

BEYOND THE SILK ROAD

Saturday, February 23
7:30 p.m., Pantages Theater

Sarah Ioannides, conductor
Sandeep Das, tabla

<i>Fire-Mountain</i>	Daniel Ott	12'
Concerto for Tabla & Orchestra	Dinuk Wijeratne	30'
I. <i>Canons, Circles</i>		
II. Folk Song: <i>'White in the moon the long road lies (that leads me from my love)'</i>		
III. <i>Garland of Gems</i> Sandeep Das		

INTERMISSION

<i>Scheherezade, op. 35</i>	Rimsky-Korsakov	42'
I. The Sea and Sinbad's Ship		
II. The Legend of the Kalendar Prince		
III. The Young Prince and the Young Princess		
IV. The Festival at Baghdad/The Sea and the Shipwreck		

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The length of this concert, including intermission, is approximately 114 minutes. This concert is being recorded for archival purposes. The use of cameras and personal recording devices is strictly prohibited. Please turn off all cell phones, beepers, watch alarms and other electronic devices while in the concert hall.

Sandeep Das, tabla

Sandeep Das is one of the leading tabla virtuosos in the world, touted by the *New York Times* as having the ability to "turn any performance into a spectacle." He is one of the unique Indian classical musicians who has collaborated and performed with, and composed for, major symphony orchestras, string quartets, and jazz musicians—with regularly featured concerts at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Hollywood Bowl, Royal Albert Hall and the Concertgebouw, to name a few.

Mr. Das has performed at many prestigious events such as the 150-year anniversary celebration of the United Nations in New York City, the opening

Sandeep Das continued next page

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ceremony of the Special Olympics in Shanghai, and the World Economic Forum. He has also performed for visiting dignitaries including Queen Elizabeth of England, Queen Sirikit of Thailand, the Pope and various other visiting country heads. His collaboration with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble (SRE) for *Sing Me Home* won the 2017 Grammy Award for the Best World Music album. He has had two previous Grammy nominations in 2005 and 2009.

Mr. Das is the founder of HUM (Harmony and Universality through Music). HUM's mission is two-fold: (1) to promote global understanding through performance and education and (2) to provide learning opportunities and scholarships for specially-abled children with potential in any genre of art to empower them to lead self-reliant lives. Since its inception, HUM has grown in size and now supports six specially-abled children through a national scholarship, the first of its kind in India.

Starting at the age of seven, Mr. Das trained for 12 years in the centuries-old Indian tradition of Guru-Shishya Parampara, which included living with his guru, Pandit Kishan Maharaj, and learning and practicing music as a way of life. His training and life experiences provide a unique, educational example from which students and ensembles can learn.

Mr. Das has been on faculty at the Harvard Education School Summer Institute for the last five years and has been an artist-in-residence at various universities, including Dartmouth, Brandeis, UC Santa Barbara, UC Santa Clara, College of the Holy Cross, Juilliard School of Music, Berklee School of Music, and the University of British Columbia. He is a Gold Medalist in English Literature from Banaras Hindu University in India and currently resides in Boston. 

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

Daniel Ott (1975 -)

Fire-Mountain (2017)

Fire-Mountain takes its name from a quote by celebrated naturalist John Muir: "Of all the fire-mountains which, like beacons, once blazed along the Pacific Coast, Mount Rainier is the noblest in form" (*Our National Parks*, 1901). I took as my point of departure not only the inspiring nature of our mountain's setting, but also its very shape.

If one were to trace the outline of the mountain with the tip of a finger (especially when viewed from slightly north of our location tonight), he or she would describe two prominent peaks: Little Tahoma to the east, and Columbia Crest, Mt. Rainier's summit, to the west. This image is so embedded in any Pacific Northwesterner's consciousness that it's hard for one of us to even think of "home" without recalling it to mind. And it's this image that encapsulates *Fire-Mountain's* musical form.

