

OLD TURTLE

Saturday | March 31, 2012 | 7 pm | Symphony Hall at the DECC
Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra | Dirk Meyer, conductor
in collaboration with the Minnesota Ballet

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2012

Dorff

The Tortoise and the Hare ca. 6'
Narrated by Andrew Roemhildt

Saint-Saëns

Carnival of Animals ca. 21'
Introduction
Royal March of the Lions
Cocks and Hens
Wild Jackass
Turtles
Elephants
Kangaroos
The Aquarium
The Mules
The Cuckoo in the Woods
The Birds
The Pianists
The Fossils
The Swan
Grand Finale

INTERMISSION ca. 20'

Brophy

Old Turtle ca. 30'
Narrated by John Munson

Minnesota Ballet

This concert is generously sponsored by
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Composer, author, illustrator, narrator, and Minnesota Ballet profiles
appear on pages 51–52.

Dirk Meyer's profile appears on page 52.

Program subject to change



Larry Johnson, President and CEO NORTH SHORE BANK OF COMMERCE

Throughout history, the best communities, cities, towns and countries have had passionate and dedicated supporters of the arts. Theater, music, dance, and fine arts of all types reflect the community, tell its stories (and many others) and bring people together to learn, experience, celebrate and enjoy. Our sponsorship of the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra is inspired by those great truths, as well as the fact that they consistently make really great music!

OLD TURTLE

The Tortoise and the Hare

“You’re the funniest looking animal I’ve ever seen,” the Hare said. “Your legs are so tiny... how do you get anywhere?”

“Well,” answered the Tortoise, “I do get wherever I’m going.”

Daniel Dorff’s “The Tortoise and the Hare” is the final movement of *Three Fun Fables*. *Three Fun Fables*, a suite of

lighthearted Aesop fables commissioned by the Minnesota Orchestra’s Kinder Konzerts series which performed it over 50 times in the 1996-97 season and again over 50 times in 2003-04.

The well-loved fable tells the story about a persistent Tortoise and an overconfident Hare who race each other, with unexpected results.

Performances of “The Tortoise and the Hare” have been given by the Chicago Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, and many other orchestras.

“The Tortoise and the Hare” gives each character of the fable a clearly recognizable theme and instrument. The tortoise is portrayed by the contrabassoon and the hare will be portrayed by the Bb clarinet. You can probably guess which instrument will be played very fast and which instrument will be played more slowly!

Carnival of the Animals

Listen carefully—*The Carnival of the Animals* lets the animals speak for themselves through the instruments in the orchestra. See if you can recognize each animal as the carnival passes by!

When Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) was just a toddler, his mother and his great-aunt began teaching him music. He was only five years old when he gave his first public piano performance. When he was seven, he began to study with other teachers, and he had already begun composing his own music. He was to become one of the most famous French composers.

Saint-Saëns also liked to write poetry, scientific papers, and essays about music. Sometimes he made enemies because he insulted his fellow musicians when he wrote about them.

When Saint-Saëns grew up, he became a famous organist in Paris, but decided to leave his job playing the organ so he could conduct and compose music.

The Carnival of the Animals became one of Saint-Saëns’ most well-known compositions. Did you know that he wrote it to poke fun at some of his friends? Today, *The Carnival of the Animals* is enjoyed by children all over the world for the pictures it paints of animals.

It might surprise you to learn that the *The Carnival of the Animals* was performed only once during Saint-Saëns’ lifetime. Once *Carnival* was published, and orchestras began to play it, it became very popular and today it is one of his best-known works.

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Old Turtle

In music, dance, and word, *Old Turtle* tells the story of a wise old turtle who shared her wisdom with the world.

Do you know the story of *Old Turtle*? The DSSO thought the children’s book was so inspiring that they

asked composer Peter Brophy to compose some “Old Turtle” music and they asked the Minnesota Ballet to design a special dance to tell the story.

