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Welcome to the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra

We are glad that you are here, and we look forward to sharing meaningful musical experiences together! Please contact us at 850.435.2533 or info@pensacolasymphony.com with any comments or suggestions about enhancing your experience.

OUR TEAM

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Peter Rubardt

Executive Director

Bret Barrow

Administration & Production Management

Kiara Ramirez-Smith

Advancement & External Relations

Jessica Hyché

Librarian

Molly Hollingsworth

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CONTACT US

Phone: 850.435.2533

Email: info@pensacolasymphony.com

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Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1752 | Pensacola, FL 32591

Cover Photo by Marco Borggreve



Photo by Meg Burke Photography

Peter Rubardt

Music Director

Peter Rubardt has earned wide acclaim for powerful and insightful performances that inspire passionate responses to symphonic music. In addition to his long-standing position as Music Director of the Pensacola Symphony, he also serves as the Music Director of the Meridian and Gulf Coast Symphonies in Mississippi. Throughout his career he has worked successfully to deepen the relationships between communities and their orchestras, leading to growing audiences and a broad base of support. A gifted speaker about music as well as a performer, he actively engages audiences and community groups in the appreciation of symphonic music. Also busy as a guest conductor, Rubardt recently debuted with the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, Lake Placid Sinfonietta, Alabama Symphony, Fort Worth Symphony, and Augusta Symphony, among others.

Now in his 26th season as Music Director of the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra, Rubardt continues to grow the organization through a wide range of classical, pops, and educational programs. He played a central role in designing the orchestra's innovative

“Beyond the Stage” program, partnering with a range of local organizations to bring music to hospitals, schools, and neighborhoods around the community. Previously he was at the forefront of the effort that successfully renovated the historic Pensacola Saenger Theatre, giving the orchestra increased visibility and vitality. He also led a significant capital campaign for the orchestra and played a key role in the creation of an hour-long documentary in collaboration with WSRE public television. Since assuming the Music Directorship in Meridian, that community has seen an increase in concert attendance, an acoustical retrofit of the hall, a new symphonic pops event, and the introduction of a newly formed symphony chorus. At the Gulf Coast Symphony, Rubardt successfully oversaw the transition into a newly constructed performance hall, and is currently engaged in a capital campaign to expand the orchestra’s community impact.

Prior to his appointment in Pensacola, Rubardt served four seasons as Associate Conductor of the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra and three seasons as Resident Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, conducting numerous classical and pops performances, regional tours, and educational programs with both orchestras. He has also conducted the Utah Symphony, Alabama Symphony, Louisiana, Rochester, and Las Vegas Philharmonic Orchestras, The Louisville Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, Richmond Symphony, Japan’s Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra, Century Orchestra Osaka, Yamagata Symphony, Hyogo Performing Arts Center Orchestra (where he performed for Her Imperial Highness Princess Hitachi of Japan), Kansai Philharmonic Orchestra and Nova Filarmonia Portuguese, with which he

toured Portugal several times, as well as the orchestras of Acadiana, Anchorage, Annapolis, Augusta, Bangor, El Paso, Lubbock, Peoria, Portland, Quad Cities, Rogue Valley, South Dakota, Southwest Florida, Spokane, and Youngstown, among others. From 1991-96, he served as Music Director of the Rutgers Symphony.

A native of Berkeley, California, Rubardt holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Orchestral Conducting from The Juilliard School, where he was the recipient of the Bruno Walter Fellowship. A Fulbright Scholar, he studied piano and conducting at the famed Vienna Hochschule fur Musik, and pursued further studies at the Tanglewood Music Center and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute. He has participated in the masterclasses of Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa, André Previn and Herbert Blomstedt; his major teachers have included Otto-Werner Mueller, Sixten Ehrling, Michael Senturia, and David Lawton. He was selected by the League of American Orchestras to perform in the National Conductor Preview with the Jacksonville Symphony.

