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Armenio Suzano,  
Conductor

# New Horizons and Timeless Traditions



ROMAN MEKINULOV  
GUEST ARTIST

PROGRAM SELECTIONS:

- Mikhail I. Glinka: "Russian and Ludmila" Overture
- George F. Handel: Alla Hornpipe
- Antonio Vivaldi: Concerto No. 24 for Two Violoncelli
- Arturo Márquez: Danzón No. 2
- Eric Whitacre: Lux Aurumque
- Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 5



BENJAMIN MEKINULOV  
GUEST ARTIST

Sunday, April 16, 2023 | 7:00 PM  
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## Conductor's Corner:

"I must study politics and war, that my sons may have the liberty to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history, and naval architecture, navigation, commerce, and agriculture; in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain." (John Adams, 2nd President of the U.S.A.)

For millennia people have wondered with amazement what lies on the unseen edges of humanity's horizons. It was the visionary navigator and explorer Christopher Columbus who famously said, "one can never discover new worlds unless one is willing to lose sight of the horizon." More recently, Enrico Fermi wondered, "with so many habitable planets out there why in God's name have we never heard a word from a single one of them?" From Alexandre the Great to Marco Polo, from Americo Vespucci to Sir Edmund Hillary, and from Amelia Earhart to Neil Armstrong, we have strived to conquer the great divide of our world, of our societies, of our cultures and politics.

From East to West and from North to South mankind has continually and assiduously searched for those things that move the spirit, elevate the mind, fires the imagination, and – ultimately – make us human. This unquenchable thirst for the next horizon has, along with all other endeavors pursued by humans, both a positive and a negative side for its capacity, when benign, to allow all around to flourish and its capacity, when malign, to make all around it wither. Tonight, we will focus on all of the goodness that sprang from visionary individuals, from North, South, East and West; artists whose creativity have extrapolated their time, their culture, their own insecurities, and have reached a 21st century audience of music lovers.

This evening we invite you to go on a journey of exploration through music – and time. The beautiful stories being told tonight come from distant lands as 16th Century Venice, as well as 20th Century Alamos, Mexico and Reno, NV. Tonight, we invite you to picture the busyness of the streets exalting Venice's wealth and exuberant culture, vividly outlined in Vivaldi's Double Cello Concerto in G minor. Contemplate the profoundly moving harmonies and dissonant melodies of Whitacre's *Lux Aurumque*, a composition that not only exposes the listener to the unsettling tensions of disruptive musical idiosyncrasies but also assures us that with each one of those tense moments we are bound to find the peaceful resolutions that irrevocably come with each new sunrise – whether in this piece or in life.

Finally, Beethoven's 5th Symphony also reminds us that the beauty of what is being created through art and music must also be passed on to those who come after us. Santorini was a thriving island civilization in the Mediterranean until one morning, 3,500 years ago, it simply fell into the sea. Tonight's concert is a reminder – and an invitation – for each of us to continually support, consider, promote, or otherwise protect those things that matter most in the quotidian explorations of life.

I am so deeply honored to share in the musical talents of this highly committed ensemble of musicians in the Amherst Symphony Orchestra. It is my hope that you will leave tonight's concert feeling both excitement for the unspeakable gift of music as well as a sense of renewed hope for the future and the blank pages each of us is given with every sunrise. Let us fill those pages with beautiful, loving, and fun-filled adventures.

Cheers,  
*Armênio Suzano*

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Donna Feldman  
Chihiro Heckman  
Emma Hoffritz  
Libby Keller  
Gayle Kroetsch  
Janet Mazzio  
Jeff Mols  
Jenna Norek  
Sandy Paddock  
David Spring

## 2nd Violins:

Laura Rusche,  
Principal  
Gabrielle Catalano  
Melissa Gould  
Mike Kluczniak  
Samantha Macnamara  
Leanne Paddock  
Phyllis Piazza  
Martina Puzanov  
Carrie Ricchiazzi  
Erin Szymanski

## Violas:

Gretchen Perhamus,  
Principal  
Martin Ederer  
Megan Mihans  
Maddie Mooney  
David Peralta  
Sara Philips  
Mary Pouli-Sosnowski  
Renee Roess

