

STRING ORCHESTRA

OF THE ROCKIES

2021-2022
CONCERT SERIES

*American
Virtuosi*



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WITH GUEST ARTIST **Stephanie CHASE** VIOLIN

SUNDAY **APRIL 24** 7:30 PM

UM MUSIC RECITAL HALL | UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

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VIOLIN

Maria Larionoff, *Artistic Director*
Margaret Baldridge, *Orchestra Leader*
Jacquie Fennell
Loy Koch
Mary Kothman
Carrie Krause
Kira Lee
Mary Papoulis

VIOLA

Jenny Smith, *Principal*
Lisa Shull
Amelia Thornton

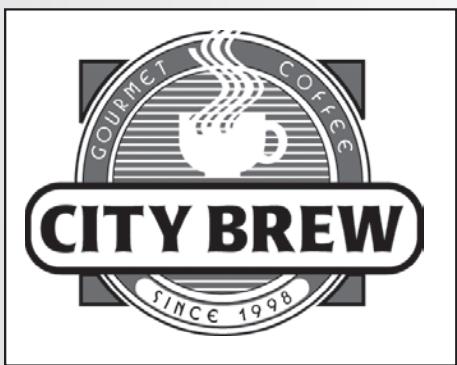
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BASS

Bren Plummer, *Principal*

Some SOR musicians rotate positions for pieces on the program.
Please visit the "Musicians" page on our website, www.sormt.org,
to learn all about your favorite SOR performers!



FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the final concert of SOR's 37th season! It has been an enriching and fun-filled year for us as the full orchestra returned to the concert stage and made music together again. The extraordinary talent of our September guest artist Amit Peled, including his evening of storytelling and music with Tom Cook, and our "Rising Stars" musicians featured in November made it an exceptionally enjoyable year for all. We are truly grateful to each of you, our supportive and enthusiastic audience members, for being an important part of this season's musical journey.

Tonight's concert is a special treat as we welcome world-class violinist Stephanie Chase. I have had the privilege of knowing Stephanie for many years, and she is a warm and generous colleague, as kind and humble as she is brilliant. From her early years as a child prodigy where she debuted with the Chicago Symphony at age 8 and appeared on the Jack Benny Show, she has traveled the world soloing with orchestras, playing recitals, and winning accolades and prestigious musical awards. We are excited to have her making her SOR debut and hope you will enjoy meeting her and hearing her perform.

We celebrate two other American musicians this evening as well—the phenomenal George Gershwin, in his romantic, lilting "Lullaby," and the jazzy, bluegrass-inspired music of Kenji Bunch, the popular and prolific composer based in Portland, Oregon.

I wish all of you a relaxing, wonderful summer and hope to see you again in the Fall for our next season of musical adventures!

Yours in Music,
Maria Larionoff
Artistic Director, SOR

MISSOULAGIVES

MAY 5 & 6, 2022



GUEST ARTIST STEPHANIE CHASE



Stephanie Chase is internationally recognized as "one of the violin greats of our era" (*Newhouse Newspapers*) through solo appearances with over 170 orchestras that include the New York and Hong Kong Philharmonics and the Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta and London Symphony Orchestras. Her interpretations are acclaimed for their "elegance, dexterity, rhythmic vitality and great imagination" (*Boston Globe*), "stunning power" (*Louisville Courier-Journal*), "matchless technique" (*BBC Music Magazine*), and "virtuosity galore" (*Gramophone*). "Renowned for her impeccable intonation" ("Temperament," Stuart Isacoff), her playing is also characterized by "great intensity and a huge tone, the epitome of the modern violinist" ("The Baroque Cello Revival," Paul Laird).

A top medalist of the prestigious VII International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, Ms. Chase has performed concerts in twenty-five countries throughout the world and is a recipient of the esteemed Avery Fisher Career Grant. In recent seasons her performances have been selected as a "Classical Act of the Decade" (*Courier-Journal, Louisville*), one of "20 Concerts to Hear this Fall" (WQXR) and "Critics' Choice" (*Musical America*).

Equally at home in the virtuoso's repertoire, historically informed performance practice and contemporary music, Ms. Chase offers a diverse repertoire of over 60 concertos and large works for violin and orchestra. Her recordings include Beethoven's Violin Concerto, which is "one of the twenty most outstanding performances in the work's recorded history" ("Beethoven: Violin Concerto," Cambridge University Press) and honored with the highest possible ratings by *BBC Music Magazine* and *Classic CD*, including "Record of the Month."

Born in Illinois, Stephanie Chase's early violin teachers were her mother and Sally Thomas, and she was renowned as a child prodigy through concert performances starting at age two. She made her debut with the Chicago Symphony at eight and began extensive national concert touring while in her early teens. Following her Carnegie Hall debut at eighteen, she studied violin privately with Arthur Grumiaux and chamber music at the Marlboro Festival.

Ms. Chase often performs in the dual roles of violin soloist and conductor, and she is a favorite guest of chamber music festivals such as Bravo! Vail, Bargemusic, and Caramoor. Her violin was made in 1742 by Petrus Guarnerius of Venice, which she pairs with a bow made by Dominique Peccatte.

