



Re-Gifting with
Royalty

Matthew Dirst / Artistic Director

Friday, September 21, 2018

Zilkha Hall, The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts
at 7:30 pm

Good evening and welcome to *Re-Gifting with Royalty*, which opens Ars Lyrica's 2018/19 "Out of the Box" season. Tonight's program features soprano Lauren Snouffer, violinist Elizabeth Blumenstock, flutist Colin St-Martin, and yours truly on harpsichord in some favorite works by J. S. Bach and François Couperin. Re-gifted musical works are the main course, with complementary sides that provide accent and spice.

Next up in November is Ars Lyrica's first full-length opera: Handel's early masterpiece *Agrippina*. This production features an exceptional cast and is sure to be popular at the box office, so get your tickets now for either Nov 16 or 18. A four- or six-concert subscription package is the best way to enjoy a range of great music from the Baroque and early Classical eras. For the most up-to-date offers and concert information, consult the Ars Lyrica website www.arslyricahouston.org or stop by our table in the Zilkha Hall lobby.

Thanks for your support and enjoy the program.



MATTHEW DIRST
Artistic Director

PROGRAM

"Brandenburg" Concerto V in D Major, BWV 1050 Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

Allegro
Affettuoso
Allegro

Excerpts from the *Concerts Royaux & Aires sérieux* François Couperin
(1668–1733)

Prélude (3^e Concert royaux)
Doux liens de mon Coeur
Courante à l'Italienne (4^e Concert)
Qu'on ne me disse plus
Allemande (1^{er} Concert)
Brunette: Zéphire, modere en ces lieux

La Sultane François Couperin

INTERMISSION

"Brandenburg" Concerto VI in B-flat Major, BWV 1051 J.S. Bach

[Allegro]
Adagio ma non tanto
Allegro

Non sa che sia dolore, BWV 209 J.S. Bach

Sinfonia
Accompagnato: *Non sa che sia dolore*
Aria: *Parti pur*
Recitative: *Tuo saver al tempo*
Aria: *Ricetti gramezza e pavento*

Please see pp. 6-8 for texts and translations.

PROGRAM NOTES

Three hundred years ago re-gifting wasn't just something one did with unwanted baubles or bottles. Plenty of musical works were recycled for new occasions, sometimes with changes and sometimes not. Even royal patrons seemed not to mind, provided the proffered item was sufficiently pleasing. For a musical manuscript or edition, proper etiquette meant adding a flowery title page or dedication—words that flattered somehow. The music itself could be effusive or elusive; the actual contents hardly mattered.

Many musical gifts from this era remained unopened, awaiting posterity's thanks and judgement. Sebastian Bach's most beloved concertos met just such a fate. In 1721 he sent "Six Concertos for Several Instruments" in a sumptuous manuscript bearing this title as a gift to Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg. With such unusually scored concertos, each requiring a different combination of instruments, Bach hoped to make a lasting impression on an important musical patron. He may in fact have intended this extraordinary set as an application for a position at the margrave's court, though an offer was apparently not forthcoming.

Like other collections Bach assembled for either presentation or publication, the so-called "Brandenburg" Concertos illustrate, in musical terms, the age-old ideal of "unity in diversity." Groups of six works in the same genre were common in volumes of Baroque instrumental music especially. Bach probably did not compose afresh most of the individual movements in the "Brandenburg" Concertos but instead put them together from an ever-growing store of sinfonias and concerto movements. This was common practice among composers of his age, and not only for multi-movement instrumental works.

Concerto No. 5 appears, at first sight, to be a triple concerto for flute, violin, and harpsichord with accompanying strings. Its

imposing opening movement, the longest in the collection, begins with a vigorous *ritornello* (a plastic thematic idea played by all) that is elaborated with *galant*-style figuration. By the third solo episode, it becomes apparent that this movement is all about the harpsichord: its solo turns are much more elaborate than those Bach gives to the flute or solo violin. The extraordinary and highly disruptive harpsichord cadenza—before which the other instruments gradually disappear—must have astonished those who first heard it.

