

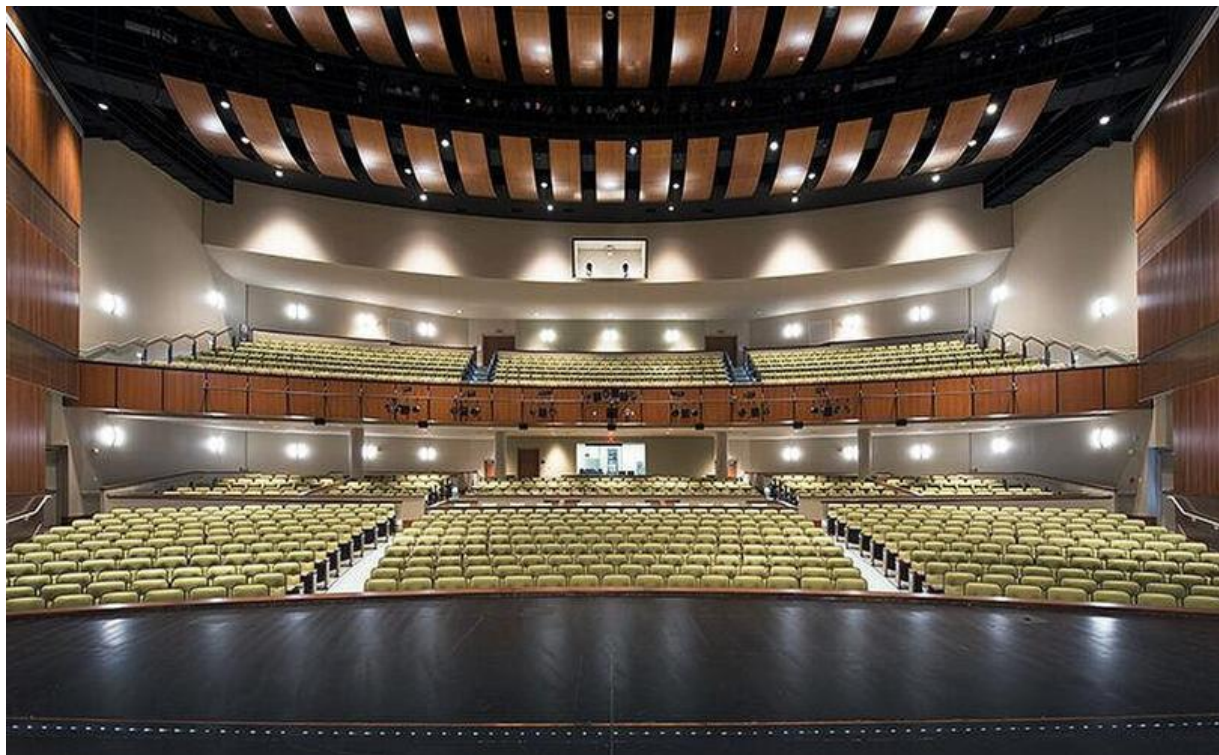
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Magic of Troy Quinn and Venice Symphony

'Biggest and boldest' program to debut Nov. 18

By KIM COOL Our Town Editor

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There's not a bad seat at the Venice Performing Arts Center, home of the Venice Symphony.

PHOTO PROVIDED

VENICE — Symphony season begins — not just in Venice — but in cities like Cleveland and New York where residents enjoy world-class musical performances.

Since the arrival of Troy Quinn, who was hired following the 2017-18 season to succeed violinist Kenneth Bowermeister as director of the Venice Symphony, there have been comparisons of Quinn with the late George Szell, who conducted the world famous Cleveland Orchestra from 1946 to 1970, when Szell died at the age of 73.

“Tchaik Strikes,” Venice Symphony’s season opener, Nov. 18 at 7:30 p.m. and Nov. 19 at 3:30 p.m. at the Venice Performing Arts Center, could well have been a George Szell program, although likely with a different title in the Szell era.

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Described as the “biggest and boldest” program of the coming season, the concert will open with the “fiendishly fast” opera overture from “Rusland and Ludmila” by Glinka and then go on to include “a bright and lavish work and new staple in the classical repertoire” – Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber with the finale of Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 4, hence the concert’s title.

“It’s a very personal symphony and a tour-de-force of an orchestral piece, brimming with excitement and drama,” said Quinn about the final piece on the program, which is the first of the season’s seven concerts.

The season opener also seems to have inspired the symphony’s first fundraiser of the season, “Baroque, Brunch and Bubbly,” scheduled for Nov. 13 at Plantation Golf and Country Club.

