Rutgers Symphony Orchestra

Kynan Johns, Conductor
Saya Callner, Assistant Conductor
David Jeong, Assistant Conductor

with
Yunkyoung Rachel Choo, Piano

Sunday, November 2, 2014 | 2 p.m.
Nicholas Music Center
Mason Gross Performing Arts Center
Douglass Campus

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Program

John Zorn (b. 1953)

Piano Concerto in G major
Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

I. Allegramente – Andante
II. Adagio assai
III. Presto

Yunkyung Rachel Choo, Piano

Intermission

Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 27
Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943)

I. Largo – Allegro moderato
II. Allegro molto
III. Adagio
IV. Allegro vivace
Program Notes

Composer, producer, and saxophonist John Zorn does music in various genres, from classical, jazz, and improvisational to rock and metal. As he states in the March 2003 issue of the Guardian:

All the various styles are organically connected to one another. I’m an additive person—the entire storehouse of my knowledge informs everything I do. People are so obsessed with the surface that they can’t see the connections, but they are there.

Born on September 2, 1953, in New York City, Zorn learned piano, guitar, and flute at a young age; later, inspired by an Anthony Braxton album, he began saxophone. After attending college in Missouri, Zorn returned to New York City and established himself as a composer and performer in the city’s downtown music movement of the 1970s. Contracts ensued with many independent United States and European record labels, and under Elektra Nonesuch he attracted attention with the release of Spillane in 1987 and Naked City in 1989. Zorn started his own label, Tzadik, in 1995 with a focus on releasing undiluted avant-garde and experimental music by a worldwide community of contemporary musician-composers.

Composed in 1996, Orchestra Variations was commissioned for the 150th anniversary of the New York Philharmonic and bears the dedication “Leonard Bernstein in memoriam.” The piece requires orchestra players of high musicianship to play complex individual parts simultaneously, with many changes of tempo and meter. In his September 26, 2013, New York Times review of the work’s performance—part of the composer’s 60th birth-year celebration concert series—Steve Smith notes, “Orchestral [sic] Variations … is Mr. Zorn as thieving magpie, with baubles of dutiful Minimalism, tipsy Stravinsky, cinematic swoon and Straussian pomp assembled for flashy display.”

—Saya Callner, DMA, orchestral conducting
In the summer of 1931, **Maurice Ravel** said, “The music of a concerto should, in my opinion, be lighthearted and brilliant, and not aim at profundity or at dramatic effects …” This is an especially apt description of *Piano Concerto in G Major*, which Ravel was just completing and which he had originally intended to call *Divertissement*. The concerto became one of his most beloved pieces; it comprises a brilliant, jazz-influenced first movement that showcases various solo instruments in the orchestra; a beautiful, songful second movement (with which Ravel surprisingly struggled a great deal); and an irresistibly virtuosic finale.

Unlike many classical composers, Ravel was fortunate to be born into a family supportive of his musical ambitions from his earliest years. He received the best possible music education and at 14 was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire, where he quickly found success as a young composer. *Concerto in G* is one of two piano concertos that Ravel began in 1929; the other is *Concerto for the Left Hand*, a piece commissioned by Paul Wittgenstein, an Austrian pianist who had lost his right arm in World War I. At its premiere on January 14, 1932, with Marguerite Long as soloist and Ravel himself conducting the Lamoureux Orchestra, *Concerto in G* was a great success. It was introduced in the United States four months later, when two pianists and orchestras—Jesús María Sanromá with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Serge Koussevitzky, and Sylvan Levin with the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Leopold Stokowski—performed it on the same day, April 22.

—Saya Callner DMA, orchestral conducting
Pianist, composer, and conductor Sergei Rachmaninoff is one of the greatest musicians of late Russian Romanticism. His compositions are especially popular with music lovers for their melancholy harmonies and lyrical, passionate melodies. For Rachmaninoff the symphonic challenge was a lifelong struggle. An immensely talented composer, he started to write symphonic music when he was just 13 years old and in 1896 composed his First Symphony in D minor, Op. 13. Its 1897 premiere took place in St. Petersburg under Alexander Glazunov. Because of Glazunov’s lack of enthusiasm and poor direction, the performance was not well received. Rachmaninoff lost his confidence and the will to compose, and he entered a period of artistic crisis and breakdown. In April 1897 he left a note about the First Symphony, referring to “Sketches of my new symphony, in which I judge nobody is likely to take any interest.” The crisis led to three years of deep depression. Rachmaninoff then took a course of autosuggestive therapy with psychologist Nikolai Dahl, and fortunately, it worked. After his recovery, he worked as a conductor for two years before taking his first steps toward composing once again. That resulted in his Second Piano Concerto, which he dedicated to Dahl.

