

Thursday, March 8, 2007

## Järvi to conduct 'conversation' before concert

By Mary Ellyn Hutton

Post music writer

Paavo Järvi and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra present an all-Russian program at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday at Music Hall.

Guest artist in Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 (heard in the Oscar-winning film "Shine" with Geoffrey Rush) will be Russian-born Yefim Bronfman. Järvi will open with Prokofiev's delightful "Lieutenant Kije" Suite and close with the rarely heard Symphony No. 2 by Alexander Scriabin.

Best of all, Järvi will discuss the music in a "Classical Conversation" at 7 p.m. before each concert. It will be a new role for the CSO music director, who prefers not to speak before concerts. (Pre-recorded comments by Järvi projected onto plasma screens on each side of the Music Hall stage received a lukewarm reception last fall, largely because they were too small for the oversized hall.)

Järvi has a natural affinity for the Russian repertoire, having imbibed it during his childhood in Soviet-occupied Estonia. Jarvi's father, Neeme, music director of the New Jersey Symphony and the Hague (Netherlands) Residentie Orchestra, studied conducting at the Leningrad Conservatory and has a vast discography of Russian music, including Scriabin's symphonies.

Best known for his piano music and symphonic "Poem of Ecstasy," Scriabin was a strange bird who died in 1915 at 43 before fulfilling his dream of achieving collective nirvana by mounting a gigantic outdoor concert in the Himalayas. His 1901 Symphony No. 2 is late romantic, with a twittering, nature-worshipping slow movement. This will be its second performance in CSO history (the first was by guest conductor Georg Semkow in 1971).

"Lieutenant Kije" is from Prokofiev's score for the film of the same name about a fictitious army officer whose life must be "made up" (on paper, at least) to please the czar. It and Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5, to be performed on CSO concerts March 15-17, will be recorded by Telarc.

Tickets are \$19.50-\$81, \$10 for students, half-price for seniors, at (513) 381-3300 and online at

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[www.cincinnati-symphony.org](http://www.cincinnati-symphony.org). Half-price ZIPTIX may be had from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. concert days at the Music Hall box office.

**"The Three Celtic Tenors,"** Matthew Gilson, James Nelson and Daryl Simpson, repeat last weekend's high-note hit parade with the Cincinnati Pops at 3 p.m. Sunday at Music Hall. Joining them will be Deirdre Shannon of the traveling show "Celtic Woman." CSO assistant conductor Tito Munoz will conduct. Tickets are \$23-\$63 at (513) 381-3300 or [www.cincinnati-pops.org](http://www.cincinnati-pops.org).

**The Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra** led by music director Mischa Santora performs the second and final concert of its 20th-century "Musical Explorations" series with Copland's "Music for the Theater" and Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat" ("The Soldier's Tale") at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in Memorial Hall. Tickets are \$25 at (513) 723-1182 or online at [www.cocincinnati.com](http://www.cocincinnati.com). Children 18 and younger are free.

**Cincinnati Men's Chorus** presents its spring concert, "Women We Love," featuring jazz/blues musician Suede, at 8:07 p.m. March 10 and at 3:07 p.m. March 11 in the Gallagher Student Center Theater at Xavier University. The program, which salutes strong women, socially, politically and culturally, will include "We are a Family" from "Dreamgirls," "Sister (Miss Celie Blues)" from "The Color Purple" and a medley of Whitney Houston and Dionne Warwick songs. Tickets are \$20 at [www.cincinnati-menschorus.org](http://www.cincinnati-menschorus.org) and (513) 542-2626.

**Speaking of** men's voices, check out "The Baker's Dozen," 16 choristers from Yale University who will sing traditional ballads and up-to-date songs, at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at St. Barnabas Church, 10345 Montgomery Road. The touring a capella group is celebrating its 60th anniversary; \$7 at the door.

**A new production** of "Margaret Garner," the Richard Danielpour/Toni Morrison opera about escaped slave Margaret Garner, will open New York City Opera's new season Sept. 11-29 in New York State Theater in Lincoln Center.

The dramatic work - co-commissioned by Cincinnati Opera, Michigan Opera Theater and Philadelphia Opera - received its Cincinnati Opera premiere in July 2005.

Tracie Luck, who covered for soprano Denyce Graves in Cincinnati, will sing Margaret Garner. Baritone Gregg Baker, who sang Robert Garner here, will repeat the role in New York.

For tickets, call (212) 870-5633.

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