

Classical notes: Corigliano in Lake Luzerne, Glens Falls Symphony season and Knussen at Tanglewood

Composer featured at Luzerne Music Festival

By Joseph Dalton

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"The Red Violin" has been a profitable instrument for both John Corigliano, the celebrated composer, and Elizabeth Pitcairn, the virtuoso violinist and teacher. Corigliano won an Oscar for his score to the 1999 film, "The Red Violin," and Pitcairn performs on the 1720 Stradivarius, also called the "Red Mendelssohn," whose history loosely inspired the film.



Corigliano and Pitcairn are in the midst of a four-day collaboration at the Luzerne Music Festival, located in Warren County west of Glens Falls, where Pitcairn is artistic director. The festival was established in 1980, primarily as a summer training program for teenage musicians. But the 20-acre wooded grounds also host a series of professional chamber concerts on Monday evenings through the season.

Corigliano has been on hand in Luzerne since Friday and in honor of his presence, the campus is open to the public for all classes and other events. And tonight, there's a gala concert that starts at 5 p.m. with cocktails and ends with dinner after the music. The lineup features the Albany Symphony's David Alan Miller, a recent addition to the faculty, leading the Luzerne Music Center Symphony in Corigliano's Promenade Overture. Miller and Corigliano are probably pretty chummy by now, since the composer was in residence with the ASO during the 2010-11 season. (Look for a CD from the season, forthcoming on Naxos.) Also as part of tonight's program, Pitcairn will perform "The Red Violin Suite," which is one of a six concert works Corigliano has wrung from his prize-winning score.

Monday evening features a program by the Corigliano Quartet. This is a young American string quartet founded in 1996 and named for the composer, and, presumably, for his father as well, the late John Corigliano Sr, who was concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic. Naturally, the Corigliano will be playing Corigliano. The program opens with his 2003 piece titled "Snap Shot," followed by Beethoven's String Quartet No. 10 in E-flat Major, Op. 74 "Harp." After intermission comes more Corigliano, with his String Quartet, which dates from 1995. The piece was originally written for the Cleveland Quartet, and their debut recording earned Corigliano the Grammy Award for best contemporary composition. A few years later when he re-vamped the piece for full string orchestra and called it Symphony No. 2, he received the Pulitzer Prize. What's left Mr. C., an Emmy? A Tony? Whatever. Just keep the music coming.

The season at Luzerne concludes on the evening of Monday, Aug. 20, when Pitcairn performs with colleagues in works of Mozart, Britten and Brahms. For tickets and more information call 696-2771 or visit: <http://www.luzernemusic.org/>

Glens Falls Symphony

Speaking of music in Warren County, let's briefly depart from the summer slate of events to take a look at what's in store from the Glens Falls Symphony. Conductor Charles Peltz and the recently installed executive director Lisa A. Miller are calling their 2012-13 season "The Year of the Violin."

Sarah Chang is the star guest in the season opener on Oct. 14, performing the Barber Concerto. Concertmaster Michael Emory steps up to soloist status on Nov. 11 in Vivaldi's "Four Seasons," and Vaughn-Williams' "The Lark Ascending." That event also boasts the premiere of a new work by Ezra Laderman. A Baroque program for strings is scheduled for March 17, 2013, and then it's Elizabeth Pitcairn and her "Red Violin" to round out the season on May 17. She'll be soloist in the Prokofiev First Concerto.

The symphony performs on Sunday afternoons at the Glens Falls High School. Check out their full program at <http://www.gfso.org> or call 518-793-1348.