



## Bird Tales

Sunday, January 22, 2023

### **| Daniel R. Martin Masterworks Series | Bird Tales**

**Sunday, January 22, 2023**  
**William Saroyan Theatre**

**Rei Hotoda**, conductor  
**Narek Hakhnazaryan**, cello

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**Siamak Aghaei and Colin Jacobsen**      Ascending Bird

**Saint-Saëns**      The Swan

**Saint-Saëns**

Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 33

Allegro non troppo  
Allegretto con moto  
Allegro non troppo

**Intermission**

**Respighi**

Fountains of Rome

The Fountain of Valle Giulia at Dawn  
The Triton Fountain at Morning  
The Fountain of Trevi at Midday  
The Villa Medici Fountain at Sunset

**Stravinsky**

Firebird Suite

Introduction  
The Firebird and its Dance-Firebird's  
Variation  
The Princesses' Khorovod (Rondo)  
Infernal Dance of King Kashchei  
Lullaby (Berceuse)  
Finale

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2022-23 Season Major Support provided by

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## **| Orchestra Roster**

### **VIOLIN I**

Stephanie Sant'Ambrogio,  
*Concertmaster*  
Calvin Lewis  
Lianna Elmore  
John Morrice  
Rudolfina Sjostrand  
Erin Adams  
Claire Tatman  
Sarah Coyle  
David Haskins  
Rebecca Wishnia  
Jackson Snead  
Sarah Elert

### **VIOLIN II**

Caitlin McSherry, *Principal*  
Cynthia Stuart  
Darren Sagawa  
Gaylene Debra Joe  
Julia Copeland  
Brandon Morris  
William Chen  
Josepha Fath  
Julie Metz  
Yuliya Hess

### **VIOLA**

Alexandra Simpson, *Acting Principal*  
Heather Gardner  
Galina Andre  
Terry Paul  
Matthew Smoke  
Claudia Shuih  
Nao Kubota

**CELLO**

Saul Richmond-Rakerd, *Acting Principal*

Alicja Blanquart

Judith Robinson

Alana Shannon

Melinda Mack

Kelvin Diaz Inoa

Emma Hill

Eric Sheaffer

**BASS**

Sukyung Chun, *Acting Principal*

Bruce Bransby

Heidi Franklin

Keith Bionde

Benjamin Green

Sheldon Schlesinger

**FLUTE**

Janette Erickson, *Principal*

Colleen Fernandez

Theresia Gaffney

**OBOE**

Rong-Huey Liu, *Principal*

Kathy Oh

Marissa Honda

**CLARINET**

Peter Nevin, *Principal*

Jeannie Psomas

Lea Steffens

**BASSOON**

Jeff Robinson, *Acting Principal*

Wendy LaTouche

**HORN**

Amy Sanchez, *Acting Principal*

Jennie Blomster

Elisha Wells

Sarah Ference

**TRUMPET**

Bill Harvey, *Acting Principal*

Ron Franklin

Joseph Farkas

**TROMBONE**

Phil Keen, *Acting Principal*

Sam Wamhoff

Wayne Solomon

**TUBA**

Rod Matthews, *Acting Principal*

**TIMPANI**

Justin Gingrich, *Principal*

**PERCUSSION**

Corey Ritter, *Principal*

Tammy van der Paardt

Craig Cory

**HARP**

Laura Porter, *Principal*

Carter Williams

**PIANO**

Kathryn Eames, *Principal*

**CELESTE/ORGAN**

Mio Arai, *Principal*

**Program Notes****SIAMAK AGHAEI AND COLIN JACOBSEN (B. 1978)****Ascending Bird**

*Ascending Bird*, composed in 2007, is a joint effort by composer and violinist Colin Jacobsen and Iranian composer and santur (a hammered dulcimer popular in Iran) player Siamak Aghaei, colleagues in the Silk Road Ensemble. It is an arrangement of an old Persian folk tune – a version of the phoenix myth – which tells the popular legend of a bird attempting to fly to the sun. After two failed attempts, the bird finally makes contact with the sun, losing its physical body in fire, and in this way achieving a metaphorical spiritual transcendence.

