

Vivace



PROGRAM

SCOTT SPECK, conductor

SUJARI BRITT, cello

Saturday, March 7, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. • Sunday, March 8, 2020 at 2:30 p.m.

Saenger Theatre

Anna Clyne
b. 1980

Masquerade (2013)*

5 minutes

Camille Saint Saëns
(1864-1949)

Cello Concerto, No. 1, op. 33
Allegro non troppo
Allegretto con moto
Allegro non troppo

19 minutes

Sujari Britt

INTERMISSION

Sergei Prokofiev
(1891-1953)

Symphony no. 5, op. 100
Andante
Allegro moderato
Adagio
Allegro giocoso

46 minutes

SPONSORED BY



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**The presentation of this work is made possible by a generous donation to the Symphonic Innovations Fund.*

FLOWERS IN THE SAENGER THEATRE ARCADE ARE PROVIDED BY SOUTHERN VERANDA FLOWERS AND GIFTS.

Sujari Britt appears through arrangement with Opus 3 Artists.

MASQUERADE

ANNA CLYNE

BORN: London, England / March 9, 1980

Anna Clyne is a Grammy-nominated composer of acoustic and electro-acoustic music. Described as a “composer of uncommon gifts and unusual methods” in a *New York Times* profile, and as “dazzlingly inventive” by *Time Out New York*, her work often includes collaborations with cutting-edge choreographers, visual artists, filmmakers, and musicians worldwide. *Masquerade* premiered in London at the last night of the 2013 BBC Proms concerts. Marin Alsop conducted the BBC Symphony Orchestra. The composer has provided the following note:

Masquerade draws inspiration from the original mid-eighteenth century promenade concerts held in London’s pleasure gardens. As is true today, these concerts were a place where people from all walks of life mingled to enjoy a wide array of music. Other forms of entertainment ranged from the sedate to the salacious with acrobatics, exotic street entertainers, dancers, fireworks and masquerades. I am fascinated by the historic and sociological courtship between music and dance. Combined with costumes, masked guises and elaborate settings, masquerades created an exciting, yet controlled, sense of occasion and celebration. It is this that I wish to evoke in *Masquerade*.

The work derives its material from two melodies. For the main theme, I imagined a chorus welcoming the audience and inviting them into their imaginary world. The second theme, Juice of Barley, is an old English country dance melody and drinking song, which first appeared in John Playford’s 1695 edition of *The English Dancing Master*.

This piece is scored for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings.

**CELLO CONCERTO NO. 1
IN A MINOR, OP. 33**

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

BORN: Paris, France / October 9, 1835**DIED:** Algiers, Algeria / December 16, 1921

Cellists are grateful for Saint-Saëns’ superb contributions to their limited repertoire: two concertos, two sonatas with piano, a suite and a number of shorter works. He composed Concerto No. 1 in 1872. He dedicated it to the soloist who played the premiere: Auguste Tollbecque, principal cellist in the Orchestra of the Paris Conservatoire. Its attractions are not confined to appealing themes and an effortless response to the problem of ensuring that the low-voiced cello is never obscured by the orchestra. Another plus is an ingenious structure. Borrowing procedures originated by his friend and contemporary, Franz Liszt, Saint-Saëns telescoped the traditional three movements of a concerto into a continuous whole. He also based the first and last of them on the same thematic material. The urgent, dramatic book-ends are separated by a minuet like section that displays a refined, very French elegance and a playful sense of fantasy.

This piece is scored for solo cello, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings.

**SYMPHONY NO. 5
IN B-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 100**

SERGEI PROKOFIEV

BORN: Sontsovka, Ukraine / April 27, 1891**DIED:** Moscow, Russia / March 5, 1953

In June 1944, Prokofiev took up residence at a vacation estate that the Union of Composers operated near Ivanovo, northeast of Moscow. Between summer and autumn, he created one of the most mature and serious works he had composed up to that time: Symphony No. 5.

“I attach great importance (to the symphony),” he wrote. “I thought of it as a work glorifying the human spirit. I wanted to sing of man free and happy, his strength, his generosity and the purity of his soul. I cannot say that I chose this theme; it was innate in me and had to be expressed.”

He conducted the first performance himself, in Moscow on Jan. 13, 1945. The symphony’s immediate popularity sprang from its representing precisely what Soviet audiences wanted: a hopeful vision of better times after six years of horrific conflict. It has maintained its reputation through its masterful bal-

ance of grandeur, powerful emotions and sparkling humor. In it Prokofiev may be heard to achieve the language – direct and approachable yet still individual – that would satisfy both himself and the conservative bureaucrats who regularly criticized his and other Soviet composers’ music.

