

Anchorage Symphony Orchestra

NEWS RELEASE

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Anchorage Symphony Orchestra

2024 Season Finale

featuring Terrence Wilson, piano

Saturday, May 11th – 7:30pm

Atwood Concert Hall, ACPA

Anchorage, Alaska – April 30, 2024 – Anyone who has not heard the Anchorage Symphony Orchestra lately is missing out! Concert after concert, audiences have been leaping to their feet, giving long, enthusiastic standing ovations. On Saturday, May 11th, the ASO and Music Director Elizabeth Schulze cap off a season of extraordinary musical journeys with a fitting Season Finale featuring works by Chinese Pipa virtuoso Gao Hong, piano legend Rachmaninoff, and storyteller extraordinaire Rimsky-Korsakov, plus the talents of guest pianist Terrence Wilson, and ASO's concertmaster Ludek Wojtkowski.

The ASO's *Season Finale* literally kicks off with a *Celebration* by Gao Hong, a composition that beautifully blends traditional Chinese elements with Western Orchestration. Hong, an internationally recognized Chinese Pipa player, brings her vibrant spirit and intricate melodies to the stage, creating a musical experience like no other.

The first traditional musician to be awarded the prestigious Bush Artist Fellowship in 2019, Hong is currently the only musician in any genre to win five McKnight Artist Fellowships for Performing Musicians. As a composer, she has received commissions from numerous orchestras, theaters, and art centers around the globe. Hong now teaches at Carleton College and directs the Chinese Music Ensemble. She is also a guest professor at the Central Conservatory of Music, China Conservatory of Music, and Tianjin Conservatory of Music. A Board member of the American Composers Forum and Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, Hong is also a Voting Member for the Grammys and an Advisor to the Board for the Recording Academy's Chicago Chapter.

Celebration was commissioned and premiered by the Minnesota Sinfonia (October 19, 2021). Hong writes about her composition, "During the COVID-19 pandemic and recent incidents of racial injustice, I felt that my entire world was turning upside down. All of my performances and international tours were canceled. All I wanted to do was to get back to a normal daily life. So in this piece, celebration has two meanings. The first celebration is for when vaccines became available and there was hope that the pandemic would soon end and we'd be celebrating the

return to our normal lives. And secondly, I was hoping to finally celebrate major moves toward racial equality and a time when everybody would be appreciated and treated with respect. I was excited to see a glimmer of hope and wanted to celebrate."

Hong's jubilant overture is followed by Rachmaninoff's soul-stirring *Piano Concerto No. 2*, a piece that resonates with the depths of human emotion. Composed during a time of deep depression for Rachmaninoff, this concerto is a testament to the power of music to heal and uplift.

Performing Rachmaninoff's virtuosic concerto is dynamic pianist Terrence Wilson. Acclaimed by the Baltimore Sun as "one of the biggest pianistic talents to have emerged in this country in the last 25 years," Wilson has appeared as a soloist with prestigious symphonies around the world. In the summer of 2022, he appeared as a guest at the Aspen Music Festival, where he worked with ASO Music Director Elizabeth Schulze. "Terrence and I collaborated early on in both of our careers and I'm so happy to be working with him again. It is my privilege to introduce him to Anchorage Symphony audiences."

Wilson's accolades include the SONY ES Award for Music Excellence, an Avery Fischer Career Grant, and the Juilliard Petschek Award, as well as a GRAMMY nomination in the category of "Best Instrumental Soloist with an Orchestra." The Bronx native and Juilliard graduate now lives in New Jersey and is on the piano faculty at Bard College Conservatory of Music.

As the night comes to a close, the symphonic narrative unfolds further, unveiling the enchanting tale of *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov, where each movement breathes life into the legendary Arabian tales of *A Thousand and One Nights*, captivating the senses with its exotic allure and dazzling virtuosity. ASO concertmaster Ludek Wojtkowski will take the spotlight, performing the famous violin solo, representing Scheherazade herself. It proves to be a night of musical enchantment, where the melodies of the past and present converge to create an unforgettable finale.

Anchorage Symphony's Season Finale, Saturday, May 11, 2024, (7:30pm) in the Atwood Concert Hall, Alaska Center for the Performing Arts. Infrared headphones for the hearing impaired are available concert night from the House Manager on the Orchestra Level. Tickets: Adult, \$52-\$27; Youth, \$24.75-\$12.50; Senior, \$46.50-\$24.50 (prices include all surcharges and fees). Military, student and group discounts available. To purchase tickets, go to www.centertix.com or call 263-ARTS (2787), toll free at 1-877-ARTS-TIX.

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Program

GAO HONG | Celebration

RACHMANINOFF | Piano Concerto No. 2

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV | Scheherazade

- Interviews with ASO Music Director, Elizabeth Schulze and attendance at a rehearsal are available upon request.
- Contact ASO Marketing Director, Jennifer Cargile at ASO@YourASO.org, or 907-227-1401 to make arrangements.