



# Variations On A Fourth!

## Saturday, July 4, 2020 • 7:30 pm

John Stafford Smith  
(1750 – 1836)

*The Star-Spangled Banner*  
Michelle Johnson, Soprano

Henri Vieuxtemps  
(1820-1881)

*Souvenir d'Amerique "Yankee Doodle"*  
Sirena Huang, Violin

Charles Ives  
(1874-1954)

*Variations On "America"*  
Joseph Ripka, Organ

Traditional  
Arr. Moses Hogan  
(1957 – 2003)

*Deep River*  
Michelle Johnson, Soprano

Francis Johnson  
(1792 – 1844)

*Victoria Galop*  
Chestnut Brass Company  
Bruce Barrie, Trumpet  
Marian Hesse, Horn  
Jay Krush, Tuba  
John Charles Thomas, Trumpet  
Larry Zimmerman, Trombone

John Philip Sousa  
(1854 – 1932)

*Stars and Stripes Forever*  
Chestnut Brass Company

# Chestnut Brass Company

The Grammy-winning Chestnut Brass Company has earned international acclaim for brilliant performances on modern and historical brass instruments. Since beginning as a street band in Philadelphia in 1977, they have performed in North and South America, Europe, the Caribbean, and Asia.

The chamber ensemble is active in the performance and commissioning of contemporary music and has introduced numerous new works to audiences around the country. Composers who have written works for the Chestnut Brass Company, or have been commissioned by the Chestnut Brass Company, include Richard Wernick, Peter Schickele, Leslie Bassett, Eric Stokes, Theodore Antoniou, Jan Krzywicki, and Paul Basler. The brass quintet has received awards for commissioning and performance from the NEA, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Chamber Music America and Meet the Composer.



Interviews and recitals of the Chestnut Brass Company have been featured on National Public Radio's All Things Considered, Fresh Air, Radiotimes and Performance Today programs; Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Bavarian State Radio, Korean National Television and numerous radio and television stations across the United States. The Chestnut Brass Company has been featured in performance at the Juilliard School, the Chautauqua Institute, the Ambassador Series, the Boston Museum of Art, Merkin Concert Hall, Alice Tully Hall and the Yale Collection of Instruments. The CBC Hot Air: the Story of Brass Instruments children's program was selected by the Kennedy Center for broadcast as part of their educational series.

As curators of the sounds of ancient and antique brasses, the Chestnut Brass Company have been at the forefront of the period-instrument revival with performances on cornetti, sacbuts, keyed bugles and saxhorns. The quintet continues to collect antique brass instruments and to research the literature and performance practice of these instruments.

This extraordinary diversity of repertoire and instrumentation enables the Chestnut Brass Company to offer a variety of exciting, entertaining and innovative programs. They can be heard on the Sony, Newport Classic, Crystal and Musical Heritage/Musicmasters labels. Selections from CBC recordings have been featured on several documentaries ranging from A House Divided for PBS, to Pinehurst, the History of Golf.

# Sirena Huang

Praised by The Baltimore Sun for her “impeccable technique...deeply expressive phrasing...and poetic weight,” Sirena Huang is one of her generation’s most celebrated violinists. She brings not only technical brilliance and powerful artistry to the stage, but also a profound sense of connection to her audience.

Sirena has been the recipient of numerous accolades and awards. In 2017, she was awarded First Prize at the Elmar Oliveira International Violin Competition and later that year, she was the winner of the New York Concert Artist Worldwide Debut Audition. In 2009, she won First Prize Gold Medalist of the 6th International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. She won First Prize and the Audience Award at the Cooper International Competition in 2011. That same year, she was also named the first Artist-in-Residence of Hartford Symphony Orchestra. In 2013, she was awarded the Hannloser Prize for Violin at the Verbier Music Festival in Switzerland. She is also a top prize winner at Singapore International Violin Competition as well as the Shanghai Isaac Stern International Violin Competition.



Sirena made her solo debut with the National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra in 2004 at the age of nine and has performed in twenty countries across three continents. She has been featured as a soloist with more than fifty prestigious ensembles, including the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, Russian Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra, and the Staatskapelle Weimar in Germany. She has performed in leading venues, including Berliner Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, the Kravis Center, Esplanade -Theaters on the Bay, Shanghai Concert Hall, and the Taiwan National Concert Hall, among many others. She has appeared as a guest artist at the Verbier Music Festival, Marlboro Music Festival, Ravinia Music Festival, Aspen Music Festival, Newport Music Festival, Music in the Mountains Festival, Eastern Music Festival, Sarasota Arts Series, “The Great Music for a Great City” series in New York City, and many others.

