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February 12, 2017, at 3pm
The Westchester Philharmonic's Friends & Family Concert

Ted Sperling, conductor

Julia Bullock, soprano

MIKHAIL GLINKA (1804–1857)

Overture to *Ruslan and Ludmilla*

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPHINE BAKER (1906–1975) (ARR. SAM HYKEN)

“La conga Blicoti”

“J’ai deux amours”

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898–1937)

“Summertime” from *Porgy and Bess*

Walking the Dog

LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1918–1990)

“A Julia de Burgos” from Songfest

WOLFGANG AMADÈ MOZART (1756–1791)

“Deh vieni non tardar” from *Le nozze di Figaro*

Ms. Bullock

Intermission

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)

Suite from *L’oiseau de feu* [The Firebird], 1919 Revised Version

- I. Introduction—The Firebird and its dance—The Firebird’s variation
- II. The Princesses’ Khorovod
- III. Infernal dance of King Kashchei
- IV. Berceuse
- V. Finale

This season is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

This season is made possible by ArtsWestchester with support from Westchester County Government.

This afternoon's unusual program combines Russian classics and American originals—with one immortal Mozart aria added in for good measure.

All the selections Maestro Sperling and the Westchester Philharmonic perform, including those with guest artist Julia Bullock, have associations with the stage—opera, ballet, Broadway—and with popular song. The mixture is intoxicating.

We open with a sparkling opera overture by Mikhail Glinka, known as the Father of Russian Nationalist music. The program concludes with Igor Stravinsky's ravishing suite from his 1910 ballet, *The Firebird*. To complement these two orchestral masterpieces, Ms. Bullock performs a variety of vocal selections.

The years from World War I through the rise of rock 'n' roll were a golden age for American song. The increased popularity of vaudeville houses, musical theatre, and nightclubs started it; the growth of radio and the recording industry fueled the boom, in Europe as well as the United States. Ms. Bullock's set this afternoon is anchored by torch songs that Josephine Baker made famous and chestnuts by George Gershwin. Her inclusion of Susanna's aria "Deh vieni non tardar" from *The Marriage of Figaro* reminds us that this versatile young soprano has a stellar career as a recitalist and in the opera house.

Overture to *Ruslan and Ludmilla*

MIKHAIL GLINKA

Born 1 June, 1804 in Novospaskoye, Smolensk District, Russia
Died 15 February, 1857 in Berlin, Germany

- *Ruslan and Lyudmila* is a comic opera based on a fairy tale
- Glinka's opera is the spark that fired Russian Romantic opera
- The overture is zesty and energetic: a sparkling curtain raiser!

Before Mussorgsky, before Tchaikovsky, long before either Stravinsky or Shostakovich, there was Glinka. The undisputed father of Russian nationalism in music, Mikhail Glinka bequeathed a substantial legacy through his operas, especially to the group of five known as the "Mighty Handful" and to Tchaikovsky. An unusually cosmopolitan composer, Glinka met both the Irishman John Field and the Austrian Johann Nepomuk Hummel during his childhood. Both older composers were impressed with Glinka's vocal and pianistic talent. Later Glinka studied in Milan, Rome, Naples and Berlin, where he became acquainted with Bellini, Donizetti, Mendelssohn and Berlioz.

Glinka also numbered many important Russian writers among his personal friends, including Pushkin, the author of the fairy-tale poem *Ruslan and Ludmilla* upon which Glinka's most famous opera is based. Only Pushkin's premature death from injuries sustained in a duel prevented him from writing Glinka's libretto for the opera. *Ruslan* failed on the Russian stage, but its overture is a jewel, bubbling like champagne for its duration. It has become one of the best-loved concert openers in the repertoire.

In his memoirs, Glinka recalled attending a wedding dinner at the Russian court that influenced the overture. "I was up in the balcony, and the clattering of knives, forks, and plates made such an impression on me that I had the idea to

imitate them in the prelude to *Ruslan*. I later did so, with fair success." His modest observation is an understatement for this exhilarating movement.