The concerto was an instant success and gave Rachmaninoff the confidence to tackle a second symphony, which would become Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 27, written between 1906 and 1907. Its premiere took place one year later in St. Petersburg, where his first symphony had failed. No longer willing to entrust such an important premiere to another conductor, Rachmaninoff conducted it himself. This time, the new work was enthusiastically applauded. The symphony is not only full of the composer’s typical lush romantic melodies, it shows a wealth of compositional techniques and an impressive use of fugal writing. Rachmaninoff dedicated the work to his composition teacher, Sergei Taneyev.

The Second Symphony lasts about one hour and consists of four movements: Largo – Allegro moderato, Allegro molto, Adagio, and Allegro vivace. The debt to Tchaikovsky is clear, with many quotes
from scores such as *Romeo and Juliet* immediately apparent at the beginning of the first movement’s Largo section. The following Allegro moderato section uses several traditional Russian dancelike rhythmic gestures, continually varied and interwoven, with the melodic line always taking primacy. The second-movement scherzo gives the impression of a chaselle scenario, perhaps on horseback, evoking Rachmaninoff’s youthful experiences in the Russian countryside.

The beautiful and at times neurotic third movement is a deeply personal depiction of the composer’s rather tumultuous love for his soon-to-be wife, Natalia Satina. Because they were cousins, the powerful Russian Orthodox Church objected to their marriage, but that obstacle was overcome through the couple’s strong military connections. The fourth and final movement is opulent, with orchestral colors achieved by Rachmaninoff’s discerning use of orchestration. Even within a relatively fast tempo, Rachmaninoff shows much skill in dealing with complexity of texture and chromatic harmonic movement. Some had found fault with his handling of the orchestra in the First Symphony, but the immense success of the new work put that criticism to rest. The Second Symphony has been a staple of the symphonic repertoire ever since.

—David Jeong, DMA, orchestral conducting
Rutgers Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Kynan Johns
Assistant Conductors: Saya Callner, David Jeong

First Violin
Wen-Tso Chen, Co-concertmaster
Tao Zhang, Co-concertmaster
Go Woon Choi, Assistant Concertmaster
Yerim Kwon, Assistant Concertmaster
Hyun Joon Shin
DanBee Park
Lindsey Gamble
Ga Young Cho
Melissa Lisboa-Underwood
Michael Szeles
Nikki Airhart
Cristopher Basso
Kippum Lee
Shannon Merlino

Second Violin
Xinou Wei, Principal
Yu Jin Oh, Assistant Principal
Caroline Yoshimoto
James Keene
Chang Ho Lim
Daniel Jang
Andriy Gavrish
Grace Lee
Teresa Lim
Emily Gaab
Mark Perfect
Natalie Caravaglio

Cello
Jordan Enzinger, Principal
Joon Whan Kim, Assistant Principal
Diana Golden
Alex Nelson
Yoonjin Park
Sha Wu
Mathias Iff
Kevin Maa

Contrabass
Emilio Guarino, Principal
Francis Wagner, Assistant Principal
Craig Yoder
Jason Bloomquist
Matt Weber
Alexander LaRocca

Flute and Piccolo
Hilary Jones, Principal
Natasha Loomis, Co-principal
Juhye Lee
Minji Kwon

Oboe and Cor Anglais
Lillian Copeland, Principal
Wyatt Beekman
Wei Wang

Clarinet
Soojin Huh, Principal
Daniel Choi
Anthony Ciccone
Jean Gould
Tallyn Wesner

Bassoon
Casey Gsell, Principal
Wen Hsieh, Co-Principal
Jonathan Livolsi

Horn
Mimi Zhang, Principal
Jessie Mersinger
Elizabeth Benson, Co-principal
Giovanni Garcia
Kevin Ayres

Trumpet
Arthur Zanin, Principal
Cyril Bodnar
Angel Narvaez
Don Batchelder

Trombone
Matthew Walley, Principal
Alec Hanslowe
Jessica Cates

Bass Trombone
Jeffrey Smith, Principal

Tuba
Caleb Adams, Principal

Timpani
Paul Nalesnik, Principal

Percussion
Christine Ching-Yu Chen, Principal
Chui Ling Tan
Tom O’Hara

Harp
Elaine Christy

Piano/Celesta
Patricio Molina
About the Artists

A native of Seoul, Korea, **Yunkyung Rachel Choo** graduated from Yewon Middle School and Seoul Arts High School. At age 12 she made her public solo recital debut, at Kumho Arts Hall (Seoul), as part of the Prodigy Concert Series. Choo has performed with many orchestras—including the Korea National University of Arts Orchestra and the Kangnam Symphony Orchestra—and has appeared in the Young Musicians Concert Series (Seoul). She has received many awards from major competitions in South Korea and the United States. Choo made her United States debut at Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Hall with the Juilliard Orchestra, under maestro James Conlon. She is a doctor of musical arts candidate in piano performance at Mason Gross, studying with Min Kwon. Choo completed her undergraduate and master’s degree studies at The Juilliard School, where she studied with Yoheved Kaplinsky and Matti Raekallio.