Motivated by a deep wish to inspire peace and harmony with her music, Sirena has performed before world leaders, thinkers and humanitarians. She has appeared at the World Peace Conference held in Petra and at the Opening Ceremony of the “Forum 2000 World Conference” in Prague, among others.

In addition to her TED Talk in 2006, Sirena has been featured on numerous radio and television broadcasts, including WQXR’s McGraw-Hill Young Artists Showcase, and NPR’s “From the Top” as well as several interviews with WNPR, CNBC, WTNH, WTIC, WB20 and Beethoven Radio.

# Michelle Johnson

Soprano Michelle Johnson has been praised for her “extraordinary breath control and flawless articulation. Her voice is velvety and pliant – a dulcet dream.” In upcoming seasons, Johnson makes a debut with Opera Columbus, Knoxville Opera and Opera Idaho singing the title role of *Aida*, Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra singing Verdi’s *Requiem* and Madison Opera singing *San-tuzza* in *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

Last season, Johnson returned to Lyric Fest for “I Hear America Singing,” Sarasota Opera for *Madame Lidoine*, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Boston Landmark Orchestra for Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9* and made a debut with Columbus Symphony as soprano soloist in Verdi’s *Requiem* which all lead to rave reviews.



Past seasons included *Leonora* in *Il trovatore*, Hawaii Opera Theatre, *Minnie* in *La Fanciulla del West*, Kentucky Opera, *Élisabeth de Valois* in *Don Carlos* and title role *Aida*, Sarasota Opera, title role *Manon Lescaut* and *Donna Anna* in *Don Giovanni*, Opera Philadelphia, *Mimi* in *La bohème*, Annapolis Opera and PortOpera, *Aida*, Glimmerglass Music Festival and Opera Santa Barbara, *Leonora* in *Il trovatore* and *Alice Ford* in *Falstaff*, Opera in the Heights, soprano soloist Verdi’s *Requiem* and Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9*, Orquesta Sinfónica del Principado de Asturias, Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9*, Boston Philharmonic, an all French Opera concert with Maestro Michel Plasson, Montpellier, France, soprano soloist in Vaughan Williams’ *Dona nobis pacem* with Juneau Symphony, and an all Verdi concert with The Princeton Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Rossen Milanov. She also performed the title role in the rarely performed *Sakuntala* with Teatro Grattacielo, to very favorable reviews.

A graduate of the prestigious Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, she was seen as the title role in *Suor Angelica*, *Leonora* in *Oberto*, *Donna Anna* in *Don Giovanni*, the Countess in *Capriccio*, and *Alice Ford* in *Falstaff*. Winner of numerous competitions, most notably Grand Prize Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, William Matheus Sullivan Foundation, Gerda Lissner Foundation and the Giulio Gari Foundation.

# Joseph Ripka

As the first prize winner of the 2008 Dublin International Organ Competition, the 2008 Fort Wayne National Organ Competition and the 2008 San Marino/Elizabeth Elftman National Organ Competition, Joseph Ripka has earned national and international recognition as one of today’s finest young organ talents. Joseph was awarded first prize at the Dublin competition by a unanimous decision of all five international jurors.

Joseph is in demand as a concert organist and has performed recitals throughout the United States. He received high praise in a review from the Boston Musical Intelligencer for his performance at Holy Cross College in Worcester Massachusetts on the renowned Taylor and Boody Opus 9 instrument. Joseph has performed with the New World Symphony, the Boston Philharmonic, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra under conductors Michael Tilson Thomas, Benjamin Zander, and Alan Gilbert. Mr. Ripka’s recitals have been aired on American Public Media’s *Pipedreams* several times; he was invited by Michael Barone to be the featured artist for the 25th anniversary celebration of *Pipedreams* in 2008 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. During the summer of 2009, Joseph made his European concert debut with recitals at St. Sulpice in Paris, Bavo Kerk in Haarlem, Oude Kerk in Amsterdam, and Hooglandse Kerk in Leiden, Netherlands. Joseph has since played recitals at Westminster Cathedral in London, St. Michael’s Church in Dun Laoghaire, St Paul’s Cathedral in London, St Columb’s Cathedral in Derry, Noorderkerk in Amsterdam, and many more.



