Stephen Hough, piano
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2020
I begin my recital with Busoni’s arrangement of the Bach Chaconne for solo violin. A piece originally written for the smallest of string instruments here it becomes as if written for a mighty organ. Then I play Schumann’s Fantasie Op. 17, one of his greatest works. This three-movement piece takes us through every possible side of the composer’s personality from the most intimate and tender to the most passionate and declamatory. Then two pieces by Liszt, to whom the Schumann Fantasie was dedicated. His Funérailles is an amazing emotional experience, melodies and harmonies leading up to a shattering climax evoking the terrible tragedy of burying a person who meant a lot to you. It was written about a month after Chopin’s death but we don’t know whether there’s any direct connection here. After that his Mephisto Waltz No. 1, a glittering showpiece full of bravura and dazzling pianism. As an encore we go back to Schumann, his “Träumerei” which is part of the Kinderszenen cycle. Few composers invoke the spirit of childhood with more tenderness than Schumann and his piece is maybe his most perfect example of such innocence.

—Stephen Hough

### BACH/BUSONI: CHACONNE FROM THE VIOLIN PARTITA NO. 2 IN D MINOR, BWV 1004

Its natural habitat having been severely diminished over the past half-century, “hyphenated Bach” (i.e. arrangements of Bach by prominent musicians) might well be heading for extinction. It was once encountered freely throughout the world’s recital halls: Bach-Brahms, Bach-Friedman, Bach-Liszt, Bach-Reger, Bach-Siloti, Bach-Tausig, and especially Bach-Busoni. Nowadays hyphenated Bach piano transcriptions are rarely heard, done in by stylistic propriety and unflattering comparisons to the sleek sonicscapes of the historical performance movement.

Hybrids they may be, but that does not lessen their potential effectiveness. Perhaps their virtual banishment has been an overreaction, and perhaps it’s high time that superlative recital openers such as the Bach-Tausig Toccata and Fugue in D minor, BWV 565 or the spectacular transcription of the Chaconne from the D minor Violin Partita by Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) are restored to the repertory.

The Chaconne of J.S. Bach (1685-1750)—the name refers to a variation form of sorts that wrings changes over an unchanging bass line rather than embellishing a tune—is an Everest of the solo violin repertory, a supreme challenge to all who attempt it. Lengthy, complex, virtuosic, and awe-inspiring, it has long been an object of fascination to piano composers ranking from consummate masters (Brahms, who transcribed it for piano left hand), to minor masters (Joachim Raff), to piano-technique mavens (Isidor Philipp, also for the left hand), to the downright obscure (Hans Harthan, whose two-hand version just might be worthy of somebody’s attention someday.)
Ferruccio Busoni’s magisterial transcription fully respects Bach’s original while avoiding any hint of museum stuffiness by taking full advantage of the modern piano’s manifold possibilities. As one of the supreme pianists of his or any other age, Busoni knew just what the piano could do; as a ranking composer (even if his star has dimmed) he knew just what caliber of music he was transcribing and acted accordingly. Spectacular and impressive, the Bach-Busoni Chaconne gives us hyphenated Bach at maximum strength, a master musician’s tribute to his noble predecessor.

—Scott Foglesong

**SCHUMANN: FANTASIE IN C MAJOR OP. 17**

Schumann’s love life and his admiration for Ludwig van Beethoven interacted in a curious way in the composition of his C Major Fantasie Op. 17, his largest and perhaps greatest work for solo piano. In 1836, the path of true love was not running smooth for young Robert as he pined in vain for his beloved Clara, the teenaged daughter of his teacher Friedrich Wieck. The Fantasie’s first movement was composed under the stimulus of these strong emotions and expresses them in a spontaneous flow of soaring melodies and swirling rhapsodic accompaniments that only finds temporary respite in its mysterious middle section Im Legenden-Ton (‘in the character of a legend’).

That same year a civic project was launched to raise a memorial to Beethoven in Bonn, the city of his birth, and Schumann offered to raise funds with the publication of a ‘grand sonata’ in three movements. The tribute to Beethoven may well have been conceived before the first movement was completed, however, as its Adagio coda features a melodic quote from the last song in Beethoven’s An die ferne Geliebte, which could easily have been intended for Clara: “Take, then, these songs [which I have sung for you].”

