



Frank Almond, Artistic Director

January 29, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.

Schwan Concert Hall,
Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee

January 30, 2019 – 6:30 p.m.

Guarneri Hall, Chicago

Robert & Clara

Frank Almond, *violin*

Toby Appel, *viola*

Alexander Hersh, *cello*

Orion Weiss, *piano*

PROGRAM

Selected Chorale Preludes of J.S. Bach, Op. 122 **Johannes Brahms**

(1833–1897)

Arr. Ferruccio Busoni

Märchenbilder, Op. 113 **Robert Schumann**

(1810–1856)

I. Nicht Schnell

II. Lebhaft

III. Rasch

IV. Langsam, mit melancholischen Ausdruck

Three Romances for Violin and Piano, Op. 22

Clara Schumann

I. Andante molto

II. Allegretto

III. Leidenschaftlich schnell

(1819–1896)

Intermission

Piano Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 47 **Robert Schumann**

(1810–1856)

I. Sostenuto assai—Allegro ma non troppo

II. Scherzo: Molto vivace

III. Andante cantabile

IV. Finale: Vivace



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This program was supported in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the state of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The 15th Anniversary Season is lovingly dedicated to Katherine Denton Almond (1968-2017).

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BIOGRAPHIES



Photo by Jennifer Brindley

Violinist **Frank Almond** holds the Charles and Marie Caestecker Concertmaster Chair at the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. He has also held positions as

Concertmaster of the Rotterdam Philharmonic with Valery Gergiev, and Guest Concertmaster of the London Philharmonic with Kurt Masur. Other Guest Concertmaster appearances have included the Seattle Symphony, the Montreal Symphony, the Dallas Symphony, the Grand Tetons Music Festival, and the San Diego Symphony. He continues an active schedule of solo and chamber music

performances in the US and abroad including appearances with the Ojai Festival, Frankly Music, An die Musik, the Nara Academy in Nara, Japan, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Music in the Vineyards, Sarasota Music Festival, and various solo appearances with orchestras. He has been a member of the chamber group An die Musik in New York City since 1997, and also founded and directs the much-loved and somewhat notorious Frankly Music Chamber Series based in Milwaukee. At 17, he was one of the youngest prizewinners in the history of the Nicolo Paganini Competition in Genoa, Italy, and five years later was one of two American prizewinners at the Eighth International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, which

was documented in an award-winning PBS film. Since then he has kept up an eclectic mix of activities in addition to his concertmaster duties, appearing both as a soloist and chamber musician.

In addition to his work with An die Musik, Mr. Almond's work as a chamber musician has generated collaborations over the years with many of today's well-known institutions, including the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Hal Leonard Corporation, the Ravinia Festival, La Jolla Summerfest, Music in the Vineyards, and numerous other summer festivals. He has recorded for Summit, Albany, Boolean (his own label), Innova, Newport Classic, Wergo and New Albion and has appeared numerous times on NPR's Performance Today. In both 2002 and 2004 An die Musik received Grammy nominations for its "Timeless Tales" series. The re-release of Mr. Almond's recording of the complete Brahms Sonatas, performed in collaboration with pianist William Wolfram, brought extraordinary critical acclaim, and was also listed in the American Record Guide top recordings of 2001. With pianist William Wolfram, a CD of sonatas by Respighi, Janáček, and Strauss was released on the AVIE label to much acclaim, and was named a "Best of 2007" by the American Record Guide. A CD of American violin and piano music was released on Innova Recordings with pianist Brian Zeger and has also garnered much press enthusiasm. A recording of selected works of Samuel Barber was released in 2010, in cooperation with the Hal Leonard Corporation. In April 2013 AVIE released *A Violin's Life* featuring works and composers directly associated with the "Lipiński" Stradivarius, charting in the Billboard Top 10 in its first week of release. *A Violin's Life, Vol. 2* was released in May 2016, also charting at the top of Billboard. In 2015, he premiered *Soul of a Nation* in New York and Chicago, a new violin concerto from composer Victoria Bond based on the life and writings of Thomas Jefferson. The work

was recently recorded for release in 2017. In February 2018, he and the Milwaukee Symphony performed a new violin concerto by Pierre Jalbert, co-commissioned by the MSO, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.