Mr. Ripka is also a performing pianist, concertizing frequently with his wife violinist Erin Kathryn Ripka as the Ripka Duo. Mr. Ripka received the prestigious Artist Diploma in organ from the Oberlin Conservatory where he studied with James David Christie. He holds Master of Music degrees in piano and organ performance from the University of Kansas and Bachelor of Music degrees in piano and organ performance from Saint Cloud State University, MN. His previous teachers include James Higdon, Charles Echols, Jack Winerock, Carmen Wilhite, and Yakov Gelfand. He has coached with Olivier Latry, Marie Claire Alain, Wilma Jensen, Jean-Baptiste Robin, John Scott, and Philippe Lefebvre.

Mr. Ripka is the Director of Music at All Saints’ Episcopal Church and Day School in Phoenix, AZ. He is the former organist and choirmaster at Calvary Church (Episcopal) in Stonington, CT and artistic director of Calvary Music School. At Calvary, he directed an active music program, including adult and children’s choirs and a music school with over 100 students and a faculty of 14. During the summer of 2016, the Calvary Choir (RSCM) under Mr. Ripka’s direction, toured the UK singing nine services in seven days at St Mary’s Cathedral in Edinburgh, Scotland and Lichfield Cathedral in Lichfield, England. Joseph was also consultant for a new organ by the Richards-Fowkes Co. of Ooltewah, TN that was installed in August of 2017. He later returned to play the dedication recitals in January of 2018.

Joseph was previously organ scholar at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Fairfield, Connecticut, organist/choirmaster at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Kansas City, and organist/choir director at St. Paul’s United Church of Christ in Parma, OH. During the 2006-2007 academic year, Joseph served on the piano faculty at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University in Collegeville, Minnesota. Joseph was invited to serve as a jurist for the 2010 L. Cameron Johnson Memorial Competition for high school organ students and the North American round of the 2009 Tariverdiev International Organ Competition.

# Thank You!



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## Period Brass Instruments

Chestnut Brass Company has shared the following information about the instruments they played for “Victoria Galop” by Francis Johnson (1792-1844).

The keyed bugles were the first complete, fully functional family of chromatic brass instruments, soprano to bass. The soprano instruments were first introduced in 1810 with five keys, but the addition to seven keys made the instrument fully chromatic. Elaborate keyed bugles with as many as 12 keys were presented to outstanding bandmasters and soloists.

• Bruce Barrie: **E-flat keyed-bugle** description:

Firth, Hall & Pond (American, New York.) E-flat keyed-bugle. Circa 1837, body of instrument is made of copper with tone holes, garland and eight keys made of brass. Keys are boxed mounted with domed keys.

• John Charles Thomas: **B-flat keyed-bugle** description:

Hippolyte Collin (French, Paris) B-flat keyed-bugle. Circa 1820-25, body of instrument is made of brass with seven tone holes.

• Marian Hesse: **natural horn** description:

Reproduction horn in E-flat made by Lowell Grier (American, MI) after an instrument by Marcel Auguste Roux (Paris), circa 1826. Nickel plated brass.

Larry Zimmerman: **trombone** description:

• Standard Band Instrument Company (Boston) B-flat slide trombone. Circa 1880, body of instrument is brass. Trombones have persisted throughout the past 5 centuries, with relatively few changes. Truly archaic beasts!

Jay Krush: **Ophicleide** description:

• Butler & Son, (Soho, London) C Ophicleide. 1860-1865, body of instrument is made of brass, with eleven keys. The largest, and lowest pitched, instrument on this recording is the Ophicleide, the bass member of the keyed bugle family. The Ophicleide was added to the family in 1818, and was used in orchestral works by such composers as Berlioz and Mendelssohn. By the middle of the second half of the 19th Century, the tuba (introduced in 1835) was taking over the role of the brass bass and the heyday of the Ophicleides was over. The Ophicleide on this recording is a fairly late one, and about as advanced as the instrument ever got.

The Chestnut Brass Company has proudly recorded a couple of albums of the music of Francis Johnson, a noted African-American Philadelphia born bandsman, and his works are played regularly on Chestnut Brass Company concerts.