The book *Old Turtle*, written by Douglas Wood and illustrated by Cheng-Khee Chee, was first published in 1992. Author Douglas Wood said he wrote the story because he believes a turtle has the perfect voice to tell the world about how humans and nature are interconnected.

“The turtle really is a gentle, benevolent, wise, humble creature. Those are qualities that I think one needs to cultivate to be in tune with the natural world,” Wood says. “You have to slow yourself down...and absorb what’s really going on.”

The book has sold over one million copies in more than 30 printings. With beautiful illustrations by Cheng-Khee Chee, *Old Turtle* won the American Booksellers Book of the Year Award (ABBY) and the International Reading Associations Book of the Year, as well as the Minnesota Book Award, and Midwest Publishers Award. *Old Turtle* is a children’s story for all ages, about all the beings in the world learning to live in harmony with one another and with the earth. *Old Turtle* is the story of a wise old turtle who shares her wisdom on spirituality, peace and ecology.

Old Turtle is a very special blending of text and illustration. The enchanting and mystical water colors of Cheng-Khee Chee begin to weave their spell from the cover of the book through to the last page. Told as a fable, the message of *Old Turtle* begins with simple words under beautiful, yet small, paintings. Slowly the words increase with the size of the illustrations, until both fill the pages with stunning and uplifting words and color.

This stirring parable promotes a deeper understanding of ourselves, the earth, and our relationship with all beings. Simple yet profound, *Old Turtle* has brought hope and inspiration to children and adults everywhere.

Carnival of the Animals by Ogden Nash

In 1983, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra visited Duluth and presented Saint-Saëns's *Carnival of the Animals*, with Pinchas Zukerman conducting and actor Telly Savalas performing these poems by Ogden Nash.

Introduction

Camille Saint-Saëns
Was wracked with pains,
When people addressed him,
As Saint Sanes.
He held the human race to blame,
Because it could not pronounce his name,
So, he turned with metronome and fife,
To glorify other kinds of life,
Be quiet please – for here begins
His salute to feathers, fur and fins.

Royal March of the Lions

The lion is the king of beasts,
And husband of the lioness.
Gazelles and things on which he feasts
Address him as your highness.
There are those that admire that roar of his,
In the African jungles and velds,
But, I think that wherever the lion is,
I'd rather be somewhere else.

Cocks and Hens

The rooster is a roistering hoodlum,
His battle cry is cock-a-doodleum.
Hands in pockets, cap over eye,
He whistles at pullets, passing by.

The Wild Jackass

Have ever you harked to the jackass wild,
Which scientists call the onager?
It sounds like the laugh of an idiot child,
Or a hepcat on a harmoniger,
But do not sneer at the jackass wild,
There is a method in his heehaw,
For with maidenly blush and accent mild
The jenny-ass answers shee-haw.

Turtles

Come crown my brow with leaves of myrtle,
I know the tortoise is a turtle,
Come carve my name in stone immortal,
I know the turtoise is a tortle.
I know to my profound despair,
I bet on one to beat a hare,
I also know I'm now a pauper,
Because of its totley, turtley, torper.

Elephants

Elephants are useful friends,
Equipped with handles at both ends.
They have a wrinkled moth proof hide,
Their teeth are upside down, outside,
If you think the elephant preposterous,
You've probably never seen a rhinosterous.

Kangaroos

The kangaroo can jump incredible,
He has to jump because he is edible,
I could not eat a kangaroo,
But many fine Australians do,
Those with cookbooks as well as boomerangs,
Prefer him in tasty kangaroomeringues.

The Aquarium

Some fish are minnows,
Some are whales,
People like dimples,
Fish like scales,
Some fish are slim,
And some are round,
They don't get cold,
They don't get drowned,
But every fishwife
Fears for her fish,
What we call mermaids
They call merfish.

The Mules

In the world of mules
There are no rules.
The Cuckoo in the Woods
Cuckoos lead bohemian lives,
They fail as husbands and as wives,
Therefore, they cynically disparage
Everybody else's marriage.

