

Concerts of Thursday, October 12, and Saturday, October 14, 2017, at 8:00p

Robert Spano, Conductor

Dejan Lazić, piano

Michael Gandolfi (b. 1956)

A Garden Feeds also the Soul (2017)

The Bone Garden (...of death and rebirth...)

The Scottish Worthies

World Premiere, Commissioned by Paul and Linnea Bert for the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

Dejan Lazić (b. 1977)

Concerto in Istrian Style, for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 18 (2014)

I. *Overture*

II. *Intermezzo*

III. *Cadenza ad libitum*

IV. *Canon and Rondo on Istrian Folk Tunes*

V. *Finale*

Dejan Lazić, piano

Intermission

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Opus 44 (1936)

I. *Lento; Allegro moderato*

II. *Adagio ma non troppo*

III. *Allegro*

Notes on the Program by Ken Meltzer

A Garden Feeds also the Soul (2017)

Michael Gandolfi was born in Melrose, Massachusetts, on July 5, 1956. These are the world premiere performances.

Michael Gandolfi describes the inspiration for his orchestral work, *The Garden of Cosmic Speculation* (2007):

The Garden of Cosmic Speculation, a thirty-acre private garden in the Borders area of Scotland created by architect and architectural critic Charles Jencks, is a joining of terrestrial nature with fundamental concepts of modern physics (quantum mechanics, super-string theory, complexity theory, etc.)...I have long been interested in modern physics and it seemed proper for music to participate in this magnificent joining of physics and architecture. I discovered *The Garden of Cosmic Speculation* in January of 2004 and after a month or so of sketching musical ideas I decided to focus on several aspects of the garden to which I had the strongest musical response.

The Garden of Cosmic Speculation, a work in three Parts, comprising sixteen movements, received its world premiere in Miami, Florida, in April of 2007, with Robert Spano conducting the New World Symphony Orchestra. Robert Spano conducted the Atlanta Symphony premiere on May 24, 2007. Following the performances, Maestro Spano and the ASO recorded the work for Telarc Records (CD-80696).

The two movements premiered tonight, *The Bone Garden* and *The Scottish Worthies*, will eventually join two movements written for Chicago's Grant Park Orchestra last year, titled *Octagonia* and *The Comet Bridge*, to form the fourth part of the ever expanding larger work, *The Garden of Cosmic Speculation*.

The Bone Garden (Charles Jencks, the architect of *The Garden of Cosmic Speculation*, also describes this as *the Garden of Death and Rebirth*) is rather self-explanatory in its title. In my composition, I composed an introduction, which makes overt references to rattling bones but also sets two figures in motion: one that is rising and one that is falling, to metaphorically depict the trajectory of life and death. This is followed by a chaconne (a repeating chord progression) that is composed of ominous-sounding chords that lead downward locally, but the overall progression is made to rise. The progression ends at a slightly higher pitch-level (one whole-step, to be precise) than its point of origin. This sets in motion an upward spiral that is the metaphor for

rebirth. With each iteration, this chaconne increases in brightness and orchestral strength and patterning. When it has risen a full octave, the rebirth is complete and a gentle unwinding occurs until the opening introductory material is rejoined, albeit modulated slightly, as if poised to run through this cycle of infinity.

The Scottish Worthies comprise a portion of Jencks' garden devoted to honoring great figures of the Scottish Enlightenment. Included in this list are Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Smith, James Hutton, Robert Adam, James Watt, Thomas Telford, Robert Burns, Joanna Baillie, Walter Scott, Mary Somerville, Thomas Babington Macaulay and David Livingstone, Andrew Carnegie, Elsie Maude Inglis, Margaret Macdonald, and Rebecca West. Monuments to each are assembled in chronological order by birth. I decided to approach this in multiple parts, as it would otherwise create a movement of too great a length. I focused on the following, which Jencks characterizes as follows.

Frances Hutcheson (1694-1746) – "...an attractive figure from the beginning of the Scottish Enlightenment...had a passion for freedom..."

David Hume (1711-76) – "The Philosopher and the Fishwife"

Adam Smith (1723-90) – "Empathy and Social Construction"

James Hutton (1726-97) – "Deep Time Rocks"

Robert Adam (1728-92) – "Wild and Refined"

James Watt (1736-1819) – "Practical Invention"

Thomas Telford (1757-1834) "Shrinking Spacetime"

Robert Burns (1759-96) "New Music"

Joanna Baillie (1762-1851) "Lyrical Moralizer"

The Scottish Worthies is composed as a set of episodes or variations that seek to capture the spirit of these great figures from the Scottish Enlightenment.

