



FROM THE CEO

Dear ASO supporters, music lovers, people who took piano when young and have always wished they still played, former high school band or ASYO members, and anyone who is out for a night of fun and relaxation,

I am so pleased to welcome you here today to hear your Arkansas Symphony Orchestra perform. This is an exciting season for ASO. I could spend this entire page talking about each of our goals for the year: looking for a new Music Director, growing our music education programs and amateur community orchestra, developing our organization's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement, and last, but certainly not least, raising the just under \$1.35 million needed to unlock the Windgate Foundation Challenge match so we can break ground on the new ASO Stella Boyle Smith Music Center for generations of Arkansans to use.

Rather than detail the steps we are taking to achieve those goals, I want to take this space to talk about what makes these goals important right now.

ASO aspires to make the world a better place through music. We want to serve more Arkansans, be more relevant to more people, and be an inclusive and welcoming organization. Our purpose is to make the world a better place through music, and we do this steeped in our values: connectivity, continual learning, artistry, courage and agility. Years ago, ASO leaders concluded that we could not achieve our aspirations and truly serve Arkansans in our current headquarters. We rent space in the Diocese home in the Heights that is over 100 years old. Arkansans ages 4 to 104 used this space until walking up the stairs became impossible. Students take lessons in the storage room and in offices. Our physical headquarters do not support our purpose, aspirations, and music making.

On the cover of the program book this year, you see a rendering of what the ASO Stella Boyle Smith Music Center will look like. It will be located between Heifer International and the Clinton Presidential Library. ASO has an amazing opportunity to build a 20,000 square foot community music center for Arkansans ages 4 to 104 to make and enjoy music together. With this center, ASO will be more relevant to more people, be accessible to the students from the 33 communities across our state that participate in youth ensembles, have a broadcast studio to share concerts and music education programs throughout the state, and have more financial stability. We still have just under \$1.35 million to raise to unlock the Windgate Foundation challenge grant and make the center a reality for our city and state. If you are interested in learning more about how you can help at this critical stage and/or sharing ideas for how to use the music center, please call or email me at CLittlejohn@ArkansasSymphony.org or 501-666-1761, ext. 115.

Thank you for your participation. I hope you enjoy yourself and come back again and again.

Sincerely,

Christina Littlejohn, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
ARKANSAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



ARKANSAS
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Thank you



Stella
STELLA BOYLE SMITH TRUST

for your extraordinary support of the

Stella Boyle Smith
MASTERWORKS Series



FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

To All,

Welcome to the '22-'23 season! I want to thank you for being at our performance, whether this is the first time hearing your Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, or if you are a seasoned symphony concertgoer. Congratulations on getting out to hear this incredible musical organization perform.

Each concert this season will be a unique musical experience. With guest artists from Zuill Bailey to Heather Headley, we will show the true diversity and richness of the symphonic repertoire. Already, we have partnered with new friends and old to bring joy to you and your family and friends at Halloween and during the holiday season. We have never been more focused on making the ASO a welcoming and inclusive place to let the power of music lift your spirit. Be sure to check out all of our offerings on the Masterworks, Pops, River Rhapsodies series, and even free neighborhood concerts and other popup events. The artistry of this orchestra will shine at each concert, with relevant and exciting musical selections chosen in every style.

Meanwhile, the work of our top-flight music educators continues apace. The leadership of this organization have long hoped to find a physical space that could contain our wide breadth of education programs: three youth orchestras, an adult community orchestra, beginner group classes, hundreds of weekly private lessons, advanced masterclasses with guest artists, student recitals, recording projects, lectures, and more. We are thrilled to be on the cusp of beginning construction of the ASO Stella Boyle Smith Music Center, which will house these activities in a modern, inspiring, safe, and inviting new facility. And as it always has been, cost is never a barrier for students to access these programs — through generous scholarship support made possible by patrons like you.

Thank you again for being part of our journey. I hope to see you many times this year!

