

NORTHWEST IOWA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PRESENTS
2017-2018 CONCERT SERIES

*Symphonic
Treasures*

SPRING CONCERT:

**Tuesday, April 10, 2018
at 7:30pm**

in the BJ Haan Auditorium on the campus of Dordt College

A MIGHTY FORTRESS

Guest Artist: Richard Steinbach, piano
M. A. Martin Everist Foundation Artist-in-Residence

Rimsky-Korsakov: Russian Easter Overture

Shostakovich: Piano Concerto No. 2

Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 5, "Reformation"



niso
northwest iowa symphony orchestra

**Christopher Stanichar,
Principal Conductor**

WELCOME

Dear NISO friends,

Our spring concert features a commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Under the theme of *A Mighty Fortress*, NISO will be performing the *Russian Easter Overture* by Rimsky Korsakov and *Reformation Symphony* by Mendelssohn. The piano performance by guest artist Richard Steinbach is a wonderful addition to the concert. This evening's presentation will conclude our spectacular 2017-2018 "Symphonic Treasures" season.

Please take time to buy coffee and truffles during intermission provided by Friends of NISO. I would like to encourage you to consider joining the NISO Friends organization as a wonderful way to support NISO.

Plans are underway for next season. The theme for the 2018-2019 NISO season is "Orchestral Celebration," and we are looking forward to another fantastic season. Thank you very much for your continuing support. The NISO board appreciates your generosity.

Best Regards,
Rhonda Pennings
NISO Board Chairperson

NISO 30th Anniversary CD

NISO is excited to present our very first CD, produced as part of last year's celebration of our 30th Anniversary. The CD is a sampler of performance highlights from past years. It includes twelve pieces by twelve different composers from eleven different concerts conducted by Henry Duitman, Tim McGarvey, Henry Charles Smith, Jungho Kim, and Christopher Stanichar. The compositions include the lovely *Pavane* by Fauré, the "Triumphal March" from *Aida* by Verdi, the dramatic *Pines of Rome* by Respighi, and nine other concert favorites.

The CD will be for sale at all NISO concerts this season. It is also available in the NISO office; requests for mail orders can be submitted by e-mail. The CD costs \$15.00, with proceeds going toward 2017-2018 season expenses.

Further information, including a complete listing of the titles and ordering information, is available at niso.dordt.edu.

PROGRAM

THE NORTHWEST IOWA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Christopher Stanichar, Principal Conductor
Richard Steinbach, Piano

10 April 2018

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV Russian Easter Overture

SHOSTAKOVICH Piano Concerto No. 2

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro

Presentation of 2018-2019 NISO Concert Season

Intermission

MENDELSSOHN Symphony No. 5, "Reformation"

- I. Andante – Allegro con fuoco
- II. Allegro vivace
- III. Andante
- IV. Andante con moto – Allegro vivace – Allegro maestoso

Please Note:

Flash photography and the use of recording devices is prohibited during NISO concerts. Please disable all cell phones and pagers.



PROGRAM NOTES

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov - Russian Easter Overture

"May God arise, may his enemies be scattered; may his foes flee before him. May you blow them away like smoke—as wax melts before the fire, may the wicked perish before God." (Psalm 68:1-2)

Early in the 1860's, a group of young, self-trained composers coalesced around Mily Balakirev (1837-1910) in Saint Petersburg. Including Balakirev, Cesar Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, Aleksandr Borodin, and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, the group sought to create a distinctly nationalist school of Russian music. (Distinct, of course, from what they considered the academic hand-me-downs of European darlings such as Tchaikovsky.) Active through the 1860's and 70's, "The Five" expanded the language of Russian music with radical ideas on harmony and an affection for exotic, oriental sounds. The Five began to drift apart late in the 1870's and lost members in the 1880's: Balakirev withdrew from music for a time, Mussorgsky's alcoholism drove him to a pauper's grave in 1881, and Borodin passed away in 1887. Grieving his friends, Rimsky-Korsakov dedicated the present work to the memories of Mussorgsky and of Borodin.

