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About the Show

Modesto Symphony Orchestra Association

Rhapsody in Blue

Friday, October 21, 2022, 7:30 pm

Saturday, October 22, 2022, 7:30 pm

Gallo Center for the Arts, Mary Stuart Rogers Theater

Christopher Dragon, *conductor*

Gabriela Martinez, *piano*

Program

Florence Price (1887-1953)

Concert Overture No. 2 (1943)

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

***Rhapsody in Blue* (1924)**

Gabriela Martinez, *piano*

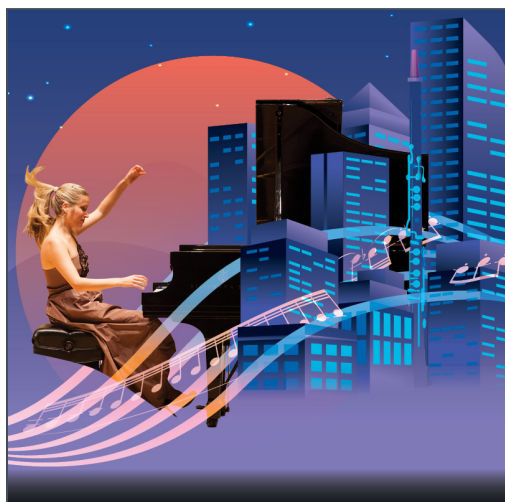
INTERMISSION

Antonín Dvorák (1841-1904)

Symphony No. 9 in E minor, "From the New World," Op. 95 (1893)

Rhapsody in Blue

Celebrating the American Sound



- I. Adagio - Allegro molto
- II. Largo
- III. Molto vivace
- IV. Allegro con Fuoco

Roster

Orchestra Roster

Christopher Dragon, conductor

Violin I

Dagenais Smiley, *Concertmaster*
Calvin Lewis, *Associate Concertmaster*
Michael Nicholson, *Assistant Concertmaster*
Kirstan Hilton
Valerie Tisdel
Mark Neyshloss
Milka Krалеva-Castro
Elizabeth Kidwell
Matthew Oshida
Brian Lee
Gabrielle Wunsch
Josepha Fath

Violin II

Myriam Cotton-Rack, *Principal*
Ani Bukujian, *Assistant Principal*
Juan Carlos Gutierrez
Donald Grishaw
Josephine Gray
Donna Harrison
Aya Kiyonaga
Thomas Yee
Gyongyver Petheo
Ray Reinebach

Viola

Marcel Gemperli, *Principal*
Kathryn Juneau, *Assistant Principal*
Pauline Metzgar
Stephanie Railsback
Anne Martin
Colin Belisle



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Nao Kubota
Alexandra Simpson

Cello

Jonah Kim, *Principal*
Dina Weinschelbaum, *Assistant Principal*
Daniel Davies
Hannah Harrington
Jonathan Flaksman
Paul Hale
Dieter Wulfhorst
Amy Brodo

Bass

Raymond Vargas, *Principal*
Sukyung Chun, *Assistant Principal*
Aaron Shaul
Chris Yick
Heidi Franklin
Tom Spencer

Flute

Johanna Borenstein, *Principal*
Debra Dix
Brittany Trotter
Gail Edwards, *Piccolo*

