

**Cleveland Women's Committee Benefit
to feature Joela Jones, Michael Sachs
& Massimo La Rosa on March 4**

by Mike Telin



“Behind every great institution there are women,” Cleveland Orchestra principal keyboard Joela Jones pointed out during a conversation in the Taplin Room at Severance Hall. The Women’s Committee of The Cleveland Orchestra will

sponsor a benefit for the Orchestra on Friday, March 4 beginning at 6:00 pm at Executive Caterers at Landerhaven in Mayfield Heights. Joela Jones will join her Orchestra colleagues Michael Sachs, principal trumpet, and Massimo La Rosa, principal trombone, for a special evening of music and conversation.

Jones found it appropriate that our conversation was taking place while the Orchestra was performing Young People’s concerts across the hall, as the Women’s Committee played a major role in creating TCO’s first educational programs. “I’m so inspired by all of the women who have been behind the scenes working on behalf of the Orchestra.”

Founded in 1921 by The Cleveland Orchestra’s first general manager, Adella Prentiss Hughes, Women’s Committee membership is now open to both women and men. Benefit proceeds will support everything The Cleveland Orchestra does — from music education programs and community presentations to performances of classical music onstage. The work of the Women’s Committee is critical to the ongoing ability of the Orchestra to serve Northeast Ohio through the power of music each and every year.

The musical portion of the evening will feature arrangements of arias from Bizet’s *Carmen*, including the Overture, Habanera, Toreador Song, and Seguidilla. The arrangements are from an opera aria program that Sachs and La Rosa first put together five years ago.

We spoke to the trumpeter and trombonist in a separate conversation. “I always think of Massimo as a great vocalist who uses the trombone,” Sachs said. La Rosa added, “Last year we performed it at Strings Music Festival, Michael’s festival in Steamboat, Colorado, and the audience response was amazing.”

In addition to music from *Carmen*, Sachs will perform the first movement of Johann Neruda’s *Trumpet Concerto in E-flat*, which Sachs said is one of his favorite concertos. La Rosa will be featured in the first movement of Danish composer Launy Grøndahl’s *Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra*. La Rosa, a native of Italy, said that he feels very attached to the work. “Grøndahl wrote it while he was in Italy, so it is inspired by Italian culture. I also played it on my Cleveland audition when I won my position.”

Sachs and La Rosa also look forward to working with Joela Jones, whom they hold in the highest esteem. “I’m always amazed by how many hats she wears,” Sachs said. “She’s an amazing pianist, but also a great organist and continuo player. She even plays accordion. She’s wonderful with piano reductions too.”

Jones equally admires her colleagues. “It’s going to be so much fun to perform with Michael and Massimo. There are no better brass players anywhere.” Regarding those often musically pesky piano reductions, Jones said, “I love playing them. It’s a different kind of playing and it’s fun to figure out how to sound like a full orchestra.”

All three are honored to be part of Friday’s benefit, pointing out that the success of an organization like The Cleveland Orchestra is built on teamwork, and being ambassadors for the Orchestra is an important part of what they do. “I’m so proud to be part of an organization that is committed to education,” La Rosa said, “and the Women’s Committee is doing such great work to make that happen.” Sachs added, “We thank the Committee for all of their support. It’s going to be a great event.”

Tickets for the benefit can be purchased at the Severance Hall ticket office at 216-231-1111.

Photos by Roger Mastroianni.

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