Newbrough has won many international and national piano competitions and performed in numerous solo, chamber music, and concerto engagements in the United States, Canada, Mexico, England, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Russia, South Korea, and Australia. Highlight venues have included Carnegie Hall, the Sydney Opera House, the French embassy in Washington, D.C., the Van Cliburn Piano Institute, the Dame Myra Hess Series in Chicago, the Chopin Foundation in San Francisco, and Artist Series performances with the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra. Newbrough was the only American of nine pianists worldwide chosen to perform at the prestigious Franz Liszt International Masterclasses and Festival in Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Newbrough has performed multiple times on the acclaimed television series “Grand Piano,” and he was featured on “Great Discoveries” on the Discovery Channel. Many of his performances have also been broadcast on radio. Newbrough has been a recipient of many musical awards, including the Yale Gordon Honorary Medallion in Music, an Eisner Award, and BPAC Artist of the Year. Most recently, he was named a Steinway Artist, he won first prize at The American Prize, and his latest CD became eligible for a Grammy nomination.

In addition to being a classical pianist, Newbrough performs his own hymn arrangements in churches, colleges, and charity and benefit concerts. He acknowledges that his performance ability is entirely a gift from the Lord. Some of the churches at which he has played include the Crystal Cathedral in Los Angeles, Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Florida, Moody Church in Chicago, First Baptist Church in Atlanta, and First Baptist Church in Anchorage, Alaska. He has three sacred piano CDs, “The Sacred Tradition,” “Benediction,” and “Acclamation” on the Mark Custom Recordings label, and a full-length production DVD also entitled “Benediction.”

Bill John lives in Houghton, NY with his wife, Julia, and daughters, Julianna and Daria.

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On March 7, 2020, FASO and the Williamsville Rotary collaborated on the 35th year of Music Scholarship auditions for music students from the Town of Amherst. To qualify, a student has to be a Senior in HS living in the town of Amherst, or related to an orchestra member, or related to a board member of the ASO or FASO. The student also has to be planning to go on to college as a Music Major or as a double major that includes Music.



This year's Scholarship winner is Benjamin Mekinulov, a very fine cellist. He is a Senior at Amherst High School studying under Music Teacher Matt Pendrak. He also studies privately with David Yang, who is a teacher at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. He played the 4th movement of the Elgar Concerto and the Suite 2 Prelude of Bach at his audition. Benjamin has also played with the Greater Buffalo Youth Orchestra and has participated in many music conferences throughout New York State. Benjamin has applied to 5 prestigious music schools throughout the country, but has yet to decide where he will study. Benjamin is our first winner of the Scholarship since it has been raised to \$2000. We were able to raise the scholarship amount this year due to the added support of the Williamsville Rotary.

Benjamin will receive his scholarship checks (one from FASO and one from the Rotary) at the intermission of the April 5 ASO evening concert with solo pianist Dr. William John Newbrough. The concert is a special night dedicated to Russian composers and titled "To Russia With Love". We know that this concert promises to be a very exciting evening musically. We also know that Benjamin comes from a musical family, both of his parents being fine musicians. We know his parents are very proud of all his fine accomplishments.

Come and Enjoy!!!



*Jeffery Zepowitz,
memorializes his grandfather,
violin virtuoso and child
prodigy, Harry Samuel, and
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PROGRAM NOTES BY CLAUDIA STAINES

Ruslan & Ludmila

Based on a poem by Pushkin

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka

1804-1857

Born to a wealthy family, Glinka was an highly cosseted child, kept at home by his paternal grandmother, always wrapped in furs to stay warm. There were only two sources of music for him during these years of confinement were the village church bells, tuned to a dissonant chord, helping developing his appreciation for the strident harmonies. The other were the folk songs captured from the passing peasants and from his nurse. Between the dissonance of the bells and melodies of the folksongs, Glinka had the foundation for the music he would later champion and compose. Following the death of his grandmother, Glinka moved to his maternal uncle's home where he first heard western music like Haydn, Beethoven, and Mozart. But he himself credits a clarinet quartet piece by Bernhard Henrik Crusell for lighting the bulb, as it were. Many years later, while explaining where his passion came from, he said that was moment when "music became (his) soul".

Glinka's soul, in a way, became the soul for all of Russian music. The critic Vikto Korshikov said that there would have been no real growth in Russian musical culture with Glinka's 'Ruslan and Ludmila'. In 1884, the Glinka Prize was founded and awarded to a large number of distinguished composers and musicians, amongst them Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. But perhaps the further reach of Glink's influence was achieved when Soviet astronomer named a minor planet for him - 2205 Glinka.



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Scheherazade, Op 35

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
1844 - 1908

Scheherazade is a gifted storyteller, a weaver of fantasy and romance, whose tales were designed to stop the monarch Shahryar in his path.

For the king had been driven to a kind of jealousy fed madness on discovering his first wife had been unfaithful to him. Upon this discovery, Shahryar decided he would take a new, virgin bride every day, but after beheading the wife he married the day before! He had married, and killed, one thousand and one wives before he met Scheherazade.