The second movement *Affetuoso*, which requires just the three soloists, also uses ritornello procedure but within the context of a languid trio movement. The gigue-like finale begins as a fugue, with one instrument at a time playing identical material. This movement's overall shape is determined less by typical fugal procedures, however, than by Bach's own inimitable way of embedding concerto procedures within *da capo* form (in which the ending recapitulates the opening). As in the first movement, the harpsichord figuration is extravagant.

Why such a lot of notes for an instrument that previously provided only continuo (harmonic) support in concerted music? In 1719 Bach traveled to Berlin to examine and supervise transport of a new Mietke harpsichord for the Cöthen court. This large and beautiful instrument may well have been Bach's inspiration for what is effectively his first harpsichord concerto.

The sixth concerto in the set features lower-pitched members of the violin and viol families, with two violas and one cello arrayed against two violas da gamba and one violone. Though his era still prized virtuosity on the venerable viol, Bach gives the lion's share of activity in this concerto's outer movements to the upstart viola; the middle movement dispenses entirely with the older pair of instruments. This deliberate subversion of expectations—keeping in mind that Bach also wrote three highly ambitious sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord—must have raised a few eyebrows. If indeed he performed this concerto in Cöthen, its resident viola da gamba virtuoso Christian Ferdinand Abel wouldn't have needed much rehearsal.

Though François Couperin is remembered mostly for his keyboard and instrumental chamber music, he also composed a handful of sacred works and at least twelve secular songs. Nine of the latter found their way into Pierre Ballard's monthly *Recueils d'airs sérieux et à boire*, which sated a seemingly unquenchable thirst for both tender and jolly solo and part songs during the long reign of Louis XIV (1643–1715). Few of the gems in Ballard's popular collections were composed afresh for these volumes; instead, these are compilations of "greatest hits" from Parisian salons and noble chambers.

The origins of the *air sérieux* can be found in the court song repertoire of the late sixteenth century, while drinking songs (*airs à boire*) have probably been around since humans harnessed fermentation. The simple *air de cour* or lute song became a thoroughly stylized genre during the *ancien siècle*, thanks to a cultural regime that set serious poetry to pliant melodies full of expressive devices. Many of these were called *brunettes* because of their pastoral verse; such *airs* are the musical equivalent of a Watteau garden scene. Couperin's three surviving *airs sérieux* are all *brunettes*, though only *Zéphire, modère en ces lieux* carries this generic descriptor in its title. The most luxurious of the three, *Zéphire* comprises five couplets, each of which is individually stylized with its own melodic embroidery.

Surrounding the Couperin *airs* on this program are excerpts from his *Concerts royaux* (1722), a collection of instrumental suites written for Louis XIV and published in homage a few years after the king's death. These delectable miniatures, scored mostly for just a single treble line with basso continuo, can be performed in various ways: violin, flute, and/or oboe with continuo, or simply as harpsichord solos.

Unlike most of Couperin's instrumental works, *La Sultane* remained unpublished at his death in 1733, perhaps because of its unusually lavish scoring: this sumptuous sonata calls for two violins, two violas da gamba, and continuo. The lone quartet among Couperin's chamber works, its dating remains uncertain. At any rate, *La Sultane* surely found a welcome audience at court, where the rage for Turkish dress and decoration reached its apogee with the daughters of Louis XV.

Despite its title, this is a decidedly French sultan, not a Turkish harem-keeper. Formally, *La Sultane* resembles Couperin's four trio sonatas in *Les Nations* (1727), though its individual sections are more substantial. A grandiose and solemn beginning leads to a faster fugue, whose primary theme is nearly identical to that of the opening. A tender air and sections in contrasting meters lighten the mood considerably toward the end, as all four melody instruments engage in concerto-like figuration.

Non sa che sia dolore is one of two extant Bach cantatas in Italian. Its odd and grammatically challenged libretto, cobbled together from various sources including a Guarini madrigal and a Metastasio opera libretto, begins with a tender farewell for a traveling scholar returning to his homeland. The opening *accompagnato* also invokes Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, to bless his travels. The two arias summon patriotism and courage, among other things, and the work ends with an admonition to reject anxiety and embrace the future.