Oboe

Robert Walker, *Principal*
Belinda Rosen
Michael Johnson, *English Horn*

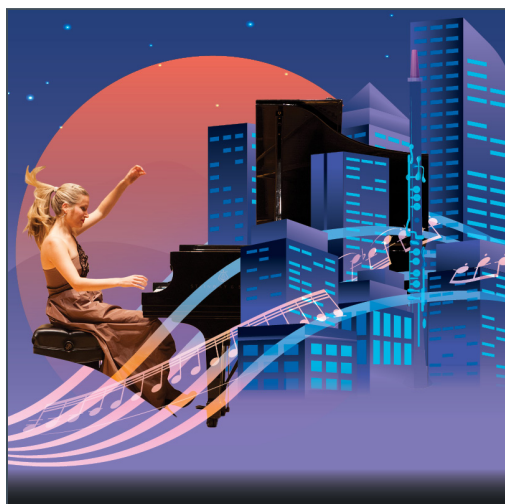
Clarinet

Rob Patterson, *Principal*
Cory Tiffin
Bruce Foster, *Bass Clarinet*

Bassoon

Jeff Robinson, *Principal*
Kris King

Horn



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Melia Badalian, *Principal*
Sarah Ference, *Assistant Principal*
Nicky Roosevelt
Adam Wolf
William Harrington

Trumpet

William Harvey, *Principal*
Bryce Schmidt
Kale Cumings

Trombone

Bruce Chrisp, *Principal*
Don Benham
Todd Eames

Tuba

Forrest Byram, *Principal*

Timpani

John Weeks, *Principal*

Percussion

Thomas Rance, *Principal*
Joseph Runnels
Michael Downing

Harp

Anya Garipoli, *Principal*

Roster as of 10/18/2022

Artist Biographies



Rhapsody in Blue

Celebrating the American Sound



Christopher Dragon

conductor

Australian conductor **Christopher Dragon** is the Music Director of the Wyoming Symphony Orchestra and Resident Conductor of the Colorado Symphony. He joined the Colorado Symphony in the 2015/2016 Season as Associate Conductor – a position he held for four years. For three years prior, Dragon held the position of Assistant Conductor with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, which gave him the opportunity to work closely with Principal Conductor Asher Fisch.

Dragon has a versatile portfolio ranging from live-to-picture performances of *Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Jurassic Park* and *Mary Poppins*, a wide variety of collaborations with artists such as The Flaming Lips, Cynthia Erivo and Wynton Marsalis, to standard and contemporary orchestral repertoire such as Danny Elfman's Violin Concerto, *Eleven Eleven*, all areas of which he has become highly sought after. Christopher has become known for his charisma, high energy and affinity for a good costume, consistently delivering unforgettable performances that has made him an audience favourite.

Recent season highlights include his subscription series debut with the San Diego Symphony, performances of *Danny Elfman's Music from the Films of Tim Burton* with Danny Elfman reprising the role of Jack Skellington and the historic Colorado Symphony performances with the Wu-Tang Clan at Red Rocks and the Mission Ballroom. Dragon's upcoming debuts include concerts with the San Francisco Symphony and the Utah Symphony.

Christopher works regularly in Australia and has guest conducted the Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and West Australian Symphony Orchestras. His 2015 debut performance at the Sydney Opera House with John Pyke and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra was released on album by ABC Music and won an ARIA the following year. Christopher's other guest conducting includes Orquestra Sinfônica de Porto Alegre, Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, Omaha Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.



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He has also conducted at numerous festivals including the Breckenridge and Bangalow Music Festivals, with both resulting in immediate re-invitations. At the beginning of 2016 Dragon conducted Wynton Marsalis' *Swing Symphony* as part of the Perth International Art Festival alongside Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

Christopher began his conducting studies in 2011 and was a member of the prestigious Symphony Services International Conductor Development Program in Australia under the guidance of course director Christopher Seaman. He has also studied with numerous distinguished conductors including Leonid Grin, Paavo and Neeme Jarvi at the Jarvi Summer Festival, Fabio Luisi at the Pacific Music Festival and conducting pedagogue Jorma Panula.

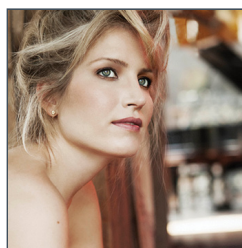
Website: <https://www.dragonconducts.com/#homepage-section>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/dragonconducts/?hl=en>



Rhapsody in Blue

Celebrating the American Sound



Gabriela Martinez

piano

Versatile, daring, and insightful, Venezuelan-born pianist **Gabriela Martinez** is establishing a reputation both nationally and internationally for the lyricism of her playing, her compelling interpretations, and her elegant stage presence.