The second movement is a stirring march of nostril-flaring patriotic fervour that alternates, in rondo fashion, its beginning of the funeral procession. The procession begins by what I feel must surely betrumpet calls, signaling the unstoppable martial chords. As you will hear (hopefully), something undaunted and heroic. The right hand enters with bass register of the piano which signals the approach of an almost suffocation tension.

The last movement is a poetic reverie that drifts between the gentle unfolding of evocative harmonies murmuring with intimations of melody in the inner voices and more openly songful patches that create their own swells of passionate climax and subsiding emotion.

Schumann’s three-movement ‘sonata’ was eventually published in 1839 under the title “Phantasie” and the monument to Beethoven in Bonn was indeed built, thanks to a generous top-up of funds on the part of Franz Liszt, to whom Schumann’s work is dedicated. The unveiling took place in 1845, with Queen Victoria, no less, in attendance.

—vanrecital.com

**LISZT: FUNÉRAILLES (FUNERAL RITES)**

From a cycle of 10 pieces called Harmonies poétiques et religieuses (Poetic and Religious Harmonies), Liszt’s Funerailles is without a doubt the most well-known of the set, and one of his most famous pieces. This may be largely owing to a middle section which exhibits one of the more hair-raising and exhilarating (and/or disastrous) technical challenges in the piano repertoire: a thunderous tumult of left hand octaves in ceaseless ostinato patterns. Many pianists can be watched or listened to on youtube who deal with this famous passage successfully (or not-so-successfully)—growing up I often used to fast-forward my cd or tape to the “octave section” to see how someone handled this tremendous challenge.

The work is quite beautiful besides—bearing the subtitle “October 1849,” it is thought to have been written with the memory of three men in mind, all who died in the Hungarian uprising against the Hapsburgs in the previous year. Some have conjectured Liszt experienced a deep personal trauma because of their deaths and the failure of the uprising (it is worth noting he was himself one of the most famous Hungarians of all time). Others have cited Chopin as an inspiration for the work—Chopin was a friend of Liszt, and died only months before the work was written. It is also well-known that the famous octave section previously mentioned was, by Liszt’s own admission, lifted from Chopin’s “Heroic” Polonaise (and in the hands of the Hungarian, made even more difficult).

In any case, Funerailles is a mournful, tearful, yet (like the Polonaise) heroic work—the opening pages have been equated to the distant ringing of church bells across a battlefield—a battlefield which has become a gravesite. This enormous, relentless ringing (A section) builds and builds to a thundering climax which is suddenly interrupted by what I feel must surely betrumpet calls, signaling the beginning of the funeral procession. The procession begins (B section)—a mournful dirge with a drooping, heavy left hand melody and right hand chords which never alleviate an almost suffocation tension.

This death march again builds to a climax which is subverted and brought to a total stop before the third section, which is of an entirely different character. A-flat, (for Liszt, the key which signifies love) is introduced, enveloping a luminous melody, marked lagrimosa (tearfully). The melody seems tentative at first, but is soon more expressive—I find the music here to be incredibly beautiful and evocative, if extremely sad. It is possible to project on this section, in light of what is known of Funerailles, a memory—perhaps even one which did not take place—of an intimate dialogue between two people who would have been together for a long time, were it not for an unpredicted tragedy. This tender, fragile dream becomes a passionate duet, written in classic Lisztian style, with octaves and chords abounding. Again rising to a climax—this time intense and impassioned—the music stops short of the expected cadence, and slowly the left hand begins a repeating ostinato figure deep in the bass register of the piano which signals the approach of something undaunted and heroic. The right hand enters with unstoppable martial chords. As you will hear (hopefully),
the single-note ostinato in the left hand becomes a rumbling roar of octaves, relentlessly surging back and forth in the bass under the increasingly excited right hand—we have entered the famous octaves section. After a pummeling up the keyboard, the funeral procession will re-enter, doubled in its furious, hell-bent energy; the heroicism of the octaves is swallowed up. But the grieving procession does not get the last word; interestingly, Liszt gives us one last glimpse of the beautiful “love” melody, and then makes an exit which contains music you will most certainly recognize.