Reference to the city of Ansbach in the central recitative may indicate that Bach wrote this cantata for his friend and eventual colleague Johann Matthias Gesner, who in 1729 took up duties as Rector of the Ansbach Gymnasium. (Gesner later served as Rector at the Leipzig Thomaschule, where he worked with Bach.) The work's central metaphor, however, is that of a young man's departure for military service at sea, suggesting multiple uses for this singular cantata, perhaps for similar circumstances but with different dedicatees. It is, in any case, entirely in keeping with Bach's mature Leipzig style. Scored for soprano, flute, and strings, *Non sa che sia dolore* begins with a free-standing introductory *sinfonia* featuring the flute, which also plays a prominent role in the two fully-scored *da capo* arias.

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TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS

Doux liens de mon Coeur

*Aimables peines,
Charmanes chaînes,
De moment en moment,
Redoublez mon tourment.*

Gentle bonds of my heart,
Pleasant pain,
Charming chains,
From moment to moment
Increase my torment.

*Un Coeur exempt
De nos tendres allarmes Ne
ressentit jamais
Que de foibles doucers;
C'est dans l'exces de ses
rigueurs,
Que l'Amour a caché
ses plus dous charmes.*

A heart immune
To our tender lover's pangs
Can never feel
Such sweet pleasure;
It is in his ruthlessness

That Cupid hides
His sweetest charms.

Qu'on ne me disse plus

*Que c'est la seule absence
Qui peut guerir nos coeurs
De l'amoureux poison.*

Tell me no more
That only absence
Can heal our hearts
From love's poison.

*J'aime Iris en secret,
J'évite sa presence,
Ce remede cruel accable ma raison,
Absente je la vois,
À tous momens j'y pense,
Et cherchant à guerir
Je fuis ma guerison.*

I secretly love Iris;
I avoid her presence.
This cruel remedy drives me mad.
I see her when she's not there,
Think of her constantly,
And although I seek relief
I continue to torment myself.

Zéphire, modere en ces lieux

*L'ardeur dont tu caresses Flore:
Le sommeil a fermé les yeux
De l'inhumaine que j'adore.*

Zephyr, wherever you blow
Temper your ardor for Flora;
Sleep has closed the eyes
Of the creature I adore.

*Et vous, qui baignez de vos flots
Les bords de son lit de verdure,
Ruisseaux, respectez son repos;
Coulez un moment sans murmure.*

O waters that lap gently
Around her bed of greenery,
O streams, respect her rest;
Flow quietly for a moment.

*N'interrompez point son sommeil,
Oiseaux, dont la voix est si tendre:
Que ce ne soit qu'à son reveil,
Que vos chants se fassent entendre.*

Do not interrupt her sleep,
Ye birds, whose voice is so tender:
May it be only when she stirs
That your songs become audible.

*Voyez les Faunes de ces lieux
Et les Nymphes de ces bocages,
Attendant qu'elle ouvre les yeux,
Se reposer sous ces ombrages.*

Behold the attendant Fauns
And the Nymphs from these groves:
As they wait for her to open her eyes,
They rest under the shade.

*Voyez les Déesses des eaux
Veiller tandis qu'elle sommeille:
Nayades, Faunes, Oyseaux,*

Behold the Goddesses of the water
Watching over her slumber.
Sing Naiads, Fauns, Birds, and
Nymphs,
For she awakes.

Nymphes, Chantez: Elle s'éveille.

Non sa che sia dolore
Chi dall' amico suo parte e non more.

Sorrow remains unknowable
to one who weeps not for a
departed friend.

Il fanciullin' che plora e geme

Even the little child who cries
and groans

*Ed allor che più ei teme,
Vien la madre a consolar.
Va dunque a cenni del cielo,
Adempi or di Minerva il zelo.*

And is continually fearful;
His mother comes to console him.
So go and seek heaven's sign
That you may placate Minerva.