A crisp sonata form movement, the overture is filled with wonderful melodies: folk-like in character, yet not specifically Russian. Glinka maintains a brisk tempo throughout, achieving variety by means of colorful orchestration and effective use of dynamic contrasts. In particular, his use of timpani is highly imaginative, actually endowing the kettledrums with a significant motivic role in the development and recapitulation. Brimful of vitality, the overture to *Ruslan and Ludmilla* is a perfect curtain raiser.

Glinka's score calls for woodwinds in pairs plus contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani and strings.

"La conga Blicoti"

by Armando Oréfiche (1911–2000)

"J'ai deux amours"

by Vincent Scotto (1874–1952)

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPHINE BAKER

Born 3 June 1906 in St. Louis

Died 12 April, 1975 in Paris

Arranged by Sam Hyken

Last summer, *The New York Times* Sunday travel section ran a front-page feature headlined "Exploring the France that Josephine Baker Loved." The author, and White Plains native, Sloane Crosley, spent time with David Burke, an American author and film producer and long-time Paris resident, who was working on a documentary about Baker. "Josephine wasn't really a jazz person and she was a dreadful singer at first, but she was involved with the whole Jazz Age community," Burke told Crosley. "She's the most famous of any American to ever live in France. People just went wild for her," Burke continued. "There was a need for something fresh and Josephine

brought this combination of Africa, jazz, humor, and America in her presentation. And she was personable. Everyone loved her."

Baker got her start in vaudeville. Her first big break was in the dancing chorus for the original *Shuffle Along*. That led first to Broadway, then to Paris. Her impact in the French capital was immediate and electric. Within a year of her 1925 début at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Baker commanded the highest fees of any singer in France. Her revealing stage wardrobe—most famously a 'banana skirt' consisting of 16 plastic bananas—both scandalized and enchanted audiences. Her admirers included Picasso and Dior, Hemingway and Fitzgerald, all of whom were in France in the 1920s.

Ms. Bullock has been a champion of the songs that Baker made famous. The two she performs today were among Baker's standards, and are representative of her international repertoire. The composer and pianist Armando Oréfiche was Cuban, and his homeland's rumba and salsa-like rhythms course through "La conga blicoti." He recorded this tune with Baker; Woody Allen used it in the soundtrack to *Midnight in Paris* (2011).

"J'ai deux amours" was written by Vincent Scotto, who was born in Marseille to Neapolitan parents. He was celebrated for his operettas, but gravitated to the music of the people, writing thousands of songs for cafés, music halls, and cabarets. During the 1930s and 1940s he also composed more than 200 film scores. Baker introduced "J'ai deux amours" at the Casino de Paris in 1930. The revue was set in North Africa, involving a romance between a French colonist and an African woman. The Frenchman wishes to take her back to Paris with him. She is torn between her love of country and the seductive promise of Paris. The French film director Alain Resnais used "J'ai deux amours" in the soundtrack to *On connaît la chanson* (1997).

“Summertime” from *Porgy and Bess*
Walking the Dog

GEORGE GERSHWIN

Born 26 September, 1898 in New York City
Died 11 July, 1937 in Los Angeles

George Gershwin left his job in Tin Pan Alley in 1917 for Broadway, where he secured a job as a rehearsal pianist. Soon he was contributing songs to new Broadway shows, and in 1919 his first original show, *La La Lucille* opened. A series of other songs and full scores followed, and his reputation grew.

When Gershwin composed *Rhapsody in Blue*, he was 25, ambitious, talented, and still largely unschooled in formal music theory and composition. But he knew jazz, and instinctively understood that jazz deserved a far broader audience than could fit in Harlem clubs.

Porgy and Bess (1935) was arguably Gershwin’s *magnum opus* and has entered the canon of great American opera. One of the great ironies of American music is that *Porgy* was a failure when it was first performed at New York’s Alvin Theatre in October 1935. The critics panned it and the production was unsuccessful commercially. Today, *Porgy and Bess* is widely regarded as Gershwin’s masterpiece, and a half dozen of its songs have become part of the American canon.

Its most beloved aria, “Summertime,” needs no introduction; it is the quintessential American ballad. A timeless lullaby that has also become a torch song, “Summertime” merges blues, jazz, gospel, spirituals—and the tenderness of a mother soothing her infant.