—asherianarmstrong.com

LISZT: MEPHISTO WALTZ NO. 1, S. 514

The Mephisto Waltzes are four pieces by Franz Liszt. Of the four, the first is the most popular and has been frequently performed in concert and recorded. Subtitled Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke (The Dance in the Village Inn), the first Mephisto Waltz is the second of two short works he wrote for orchestra. While the work preceding it, Midnight Procession, is rarely played, the waltz has remained a concert favorite, with its passion, sensuality and dramatics generating an emotional impact. The piece is a typical example of program music, taking for its program an episode from Faust, not by Goethe but by Nikolaus Lenau. The waltz was conceived as both an orchestra and a piano work. Three versions, orchestral (S.110/2), piano duet (S.599/2) and piano solo, (S.514), all date more or less from the same period (1859–62). The piano duet version is a straightforward transcription of the orchestral version, while the solo piano version is an independent composition. Liszt dedicated the piece to Carl Tausig, his favourite pupil.

—musopen.org

SCHUMANN: KINDERSZENEN, OP. 15, MVT. 7, “TRÄUMEREI”

Kinderszenen or as it is usually translated, Scenes from Childhood, was the product of a troubled time in the composer’s life. Schumann’s marriage to his beloved Clara would not take place for more than a year and the couple was busy petitioning the courts for permission to marry, over Clara’s father’s objection to the union. Robert had been courting Clara since 1835 and by the time of their eventual marriage in 1840 (the day before the bride’s 21st birthday), the couple had known each other for more than 10 years.

Träumerei, is one of Schumann’s best known pieces; it was the title of a 1944 German biographical film on Robert Schumann. Träumerei is also the opening and closing musical theme in the 1947 Hollywood film Song of Love, starring Katharine Hepburn as Clara Wieck Schumann.

—Grant Hiroshima

ABOUT THE ARTIST

STEPHEN HOUGH, PIANO

Stephen Hough is regarded as a Renaissance man of his time. Over the course of his career he has distinguished himself as a true polymath, not only securing a reputation as a uniquely insightful concert pianist but also as a writer and composer. Mr. Hough is commended for his mastery of the instrument as well as an individual and inquisitive mind that has earned him a multitude of prestigious awards and a longstanding international following.

Mr. Hough became the first classical performing artist to win a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 2001. He was awarded the 2008 Northwestern University’s Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in Piano and went on to win the Royal Philharmonic Society Instrumentalist Award in 2010, and in December 2013, he was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE). Since taking first prize at the 1983 Naumburg Competition in New York, Mr. Hough has appeared with major American and European orchestras and has given recitals at the most prestigious concert halls around the world. He has given recitals in Beijing, Berlin, Chicago, Dublin, Hong Kong, London, Milan, Montreux, New York, Paris, San Francisco, Stockholm, Sydney, and Tokyo. He has appeared with the BBC, Czech, London, Los Angeles, Netherlands, New York, and Royal philharmonics; the Atlanta, Baltimore, BBC, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Montreal, National, NHK, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, St. Louis, and Toronto symphonies; and the Budapest Festival, Cleveland, Minnesota, Philadelphia, Russian National, and Zürich Tonhalle orchestras; among many other ensembles. He is a regular guest at such festivals as Aldeburgh, Aspen, Blossom, Edinburgh, Hollywood Bowl, Mostly Mozart, Ravinia, Salzburg, Tanglewood, Verbier, and the BBC Proms, where he has made more than twenty-five concerto appearances. At the 2019 Proms, he played Queen Victoria’s own piano in celebration of the 200th anniversary of her birth, performing Mendelssohn’s Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under Adam Fischer. He returns to the Proms in 2020 for a performance of Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 2 with Thomas Dausgaard and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

In May 2020, Mr. Hough celebrated the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth with a three-disc recording cycle of the composer’s five piano concertos, recorded with Hannu Lintu and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra for Hyperion Records. Mr. Hough has performed the Beethoven piano concertos numerous times with the world’s leading orchestras throughout his 30-year career, including in recent seasons with the New York Philharmonic and St. Louis Symphony. Prior to worldwide cancellations in response to the coronavirus pandemic, Mr. Hough had been scheduled to perform Beethoven concertos with the National Symphony Orchestra, the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, and on tour in China performing with the China Philharmonic and Shanghai Symphony Orchestras, among others.

