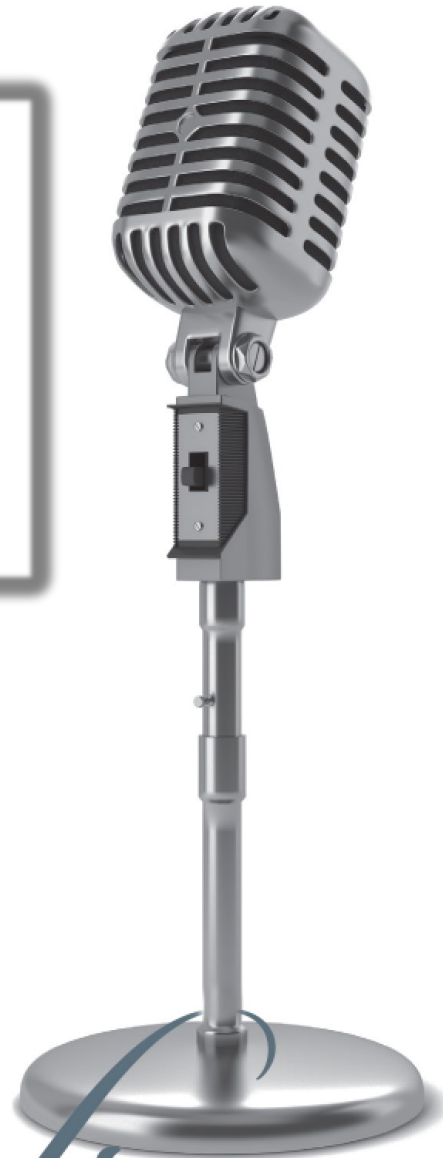


2021 Spring Concert Series

Music of Chopin,
Rachmaninoff, and
Ratcliff

April 21, 2021
12:10PM



LIVE *from*
HOCHSTEIN

50 N. Plymouth Ave. • Rochester, NY • www.hochstein.org • 585.454.4596



A native of California, **Cary Ratcliff** adopted Rochester when, before finishing his undergraduate degree at Eastman, he was playing piano for the Rochester Philharmonic and was Composer-in-Residence for Strasenburgh Planetarium — where he had to get creative fast using an early 3-oscillator Moog synthesizer and multi-track tape recorders. Over the next decade, he wrote orchestral soundtracks for the Smithsonian’s Einstein Planetarium, including one show about Halley’s Comet during its 1986 appearance, which he recorded with the RPO in the Hochstein Performance Hall. His opera “Eleni” appeared on NY City Opera’s VOX Showcase of New American operas, and his Viola Concerto won ASCAP’s Nissim Prize for best new American Orchestral work. Harmonia Mundi’s CD of his oratorio on Pablo Neruda was nominated for Best Choral Performance at the 2016 Grammys.

Cary is currently Artistic Director of the chamber chorus Madrigalia. He is now vaccinated, so you don’t have to give him a wide berth if you see him on the street.

American violinist **Robert Simonds** has a multifaceted career as an orchestral player, chamber musician, and solo recitalist. Rob is the principal second violin of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and a member of the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in Santa Cruz, CA. Interested in contemporary music for as long as he can remember, Rob performs, commissions, and records dynamic new music by living composers and explores the connections between traditions.



For seven years, Rob was principal second violin of the Louisville Orchestra. He began his professional orchestral career with the Richmond Symphony Orchestra followed by a longtime position with The Phoenix Symphony. He has collaborated with a wide range of artists including: Rhiannon Giddens, Lizzie No, Joe Pug, Ben Sollee, and The Low Anthem.

Born and raised in Massachusetts, Rob began the violin at a young age, learning from his grandmother. A graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, he studied with Dr. Won-Bin Yim and Dorothy Delay. His violin is from Reggio Emilia in northern Italy, made by Mario Bedocchi in 1927.

Today’s Live from Hochstein concert is broadcast live and in stereo on **WXXI** FM, Classical 91.5 with host Mona Seghatoleslami.

The Hochstein School is grateful to Sidney & Barbara Sobel for providing continuous underwriting support for Live from Hochstein since 1993.