Concerts are sponsored by the Evelyn E. Cerny Charitable Fund at Gulf Coast Community Foundation. Season sponsors are Gulf Coast Community Foundation (GCCF) and proceeds from the Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax.

The Cleveland connection to Venice includes its first mayor, Edward Worthington, who came from that city and the city’s first developers of the John Nolen-designed city – the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, although Worthington and the BLE all left when the Great Depression arrived.

But that Cleveland connection remained and was reinforced in the ensuing years by Cleveland visitors, many of whom became seasonal residents and then finally full-time residents, bringing with them their type of symphony, especially in the Szell years, which coincided with this city’s growth spurt in the 50s and 60s, and its development as an arts center.

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In comparing Quinn to Szell, consider this comment, written 17 years after Szell's death for an article in *Keynote Magazine*, comparing him to the leaders of the greatest orchestras in the world:

“He (Szell) began with a phenomenal and precocious talent, which formed the basis for a depth of knowledge acquired during a lifetime of study and experience; he built the Cleveland Orchestra into a world-class ensemble; he conducted unforgettable performances with Cleveland, the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic, and the great orchestras and festivals of Europe; although he had no false modesty in knowing his worth, he had a sincere humility; and he recognized his responsibility in passing on his knowledge to generations of younger conductors.”

Opening Cleveland Orchestra rehearsals to the third-graders of Cleveland area schools (both public and private), Szell also upped the musical knowledge of future symphony-goers, whether or not those students were musically talented.

Quinn, as did many of his predecessors, also shares his musical knowledge and expertise and likely will do so at the opening concerts.

Szell soared to the heights of the musical world in the post-war years and during the dawning of rock and roll and all the genres that have followed.

Graduating from Providence College in 2005 and then earning a masters with honors from the Manhattan School of Music, Quinn, a Connecticut native, studied conducting with David Gilbert and voice with opera singer Mark Oswald.

He added a doctorate with honors in conducting from Southern California's Thornton School of Music, where he serves on its conducting faculty while also conducting master classes.

He has pursued more conducting lessons and experience at such places as the Royal Academy of Music and Eastman School of Music and, because he also is a singer, has performed on recordings with the likes of the Rolling Stones and in film. The latter sets him apart from Szell, but only in virtuosity.

A visit to Quinn's web site, troyquinn.com, shows the depth of this musical phenom who once considered a totally different career — weather — despite his enjo

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On his non-stop musical path, he has performed with some of this country's finest orchestras while also becoming the current musical director of five symphonies, including Venice (fourth season); Owensburg, Kentucky (sixth season); Spartanburg, South Carolina (first season); Santa Monica Symphony (first season); and, in the summer, the Rhode Island Philharmonic, where he is the pops director.

The recipient of countless awards and honors, Quinn also has performed in the pops field with the likes of such popular artists as the Rolling Stones, Barry Manilow, Lee Greenwood, Josh Groban, Jennifer Hudson, Rockapella, Michael Feinstein, and Linda Eder.

He brought Rockapella to Venice last May for the symphony's patriotic pops concert at Cool Today Park Saturday of this year's Memorial Day weekend.

Also an accomplished vocalist, Quinn has collaborated with such prominent maestros as Helmuth Rilling, Carl St. Clair, and Dan Saunders of the Metropolitan Opera.

In addition to his concert work, Quinn has worked extensively in the television and recording industry, having made appearances on such hit TV shows as Fox's Glee, NBC's The Voice, and The Tonight Show with Jay Leno while recording on films like The Call of the Wild and Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull.

He has appeared at many of the world's major music centers.

Christine Kasten, president and CEO of The Venice Symphony, said that everyone at the Symphony is ready to return to the concert hall as the region continues to rebuild after Hurricane Ian.

"We know that music has the ability to lift up and unite a community during difficult times," she said. "We look forward to welcoming back patrons and meeting the many new people attending the Symphony this season."

The Symphony will offer its popular and free Pre-Concert Talks at 6:30 p.m. before evening concerts and 2:30 p.m. before afternoon concerts.

These insightful and entertaining programs featuring Quinn and guest artists and moderated by Joseph Caulkins are sponsored by FourThought Private Wealth in Venice.

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While seating is already limited, subscriptions for the season as well as for the Saturday Nights at the Symphony series are still available.

Purchase tickets at thevenicesymphony.org, by calling 941-207-8822, or by visiting the Venice Symphony office at 700 U.S. 41 North, Suite 4 in Venice.

Student tickets are always half-price and discounts are available to Florida teachers and groups of 10 or more. Tickets are not sold at the Venice Performing Arts Center until the day of the concert and only if the concert is not sold out.

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