

The Miami Herald

Posted on Sun, Sep. 18, 2011

Classical music season brings big names, Drucker's new series

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Special to The Miami Herald



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The classical season ahead will be edgier and more youthful than in years past, but there still will be plenty of big names, ensembles and favorite pieces in the months to come.

There's even room for an old friend.

"I'm happy to say I finally got my courage back," said Judy Drucker, who for 40 years enlivened South Florida's musical stages with events presented by her Concert Association of Florida. Drucker returns with four concerts under The Great Artists Series rubric.

The series opens with baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky (Jan. 3) at the Knight Concert Hall, followed by pianist Vladimir Feltsman (Feb. 19), violinist Pinchas Zukerman and his wife, cellist Amanda Forsyth (March 27), and pianist Evgeny Kissin (April 15), all at the New World Center.

Drucker is coming back to an arts community that has seen some major changes in the four years she's been away. The Frank Gehry-designed New World Center on Miami Beach, which opened in January, marked the arrival of a major new South Florida concert venue, and its chief occupants, the New World Symphony orchestral academy, couldn't be more pleased.

Soprano Elizabeth Caballero will be starring in the Florida Grand Opera

production of Puccini's 'La Rondine (Jan. 21-Feb.4) at the Adrienne Arsht Center in Miami.

"Things are going really, really well," said Craig Hall, the New World's vice president for

communications. One of the best surprises has been the response to the orchestra's "wallcasts" on the big white expanse of the building on 17th Street, he said.

The seating area outside, built for about 1,000 people, has been drawing about 1,700 on broadcast nights. "Audiences have been making this a social activity, a family activity," Hall said.

Musically, the New World has some notable contemporary music events, opening with a world premiere, James Lee III's Sukkot Through Orion's Nebula (Oct. 15-16). The 30-year-old American Nico Muhly's Wish You Were Here arrives in a preseason concert Sept. 24, and there will also be works by Cindy McTee (April 13-14), Esa-Pekka Salonen (April 7), and for Art Basel, an all-John Cage concert (Dec. 1).

Other highlights include soprano Christine Brewer in Wagner's Wesendonck Lieder (Oct. 29), cellist Johannes Moser in the Dvorak Cello Concerto (Dec. 10-11), mezzo Amanda Crider in Ravel's Songs of Madagascar (Dec. 18), violinist James Ehnes in the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto (Jan. 7-8), violinist Gil Shaham in the Prokofiev Second Concerto (Feb. 17-18), and pianist Hélène Grimaud in the Beethoven Fourth Concerto (April 13-14), with Leonard Slatkin conducting. The season ends with a concert version of Bartok's one-act opera Bluebeard's Castle (April 27-28) and Mahler's Ninth Symphony, under New World chief Michael Tilson Thomas (May 5-6).

Another major contemporary composer, John Corigliano (The Red Violin), is the special guest of the SoBe Institute of the Arts' American Masterworks String Festival (Dec. 5-10), which features violinists Lara St. John and Anastasia Khitruk, violist Kim Kashkashian and cellist Matt Haimovitz. And SoBe Arts founder Carson Kievman's opera Hamlet, composed 20 years ago for Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival, gets its long-delayed premiere Feb. 23-March 11.

For its part, Florida Grand Opera is featuring two new productions for its 71st season, beginning with its first-ever zarzuela, Federico Torroba's Luisa Fernanda (Nov. 12-Dec. 3). "It was part of our looking at how we reach the community in new ways, and how we expose our regular audience to music they might not know," said Robert Heuer, FGO's general director.

And the opera company will have some global star power to help them do it. Plácido Domingo, who began his storied career as a zarzuela singer, will sing one performance of Luisa Fernanda on Nov. 15 during the FGO run at the Ziff Ballet Opera House.

Soprano Elizabeth Caballero stars in FGO's second production, also new for the company: Puccini's La Rondine (Jan. 21-Feb. 4). That's followed by Verdi's Rigoletto (with Mark Walters and Nadine Sierra, Jan. 28-Feb. 18) and Gounod's Romeo et Juliette (with Sarah Coburn and Sébastien Guèze, April 21-May 12).

