

Jean Sibelius

The beloved Finnish composer Jean Sibelius was born in 1865 in what is now Finland, but at the time was "The Grand Duchy of Finland," ruled by Czar Alexander of Russia. His early compositions, beginning in the 1890's, celebrated Finnishness with tone poems based on the Kalevala, the Finnish National Epic, and the natural beauty of Finland. These compositions, including his most famous, *Finlandia*, have been important in the development of the Finnish national identity, as Finland emerged from years of Russian oppression to become the symbol of freedom and resilience it is today.

His extensive body of work includes a cycle of seven symphonies and his Violin Concerto in D minor, the most recorded violin concerto of the 20th century. In addition to these larger orchestral pieces, Sibelius is appreciated for his compositions for the piano as an accompanying or solo instrument. Jean Sibelius's music is appreciated and loved worldwide and will surely be heard in numerous concert halls in 2015, his 150th Anniversary year.

The Finnish American Heritage Society of Canterbury, CT, is pleased to present a program of Sibelius's solo piano compositions performed by Craig Randal Johnson. The program will also include arrangements for piano of Sibelius's popular orchestral works, *Valse Triste* and *Finlandia* and pieces by his disciples, Leevi Madetoja and Einojuhani Rautavaara.



Craig Randal Johnson

Mr. Johnson is a Minneapolis based pianist and conductor who specializes in Finnish and American music. As a pianist he has performed as Finlandia Foundation's "Performer of the Year." He has also played solo recitals in Finland, Germany, and in cities throughout the United States, including St. Paul, New York, Los Angeles, Hartford, Iowa City, and Tucson. He has conducted several premieres of Finnish orchestral works, as well as the United States premiere of Jukka Linkola's opera, "Rockland," for Michigan's Pine Mountain Music Festival.

Mr. Johnson holds degrees from the University of Minnesota (BA) and Northwestern University (MM). His piano teachers included Bernhard Weiser and James Douglas Johnson.



THE FINNISH AMERICAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

of Canterbury, CT

presents

SIBELIUS at 150

Sunday, May 17, 2015



A Solo Piano Recital
featuring Craig Randal Johnson
and celebrating the
150th Anniversary
of Finnish Composer
Jean Sibelius
(1865-1957)