The four movements alternate slow and fast tempos. The first generates an impression of optimism, rising to a climax of overwhelming heft and forcefulness. A bustling movement laced with typically biting Prokofiev light-heartedness follows. The dark, questioning third movement mirrors the matching section of Shostakovich’s Fifth, which since its debut in 1937 had been the model for Soviet symphonic tragedies. The finale opens in a mood of gentle musing, only to shift to an impudent, carnival-like atmosphere that sweeps the music along joyfully to the celebratory conclusion.

This piece is scored for 2 flutes, Piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, piano and strings.

Program Notes by Don Anderson © 2019 ■



SUJARI BRITT, VIOLIN

Sujari Britt showed her prodigious talent and uncanny devotion to and understanding of music from a very early age. She began formal study of the cello at age four, following her study on the violin and piano.

Sujari earned her bachelor's of music (2018) in classical cello performance at Manhattan School of Music in the studio of distinguished pedagogue, author and cellist Marion Feldman. Sujari presently studies with renowned cellist and pedagogue Martti Rousi, Sibelius Academy in pursuit of her master's of classical cello.

In February 2019, Sujari was a featured artist at Musiikkotalo, Cellofest Opening Gala in Helisinki, Finland. Sujari also was featured at CUNY/Queens College, where she performed the Elgar, Cello Concerto in E minor. She opened the current season for the Rogue Valley Symphony in Oregon in September and closed last season with an appearance with the Helsinki Chamber Orchestra in May 2019.

This is Sujari's first appearance with the Mobile Symphony. "When Sujari Britt was 15, she said 'I think it's my role as a musician to bring music to everyone,' and I couldn't agree more," Scott Speck, MSO music director said. "The Mobile Symphony, Sujari and I want nothing more than for our music to touch you, the city of Mobile, and all of humanity. We hope this concert of Saint-Saens, Prokofiev and Anna Clyne will do just that."

In 2009, Sujari had the honor of performing with Alisa Weilerstein at the White House for President Obama, the First Lady, and their distinguished guests, where she was brought to the attention of many notables in the classical music industry.

Sujari was featured in *Strings Magazine* Fall 2015, and was *StayThirsty* Winter 2014 Spotlight Artist to Watch. Sujari also was featured in an on-line THKR/RadicalMedia PRODIGIES, a *TIME for Kids/Time Magazine* article, *Ebony.com* and a segment of *Katie!* with Katie Couric. Sujari joined a host of prodigious young movers of the world on TEDx-Redmond of TED Talks, and was featured as one of NBC *TheGrio's* "100 History Makers in the Making."

Sujari serves in the Arts Leadership Program of From the Top. She is the distinguished recipient of prestigious academic



scholarships and awards, and grand prize winner of numerous national and international competitions. Sujari plays a Neuner and Hornsteiner cello made in Mittenwald, Germany circa 1718, generously loaned to her by Carlsen Cello Foundation.

In addition to her active solo career, Sujari is a member of JoSunJari, a classical string trio with her sister Joelle (violin), and her brother Sunnaj (violin); and a member of various troupes and ensembles of classical, jazz and eclectic genres.

Sujari has participated in international and local summer music festivals including Manhattan in the Mountains, JVL International Music Festival, New York University String Camp, Greenwood Music Festival, Gateway Music Festival, Kaufman String Camp and World Cultural programs in Prague, Budapest and Italy. ■

SPECK SPEAKS

PROKOFIEV SYMPHONY NO. 5

Boy, did Sergei Prokofiev mess up. He moved to the Soviet Union in the midst of Stalin's Reign of Terror.

You heard that right. Born in Ukraine and educated in Russia, Prokofiev had had the good sense to slip out, just before the worst effects of Bolshevik Revolution hit like a pile driver. For years he lived in New York, celebrated as the great composer and pianist that he was. From there he moved to Paris and once again joined the musical elite, composing several masterpieces for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.

But his homeland was very interested in having him back. And for a few years, an interesting negotiation went on between the international rock star and the U.S.S.R. Eventually, in 1936, Prokofiev agreed to move back, and settled in Moscow. Imme-

diately afterwards, Stalin began his Great Purge – and one of its eventual victims was Prokofiev's Spanish-born first wife Lina, who was sent to the Gulag for anti-Soviet sentiments.

Despite how Prokofiev must have felt about his disastrous timing, he managed to thrive professionally within the Soviet system. His Fifth Symphony, full of tragedy and triumph, buoyed his countrymen's spirits during the worst of World War II. In describing his music, Prokofiev parroted the party line: "It is the duty of the composer, like the poet, the sculptor or the painter, to serve his fellow men, to beautify human life and point the way to a radiant future."

Whether Prokofiev actually believed this is open to interpretation. Despite his immense fame, when he died in 1953, there was not a single word about it in the Moscow newspapers. Because Joseph Stalin died on the very same day. ■