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Robson, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
ARKANSAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PURE BRILLIANCE



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PROGRAM

Saturday, February 25, 2023 • 7:30 PM Sunday, February 26, 2023 • 3 PM
Robinson Performance Hall Little Rock, Arkansas

STELLA BOYLE SMITH MASTERWORKS SERIES

Rachmaninoff's *Paganini* *Variations for Piano*

Andrew Crust, *conductor*

George Li, *piano*

- | | | |
|---|--|-----|
| MARGARET BONDS <i>(1913-1972)</i> | The <i>Montgomery Variations</i> (1964) I. Decision: Andante deciso II. Prayer meeting: Religioso III. March IV. Dawn in Dixie V. One Sunday in the South VI. Lament VII. Benediction | 24' |
| SERGEI RACHMANINOFF <i>(1873-1943)</i> | <i>Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini</i> , Op. 43 Introduction: Allegro vivace Var. I – Tema – Var. II-XXIV <i>George Li, piano</i> | 22' |

I N T E R M I S S I O N

- | | | |
|---|--|-----|
| WILLIAM GRANT STILL <i>(1895-1978)</i> | Symphony No. 1 (Afro-American Symphony) I. Moderato assai II. Adagio III. Animato IV. Lento, con risoluzione – Vivace – Maestoso | 23' |
|---|--|-----|

PLEASE SILENCE ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES. THANK YOU.

Use of cameras and recording equipment is not permitted in the concert hall.

The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra is supported in part by a grant from the Arkansas Arts Council, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage.



ORCHESTRA

Rachmaninoff's *Paganini Variations* for Piano

ANDREW CRUST, Conductor, *Pamela Diane Stephens Conductor's Chair*

GEORGE LI, Piano

VIOLIN

Andrew Irvin

Concertmaster

Dora Paley Ronnel

Concertmaster's Chair

Kiril Laskarov

Concertmaster

Katherine Williamson

Assistant Concertmaster

*†Meredith Maddox Hicks

Principal Second Violin

Eric M. Hayward

Memorial Chair

Edward Barnes

‡Linnaea Brophy

Rachel Bundy

†Charlotte Crosmer

Leanne Day-Simpson

‡Trisha McGovern Freaney

Karen Jarboe

Tom McDonald

Juan Mario Moreno

Abraham Martinez

Geronimo Oyenard

Magdalena Ryszkowski

Dan Santelices

Soyeon Rachel Seo

Algimantas Staskevicius

Nelio Zamorano

VIOLA

‡Katherine Reynolds

Principal

Dr. Howard & Celia

Barnhard Chair

Joe Joyner

†Tatiana Kotcherquina

†Timothy MacDuff

Julian Pranata

Beth Robison

Borys Smolaga

Amanda Wilton

CELLO

David Gerstein

Principal

Linda Garner Riggs Chair

†Chava Appiah

Casey Buck

Stephen Feldman

Rafael León

Alexander Seman

Kristin Smith

‡Jacob Wunsch

BASS

Justin Cheesman

Principal

Ian Collins

Ian Grems

Chris Leverenz

Sara Neilson

FLUTE

Carolyn Brown

Principal

Adriana Manzano

Gabriel Vega

ALTO FLUTE & PICCOLO

Gabriel Vega

OBOE

Leanna Renfro

Principal

Rachel Fuller

Memorial Chair

Lorraine Duso Kitts

ENGLISH HORN

Beth Wheeler

Principal

CLARINET

Karla Fournier

Erin Cameron

Mason Sangster

Lyle Wong

BASS CLARINET

Lyle Wong

BASSOON

Susan Bell León

Principal

Marissa Takaki

CONTRABASSOON

Jake Fowler

HORN

David Renfro

Principal

Robin Dauer

Brent Shires

Tyler Bjerke

Evan Mino

TRUMPET

Chris Wilson

Nairam Simoes

George Worthen

Memorial Chair

Carl Mason

TROMBONE

Michael Underwood

Principal

William "Bill" Vickery, Jr.

Memorial Chair

Bruce Faske

David Carter

TUBA

Ed Owen

Principal

Greer & Barnett Grace

Chair in memory

of Gov. Frank White

TIMPANI

Rick Dimond

Principal

Arkansas Symphony

Orchestra Guild Chair

PERCUSSION

Erick Saoud

Justin Bunting

Ryan Lewis

Fernando Valencia

HARP

Alisa Coffey

Principal

CELESTE

Carl Anthony

Principal

TENOR BANJO

Matt Stone

*ASO-UALR Partnership Faculty

† Member, Quapaw Quartet

‡ Member, Rockefeller Quartet



ARTISTS



GEOFFREY ROBSON, Artistic Director

Geoffrey Robson has emerged as a force of artistic leadership throughout the U.S. and the state of Arkansas. In 2017, he was awarded the Respighi Prize in Conducting by the Chamber Orchestra of New York. He currently serves as Artistic Director and is the principal conductor of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra.