Peter Rubardt has served on the faculties of The Juilliard School, Rutgers University, and the State University of New York at Purchase. In addition to Juilliard, he has received awards and degrees in music from the State University of New York at Stony Brook and the University of California at Berkeley. Rubardt has recorded for Pantheon Records International. He resides in Pensacola with his wife Hedi Salanki, a Distinguished University Professor in the Grier Williams School of Music at the University of West Florida, and their two children.

www.PeterRubardt.com

From Our Music Director

Sometimes I think it would be fun to invite the entire audience to stand where I stand during a performance. It's true that the sound is better where you sit (and the ventilation is *much* better), but the sheer visceral impact of being so close to the musicians in the midst of a sizzling live performance is a thrill that I never tire of.

The Saenger Theatre is a moderately large hall, but it can be surprisingly intimate; if you lean in, you can feel a lot of what I feel. An orchestra is not a sea of faceless tuxedos and black attire, but a team of individuals, each talented and committed, each contributing in their own way to the extraordinary experience of an orchestral performance. Watch how the percussionists shuffle between instruments, grabbing their sticks and sheet music on the fly as they make a quick transition. Watch how the violin sections follow the concertmaster's bow, matching him stroke for stroke. Watch the brass and wind players signal each other as they breathe, conveying exactly when to make an entrance. The things we work on in rehearsal are just the tip of the iceberg; the real joy of live music lies in constant musical communication that is intuitive, instinctive, and spontaneous.



It may seem like everything about a performance is preordained, but nothing could be further from the truth. While we're usually reasonably certain that nothing major will go wrong, there are a thousand different ways that things can go right. This is my 26th season with the Pensacola Symphony, and over the years we've come to know each other well. A quarter of a century is a long time to be together, but I'm still surprised by how delightfully unpredictable a symphony concert can be. I wouldn't want it any other way – it's a constant reminder of how joyful live music is. So the next time you're with us, consider listening with your eyes as well as your ears, and take a step deeper into the ever-rewarding world of live music.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Rubardt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Peter Rubardt
Music Director



