

The Providence Mandolin Orchestra

Mark Davis, Director

With special guest Christopher Acquavella

Wheeler School, Providence RI

Saturday, May 5, 2012, 8 PM

Nocturne	Frank Wallace
Neponset Valley Suite <i>River Bottom – Currents - Evening</i>	Owen Hartford
Oblivion	Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) arr. R. A. Margo

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(Pause)

Imardin	Christopher Acquavella
Captain O'Kane	Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738)
De Samodeste Mere	Gabriele Leone (c. 1735- a.1768)
El Duende	Juan Carlos Munoz
Piccolo Gavotta, Op. 73	Raffaele Calace (1863-1934)
Fantasia No. 1	Takashi Ochi (1934-2010)

Chris Acquavella, mandolin and baroque mandolino

(Pause)

Konzert h-moll for solo-mandoline und Zupforchester <i>Allegro moderato – In memorium – Allegretto giocoso</i>	Arno Starck (d. 1960)
Yutuma	Christopher Acquavella

Providence Mandolin Orchestra with Christopher Acquavella, mandolin solo

Program Notes by Robert A. Margo

The Providence Mandolin Orchestra is honored to present one of the world's leading performers on classical mandolin, Christopher Acquavella, solo and in ensemble with the PMO. Our concert begins with three works performed by the PMO. A prolific composer for modern classical guitar and an eminent performer on early plucked strings and modern guitar, Frank Wallace's *Nocturne* is his first large scale composition for mandolin ensemble. Owen Hartford has written many works for the PMO over his long tenure with the group. His latest composition, in three movements, is the *Neponset Valley Suite*. The main theme of the first movement, "River Bottom", is undulated and jagged, while the second movement, "Currents", eddies back and forth between gentle harmonies and starkly chromatic lines in 13/8. Drawing on minimalist impulses, "Evening" alternates between 4/4 and 3/4 before the "River Bottom" theme returns. One of his most popular and enduring works Astor Piazzolla composed *Oblivion* for Marco Bellocchio's film *Enrico IV*, an adaptation of the classic play by Luigi Pirandello.

Throughout its long history the mandolin has boasted a substantial repertoire for solo performance. One of the first great virtuosi, Gabriele Leone was active in Paris in the 1760s. Like his other works for solo mandolin, "De Samodeste Mere" originally appeared in Leone's method, "A Complete Introduction to the Art of Playing the Mandoline" (1768). Leone's "air" was written for the baroque ancestor of today's four course instrument while the O'Carolan is an arrangement that is performed on a modern reproduction of a baroque "mandolino", which had 5 or 6 courses and, unlike the conventional mandolin, was tuned in fourths. "Piccolo Gavota" is a beloved miniature by the great early 20th century Italian mandolinist Raffaele Calace, who excelled not only in composition but also performance and instrument design and construction. Born in Japan, Takashi Ochi later moved to Germany where he enjoyed a career as one of the leading performers on classical mandolin during the latter half of the twentieth century. Among his many compositions were a series of works for solo mandolin, such as the atmospheric "Fantasia No. 1". Juan Carlos Munoz's fiery "El Duende" is the final piece of a collection of seven works for solo mandolin entitled "Estampes".

Of his own composition "Imardin" Chris Acquavella writes that "Imardin is the capital city of Kyrulia, from the fantasy novel series, The Black Magician trilogy by Australian author Trudi Canavan. The city was made up of three circular walls that separated the social classes. It consists of slum-dwellers as well as the upper class aristocracy. I was reading the Canavan books while composing this piece. Just like the fictional city, "Imardin" for solo mandolin consists of three sections that each have their own personalities. The opening is gentle, full chords and singing melody line. The middle section is vibrant, fast and rhythmical. The final section is slow, mellow and haunting; finally ending back at the main melody. "Imardin" started life as an idea for solo harp. I was never happy with how the notes and phrases were taking shape on the harp so I transferred it back to the mandolin. All of a sudden I started to hear the energy and excitement that I had first envisioned."

Our concert closes with two modern works for solo mandolin and mandolin ensemble. Born in Dresden in the late 19th century, Arno Starck studied violin, piano, conducting and composition at the Dresden Conservatory of Music. In addition to numerous works for violin, orchestra, male and mixed choir, he also wrote a series of pieces for mandolin ensemble in a neo-baroque style, such as the "Concerto in B-minor" performed this evening. Chris Acquavella's second work on the program, "Yutuma", is a tour-de-force workout in multiple meters, drawing on Bulgarian music for inspiration.

The Providence Mandolin Orchestra

Director: Mark Davis

First Mandolin: Joshua Bell (concertmaster), Christine Chito, Yvette Cote, Duane Golumb

Second Mandolin: Lynne Bell, Owen Hartford

Mandola: Mark Chouke, Mack Johnston, Robert Margo

Mandocello: Dan Moore, Matt Snyder

Guitar: Mark Armstrong, Beverly Davis, Sylvie Harris, Michael Hession

Bass: Hiatt Knapp

The original **Providence Mandolin Orchestra** was founded in 1913 by William Place Jr., one of the leading virtuosos of the mandolin in the United States during the instrument's "Golden Age" of the early 20th century. The modern version of the PMO dates from 1971, when it was revived by Hibbard Perry. Since then the PMO has become the leading American mandolin ensemble with regular performances throughout the eastern United States and Western Europe. Currently the PMO is directed by **Mark Davis**, who pursues an active career as an educator, conductor, and performer. The PMO is dedicated to the performance of contemporary music, including pieces written for the ensemble. In the past five years the PMO has given US or world premieres of new works by Clarice Assad, Betty Beath, Richard Charlton, Owen Hartford, Victor Kioulaphides, Annette Kruisbrink, Stephen Lalor, Olaf Naslund, Robert Schultz, Emile Stopler, Caroline Szeto, Francine Trester, and Frank Wallace. Also over the past five years the PMO has embarked on an ambitious program of joint performances with leading European mandolin ensembles, including Het Consort (The Netherlands, directed by Alex Timmerman); the Ensemble a Plectre de Toulouse (France, directed by Alain Corvocchiola); the JZO NRW (Germany, directed by Christian de Witt); and the Orchestra of the International Mandolin Academy (Italy, directed by Carlo Aonzo).

A leading performer worldwide on classical mandolin, **Christopher Acquavella** graduated First Class Honors from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London, England. A student of the late Alison Stephens, Acquavella won the Wolfsan Foundation Music Award in 2004 and was awarded the TCM Trust Silver Medal for String Studies in 2006. Chris has performed with Avi Avital, Alon Sarel, Jeremy Kurtz, Tim Connell, Alison Stephens and Mike Marshall, and as a soloist and orchestral musician with the Trinity String Ensemble (UK), Dartington Festival Orchestra (UK), E.G.M.A. (DE), New City Sinfonia (USA), Camarada Chamber Ensemble (USA) and the San Diego Symphony (USA). He is also a mandolin/guitar instructor at New Expression School of Music in San Diego and Artistic Director/Conductor of the New Expression Mandolin Orchestra. Aside from teaching and performing, Chris spends time composing new works for mandolin and mandolin ensemble. Several of his works are published by Haus der Musik Trekel, Germany. His recording of solo works for mandolin, "Praeludium" was recently released to great acclaim.