Since making her orchestral debut at age 7, Ms. Martinez has played with such distinguished orchestras as the San Francisco, Chicago, Houston, New Jersey, Tucson, West Michigan, Pacific and Fort Worth symphonies; the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra; Germany's Stuttgarter Philharmoniker, MDR Rundfunkorchester, Nürnberger Philharmoniker, and MDR Leipzig Radio Philharmonic Orchestra; Canada's Victoria Symphony Orchestra; the Costa Rica National Symphony; and the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra in Venezuela. In the past four seasons she has appeared with the Knoxville, Pacific, Richmond, Charlotte, Grand Rapids, Pasadena, Billings, Richardson, Springfield, Wichita, and Waco symphony

orchestras; the Orlando, Boise, and Dayton philharmonics; the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia; the Atlantic Classical Orchestra; and the Symphony of Southeast Texas. Orchestral engagements in the 2021-22 season include the Omaha, Hartford, Texarkana, and San Antonio symphony orchestras.

She has performed with conductors Gustavo Dudamel, James Gaffigan, James Conlon, Marcelo Lehninger and Guillermo Figueroa, among many others, and at such esteemed venues as New York's Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, Merkin Hall, and Alice Tully Hall; the Broad Stage in Santa Monica; the El Paso Pro Musica and Kansas City Harriman-Jewell series; Canada's Glenn Gould Studio; Salzburg's Grosses Festspielhaus; Dresden's Semperoper; Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens; and Paris's Palace of Versailles. Her festival credits include the Mostly Mozart, Ravinia, and Rockport festivals in the United States; Italy's Festival dei Due Mondi (Spoleto); Switzerland's Verbier Festival; the Festival de Radio France et Montpellier; and Japan's Tokyo International Music Festival.



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Amplified Soul, her debut solo album released in 2016 by Delos Records, features a wide-ranging program including works by Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, and Szymanowski. The album also pays homage to acclaimed composers Mason Bates and Dan Visconti, whose title selection Amplified Soul (world premiere recording), was written for Ms. Martinez. She collaborated with Grammy Award-winning producer David Frost on the album. A music video of Visconti's Amplified Soul can be found on Ms. Martinez's YouTube Channel.

Her wide-ranging career includes world premieres of new music, live performance broadcasts, and interviews on TV and radio. Ms. Martinez's performances have been featured on National Public Radio, CNN, PBS, 60 Minutes, ABC, From the Top, Radio France, WQXR and WNYC (New York), MDR Kultur and Deutsche Welle (Germany), NHK (Japan), RAI (Italy), and on numerous television and radio stations in Venezuela.

Ms. Martinez was the First Prize winner of the Anton G. Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Dresden, and a semifinalist at the 12th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, where she also received the Jury Discretionary Award. She began her piano studies in Caracas with her mother, Alicia Gaggioni, and attended The Juilliard School, where she earned her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees as a full scholarship student of Yoheved Kaplinsky. Ms. Martinez was a fellow of Carnegie Hall's The Academy, and a member of Ensemble Connect (formerly known as Ensemble ACJW), while concurrently working on her doctoral studies with Marco Antonio de Almeida in Halle, Germany.

Website: <http://www.gabrielamartinezpiano.com/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/gabrielapiano>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/gabrielapiano/?hl=en>
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/AGabrielaMartinez>

Program Notes

Concert Overture No. 2

Florence Price

Florence Price

Concert Overture No. 2

Composer: born April 9, 1887, Little Rock, AR; died June 3, 1953, Chicago

Work composed: 1943

World premiere: undocumented

Instrumentation: piccolo, 3 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, harp, and strings