She was the vizier's daughter and was remarkable well read. It was said she that had amassed a collection of over a thousand books, filled with history and legends, of earlier kings and exciting adventures. She knew the poets and had memorized their work. She read philosophy, science, and art. And Scheherazade was a charming woman, witty, well bred, and very wise.

Over her father objections, Scheherazade offered to go to the monarch and spend one night with him. Once in his quarters, she begged the king for a favor, to have her beloved sister Dunyazad come for one, last, farewell. What the king did not know was that the sisters had planned for Dunyazad to ask her sister for one of her wonderful stories one, last, time. Scheherazade was given leave to tell her tale, and what a story! But, as she had planned, Scheherazade stopped, in the middle of the tale, just as the sun was coming up. Her night with the king was over. But Shahryar was so intrigued by her tale, he spared her life so that she could finish the adventure the next night.

cont.

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And so she did. But then she started another one, another story that was even more intriguing and thrilling. And again, just as the sun was rising, Scheherazade stopped. It was the end of her night with the king. And again, Shahryar spared her life so she could finish her story.

This went on for one thousand and one nights, until she stopped. It was 1,001 nights and 1,000 stories later, and Scheherazade said she had no more stories to tell. But her wit and wisdom, her great storytelling, her loveliness had made Shahryar fall in love with her. He made her his Queen.

First translated in the 18th century, western culture has been greatly influenced by the ideas and images which came from the Nights stories. We have words in our culture now because of Scheherazade, like "magic lamp" and "genie". We know who Sinbad and Aladdin are because of her. Writers as diverse as Stendahl, Conan Doyle, and A.S. Byatt have used this story for their own work. And composers have used her as well.

Rimsky-Korsakov composed this symphonic suite in 1888. Imperial Russia had long been deeply interested in the East, and this symphony's dazzle and sweep played into that fascination wonderfully. Many musicologists and fans think this is Rimsky-Korsakov's finest work, and perhaps it is. Shall we ask Scheherazade?

Piano Concerto No.2
in C minor, Op. 18

Sergei Rachmaninoff
1873 -1943

For many creative types - authors, actors, musicians - there is something referred to as a 'sophomore curse'. The first time out of the gate with a book, or a movie, or a great piece of music, and it's a hit! Audiences love the work, the money rolls in, and you're a success. Except, the complete opposite was true for Rachmaninoff.

Already suffering from a mental decline following the death of Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff fell into a depression following the March 1897 debut of his Symphony No. 1. It was not well received, at all. Critic and composer Cesar Cui said it was "a depiction of ten plagues of Egypt...". Anyone would spin into depression after such criticism, and Rachmaninoff's last for three years, during which he endured writer's block, unable to produce anything, and supporting himself by teaching piano. In 1897, he was asked to conduct an opera at the Moscow Private Russian Opera Company, and his fortunes began to change.

Rachmaninoff had always been determinedly self-critical, and through his illness became even more so. However, a persuasive visit from a beloved aunt convinced him to try hypnosis and psychotherapy, which he undertook for the first few months of 1900. The idea was to improve his mood, help his poor sleep patterns, improve his appetite, and to help him find a way to reignite the desire to compose. That summer, he began to write a few things, and by April 1901 - a year after he had completed his work with Dr Nikolai Dahl - Piano Concerto No.2 was complete. It was dedicated to Dr Dahl, and it was most enthusiastically received by the first audiences who heard it.

Besides being a composer, Rachmaninoff was a fine pianist, ranked amongst the best of his time, along with Leopold Godowsky, Moriz Rosenthal, and Josef Hofmann. His technique was clean and virtuosic, his playing notable for the ability to clear even when the composition was complex. His gifts as a pianist



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cont.

might have been helped a little by his very large hands. Rachmaninoff had a five finger stretch that enabled him to play the chord C E^b G C G with his left hand.

As your being absorbed by Concerto No.2 this evening, think of Rachmaninoff performing it at its debut, perhaps remembering the failure of the first concerto, not knowing that the future would see this piece used in so many ways in so many other cultural outlets. Just sit, and let the ultimate triumph fill you.

Symphony No. 5

Pytor Ilyich Tchaikovsky
1840-1893

Following the time of Peter the Great, Russia often displayed an ambiguity of its nature, a sort of 'split personality' between the native and adopted elements of the country. It lead the country's intelligentsia to consider and re-consider, over many cups of tea and much drink, what kind of country Russia was. It was a dilemma which also haunted Tchaikovsky through his life. Despite his many popular successes, the composer faced a series of personal troubles, including depression. The early death of his mother while he was a boy away at school, the loss of close friend, and the dissolution of the long relationship with his mentor and patron were all contributing factors, but perhaps we can find some good from this - his music.