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Meet the Musicians

FIRST VIOLIN

Leonid Yanovskiy, Concertmaster

Pensacola Symphony Orchestra Guild Chair

Petra Bubanja, Associate Concertmaster

Enen Yu, Concertmaster, Pensacola Opera

Productions

Maeanna Callahan

Edward Charity

Ken Davis

Burcu Goker

Molly Hollingsworth

William Jackson

Gosia Leska

Natasha Marsalli

Tania Moldovan

Ingrid Roberts

SECOND VIOLIN

Grace Kim, Principal

Brian Brown

Juliana Gaviria

Ellen Grant

Joe Ortiguera

Alejandro Romero

Megan Sahely

Barbara Withers

Nathan Witter

VIOLA

Michael Fernandez, Principal

Marion Viccars Chair

Victor Andzulis

Brian Brown

Rossana Cauti

Amaro Dubois

Courtney Grant

Jim Lichtenberger

Daniela Pardo

Dave Rebeck

CELLO

Aleksandra Pereverzeva, Principal

Helen N. Williams Chair

Jose Sunderland

Litvak Family Chair

Chun-hsin Chang

Juan Jose Gutierrez

Paul Hanceri

Daniel Martinez

Ryan Snapp

BASS

Taylor Hollyer, Principal

Samuel Dahmer

Michael Johnson

Ernie Szugyi

Doug Therrien

FLUTE

Stephanie Riegler, Principal

Bethany Witter Wood

Gay and Bruce Burrows Chair

Sarah Jane Young

Mary Elizabeth Patterson Chair

PICCOLO

Sarah Jane Young

OBOE

Matt Fossa, Chair

Margaret Cracchiolo

Bobby and Suzanne Kahn Chair

Jillian Camwell

Asher Kelly

ENGLISH HORN

Margaret Cracchiolo

CLARINET

Richard Jernigan, Principal

Newell Hutchinson

Melissa Turner

Kim Whaley

E♭ CLARINET

Newell Hutchinson

BASS CLARINET

Melissa Turner

Kim Whaley

BASSOON

Jeff Keesecker, Principal

Paul W. Runge and Phyllis G. Runge Chair

Abigail Walker

Richard Hopkins

Kristina Nelson

CONTRABASSOON

Richard Hopkins

SAXOPHONE

Dave Camwell, Principal

Chris Sacco

HORN

Jacquelyn Adams, Principal

Claudio Torres, Jr. MD Chair

Jodi Graham Wood

Stuart Kinney

Tony Chiarito

James Baker

TRUMPET

Dale Riegler, Principal

Marea Jo Milner Chair

Jonathan Martin

Ned and Jan Mayo Chair

Tom Savage

Timothy Tesh

Mike Huff

TROMBONE

Bret Barrow, Principal

Dona and Milton Ustry Chair

Don Snowden

Josh Bledsoe

BASS TROMBONE

Wess Hillman

TUBA

Mike Mason, Principal

TIMPANI

Laura Noah, Principal

PERCUSSION

Jordan Wood, Principal

Adam Blackstock

Matt Greenwood

Pete Krostag

HARP

Katie Ott, Principal

Rebekah Atkinson

PIANO

Tina Buran, Principal

Blake Riley

Andrew Gregg

ARTISTIC STAFFMolly Hollingsworth, *Librarian*Kiara Ramirez-Smith, *Administration & Production
Management*Dale Riegler, *Personnel Manager***VIRTUAL PRODUCTION**Quinton Williams, *Director*Brittan Braddock, *Producer*Jeff Jordan, *Audio Engineer*



The History of the PSO

Instrumental music performances and music study clubs began to appear in Pensacola during the late 1800s and early 1900s. By 1919, the Pensacola Music Study Club formed and in 1925, John and Louise Northup began hosting regular music gatherings with friends in their home on the southwest corner of Spring and Gregory Streets (today the Pensacola Victorian Bed & Breakfast). In 1926, representatives of the Civic Music Association of America came to Pensacola to sell memberships that gave exclusive access to performances of classical music through a series of concerts featuring

national talent. In their initial campaign, they were able to sell 800 memberships for the traveling series at \$5 each. The Pensacola Philharmonic Orchestra was first formed in 1926 by German immigrant John W. Borjes as a reaction to the visiting concert series. Professor Borjes, who studied music at the storied conservatory Leipzig, recognized the need for Pensacola to have an institution of its own that could develop local talent and also provide access to symphonic music for the entire community. We know from Borjes' comments that he formed the ensemble with a hope "to demonstrate

to this city that it is not necessary to go out of town to get good music.” Having been music director of orchestras at New York’s Shubert Theatre and Memphis’ Orpheum Theatre no doubt gave Borjes the requisite experience and credibility this new venture would need. Members of this early ensemble included many members of the 20-piece Saenger Theatre Concert Orchestra, among others. Their debut performance, a free concert that took place at Pensacola High School, was well received as documented in the local newspaper.

From those early years, the Pensacola Philharmonic Orchestra transitioned through a few name changes. Under the baton of Dr. John Venetozzi in the 1950s, the organization emerged as the Greater Pensacola Symphony Orchestra, its legal name to this day. The Ladies Auxiliary of the Orchestra formed in 1956, and later the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra Guild formed in 1973. After a major renovation effort in 1982, the Saenger Theatre became the concert home of the orchestra while under the direction of Dr. Grier Williams. Dr. Williams led the PSO until 1996. During that time he was also the founder of the Music Department at the University of West Florida, Music Director of First Presbyterian Church, and also brought together a group of singers that later became the Pensacola Children’s Chorus.

In 1997, the Pensacola Symphony welcomed Peter Rubardt as its new music director. Since that time, Dr. Rubardt has played a central role in increasing the organization’s impact through a wide range of classical, pops, and community engagement programs. In 2003, Rubardt assisted the orchestra in launching a capital campaign that grew PSO’s endowment,

provided percussion equipment, added chamber orchestra concerts, boosted musician compensation, and expanded community engagement opportunities.