As the peaks and valleys of this outline rise and fall, so do the large-scale sections of the music. The piece begins with a whisper of wind, relying on the choir and strings to create the effect, and then builds toward its first peak (Little Tahoma). At this point, a new, more lyrical theme emerges in the brass (itself tracing the contours of Rainier's peaks), eventually rising to the musical summit (Columbia Crest). Now the choir enters once again, singing emphatic snatches of the Muir quote above. But the music shifts tone, becoming more liquid; panicked sounds of melting are heard all through the orchestra and choir. The music cascades down in a rush of sound, depicting Mt. Rainier's threatened glaciers. The ending asks

more of a question than it provides an answer: What will our mountain's fate be? How can we shape its destiny?

-by Daniel Ott

Dinuk Wijeratne (1978 -)

Concerto for Tabla & Orchestra (2011)

While the origins of the tabla are somewhat obscure, it is evident that this "king" of Indian percussion instruments has achieved global popularity for the richness of its timbre, and for the virtuosity of a rhythmically complex repertoire that cannot be separated from the instrument itself. In writing a large-scale work for tabla and symphony orchestra, it is my hope to allow each entity to preserve its own aesthetic.

Steeped in tradition, the tabla lends itself heartily to innovation and has shown its cultural versatility as an increasingly sought-after instrument in contemporary Western contexts such as pop, film music, and world music fusion. This notion led me to conceive of an opening movement that would do the not-so-obvious by placing the tabla first in a decidedly non-Indian context. Here, initiated by a quasi-Baroque canon in four parts, the music quickly turns into an evocation of one my favorite genres of electronic music: "Drum-&-Bass," characterized by rapid breakbeat rhythms in the percussion. Of course, there are some North-Indian classical musical elements present.

A brief second movement becomes a short respite from the energy of the outer movements and offers a perspective of the tabla as accompanist in the lyrical world of Indian folk-song. It is set in *dheepchandhi*, a rhythmic cycle of 14 beats.

Typically, a tabla player concluding a solo recital would do so by presenting a sequence of short, fixed (non-improvised) compositions from his/her repertoire. Each mini-composition, multi-faceted as a little gem, would often be presented first in the form of a vocal recitation. The traditional accompaniment would consist of a drone as well as a looping melody outlining the time cycle— a *nagma*— against which the soloist would weave rhythmically intricate patterns of tension and release. I wanted to offer my own take on such a recital finale, with the caveat that the orchestra is no bystander.

-by Dinuk Wijeratne

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

(1844-1908)

Scheherazade (1888)

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was a Russian composer and educator, known as a master of orchestration. His best-known orchestral compositions, such as *Capriccio espagnol*, *Russian Easter Festival Overture* and *Scheherazade*, are staples of the classical music repertoire.

Born into a Russian noble family, Rimsky-Korsakov did not receive formal musical training as a child, instead studying with private teachers. He joined the Russian Navy and enjoyed a long career. Rimsky-Korsakov was also a member of the group of composers called *The Mighty Five* along with Mily Balakirev, Aleksandr Borodin, Cesar Cui and Modest Mussorgsky. *The Five* stood against the professionalism of formal musical training and liked to incorporate aspects of Russian folk song, exotic scales, and folk polyphony in their compositions. They admired music from Western Europe and chose to study it independently, outside of academic musical establishments.

In 1871, Rimsky-Korsakov accepted a position as a professor of practical composition and instrumentation at