The music starts gently, and gradually ramps up by adding more instruments, leading to an ecstatic finish. The instrumentation is flexible, including traditional instruments whenever available.

A graduate of the Juilliard School and the Royal Conservatory of the Hague, Colin Jacobsen is a founding member of the innovative Brooklyn Rider String Quartet, as well as The Knights Chamber Orchestra. He is also since 2000 a touring member of Yo-Yo ma's Silk Road Project.



### CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921)

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"The Swan" from *Carnival of the Animals*

Camille Saint-Saëns was a child prodigy, who wrote his first piano compositions at age three. At ten he made his formal debut at the Salle Pleyel in Paris, playing Mozart and Beethoven piano concertos, and offered to play any one of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas from memory as an encore. In his youth he was considered an innovator, but by the time he reached maturity he had become a conservative pillar of the establishment, trying to maintain the classical musical tradition in France and expressing open disdain for the new trends in music, including the "malaise" of Wagnerism. His visceral dislike of Debussy made frequent headlines in the tabloid press. As an accomplished organist and pianist, he premiered his five piano concertos himself with elegant, effortless grace. But neither his compositions nor his pianism were ever pinnacles of passion or emotion. Berlioz noted that Saint-Saëns "...knows everything but lacks inexperience."

But Saint-Saëns did not lack a sense of humor. One of his most popular works today is the witty *Carnival of the Animals*, subtitled *A Grand Zoological Fantasy*. It began life as a private joke among friends, originally for two pianos, 2 violins, viola, cello, double bass, flute, clarinet, glass harmonica or celesta and xylophone that he dashed off in 1886 during a vacation. It pokes fun at his contemporaries: Berlioz, the comic opera composer Jacques Offenbach, music critics, "fossil" composers, clumsy dancers and talentless pianists. Deeply protective of his image and reputation as a composer of serious music, however, he forbade its performance during his lifetime, except for No. 13, "The Swan," which acquired a life of its own. Written originally for solo cello with piano accompaniment, it is just about the only movement that doesn't involve humor.



### CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921)

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Concerto No. 1 in A minor for Cello & Orchestra, Op. 33

The defeat of France at the hands of Prussia in 1871 shocked the country's pride and spurred a revival of French arts and letters. One of the results was the founding by Camille Saint-Saëns and his colleagues of the *Société Nationale de Musique*, whose motto and purpose was "*Ars Gallica*." (French art). One of its offshoots was the establishment of three newly energized competing symphony orchestras in Paris by three great conductors – Édouard Colonne, Jules-Étienne Pasdeloup and Charles Lamoureux – who urgently looked for new works by French composers.

Saint-Saëns composed the Cello Concerto in 1872 in response to this demand. It is in three continuous movements without pause, in the manner of the Cello Concerto by

Robert Schumann. Unlike the standard classic concerto, Saint-Saëns's Concerto opens with only a single orchestral chord, after which the soloist introduces the principal themes. The first one is an assertive and virtuosic melody that will be revisited throughout the Concerto as a unifying device. The cello also introduces the standard contrasting second theme. There is virtually no development section in this movement, merely a varied restatement of the themes in order. The second theme gradually softens the mood and the music glides into the second movement, an understated minuet in the orchestra. When the cello enters, it plays a counter-melody over the minuet and then a little waltz on its own. Once again, the end of the Minuet blends without pause into the Finale.

While many nineteenth-century works bring back the opening theme at the end as a way of providing closure and an arch-like structure, Saint-Saëns expands greatly on this architectural concept. The Finale, the longest of the movements, continues the development of the opening theme of the Concerto but also includes a new more expansive second theme, as well as a burst of new thematic material, and, of course, rapid scales, arpeggios and high harmonics that permit the soloist to indulge in virtuosic brilliance. The Concerto concludes with a coda, accelerating the tempo for a dramatic finish.



### OTTORINO RESPIGHI (1879 - 1936)

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#### Fontane di Roma (Fountains of Rome)

Ottorino Respighi was one of the most imaginative orchestrators of the first part of the twentieth century. While most of his musical studies were undertaken in Italy, he spent two crucial years in

Russia where he took lessons in orchestration from Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov. Respighi developed a masterful technique in the use of instrumental colors and sonorities. Firmly rooted in the late-Romantic tradition, he maintained this style with only marginal influence from the revolutionary changes in music that occurred during his lifetime.