During the 2020–21 season, Mr. Hough’s orchestral engagements include performances of Brahms’s Piano
Concerto No. 1 with the London Philharmonic, Liszt’s Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Cincinnati Symphony, Saint-Saëns’s Piano Concerto No. 5 with the Atlanta and San Antonio Symphonies and the NDR Radiophilharmonie, and Mendelssohn’s Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Milwaukee Symphony, among other engagements. He also gives recitals across the U.K., comprising his own newly composed Partita, Copland’s Piano Variations, Schumann’s Kreisleriana, British composer Alan Rawsthorne’s 1938 Bagatelles, and Chopin’s Ballade No. 3 in A-flat major, selected Nocturnes, and Scherzo No. 2 in B-flat minor. All scheduled performances are contingent upon their compliance with public health guidelines.

Mr. Hough has composed for orchestra, choir, chamber ensemble, and solo piano, and his compositions are published by Josef Weinberger, Ltd. Among his more than 40 published compositions are The Loneliest Wilderness, a cello concerto premiered by Steven Isserlis and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic in 2007; Was mit den Tränen geschieht, commissioned by members of the Berlin Philharmonic, which received its world premiere at the Berlin Philharmonic in 2009; and the string sextet Requiem Aeternam (after Victoria), commissioned by the National Gallery for its 2009 exhibition, “The Sacred Made Real: Spanish Painting and Sculpture, 1600–1700.” Among his numerous choral works are “Hallowed,” premiered and recorded by The Sixteen and Harry Christophers in 2018, as well as two masses—“Mass of Innocence and Experience” and “Missa Mirabilis”—respectively commissioned by and performed at London’s Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral. In 2012, the Indianapolis Symphony commissioned and performed Mr. Hough’s own orchestration of “Missa Mirabilis,” which was subsequently performed by the BBC Symphony as part of Mr. Hough’s residency with the orchestra. “Missa Mirabilis” was recorded by the Colorado Symphony and Chorus for Hyperion, and both masses were performed by the Minneapolis-based choral group VocalEssence in 2017. Mr. Hough has composed four piano sonatas: broken branches (2011), notturno luminoso (2012), Sonata III (Trinitas) (2015), and Sonata No. 4 (Vida Breve) (2018). He performs broken branches on an all-Hough recording for BIS that also includes The Loneliest Wilderness with Steven Isserlis and the Tapiola Sinfonietta, Was mit Tränen geschieht, Un Piccolo Sonatina (for solo piccolo), Bridgewater (for bassoon and piano), and Herbstlieder (for baritone and piano). He recorded his second sonata notturno luminoso for his album In the Night on Hyperion and premiered his Sonata for Cello and Piano, Left Hand (Les Adieux) with Steven Isserlis in 2013, recording the work for Hyperion two years later.

Mr. Hough has recorded over 60 albums for Hyperion Records, including most recently his box set of the complete Beethoven piano concertos. Released in January 2021 is Mr. Hough’s album Vida, featuring his Vida Breve sonata and works by Chopin, Liszt, Busoni, and Bach/Gounod. His recent recordings for Hyperion also include Brahms: The Final Piano Pieces, comprising the Fantasias, Intermezzi, and Pieces, Op. 116–119; an all-Delbussy album, released to mark the centennial of the composer’s death, which Mr. Hough also honored in recital and in writing; and the Dream Album, a collection of short pieces by over a dozen composers, including Liszt, Dvořák, Sibelius, and Mr. Hough himself. All of the works selected for the latter recording bear personal meaning for him—from his favorite encores, to pieces from his childhood, to works written for friends. Many of Mr. Hough’s recordings for Hyperion have garnered international prizes including the Deutscher Schallplattenpreis, Diapason d’Or, Monde de la Musique, several Grammy nominations, and eight Gramophone Magazine Awards including the 1996 and 2003 “Record of the Year” Awards and the 2008 “Gold Disc” Award, which named his complete Saint-Saëns piano concertos the best recording of the past 30 years. His 2012 recording of the complete Chopin waltzes received the Diapason d’Or de l’Année, France’s most prestigious recording award. In the course of the Liszt bicentenary in 2012, Mr. Hough’s recordings of the Liszt Piano Sonata and Années de Pèlerinage: Suisse were recommended on BBC Radio 3’s “Building a Library.” His 2004 live recording of the Rachmaninoff piano concertos was the fastest-selling recording in Hyperion’s history, while his 1987 recording of the Hummel concertos remains Chandos’ best-selling disc to date. Mr. Hough is the featured artist in an iPad and Apple TV app on the Liszt Sonata in B minor, which includes a fully filmed performance and commentary, released by TouchPress.