Easter is, naturally, a joyous time in all Christian circles and particularly so in Russia, where it coincides with the arrival of spring after a long winter. First performed in 1888, the present overture carries Rimsky-Korsakov's programmatic inscription from the sixteenth chapter of Mark:

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen!"

Sunrise breaks on the timeless, melancholy mysticism of Orthodox chant. This in turn gives way to a burly dance as God's messenger informs the women that Christ is indeed raised from the dead. Rimsky-Korsakov offers final remarks on the overwhelming joy of the overture's conclusion: "Resurrexit!" sing the choirs of angels in heaven to the sound of archangels' trumpets and the rustling wings of the seraphim. 'Resurrexit!' sing priests in temples, surrounded by incense, in the light of innumerable candles and the ringing of triumphant carillons."

Dmitri Shostakovich - Piano Concerto No. 2

Like many of his contemporaries, Dmitri Shostakovich faced a rough time under the Zhdanovist policies of the Soviet Union. Twice denounced, he had the terrifying experience of seeing Joseph Stalin walk out on one of his operas. (The audience reported that Shostakovich was "white as a sheet" when called to take his bow at the conclusion.) Written shortly after the death of his first wife, Nina, in 1954, Shostakovich dedicated the present concerto to his son, Maxim (b.1938) as a present for his 19th birthday. Maxim first performed the concerto at his graduation from the Moscow Conservatory in 1957.

Shostakovich later dismissed the work as having "no artistic merit," perhaps seeking to preempt any criticism of his son's birthday present. Yet despite the composer's dismissal, the concerto remains a delight to audiences today. The bouncy, bluesy recklessness of the first movement gives way to tender lyricism in the second. The final movement weaves a few "Hanon" finger exercises—bane of piano students everywhere—into a driving, swirling, carnival-ground romp.

Felix Mendelssohn - Symphony No. 5, "Reformation"

"With might of ours can naught be done; soon were our loss effected. But for us fights the Valiant One, whom God Himself elected."

- Martin Luther (1529) - tr. Pennsylvania Lutheran Church

The son of a banker, Felix Mendelssohn enjoyed an astonishing childhood: Not only was his natural talent for music honed by the finest tutors in Berlin, but his compositions were often performed at home by a private orchestra. By age 14 he had written a dozen string symphonies; at age 15 he led a full orchestra in the premiere of his first symphony.

At age 20, Mendelssohn began composing his second full symphony to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession. For a variety of reasons, though, the finished symphony was not played in the Augsburg tercentennial: composition was delayed by a busy touring schedule and a case of the measles. Lingering antisemitism against his family name persisted in Berlin. Another composer (whom history has forgotten) had already submitted a score. Mendelssohn later wrote to a colleague that he had no intention of submitting the symphony.

The following year, the symphony received an icy reception and was refused by orchestras in Munich, Paris, and Italy. "Too much fugato and not enough melody," complained the musicians in France. Mendelssohn scrapped the work for a tour of London. Returning to Berlin, he revised the work, had it performed once and then shelved it, thinking the entire exercise a failure. He refused to allow it to be published during his lifetime, calling the work a "fat, bristly animal...a total misfit." Two decades after his death, publishers erroneously presented the score as his fifth symphony and released it posthumously.



Melodically, the symphony draws on the "Dresden Amen", a simple ascending fifth so named for its use in churches of that city.

A high scale in the strings, a sharp fanfare in the brass, inverted for a descending fifth during the scherzo, the simple melody is found throughout the symphony. But, Mendelssohn reserves the most "reformational" melody of all for the final movement. First with a solo flute and ultimately with the entire orchestra, the veritable anthem of Lutheranism thunders out: *A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.*

Notes by Robert Horton, 2018

ARTISTS

RICHARD STEINBACH, pianist, performed his solo debut recital at Carnegie Hall in New York on June 12, 2015. Steinbach's Carnegie Hall debut featured the premiere of his seventh CD titled FUSION: New Music for a New Age, and was the culminating event for the international "Fusion Project" that Steinbach launched in 2013. The Fusion Project featured an extensive concert tour of South America and Latin America with master piano classes for students. Dr. Steinbach has performed extensively as both soloist and collaborative artist in concerts throughout the United States, Canada, France, Italy, Great Britain, South America (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru), Honduras, Mexico, Cuba, New Zealand, Australia, Jamaica, South Korea, Malaysia, Japan and The People's Republic of China. As the grand prizewinner in the France Piano International Competition, he performed his solo debut recital at the Salle Cortot in Paris in January 1996.

