

Holland Symphony Orchestra
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Press Release

Holland Symphony Orchestra and Music Director, Johannes Müller-Stosch announce the David P. Roossien 2021-2022 Concert Season's opening concert featuring guest artist, Ralph Votapek, pianist, sharing live music "together again!"

Classics I, New Worlds, will include three orchestral masterpieces. This concert will take place on Saturday, September 25th at 7:30pm at the Concert Hall at the Jack H. Miller Center, Hope College. There will be no pre-concert talk in the venue before the concert. Masks will be required at the concerts. (All plans are subject to change relative to the pandemic restrictions in Michigan.)

Single tickets are \$22 per adult and \$5 per student K through college. Classical Chats continue at Freedom Village, (145 Columbia Ave.) 6th floor at 3:00pm on the Thursdays prior to the three Classical Concerts. This is open to concert attendees. There is also be a pre-concert video, artist biographical information and program notes available on the website one week before the concert.

Season tickets are available from the Symphony office by phone at 616-796-6780 or the website at www.hollandsymphony.org. The five-concert Season Ticket subscription includes Classics I, II, III, Holiday and Family. Adults are \$95 and Students (through college) are \$25. First-time subscribers can purchase Season Tickets at 30% off the regular price. Seating at the Concert Hall at the Jack H. Miller Center are assigned.

The full season sponsor is David P. Roossien and the artist sponsor is West Michigan Community Bank. Logo sponsors for Classics I include Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge, First National Bank of Holland, Sight Eye Clinic, and Chamber Music Festival of Saugatuck. Artist flowers are provided by Huisman Flowers (Eastern Floral Lakeshore).

HSO is thrilled to perform with renowned piano soloist Ralph Votapek, who will play Beethoven's second piano concerto. Votapek is professor emeritus of piano at the Michigan State University College of Music. He is the gold medalist of the first Van Cliburn International Piano Competition and winner of the prestigious Naumburg Award. Votapek has been featured 16 times as the Chicago Symphony's guest soloist, has played with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, the Boston Pops, the Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Houston, Dallas, St. Louis, National Symphonies, and other top ensembles. He is equally celebrated as a solo recitalist throughout the United States and has performed repeatedly in Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Chicago's Orchestra Hall, and the National Gallery in Washington. Guest appearances with the Juilliard, Fine Arts, New World, and Chester String quartets highlight his extensive chamber music experience.

Votapek was the soloist on Arthur Fiedler's last Boston Pops recording, a Gershwin program released on CD by London Records and most recently available as a part of the Deutsche Grammophone CD titled "The Arthur Fiedler Legacy." In recent years he has recorded prolifically for the Ivory Classics and Blue Griffin labels. His albums have been critically acclaimed by *Grammophone*, *American Record Guide*, *International Piano*, and *Fanfare* magazines.

The performance will open with William Grant Still's "Darker America." Still, and American composer who lived in the early 1900s, broke a lot of musical barriers. His wrote pieces that blended European art music with African-rooted popular and folk music, as well as jazz, blues, and other forms. Still described "Darker America" as a tone poem that begins is sorrow, expresses hope and the prayer of "numbed rather than anguished souls," and ends with "the triumph of a people over their sorrows through fervent prayer." It has echoes of the symphonic jazz writing of George Gershwin.

The concert will conclude with Dvorak's well-loved Symphony No. 9, "From the New World." Dvorak was a well-known nineteenth century Czech composer who was invited to New York to help launch a music school. In his homeland Dvorak had cultivated a reputation for writing music that reflected the folk music of his people. While in New York he was homesick, but had his spirits lifted during a drip to a Czech colony in Iowa. He heard a lot of American music in his time here—from first nations folk songs to African American spirituals, and he encouraged American composer to embrace these traditions in their music. He reflected this in his ninth symphony, "From the New World." It features beautiful tunes and rhythmic vitality throughout the work and includes the well-known melody that has transformed into the song, "Goin' Home."

For more information, contact the Holland Symphony Orchestra:

Pictures of the soloists available by contacting the HSO and are available on the website.

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See bio of Johannes Müller-Stosch, Music Director, on the Holland Symphony website.

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