

TWENTY FIRST ANNIVERSARY YEAR

*THE CLAIRE AND SEYMOUR SMITH CONCERT SERIES*



*PRESENTS*

**THE LYNN UNIVERSITY  
PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA**

**JON ROBERTSON**  
**Conductor**

**SEBA ALI**  
**Piano**

Thursday, February 10, 2011

8:00 P.M.

~HUNTINGTON POINTE THEATRE ~

# PROGRAM

Jon Robertson, conductor

Overture to Russlan and Ludmilla

Mikhail Glinka

Piano Concerto in G Major

Maurice Ravel

*Allegramente*

*Adagio Assai*

*Presto*

**Seba Ali, piano**

## INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, op.43

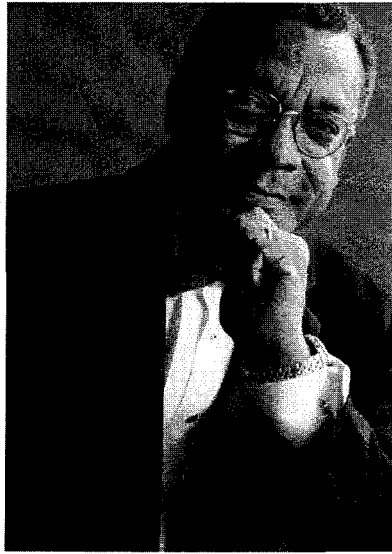
Jean Sibelius

*Allegretto*

*Tempo andante, ma rubato*

*Vivacissimo (attacca)*

*Finale: Allegro moderato*



## **Jon Robertson, conductor**

**Maestro Jon Robertson** enjoys a distinguished career, both as a pianist, conductor and academician. He was awarded full scholarship six consecutive years to The Julliard School of Music, earning a B.M., M.S., and D.M.A. degrees in piano performance as a student of Beveridge Webster. After completing a Masters Degree at The Julliard, he was appointed Chair of the Department of Music at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama. In 1970, Robertson returned to The Julliard as a Ford Foundation Scholar to complete his Doctorate of Musical Arts. In 1972, Robertson became Chair of the Thayer Conservatory of Music at Atlantic Union College, in Massachusetts. Robertson traveled to Europe as a conducting fellow of Herbert Blomstedt, conductor of the Dresden Staatskapelle. He became Conductor and Music Director of the Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra in Norway in 1979 and served until 1987. In 1982 Maestro Robertson became the Conductor and Music Director of the Redlands Symphony Orchestra. As guest conductor, Maestro Robertson has conducted orchestras nationally and internationally, among others, the San Francisco Symphony at Stern Grove and in Davies Hall, the Beijing Central Philharmonic in China, the Cairo Symphony Orchestra in Egypt and was the principal guest conductor of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra in Yerevan from 1995-1998. Maestro Robertson has also conducted the Bratislava Chamber Orchestra, at the Pianofest Austria at Bad Aussee, Austria, and most recently in South Africa, at the University of Stellenbosch

International Festival. Recently, Robertson was honored as the 2010 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient from the National Society of Arts and Letters. Dr. Jon Robertson is presently Dean of the Lynn University Conservatory of Music.

## **Lynn University Philharmonia Orchestra**

The Lynn University Philharmonia sets the standard for conservatory level symphonic training. Now in its 18th season as a full symphony, the Philharmonia continues to present high quality concerts with a wide range of repertoire.

The Philharmonia is directed by Albert-George Schram, who is also resident conductor of the Columbus and Nashville Symphonies.

The Philharmonia was first formed in 1991 as the Harid String Orchestra. It became a full symphony orchestra in 1993. In 1999 Lynn University took over the operations of the music division of the Harid Conservatory forming the Lynn University Conservatory of Music.

As an integral part of the education of the conservatory's graduate and undergraduate music students, the Philharmonia offers superior training through the preparation and performance of orchestral repertoire and a minimum of six public performances per year. It has presented several new works throughout its history, and has always been enthusiastically received by the public and the press. Music directors of the Philharmonia have included such conductors as Markand Thakar and Arthur Weisberg and many guest conductors including Jon Robertson, David Lockington, Zeev Dorman, Joseph Silverstein, among others.



## Seba Ali, piano

Pianist **Seba Ali** was born in Cairo, Egypt. She appeared on the stage at the age of seven and obtained her Diploma and Bachelor's Degree with Excellent Honors from Cairo Conservatory. She has been invited to play for Egypt's First Lady and received Honor Certificates from The Egyptian Ministry of Culture and Manasterly International Music Center.

Seba has been awarded a notable scholarship to Brevard Music Festival in 2008 and AppleHill Center for Chamber Music in 2009. She participated in Masterclasses with *Anne Queffelec*, *Douglas Weeks*, *Ralf Gothoni*, *Sandra W. Shen*, *Idil Biret*. She performed the Egyptian Premiere of F. Busoni's Concerto for Piano and String Orchestra in D Minor and the world premiere of Kenneth Frazelle's "Gee's Bend Pieces," during The New Music Festival 2010. She appeared as a soloist with Cairo Symphony Orchestra, Cairo Conservatory Symphony Orchestra, Bibliotheca Alexandria Chamber Orchestra and Ars Flores Symphony Orchestra in 2009.

She was a winner of the Ars Flores Concerto Competition 2009 and Lynn University Concerto Competition, 2010.