Estimated duration: 15 minutes

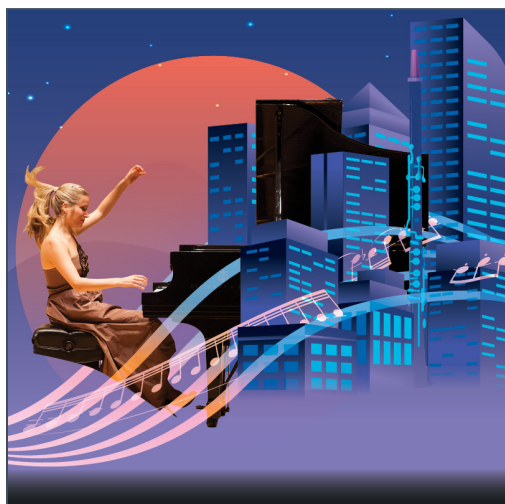
As the first Black female American composer to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra, Florence Price enjoyed considerable renown during her lifetime. Her compositional skill and fame notwithstanding, the entrenched institutional racism and sexism of the white male classical music establishment effectively erased Price and her music from general awareness for decades after her death. In 2009, a large collection of scores and unpublished works by Price were discovered in a house in rural Illinois. Since then, scholars, musicians, and audiences have been discovering Price's work and her rich legacy.

The daughter of a musical mother, Price was a prodigy, giving her first recital at age four and publishing her first composition at 11. During her childhood and teens, Price's mother was the guiding force behind her piano and composition studies. Young Florence entered New England Conservatory in 1903, at 16,



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where she double majored in organ performance and piano pedagogy. While at NEC, Price also studied composition with George Whitefield Chadwick. Chadwick was an early champion of women as composers, which was highly unusual at the time, and he believed that American composers should incorporate the rich traditions of native American and “Negro” styles in their own works. Price, already inclined in this direction, was encouraged by Chadwick, and many of her works, including tonight’s Concert Overture No. 2, reflect the expressive and distinctive sounds of Negro traditions, particularly the spirituals, ragtime, and folkdance rhythms whose origins trace back to Africa. This overture features the spirituals “Go Down, Moses,” “Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen,” and “Every Time I Feel the Spirit.”

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Rhapsody in Blue

George Gershwin

George Gershwin

Rhapsody in Blue

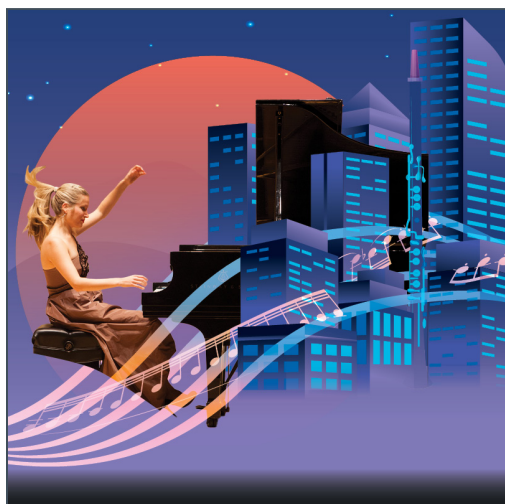
Composer: born September 26, 1898, Brooklyn, NY; died July 11, 1937, Hollywood, CA

Work composed: Gershwin wrote *Rhapsody in Blue* in the first three weeks of 1924

World premiere: Gershwin was at the piano when Paul Whiteman’s Orchestra premiered *Rhapsody in Blue* at Aeolian Hall in New York City, on February 12, 1924

Instrumentation: solo piano, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, 3 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, gong, glockenspiel, snare drum, celesta, triangle, banjo, and strings

Estimated duration: 15 minutes



Rhapsody in Blue

Celebrating the American Sound

Rhapsody in Blue introduced jazz to classical audiences, and simultaneously made an instant star of its composer. From its iconic clarinet glissando to its brilliant finale, *Rhapsody in Blue* epitomizes the Gershwin sound, and transformed the 25-year-old Tin Pan Alley songwriter into a composer of “serious” music.