Mr. Hough resides in London and is a visiting professor at the Royal Academy of Music and Juilliard. He holds the International Chair of Piano Studies at his alma mater, the Royal Northern College in Manchester, and he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Liverpool in 2011. To learn more about Mr. Hough, visit his website, stephenhough.com, follow him on Twitter (@houghhough), and follow his Facebook fan page.

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Saturday, December 12, 7pm PST

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LEIF OVE ANDSNES, PIANO
Thursday, January 21, 2021, 7pm
Virtual Concert

BEETHOVEN: Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13, “Pathétique”

LEIF OVE ANDSNES, PIANO
Thursday, January 28, 2021, 7pm
Virtual Concert

DVOŘÁK: Poetic Tone Pictures, Op. 85

TETZLAFF QUARTET
Saturday, January 16, 2021, 7pm PST
Virtual Concert

BEETHOVEN: String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat major, Op. 130
BEETHOVEN: Große Fuge, Op. 133
BEETHOVEN: String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132

ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Liev Schreiber, narrator
Karen Slack, soprano
Saturday, January 9, 2021, 7pm
Virtual Concert

BEETHOVEN (arr. Tarkmann): Incidental Music from Egmont, Op. 84
Translated and Adapted by Philip Boehm

JANUARY
UPCOMING EVENTS

VADYM KOLODENKO, PIANO AND BROOKLYN RIDER
Sunday, January 24, 2021, 3pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

The 2013 Cliburn Piano Competition Gold medalist Vadym Kholodenko teams up with string quartet Brooklyn Rider, which has been hailed as “the future of chamber music” (Strings) and continues to draw rave reviews from classical, world, and rock critics alike, in a chamber performance highlighting the performers’ commanding technique and creative interpretations. Program to be announced.

FEBRUARY

JOSHUA BELL, VIOLIN
Wednesday, February 10, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

Grammy Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell returns to Orange County in a recital that will enchant audiences with his breathtaking virtuosity and captivating stage presence. Program to be announced.

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA AT 100 WITH PHILIPPE QUINT AND MEMBERS OF THE JOFFREY BALLET
Philippe Quint, violin
Members of the Joffrey Ballet*
Additional artists to be announced
Tuesday, February 23, 2021, 8pm PST
Irvine Barclay Theatre

Co-presented by Irvine Barclay Theatre
Concert sponsored by Steven M. Sorenson MD
Additional support provided by the Ibex Foundation
*Appearance courtesy of the Joffrey Ballet, Ashley Wheater, Artistic Director

Multi-Grammy-nominated violinist Philippe Quint and members of the world-class, Chicago-based Joffrey Ballet celebrate the centennial of tango legend Astor Piazzolla in a performance of music and dance.

MARCH

GEORGE LI, PIANO
Thursday, March 4, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

BEETHOVEN: Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2, “Moonlight Sonata”
BEETHOVEN: Variations and Fugue for Piano in E-flat major, Op. 35
CHOPIN: Nocturnes, Op. 27
CHOPIN: Mazurkas, Op. 59
CHOPIN: Scherzo No. 1 in B minor, Op. 20
CHOPIN: Scherzo No. 4 in E major, Op. 54

2021 Laguna Beach Music Festival COUNTERPOINT
Festival Artistic Director: Conrad Tao, piano
Caleb Teicher, dancer
Friday, March 26, 2021, 8pm PST
Locations in Laguna Beach

Duo program with music by Bach, Gershwin, etc.

2021 Laguna Beach Music Festival ITS BRILLIANCE ALMOST FRIGHTENED ME
Festival Artistic Director: Conrad Tao, piano
Saturday, March 27, 2021, 8pm PST
Locations in Laguna Beach

Laurence CRANE: Prelude No. 1
BERG: “Traumgekrönt” from Seven Early Songs
SCHUBERT: “Gretchen am spinnrade” (Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel)
Eric WUBBELS: gretchen am spinnrade
Ruth Crawford SEEGER: String Quartet
BEETHOVEN: String Quartet No. 16, Op. 135
UPCOMING EVENTS

2021 Laguna Beach Music Festival
CHANGE THIS THREAD ON WHICH WE MOVE
Festival Artistic Director: Conrad Tao, piano
Sunday, March 28, 2021, 3pm PST
Locations in Laguna Beach

Caroline Shaw: Entr’acte (Westerlies arrangement)
Debussy: Violin Sonata in G minor
Gesualdo: selected Madrigals
Other works to be announced.