The Cleveland Orchestra, in its three-program Miami residency, welcomes the American soprano Dawn Upshaw in the Miami premiere of Osvaldo Golijov's Three Songs for Soprano and Orchestra (March 2-3). American

composer Sean Shepherd's *Wanderlust* shares the Jan. 27-28 program with pianist Yefim Bronfman in the Brahms Second Concerto, and music director Franz Welser-Möst leads the band in the Shostakovich Sixth Symphony. Conductor Giancarlo Guerrero closes the series March 23-24 with Argentine pianist Gabriela Montero in the Grieg Piano Concerto; also on the program are Respighi's *Pines of Rome* and Beethoven's Sixth Symphony (Pastoral).

The Miami Symphony Orchestra adds a 10th concert to its lineup, which includes new pieces by principal trumpeter Sam Hyken and composer Alexander Berti. Hyken's *Beatles' Guide to the Orchestra* opens the season Oct. 23 on a program that includes the Canadian pianist Stewart Goodyear in the Tchaikovsky First Concerto.

Guitarist Juan Diego performs Berti's *Guitar Concerto* March 10-11 with concertmaster Daniel Andai conducting. Brazilian pianist Simone Leitão plays the Prokofiev First Concerto with the orchestra Dec. 10-11, and music director Eduardo Marturet pairs Schoenberg's ravishing *Verklärte Nacht* with Mahler's First Symphony March 31 and April 1.

Patrick Dupré Quigley's Seraphic Fire concert choir opens its 10th anniversary season by marking the 400th anniversary of the death of the great Spanish Renaissance composer Tomas Luis de Victoria with Requiem movements by Victoria, Palestrina, Lassus, Morales, and Ockeghem (Oct. 19-23).

Later, the choir performs J.S. Bach's magnificent Mass in B minor on Feb. 10-12, explores the music of England's Tudor dynasty on March 14-18, and from May 9-13, presents music by Latin American Baroque composers.

The Arsht Center's five-concert classical series opens this year with violinist Itzhak Perlman and his Perlman Music Project Nov. 17, followed Feb. 1 by French pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet in the Liszt Second Piano Concerto and American pianist Garrick Ohlsson in the Piano Concerto No. 2 of Frederic Chopin (Feb. 10).

The Japanese-American violinist Midori, accompanied by the Minnesota Orchestra and conductor Osmo Vänskä, performs the Sibelius Violin Concerto March 10. The center's season closes May 17 with a recital by the enormously popular Chinese pianist Lang Lang.

The University of Miami's multi-genre Festival Miami opens Sept. 30 with three days of concerts featuring the American composer Gunther Schuller. American pianist Clare Huangci plays the Piano Concerto No. 1 of Sergei Rachmaninov on Oct. 9, and on Oct. 22, veteran American pianist Jerome Lowenthal offers an all-Liszt program.

Also at Gusman Hall, the Sunday Afternoons of Music series enters its 31st year with nine concerts, including Emerson String Quartet cellist David Finckel and his wife, pianist Wu Han (Jan. 12), the Miro Quartet (Feb. 12), the Macedonian pianist Simon Trpèski (Feb. 25), and violinist Sergei Krylov (May 19).

Julian Kreeger's Friends of Chamber Music series features several excellent pianists this year, including Nikolai Lugansky (Nov. 13), Anton Kuerti (Dec. 5), Cyprien Katsaris (Feb. 13) and Stephen Hough (Feb. 19). The

veteran Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio arrives Jan. 9 with violist Michael Tree, and the Ehnes String Quartet plays all-Schubert program April 25.

The Miami Bach Society opens with Catalan gambist Jordi Savall (Oct. 16), who then performs March 3-11 with his ensemble for the 13th Tropical Baroque Music Festival. Also on tap for the festival: the celebrated female vocal quartet Anonymous 4; Baroque ensembles Fuoco e Cenere, Concerto Soave, and Elbipolis; the New York-based duo Asteria; and Brass Miami, led by Brian Neal. And on May 20, Miami's own Baroque group, Arcanum, returns for a second appearance with the society.

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