His dynamic leadership of the ASO during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in state-wide and national visibility for the organization. By overseeing an aggressive shift to virtual offerings of performances and educational content, Robson helped ensure the ASO's continued success and full employment of all musicians and staff.

The orchestra's online *Bedtime with Bach* series received nationwide acclaim and was featured by the *Washington Post* and the *Kelly Clarkson Show*. During his tenure in Arkansas, he has conducted critically acclaimed and sold-out masterworks, pops, chamber, and educational concerts throughout the state.

He frequently collaborates with organizations in the community, such as Ballet Arkansas, Arkansas Children's Theater, Opera in the Rock, the Chamber Music Society of Little Rock, and many local choral groups. He served on the faculty of Hendrix College from 2018-2021. In 2013-2014 he served as Visiting Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Central Arkansas and conducted the Conway Symphony Orchestra.

Robson serves as Artistic Director of the Faulkner Chamber Music Festival, a summer concert series and 10-day intensive chamber music camp that provides a unique immersive experience to music students in central Arkansas in the art of playing chamber music.

He has worked with renowned artists such as Gil Shaham, Midori, Rachel Barton Pine, Vadym Kholodenko, Alexander Markov, Mandy Gonzalez, Calvin Lee, and the Beach Boys. He regularly brings emerging world-class talent to Little Rock to entertain audiences and educate and inspire young musicians.

A champion of new music, he collaborates with and explores the music of renowned living composers. In 2016, he conducted the premiere of James Stephenson's *Concerto for Hope* with celebrated trumpeter Ryan Anthony and the San Juan (Colorado) Symphony. Recently, he conducted the premiere of *Into the Beautiful North*, by Joe Brent, performed by the trio 9 Horses. He has promoted works by composers with Arkansas connections, such as Jeremy Crosmer and Karen Griebling.

Robson is also an orchestral arranger, and his works have been featured in the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra's pops series concerts on numerous occasions. Additionally, he writes string arrangements for recording artists to assist them in achieving their musical goals in the studio. He also writes and produces *At the Symphony*, a concert preview radio series on KLRE Classical 90.5 in Little Rock.

As a violinist, he frequently performs on the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra's popular *River Rhapsodies* chamber music series, often sharing the stage with principal

continued next page

ARTISTS *continued*

orchestra members. While in graduate school, he served as concertmaster of the Connecticut Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra and assistant concertmaster of the Waterbury Symphony. Recognized for his skill and versatility as a violinist and fiddle player, he is increasingly sought after as a studio musician.

Robson studied orchestral conducting at the Mannes College of Music in New York City under the tutelage of David Hayes and holds violin performance degrees from Yale University and the Michigan State University Honors College. Primary violin teachers include Erick Friedman, Dmitri Berlinsky, and I-fu Wang.

He studied conducting at Yale University with Lawrence Leighton Smith, Edward Cumming, and Shinik Hahm. Other notable teachers include Leon Gregorian, John Farrer, Neil Thomson, and Larry Rachleff.



ANDREW CRUST, Conductor

Andrew Crust has developed a versatile international career as a conductor of orchestral, opera, ballet, and pops programs. In his third season as Music Director of the Lima Symphony, Andrew programs and conducts the Grand Classics, Pops, and Educational series and has led collaborations with soloists such as Amit Peled, Awadagin Pratt, and Laquita Mitchell.

In the current and upcoming seasons Andrew will debut with the Arkansas, Elgin, Rockford, and Vermont Symphonies as Music Director finalist with soloists such as Tracy Silverman,

Stella Chen, Shannon Lee, George Li, and Wei Luo, and with the San Diego Symphony, Calgary Philharmonic, Billings Symphony, and Sewanee Summer Music Festival as a guest conductor. Andrew will also lead performances of *Le nozze di Figaro* in multiple cities across Spain in 2023. Other recent engagements include performances with the Winnipeg Symphony, Memphis Symphony, Hartford Symphony, Bozeman Symphony, and l'Orchestre de la Francophonie in Québec.

