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Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes Presents “A Grand Gershwin Celebration”

Event: “A Grand Gershwin Celebration”
Featuring: Bryan Pezzone (piano), Lynnesha Crump (soprano), Fredrick Redd (baritone)
Date/Time: Saturday, May 11, 2024 at 7:00 PM
Venue: Clemens Center Powers Theater, 207 Clemens Center Parkway, Elmira, NY 14901
Program: Dusek: *Leviathan*, Okoye: *Voices Shouting Out*, Gershwin: *Rhapsody in Blue* and Gershwin/Bennett *A Concert of Songs—Porgy & Bess*
Tickets: ClemensCenter.org or 607-734-8191

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE April 12, 2024 (Corning, NY):

The Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes (OSFL), under the baton of Music Director & Conductor Toshiyuki Shimada, is delighted to announce its season finale concert, “A Grand Gershwin Celebration,” an unforgettable evening of all-American music and a tribute to the iconic composer George Gershwin. The concert will take place on Saturday, May 11, 2024, at 7 PM at the Clemens Center Powers Theater in Elmira, NY.

Featuring a stellar lineup of guest artists, including pianist Bryan Pezzone, soprano Lynnesha Crump, and baritone Fredrick Redd, along with the Chorus of the Southern Finger Lakes, this concert promises to captivate audiences with a rich tapestry of Gershwin’s melodies.

In this concert tribute to one of America’s most iconic composers, audiences will be swept away by Gershwin’s masterpieces, including the quintessential *Rhapsody in Blue*, celebrating its 100th year anniversary, and a special *Concert of Songs* from the beloved *Porgy and Bess*, highlighting the collaborative brilliance of the brothers George and Ira Gershwin.

In addition, the program will feature contemporary American works, including an energetic concert opener *Leviathan* by Robert Dusek and *Voices Shouting Out (9/11)* by Nkeiru Okoye, offering a poignant reflection on historical events and the resilience of the human spirit.

Concert Ticket Information:

Children under age 18 get free admission with a ticketed adult. College student tickets are just \$15 and adult tickets are \$55, \$45, and \$25. Groups of 10 or more receive a 10% discount. Purchase tickets in advance at the Clemens Center Box Office 607-734-8191 or online at ClemensCenter.org.

As a part of the education infusion initiative, the OSFL will hold two events for the general public to “Meet the Soloists.” On Thursday, May 9 at 1:00 PM, the consummate crossover pianist, Bryan Pezzone will give an engaging presentation about his diverse career path including his Hollywood gigs recording major films (Disney movies, Warner Brothers cartoons, AAA games, *Harry Potter*, *Frozen*, *Star Wars* and hundreds more). At the piano, Pezzone will demonstrate his fusion of jazz, classical, modern and more, including improvisation across genres. This event is hosted at Corning Painted Post High School. Visitors should RSVP in advance at OSFL.org and arrive early to sign in at the school office.

In addition, a vocal master class will be led by Fredrick Redd on Friday, May 10 at 4:00-5:30 at North Presbyterian Church at 921 College Ave., Elmira. An engineer, triathlete and “compelling vocal actor” (London’s *Opera Now*), Redd has performed principal roles with opera companies throughout the US and made his New York City Opera debut in the Emmy-nominated *Porgy & Bess* performances.

Both events are free to attend. For more information visit OSFL.org. The pianist presentation is made possible in part by the Corning Painted Post High School Choristers Club and the QuickARTS grant program administered by The ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes and funded by the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes, Inc. The vocal master class is sponsored in part by North Presbyterian Church and the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes, Inc.

The related movie, *Porgy and Bess (1959)* will be showing at the Park Church at 208 W. Gray Street in Elmira, NY on Thursday, May 9. Beginning at 7 PM, Maestro Toshiyuki Shimada will give an introduction to the movie, providing insight into the full context for *Concert of Songs* to be performed at Saturday’s concert. The 1959 movie starring Sidney Poitier aptly demonstrates the brilliance of Gershwin’s skill combining musical theater, jazz, and opera in what is considered the first great American opera to hit Broadway. The movie viewing and popcorn are free, compliments of the Park Church’s Meaningful Movies Series. Donations appreciated. All are welcome.

For more information about the Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes and the upcoming events, visit OSFL.org.

ABOUT THE ORCHESTRA OF THE SOUTHERN FINGER LAKES (OSFL)

The OSFL offers four regular season full orchestra concerts, a Musicians’ Choice Chamber Music Series, concerts by the Chorus of the Southern Finger Lakes, youth orchestra concerts, and educational concerts for children. Under the guidance of distinguished Music Director and Conductor, Toshiyuki Shimada, the OSFL is a strong supporter of highlighting the musical achievements of young musicians with its own youth ensemble program, a side-by-side youth and professional musician collaboration, and the Hertzog Concerto & Aria Competition for young artists in grades 9 through 12. The OSFL collaborates with regional cultural partners, artists, and like-minded organizations to advance our mutual artistic growth in the greater Elmira-Corning area.

Support for the OSFL comes from the Corning Incorporated Foundation, the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes, Hilliard Foundation, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the office of the governor and the New York State Legislature. *FREE Under 18* is sponsored by the Anderson Foundation.

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