

Strathmore

PRESENTS

Post-Classical Ensemble

Angel Gil-Ordóñez, Music Director
Joseph Horowitz, Artistic Director

Carnival of the Creatures

A scary children's concert

George Vatchnadze and Genadi Zagor, pianos

Maggie Yin Horowitz, ballerina

Amy Chai Miller, narrator

Post-Classical Ensemble conducted by Angel Gil-Ordóñez

Produced by Joseph Horowitz

Camille Saint-Saëns The Carnival of the Animals
Introduction and Royal March of the Lion
Hens and Cocks
Wild Asses
Tortoise
Elephant
Kangaroos
Aquarium
Persons with Long Ears (Mules)
Cuckoo in the Heart of the Wood
Aviary
Pianists
Fossils
The Swan
Maggie Yin Horowitz, ballerina;
staged by Valentina Kozlova after
Michel Fokine
Finale

Poems by Odgen Nash read by
Amy Chai Miller

Henry Cowell The Banshee
Tiger
George Vatchnadze, piano

Maurice Ravel Scarbo
George Vatchnadze, piano

Improvisation A Scary Improvisation
Genadi Zagor, piano

Silvestre Revueltas Sensemayá

Poem by Nicolás Guillén read by
Monalisa Arias

Post-concert discussion

The Music Center at Strathmore
Marriott Concert Stage



Angel Gil-Ordóñez

Angel Gil-Ordóñez is the former associate conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Spain, and has conducted throughout Europe, the United States, and Latin America. In the U.S., he has appeared with the American Composers Orchestra, Opera Colorado, the Pacific Symphony, the Hartford Symphony, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and the National Gallery Orchestra in Washington, D.C. Abroad, Mr. Gil-Ordóñez has been heard with the Munich Philharmonic, Solistes de Berne, at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, and at Bellas Artes National Theatre in Mexico City. In summer 2000, he toured the major music festivals of Spain with the Valencia Symphony Orchestra in the Spanish premiere of Leonard Bernstein's *MASS*. Born in Madrid, he worked closely with Sergiu Celibidache for more than six years in Germany.

Mr. Gil-Ordóñez has recorded four CDs devoted to Spanish composers, in addition to Post-Classical Ensemble's *Virgil Thomson* CD/DVD on Naxos. Mr. Gil-Ordóñez also holds the positions of director of orchestral studies at Wesleyan University in Connecticut and music director of the Wesleyan Ensemble of the Americas. In 2006, the King of Spain awarded him the country's highest civilian decoration: the Royal Order of Queen Isabella.

Joseph Horowitz

Joseph Horowitz has long been a pioneer in classical music programming, begin-

ning with his tenure as artistic advisor for the annual Schubertiade at New York's 92nd Street Y. As executive director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, resident orchestra of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, he received national attention for "The Russian Stravinsky," "American Transcendentalists," "Flamenco" and other festivals exploring the folk roots of concert works. Now an artistic advisor to various American orchestras, he has created more than three dozen interdisciplinary music festivals since 1985. Called "our nation's leading scholar of the symphony orchestra" by Charles Olton, former president of the American Symphony Orchestra League, Mr. Horowitz is also the award-winning author of seven books dealing with the institutional history of classical music in the United States. *Classical Music in America: A History* (2005) was named one of the best books of the year by *The Economist*. A former *New York Times* music critic, Mr. Horowitz writes regularly for the *Times Literary Supplement* (UK). He also contributes frequently to scholarly journals. Last season, he inaugurated the New York Philharmonic's "Inside the Music" series, writing, hosting, and producing a presentation on Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* Symphony. His *Artists in Exile: How Refugees from War and Revolution Transformed the American Performing Arts*, was published by HarperCollins in 2008 and will appear in paperback this spring. His Web site is josephhorowitz.com.

George Vatchnadze and Genadi Zagor

George Vatchnadze and Genadi Zagor last appeared in tandem as part of the "Stravinsky Project" produced by Joseph Horowitz at Stanford University; the *San Jose Mercury* called them "sensational." They next appear at Strathmore in May 2010 as part of Strathmore and Post-Classical Ensemble's Stravinsky Festival. As former students of Alexander Toradze at the University of Indiana at South Bend, both are veteran members of a remarkable pianistic entourage frequently featured in thematic festivals. Mr. Vatchnadze is a native of Soviet Georgia.