Seba is currently a piano demonstrator at the Cairo Conservatory. She is working toward the Professional Performance Certificate with Dr. Roberta Rust at Lynn University. Seba is also a piano teacher at the Lynn Conservatory Preparatory Division.

# PROGRAM NOTES

## **Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857), Overture to Russlan and Ludmilla**

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka was important in Russian Music as one of the first to incorporate traditional Russian folk music into his works. The Overture is an exuberant romp. After some initial scuttling sounds, the main melody is a short, upward rising triadic figure, followed by swoops of eighth notes in the flute and upper strings, offbeat and sizzling away on high octane. Glinka's travels in Europe did not go amiss, because the Overture recalls to listeners delightful shades of the Follies Bergeres and Offenbach's "Orpheus in the Underworld," and even Mendelssohn's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in the open horn phrases between the crisp, energetic opening theme and the second melody in violas and cellos. This melody leads back to the energetic opening figure and the Overture ends with an exciting coda.

## **MAURICE RAVEL [1875-1937], PIANO CONCERTO IN G**

Maurice Ravel was one of the most highly regarded French composers of the early twentieth century; and after the death of Debussy in 1918, he was considered the most important French composer of his generation. In evolving his musical vocabulary, Ravel incorporates Russian and Spanish influences, but the influence most evident in the concerto is jazz. Ravel does not so much reinvent the piano concerto as write one of the first impressive crossovers, mixing jazz idioms and rhythms with the symphonic orchestra and piano. Highly influenced by George Gershwin, Gershwin brought jazz inflections to the piano concerto and opera from the side of American popular music, while Ravel brought jazz influences of the '20's from the side of a classical composer, writing the Piano Concerto in G Major between 1929-31. Those jazz idioms include his choice of instruments, like the trumpet near the beginning of the work, his off-beat rhythms and the bluesy 7th and 9th chords, reminiscent of Gershwin's piano concerto and the "Rhapsody in Blue."

Punctuated by the sprightly main idea of the first movement, Ravel's piano writing is incisive, with sharp-edged groups, percussive and clear-cut. The slow movement is an extended meditative solo that recalls a reflective melancholy and wondrous star-gazing quality. When individual wind lines join, they become integrated as part of the music's internal reflection, as the piano flowers into filigree strands and dissolves at the end of the movement in a shimmering trill.

The presto finale is a whirlwind of deft, exciting rhythmic figures, which, like the first movement, particularly feature the upper register of the piano. Unlike Stravinsky's use of rhythmic dislocation, Ravel's rhythmic writing is succinct and clear-cut. In contrast to the off-beat figures of the first movement, the

finale is based on brilliant, crisp-cut groups, with precise chord clusters set against scurrying runs. The energy generated by these power house rhythms culminates in one of his most exciting and exhilarating movements.

## **JEAN SIBELIUS [1865-1957] SYMPHONY NO.2 IN D MAJOR, OP.43**

Jean Sibelius was the most important Finnish composer of the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. He made a significant contribution to orchestral music, particularly through his seven symphonies, his violin concerto and his tone poems, based on folk legends, with distinctive dark coloration that evokes the woods and the mist-shrouded landscape of his country, steeping himself in the epic mythology of Finland, with its gods and heroes.

The Second Symphony was written in 1901-2, with Sibelius using folk melodies with a narrow range, modal harmony and often a dark, trenchant orchestration. The first movement, Allegretto, is a pastoral evocation, and shows Sibelius's preference for avoiding the first beat of the bar and symmetrical phrases, so the phrases have the quality of flexibility and fluidity. The second movement in D minor, starts with pizzicato basses, then taken over by pizzicato cellos, overlaid by a mournful, modal melody in the bassoons. From the lugubrious opening, the second movement is made up of a disjunct blocks of sound, two of which end with timpani rolls. At the end of these segments, a lead-in takes us to the central section of the movement, an extended elegiac refrain, largely carried by the strings with commentary by choirs of woodwind and punctuated by brass in a somber modal D. The closing of the movement brings back the timpani trill underlying a determined ending [heavy] for the full orchestra.

The scherzo in B flat is fleet-moving, in the time signature of 6/8, with two groups of three-eighth notes per bar, but rather than the rough humor of Beethoven's famous scherzos or the ironic drive of Mahler's, this movement, while fleet-moving in the strings, is overlaid by ominous brass chords. The trio in G-flat is a slow, reflective brass chorale, and in fact the movement is a five part scherzo, as the trio comes back a second time, leading straight into the finale in D major. For the first time in the work, the elements that had been so disjunct in the first and second movement now coalesce at the beginning of the finale in a clear melody centered on three rising notes. After a subdued transition, the center of the movement deploys a series of these three-note rising figures, pushed forwards with a sense of urgency towards a dominant pedal in the timpani, in a forceful crescendo leading to the recapitulation. The main theme returns, rescored for full orchestra, but with a slightly menacing undercut, as if the return is incipiently threatened, even in the bright day of the full orchestral statement. Sibelius denied any explicit political meaning to the Second Symphony, but given his well-known identification with Finland's identity and political autonomy and his opposition to Russia's constant threat to Finland's sovereignty, such a reading cannot be totally excluded.

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**2011 CONCERT SERIES SCHEDULE**

Sunday, January 23, 2011	Symphony of the Americas
Thursday, February 10, 2011	Lynn University Orchestra
Friday, February 25, 2011	Dance Alive National Ballet
Wednesday, March 16, 2011	Tutto Puccini