In recent seasons he has occasionally appeared as a conductor, most recently with the Cabrillo Chamber Orchestra (CA), the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, the Traverse Symphony (MI), on the Frankly Music series with members of the Milwaukee Symphony, and the Berlin Sinfonietta.

Mr. Almond holds two degrees from the Juilliard School, where he studied with Dorothy DeLay. Other important teachers included Michael Tseitlin, Felix Galimir, and Joseph Silverstein. He has held academic positions at San Diego State University, Texas Christian University, and Northwestern University, and in 2014 joined the faculty of the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. In 2014, he was appointed to a newly created Artist-in-Residence position at the Milwaukee Youth Symphony. He usually plays on a violin by Antonio Stradivari from 1715, the "ex-Lipiński". In December 2011, he appeared in concerts and masterclasses in Poland to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Karol Lipinski performing on his former violin.

On January 27, 2014, the "ex-Lipiński" Stradivari was stolen from Mr. Almond in an armed robbery after a Frankly Music concert. The violin was recovered nine days later, and the story continues to make headlines around the world. Mr. Almond is extremely grateful to the Milwaukee Police Department, the FBI, and the thousands of individuals who sent messages of concern and support.

Mr. Almond writes an online column, *nondivisi*, which may be found, along with more information about Frankly Music, *A Violin's Life* and the *Lipiński* Stradivari, at frankalmond.com.



Toby Appel now splits his time between Santa Fe and New York, and is in his 28th year of teaching at the Juilliard School. He is a former member of Tashi, and the

Lenox and Audubon Quartets. He began training at age 13 at the Curtis Institute with Max Aronoff. He has held professorships at SUNY, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, University of New Mexico, Rutgers University, Carnegie Mellon, and Yale. Appel is a winner of the Young Concert Artists International. He is a frequent commentator for National Public Radio's "Performance Today." He has toured for the U.S. State Department and performed at the United Nations and at the White House. Chamber music and recital recordings can be heard on the Columbia, Delos, Desto, Koch International, Opus 1, and Musical Heritage Society labels.



Since making his Symphony Hall debut with the Boston Pops in 2015, cellist **Alexander Hersh** has quickly established himself as a rising young talent. He

has received numerous awards both as a soloist and as a chamber musician, including first prizes at the 2017 New York International Artists Association Competition, 2017 Luminarts Classical Music Fellowship, 2017 Borromeo String Quartet Guest Artist Award, the 2016 Schadt String Competition, 2016 Jefferson Symphony International Young Artists Competition, the 2016 Hellam Young Artist Competition, 2015 Boston Pops/New England Conservatory Competition, Society of American Musicians, the Saint Paul String Quartet Competition, the Jules M. Laser National Chamber Music Competition, the Chicago National Chamber Music Competition, and is a three

time winner of the New England Conservatory Honors Competition. The Musiq3 critics of the RTBF Belgian Radio company gave Hersh's performance at the inaugural Queen Elisabeth Cello Competition in Belgium in 2017 a rave review: "The evening session allowed us to hear the American Alexander Hersh (23 years old) on the already well-filled list. With his scenic presence and charm, Hersh has everything to become the darling of the public." He has been invited to festivals worldwide including: Marlboro, Caramoor, Ravinia Steans Music Institute, Music@Menlo, I-M-S Prussia Cove, Perlman Music Program Chamber Music Workshop, Piatigorsky International Cello Festival, Amsterdam Cello Biennial, Kneisel Hall, Lucerne, New York String Orchestra Seminar, Domaine Forget, and the Meadowmount School of Music. Season highlights have included his Carnegie Weill Hall debut, a "Three-generation" Hersh Trio performance of the Beethoven Triple Concerto with the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, a performance of the Brahms Double Concerto with the DuPage Symphony Orchestra, as well as recital and chamber music appearances in New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Penzance (England), Blonay (Switzerland), and Berlin (Germany). In August of 2018, Hersh launched the inaugural season of Nexus Chamber Music Chicago, a festival dedicated to the mission of deconstructing the traditional barrier between audience and performer. Nexus Chamber Music Chicago presents first-class musical events in intimate, and sometimes unconventional venues in and around the city of Chicago. A 4th generation string player, Alexander's parents, Stefan and Roberta, are both active professional violinists. His grandfather, Paul Hersh, is professor of viola and piano at San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and his great grandfather, Ralph Hersh, was a member of the WQXR and Stuyvesant String Quartets,