PROGRAM

- *Overture to the Opera *Ellis Island* Cary Ratcliff
(b. 1953)
Robert Simonds, violin
Cary Ratcliff, piano
- Etude in F Minor, Op. 25 #2 "*The Bees*" Frederic Chopin
(1810-1849)
- Polonaise in C# Minor, Op. 26, #1 *Allegro appassionato* Frederic Chopin
- Two Preludes Sergei Rachmaninoff
G# Minor, Op. 32 #12 *Allegro* (1873-1943)
Eb Major, Op. 23 #6 *Andante*
- Two Nocturnes Frederic Chopin
B Major, Op. 32 #1 *Andante sostenuto*
E Minor, Op. 72 #1 *Andante*
Cary Ratcliff, piano
- *Goodbye Cary Ratcliff
Robert Simonds, violin
Cary Ratcliff, piano

* *Premieres*

The Hochstein School wishes to thank its donors and patrons
for their support of our mission:

To provide people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities with access to excellent music and dance
education in a community that nurtures and encourages personal achievement.

For more information, please contact Director of Development & Community Engagement, Alette
Jordan, at ayette.jordan@hochstein.org or 585-454-4403.

PROGRAM NOTES

by Cary Ratcliff

Overture to the Opera *Ellis Island*

A newly penned overture on an early opera of mine is set during the second great wave of immigration, as the United States opened its doors to Southern and Eastern Europeans around the beginning of the 19th century. My opera *Ellis Island* follows characters from the bowels of an ocean liner, through the Great Hall at Ellis Island, to being detained for further inspection and quarantine, not knowing who will make the final 2 miles to the U.S. mainland, and who will be sent back across the ocean. The opera gave me opportunity to suggest the music of many cultures. This work includes violinist Robert Simonds, Principal Second Violin of the RPO.

Chopin Etude & Polonaise

Chopin, nearly 200 years ago, took many genres of piano pieces to new levels. Here is one of his etudes, a study with a single piano-player challenge, and a polonaise, a traditional Polish processional dance in slow, three-quarter time.

Two Preludes

Rachmaninoff, who struggled with self-doubt as a composer, found inspiration in the piano music of Chopin: "I find myself continually playing Chopin at home, just for the sheer pleasure... the delight in letting one's fingers run through his perfectly molded passages." Most of Rachmaninoff's piano pieces offer no programmatic title, yet they quickly evoke a story, an emotional terrain; for me, restless and moody in the G sharp minor Prelude, luxuriant and aching in the E flat major Prelude.

Two Nocturnes

In this year of isolation, I've explored Chopin's Nocturnes, finding in them not just beautiful melodies, but a sense of being autobiographical. The B Major Nocturne is fraught with changes of mood, discontinuities, and reveries of the past. The piece unfolds in ways you don't expect, like life. The E minor Nocturne I've played since my childhood, but the growth of the simple, poignant melody to its powerful final statement I still find captivating. I've taken to playing nocturnes at night, a way to process the moods of the day into some point of closure, of repose.

Goodbye

So many in this past year have suffered loss, myself included. A recent NY Times article cites an epidemic of grief. The final work, composed for this occasion, voices both sweetness of memory and pang of loss. The dialogue between the violin and piano recalls the intertwining of lives, the finishing of each other's thoughts. The rhythm of the word 'goodbye', the title of the work, appears in rising fifths at the close of the two sections of the piece.

ENJOY THESE PERFORMANCES?

The *Live from Hochstein* series requires financial support to continue providing performances for the Rochester community. If you enjoy these performances, please consider making a donation to The Hochstein School. You may donate online at <https://hochstein.org/Support> or mail a check to us. Checks can be made out to The Hochstein School, and *Live from Hochstein* should be the memo.

THANK YOU!



NEXT WEEK'S PERFORMANCE:

Wednesday, April 28, 2021 at 12:10pm

A Trio of Trios: Music of Debussy, Mozart, and Piazzolla

featuring pianist Elinor Freer, violinist Yoojin Jang, and cellist Mimi Hwang



This program is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.