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Armenio Suzano,
Conductor

"MOVIE MAGIC"

WORKS BY:

Gershwin • Shostakovich
Copland
Williams • Grieg



GUEST ARTIST:

**RANDALL KRAMER,
PIANO SOLOIST**

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2023 • 7:00 PM

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Conductor's Corner:

From the very beginning, Hollywood music has enhanced the entertainment experience of Americans who relish this wonderful form of social amusement. Starting in the Golden Era of Hollywood – late 1920's to the early 1960's – our country was growing up with the melodies of iconic films such as “It's a Wonderful Life” and “The Wizard of Oz.” But in the post-Golden Era, Hollywood experimented with amazing new musical elements – Jazz, Rock and electronic music. And this experimentation gave us the iconic music of “The Magnificent Seven,” West Side Story,” and the ground-breaking scores by John Williams.

This evening we invite you to go on a journey through music that reflects the endless possibilities, breath-taking surprises, and the hope-filled spirit that comes with the combination of some Golden Era music scores with some of the most beloved Post-Golden Era music from Hollywood's best composers. Tonight, embrace Shostakovich's zeal and admiration for his musical ideals with the grandiose harmonies of his Festive Overture, and allow the brand-new experiment of Video Games music to infuse your spirit with the possibilities of the “road less traveled,” as we perform Ralph Ford's arrangement of the Suite from Video Games Live.

We also celebrate the splendors of one of the most colorful American composers of the late 19th and early 20th Century, George Gershwin, whose composition Rhapsody in Blue, secured for him a place of honor and respect among the finest composers of his time. From the deeply jazzy, romantic and spellbinding melodies of Gershwin's Rhapsody, performed by pianist, Randy Kramer, saddle up and enjoy the unmistakably American sounds and adventurous spirit of Copland's Hoe-Down from the ballet “Rodeo.” Finally, remember the unique story-telling melodies and global appeal of a new genre of symphonic music that has been enticing audiences all over the world for the past 40+ years, as the ASO performs John Williams' unforgettable Star Wars Suite.

I am so deeply honored to share in the musical gifts of this talented and highly committed ensemble with YOU, our faithful ASO audience tonight. It is my hope that you will leave tonight's concert with a sense of renewed hope for the future and the blank pages each of us is given with every sunrise. Let us fill those blank pages with beautiful, loving, and fun-filled adventures, starting with tonight's concert.

Cheers,
Armênio Suzano



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Armenio Suzano, Conductor

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Shieh-Jian Tsai,
Concertmaster
Esha Blaggan
Donna Feldman
Chihiro Heckman
Libby Keller
Gayle Kroetsch
Jeff Mols
Carrie Ricchiazzi
Ellyn Sheffield
David Spring

2nd Violins:

Laura Rusche, Principal
Melissa Gould
Nathan Klaitz
Michael Kluczniak
Grace LeVe
Samantha MacNamara
Andrea Peralta
Phyllis Piazza
Anna Rumfola
Melanie Rushton
Erin Szymanski

Violas:

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

Celli:

Allison Collins, Principal
Peg Beyer
Erin Eno
Sam Godus
Reggie Guo
John Martell
Jennifer Sandner
Joseph Tronolone
Anne Marie Will
Ezra Zubrow

Double Basses:

Gil Pease, Principal
Jamie Baumgardt
Bob Groves
Lois Peralta
Vincent Tutino
Mary DiCioccio
Mo Han
Christopher Tucciarone

Flutes:

August Grillo, Principal
Michelle Russ

Piccolo:

Eileen Brusin

Oboes:

Sheryl Rohr, Principal
Erin Rus

English Horn:

Laura Beuchi

Clarinets:

Roseann Deni, Principal
Rachel Birkman
Sean Crawford

Bass Clarinet:

Sean Crawford

Bassoons:

Susan Tichy, Principal
Mary Britton

Alto Sax:

Paul LaGrecca
Christopher Peracciny

Tenor Sax:

Christian Kopacz

French Horns:

Megan Marranca - Velez,
Principal
Lee Brusino
Dave Macaluso
Alexa Mathes
Isaac Newman

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G. Nathaniel Barnes,
Principal
Larry Deni
Karl Kroetsch
Ali Jeffords
Al Schlisserman

Trombones:

Alan Jaenecke, Principal
Peter Blackwell

Bass Trombone:

Stuart Easter

Tuba:

Jim Pace

Percussion:

Kris Banzhaf
Ed Bradley
Dan Hull
John Senall
Thomas Stroth
Andrew Ziemba

Harp:

Cristin Kalinowski

Banjo:

Mike Moser

Synthesizer/Piano:

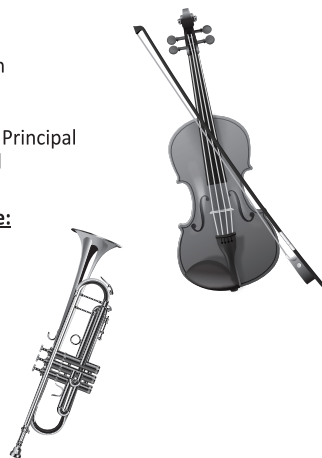
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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2023 • 7:00 PM
"MOVIE MAGIC"
ARMENIO SUZANO, CONDUCTOR
GUEST ARTIST: RANDALL KRAMER, PIANO SOLOIST

Festive Overture.....Dimitri Shostakovich

The Star and Spangled Banner.....Francis Scott Key & John Stafford Smith

Peer Gynt Suite, Op. 46.....Edvard Grieg

- 1. Morning Mood
- 2. The Death of Åse
- 3. Anitra's Danse
- 4. In the Hall of the Mountain King

Suite from Video Games Live.....arr: Ralph Ford

Rhapsody in Blue.....George Gershwin

Randy Kramer, piano

----- INTERMISSION -----

Hoe-Down from Rodeo.....Aaron Copland

Star Wars Suite for Orchestra.....John Williams

- 1. Main Title & The Imperial March
- 2. Yoda's Theme
- 3. Throne Room & End Title

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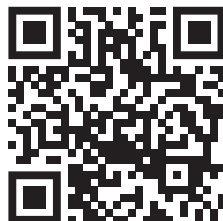
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Armênio Suzano, Conductor



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 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.

Armênio 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 served for many years as Dean of the Greatbatch School of Music @ Houghton College in Houghton, N.Y. and currently serves as Director of Orchestral Studies at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, OK, where he also lives with his wife, Kelly VanKirk Suzano and daughters Cuca Suzano and Gabby Suzano.

RANDALL KRAMER, GUEST ARTIST

Randall Kramer is the founder and Artistic/Executive Director of MusicalFare Theatre which has become a regional center for world and area premiere musicals and a leading musical theatre company in the Northeast. He has directed many of their critically acclaimed productions, including ONCE, MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET, EVITA, IN THE HEIGHTS, FALSETTOS, SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE, SWEENEY TODD and the world premieres of PRETTY FUNNY, BADA BING! BADA BOOM! DANCING IN THE DARK, CHANGE PARTNERS, A RAINBOW JOURNEY and ONE MORE FOR MY BABY.



Mr. Kramer, an eight-time Artvoice Theatre Award winner for best director of a musical, has directed PETER PAN, MARY POPPINS, SOUND OF MUSIC, CINDERELLA, AIDA, BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, JOSEPH...ALL SHOOK UP (with Sally Struthers), and FAME for Artpark. He has also directed the Off Broadway workshop production of DANCING IN THE DARK at the Lambs Theatre, BAT BOY AND DANCING IN THE DARK at the former Studio Arena Theatre in Buffalo, and the dance/theatre world premiere of SOMETHING SO RIGHT at the U.B. Center for the Arts.

He is the author of the musicals STORIES OF LIFE, AMERICAN RHAPSODY and RENEWING WRIGHT and is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC.) He is a founding member and first President of the Theatre Alliance of Buffalo (TAB), the first chairman of the board of Arts Services, a steering committee member of the Greater Buffalo Cultural Alliance (GBCA), and a past New York State council on the Arts (NYSCA) theatre and facilities panelist.

Mr. Kramer holds a Masters of Fine Arts in Piano Performance from the University of Buffalo. He has conducted at Artpark and at the Amherst Symphony Orchestra, and has appeared as a piano soloist with the Orchard Park Symphony, the Niagara Falls Philharmonic, and at Kleinhans Music Hall. He and his wife, Theresa Quinn, have performed their original one piano- four hands show: A GIRL, A GUY, A PIANO, regionally and in Ft. Myers, Florida and Charleston, South Carolina. He is a proud member of Musicians Local 92.