The Birds

Puccini was Latin, and Wagner Teutonic,
And birds are incurable philharmonic,
Suburban yards and rural vistas
Are filled with avian Andrew Sisters.
The skylark sings a roundelay,
The crow sings "The Road to Mandalay,"
The nightingale sings a lullaby,
And the sea gull sings a gullaby.
That's what shepherds listened to in Arcadia
Before somebody invented the radia.

The Pianists

Some claim that pianists are human,
Heh, and quote the case of Mr. Truman.
Saint Saëns on the other hand,
Considered them a scurvy band,
A blight they are he said, and simian,
Instead of normal men and wimian.

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The Fossils

At midnight in the museum hall,
The fossils gathered for a ball,
There were no drums or saxophones,
But just the clatter of their bones,
Rolling, rattling carefree circus,
Of mammoth polkas and mazurkas,
Pterodactyls and brontosauruses
Sang ghostly prehistoric choruses,
Amid the mastodonic wassail
I caught the eye of one small fossil,
"Cheer up sad world," he said and winked,
"It's kind of fun to be extinct."

The Swan

The swan can swim while sitting down,
For pure conceit he takes the crown,
He looks in the mirror over and ovea,
And claims to have never heard of Pavlova.

The Grand Finale

Now we've reached the grand finale,
On an animalie, carnivalie,
Noises new to sea and land,
Issue from the skillful band,
All the strings contort their features,
Imitating crawly creatures,
All the brasses look like mumps
From blowing umpah, umpah, umps,
In outdoing Barnum and Bailey, and Ringling,
Saint Saëns has done a miraculous thingling.

The people who brought you today's concert

Daniel Dorff

COMPOSER, *"The Tortoise and the Hare."*
Daniel Dorff was born in New Rochelle, New York and now resides in Pennsylvania. He is currently composer-in-residence with the Haddonfield Symphony in Haddonfield, New Jersey and is vice president of publishing with a music publisher. Mr. Dorff has written music for orchestra, concert band,

piano, chorus and chamber ensembles, and has composed many pieces for young people. In addition to composing, he also plays the clarinet and saxophone.

Douglas Wood

AUTHOR of *Old Turtle*. Though Douglas Wood started as a poor reader in elementary school, his second grade teacher instilled in

him a life-long love of books and reading. Raised in a family of musicians, Doug grew up playing violin and piano. He taught himself to play guitar and banjo, and write songs. As a writer of books for children and adults he has almost two million copies in print, including the classics *Old Turtle* and *Grand-dad's Prayers of the Earth*. Among his many honors and awards have been the Christopher Medal, ABBY Award, International

Reading Association Book of the Year, Minnesota Book Award, Midwest Publishers Association Book of the Year, Parent's Choice Award, Barnes and Noble Star of the North, and Story Telling World Award. Doug's newest titles are *No One But You* and *Franklin and Winston: A Christmas That Changed The World*. Mr. Wood is also an accomplished musician and composer, often performing with his Wild Spirit Band.

Cheng-Khee Chee

ILLUSTRATOR of *Old Turtle*. Cheng-Khee was born in Fengting, in Fujian Province in China and emigrated to Penang, Malaysia in 1948, where he was raised by his uncle. While he pursued his career as a librarian at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, at night he developed his skills and ideas in watercolor. In 1979, Cheng-Khee also started teaching watercolor painting at the University of Minnesota, and in 1981 was promoted to Assistant Professor of Art, and to Associate Professor of Art in 1988. Today he is Associate Professor Emeritus of the University of Minnesota. He has been represented in numerous national juried exhibitions and received over 200 honors. Among his publications are *The Watercolor World of Cheng-Khee Chee* (book 1997), *The Work of Cheng-Khee Chee* (instructional manual 2003), *Old Turtle* (illustration 1992), *Swing Around the Sun* (illustration 2003), *Noel* (illustration 2005),

and numerous contributions to books and magazines.