"...a mesmerizing performance by an artist who both totally understands the composer's magical world, and also possesses the virtuosity to present it to us. Any composer—myself included—would be privileged by an interpretation as intelligent and powerful as Mr. Steinbach's." —American Composer, John Corigliano

Dr. Steinbach is currently a Professor of Music at Briar Cliff University, Sioux City, Iowa. In July, 2016, he was appointed the "M. A. Martin Everist Foundation Artist-in-Residence" at the university. He holds degrees in piano performance from the University of Colorado, the Eastman School of Music, and the Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of Iowa. Post-doctoral work includes study and master classes with Dominique Merlet, Noel Lee, Roy Howat, Pascal Devoyon, Dorothy Taubman and John Bloomfield. www.RichardSteinbachPiano.com

CHRISTOPHER STANICHAR is the Principal Conductor of the Northwest Iowa Symphony, an ensemble of some of the finest musicians in northwest Iowa and southeast South Dakota. Stanichar was appointed to this position in 2011, following a number of guest appearances. Stanichar has continued NISO's tradition of artistic excellence, innovative programming, and collaborations with guest artists from the region and beyond. Stanichar leads NISO in three concerts per season, in addition to the annual *Concert for Children*. He has been praised for "his obvious energy, great joy directing, and outright enthusiasm." (Peter Wagner, *Northwest Iowa Review*).

In addition to his position with Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra, Stanichar conducts the Worthington Area Symphony Orchestra in Minnesota.

Stanichar has conducted professional orchestras in Europe, Russia, Mexico, and the United States, including the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra (Russia), Sochi Symphony Orchestra (Russia), Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil del Estado de Veracruz (Mexico), and many orchestras in the United States.

Stanichar earned his Doctorate of Musical Arts in conducting at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music where he was a student of Gerard Samuel. In 1996 he was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to study conducting in Slovakia, where he appeared as a guest conductor of many top orchestras in that country. In 1997 he was appointed Conducting Assistant for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, where he was mentored by maestros Jesús López-Cobos and Erich Kunzel.

Stanichar is an active composer; his works have been commissioned and performed throughout the world. His *Trisagion* was used in the Ric Burns' PBS documentary, *Andy Warhol*. More recent projects include a full-length cantata, *St. Mark Passion*, written as part of a Granskou grant for the 150th anniversary of Augustana College. His *Variations on a Theme by Handel* for string orchestra is featured in the independent film, *Dust of War*. TrevCo-Varner Music has published several of his works for English horn.

THE NORTHWEST IOWA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA comprises the finest musicians in the tri-state area. Teaching principals are of a professional caliber and function as first chair players and teachers in sectional rehearsals. The orchestra's 80 members include adults of all ages as well as gifted music students from area high schools, middle schools, and colleges. Four of the middle school and high school students are recipients of scholarships from *Friends of the Symphony* for the purpose of continuing their private music instruction. NISO presents three concerts each season in addition to the annual *Concert for Children*, which is given each November for over 1,000 area 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students.

***2018-2019 Season Tickets will be available
for purchase at Pre-Season Sale Prices
TONIGHT ONLY!***

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Daniel Amin, Dordt College
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 Erika Buijer, Dordt College
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 Tara Tilstra, Dordt College
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*Tonight's Intermission Feature: Gourmet coffee and truffles (\$1 each).
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Symphonic Treasures

Northwest Iowa Symphony Youth Orchestra Concert

Christopher Stanichar, Conductor

Saturday, April 14, 2018, 3:00PM



Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra
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