Now in its 97th season, the PSO continues to seek ways to fulfill its mission of promoting the well-being of the Greater Pensacola community through excellence in live symphonic music and lifelong learning through engaging musical activities. From the stage, PSO’s goal is to provide the Pensacola community with transformative musical experiences through performances with world-renowned artists. In addition to enlivened performances, PSO’s “Beyond the Stage” program brings musical experiences to the Pensacola community in virtual and in-person settings that include schools, retirement communities, health care facilities, and galleries.

Season Calendar

October 1, 2022 - 7:30 p.m.

Masterworks – Opening Night!

October 16, 2022 - 4:30 p.m.

Free Community Performance

PSO in the Park

Museum Plaza

October 20, 2022 - 7:00 p.m.

Free Community Performance

Cinco Banderas

Artel Gallery

October 30, 2022 - 4:30 p.m.

Free Community Performance

PSO in the Park

Museum Plaza

November 5, 2022 - 7:30 p.m.

Masterworks

Schumann Symphony No. 3

November 6, 2022 - 1:30 p.m.

Free Community Concert

Great Gulfcoast Arts Festival

Seville Square

December 31, 2022 - 7 p.m.

Pops! – Celebrate the New Year!

January 14, 2023 - 7:30 p.m.

Masterworks

Beethoven & Blue Jeans

February 4, 2023 - 7:30 p.m.

Chamber Orchestra Concert

Mozart Madness

First United Methodist Church

February 11, 2023 - 7:30 p.m.

Pops! – Cirque Spectacular

February 25, 2023 - 7:30 p.m.

Masterworks – Verdi Requiem

March 25, 2023 - 7:30 p.m.

Add-On Concert – Bronfman Plays

Rachmaninoff's Third

April 22, 2023 - 7:30 p.m.

Masterworks – Season Finale:

Dvořák Symphony No. 7

May 20, 2023 - 10 a.m.

Music for Families

Tchaikovsky Discovers America



Moving Our Community Forward



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Beyond the Stage

Since 1926, musicians in our community have been performing, teaching, and sharing music under the auspices of this orchestra. The legacy of this work creates a solid foundation on which we continue to build. During the past several years, your involvement and generosity have made it possible for the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra to move beyond the stage and join with key community partners in providing meaningful musical experiences during every stage of life.

MUSIC FOR FAMILIES

Laying the foundation for a lifelong love of music, our annual Music for Families concert is an exciting theatrical event for all audiences. Partnering with acclaimed presenters Classical Kids Live!, last season's *Beethoven Lives Upstairs* concert shared the music and the story of one of the world's greatest composers. Following the concert, those in attendance were invited to join our musicians for an instrument petting zoo to create music on their own. This season, we will present *Tchaikovsky Discovers America* on May 20, 2023.

FIFTH GRADE CONCERTS

For more than 40 years, Escambia and Santa Rosa County fifth graders have enjoyed a field trip to the Saenger Theatre to experience a symphony concert. When it became apparent that this beloved tradition was not be possible during the past several years, your local teachers and administrators made it a priority for this generation of fifth graders to experience orchestral music in a new way. A virtual education concert was streamed in classrooms across both counties, ensuring that students were still able to enjoy their day "with" the symphony. This season, we are excited to resume in-person concerts and welcome students back to the Saenger Theatre!



MEMORY CARE ENGAGEMENTS

For people experiencing memory loss, exposure to music can improve cognitive function as well as emotional and behavioral health. As part of our partnership with local memory care facilities, our musicians participate in solo engagements that enhance patients' quality of life by making connections to music that is meaningful to them.

HOSPICE ENGAGEMENTS

Our mission to bring music to people in every stage of life includes those experiencing hospice care. Joining with the experienced care teams at in-patient hospice facilities, our musicians help address the emotional, cognitive, and social needs of patients by sharing music.