Andrew is a 2020 winner of the Solti Foundation US Career Assistance Award. In 2021 he was awarded “Premio a la Proyección” at the Llíria City of Music International Conducting Competition. In 2017 he was awarded first prize at the Accademia Chigiana by Daniele Gatti, receiving a scholarship and an invitation to guest conduct the Orchestra di Sanremo in Italy. He was a semi-finalist for the Nestlé/Salzburg Festival's Young Conductors Award competition, and was selected by members of the Vienna Philharmonic as a winner of the Ansbacher Fellowship, with full access to all rehearsals and performances of the Salzburg Festival.

Andrew is equally at ease in the pit, having conducted ballet with Ballet Memphis and the New Ballet Ensemble, and opera with Opera McGill, College Light Opera Company, Boulder Opera Company, and others. As a Pops conductor, Andrew has collaborated with such artists as Rufus Wainwright, Steven Page, Michael Bolton, Cirque de la Symphonie, and the United States Jazz Ambassadors. Andrew has also established himself as a conductor of films with orchestra.

Andrew served as the Associate Conductor of the Vancouver Symphony in Canada from 2019-2022, where he conducted a wide variety of programs with the VSO each season, and made dozens of recordings released on theconcerthall.ca. Andrew served as Assistant Conductor of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra from 2017-2019 where he conducted around forty concerts each season. Andrew also served as Conductor of the Memphis Youth Symphony Program. As the Assistant Conductor of the Portland Symphony Orchestra in Maine from 2016-2018, he conducted a variety of concert series, helped coordinate the orchestra's extensive educational programs, and helped lead a program for concertgoers under 40 called "Symphony and Spirits".

Andrew was the Assistant Conductor of the National Youth Orchestra of the USA (NYO-USA) in the summers of 2017 and 2018, assisting Michael Tilson Thomas on an Asian tour, as well as Giancarlo Guerrero, Marin Alsop, and James Ross at Carnegie Hall and in a side-by-side performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra. He has also served as Cover Conductor of the Kansas City Symphony, San Diego Symphony, and Nashville Symphony, Assistant/Cover Conductor of the Boulder Philharmonic and Assistant Conductor of Opera McGill.

Abroad, he has led concerts with the Orchestra Giovanile Italiana in Italy, Hamburger Symphoniker at the Mendelssohn Festival in Germany, the Moravian Philharmonic in the Czech Republic, and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Chile in Santiago.

As an arranger/orchestrator, Andrew is currently working with Schirmer to make orchestrations of a set of Florence Price's art songs, and has orchestrated works by Alma Mahler and Prokofiev, as well as many pops and educational selections.

Andrew is dedicated to exploring new ways of bringing the classical music experience into the 21st century through innovative programming and marketing, creating community-oriented and socially-sensitive concert experiences, and utilizing social media and unique venues. Andrew is a firm believer in meaningful music education, having produced and written a number of original educational programs with orchestras.



GEORGE LI, Piano

Praised by *The Washington Post* for combining "staggering technical prowess, a sense of command, and depth of expression," pianist George Li possesses brilliant virtuosity and effortless grace far beyond his years. Since winning the Silver Medal at the 2015 International Tchaikovsky Competition and being named the recipient of the 2016 Avery Fisher Career Grant, Li has rapidly established a major international reputation as he performs regularly with some of the world's leading orchestras and conductors, such as Gustavo Dudamel, James Gaffigan, Valery Gergiev, Gustavo

Jimeno, Manfred Honeck, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Kirill Petrenko, David Robertson, Leonard Slatkin, Yuri Temirkanov, Vladimir Spivakov, Michael Tilson Thomas, Long Yu, and Xian Zhang.

Highlights of the 2021-22 season include orchestral engagements with the Nashville, San Diego, New World, North Carolina, Pacific, and Valencia Symphonies, as well as the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Russia. In addition, Mr. Li will perform

continued next page

ARTISTS continued

recitals presented by the Chicago Symphony, University of Washington in Seattle, The Cliburn Foundation in Ft. Worth, Emory University in Atlanta, and Stuttgart Konzert in Germany.