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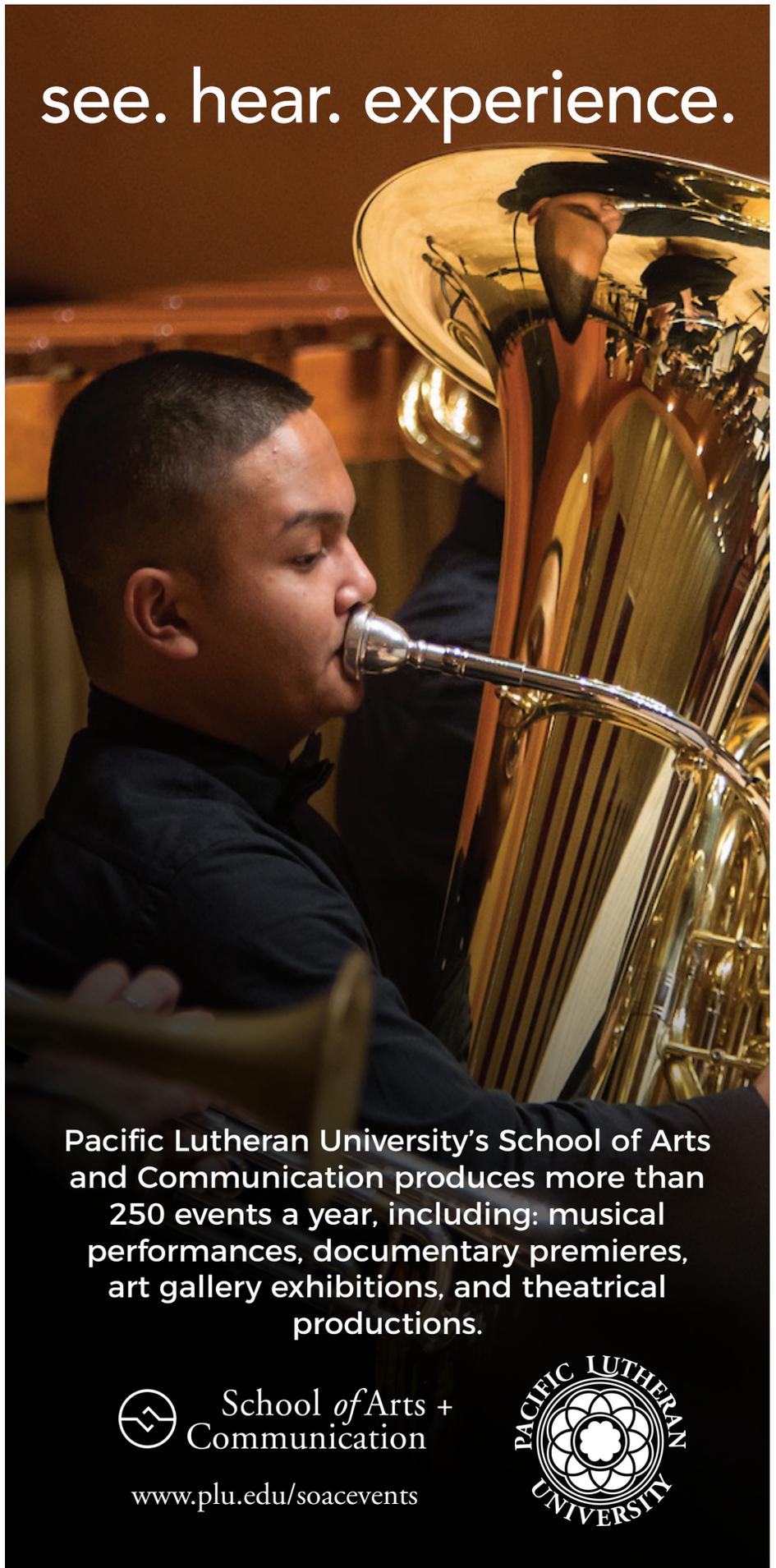
the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, abandoning the anti-academic stance of *The Five*. He soon realized how much he had to learn before he could confidently teach music theory. Teaching himself from textbooks and following a strict regimen of composing contrapuntal exercises, fugues, chorales and *a cappella* choruses, he eventually became an excellent teacher and fervent believer in academic training, even revising everything he had composed prior to his education.

Scheherazade is a symphonic suite composed in 1888. It is a programmatic suite, composed with a preconceived narrative. Rimsky-Korsakov based the narrative on the story of *The Arabian Nights*, writing for the premiere, “The Sultan Schariar, convinced that all women are false and faithless, vowed to put to death each of his wives after the first nuptial night. But Scheherazade saved her life by entertaining her lord with fascinating tales... for one thousand and one nights.”

Scheherazade puts Rimsky-Korsakov’s genius for orchestration and musical characterization on display. For instance, the grim bass motif in the low brass which opens the first movement represents the domineering Sultan. The leitmotif in the solo violin, accompanied by harp, represents Scheherazade beginning her nightly story to distract the Sultan. Imagery is especially prevalent in each movement, with Rimsky-Korsakov painting vivid pictures of Scheherazade’s stories in the mind of the listener—the adventures of a young prince, the love story of a prince and princess, and the sounds of rolling waves at sea. The peaceful coda at the end of the final movement represents Scheherazade finally winning over the heart of the Sultan. 

-by Lydia Robinson

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