Tonight's symphony was composed between May and August 1888, and falls between the Manfred Symphony (1885) and the Sketches for Symphony in E , which were abandoned later. As a numbered symphony, it follows No.4 which was done in 1878, while No. 6, the last of his symphonies, was composed in 1893, shortly before his death. It is a cyclical symphony, that is one which has a melody or theme that occurs and recurs in the piece as a sort of unifying force. Tchaikovsky used this form in other pieces, notably No. 4, but with this symphony, he employs the theme though all the movements.

Although not all critics, and not even Tchaikovsky himself, thought well of the ending (he called it "crude") the symphony in its entirety was well received in its debut in St Petersburg in November 1888, and has since popular with audiences and orchestras around the world. During WWII, it was exceptionally popular with Russian audiences for the clear idea of "ultimate victory through strife". Indeed, on October 20, 1941, at the beginning of second movement during a concert broadcast live to London, bombs began falling on Leningrad. The Leningrad Radio Orchestra played until last note. That was the sixth week of the siege of Leningrad, which did not end until January 1944. Victory through strife indeed.

THE AUTHOR OF THESE NOTES has always been intrigued by the challenging art and music of Russia, the deliciousness of Russian caviar, and the luxuriousness of Russian sable. Intrigued by, but neither a possessor nor master of any. Still, there is something lovely about the idea of storytelling, in words and in music, that will save lives, fortify souls, act as symbols of patriotic pride. So from Russia with love indeed. Naslazhdaysya muzykoy! (Enjoy the music)



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Greetings & Welcome to the Spring Concert!

Tonight we celebrate Spring! Maestro Armenia Suzano brings selections "From Russia With Love." We will also be delighted by the piano performance of guest artist, Dr. William John Newbrough.



Each year FASO and the Williamsville Rotary sponsor a music scholarship. The winner will be announced during intermission. This talented student will be presented with a \$1,000 check from FASO and a \$1,000 check from the Williamsville Rotary. Thanks to Sharron (Jo) Rich, Chairperson, with the help of Sima Lewis, the scholarship team and the judges for their time and talent. The winner will perform at the Spring Luncheon on May 12, 2020.

Another presentation will be a check to the Orchestra from the proceeds of the annual FASO Plant Sale. Much gratitude goes to Mischlers and to Priscilla and John Sedgwick Plant sale coupons are available in the lobby.

Please consider joining FASO. We support the Orchestra with hospitality, financial assistance and promotion of music in the community. Get involved, share the spirit and have fun!

Looking forward to seeing you at the Spring Luncheon on May 12, 2020

Carolyn P. Dole, FASO President



FASO Annual Spring Luncheon

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11:00 am

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For further information, please call Judy Bacon at 716.689.2775

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The plant sale provides funds for our scholarship and annual gift to the orchestra.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:



I just can't help it. It's the History teacher in me. With our 75th Anniversary Season approaching, I've been sorting through some of the keepsakes in the ASO archives. The year was 1946. "Our Boys" have come home. Families gathered 'round the radio for news, serial programs to entertain, and yes, music. The Concert Series, 1946-47, of the Amherst Symphony Orchestra has begun. Founder, First Conductor and Music Director, Dr. Joseph Wincenc wanted everyone in the community to have the availability and opportunity to hear good, live symphonic music from their neighborhood stage. Joe Wincenc was often quoted as saying, "Music Brings Unity to the Community". For the next 50 years, Dr. Wincenc spread his joy of live symphonic music throughout the communities of Amherst, Orchard Park, and summers in Clarence, New York. Fast forward to 1974 and welcome our second Conductor and Music Director, Steven Thomas. Among the many, many pieces of memorabilia, I found a Concert Series 2003-2004 flyer of the Amherst Symphony celebrating 58th Years of Music. Steve Thomas was quoted on the flyer as saying, "Live Music Unifies Family, Friends and Community". Different words, but the same thoughts as Joseph Wincenc. In 2020, we still speak of the Amherst Symphony Orchestra Family; represented by our Conductors, Musicians, Association Board Directors, Committees, Volunteers, Contributors and you, the faithful Community Audience supporting us.

The 75th Anniversary Season will be a time to reminisce our past and move us forward to the future. You won't want to miss our August, October, December, February and April Concert Series. Preview the excitement of the past by stepping out into the front hall Lobby and standing in front of our 75th Anniversary Media-Backdrop, take a 21st Century photo or "selfie", while reading Dr. Joseph Wincenc's words about Community on its Commemorative Logo. You will find the Backdrop available for photo-ops all next year and I'll keep sorting through our past mementoes to share with you.

*Sincerely,
Susan G. Arrigo
ASO Association President*

The Amherst Symphony Orchestra (ASO) gratefully acknowledges the volunteer time and support given by the residents of Presbyterian Village and Asbury Pointe in preparing this season's contributor and concert mailings.

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 3349 Broadway
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 Trinity Performing Arts Center
 Trinity United Methodist Church
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Glazunov Saxophone Concerto

Orchard Park Symphony Orchestra

(Last Concert of Season is held prior to ours)

To receive our publications & updates electronically, please email NATHAN BARNES at: Gnathan.barnesASO@gmail.com



Mark Poloncarz,
County Executive

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Amherst Symphony Orchestra

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