Recent concerto highlights include performances with the Los Angeles, New York, London, Rotterdam, Oslo, St. Petersburg, and Buffalo Philharmonics; the San Francisco, Tokyo, Frankfurt Radio, Sydney, Montreal, Baltimore, Utah, and Pittsburgh Symphonies; as well as the Philharmonia, DSO Berlin, and Orchestra National de Lyon. His eight-concert tour of Germany with the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra included performances at the Berlin Philharmonie, Philharmonie am Gasteig Munich, and the Stuttgart Liederhalle. Mr. Li frequently appears with Valery Gergiev and the Mariinsky Orchestra, including performances at the Paris Philharmonie, Luxembourg Philharmonie, New York's Brooklyn Academy of Music, Verbier Festival, Grafenegg Festival, and in various venues, such as the Mariinsky Concert Hall, and others throughout Russia. Li has also performed with major Chinese orchestras, such as the NCPA, China Philharmonia, and Shanghai and Guangzhou Symphony Orchestras, under the baton of Long Yu and Xian Zhang.

In recital, Li performs at venues including Carnegie Hall, Davies Hall in San Francisco, the Mariinsky Theatre, Elbphilharmonie, Munich's Gasteig, the Louvre, Seoul Arts Center, Tokyo's Asahi Hall and Musashino Hall, NCPA Beijing, Shanghai Poly Theater, and Amici della Musica Firenze, as well as appearances at major festivals including the Edinburgh International Festival, Verbier Festival, Ravinia Festival, Vail Festival, Seattle Music Festival, La Jolla Festival, Festival de Pâques in Aix-en-Provence Festival, Colmar Festival, and Montreux Festival.

An active chamber musician, Li has performed alongside Benjamin Beilman, Noah Bendix-Balgley, James Ehnes, Daniel Hope, Pinchas Zukerman, Amanda Forsythe, Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Kian Soltani, Pablo Ferrandez, and Daniel Lozakovich.

George Li gave his first public performance at Boston's Steinert Hall at the age of 10. In 2011, he performed for President Obama at the White House in an evening honoring German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Among George Li's many prizes and awards, he was the First Prize winner of the 2010 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, the inaugural Thomas and Evon Cooper International Competition, and the Grand Prix Animato, as well as a recipient of the 2012 Gilmore Young Artist Award and the 2018 Arthur Waser Prize.

George is an exclusive Warner Classics recording artist. His debut album, "Live at Mariinsky," which was recorded live at the Mariinsky Concert Hall, won an Opus Klassik award for Soloist Recording of the Year in 2018. His second recording for the label features Liszt solo works and Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1, which was recorded live with Vasily Petrenko and the London Philharmonic, and released in October 2019.

George began his piano studies at age 4 with Dorothy Shi, before continuing with Wha Kyung Byun at New England Conservatory beginning at age 12. In 2019, he completed the Harvard/New England Conservatory dual degree program, with a Bachelor's degree in English Literature and a Master's degree in Music. He is currently pursuing an Artist Diploma at the New England Conservatory. When not playing piano, George is an avid reader and photographer, as well as a sports fanatic.

The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Guild presents



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SYMPHONY OF HOMES



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This spring, the doors of some of the most beautiful residences in Little Rock will open to you and your friends for the ASO Guild's Symphony of Homes Tour. You will experience the expert craftsmanship of well-known builders and the creativity and magic of noted designers in settings that will inspire you.

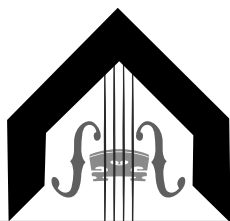
The tour will run for two April weekends, allowing ticket holders to tour all homes in one weekend or choose a few each weekend. A tour map will be provided. At each residence, there will be docents to assist you and to answer your questions. Our Prelude party will kick off the fun on April 21. It's the start of something wonderful!

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SYMPHONY
of
HOMES

April 22, 23, 29, 30
PRELUDE PARTY APRIL 21

The mission of the ASO Guild is to support your Arkansas Symphony Orchestra. The money raised by participation in Symphony of Homes will go to the ASO for music education programs such as the Sturgis Music Academy, the ASO Youth Orchestra, and the Children's Concert, as well other needs.