On January 4, 1924, Ira Gershwin showed George a news report in the *New York Tribune* about a concert put together by jazz bandleader Paul Whiteman, grandiosely titled “An Experiment in Modern Music,” that would endeavor to trace the history of jazz. The article concluded, “George Gershwin is at work on a jazz concerto.” This was certainly news to Gershwin, who was then in rehearsals for a Broadway show, *Sweet Little Devil*. Gershwin contacted Whiteman to refute the *Tribune* article, but Whiteman eventually talked Gershwin into writing the concerto.

In 1931, Gershwin described to biographer Isaac Goldberg how the musical ideas for *Rhapsody in Blue* first emerged: “It was on the train, with its steely rhythms, its rattle-ty bang, that is so often so stimulating to a composer ... And there I suddenly heard, and even saw on paper – the complete construction of the *Rhapsody*, from beginning to end ... I heard it as a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America, of our vast melting pot, of our unduplicated national pep, of our metropolitan madness. By the time I reached Boston I had a definite plot of the piece, as distinguished from its actual substance.”

At the premiere, Gershwin’s unique realization of this “musical kaleidoscope of America,” coupled with his phenomenal abilities at the keyboard, wowed the audience as much as the novelty of hearing jazz idioms in a classical work.

The opening clarinet solo got its signature jazzy glissando from Whiteman’s clarinetist Ross Gorman. This opening unleashes a floodgate of colorful ideas that blend seamlessly. The pulsing syncopated rhythms and showy music eventually morph into a warm, expansive melody à la Sergei Rachmaninoff.

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Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95, “From the New World”

Antonín Dvorák

Antonín Dvorák

Composer: born September 8, 1841, Nelahozeves, near Kralupy in Bohemia (now the Czech Republic); died May 1, 1904, Prague

Work composed: 1892-1893 in New York City

World premiere: Anton Seidl led the New York Philharmonic on December 16, 1893, at Carnegie Hall.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, cymbals, triangle, and strings.

Estimated duration: 40 minutes



Rhapsody in Blue

Celebrating the American Sound

Antonín Dvorák began his Ninth Symphony in December 1892, shortly after he arrived in America, and completed it the following May. During his three-year sojourn in New York, Dvorák explored the city, watched trains and large ships arrive and depart, fed pigeons in Central Park, and met all kinds of people. Late in 1892, Dvorák wrote to a friend back home, "The Americans expect great things of me. I am to show them the way into the Promised Land, the realm of a new, independent art, in short, a national style of music! ... This will certainly be a great and lofty task, and I hope that with God's help I shall succeed in it. I have plenty of encouragement to do so."

Dvorák was also introduced to a great deal of American folk music, including Native American melodies and Negro spirituals. However, he did not quote any of them in the Ninth Symphony. Dvorák explained, "The influence of America can be readily felt by anyone with 'a nose.'" That is, hints of the uniquely American flavor of this music are discernable throughout, as Dvorák made use of the syncopated rhythms, repeated patterns, and particular scales common to much of America's indigenous music. But the Ninth Symphony is not a patchwork of previously existing materials, and all the melodies in the Ninth Symphony are Dvořák's own (including the famous English horn solo in the Largo, which was later given the title "Goin' Home," with accompanying text, by one of Dvořák's New York composition students, a young Black composer and baritone named Harry Burleigh).

"I have simply written original themes embodying the peculiarities of Indian music, and, using these themes as subjects, have developed them with all the resources of

modern rhythms, harmony, counterpoint, and orchestral color,” Dvorák explained. As for the title, “From the New World,” Dvorák intended it as an aural picture postcard to be mailed back to friends and family in Europe and meant simply “Impressions and Greetings from the New World.”

At the premiere, the audience applauded every movement with great enthusiasm, especially the Largo, which they cheered without pause until Dvorák rose from his seat and took a bow. A critic writing for the *New York Evening Post* spoke for most when he wrote, “Anyone who heard it could not deny that it is the greatest symphonic work ever composed in this country ... A masterwork has been added to the symphonic literature.”

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Rhapsody in Blue

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