Respighi was a musical nationalist, keenly interested in reviving Italy's musical heritage, especially its instrumental music. Beginning in 1906 he undertook the transcription and arrangement of music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, editing the works of Claudio Monteverdi and Tomaso Antonio Vitali. In 1917 he published the first of his three suites of *Ancient Airs and Dances*, based on Italian and French lute music, mostly from the early seventeenth century. In 1927 he composed *Gli uccelli* (The Birds), a five-movement suite using eighteenth-century keyboard works imitating birdsongs. Indeed, most of his works are based on the music of the past.

Composed in 1914-16, *Fontane di Roma* is the first of a trilogy celebrating Rome's unique history and culture. The others are *Pini di Roma* (Pines of Rome) and *Feste romane* (Roman Festivals.) They are scored for a large, diverse orchestra that includes bass clarinet, two harps, celesta, piano, optional organ and, of course, glittering



percussions.

Respighi noted in the introduction to the score that he tried to express in music the sentiments and visions suggested to him by four of Rome's iconic fountains, at the hour in which the character of each is most in harmony with the surrounding landscape or appears most enchanting to the observer. He also added some descriptive remarks to each section.

*The Fountain of Valle Giulia at Dawn:* Muted rustling in the violins and soft woodwinds give an impressionistic and bucolic picture of early morning. Respighi wrote in the score: "Droves of cattle passing and disappearing in the fresh and damp mists of the Roman dawn." The modal oboe melody and open fifths recall the music of the Middle Ages. Birdcalls also punctuate the musical image.

*The Triton Fountain at Morn:* A sudden loud blast on the horns above a brilliantly orchestrated trill for piccolo and triangle introduce the Triton Fountains "...like a joyous call, summoning troops of naiads and tritons, who run around, pursuing each other and mingling in a frenzied dance amidst the jets of water."

*The Trevi Fountain at Mid-day:* An undulating solemn theme introduces the image of the Fountain. The theme passes from the woodwinds to the brass, assuming a triumphal character. "Trumpets ring; across the shimmering surface of the water passing Neptune's chariot drawn by sea horses and followed by a train of sirens and tritons. The procession vanishes while faint triumphal blasts are heard in the distance."

*The Villa Medici Fountain at Sunset:* The final movement opens with a dreamlike English horn melody, accompanied by trickling water, depicted in the glockenspiel and celesta. "It is the nostalgic hour of sunset, with the air full of tolling bells, birds twittering and leaves rustling. Then everything dies peacefully into the silence of the night."



### IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)

Suite from *The Firebird* (1919)

"He is a man on the eve of fame," said Sergey Diaghilev, impresario of the famed *Ballets Russes* in Paris, during the rehearsals for Igor Stravinsky's *The Firebird*.

In 1909 Stravinsky, viewed as a budding composer just emerging from the tutelage of Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, got what can be called his big break, thanks to the laziness of the composer Anatoly Lyadov. Early in the year Diaghilev had written Lyadov: "I am sending you a proposal. I need a ballet and a Russian one, since there is no such thing. There is Russian opera, Russian dance, Russian rhythm – but no Russian ballet. And that is precisely what I need to perform in May of the coming year in the Paris Grand Opera and in the huge Royal Drury Lane Theater in London...The libretto is ready...It was dreamed up by us all collectively. It is *The Firebird* – a ballet in one act and perhaps two scenes." When Diaghilev heard that after three months Lyadov had only progressed so far as buying music manuscript paper, he withdrew the commission



and offered it to Aleksander Glazunov and Nikolay Tcherepnin, who both turned him down. In desperation he turned to the unknown Stravinsky.

Stravinsky finished the score in May 1910, in time for the premiere on June 25. It was an instant success and has remained Stravinsky's most frequently performed work. Its romantic tone, lush orchestral colors, imaginative use of instruments and exciting rhythms outdid even Stravinsky's teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, the Russian master of orchestration. It required an immense orchestra and the first suite Stravinsky extracted from the ballet in 1911 strained symphony orchestras' resources. He made two subsequent revisions, with modified orchestration, the final one in 1945.