PROGRAM NOTES

Montgomery Variations / MARGARET BONDS

b. Chicago, Illinois, USA / March 3, 1913; d. Los Angeles, California, USA / April 27, 1972

Bonds was one of the first Afro-American female composers to earn a significant reputation. She created original works such as the one you will hear at this concert, but she is best known for her many arrangements of traditional Afro-American spirituals, including such familiar songs as *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*. Her father was a doctor who was an active force in the civil rights movement, and her mother was a church musician. Her home was the scene of much discussion and music-making. She displayed an interest in composition at an early age. She earned her Bachelor and Master degrees at Northwest University, with difficulty due to the widespread racism of the day. She continued her studies at the prestigious Julliard School in New York.

After graduation, she launched into a busy career of teaching and performing. In 1933, she appeared as soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in the piano concerto by her friend and fellow Afro-American composer, Florence Price. Thus she became the first Afro-American to perform with that ensemble. She relocated to New York in 1939, and from then on played a significant role in advancing the careers of other Afro-American performers and composers, in addition to creating works of her own.

In 1964, she composed *Montgomery Variations* for orchestra, a set of seven warm-hearted and expertly orchestrated variations on the spiritual *I Want Jesus to Walk with Me*. She stated that her variations centered on Southern Afro-Americans' decision to no longer accept the segregationist policies of the Jim Crow South, focusing on the Montgomery Bus Boycotts and the 1963 bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. She dedicated the work to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. After receiving just a handful of performances over the years, became more accessible once it was published for the first time in 2020.

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43 / SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

b. Oneg, Russia / March 20, 1873; d. Beverly Hills, California, USA / March 28, 1943

After Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 4* drew a frosty reception, he determined to make his next (and as it turned out, final) work for piano and orchestra more approachable. As other composers have done (including Liszt, Schumann, Brahms, Blacher, Lutoslawski, and Lloyd Webber), he turned for inspiration to the last of Italian violin virtuoso Niccolò Paganini's twenty-four *Caprices* for solo violin.

Rachmaninoff composed *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* — a set of two dozen variations on *Caprice No. 24* — in a fever of inspiration in July and August, 1934 at his summer residence, a villa on Lake Lucerne in Switzerland. The premiere took place in Baltimore on November 7, with the composer as piano soloist and Leopold Stokowski conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. It won a huge success, by far the greatest enjoyed by any of his latter-day works. It quickly entered the repertoire of virtually every major pianist.

It begins playfully, presenting not the theme itself but the first variation. Aptly, it is the violins that perform Paganini's catchy tune. In the seventh variation, Rachmaninoff introduces the *Dies irae* (Day of Wrath). This sombre theme, drawn from the medieval plainchant *Mass for the Dead*, portrays the fearsome day of final judgment. Berlioz had used it in the nightmarish finale of *Symphonie fantastique* and Liszt as the basis of his *Totentanz* (*Dance of Death*). Rachmaninoff, for reasons he never explained, quoted it not only here, but in numerous works composed throughout his career.

The rhapsody's emotional climax arrives in the eighteenth variation. It is a lyrical, ultimately fervent outpouring of emotion, ingeniously based on a simple inversion of the beginning of Paganini's theme. Accurately predicting that audiences would love it, Rachmaninoff quipped that he had created it "for my manager." Across the remaining six variations, Rachmaninoff builds wave upon wave of increasing excitement, crowned by a thunderous statement of the *Dies irae* in the brass. But it is the soloist who has the final word, banishing the storm of sound and fury with a sardonic quip from Paganini's ghost.

Symphony No. 1, "Afro-American" / WILLIAM GRANT STILL

b. Woodville, Mississippi, USA / May 11, 1895; d. Los Angeles, California, USA / December 3, 1978

Still became the first Afro-American composer to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra when the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra gave the premiere of his first symphony in 1931. Still was also the first Afro-American to have an opera produced by a major company (*Troubled Island*, New York City Opera, 1949); and the first to receive commissions and performances from top-level American orchestras, including New York, Philadelphia, and Cleveland.

He began his musical activities by conducting and arranging for band and string quartet at Wilberforce College in Ohio. After leaving that school in 1915, he earned a living playing in jazz bands and writing arrangements for them. He continued his formal studies at Oberlin College, then moved to New York in 1919 at the invitation of celebrated band leader, W.C. Handy.