PROGRAM NOTES BY TOM COOK

Lullaby

It was the "Roaring '20s" and the famous composer **George Gershwin** was in the midst of writing scores for annual productions of George White's "Scandals," a popular variety revue which ran from 1919 to 1939 and was modeled after the Ziegfeld Follies. Standards such as "(I'll Build a) Stairway to Paradise" and "Somebody Loves Me" were among the songs emanating from those shows. For the 1922 revue, Gershwin convinced White to incorporate a one-act jazz opera he called "Blue Monday" and which included the *Lullaby* opening tonight's concert. Sadly, that year's version of White's "Scandals" turned out to be a failure. However, *Lullaby* from that shut-

PROGRAM NOTES BY TOM COOK

tered production prevailed and went on to persuade well-known band leader Paul Whiteman to commission Gershwin to write a new piece for an upcoming concert in New York City. It was called....."Rhapsody in Blue." But, that's not the end of the story! At Gershwin's death, the *Lullaby* manuscript became the property of George's brother, Ira, who later showed it to harmonica virtuoso Larry Adler. What evolved was a transcription of the song, written for harmonica and string quartet and presented at the Edinburgh Festival in 1963. *Lullaby* was finally premiered in its original form in 1967. Don't let the label "Lullaby" dissuade you from being an attentive listener. It's music to our ears!

Concerto for Violin and Strings

Long ago, our Artistic Director, Maria Larionoff, learned how essential it is to select just the right piece to showcase the artistry of a guest musician the caliber of Stephanie Chase. Of course, the process of selecting the solo repertoire is a collaboration, only affirmed following careful consideration of a number of masterworks. This evening, it is an 1822 work by **Felix Mendelssohn** that has been selected as the musical vehicle for such a showcase. Composed for violin and string orchestra, the concerto was originally written for Eduard Rietz, a beloved friend and teacher of Mendelssohn who later served as concertmaster for Mendelssohn's legendary performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. But, just to confuse the musicologist in each of us, another close friend of Mendelssohn, Ferdinand David, premiered the same Violin Concerto in 1967, this time in E minor instead of the original key. Casting all that aside, prepare to be dazzled by the music of Stephanie Chase and our SOR musicians!

Zigeunerweisen (Gypsy Airs) Op. 20

As if the Mendelssohn work from this evening's program were insufficient to adequately portray the virtuosic playing and amazing musicianship of Stephanie Chase, we hear next her own arrangement for violin and strings of an 1878 work by the Spanish violin virtuoso, composer and conductor, **Pablo de Sarasate**. *Zigeunerweisen*, or "Gypsy Airs," is the composer's Opus 20. It is not a concerto, but rather a fantasia based on Romany themes reflecting Gypsy beliefs.....but not just *any* Gypsies – Romanians being an ethnic group who live inherently within the borders of Romania. Digging a bit deeper, we find that the themes in this piece are actually not of Romani origin at all but were all adapted from Hungarian musical pieces. This is music bursting with energy and one of Sarasate's most popular compositions, a favorite among violin virtuosos. In a rendition offered up by this evening's guest artist, we are thrilled to present the music of Sarasate and the artistry of Stephanie Chase.

String Circle

And now, on to the grand finale for the SOR's 37th season! Composer **Kenji Bunch** lives in Portland, Oregon, where he serves as artistic director of Fear No Music, a chamber ensemble promoting the music of living composers and introducing audiences to new music being made both locally and globally. In his spare time, he also teaches at Portland State University and Reed College and works with the Portland Youth Philharmonic. Bunch is now forty-eight, and he has received acclaim from audiences, performers, and critics alike for being one of America's most engaging, influential, and prolific composers. His wonderfully creative website can be found at www.kenjibunch.net. Tonight's final piece, *String Circle*, was written in 2005 when Bunch was serving as a classical violist, a fiddler in a bluegrass band, and a composer. The five short movements are based on vernacular American music, and they are pure fun. Wow, just WOW! And thanks for being with us this season, just THANKS!

**The loving memory of our former SOR Board Member
and supporter Noel Hoell is in our hearts this evening.**

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STRING ORCHESTRA
OF THE ROCKIES

“American Virtuosi”

Sunday, April 24, 2022, 7:30 pm

University of Montana, School of Music - Recital Hall

PROGRAM

Lullaby (1922).....George Gershwin
(1898-1937)

Concerto for Violin and Strings in d minor(1822).....Felix Mendelssohn
Allegro
Polonaise: Tempo moderato
Andante
Allegro
Stephanie Chase, violin soloist

INTERMISSION

Zigeunerweisen (Gypsy Airs) Op. 20 (1878).....Pablo de Sarasate
(arr. by Stephanie Chase for violin and strings)
(1844-1908)

Stephanie Chase, violin soloist

String Circle (2005).....Kenji Bunch
Moderato
Easy
Slow ballad
Scherzo
High-speed

This evening's performance is being recorded.
Please be sure to silence all cell phones and other devices.
Please be aware that some hearing aids may emit noises that
interfere with the performance. *Thank you.*