*Parti pur e con dolore,
Lasci' a noi dolente il core.
La patria goderai,*

Go then, with sorrow,
Leaving us with aching hearts.
You will make your homeland
proud

*A dover la servirai.
Varchi or di sponda in sponda,
Propizi vedi il vento e l'onda.*

By doing your duty.
Sail forth from shore to shore,
May you find propitious winds
and waves.

*Tuo saver al tempo e l'età
contrastà,
Virtù e valor solo a vincer basta.*

Your wisdom is well beyond
your years;
Virtue and valor alone are
enough to conquer.

*Ma chi gran ti farà più che non
fusti?
Ansbach, piena di tanti augusti.*

*Rigetti' gramezza e pavento,
Qual nocchier, placato il vento,
Più non teme o si scolora
Ma contento in su la prora
Va cantando in faccia al mar.*

TRANSLATIONS BY M. DIRST

But who will make you greater
than you were?
Ansbach boasts many
distinguished souls.

Rejecting anxiety and dread,
The steersman, in quiet winds,
No longer fears or turns pale,
But is content at his perch
To sing into the face of the sea.

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Matthew Dirst, *Artistic Director*

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Lauren Snouffer	<i>soprano</i>	Barrett Sills	<i>cello</i>
Colin St-Martin	<i>traverso</i>	Deborah Dunham	<i>violone</i>
Elizabeth Blumenstock	<i>violin</i>	Richard Savino	<i>theorbo & Baroque guitar</i>
Oleg Sulyga	<i>violin</i>	Matthew Dirst	<i>harpsichord & Artistic Director</i>
James Dunham	<i>viola</i>		
Erika Lawson	<i>viola</i>		
Mary Springfels	<i>viola da gamba</i>		
Eric Smith	<i>viola da gamba</i>		

Special thanks to Kathryn, Helen, and Brendan Godfrey for underwriting the post-concert reception and to Elizabeth Duerr, Janet & Ed Hess, Matthew Dirst & Sixto Wagan, and Deborah & James Dunham for providing accommodations for Ars Lyrica Houston artists.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Lauren Snouffer is celebrated as one of the most versatile and respected sopranos on the international stage. Highlights of the 2017-18 season include Mozart's Requiem with The Cleveland Orchestra, Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* and Mahler's Fourth Symphony with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, and *Don Giovanni* in concert with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra. She joins the Lyric Opera of Chicago for a new production of *Orphée et Eurydice* and her reputation as a leading exponent of contemporary music is fortified with performances of Berg's *Lulu* at the Teatro Municipal de Santiago, George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* for Opera Philadelphia, and the world premieres of operas by Ricky Ian Gordon at Houston Grand Opera and by Andrew Norman for the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Collaborations of past seasons include performances with Marin Alsop and the Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo, Alan Gilbert and the New York Philharmonic, Markus Stenz and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and Franz Welser-Möst and The Cleveland Orchestra.

An impactful discography includes Hasse's *Siroe* and Handel's *Ottone* for Decca, Gottschalk's *Requiem for the Living* on Novona Records, Grantham's *La canción desesperada* on Harmonia Mundi, and Feldman's *The Rothko Chapel* for ECM.



Colin St-Martin, who since childhood was interested in 17th and 18th century European culture, began playing the traverso at the age of 14. His studies took him to Brussels, Belgium, where he obtained a First Prize (bachelor of music) from the Royal Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of the renowned master, Bart Kuijken. He returned to the US to complete graduate work at the Early Music Institute at Indiana University. Currently, Mr. St-Martin is busy as a performer and recording artist with many early music ensembles across the US in addition to being sought after as a master teacher.



Widely admired as a Baroque violinist of expressive eloquence and technical sparkle, **Elizabeth Blumenstock** is a long-time concertmaster with the Bay Area's Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and American Bach Soloists, concertmaster of the International Handel Festival Orchestra in Goettingen, Germany, and Artistic Director of the Corona del Mar Baroque Music Festival in Orange County, California. Her love of chamber music

has involved her in several accomplished and interesting smaller ensembles including Galax Quartet, Live Oak Baroque, Sarasa, and Voices of Music. Ms. Blumenstock teaches regularly for the Juilliard Historical Performance program, at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the American Bach Soloists' summer Festival and Academy, the International Baroque Institute at Longy, and the Valley of the Moon Music Festival. She plays a 1660 Andrea Guarneri violin built in Cremona, Italy, on generous permanent loan to her from the Philharmonia Baroque Period Instrument Trust.