He worked freelance as an arranger for Broadway shows and popular music artists, and played oboe in theatre pit bands. All the while he continued to build a reputation for his original concert works, and continued his education with noted composers such as the conservative American George Chadwick, and the avant-garde Frenchman Edgard Varèse. In 1934, he moved to Los Angeles, where he devoted himself primarily to composing concert and theatre works. Over the years, his catalogue came to include eight operas, five symphonies, ballets, concert suites, incidental music for plays, choral music, and songs.

He composed *Symphony No. 1* in 1930, riding a wave of Afro-American cultural awareness that had begun during the previous decade. He and other Afro-American composers incorporated such important elements of their cultural heritage as spirituals, blues, and characteristic dance music into their concert and theatre works.

PROGRAM NOTES *continued*

Still himself wrote of this symphony, “Like so many works which are important to their creators, the Afro-American Symphony was forming over a period of years. Themes were occurring to me, were duly noted, and an overall form was slowly growing. I knew I wanted to write a symphony; I knew that it had to be an American work; and I wanted to demonstrate how the blues, so often considered a lowly expression, could be elevated to the highest musical level.”

The *Afro-American Symphony* is laid out in the four-movement plan typical of a Classical or Romantic period symphony. Still gave each of the four movements a subtitle: Longings, Sorrows, Humor, and Aspirations. A theme that he composed in blues style is the main building block of the symphony, appearing in each movement.

The moderately-paced opening and closing panels of the first movement explore the highly expressive themes in all the colors of the orchestra. They frame a lively central episode. The second movement is a broken-hearted lament. Still follows it with a lively and cheerful dance movement to which the banjo lends its distinctive sound. The heartfelt and expansive first half of the finale is almost a prayer. Animation and joyfulness return to the music, driving it forward to an uplifting conclusion.

PROGRAM NOTES BY DON ANDERSON © 2023



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SPECIAL THANKS

LEGACY GIVING

The Arkansas Symphony would like to thank the following donors who have made a lasting commitment to great symphonic music and music education in Arkansas through their gifts to the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra through their estates.

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Thank you for your support throughout the COVID-19 pandemic! Because of you, ASO is still here to serve Arkansas through the power of music!

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Giving Highlight

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- Your donation amount
- Organization name:
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- ASO's Federal Tax Identification Number: 71-6059542
- ASO's address: P.O. Box 7328,
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Please notify the Development Team when you give from your IRA— we want to thank you for your gift!

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future ASO Stella Boyle Smith Music Center



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CRESCENDO BUILDING

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The ASO would like to thank and recognize these leaders for their support in making the ASO Stella Boyle Smith Music Center a reality for our community.

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Thanks to the generosity of a \$1.5 million challenge grant from the **Windgate Foundation**, your gift will be matched \$1 for every \$2 given. To join in supporting the new ASO Stella Boyle Smith Music Center, please make a donation at arkansassymphony.org/crescendo or for more information contact David Renfro at drenfro@arkansassymphony.org.

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PROGRAM

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FIRST ORION POPS SERIES

JURASSIC PARK

I N C O N C E R T

Geoffrey Robson, *conductor*

Music by John Williams

JOHN WILLIAMS Jurassic Park – Act II 71'
(b. 1932)

I N T E R M I S S I O N

WILLIAMS Jurassic Park – Act II 55'

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The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra is supported in part by a grant from the Arkansas Arts Council, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage.

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Film Edited by MICHAEL KAHN, A.C.E.

Production Designer RICK CARTER

Director of Photography DEAN CUNDEY, A.S.C.

Based on the Novel by MICHAEL CRICHTON

Screenplay by MICHAEL CRICHTON and DAVID KOEPP

Produced by KATHLEEN KENNEDY and GERALD R. MOLEN

Directed by STEVEN SPIELBERG

A UNIVERSAL PICTURE



Tonight's program is a presentation of the complete film *Jurassic Park* with a live performance of the film's entire score, including music played by the orchestra during the end credits. Out of respect for the musicians and your fellow audience members, please remain seated until the conclusion of the credits.