## Celli:

Allison Collins, Principal  
Peg Beyer  
Samantha Godus  
Reggie Guo  
Jennifer Sandner  
Jonathan Steffen  
Joseph Tronolone  
Anne Marie Will  
Ezra Zubrow

## Double Basses:

Gil Pease, Principal  
Jamie Baumgardt  
Mary DiCioccio  
Bob Groves  
Vincent Tutino

## Flutes:

August Grillo, Principal  
Michelle Russ

## Piccolo:

Michelle Russ

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Erin Rush

## Clarinets:

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Roseann Deni

## Bassoon:

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Alex Weber

## Contrabassoon:

Linda Mucyn

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Dave Macaluso  
Alexa Mathes  
Lee Brusino

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Ali Jeffords  
Don Montalto

## Trombones:

Pim Liebman, Principal  
Alan Jaenecke

## Bass Trombone:

Stu Easter

## Tuba:

Fred Lenz

## Percussion:

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Dan Hull  
John Senall  
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Lee Brusino

## Baroque String Ensemble

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Joe Buckle  
Donna Feldman  
Sandy Paddock

### 2nd Violins:

Laura Rusche  
Mike Kluczniak  
Melissa Gould  
Martina Puzanov

### Violas:

David Peralta  
Gretchen Perhamus

### Celli:

Reggie Guo

### Double Basses:

Gil Pease



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**SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 2023 • 7:00 PM**  
**New Horizons and Timeless Traditions**  
**ARMENIO SUZANO, CONDUCTOR**  
**Guest Artists: Roman & Benjamin Mekinulov**

“Ruslan and Ludmila” Overture

Mikhail J. Glinka

Alla Hornpipe (from Water Music)

George F. Handel

Concerto No. 24 for Two Violoncelli & Orchestra RV531 in G minor

Antonio Vivaldi

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro

*Roman Mekinulov and Benjamin Mekinulov, Celli*

Danzón No. 2

Arturo Márquez

**INTERMISSION**

Lux Aurumque

Eric Whitacre

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

Ludwig van Beethoven

- III. Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato – Allegro
- IV. Finale: Allegro con fuoco

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## Armênio Suzano, Conductor



Dr. Armênio 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 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 pianist, Suzano has conducted symphony orchestras and wind ensembles throughout the U.S., Russia, and Brazil.

Armênio Suzano is the winner of 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 served as Orchestra Director at Liberty University (Lynchburg, VA) and as Dean of the Greatbatch School of Music at Houghton University (Houghton, NY); currently serves as the Executive Director of The Villa-Lobos Youth Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting character development, self-reliance, and patriotism for Jr. High & High School students, church youth groups and civic youth organizations, as well as serving as Orchestra Director at BRCS Schools. Dr. Suzano lives in Wellsville, NY with his wife, Mezzo-soprano & Choral Director, Kelly VanKirk Suzano and their daughter, Audrey Elizabeth (Cuca) Suzano.

# Roman Mekinulov, Guest Artist

## *Principal Cello (Jane D. Baird Endowed Chair)*

A native of Leningrad, Russia, Roman Mekinulov began cello studies at the age of five at the Leningrad Music School. At age 12 and 14, he was a winner of the Young Artists Competition of Leningrad. In 1985, he was presented in the Winner's Showcase Series at the Great Philharmonic Hall in Leningrad. At age 16, Mr. Mekinulov entered the Rimsky-Korsakov College where he studied with Georgy Ginovker. As a chamber musician, he has performed with various ensembles, and, in 1988, was awarded First Prize in the Leningrad Chamber Music Competition.



In 1989, he immigrated to the United States and continued his studies at the Juilliard School in New York, where he has successfully accomplished Bachelor's and Master's Degrees under scholarship in the class of Professor Harvey Shapiro.

In 1991, Roman formed with Greek pianist Charis Dimaras, a professional ensemble, The Emerald Duo, which has performed to great acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic and has won the Palma d'Oro International Music Competition in Italy.

