

Punta Gorda Symphony presents orchestra music of great ballets

Punta Gorda Symphony presents the music of the great ballets 'Appalachian Spring & Scheherazade' on Feb. 6 at the Charlotte Performing Arts Center in Punta Gorda.

The exciting array of pieces on the program will be conducted by Maestro Raffaele Livio Ponti, music director of Punta Gorda Symphony, and features an audience favorite, concertmaster Ming Gao on violin, in the hauntingly beautiful violin melodies of "Scheherazade."

The program features this pair of the most celebrated works in the classical music sphere, accompanied by the lesser-explored "Dances in the Canebrakes" by Florence Price, a ground-breaking composer who was the first African American woman to have a composition played by a major orchestra.

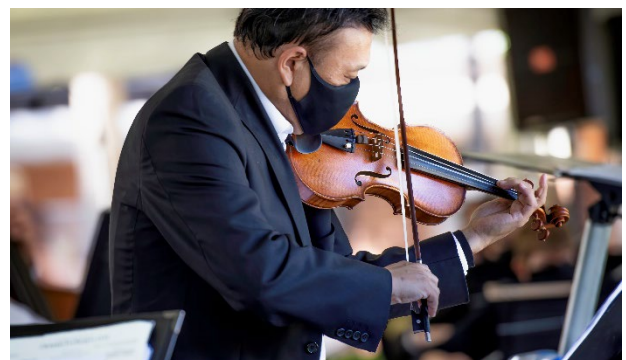
"The music of these ballets is wonderful to present, but audiences will also immediately sense something we're all familiar with: the Americana Experience," says Maestro Ponti. "Copland is known for his compositions which evoke vast American landscapes, and I've complemented that with Price's work, which conjures the underlying rhythms from the quintessential ragtime composer Scott Joplin — everyone will be tapping along!"

Contrasting the music of the American composers on the program is Russian composer Rimsky-Korsakov's masterpiece "Scheherazade." For those unfamiliar with the work, the orchestral suite for "Scheherazade" is a lush and exotic showpiece that displays the astounding virtuosity of Punta Gorda Symphony. The ballet tells the narrative of "The One Thousand and One Nights," a collection of Arabian folk stories. A frame story famously unifies the individual tales: the cruel Sultan Shahryar, convinced of the faithlessness of all women, takes a new bride every night only to have her executed at dawn, until one, Scheherazade, saves herself and wins his heart by telling stories, being sure to end each night in the middle of a tale. Concertmaster Ming Gao will dazzle audiences with the instantly recognizable violin solos. Gao has performed with Punta Gorda Symphony as concertmaster since 2015 and has served as concertmaster with esteemed orchestras in his native China and at the Heidelberg Castle Festival in Germany.

"Great music. New experiences. An evening of adventure, surprise, and fun for you and your loved ones." says Executive Director Craig Badinger. "For community members who haven't yet been to our concerts, this is a program that truly showcases our aim for excellence. You won't want to miss it."



Punta Gorda Symphony highlights orchestral suites of great ballets on February 6 at the Charlotte Performing Arts Center. Photo by Steve Donaldson.



Punta Gorda Symphony's concert at the Charlotte Performing Arts Center features concertmaster Ming Gao in the hauntingly beautiful violin solos of "Scheherazade." Photo by Jerry Beard.