

# PORTLAND ROSSINI CLUB

## 150th Season – Virtual Concert

Sunday, October 25, 2020, at 3:00 pm

President  
Program Chair

Sydney Patten  
Cecile DeRoche-Cain

### Program

Etude, Op. 25, No. 12

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Années de Pèlerinage; Deuxième Année: Italie S. 161  
Sposalizio

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

**Jonathan Pekdey Prak, piano**

Suite for Solo Cello  
Prelude  
Allemande  
Courante

J.S. Bach (1688-1750)

**John Bennett\*\*, cello**

Down in the River to Pray

traditional, arranged by Matthew Culloton

Esto Les Digo

**Andrea Garcia, Emma Masse, Kai Myers**

Kinley Lange

On Children

Ysaye Barnwell

You've Got a Friend

Carole King, arranged by David Vernier

**The Iris Ensemble\***  
**Maria Belva,\*\* director**  
**David Vernier,\*\* piano**

\*The Iris Ensemble: Kaylin Brown, Elowen Brunton, Caitlin Bryant, Alexandra Buterbaugh, Amelia Connor-McCoy, Caroline Fallona, Andrea Garcia, India Jenkins, Eden Johnson, Nora Lane, Addison Littlefield, Emma Masse, Elizabeth Morrison, Leah Moss, Kai Myers, Elena Parr, Riley Small, Amelia Thaxter, Lauren Tosi

\*\*Guest

## Today's Performers

The **Girl Singers of Maine** is the performance-based music education program for girls in the greater Portland area. Founded by director Maria Belva in the Fall of 2018 at the Portland Conservatory of Music, GSOM offers excellence in choral music in three different choirs: Skylarks, grades 2-4; Bella Canta, grades 5-8; and Iris Ensemble, grades 9-12.

**Iris Ensemble** meets for one and one-half hours on Monday evenings throughout the school year and is accompanied by David Vernier. These singers must be self-motivated, responsible individuals with a desire to grow and develop as musicians. Our repertoire comes from the finest written for women's voices and includes sacred and secular; medieval to modern; classical, folk, gospel, and non-traditional modern tunes. Members of Iris Ensemble are very active in school and community events, including sports, theater, and various musical organizations, and devote time to community service. The Iris Ensemble was to travel on a concert tour of Italy in April of this year. These young women worked very hard to raise money for the trip and for their concert dresses that you see today.

**Maria Belva, director:** Maria Belva recently moved to Portland from Peterborough, New Hampshire, where she founded and directed the Grand Monadnock Youth Choirs for 20 years. Maria brings over 25 years of experience as a choral conductor and youth educator and hopes to continue her tradition of founding choirs that thrive far into the future here in Maine. Maria has a BA in Psychology and Education from SUNY Potsdam and a Master of Music in choral conducting from University of Maine, Orono.

**John Bennett, cello:** Cellist John Bennett was born and lived in the San Francisco Bay Area of California until 2018 when he and his wife relocated to Portland, ME. He attended San Francisco State University and California State College, East Bay, and his cello teachers included Margaret Rowell, Irene Sharp, Lazlo Varga, and Burton Kaplan's Practice Retreats in New York. His chamber music coaches were Roy Bogas and Bonnie Hampton. For many years John taught students of all levels and ages in his private studio and led workshops and cello ensembles. For 20 years he was the adjunct cello instructor at Pacific Union College and the Paulin Center for the Creative Arts in Angwin, California, where he taught lessons, coached chamber music, and conducted a youth orchestra. For 12 years, John was the cello/bass coach and a member of the Artist in Residence String Quartet for the Berkeley Youth Orchestra. In addition to teaching, he was a tenured member of the Vallejo and Napa Valley Symphonies, freelanced as much as possible, and performed in chamber music and duo recitals. John's greatest love has always been helping and guiding students of all ages and levels achieve their musical goals. "I don't teach the cello; I teach the human being, one of my teachers said to me. This has always been my guiding principle."

**Jonathan Pekdey Prak, piano:** Jonathan, from Saco, ME, is a piano performance major at the University of Southern Maine School of Music and is currently studying with Dr. Laura Kargul. He was the featured solo pianist in the 2014 Annual USM Scholarship Gala. Jonathan is a recipient of the Bob Crewe Foundation Award, the Chester Cook Scholarship, and the Newell A. Auger Scholarship. He was a winner of the Anne Gannett Scholarship, sponsored by the Maine Federation of Music Clubs in 2015. He was a second prize winner of the Lucia A. Wright Piano Scholarship, sponsored by the Portland Rossini Club, in 2016 and 2017. Jonathan was awarded the Brian Mcgorill Memorial Scholarship in 2018. While he was living in Nantes, France, he wrote a piece called *Colette*, which was dedicated to his late piano teacher, Colette Kelly. Jonathan studied with Dr. Daniel Sonenberg and composed a piece called the *Kargul Variations*.