Roman has appeared as a principal cellist of the Juilliard Symphony and Orchestra under Kurt Masur, Hugh Wolf and Leonard Slatkin, the North Carolina Symphony in their European Tour, as well as the Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra in Germany with such conductors as Rostropovich, Menuchin and Eschenbach.

In 1998 Mr. Mekinulov was appointed principal cellist of the Orquestra Sinfonica do Estado de Sao Pauloin Brazil where he performed under leading conductors and with leading soloists of the World. He was featured as a soloist with all of the leading orchestras allover Brazil as well as Argentina and Peru. Roman is a founding member and the Artistic Director of the Bravo International Chamber Music Workshop, a comprehensive chamber music workshop for high school students which takes place every year during month of July.

Roman resides in Amherst with his wife Sebnem, a lyric soprano, and their two children, Talia and Benjamin.

## Benjamin Mekinulov, Guest Artist

Benjamin Mekinulov started his cello studies at the age of 6 with Professor Feng Hew, continued his studies for a couple years with Professor David Ying. Ben was chosen to participate in all Erie County and NYSSMA music festivals since 2012 until present. In the summer of 2018 and 2019 Benjamin attended the Bowdoin Music festival in Maine; previous festivals attended were Buffalo Suzuki and Bravo Workshop. In December of 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, Ben placed first in the NYSSMA festival in Rochester NY where the best musicians of NY state meet for a 4-day festival.



Ben has been a principal cellist of the Greater Buffalo Youth Orchestra since 2016 and in 2019 he was a concerto competition winner, performing Elgar Cello Concerto, which is to be performed in May of 2020. This year, Ben has won the first prize in the Erie County Music Scholarship Auditions, The Amherst Symphony Scholarship Competition, The Friends of BPO Scholarship Audition and the Silverman Scholarship.

For the summer of 2020, Benjamin was accepted into the highly competitive National Youth Orchestra that takes place in July and performs at Carnegie Hall in New York City. This most recent summer, Benjamin has attended the Colorado College festival and Sitka Music festival. He has also done master classes in the past year with several artists including Mark Kosower, Bion Tsang, David Ying, and Alan Rafferty. In the summer of 2022, Benjamin was accepted on a full fellowship to the acclaimed Aspen Music Festival where he performed many concerts and studied with esteemed cello professors such as Brinton Smith, Eric Kim and Astrid Schween.

Benjamin is currently studies at the prestigious Cleveland Institute of Music with the renowned professor Dr. Melissa Kraut. In April 2022, Benjamin had won Gold Medal in Cleveland Cello Society Scholarship Audition.

# Scholarship Winners

## **Mirabel Sasiela, cellist, recipient of the \$3,000 Audrey C. Hurd String Scholarship**

Mirabel, a student of David Meyer is a member of both the Greater Buffalo Youth and Southtowns Orchestra. Her college study options at Baldwin Wallace University include music theory, performance and neurology of musicianship and pedagogy.



## **Sophia Milbrand, cellist, recipient of the \$2,000 Valerie Heywood String Scholarship**

Sophia is also from the studio of David Meyer. Sophia will be majoring in music education and cello at Bowling Green State University.



## **Alex Weber, Bassoonist, recipient of the \$2,000 Amherst Symphony Friends/ Williamsville Rotary Scholarship**

Alex is a student of Paul Furlong. He is presently serving as Second Bassoonist in the ASO. He will be entering Berklee College of Music in Boston planning a degree in music education and performance.



# Plant Sale

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The plant sale provides funds for our scholarship and support of the orchestra.

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## SPRING LUNCHEON!

The Friends of the Amherst Symphony Orchestra are delighted to welcome back our Spring Luncheon! Not only is it a wonderful opportunity to gather with friends over an excellent meal, but it is a chance to celebrate the recipients of this year's scholarships, sponsored by FASO & the Williamsville Rotary Club, and by the Audrey Hurd Scholarship Fund. The 2023 scholars will be invited to play at the luncheon.

