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
Sujari Britt

INTERMISSION

Sergei Prokofiev
(1891-1953)
Symphony no. 5, op. 100
Andante
Allegro moderato
Adagio
Allegro giocoso

46 minutes

SPONSORED BY
MARY JOSEPHINE LARKINS FOUNDATION
JOANNA & ROBERT CUNNINGHAM

*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.
ANNAL CLYNE

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 masquerade 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 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 balance 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.
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 Musiikkitalo, Cellofest Opening Gala in Helsinki, 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.

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. Immedi-ately 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.