Ars Lyrica founder and artistic director **Matthew Dirst** is the first American musician to win major international prizes in both organ and harpsichord. Widely admired for his stylish playing and conducting, he was recently described in the Washington Post as an “efficient, extremely precise conductor who has an ear for detail and up-to-date ideas about performing Bach.” His Handel has also made the critics sing: the Dallas Morning News enthused that

“conducting both clear and evocative by Matthew Dirst yielded a performance as irresistibly lively as it was stylish. The music danced.” Early Music America celebrated his solo recording of harpsichord works by François and Armand-Louis Couperin as a “stylish, tasteful, and technically commanding performance... expressive and brilliant playing.” As Artistic Director of Ars Lyrica, Dirst leads a period-instrument ensemble with several acclaimed recordings, one of which—the world premiere recording of Johann Adolph Hasse’s *Marc Antonio e Cleopatra*—was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2011 for Best Opera. In addition to his work with Ars Lyrica, Dirst appears during 2018 with the Washington Bach Consort, the Portland Baroque Orchestra, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Houston Symphony, and San Francisco Early Music Society.

Matthew Dirst holds the PhD in musicology from Stanford University and the *prix de virtuosité* in both organ and harpsichord from the Conservatoire National de Reuil-Malmaison, France, where he spent two years as a Fulbright scholar. Equally active as a scholar and organist, he serves currently as Professor of Music at the Moores School of Music, University of Houston, and organist at St Philip Presbyterian Church in Houston. Dirst is the author of *Engaging Bach: The Keyboard Legacy* from Marpurg to Mendelssohn (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and the editor of *Bach and the Organ* (University of Illinois Press, 2016).

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ABOUT ARS LYRICA

Founded in 1998 by harpsichordist and conductor Matthew Dirst, **Ars Lyrica Houston** presents a diverse array of music from the 17th and 18th centuries on period instruments. Its local subscription series, according to the Houston Chronicle, “sets the agenda” for early music in Houston and it also appears regularly at major festivals and conferences, including the 2014 Berkeley Early Music Festival & Exhibition. Ars Lyrica’s distinctive programming favors Baroque dramatic and chamber works, and its pioneering efforts have won international acclaim: the ensemble’s world première recording of Johann Adolph Hasse’s *Marc’Antonio e Cleopatra*, hailed by Early Music America as “a thrilling performance that glows in its quieter moments and sparkles with vitality,” was nominated for a Grammy Award® for Best Opera 2011.

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Steinway Piano Dedication, Music for Four Hands SUNDAY | SEPTEMBER 23, 2018 | 2:00 p.m.

Duo pianists Ana María Otamendi and Elena Lacheva perform their four-hand arrangement of Petroushka by Stravinsky, along with equally-dazzling works by Ravel, Mozart, and others.

Concert for Peace, with Cecilia Duarte and Julia Fox SATURDAY | OCTOBER 6, 2018 | 7:30 p.m.

Soprano Julia Fox, mezzo-soprano Cecilia Duarte, pianist Keith Weber, and poets Rosemary Catacalos and Sandi Stromberg present a moving 90-minute "cross-cultural" program for peace.

St. Philip Presbyterian Church ♦ 4807 San Felipe Street ♦ Houston, Texas 77056



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HOUSTON EARLY MUSIC

Tues., Nov. 6 7:30 PM

RED PRIEST

THE BAROQUE BOHEMIANS Gypsy Fever From Campfire To Court

Reynolds Hall, Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Avenue, 77002

Revel in a high-energy concert with superb virtuosos making a case for connections between gypsy musicians and master composers of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Pre-concert talk at 6:45 PM