Walking the Dog is an instrumental interlude in the 1937 classic film *Shall We Dance*, starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. The show was filled with winner tunes, including “Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off,” “They Can’t Take That Away from Me,” and “They All Laughed.” *Walking the Dog* is unique,

however. In the film, it unfolds as a comic pantomime. Astaire is a classically trained ballet master, Rogers a popular dancer. After they meet in Paris, he arranges for them to return on the same ship to New York. The music accompanies Astaire’s clever ruse to ensure that they cross paths again. He temporarily acquires a dog so that he may join Rogers on deck while she walks her pup.

The interlude provides musical satire to accompany this charming scene. The American composer, pianist, and comedian Oscar Levant later observed, “George deliberately, and with superb effect, scored *Walking the Dog* for only eight instruments as a private commentary on the plushy, over-stuffed scoring favored by most Hollywood orchestrations.”

Walking the Dog was published in 1960 as a piano solo, *Promenade*. Its color and sass are better rendered in Sol Berkowitz’s expanded orchestration.

“A Julia de Burgos” from *Songfest*

LEONARD BERNSTEIN

Born 25 August, 1918 in Lawrence, Massachusetts
Died 14 October, 1990 in New York City

West Side Story and *Chichester Psalms* are two celebrated works attesting to Leonard Bernstein’s affinity for the human voice. *Songfest* is a later example, proving that his gift did not flag in the 1970s. The cycle originated as a Philadelphia Orchestra commission for the American Bicentennial, but Bernstein did not complete it for those festivities. By the time of its premiere in October 1977, *Songfest* had become a twelve movement work for six singers and orchestra.

Bernstein chose a rainbow of texts celebrating America’s cultural diversity. His poets spanned 300 years, ranging from the 17th century’s Anne Bradstreet to 19th century icons like Poe and Whitman, and on to 20th century

masters including Edna St. Vincent Millay, e.e. cummings, Langston Hughes, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Julia de Burgos (1914-1953) was a Puerto Rican poet who advocated for Puerto Rican independence. Her poem, No. 3 in *Songfest*, addresses the internal conflict between the feminist poet she was and the conventional role that society expected her to fulfill. Bernstein’s setting is jazzy, dance-like, and passionate.

“Deh vieni non tardar” from
Le nozze di Figaro

WOLFGANG AMADÈ MOZART

Born 27 January, 1756 in Salzburg, Austria
Died 5 December, 1791 in Vienna, Austria

The Marriage of Figaro was the first of Mozart’s three collaborations with the Italian poet Lorenzo da Ponte. Da Ponte crafted his superb libretto from Caron de Beaumarchais’s French play, *Le mariage de Figaro*, which is actually part II of a Figaro trilogy. Beaumarchais’s drama was considered subversive by the Viennese monarchy. In order for the libretto to clear the imperial censors, da Ponte had to make some adjustments. He downplayed the political aspects of the drama and capitalized on its inherent comedy. In his music, Mozart matched and surpassed da Ponte’s admirable achievement. Mozart was at the height of his powers in 1786, and there are many who rank this opera as his supreme masterpiece.

“Deh vieni, non tardar” is the Act II aria for Figaro’s fiancée Susanna. She is disguised as her mistress the Countess, in an elaborate ruse to entrap the Countess’ husband, Count Almaviva. Having arranged a nocturnal rendezvous with him in the palace garden, she sings a love song bidding him hasten to her. Figaro, eavesdropping, is certain his fiancée is being unfaithful. The simplicity and elegance of Susanna’s melodic line and Mozart’s incomparable orchestration have made this aria a perennial favorite.

Suite from *L’oiseau de feu* [*The Firebird*],
1919 Revised Version

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Born 17 June, 1882 in Oranienbaum, near St. Petersburg, Russia
Died 6 April, 1971 in New York City

- The original 1910 *Firebird* was Stravinsky’s first collaboration with Sergei Diaghilev
- Stravinsky trimmed the original ballet to form this suite
- The magical bird of the title, handsome prince, evil ogre, and captive princess all come alive in the music
- Fire and electricity course through the ogre Kashchei’s *Infernal Dance*
- Stravinsky used Russian folk tunes in his score

Handsome prince, captive princess, evil ogre, magic bird

Firebird is adapted from a Russian fairy tale in which a handsome prince is drawn into an enchanted garden and palace by the exotic bird of the title, who is a sort of good fairy. He falls in love with a beautiful captive princess, but must break the spell of the evil ogre Kashchei (who presides over the palace) before he may claim his bride. Stravinsky was young when he composed *Firebird*, and drew heavily on Tchaikovsky’s ballet models, which were essentially derived from French principles. He took great care to bind the music closely to the action on stage. If one listens carefully, even the Suite follows the chronological events and essential outline of the story.