“News From the Friends”

The Friends Committee held its first Executive Board meeting in September, organizing the many different ways to support and promote the orchestra this year. Are you interested in becoming a member of FASO? Volunteer at our orchestra hospitality events? Help us with your computer skills? Men are most welcome to join the Friends Committee. (The Women's Committee became the Friends Committee in 2003 to accommodate all volunteers!) Learn more about the Friends Committee at our amherstsymphony.com website; using the "About Us" tab; pull down "Friends Committee". You will find out about our history, a membership application button, and information about the annual Plant Sale, FASO/Williamsville Rotary Music Scholarship, our Hospitality Events and Concert Preview Luncheons. (Plus, there are buttons for a photo gallery tour of past luncheons and a current Preview Luncheon reservation form.)

September also held a welcoming First Rehearsal Break for the orchestra musicians to enjoy sweet treats and desserts. Our "Movie Magic" Preview Concert Luncheon was held at Sean Patrick's. Did you attend? Join us for the Holiday Concert Preview Luncheon at Rizotto's on December 1, 2023.

We welcome the return of the Annual Holiday Cookie Reception, held in the cafeteria, following the Sunday, December 3rd, "Holiday Family Concert". Contact Priscilla Sedgwick for more information about donating home baked cookies for this event or use the "Contact Us" tab at the ASO website. All FASO members are needed to help supply cookies for the crowd of concert goers.

FASO/MISCHLER'S 2023 PLANT SALE

Thank you to those who supported this very important fund-raising project.

Mischler's still has many beautiful Fall plants: rich colored mums, some in hanging baskets and Fall containers and there are many lovely succulents!

Plant Sale coupons can be used through
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

“Music provides an excellent push to make everyone a leader. That’s how it impacts our lives - it encourages us to be more confident.” Curtis Dean wrote that recently on the About Leaders website. I certainly hope he’s right, because I find myself at the start of this new concert season rather unexpectedly in a position of leadership with the ASO, and I hope to lead well.



As someone who has lead other arts organizations, I know the principles are the same, and in many ways the people are the same. Those who choose to work with the Amherst Symphony Orchestra — as musicians, as Board members, members of FASO (Friends of the Amherst Symphony Orchestra) — do it because they believe in the Orchestra. They believe in the music. They know music can teach us, enlighten us, and entertain us. They willingly give up hours of their time, whether because of practicing and rehearsals or in meetings as well as organizing social events and meals, amongst other activities.

The best reason I have for being an active part of ASO is the friendships I have developed. It started with our late, and much-missed, General Manager Joan Fishburn, who somehow managed to convince me to write my first set of program notes several years ago. I truly don’t know how it happened but there I was, researching composers and their compositions, trying to turn their stories into something relatable for our audience. That was followed by helping to put together our 70th anniversary celebration, joining FASO, becoming Secretary for the ASOA Board. Now this moment.

One of the friendships I have made is now going to be long-distance, as the orchestra says thank you and good-bye to Maestro Suzano. This is his last regular concert with us. His leadership and gift of music is going to be missed but he has given us so much, and I believe the orchestra has never sounded better, something for which he deserves a great deal of credit.

I hope Oklahoma is the home you and your family deserve, but know you are always welcome here in Amherst. Adeus e fique bem, Armênio. Vou sentir saudades suas.

Claudia Staines

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PROGRAM NOTES

by Claudia Staines

Festive Overture

Dmitri Shostakovich
1906 - 1975

In 1954, the head of the Bolshoi Ballet commissioned Shostakovich to create a celebratory orchestral piece the Ballet would use to celebrate the 37th anniversary of the October Revolution. While obviously a work of musical propaganda, it is so brilliantly energetic it has become a favorite with orchestras and audiences everywhere.

Shostakovich was trained as a composer and pianist, working in a variety of different styles. At the Petrograd Conservatory, he was influenced especially by neo-classicism and by Gustav Mahler although he himself said his interests in music ran from Bach to Overreach.

His graduation composition "First Symphony" was debuted in 1926, the start of Shostakovich's fame in the Soviet Union. He also rapidly became internationally known, and was all his life, and is still, acknowledged to be a composer of great skill. Despite his acceptance by Soviet audiences, Shostakovich had a rather complex relationship with the government. He had to withdraw several compositions from public performances because authorities condemned them. He also was denounced in 1948 and suffered professional consequences for several years.