and principal violist of the Dallas and Atlanta Symphony Orchestras. Raised in Chicago, Alexander Hersh began playing the cello at the age of 5. He studied with Steve Balderston and Hans Jørgen Jensen, and attended the Academy at the Music Institute of Chicago. Hersh received his B.M. from New England Conservatory (with academic honors) where he was a student of Laurence Lesser and recipient of the Clara M. Friedlaender Scholarship. In May of 2017, he received his M.M. from New England Conservatory where he studied under the tutelage of Paul Katz and Kim Kashkashian. Hersh is a recipient of the Frank Huntington Beebe fund for studies in Berlin during the 2017–2018 academic year where he studies with Nicolas Altstaedt at Hanns Eisler Hochschule für Musik Berlin. He plays a G.B. Rogeri cello on generous loan from a sponsor through Darnton & Hersh Fine Violins in Chicago, IL.



One of the most sought-after soloists in his generation of young American musicians, the pianist **Orion Weiss** has performed with the major American

orchestras, including the Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and New York Philharmonic. His deeply felt and exceptionally crafted performances go far beyond his technical mastery and have won him worldwide acclaim. 2017–18 saw him opening the season for the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra performing Beethoven's Triple Concerto and ending his season with the Colorado Symphony and Mozart's majestic Concerto in C major, K. 467; in between Orion will play with eleven orchestras, go on a recital tour with James Ehnes, and perform recitals around the country. In 2016–17 Orion performed with the Knoxville, Wichita, and Santa Rosa Symphonies and the Symphony Silicon

Valley, among others, and in collaborative projects with Alessio Bax, the Pacifica Quartet, and with Cho-Liang Lin and the New Orford String Quartet in a performance of the Chausson Concerto for piano, violin, and string quartet. In 2015 Naxos released his recording of Christopher Rouse's *Seeing*—a major commission Orion debuted with the Albany Symphony—and in 2012 he released a recital album of Dvorak, Prokofiev, and Bartok. That same year he also spearheaded a recording project of the complete Gershwin works for piano and orchestra with his longtime collaborators the Buffalo Philharmonic and JoAnn Falletta. Named the Classical Recording Foundation's Young Artist of the Year in September 2010, in the summer of 2011 Weiss made his debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood as a last-minute replacement for Leon Fleisher. In recent seasons, he has also performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra, and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and in duo summer concerts with the New York Philharmonic at both Lincoln Center and the Bravo! Vail Valley Festival. In 2005, he toured Israel with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Itzhak Perlman. Also known for his affinity and enthusiasm for chamber music, Weiss performs regularly with his wife, the pianist Anna Polonsky, violinists James Ehnes and Arnaud Sussman, and cellist Julie Albers. As a recitalist and chamber musician, Weiss has appeared across the U.S. at venues and festivals including Lincoln Center, the Ravinia Festival, Sheldon Concert Hall, the Seattle Chamber Music Festival, La Jolla Music Society SummerFest, Chamber Music Northwest, the Bard Music Festival, the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, the Kennedy Center, and Spivey

Hall. He won the 2005 William Petschek Recital Award at Juilliard, and made his New York recital debut at Alice Tully Hall that April. Also in 2005 he made his European debut in a recital at the Musée du Louvre in Paris. He was a member of the Chamber Music Society Two program of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center from 2002–2004, which included his appearance in the opening concert of the Society's 2002–2003 season at Alice Tully Hall performing Ravel's *La Valse* with pianist Shai Wosner. Weiss's impressive list of awards includes the Gilmore Young Artist Award, an Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Gina Bachauer Scholarship at the Juilliard School and the Mieczyslaw Munz Scholarship. A native of Lyndhurst, OH,

Weiss attended the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with Paul Schenly, Daniel Shapiro, Sergei Babayan, Kathryn Brown, and Edith Reed. In February of 1999, Weiss made his Cleveland Orchestra debut performing Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 1. In March 1999, with less than 24 hours' notice, Weiss stepped in to replace André Watts for a performance of Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. He was immediately invited to return to the Orchestra for a performance of the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto in October 1999. In 2004, he graduated from the Juilliard School, where he studied with Emanuel Ax.

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