Remarkably, *Firebird* was Stravinsky’s first ballet, and the first of the trio of ballets that established him as a composer of international stature. The new work was an instant success, placing Stravinsky on the musical map virtually overnight.

Behind the scenes: the first rehearsals

Tamara Karsavina, the ballerina who created the title role in the 1910 production of *Firebird*, wrote an article in 1948 recalling the young composer's participation and demeanor as the new ballet went into rehearsal.

Often he came early to the theatre before a rehearsal began, in order to play for me, over and over again, some specially difficult passage. I felt grateful, not only for the help he gave me, but for the manner in which he gave it. For there was no impatience in him with my slow understanding; no condescension of a master of his craft towards the slender equipment of my musical education. It was interesting to watch him at the piano. His body seemed to vibrate with his own rhythm; punctuating staccatos with his head, he made the pattern of his music forcibly clear to me, more so than the counting of bars would have done.

Embracing Mother Russia

With *Firebird's* brilliant and lush orchestration, Stravinsky proved how well he had learned from his teacher Rimsky-Korsakov. Relying heavily on Russian folk tunes, he also acknowledged some debt to all the "Russian Five." The *Ronde des princesses* shares the eastern exoticism of Borodin's lyrical *Polovetsian Dances*; Stravinsky's grandiose and triumphant finale is surely related to Musorgsky's "Great Gate of Kiev" in *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

In a sense, though, *Firebird* also marked Stravinsky's break with his homeland. Thereafter he was a citizen of the world, living largely in France and Switzerland, and eventually in the United States. The ballet is at once a traditional work and a turning point, marking both the end of an era and the beginning of a brilliant, lengthy career.

Firebird was premiered by the Russian impresario Serge Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* in Paris in 1910. The following year, Stravinsky derived a Suite from the ballet, concluding with Kashchei's "Infernal Dance." He re-orchestrated the Suite in 1919 for a somewhat smaller orchestra, using the Finale of the complete ballet for his conclusion; that is the version we hear. For a third version in 1945, he composed some additional connective music.

Stravinsky's 1919 score calls for two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbal, triangle, xylophone, harp, piano and strings.

In the composer's words

In his 1936 autobiography, Stravinsky described the circumstances that led to his composing *Firebird*:

In the summer of 1909 I returned to [my opera *Le Rossignol*] with the firm intention of finishing it...but a telegram then arrived to upset all my plans. Diaghilev, who had just reached St. Petersburg, asked me to write the music for *L'Oiseau de feu* for the Russian Ballet season at the Paris Opera House in the spring of 1910.

Only 27, Stravinsky was keenly aware of both the learning experience and prestige he would gain by accepting the assignment.

It was highly flattering to be chosen from among the musicians of my generation, and to be allowed to collaborate in so important an enterprise side by side with personages who were generally recognized as masters in their own spheres.

With the instinct for theatre and sense for life's adventure that served him admirably for the next six decades, he embraced his new colleagues, dizzy with ideas.

At the moment when I received Diaghilev's commission, the ballet had just undergone a great transformation owing to the advent of a young ballet master, Fokine, and the flowering of a whole bouquet of artists full of talent and originality: Pavlova, Karsavina, Nijinsky. Notwithstanding all my admiration for the classical ballet and its great master, Marius Petipa, I could not

resist the intoxication produced by such ballets as *Les Danses du Prince Igor* or *Carnaval*, the only two of Fokine's productions that I had so far seen. All this greatly tempted me, and impelled me to break through the pale and eagerly seize this opportunity of making close contact with that group of advanced and active artists of which Diaghilev was the soul, and which had long attracted me.