**Kynan Johns** is conductor and director of orchestras at the Mason Gross School of the Arts. A protégé of Maestro Lorin Maazel, he has served as resident conductor at the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, in Valencia, Spain, to both Maazel and Zubin Mehta. A native of Australia, Johns has conducted the Israel Philharmonic, the Rotterdam Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Vienna Chamber Orchestra, the Filarmonica della Scala, the Netherlands Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. In opera, he has worked at London’s Covent Garden and at Italy’s famed La Scala; conducted *Don Giovanni, Madame Butterfly, Don Carlos, Luisa Miller*, and Maazel’s 1984 in Valencia; *Don Giovanni* for the Oper Magdeburg; Britten’s *Turn of the Screw* in Rouen; and *La Bohème* for the State Opera of South Australia. Cover conductor for the recent opera sensation *Anna Nicole* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Johns worked with the New York City Opera on Adès’s *Powder Her Face*, Chin’s *Alice in Wonderland*, and Offenbach’s *La Périchole*. In addition, he conducted Kurt Weill’s *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* for the
Manhattan School of Music. Johns debuted with the Dortmund Philharmonic, the Lisbon Metropolitan Orchestra, and the Israel Symphony Orchestra, returning to the Limburg Symphony, the Netherlands; Orquesta Clásica Santa Cecilia, Madrid; and the Asturias Symphony Orchestra. He has been awarded the inaugural Centenary Medal by the Australian government for his service to music. Johns is represented by Columbia Artists Management Inc. (CAMI).

Recognized as an elite orchestra in New Jersey, Rutgers Symphony Orchestra (RSO) comprises musicians enrolled in the undergraduate and graduate music programs at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. The orchestra performs an ambitious concert series, tackling the entire major symphonic repertoire, and aims to prepare students for professional careers as orchestral musicians.

The concert season includes three fall and two spring concerts at the university. In addition, there is a major opera production each February and occasionally a pops concert, student composition readings/recording sessions, and student conductor recitals. RSO hosts an annual Concerto Competition, which provides top students solo opportunities with the orchestra the following season.

RSO has performed at Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC). As the flagship ensemble of the Mason Gross instrumental program, the orchestra has played with some of world’s leading conductors, including Maestros James Judd, Andrea Quinn, Rossen Milanov, and Andrew Grams; soloists Lara St. John, Philippe Quint, Barbara Dever, Thomas Studebaker, Nancy Gustafson, Todd Phillips, Jonathan Spitz, Min Kwon, Daniel Epstein, Susan Starr, Ruth Laredo, and Alexander Ivashkin; Paquito D’Rivera; and pop artists Ray Charles and Jay-Z. RSO concerts can be heard on 89.1 WWFM.
About the Music Department

The Music Department at the Mason Gross School of the Arts has a faculty of 34 full-time and approximately 70 part-time members. There are approximately 455 students enrolled in its seven degree programs: bachelor of music, bachelor of arts, master of music, master of arts, artist diploma, doctor of philosophy, and doctor of musical arts. The mission of all music degree programs is to develop well-educated professional musicians who have a deep historical and theoretical understanding of all aspects of music. The program provides students with traditional, well-grounded conservatory training while preparing them for the changing world of the arts in the 21st century.

Proceeds from the sale of tickets for this concert support scholarship funds for music students.

About Nicholas Music Center

- Fire regulations strictly prohibit smoking in Nicholas Music Center. Smoking is permitted outside the building only.
- FIRE NOTICE: The nearest exits are located by the red signs; exits are located to the right and left of the stage and lobby.
- Please turn off all phones and pagers before entering the performance area.
- Latecomers may have to wait to be seated until an appropriate pause in the program.
- The taking of photographs and the possession or use of audio or video recorders during performances are prohibited.
- The Lost and Found is located at the Mason Gross School of the Arts ticket office, next to the Philip J. Levin Theater, across Bettenbender Plaza.
- Water fountains are located on both sides of the lobby.

Ticket Office Hours

Weekdays: Mondays to Fridays, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Weekends: Saturdays, noon to 5:30 p.m.
Performances: one hour before curtain

Hours will vary during university holidays.