Please mark your calendars! Tuesday, May 16, 2023, Country Club of Buffalo. If you have not already received your invitation, please email Claudia Staines at [AsSheWrites@gmail.com](mailto:AsSheWrites@gmail.com) or call 716.704.9569 Pre-paid reservations are a must.

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# PROGRAM NOTES

by Claudia Staines

## Ruslan & Lyudmila

**Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka**  
1804 - 1857

Mikhail Glinka was the father of Russian music, at least according to Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky who called Glinka's work the "acorn from which the oak of later Russian symphonic music grew." Certainly, the composer did create music that has roots in European tradition but was fertilized with the folk sounds of the Middle East, Persia, and other Asian traditions. Glinka studied at the Chief Pedagogic Institute from 1818 to 1822, and took piano lessons from Irish composer and pianist John Field. Although he worked for the Russian government for a few years, he continued as a composer, even leaving Russia for three years' study in Italy and briefly in Germany, where he focused on composing. Recalled to Russia by his father's death, Glinka's work over the next few years was his best. It included his two operas, "A Life for the Tsar" in 1836 and "Ruslan and Lyudmila" in 1842. The former won him fame, but the latter was not as popular. Still, Franz Liszt spoke highly of the novelty of the music. This second opera opens with an energy that speaks of Glinka's time in Italy but which flows with a combination of exuberance and heroism that created a national operatic foundation to be built upon by the next generation of Russian composers.

## Water Music Suite No 1 "Hornpipe"

**Georg Frederic Handel**  
1685 - 1759

Handel was born and raised in Halle, Germany in 1685, the same year as Bach and Scarlatti. Handel worked there, as well as in Hamburg and Italy, as a composer. However, by 1712, he moved to London, where he settled into a professionally successful and prosperous life, eventually becoming a naturalized Briton. Handel's music reached a peak in the "high baroque"  
cont.



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style, pushing Italian opera to its highest levels, and creating the genre of English oratorio, introducing a new style of church music. As we approach May 6th and the coronation of King Charles, it is worth noting one of Handel's coronation anthems, "Zadok the Priest", has been performed at every British coronation since 1727.

Tonight however, we will enjoy 'Alla Hornpipe', a movement of "The Water Music" which first premiered in 1717 for an earlier king, George I, who had requested a concert on the River Thames. Some historians believe the music was commissioned as a way to draw the attention of the English public away from the king's profligate son, the Prince of Wales, and put the focus back on the king. Whether or not that is completely true, it is well recorded that George I very much enjoyed the Suite. At about 8pm on the evening of July 17th, the king and several friends and courtiers boarded a royal barge at Whitehall Palace and floated upstream on a rising tide, followed by a City of London barge, with some 50 musicians on board. They played for the entire journey to Chelsea, and then all the way back to Whitehall in the very late night. The Suite, in whole or in part, remains amongst the most popular pieces of music played around the world, on or off a slow moving river.

**Concerto for 2 Celli  
RV531 in G minor**

**Antonio Lucio Vivaldi  
1678 - 1741**

A Venetian by birth, a violin virtuoso by training and inclination, but also an ordained priest, and then also an impresario of Baroque music, Vivaldi's name alone can bring images of light and innovation in the formal and rhythmic structure of the concerto. Certainly for people who are most familiar for his work through the violin concerti, The Four Seasons, this might be true. But tonight's concerto offers what musicologist Michael Talbot calls an "highly charged emotional content". Certainly, it does begin rather differently from most in that the entry is for the solo instruments alone. Using the cello as a solo instrument was not different for Vivaldi; he composed some 27 concerti for cello and string orchestra, although this is the only one for two celli. Music historians believe it was composed in the 1720s in Venice.

Karl Heller wrote in his book Vivaldi: The Red Priest of Venice: "...the dark color of the two deep-toned instruments perfectly matches the serious expression..." Serious, moving, engaging, perhaps perfect, definitely the one to remember amongst all of Vivaldi's work.