Andrew Roemhildt

NARRATOR, *"The Tortoise and the Hare."* Andrew Roemhildt has been attending the DSSO's concerts since childhood to watch his father Michael Roemhildt play bassoon in the orchestra. At the age of four, he began his musical training on the cello, studying with Dr. Betsy Husby. He began acting at the Duluth Playhouse while he was in high school, all the while playing cello in the Duluth Superior Youth Symphony. He attended UMD where he received a BFA in musical theater. At UMD, he played Luther Billis in *South Pacific*, the Mayor of WhoVille, (*Seussical the Musical*), and toured *Footloose* in Istanbul Turkey. Andrew was recently seen at the Duluth Playhouse's production of *Avenue Q* as Brian, and will appear in *A Chorus Line* at the Duluth Playhouse in April.

John Munson

NARRATOR, *Old Turtle*. John Munson began his career as a voice over artist at age three when it was discovered that he could memorize any script that was read aloud to him. Once he learned how to read he continued to perform on the radio in a variety of capacities, including classical music hosting. For the past 21 years he has held the post of Northern Regional Manager for Wisconsin Public Radio. John is frequently called upon

to act as a back-up host for a number of talk programs on WPR's Ideas Network. In addition to his work with WPR, John has also continued to pursue voiceover work in a variety of venues, has recorded an audio book (*Lord of the Rinks* for Savage Press), has offered performances of the works of Edgar Allen Poe and Charles Dickens, and has appeared on stage in a variety of roles including that of Orson Wells in the UWS-Theater production of *War of the Worlds*. He has performed as narrator with the DSSO on several works including "Lincoln Portrait," "Gardens of Stone," and "The Snowman."

Minnesota Ballet

The only professional ballet company and school in northeastern Minnesota, the 45-year-old Minnesota Ballet performs at the DECC Symphony Hall its storied *Nutcracker* production, other story ballets such as *Cinderella*, plus classical and contemporary ballets and masterworks. The Ballet also represents the Northland in national and international tours, while the Ballet's outreach programs bring the joy and challenge of dance to school children in the Northland and at tour sites. The Ballet's school provides its 200 students with pre-professional ballet training, its special needs students with Creative Dance, and community members with exercise and dance classes through its Teen/Adult Division. The school's Summer Intensive draws students from the Midwest.



Dirk Meyer, Conductor

Since moving to the United States in 2002, German conductor Dirk Meyer has established himself as a most sensible and versatile musician and his performances have been described as "outstanding" and "out of this world." Since 2007, Maestro Meyer has served as Music Director to the Sarasota Youth Orchestras, a program that involves more than 250 students from Sarasota and the surrounding counties. He has served as the Music Director of the Mason Symphony Orchestra and the Assistant Conductor of the Traverse Symphony in Michigan. Last season, Maestro Meyer conducted a wide variety of concerts with the Sarasota Orchestra and, after establishing a close relationship with the Orlando Philharmonic, he led this group in numerous performances during the 2010/2011 season.

Maestro Meyer holds Doctor of Musical Arts and Masters degrees in orchestral conducting from Michigan State University. He holds Bachelor's Degrees from the Folkwang Conservatory in Germany (music) as well as the University Duisburg-Essen (philosophy). Maestro Meyer is the author of *Chamber Orchestra and Ensemble Repertoire: A Catalog of Modern Music* published by Scarecrow Press in February of 2011.

With a special interest in contemporary music, Maestro Meyer founded the Art Nouveau Chamber Orchestra in 2003, to which he served as its Music Director and Principal Conductor. Originally created to promote the music of the 20th and 21st centuries, the orchestra has commissioned and premiered several new compositions. More recently, he established a new music series with the Sarasota Orchestra, leading world premiers by Miguel del Aguila, Silas Durocher and Eve Baglarian as well as the American premiers of works by Arvo Pärt, Joby Talbot, and Elliott Sharp.