—Michael Gandolfi

(Annotator's note: At the time of publication, the instrumentation and estimated performance time had not been finalized.)

Concerto in Istrian Style, for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 18 (2014)

Dejan Lazić was born in Zagreb, Croatia, in 1977. The first performance of the *Concerto in Istrian Style* took place in Aspen, Colorado, on July 23, 2014, with the composer as soloist, and Robert Spano conducting the Aspen Festival Orchestra. In addition to the solo piano, the *Concerto in Istrian Style* is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings. Approximate performance time is thirty-five minutes.

These are the first Classical Subscription Performances.

This concerto is based on Istrian folklore and its musical tradition: Istria is a peninsula in the northwest of Croatia that juts into the Adriatic Sea near (the) Italian city of Trieste. Despite the fact that this region is situated between Croatia, Slovenia, Italy and Austria – therefore between Slavic, Latin and Germanic Spheres of influence – its musical culture and traditions have remained thoroughly idiosyncratic.

In both vocal and instrumental traditions, Istrian folk music is typically two-voiced, with the melody harmonised in thirds; this is frequently supported by shifts into asymmetrical metres (5/4, 7/4, etc.). Because traditional Istrian folk music uses a non-tempered scale, the folk harmonisation sounds rather exotic to Western ears. This was a wonderful source of inspiration which gave me an extraordinary palette of opportunities.

The five contrasting movements are linked with each other through contrapositive motifs which appear throughout the piece in various forms. The work is a tribute to many great pianist-composers who have inspired me over the years and whose works I regularly perform on stage. I also used a number of well-known musical cryptograms employing German note names (where “H” corresponds to “B”, and “B” to “B-flat”). These include “D-S-C-H” (Dmitri Shostakovich), “B-A-C-H” (Bach), “A-S-C-H” and “A-B-E-G-G” (both referring to Schumann), and “F-A-E,” *Frei aber einsam* (Free but lonely), the ultra-Romantic mantra of the 19th century violinist Joseph Joachim and a motif employed in that context by Schumann and Brahms as well.

Dejan Lazić, 2016

I. *Overture*

II. *Intermezzo*

III. *Cadenza ad libitum*

IV. *Canon and Rondo on Istrian Folk Tunes*

V. Finale

Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Opus 44 (1936)

Sergei Rachmaninov was born in Semyonovo, Russia, on April 1, 1873, and died in Beverly Hills, California, on March 28, 1943. The first performance of the Third Symphony took place at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on November 6, 1936, with Leopold Stokowski conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. The Third Symphony is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, xylophone, triangle, tambourine, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, tam-tam, celesta, and strings. Approximate performance time is thirty-nine minutes.

First Classical Subscription Performance: November 5, 1955, Henry Sopkin, Conductor.

Most recent Classical Subscription performances: June 5, 7, and 8, 2008, Robert Spano, Conductor.

Rachmaninov, the First Symphony, and Dr. Dahl

When Sergei Rachmaninov completed his First Symphony in August of 1895, he was 22 years old and brimming with the confidence of youth. "I imagined that there was nothing I could not do and had great hopes for the future," he later recalled. However, Rachmaninov's spirits were soon to incur a devastating blow. The premiere of Rachmaninov's First Symphony took place in St. Petersburg on March 15, 1897. The eminent Russian composer, Alexander Glazunov, conducted. According to all accounts, however, Glazunov's conducting did little to advance the cause of Rachmaninov's work. A few months after the premiere, Rachmaninov confided to a friend: "I am amazed how such a talented man as Glazunov can conduct so badly."

After the premiere of Rachmaninov's First Symphony, composer César Cui wrote this unforgettable critique:

If there were a conservatory in Hell, if one of its many talented students were instructed to write a programme symphony on the "Seven Plagues of Egypt", and if he were to compose a symphony like Mr. Rachmaninov's, then he would have fulfilled his task brilliantly and would delight the inhabitants of Hell.

As a result of this stunning turn of events, Rachmaninov lapsed into a profound depression. Matters became so grave that finally, on the advice of friends, Rachmaninov began to consult Dr. Nikolai Dahl, a doctor who had gained some prominence for his employment of hypnosis. Between January and April of 1900, Rachmaninov visited Dr. Dahl on a daily basis. Rachmaninov's consultations

with Dahl produced a miraculous improvement. By the beginning of that summer, Rachmaninov had resumed composing. On October 14, 1901, Rachmaninov appeared as soloist in the premiere of his Second Piano Concerto, a work the composer dedicated to Dr. Dahl.