**Danzón No 2**

**Arturo Márquez y Navarro  
1950 -**

Arturo Márquez was born in Álamos Sonora, the eldest of what would grow to be a family of nine children. Although both his father and paternal grandfather were musicians, Márquez was the only one in the sibling group who

**cont.**

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pursued music as a career. Beginning his composing life at the age of 16, Márquez studied piano and music theory at the Mexican Music Conservatory, and then went on to studies in composition with luminaries such as Federico Ibarra and Héctor Quintana. His music incorporates forms and styles of his native Mexico, although danzón actually is rooted (in its current form) in Cuba, where it is the official musical genre and dance. The danzón is a slow, formal dance, with set footwork, working with syncopated beats but also elegant pauses that pull attention away from the dancers and back onto the music. Tonight's Danzón No 2 is hugely popular, not just in Mexico, but through the musical world, as one of the most frequently performed pieces of Mexican orchestral contemporary classical music. It was commissioned by the National Autonomous University of Mexico and made its debut in 1994. If you are intrigued by this music, you may want to look up the short film also called Danzón No 2 which uses the music as narration. Besides a Romantic look at the golden age of danzón in 1940s México City, you will see the composer himself at the piano in the dance hall.

### Lux Aurumque

**Eric Edward Whitacre**  
1970 -

The name broadly translates to 'light and gold', which is a lovely way to describe this soft slow music. The inspiration comes from a short poem written in English (said to be by Esch Edward) but then translated into Latin, by Charles Anthony Silvestri, in a fashion that would make the Latin words as singable as possible. Whitacre composed the music in 2000 for the Master Chorale of Tampa Bay, and has since adapted it for instruments. In a review in *The Scotsman*, the music has been described as "...softly spoken, deeply harmonic and tuneful... making use of unusual rhythms... to create highly textured music."

The native of Reno Nevada took a long slow road to a music career, starting in a marching band in high school, but not learning to read music until he started university. Whitacre's music may be more familiar to you from the movies, particularly if you enjoy action films. In 2011, Whitacre began working with Oscar-winning composer Hans Zimmer on the music for *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides*. The 'Mermaid Theme' was sung by Whitacre's then-wife, opera singer Hila Plitman, who wrote the invented mermaid language using a combination of Latin, Hebrew and Elvish. A second Zimmer-Whitacre collaboration happened on the *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* movie in 2016.



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**Symphony No 5****Ludwig von Beethoven**  
1770 - 1827

Can there be four opening notes to any piece of music, certainly any piece of classical music, more recognizable around the world than the four which open Beethoven's Symphony No 5? During WWII, the Allies wanted music to add to their propaganda efforts and chose the awe-some Fifth at least in part for those four notes. You see, when they are transliterated into Morse code, changing the da-da-da-Dummm to short-short-short-long, you have the letter V, for Victory.

This "cornerstone of Western music" was written over a five year period, 1804 to 1808, during which Beethoven also worked on quite a number of other compositions, including the first version of Fidelio, as well as the Fourth Symphony and the Sixth, which was also debuted at the same concert (December 22nd, 1808 at Theatre an der Wien in Vienna), lasting four hours, with Beethoven at the conductor's podium. The technical and the emotional impact of the Fifth greatly influenced other composers, such as Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Mahler, and Berlioz. Music critics have not been immune to the power of this symphony either. E.T.A. Hoffman, once described the effect of listening this symphony as "... the soul of each thoughtful listener is assuredly stirred, deeply and intimately, by a feeling that is none other than that unutterable portentous longing..."

Perhaps it is this sense of being profoundly moved that makes the symphony one of the most frequently played in classical repertoires around the world. And beyond the world! In 1977, the first movement was recorded for the Voyager Golden Record. Along with a rather wide swath of images, sounds and languages, the music of Earth, the joy of Beethoven has slipped into the cosmos.

***THE WRITER NOTES:***

This concert is filled with lovely personal memories, not least the remembrance of walking down the aisle to Handel's 'Alla Hornpipe' from The Water Music. But also, taking a younger brother to his first classical music concert, Beethoven's 5th, engaging a life-long interest in classical music. And trying, most unsuccessfully, to dance to the music in the film Danzón No 2. Music touches us all in different ways, but the music that means the most is often the music that touches us most personally.

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