

# PORTLAND ROSSINI CLUB

153rd Season

The Cathedral Church of St. Luke  
Portland, Maine

3:00 PM  
Sunday, February 18, 2024

President  
Program Chair

Jonathan Prak  
Susanna Adams

## Richard Roberts Memorial Concert

Carol (*Five Bagatelles, Op. 23*)

Sonata No. 1 in F minor for clarinet and piano

I. Allegro appassionato

II. Andante un poco adagio

III. Allegretto grazioso

III. Vivace

Gerald Finzi (1901 – 1956)

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897)

Steven Blumenthal, piano  
Stephen Schiffman, clarinet

Winter (*The Four Seasons*)

Waltz in F major, Op. 34, No. 3

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)

Frédéric Chopin (1810 – 1849)

Christopher Staknys, piano  
Audrey Stack, narrator

Elegie

Danza de la Moza Donosa

Seal Slide Rag

Elite Syncopations

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873 – 1983)

Alberto Ginastera (1916 – 1983)

Sydney Patten (1954 – )

Scott Joplin (1868 – 1917)

Sydney Patten, piano

*We request that the audience reserve its applause until the end of each performance*

*Our next program will take place here Sunday, March 17, 2024*

*Many thanks to St. Luke's Cathedral for the use of their facilities for our programs*

## Today's Performers

**Steven Blumenthal, piano:** Steven studied piano at Columbia University with the late Niels Østbye, a student of Edwin Fischer. While pursuing his medical education and later directing a pediatrics emergency room in New York City, Steven continued post-graduate music studies at Columbia University and at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College. He participated in master classes with Jeanne-Marie Darré. He now lives in Cape Elizabeth with wife and PSO violinist/teacher Holly Ovenden, and recently retired from pediatrics practice in Portland. Steve has been a member of the Rossini Club since 2009.

**Stephen Schiffman, clarinet:** Prior to moving to Portland, Stephen Schiffman, emeritus faculty member at Babson College and the F.W. Olin College of Engineering, lived in Boston for 30 years and played with various ensembles and chamber music groups there. He has been playing the clarinet for 60 years and his teachers have included Sherman Friedland, Julie Vaverka and Thomas Hill. Also a member of the Marston-Kotzschmar Club, he joined Rossini Club in 2015.

**Christopher Staknys, piano:** Pianist and composer Christopher Staknys is a graduate of The Juilliard School (2018) with a degree in solo piano performance. Allan Kozinn, former music critic for the *New York Times*, praised his playing for its "dexterity and dramatic phrase shaping". He has appeared as both performer and composer in cities such as New York, Boston, Los Angeles, Paris and Salzburg. He has participated in several contemporary ensembles including *AXIOM* and the *New Juilliard Ensemble*, performing at venues such as Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall. Christopher has won numerous competitions, including first prize at the Steinway Society of Massachusetts Piano Competition and the Rivers School Concerto Competition. Artists he has studied with include Sergei Babayan, Robert Levin and Peter Serkin. He has also appeared on NPR's *From The Top* radio show. In 2021 he was selected as a Marcus Institute Fellow pianist for the Vocal Arts department at Juilliard. He has also been vocal coach and pianist for Opera Maine and the Chautauqua Opera Conservatory. Christopher has played for numerous operas and musicals including *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Into the Woods*. For three summers he taught piano and electronic music at the Sitka Fine Arts Camp in Alaska to children and young adults ranging from elementary to high school. He currently serves as music director for First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Kennebunk, Maine. His interests include languages, (Lithuanian, French, Italian, German, Ancient Greek) and reading.

**Sydney Patten, piano:** Sydney began studying piano at the age of six to please her mother. She very quickly fell in love with the instrument and with classical music. At Skidmore College, she minored in music with a concentration in piano performance. She began to compose music secretly never sharing any of her compositions until she had graduated from college. While living on the North Shore of Massachusetts, she began composing music inspired by birds at Crane's Beach. During that time, she served as the Vice President of the American Women Composers. Her greatest inspirations for composition continue to be wildlife and sea creatures in Maine and especially on Mount Desert Island. Some of her favorite subjects have been piping plovers, eagles, seaweed, jellyfish and great white sharks. She continues to study classical piano music which also influences her work. Sydney lives with her husband, Bill Patten and their dog, Patapouf in Falmouth Foreside, Maine. Other interests include skiing, gardening, and anything to do with France. She has been associated with the Royaumont Abbey for many years where she now organizes master classes in a variety of disciplines. She is past President of Rossini Club.