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Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Announces 2019-2020 Season

Guest conductors, Arkansas connections, and a collaborative programming process shape the mainstage series offerings in the upcoming season.

Little Rock, ARK, Mar. 13, 2019 - The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra (ASO) announced its 2019-2020 Masterworks and Pops Live! lineup, which includes five guest conductors and a concert conducted by Geoffrey Robson, ASO's Associate Conductor who has been named Interim Artistic Director.

ASO Chief Executive Officer, Christina Littlejohn, thanked Robson for his leadership, saying, "Geoff led a team of musicians, staff, and board members to create a Masterworks and Pops Live! season that strengthens the orchestra's ties to our community." Littlejohn emphasized the community nature of the ASO, adding, "We are the *Arkansas* Symphony and want to reflect the values of our aspirations: community partner, excellence, fun, and pride in our state."

The Stella Boyle Smith Masterworks Series opens Sep. 28-29, 2019, with a concert presented in partnership with ACANSA Arts Festival of the South. Luminary conductor JoAnn Falletta is the first featured guest conductor, and American trio Time for Three is featured in work written for them by former ASO Conductor in Residence Jennifer Higdon. The program also features Ravel's *La Valse* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*.

ASO's casual concert and street party, Beethoven and Blue Jeans, returns Nov. 9-10 and features works by two Arkansas composers: William Grant Still's *Festive Overture* and Florence Price's Piano Concerto in One Movement. Karen Walwyn, a specialist in the piano works of Price, is the featured soloist, and Andrew Grams will conduct the concert.

The Masterworks series ends May 2-3, 2020, featuring music from Fanny Mendelssohn and Schubert along with the return of prestigious cellist, Zuill Bailey, performing Dvorak's Cello Concerto.



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The 2019-2020 season coincides with the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing and protecting women's constitutional right to vote. ASO is celebrating by featuring two outstanding women conductors, JoAnn Falletta and Carolyn Kuan, two women soloists, pianist Karen Walwyn and violinist Simone Porter, and by performing works from four women composers: Pulitzer Prize-winner and former ASO Composer in Residence, Jennifer Higdon, an active and popular composer today, Little Rock's own Florence Price, Lili Boulanger, and Fanny Mendelssohn.

The Pops Live! series opens and closes with the ASO's popular "Film with Orchestra" concerts, featuring the films *Home Alone* and *Jurassic Park*, respectively. Both films feature soundtracks written by John Williams, with the orchestra performing the music live to film. The series also features A Sondheim and Webber Celebration, and a Tribute to the Queen of Soul: Aretha Franklin. Geoffrey Robson will conduct all concerts in the Pops Live! series.

"I've had the privilege of working with deeply knowledgeable and passionate stakeholders who shared many powerful ideas that helped to shape this season's programs," said Robson.

The full Masterworks series includes:

- *JoAnn Falletta and Time for Three*, Sep. 28 & 29, 2019, with music from Higdon, Ravel, and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*.
- *Beethoven & Blue Jeans*, Nov. 9 & 10, 2019, ASO's annual casual concert, featuring works from Arkansas composers Florence Price and William Grant Still and guest conductor Andrew Grams.
- *Copland's Rodeo*, Jan. 25-26, 2020, with guest conductor Carolyn Kuan, and music from Ginastera and Bartok;
- *Sibelius & Debussy*, Feb. 29 – Mar. 1, 2020, conducted by Geoffrey Robson, and featuring a multimedia work: *In Seven Days: A Concerto for Piano and Moving Image*, with pianist Andrius Zlabys.
- *Symphonie Fantastique*, Apr. 18-19, 2020, with guest conductor Eric Jacobsen, and violinist Simone Porter performing the Saint-Saens Violin Concerto No. 3 in addition to the titular orchestral showpiece by Berlioz.

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- *Zuill Bailey Plays Dvorak*, May 2 & 3, 2020, with guest conductor Vladimir Kulenovic.

The full Pops Live! series includes:

- *Home Alone: Film with Orchestra*, Dec. 20, 21 & 22, 2019
- *A Sondheim & Webber Celebration*, Feb. 8 & 9, 2020
- *Tribute to the Queen of Soul: Aretha Franklin*, Mar. 14 & 15, 2020
- *Jurassic Park: Film with Orchestra*, May 9 & 10, 2020

Subscriptions are on-sale now and offer discounts from single ticket prices as well as benefits exclusive to subscribers, such as guaranteed priority seating and free and flexible ticket exchange. New subscriptions range from \$48 - \$210 for Masterworks, and from \$32 - \$140 for Pops Live!, based on seating. Patrons interested in subscribing to the 2019-2020 season should visit ArkansasSymphony.org/season1920 or call the Box Office at 501-666-1761, ext. 1.

About Arkansas Symphony Orchestra

The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra celebrates its 54th full season in 2019-2020. ASO is the resident orchestra of Robinson Center Music Hall, to which the ASO returned in November of 2016 after a two-year renovation of the historic structure. ASO performs more than sixty concerts each year for more than 165,000 people through its Stella Boyle Smith Masterworks Series, ACXIOM Pops LIVE! Series, River Rhapsodies Chamber Music Series, Intimate Neighborhood Concerts and numerous concerts performed around the state of Arkansas, in addition to serving central Arkansas through numerous community outreach programs and bringing live symphonic music education to over 26,000 school children and over 200 schools. ASO is a member of the League of American Orchestras.

For more information about the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra call 501-666-1761 or visit www.ArkansasSymphony.org

Program notes, artist bios and high resolution headshots available upon request.

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