

Musical life after the holidays: a cornucopia of January concerts

by Daniel Hathaway



Now that winter has finally arrived and the excitement of the holidays has subsided, it's tempting to burrow in and hibernate for a few weeks. But there's plenty to do during January. Let's have a look at some of what the month has to offer, beginning with orchestra concerts.

Franz Welser-Möst and **The Cleveland Orchestra** are back at work early in the month with a round of all-Beethoven concerts from January 7-9 featuring pianist Yefim Bronfman (left) in the third piano concerto, and Bronfman and

the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus in the *Choral Fantasy*. Soprano Barbara Hannigan will be featured in the U.S. premiere of Hans Abrahamsen's *let me tell you* on January 14 and 15, sharing a program with Dmitri Shostakovich's fourth symphony. On Saturday the 16th, Robert Porco will lead the annual Martin Luther King Jr Celebration, followed by a Severance Hall Open House on Monday the 17th from 12 Noon to 5 pm. Community ensemble performances will be bracketed by the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Chorus (12:30) and Youth Orchestra (4:15). The **Cleveland Philharmonic** will host its own MLK Observance at Tri-C Metro Auditorium on Sunday, January 17.

Apollo's Fire concertmaster Olivier Brault will lead the **Akron Symphony** in an evening of baroque music by Antonio Vivaldi and J.S. Bach on Saturday, January 16 featuring five of the orchestra's own musicians in virtuoso concertos. The Akron Symphony's youth orchestras will perform at Tallmadge High School Auditorium on Sunday, January 24. The **Canton Symphony** will build its Saturday, January 23 concert around the second extraterrestrial film commissioned by the Houston Symphony from its hometown partner NASA, this time starring Earth as seen from orbit along with music by Mendelssohn, John Adams, and Richard Strauss.

Cleveland's newest orchestral ensemble, David Ellis's **Earth and Air String Orchestra** will celebrate winter with John Luther Adams's *In the White Silence* on Friday, January 29 at St. Paul's in Cleveland Heights. **Cleveland Pops Orchestra** will explore "The Genius of John Williams" at Severance Hall on Saturday, January 30. And Martin Kessler will conduct the **Suburban Symphony** in its biennial Suburban Soloists Concert on Sunday afternoon, January 31.

Conservatories are also back at work in January. Guest conductor Steven Smith will lead the **CIM Orchestra** and violinist Laurie Smukler in music by visiting composer Shulamit Ran on Wednesday, January 27 (CIM will also host a symposium with Ran on Tuesday afternoon, January 26). The **Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble** and the **Oberlin Orchestra** will tour to Chicago to celebrate the conservatory's 150th anniversary late in the month. They'll preview those performances in sendoff concerts on Tuesday and Wednesday, January 26 and 27, in Warner Concert Hall and Finney Chapel, respectively.

Conservatory faculty concerts also figure importantly in the January calendar. At **Oberlin**, piano professor Peter Takács will play music from Ludwig van Beethoven's late period with violinist Ken Aiso and tenor Virgil Hartinger on January 7 in Warner Concert Hall (another sendoff event: Takács will repeat the concert in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York on January 14). Many violists — Lisa Boyko, Mark Jackobs, Stanley Konopka, Eliesha Nelson, Joanna Patterson Zakany, Lembi Veskimets, and Richard Waugh — will appear onstage at the **Cleveland Institute of Music** on Sunday, January 10 for a festival of chamber music featuring that tenor voice in the string family. And for another faculty concert at CIM on Wednesday, January 13, violinists Sonja Molloy and Jeffrey Zehngut, violist Mark Jackobs, cellist Martha Baldwin, and pianist Alicja Basinska, piano, will feature Czech music by Smetana, Suk, and Dvořák.

Baldwin Wallace faculty recitals include "Midcentury/Modern" on Wednesday, January 13, featuring the Factory Seconds Brass Trio (Cleveland Orchestra members Jack Sutte, trumpet, Richard Stout, trombone, and Jesse McCormick, horn), and the Fuoco Duo (the husband and wife team of Christine and Anthony Fuoco) on Sunday afternoon, January 31, playing four-hand piano music by Johannes Brahms. **Kent State** voice faculty members Marla Berg, Melissa Davis, Jane Dressler, and Laura Troyer will share the stage with pianist Jerry Wong in Ludwig Recital Hall on the Kent campus for a recital on Sunday afternoon, January 24. The Kent Keyboard Series continues with a guest recital by Sugeun Kim on Sunday afternoon, January 31.

Early music ensembles will celebrate Three Kings' Day, French baroque opera, and the intimate lives of composers during January. **Mignarda** (vocalist Donna Stewart and lutenist Ron Andrico) will present "Magi Viderunt Stellam" at Immaculate Conception Church on Sunday afternoon, January 10. **Les Délices's** "The Imaginary Orchestra" will feature duo-harpsichordists Michael Sponseller and Jacob Street in arrangements of operatic works by Rameau, Marais, Lully, and other luminaries in concerts at the Galleries at CSU on Saturday, January 16 and at Plymouth Church in Shaker Heights on Sunday afternoon, January 17. **Burning River Baroque** (soprano and cellist Malina Rauschenfels and harpsichordist Paula Maust) illustrate "Forces of Good and Evil" through the music of Purcell, Barrière, Merula, Forqueray, and Stradella in two identical concerts on January 23 and 24. And the acclaimed lutenist Paul O'Dette will close out the month on the **Cleveland Classical Guitar Society** series at Plymouth Church on Saturday, January 30.

Operas include **Oberlin's** Winter Term production of Richard Wargo's *The Music Shop* in Warner Concert Hall on Friday evening, January 29 and Saturday afternoon, January 30 (directed by Sally Stunkel), and Nkeiru Okoye's *Harriet Tubman—When I Crossed That Line to Freedom*, directed by Jonathon Field in partnership with **Cleveland Opera Theater**. The Tubman piece tours around the region in late January and early February (see the concert listings for details).

Organ concerts in January include the year-long **Music Near the Market Series** at Trinity Lutheran Church in Ohio City (Florence Mustric on January 6 and 13, Robert Myers on January 20 and 27, Wednesdays at noon); Karel Paukert in his annual performance of Olivier Messiaen's *La Nativité* at St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights on Sunday afternoon, January 10; and Brian Wentzel on the Brombaugh Renaissance-style organ in Oberlin's Fairchild Chapel on Sunday afternoon, January 24.

Most choirs are sung out after the holidays, but **Good Company** always saves themselves for January. They'll sing a concert entitled "The Spirit Uncaged" on Sunday afternoon, January 10 at Lakewood Presbyterian Church. And in case you missed hearing **Quire Cleveland's** "Sing You After Me: Wondrous Canons" earlier this season, Ross Duffin and his professional singers will repeat his clever survey of rounds through the ages at St. Paul's Church in Akron on Friday, January 22.

Finally, in a category all by themselves, **Russian Duo** (Oleg Kruglyakov, balalaika and vocals and Terry Boyarsky, piano) will take off in a number of directions from their Russian roots in a set at Nighttown on Friday, January 15.

For details of all January events, visit our [concert listings](#) page.

Published on ClevelandClassical.com January 5, 2015.

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