APRIL

ALISA WEILERSTEIN, CELLO
AND INON BARNATAN, PIANO
Thursday, April 8, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

Select Beethoven Cello Sonatas

BRENTANO QUARTET
Friday, April 9, 2021, 8pm PST
Venue TBD

Haydn: String Quartet No. 6 in D major, Op. 17
Bartók: String Quartet No. 5, Sz. 102
Brahms: String Quartet No. 2 in A minor, Op. 51

JERUSALEM QUARTET WITH PINCHAS ZUKERMAN, VIOLIN AND AMANDA FORSYTH, CELLO
Wednesday, April 21, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

Bruckner: Adagio from String Quintet in F major, WAB 112
Dvořák: Sextet for Strings in A major, Op. 48
Brahms: Sextet for Strings No. 1 in B-flat major, Op. 18

JEAN-YVES THIBAUDET, PIANO
Saturday, April 24, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

Debussy: Préludes Books 1 and 2

MAY

DANISH STRING QUARTET
Sunday, May 16, 2021, 3pm PST
Samueli Theater

Grammy-nominated Danish String Quartet makes its second appearance in the 2020-21 season with a performance showcasing its players’ masterful technique and heartfelt expressivity. Program to be announced.

SERGIO ASSAD, CLARICE ASSAD, AND THIRD COAST PERCUSSION
Sergio Assad, guitar
Clarice Assad, piano/voice
Third Coast Percussion
Friday, May 28, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

In an exploration of global music traditions, legendary guitarist Sergio Assad, along with Clarice Assad’s spellbinding vocals and the rhythms of Grammy-winning Third Coast Percussion, will take audiences on a vast musical journey grounded in familiar stories.
JUNE

AUGUSTIN HADELICH, VIOLIN
AND ORION WEISS, PIANO
Monday, June 14, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

BEETHOVEN: Violin Sonata No. 4 in A minor, Op. 23
DEBUSSY: Sonata in G minor, L. 140
COLL: Hyperlude No. 5 for Solo Violin
YSAŸE: Sonata No. 6 in E major for Solo Violin
BRAHMS: Sonata No. 2 in A major, Op. 100
DEBUSSY: L’isle joyeuse, L. 106
ADAMS: Road Movies

RENÉE FLEMING, SOPRANO
Thursday, June 17, 2021, 8pm PST
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

In a rescheduled performance from the previous season, four-time Grammy winner and legendary soprano Renée Fleming appears in a program of beloved songs and arias.

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Founded in 1954 as Orange County’s first music organization, the Philharmonic Society of Orange County presents national and international performances of the highest quality and provides dynamic and innovative music education programs for individuals of all ages to enhance the lives of Orange County audiences through music.

For more than 65 years the Philharmonic Society has evolved and grown with the county’s changing landscape, presenting artists and orchestras who set the standard for artistic achievement from Itzhak Perlman, Gustavo Dudamel, Yo-Yo Ma, and Renée Fleming to the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and many others. In addition, the Philharmonic Society celebrates multi-disciplinary performances under its Eclectic Orange brand and embraces music from a wide range of countries with its World Music performances. Its celebrated family concerts introduce children to classical music with creative and inspiring performances, instilling music appreciation for future generations.

The Philharmonic Society’s nationally recognized Youth Music Education Programs, offered free of charge, engage more than 100,000 students annually through curriculum-based music education programs that aim to inspire, expand imaginations, and encourage learning at all levels. These programs are made possible by the Committees of the Philharmonic Society comprised of 700 volunteer members who provide more than 90,000 hours of in-kind service each year.

As a key youth program, the exceptional Orange County Youth Symphony and String Ensemble provide top-tier training to the area’s most talented young musicians through multi-level ensemble instruction, leadership training, touring opportunities, challenging professional repertoire, and performances in world-class venues. The Philharmonic Society also promotes life-long learning by connecting with colleges and universities to conduct masterclasses and workshops and providing pre-concert lectures to introduce audiences to program selections.

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