Rachmaninov even summoned the courage to attempt another Symphony. On New Year's Day, 1907, Rachmaninov put the finishing touches on his Symphony No. 2. Rachmaninov conducted the Symphony's premiere on January 26, 1908 in St. Petersburg, the same city that had been the venue for the catastrophic first performance of the Symphony No. 1. The Second Symphony was favorably received by the audience and critics, and certainly provided Rachmaninov with a tremendous sense of vindication.

The Third Symphony

In the ensuing years, Rachmaninov's activities as a piano virtuoso occupied a greater portion of his time. Twenty-eight years would elapse before Rachmaninov composed another Symphony. In fact, Rachmaninov's Third Symphony, completed in 1936, was the composer's first purely orchestral work since the symphonic poem, *The Isle of the Dead* (1909). The premiere of Rachmaninov's Third Symphony took place on November 6, 1936. Leopold Stokowski conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Stokowski and Rachmaninov enjoyed a long and artistically rewarding association. The two first met in January of 1910, when Rachmaninov was making his first United States concert tour. In subsequent years, Stokowski led the premieres of many important Rachmaninov compositions. Rachmaninov was the soloist, and Stokowski the conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra, for the world premieres of both the Fourth Piano Concerto (1926, rev. 1941) and the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* (1934). Stokowski also led the world premiere of Rachmaninov's *Three Russian Songs* (1926) (a work Rachmaninov dedicated to Stokowski), and the American premiere of *The Bells* (1920). Rachmaninov, Stokowski, and the Philadelphia Orchestra also collaborated on legendary recordings of the Second Piano Concerto and *Paganini Rhapsody*, made, respectively, in 1929 and 1934.

Despite the considerable talents involved in its premiere, the Rachmaninov Third Symphony received mixed reviews. However, by this stage of his life, Rachmaninov was able to be far more philosophical than the young man who had withered under the force of César Cui's biting prose. In a June 7, 1937 letter to his friend, pianist Vladimir Vilshau, Rachmaninov wrote:

Let me say a few words about my new symphony...It was played wonderfully (the Philadelphia Orchestra about which I have written you, Stokowski conducting). The reception by the public and critics was...sour...I personally am firmly convinced that the composition

is good. But...sometimes authors are mistaken! However, I am still of my opinion.

And, Rachmaninov certainly had to take heart in the appraisal of the prominent British conductor, Sir Henry Wood, whose assessment of the Third Symphony has, in subsequent years, found repeated affirmation:

I have recently had the pleasure of studying with (Rachmaninov) his third symphony in A minor, and have since directed it at the Liverpool Philharmonic Society's concert (March 22, 1938) and at a studio broadcast with the BBC Symphony Orchestra...The work impresses me as being of the true Russian romantic school; one cannot get away from the beauty and melodic line of the themes and their logical development. As did Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov uses the instruments of the orchestra to their fullest effect...I am convinced that Rachmaninov's children will see their father's third symphony take its rightful place in the affection of that section of the public which loves melody.

Musical Analysis

I. *Lento; Allegro moderato*—The Symphony opens with a brief, slow-tempo introduction (*Lento*). A solo clarinet, horn, and muted cello play a motif that will return throughout the work. A *fortissimo* orchestral proclamation leads to the winds' hushed presentation of the initial principal theme (*Allegro moderato*). Soon, however, the cellos present the focal point of the opening movement—a soaring melody, marked *dolce cantabile*. A vigorous development section leads to a recapitulation of the principal themes, with the beautiful second melody again predominating. The movement concludes with a tranquil coda.

II. *Adagio ma non troppo*—A solo horn, over harp accompaniment, invokes the motif that served to open the Symphony. A solo violin inaugurates the outpouring of lyricism that permeates this *Adagio*. Suddenly, an agitated figure in the strings heralds a vivacious scherzo episode (*Allegro vivace*). The flurry of activity finally subsides, and a reprise of the opening portion brings the movement to a whispered conclusion.

III. *Allegro*—The finale begins with a brief reference to the opening movement's introduction. The strings, punctuated by the brass, play the scurrying, initial theme. A flowing melody, marked *cantabile*, again played by the strings, provides contrast. The development section features an energetic contrapuntal episode, based upon the movement's opening theme. Soon, a Rachmaninov trademark appears with the quotation of the foreboding ancient plainchant, the *Dies irae* ("This day, this day of wrath"). The *Dies irae* becomes more prominent until finally, it is (temporarily) overcome by a recapitulation of the movement's central themes. Sinister brass fanfares herald the return of the *Dies irae*, played

by the strings. But finally, a playful sequence highlighting the winds leads to the Symphony's triumphant resolution.