The ballet, taking its plot from bits of numerous Russian folk tales, tells the story of the heroic Tsarevich Ivan who, while wandering in an enchanted forest, encounters the magic firebird as it picks golden fruit from a silver tree. He traps the bird but, as a token of goodwill, frees it. As a reward, the bird gives Ivan a flaming magic feather. At dawn the Tsarevich finds himself in a park near the castle of the evil magician Kashchey. Thirteen beautiful maidens, captives of Kashchey, come out of the castle to play in the garden but one of them in particular, the beautiful Tsarevna, captures Ivan's heart. As the sun rises, the maidens have to return to their prison and the Tsarevna warns Ivan not to come near the castle lest he fall under the magician's spell as well. In spite of the warning, the Tsarevich follows and opens the gate of the castle. With a huge crash Kashchey and his retinue of monsters erupts from the castle in a wild dance, whose drive and clashing harmonies foreshadow *The Rite of Spring*. With the help of the magic feather the Tsarevich calls the Firebird who overcomes Kashchey and tames the monsters by lulling them to sleep. In the end the captives are freed from the spell and Tsarevich Ivan and the Tsarevna are married in a grand ceremony culminating in an apotheosis of the Firebird.

## Artist Biographies



**Rei Hotoda**

conductor

Now entering her sixth season as Music Director of the Fresno Philharmonic, conductor Rei Hotoda has been hailed as an inexhaustible dynamo with a deep commitment to reimagining the 21st century concert experience. Her vision can be seen through her thought-provoking programming, passionate allyship to marginalized artists, advocacy for arts education, and an unwavering commitment to presenting the music of our times.

Her success as the Music Director of the Fresno Philharmonic since 2017 has resulted in the extension of her tenure through the 2025 season. She has worked tirelessly to build first-time and unique connections with the Fresno community with an eye toward reaching different audiences with a new music concert series, *Proxima*, and special

concerts at Bitwise South Stadium. She has reimagined the post-concert experience by creating the ever popular *Stay Tuned* series, and her programming continues to push through the preconceived notions of the classical concert-going experience, offering audiences works by often marginalized composers and today's leading voices in the field. Through her efforts, she has successfully broken down the barriers that often exist between artist and listener and reestablished the Fresno Philharmonic as a leader in the community it serves.

Rei has appeared as a guest conductor with many of today's leading ensembles, including the Symphony Orchestras of Baltimore, Chicago, St. Louis, Dallas, Detroit, Toronto, Winnipeg, Louisville, Hawaii and Utah as well as the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, among others. Her interpretations of such epic centerpieces of the classical canon such as Shostakovich's Symphony No. 8 and Britten's War Requiem, make her one of the most sought-after conductors of today. She is a tireless advocate for the music of our time, and most recently conducted the world premieres of Derek Bermel, John Wineglass, Kenneth Froelich, Cynthia Lee Wong, Kevin Day, Dinuk Wijeratne as well as works by seminal composers such as Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate, Jessie Montgomery and Hawaiian composer, Michael-Thomas Foumai to much acclaim. As a champion of today's living composers and an artist that is dedicated to amplifying marginalized voices, Rei's innovative programming and interdisciplinary collaborations continue to position her as a leader in the industry.

Rei is also an active and critically acclaimed keyboardist and embraces her time conducting from the piano and harpsichord. One of her many recent highlights was leading the Fresno Philharmonic from the piano in Beethoven's monumental Triple Concerto as part of the orchestra's *Beethoven @250* celebration and from the harpsichord in Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 as part of their Digital Masterworks series. In the 2021-22 season, she conducted both the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and the Fresno Philharmonic from the keyboard in Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos in E-flat major.

Rei is the proud recipient of several prestigious awards, including the 2006 Taki-Alsop Conducting Fellowship, created by Marin Alsop to mentor women conductors. Additionally, she has received a Peabody Career Development Grant, the Women's Philharmonic Scholarship, and an Illinois Arts Council International Arts Exchange Grant. Her teachers and mentors include Gustav Meier, Marin Alsop, Jaap van Zweden and Thierry Fischer.



