



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Peter Rodgers
Phone: (608) 260-8680 x 226
Email: prodgers@madisonsymphony.org
Photos available upon request.

MSO and Philippe Bianconi Take on Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 3*
"Colossal Piano" 2016-17 Season Concerts this Fri. 4/7, Sat. 4/8 and Sun. 4/9

MADISON, WI – Pianist **Philippe Bianconi** returns to the Madison Symphony Orchestra (MSO), led by Music Director John DeMain, as a soloist for one of the most challenging works written for piano, Rachmaninoff's massive ***Piano Concerto No. 3***, Apr. 7, 8, and 9.

The program opens with **Schumann's** dramatic ***Manfred Overture***, followed by the MSO's premiere performance of **Lutosławski's *Concerto for Orchestra***. Concluding the program is a performance of the notorious ***Piano Concerto No. 3*** composed by **Sergei Rachmaninoff** featuring Philippe Bianconi.

The concerts take place on Friday, April 7 at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, April 8 at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday, April 9 at 2:30 p.m., at Overture Hall, 201 State Street.

Robert Schumann composed the Overture to ***Manfred*** in 1848 during a time of many revolutions throughout Europe, with political feelings running high across the continent. In Bryon's mystical poem, ***Manfred***, Bryon's hero, a "freedom fighter who is tortured by guilt and melancholy" perfectly suited the time and political environment of Europe. Schumann once wrote in a letter to Franz Liszt (who directed the complete version in 1851): "I feel that it is one of the strongest of my artistic children, and I hope that you will agree with me."

Polish composer **Witold Lutosławski**, began work on ***Concerto for Orchestra*** in 1950. This is the first time this piece will be performed by the Madison Symphony Orchestra. Originally from Warsaw, Poland, the Lutosławski family fled to Russia to escape the German occupation of World War I. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, Lutosławski's father and uncle were executed by the Bolsheviks for their political activism and the family returned to Warsaw. Lutosławski had studied Piano and composition between the wars, but was then drafted into the Polish army and captured by the Nazi's in 1933. He escaped captivity and found his way back to Warsaw where he worked as a cabaret pianist. Lutosławski fled Warsaw a second time, just months before the Nazis leveled the city in 1945 – "losing most of his scores in the process." He then returned to Warsaw when it was controlled by the Soviets.

"Lutosławski's ***Concerto for Orchestra*** is based in part on folk styles – apparently at the request of conductor Witold Rowicki, to whom it is dedicated." It is his most popular piece.

Sergei Rachmaninoff composed ***Piano Concerto No. 3*** in 1909. He spent the summer in the Russian country side, relaxing on his wife's family's estate, while also writing one of the most challenging works for piano in its repertoire. This piece is a "fiery display of piano technique."



One hour before each performance, John DeMain, *Madison Symphony Orchestra Music Director*, will lead a 30-minute **Prelude Discussion** in Overture Hall to enhance concertgoers' understanding and listening experience. For more background on the music please visit the Program Notes at: <http://www.allsenmusic.com/NOTES/1617/7.Apr17.html>

Single Tickets are \$16 to \$87 each, available at madisonsymphony.org/bianconi and through the Overture Center Box Office at 201 State Street or call the Box Office at (608) 258-4141.

Groups of 15 or more can save 25% by calling the MSO office at (608) 257-3734. For more information visit, madisonsymphony.org/groups

Student rush tickets can be purchased in person on the day of the concert at the Overture Center Box Office at 201 State Street. Students must show a valid student ID and can receive up to two \$12 or \$15 tickets. More information is at: madisonsymphony.org/studentrush. Students can receive 20% savings on seats in select areas of the hall on advance ticket purchases.

Seniors age 62 and up receive 20% savings on advance and day-of-concert ticket purchases in select areas of the hall.

Discounted seats are subject to availability, and discounts may not be combined.

ABOUT THE MADISON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Madison Symphony Orchestra celebrates its 91st season in 2016-2017 and its 23rd season under the leadership of Music Director John DeMain. The MSO has grown to be one of America's leading regional orchestras, providing Madison and south central Wisconsin with cultural and educational opportunities to interact with great masterworks and top-tier guest artists from around the world. Find more information at madisonsymphony.org

Exclusive funding for the April concerts is provided by: the Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation.

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Madison Symphony Orchestra, 222 W. Washington Ave. Suite 460, Madison, WI 53703
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