His many European engagements include performances with the Kirov Orchestra in St. Petersburg and London, and an opening night appearance with the Moscow Tchaikovsky Symphony at the 2000 Stresa Festival. He is currently on the piano faculty at Michigan State University's College of Music. Mr. Zagor is a native of Krasnodar, Russia. Since his debut with orchestra at the age of ten, he has appeared with the Moscow State Symphony, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Israel Philharmonic, and Jerusalem Symphony, among others. For the past five years, he has taught at the University of the Northern Iowa School of Music. His astonishing gift for improvisation, long a late-night highlight of many a musical party, first came to public attention two years ago.

Maggie Yin Horowitz

Maggie Yin Horowitz is a seventh grader at the Professional Children's Center in New York City. Now 11, she became serious about dance at the age of 4 when she began intensive studies of both ballet and Chinese folk dance. Maggie's sole focus became ballet after she enrolled in Valentina Kozlova's Dance Conservatory of New York in 2005. She won prizes in the New Jersey Festival of Dance in 2006 and 2007, the Youth America Grand Prix Semifinals in 2007 and 2008, and World Ballet Competition of Orlando in 2007. In December 2007, she appeared as Clara in *The Nutcracker* at New York's Symphony Space. Born in China, Maggie lives with her parents and brother in New York City.

Amy Chai Miller

Amy Chai Miller, age 15, is a ninth grader at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. She appeared in the Washington National Opera's family opera *Dream of the Pacific* in 2006 and in the children's chorus of the Washington Revels' 2003 and 2004 holiday productions at Lisner Auditorium. She has been a member of the Children's Chorus of Washington since 2003. She studies cello with Loran Stephenson and has placed in several local cello competitions. Amy is a summer event assistant with Bethesda's Big

Train Baseball and enjoys club lacrosse and squash.

Valentina Kozlova

Valentina Kozlova, born in Moscow, was a principal dancer with both the Bolshoi Theatre and the New York City Ballet. She also danced the leading classical roles as a guest artist with companies throughout the world. In 2003, she opened her Dance Conservatory of New York for the training of young professional dancers in the Vaganova tradition. She is also the creator of the Dance Conservatory Performance Project, for which she has staged and produced such works as *Swan Lake*, *La Bayadère*, *Paquita*, *Le Corsaire*, and *Raymonda*.

Post-Classical Ensemble

Post-Classical Ensemble, called by *The Washington Post* "a welcome, edgy addition to the musical life of Washington," was created by Angel Gil-Ordóñez and Joseph Horowitz in 2001, and made its official debut in May 2003. "More than an orchestra," it breaks out of classical music, with its implied notion of a high culture remote from popular art. Its concerts regularly incorporate folk song, dance, film, poetry, and commentary in order to serve existing audiences hungry for deeper engagement and to cultivate adventurous new listeners. The ensemble made its sold-out Kennedy Center debut in fall 2005 in "Celebrating Don Quixote," featuring a commissioned production of Manuel de Falla's sublime puppet opera *Master Peter's Puppet Show*. In 2008-09, it performs at Strathmore, the Harman Center in downtown D.C., the Kennedy Center, and Georgetown University, with which it has initiated an ambitious educational partnership. Its second Naxos DVD, featuring the classic 1939 documentary *The City* with a freshly recorded Aaron Copland soundtrack, will be released in January 2009. The Ensemble's concerts have been nationally distributed both by National Public Radio and WFMT Chicago.

Notes on the Program

The Carnival of the Animals Camille Saint-Saëns

The French composers Camille Saint-Saëns was born in Paris in 1835 and died in Algeria (in northern Africa) in 1921. *The Carnival of the Animals*, composed in 1886, is the most popular music he ever wrote. And yet he conceived it as a private joke while on vacation. He only permitted one of the 14 movements—"The Swan"—to be published during his long lifetime.

"The Swan" became famous as a vehicle for the ballerina Anna Pavlova, who danced it as "The Dying Swan" to choreography by Michel Fokine. This afternoon, an 11-year-old ballerina, Maggie Yin Horowitz, dances "The Swan" as staged after Fokine by her teacher, Valentina Kozlova.

While there were occasional private performance of *The Carnival of the Animals*, the public premiere did not occur until 1922—Saint-Saëns' ban having been lifted, in accordance with his will, some two months before.