Fortunately, that censure did not deter the Bolshoi. Or perhaps it was the fact that they needed an orchestra piece in three days time. Despite the time constraints, the Ballet and the composer were pleased with the results. Shostakovich's good friend, Lev Lebedinsky, was at the dress rehearsal for Festive Overture and said that he "...heard this brilliant effervescent work, with its vivacious energy spilling over like uncorked champagne." Shostakovich himself described the Festive Overture as "just a short work, festive or celebrative in spirit." The work became very popular in the Soviet Union and was often played at commemorative events. In 1980, it became the signature musical theme of the Moscow Olympics.

Peer Gynt Suite

Suite No. 1, Op. 46

Edvard Grieg
1843 - 1907

"Peer Gynt" started life as a five-act play in verse by the Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen. The most widely performed Norwegian play, it is loosely based on a fairy tale. Ibsen created what he called "...poetry, and if it isn't, it will become such. The conception of poetry in our country, in Norway, shall shape itself according to this..." To enhance that

cont.



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Norwegian feeling, Ibsen asked Edvard Grieg to compose incidental music for the play. In order to meet the demands of the theatre management, Grieg had to keep the pieces of music relatively short. Nevertheless, the music and the play were warmly received by the premier audience on 24 February 1876 in Christiania (now Oslo). To make up for what Grieg considered a “patchwork” of music in the play, a decade after the music premiered, Grieg pulled out eight movements to create two, four-movement suites, Suite No. 1, Op 46 (published in 1888) and Suite No. 2, Op 55 (1893) For many years, these suites were the only parts of the music available, but just a year after Grieg died, Johan Halvorsen, Grieg’s nephew by marriage and a noted Norwegian conductor, published the entire score.

Grieg’s first piano teacher was his mother, who began his lessons at the age of six. When he was 15, violinist Ole Bull, a family friend, encourage Grieg’s parents to send him to Leipzig Conservatory in the piano department. Grieg made his debut as a concert pianist in 1861 in Sweden and continued performing even as he developed his skills as a composer, producing over 20 violin and piano sonatas and concerti still in orchestra repertoire around the world.

Edvard Grieg died in Bergen, on 4 September 1907, following years of ill-health. It is reported his last words were “Well, if it must be so.” He was mourned, and is remembered and celebrated to this day, by all of Norway.

Video Games Live Suite
based on the games Halo, Civilization IV,
Bounty Hunter, Kingdom Hearts

arr. Ralph Ford
1963 -

“Popular Science” believes that music on video games “simultaneously stimulates your senses and blends in to the background of your brain, because that’s the point of the soundtrack. It has to engage you, the player, in a task without distracting from it. In fact, the best music would actually direct the listener to the task.” When you think about it, this is the same message from studies done around the world, looking at how we benefit from having music in our lives on a regular, daily basis. NeuroNation explains there is music for every moment in our lives, whether we’re tackling spring cleaning, studying for exams, struggling through heartbreak, or playing video games. Music and sound effects which are memorable mean people recognize them outside of gaming, and will listen to the music separately, away from the console. Although their music is popular, the composers of video game music are generally unknown to their audiences. Although the majority of composers are Japanese, American musicians are catching up. Moreover as the sound technology in gaming continues to improve, soundtrack composers who work in films are now contributing to game soundtracks. And, as you’ll hear this evening, the music is also being played in concert halls.

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Rhapsody in Blue**George Gershwin**

1898 - 1937

What would the 'Great American Songbook' be without the myriad and many contributions to the oeuvre made by composer George and lyricist Ira Gershwin? One can't say definitively, of course, but it obviously would not be as rich as it is with their works included. George Gershwin's career was too short — he died at just 38 years of age — but, along with hundreds of other compositions, he left us with this sublime jazz concerto "Rhapsody in Blue".

Composed in 1924 as a commission from bandleader Paul Whiteman, it was meant for a jazz concert, an idea Whiteman developed to pull fans of jazz into a concert hall. As part of the program for the evening, Whiteman asked Gershwin for a 'jazz concerto'. While intrigued, Gershwin said no, until a friend called and told Gershwin he'd just read a publicity story. It was about Whiteman's concert and his excitement that there was going to be Gershwin concerto debuted just a few weeks hence. Fortunately for us, the newspaper story helped Gershwin change his mind, although it took him a little bit to find inspiration... on a train. As he explained to his biographer Isaac Goldberg "It was on the train, with its steely rhythms, its rattle-ty bang, that is so often so stimulating to a composer.... I frequently hear music in the very heart of the noise. And there I suddenly heard—and even saw on paper—the complete construction of the rhapsody, from beginning to end."

