

PARK UNIVERSITY TO PRESENT CHARMING FREE HOLIDAY CONCERT IN CONJUNCTION WITH PARKVILLE'S CHRISTMAS ON THE RIVER



PHOTO BY LARRY F. LEVENSON

Park University International Center for Music Orchestra

The 2022-2023 season marks the 20th anniversary of the founding of Park University's International Center for Music. Among the many special concerts created as part of the celebration, the Park ICM Orchestra will be presenting its very first holiday concert.

Offered at the charming Graham Tyler Memorial Chapel at Park University on the first Saturday of December, this delightful concert is adding to what has already become one of the best holiday events in the Greater Kansas City area, Christmas on the River. Hosted annually by the Main Street Parkville Association (MSPA) since 1993, Christmas on the River is Parkville's foremost holiday event. Each year, on the first Friday of December, residents and guests gather in downtown Parkville for traditional outdoor activities, including a visit from Santa Claus and Holiday Joy. The evening is capped off by a breathtaking fireworks display.

Honored to be included in this wonderful holiday treat with the MSPA, Park ICM's Orchestra has created a special evening of music titled, "An Intimate Christmas with Park ICM." Held on Dec. 3 at 7:30 p.m., the concert will feature familiar holiday favorites and some new things as well. "Intimate" is the key as the repertoire will be specifically chosen to fit ICM's chamber orchestra and small ensembles. In addition to the orchestra, solo piano works will be heard, featuring students from the studio of Park ICM Founder and Artistic Director, Van Cliburn International Piano Competition gold medalist, Stanislaw Ioudenitch.

A fitting conclusion to the holiday festivities, the program will come from composers of all periods and nations, and the content will be one that is both corollary and complementary to the larger annual Christmas concerts as heard at the Kansas City Symphony, as well as to the many choral presentations heard during the holiday season. The featured work on the ICM's Christmas program will be the "Christmas Concerto Op.6, No. 8" of Archangelo Corelli. A 17th-century work, it has become familiar to audiences by its added movement based on the Pifa (a dance that originated with the rustic Christmas music as played by Italian shepherds on instruments such as the shawm, an ancestor of the oboe, and bagpipe). Composed by Corelli for a string ensemble with harpsichord continuo, the ICM's chamber-orchestra size is the ideal ensemble in which to offer this inspired work. Another piece evoking the spirit of



Santa Claus and Holiday Joy at Parkville's annual celebration Christmas on the River. Photo Courtesy of Main Street Parkville Association.

dance is the Trio from the Christmas choral work "L'enfance du Christ" of Hector Berlioz. This beautiful chamber work is played during the oratorio's description of Mary and Joseph resting during their flight into Egypt with their newborn baby. The music of Arnold Schoenberg is usually associated with a drastic turning away from traditional harmony, but we will offer one of his pieces that is actually based on a more traditional musical style, namely his "Christmas Music" composed for the unlikely combination of two violins, cello, piano and harmonium, a bit of traditional melody in a somewhat more modern dress. Additional works will be performed, including some that involve audience participation . . . but those will have to be experienced by attending the concert!

These are just a few of the beautiful works that will be heard. Although this is the newest offering from the ICM, equal attention should be brought to the other orchestra concerts that occur in the new year of 2023. The annual Valentine's program will take place on Friday, Feb. 17, and will feature music for this fun festival under the direction of guest conductor Suzanna Pavlovsky. Laura Jackson will lead the orchestra in the March 31 concert that will be a special offering of music for string orchestra. And finally, guest conductor (and former resident conductor of the Kansas City Symphony) Timothy Hankewich will make his encore appearance in concert on April 28, directing the orchestra in an all-French program. All concerts given by the ICM Orchestra are free of charge, and the public is cordially invited. Additional information and reservations for each concert can be found at icm.park.edu.