**Narek Hakhnazaryan**

cello

Since winning the Cello First Prize and Gold Medal at the XIV International Tchaikovsky Competition in 2011 at the age of 22, Narek Hakhnazaryan has performed with most major orchestras and in recital and chamber music across the globe at many of the world's most prestigious festivals. Hakhnazaryan is a compelling artist, a true virtuoso with an innate musicality and an exceptional talent for connecting with his audience. He has been described as "dazzlingly brilliant" (*The Strad*) and "nothing short of magnificent" (*San*

*Francisco Chronicle*), and of his LAPO debut, the *Los Angeles Times* said, "His command of the instrument is extraordinary."

Highlights of Narek's 2022/23 season include a star-studded performance at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam as a part of the Quartet with Nikolai Lugansky, Nikita Boriso-Glebsky, and Maxim Rysanov; a Spanish tour with Barcelona Symphony Orchestra and the renowned conductor Juanjo Mena; performances at the Konzerthaus Dortmund in Germany and with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Cadogan Hall in London, England. Hakhnazaryan is set to tour California with concerts in San Diego, Sacramento, and Fresno. This season also brought Narek a residency at the Wiener Konzerthaus, at which he presented a chamber music subscription as a part of a trio with Nikita Boriso-Glebsky and Georgy Tchaidze.

Hakhnazaryan has enjoyed a truly global career since his rise to fame in 2011 and has played with orchestras such as the Orchestre de Paris, London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Frankfurt Radio, Berlin Konzerthaus, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, LA Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony, Sydney Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic, NHK Symphony orchestras, and with conductors such as Gergiev, Koopman, Alsop, Lintu, Sokhiev, Robertson, Honeck, Nosedá and Netopil. He has toured Spain with the WDR Symphony/Saraste, the US with the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra/Neemi Järvi and Japan with the Czech Philharmonic/Břetislav Tóth. A former BBC New Generation Artist, he has performed with all the BBC orchestras and made a sensational debut at the BBC Proms. In 2017, the Wiener Konzerthaus invited Hakhnazaryan to be a "Great Talent" and during the two seasons that followed he performed there regularly in recital, chamber music and with orchestra, most notably with the Wiener Symphoniker and Hrŕša. In September 2017 he was awarded the title of "Honored Artist of Armenia" by the President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan. In 2017 he toured southeast Asia, performing the complete Bach cello solo suites in Taipei, Seoul, Tokyo and Kyoto. An eager chamber musician, Hakhnazaryan has performed at most major festivals worldwide and in major halls across Europe with various chamber partners.

With the ZEN Trio, he has toured the US and China, has released a recording on Deutsche Grammophon and upcoming plans include concerts in London and Barcelona. In summer of 2019 he performed in recital at the Verbier and Rheingau Festivals with Daniil Trifonov, and in the 18/19 season was enjoyed a 4-concert residency at London's Wigmore Hall. In North America he performs regularly in recital, most recently in New York City, Chicago, San Francisco and Toronto and in past seasons has performed at Carnegie Hall and Jordan Hall (Boston). The 2020/21 season brought Narek a debut with the Vienna Radio Orchestra, a performance with the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra at their Madrid residency, Staatskapelle Weimar, and a residency with the Finnish Radio Symphony. He toured Germany with Trifonov and Dogadin, and in various chamber combinations with artists such as Lugansky and Debargues. He performed at the major venues across Europe including the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Wigmore, Cologne Philharmonie and Madrid Auditorio. He performed together with Daniil Trifonov in the USA, including Carnegie Hall. Mentored by the late Rostropovich, Hakhnazaryan received an Artist Diploma from the New England Conservatory of Music in 2011 where he studied with Lawrence Lesser. Prior to this he studied at the Moscow Conservatory with Alexey Seleznyov and at the

Sayat-Nova School of Music in Yerevan with Zareh Sarkisyan. Hakhnazaryan has received scholarships from the Rostropovich Foundation and the New Names Foundation, and his prizes include First Prize in the 2006 Aram Khachaturian International Competition in Armenia and First Place in the 2006 Johansen International Competition for Young String Players. As First Prize winner in the 2008 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, Hakhnazaryan made his debut in Washington, DC and at Carnegie Hall.



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