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A NOTE FROM THE COMPOSER

In his highly successful book, *Jurassic Park*, author Michael Crichton enabled us to imagine what the return of the great vertebrates of 150 million years ago might be like. In his thrilling 1993 film adaptation, Steven Spielberg brought these fascinating and terrifying creatures to life, and in so doing captivated movie audiences around the world.

I must say that I greatly enjoyed the challenge of trying to tell the film's story musically. And while we can luxuriate this evening in the magnificent sound produced by the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra as they perform the entire score live to the picture, it's nevertheless tempting to imagine what the trumpeting of these great beasts of the distant past might have been like...

I know I speak for everyone connected with the making of *Jurassic Park* in saying that we're greatly honored by this event... and I hope that tonight's audience will have some measure of the joy we experienced while making the film more than twenty years ago.

—John Williams

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Jurassic Park in Concert is produced by Film Concerts Live!, a joint venture of IMG Artists, LLC and The Gorfaine/Schwartz Agency, Inc.

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MUSIC PREPARATION: Jo Ann Kane Music Service

FILM PREPARATION FOR CONCERT PERFORMANCE: Ramiro Belgardt

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SOUND REMIXING FOR CONCERT PERFORMANCE: Chace Audio by Deluxe

The score for *Jurassic Park* has been adapted for live concert performance.

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO: Universal Pictures, Amblin Entertainment, Steven Spielberg, Kathleen Kennedy, John Williams, Kristin Stark, Michael Silver, Patrick Koors, Tammy Olsen, Lawrence Liu, Thomas Schroder, Tanya Perra, Chris Herzberger, Noah Bergman, Jason Jackowski, Shayne Mifsud, Darice Murphy, Mike Matessino, Mark Graham and the musicians and staff of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra.

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In a career spanning more than six decades, John Williams has become one of America's most accomplished and successful composers for film and the concert stage. He remains one of our nation's most distinguished and contributive musical voices. He has composed the music for more than one hundred films, including all nine *Star Wars* films, the first three *Harry Potter* films, *Schindler's List*, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, *Jaws*, *Jurassic Park*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Lincoln*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Superman*, and the *Indiana Jones* films. He served as music director of the Boston Pops Orchestra for fourteen seasons and remains their Laureate Conductor. He has composed numerous works for the concert stage including two symphonies and more than a dozen concertos commissioned by some of America's most prominent orchestras. He has received five Academy Awards and fifty-three Oscar nominations, seven British Academy Awards, twenty-five Grammys, four Golden Globes, and five Emmys. His other honors include the Kennedy Center Honors, the National Medal of Arts, an honorary KBE from Queen Elizabeth II, the Life Achievement Award from the American Film Institute, Spain's Princess of Asturias Award for the Arts, and the Gold Medal from the UK's prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society.

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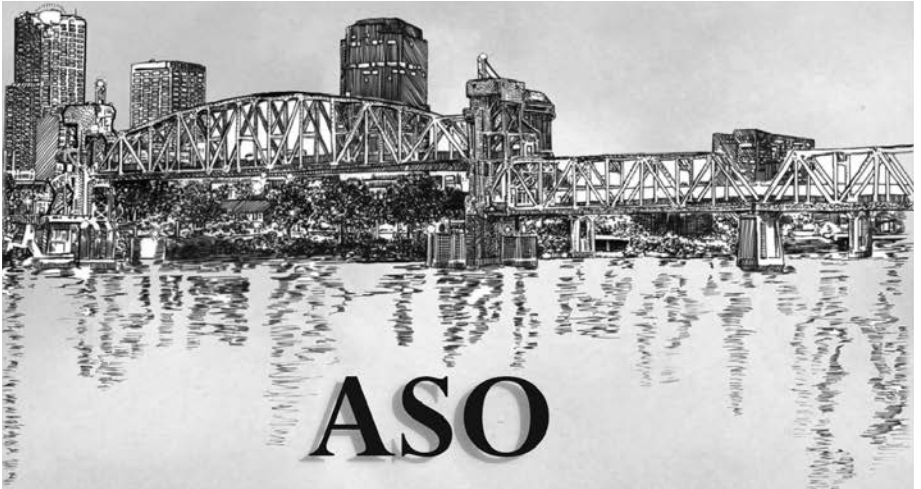
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