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Julia Bullock, soprano

Soprano Julia Bullock has been hailed as an “impressive, fast-rising soprano... poised for a significant career” (*The New York Times*). Equally at home with opera and concert repertoire, she has captivated audiences with her versatile artistry and commanding stage presence. This season, Ms. Bullock appears as Clara in *Porgy and Bess* with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Robertson, Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress* at Aix en Provence, and Kitty Oppenheimer in the BBC Symphony's production and recording of John Adams's *Dr. Atomic*, conducted by John Adams. She also performs twice with the Los Angeles Philharmonic: in John Adams' *El Niño*, and in the role of “A Girl” in *West Side Story* at the Hollywood Bowl, conducted by Gustavo Dudamel. Ms. Bullock is featured in a recital program with tenor Ian Bostridge presented by the LA Phil,

entitled *Night and Dreams: A Schubert & Beckett Recital*, directed by Yuval Sharon. Her busy season also includes the premiere of a work by Jonathan Berger with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, a continued collaboration with the International Contemporary Ensemble (I.C.E.) on “Joséphine Baker: A Portrait,” in performances at Mostly Mozart and Da Camera, a concert presented by the Resonant Bodies Festival (a New York based contemporary music festival that celebrates new vocal works), and conducted by Marin Alsop. Ms. Bullock opens the Baltimore Symphony season, singing Villa Lobos' *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5*.

She has appeared as soloist with orchestras including the London Symphony Orchestra with Simon Rattle, the New World Symphony with Christian Reif, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. In summer 2015, Ms. Bullock made her debut with the New York Philharmonic, performing Bernstein's *West Side Story* Concert Suite No. 1 with Alan Gilbert in New York City parks, at Bravo! Vail, and in Santa Barbara. She made her San Francisco Symphony debut in *West Side Story in Concert*, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas; an album of the concert was released on the orchestra's label in 2014. *The San Francisco Chronicle* wrote: “The evening's most remarkable showstopper, Julia Bullock, appeared out of nowhere to deliver a full-voiced stunningly paced account of ‘Somewhere’—for just a moment, it seemed as though nothing Bernstein ever wrote was quite as magical as that one song.”

She sang the lead role in the Berlin Philharmonic's Orchestra Academy performance of Saariaho's *La Passion de Simone*, directed by Peter Sellars, which she reprised at the Ojai Festival in 2016. She performed the title role in Purcell's *The Indian Queen* at the Perm Opera

House, Teatro Real, and the English National Opera, and she has toured South America as Pamina in Peter Brook's award-winning *A Magic Flute*. Other opera roles include Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Monica in *The Medium*, and the title roles in *Cendrillon*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*.

Ms. Bullock's contextually-driven recital and educational outreach programs have taken her across the United States to venues including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall Neighborhood Concerts, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, San Francisco Performances, University of Florida Performing Arts, and the Levine School of Music. She has sung numerous times with the New York Festival of Song, and in art song young artist programs at Caramoor and Songfest. She has also participated in master classes with bass-baritone José van Dam, soprano Jessye Norman, bass-baritone Eric Owens, and soprano Dawn Upshaw.

Ms. Bullock's accolades include a 2016 Sphinx Foundation Medal of Excellence, a 2015 Leonore Annenberg Arts Fellowship, the 2015 Richard F. Gold Grant from the

Shoshana Foundation, Lincoln Center's 2015 Martin E. Segal Award, First Prize at the 2014 Naumburg International Vocal Competition, and First Prize at the 2012 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. She holds the Lindemann Vocal Chair of Young Concert Artists. Her management is also supported by the Barbara Forester Austin Fund for Art Song. From 2003 to 2005, Ms. Bullock participated in the Artists-in-Training program with the Opera Theater of St. Louis. She holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music, Bard Graduate Vocal Arts Program, and graduated with an Artist's Diploma from The Juilliard School in 2015.

Originally from St. Louis, Missouri, Ms. Bullock integrates her musical life with community activism. She has organized and participated in benefit concerts in support of the FSH Society, the Music and Medicine Initiative for New York's Weill Medical Center, and the Shropshire Music Foundation, a non-profit that serves war-affected children and adolescents through music education and performance programs in Kosovo, Northern Ireland, and Uganda.