Saint-Saëns predicted and feared the popularity of *The Carnival of the Animals*; he worried that it might damage his rep-

utation as a "serious" composer. These little animal portraits are, in fact, full of jokes. "Fossils," for instance, is marked *Allegro ridicolo* ("Fast and ridiculous") and quotes "Baa-Baa Black Sheep" as well as an opera aria (from *The Barber of Seville*) and Saint-Saëns' own *Danse macabre*. "Tortoise" takes Offenbach's famous can-can (a naughty dance) and plays it in slow motion. "The Elephant" is a lumbering double bass solo quoting the airy "Dance of the Sylphs" from Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust*.

An ingenious feature of *The Carnival* is its scoring. Never before had a composer written for two pianos, five string instruments, flute (or piccolo), clarinet, xylophone, and glass harmonica (typically replaced, these days, by a glockenspiel). Only two of the movements use all these instruments. Saint-Saëns' ability to invent fresh colors is a never-ending delight. "Acquarium," for flute, two pianos, string quintet, and glockenspiel, shimmers miraculously.

This afternoon's performance adds tiny poems written by Ogden Nash to accompany Saint-Saëns' little musical pictures.

The Banshee and Tiger Henry Cowell

Henry Cowell was born in California in 1897 and died in New York in 1965. As a wild young man, he became famous for pounding the piano with his fists or strumming the strings inside the instrument—as in the two works we hear this afternoon: *The Banshee* (1925) and *Tiger* (1930). (In Irish folklore, a banshee is a spirit in the form of a wailing woman who appears to members of a family as a sign that one of them is about to die.) Cowell never again composed music as celebrated or influential as his early experimental piano pieces. But he was a prophetic influence on composers who would follow his lead in exploring and adapting non-Western music.

Scarbo Maurice Ravel

The French composer Maurice Ravel was born in 1875 and died in 1937. "Scarbo"—the third part of the three-movement *Gaspard de la nuit*, composed

for piano in 1908—is among the most popular and devilishly difficult of all 20th-century keyboard showpieces. A poem by Aloysius Bertrand, prefacing the score, identifies Scarbo as a small fiend, half goblin and half ghost. Hurling and spinning around the room, it casts nightmarish, moonlit shadows, then disappears, its image as faint as the wax of a candle-end.

Sensemaya Silvestre Revueltas

Silvestre Revueltas, who was born in a Mexican village in 1899 and died in Mexico City in 1940, is gradually becoming known as one of the towering figures of 20th century Latin American music. (Post-Classical Ensemble has performed more music by Revueltas than by any other composer.) He once reminisced:

"I was very young, three years old, [my mother] tells me, when I heard music for the first time: the little village band playing its evening concert in the square. I stood listening for a long time and with what must have been spectacular concentration because it was so intense that my eyes crossed. And cross-eyed I remained for three or four days after. ... As a small boy ... I always preferred banging on a washtub or dreaming tales to doing something useful ...

"I have had many teachers. The best of them, with no degrees, knew more than the others. For that reason, I have always had little respect for degrees. Now, after many years, I still study, have teachers, write music, dream of distant countries and sometime bang on washtubs."

Sensemaya, Revueltas's best-known composition, exists in a full-orchestra version and also in the original chamber orchestra version, dating from 1937, that we hear this afternoon. Its inspiration is a poem—a black-magic spell to kill a snake—by the Afro-Cuban poet Nicolas Guillén. Revueltas sets not only the story, but the Cuban rhythms and accents of the words. □

Carnival of the Animals.....Ogden Nash
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Notes by Joseph Horowitz

Post-Classical Ensemble

Adria Sternstein Foster flute & piccolo	Tom Jones percussion
David Jones clarinet	Greg Akagi percussion
Kathy Mulcahey E flat clarinet	Oleg Rylatko violin
Ed Walters bass clarinet	Eric Lee violin
Don Shore bassoon	Lisa Ponton viola
Tim White trumpet	Evelyn Elsing cello
Chris Gekker trumpet	Ed Malaga bass
Lee Rogers trombone	Naoko Takao piano
Bill Richards percussion	Susan Kelly personnel manager
John Spirtas percussion	

Post-Classical Ensemble's 2008-09 Season is made possible with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, The Spanish Ministry of Culture, CONACULTA, and the Mexican Cultural Institute.
www.post-classicalensemble.org