

December 18, 2019

Old and New Works On Orchestra Program



WORLD PREMIERE: Clarinetist Kinan Azmeh is soloist in a new work by Saad Haddad, on the Princeton Symphony Orchestra's programs January 18 and 19. (Photo by Martina Novak)

On Saturday, January 18 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, January 19 at 4 p.m. in Richardson Auditorium, the Princeton Symphony Orchestra (PSO) performs Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's popular work *Scheherazade*, Op. 35 on a program with the world premiere of composer Saad Haddad's Clarinet Concerto.

A commission of the PSO and the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition at Brigham Young University, the concerto features Syrian clarinetist Kinan Azmeh. Jacques Ibert's *Escales (Ports of Call)* completes the program to be conducted by Edward T. Cone Music Director Rossen Milanov.

Rimsky-Korsakov was influenced by explorer Richard Francis Burton's 1885 translation of *One Thousand and One Nights* (the *Arabian Nights*) enough to craft a symphonic suite centered on its heroine. Ibert's *Escales* recounts the sights and sounds of a Mediterranean coastal excursion, and composer Saad Haddad draws upon his Middle Eastern ancestry to create a work conveying a universal spirit of cooperation among fellow human beings. His new concerto is dedicated to the memory of his grandfather, who led Haddad's mother and her extended family away from war-torn Lebanon to the United States.

This is the second world premiere of a work by Haddad, co-commissioned by the PSO, and the third work overall of his performed by the orchestra since January 2017. "Saad has a

unique voice among the composers of his generation,” said Milanov. “He reaches into the unexplored well of Arabic music and creates musical experiences that are powerful, original, and deeply personal.”

Haddad writes orchestral, chamber, vocal, and electroacoustic music. His music transfers the performance techniques of traditional Arab instruments to Western symphonic instruments, while extending their capabilities through the advancement of technology. His works have been performed by the Minnesota Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Princeton Symphony Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Columbus Symphony Orchestra, and Symphony in C, among others. He is currently the 2019-2021 Young Concert Artists Composer-in-Residence.

Azmeh’s distinctive sound across different musical genres has gained him international recognition as a clarinetist. Notable appearances include New York’s Carnegie Hall and the United Nations’ General Assembly, Washington D.C.’s Kennedy Center and the Library of Congress, London’s Royal Albert hall, Buenos Aires’ Teatro Colon, Berlin’s Philharmonie, Salzburg’s Mozarteum, Paris’ Opera Bastille, Moscow’s Tchaikovsky Grand Hall, and the Damascus opera house for its opening concert in his native Syria.

Ticket prices range from \$30-\$100 (children 17 years and younger accompanied by an adult receive a 50% discount). Call (609) 497-0020 or visit princetonsymphony.org.