Visit HoustonEarlyMusic.org or call 713-325-5370 x1077

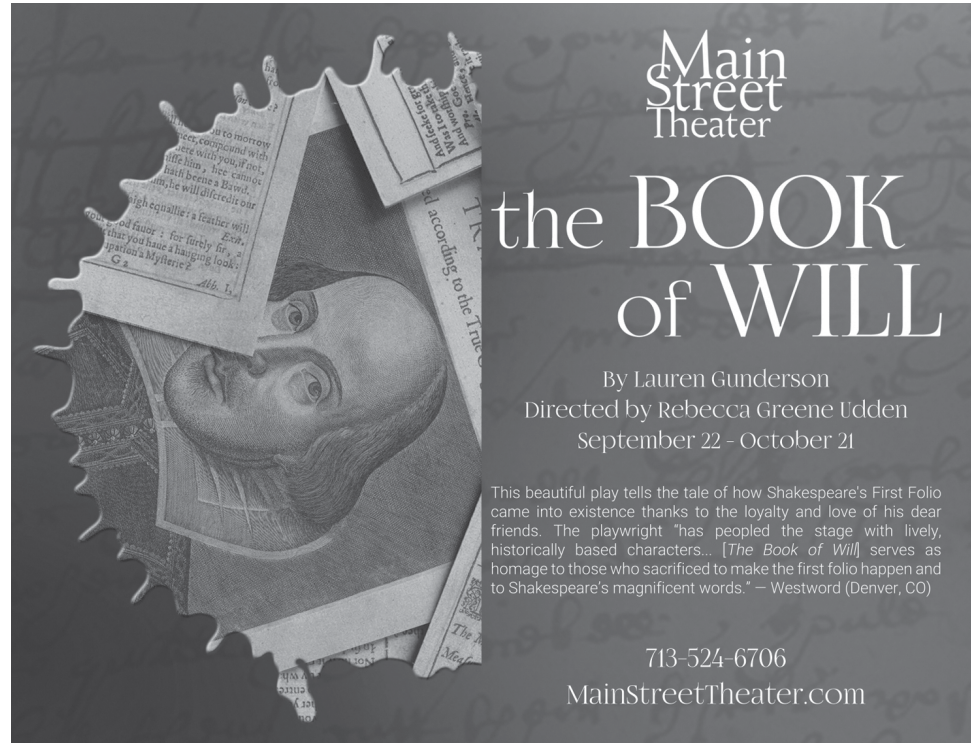
Main Street Theater

the BOOK of WILL

By Lauren Gunderson Directed by Rebecca Greene Udden September 22 - October 21

This beautiful play tells the tale of how Shakespeare's First Folio came into existence thanks to the loyalty and love of his dear friends. The playwright "has peopled the stage with lively, historically based characters... [The Book of Will] serves as homage to those who sacrificed to make the first folio happen and to Shakespeare's magnificent words." — Westword (Denver, CO)

713-524-6706 MainStreetTheater.com



ROCO
Unchambered

Saturday, October 6
5:00pm
MATCH • 3400 Main St

Joe Foley, trumpet and curator
Matt McClung, marimba
Bonnie Anderson, piano

Richard Lavenda, composer
Michael DeQuattro, composer

Mind Games

roco.org


HOUSTON
CHAMBER
CHOIR

this
IS WHY I
sing

SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 29, 2018
7:30 PM
SOUTH MAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

TICKETS:
HOUSTONCHAMBERCHOIR.ORG
713-224-5566

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ARS LYRICA'S NEXT PERFORMANCE



Agrippina

An instant sensation at its premiere in Venice in 1709, *Agrippina* established the young Handel's reputation as a theatrical genius. Its tuneful score, abundant humor, and classic Roman intrigue make for a delightful evening at the opera.

The cast for Ars Lyrica's production of this early masterpiece includes:



Sofia Selowsky
Agrippina



John Holiday
Nero



**Aryeh Nussbaum
Cohen**
Ottone



Camille Ortiz-Lafont
Poppea



Timothy Jones
Claudio



Tara Faircloth
stage director

Friday, November 16, 2018 at 7:30 pm
& Sunday, November 18, 2018 at 2:30 pm

Zilkha Hall, The Hobby Center
for the Performing Arts