Even people who don't consider themselves big music fans instantly recognize a few compositions just by their opening notes, which is especially true of the oozing glissando that pulls us in. The thing about the glissando is that it wasn't part of the original composition. It happened at an early rehearsal for the concert when Whiteman's clarinetist, Ross Gorman, decided to stretch the notes out, adding a bit of a tone that was both jazzy and humorous. Gershwin loved it, and so it has stayed. And aren't we lucky?

Hoe Down, from the ballet "Rodeo"**Aaron Copland**

1900 - 1990

When you close your eyes and think of America, do you think of energetic, bustling cities or wide open spaces dotted with cattle herds, tamed by cowboys? Probably a little of both, but when you add the music of Aaron Copland to what you're thinking, the cowboy side is likely to come out on top. Copland was a great fan and supporter of American folk music, incorporating themes from many folk pieces into his work. If you are also a folk music aficionado, you may recognize that the main theme of Hoe-Down is based on the song "Bonyparte", a traditional Kentucky folk fiddle tune.

"Rodeo" was written as a ballet, in five parts, although the later symphony suite dropped one of the movements. Choreographed by the brilliant Agnes DeMille, who besides dancing the lead in the first run of the ballet, had iron control over the production, including Copland's music. But it was control that proved worth it. The ballet was enthusiastically

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received from its first performance, and the music remains equally well-loved. It is easily recognizable, in part because it has been used in literally dozens of Western movies and television shows, but also because the American Beef Producers used the music in an 18-month television and radio advertising campaign “Beef, it’s what’s for dinner” or possibly, after this concert, what your bedtime snack will be.

Star Wars Suite

John Williams
1932 -

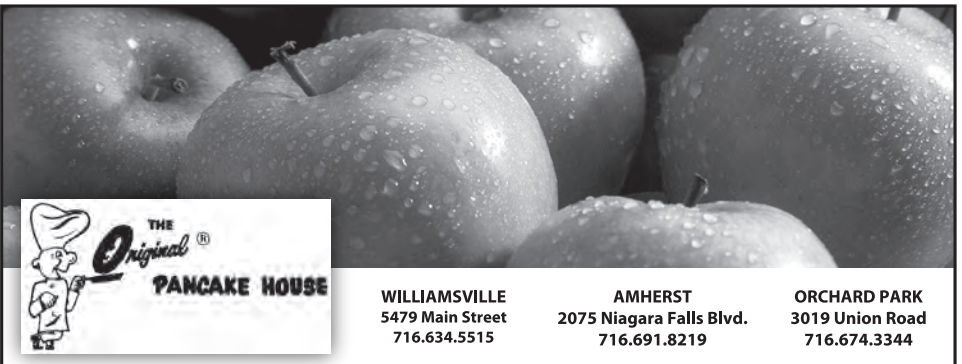
There is an essential American-ness to all of John Williams’ work, even those composed for “a galaxy far, far away”.

Williams was trained at Juilliard and the Eastman School in piano performance and composition. Although he was originally intent on a career as a concert pianist he attended a couple concerts featuring Van Cliburn and John Browning. Their skill made him re-consider his plans, so he focuses instead on writing music for others, thankfully for us who love movies and their music.

Williams began working with Steven Spielberg in 1974 and has, with only half a dozen exceptions, done the scores for all his movies. Spielberg introduced Williams to his friend and collaborator George Lucas who was looking for a composer for “Star Wars”. What was delivered was not ‘just’ a movie score, but music that echoed the style of old Hollywood. It was a modern symphony, emotional and urgent, highlighting the quiet moments, and enhancing the bold ones.

Tonight, we will thrill to the Main Title, suffer a few chills hearing again the Imperial March, be enchanted by Yoda’s Theme, and depart for the evening roused and ready for what comes next as End Title is played.

In 2005, The American Film Institute named this score, for the original “Star Wars”, as “...the greatest film score of all time.” Which is just one of the myriad awards and accolades that’s come Williams’ way. He has earned 25 Grammy’s, 5 Oscars, and 4 Golden Globes. And who knows what lies ahead for the 91-year old Williams as he continues to work!



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