SPECIAL THANKS

These special opportunities would not have been possible without the assistance of the following people and groups:

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ARTEL GALLERY PERFORMANCES

Inspired by the visual art on display, Artel Gallery performances join two art forms. With small ensembles of PSO musicians speaking about artistic connections and creating programs that excite and challenge them, Artel Gallery performances provide a special view into the creative process.

PSO IN THE PARK

During the past several years, hundreds have joined us for outdoor performances at Museum Plaza in Downtown Pensacola. Featuring small ensembles of Pensacola Symphony Orchestra musicians, PSO in the Park is a lovely way to experience live music in a casual setting.

If you would like to support a partnership through annual giving, please contact Jessica Hyche, Advancement & External Relations, at jhyche@pensacolasymphony.com or 850.435.2533 ext. 102.

Board of Directors

The board of directors plays an active role in strategic thinking, financial and legal oversight, and relationship building for the organization. Their vast experience and passion for serving our community through music are essential in addressing the PSO's challenges and opportunities. Members serve a three-year, renewable term and meet regularly to discuss the direction of the PSO, ensuring that our resources are most effectively allocated toward the fulfillment of our mission.

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This group of creative thought partners meets quarterly to provide input about our artistic imperatives, audience development, and community engagement. With open discussions and opportunities to engage with our musicians, partners, and staff, Advisory Council meetings provide an important space to evaluate the effectiveness of current programs and influence the future direction of the orchestra.

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For membership information visit us at psog.org or contact Lynne Tobin at 850-549-5889

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As the Guild's largest fundraising event in years past, Magnolias and White Linen Luncheon features entertaining speakers. Last year's sold-out event benefited the programs of the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra and featured author, photographer, and speaker Susan Sully. We appreciate the sponsors, listed below, who made this event successful.

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Peter Rubardt, Conductor

Paul Huang, Violin

Emmanuel Chabrier
(1841 – 1894)

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Erich Wolfgang Korngold
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Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35
I. Moderato nobile
II. Romanza
III. Allegro assai vivace

Featuring Paul Huang, Violin

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Paul Huang

Violin

Recipient of a 2015 Avery Fisher Career Grant and a 2017 Lincoln Center Award for Emerging Artists, violinist Paul Huang has recently appeared with Detroit Symphony Orchestra with Leonard Slatkin, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra with Markus Stenz, and the Houston Symphony Orchestra with Andrés Orozco-Estrada.

During the 2022-23 season, Huang opens the National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan season (also a U.S. tour at The Kennedy Center and Lincoln Center's David Geffen Hall), and appears with the Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra with Lahav Shani, Dallas Symphony Orchestra with Fabio Luisi, and Residentie Orkest Den Haag with Jun Märkl. Other highlights include engagements with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Colorado Symphony, San Diego Symphony, and the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra. In January 2023, Huang launches the first edition of the Paul Huang & Friends International Chamber Music Festival in Taipei, Taiwan. In Fall 2021, Huang became the first

classical violinist to perform his own arrangement of the National Anthem for the opening game of the NFL at the Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, North Carolina, to an audience of 75,000.

A frequent guest artist at music festivals worldwide, Huang recently stepped in for Anne-Sophie Mutter at Bravo! Vail Music Festival playing Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 4 with Chamber Orchestra Vienna-Berlin and made recital debuts at the Lucerne Festival and Aspen Music Festival, all to critical acclaim.

Winner of the 2011 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, Huang earned both bachelor's and master's degrees at The Juilliard School. He plays on the legendary 1742 ex-Wieniawski Guarneri del Gesù, on loan through the Stradivari Society of Chicago. He is on the faculty of Taipei National University of the Arts and resides in New York.

Huang is represented by Arts Management Group, Inc.

Opening Night!

Emmanuel Chabrier

España

Emmanuel Chabrier was born in Ambert, France, on January 18, 1841, and died in Paris on September 13, 1894. España was written in 1883 and was given its first performance on November 4, 1883, by the Orchestra of the Société des Nouveaux Concerts conducted by Charles Lamoureux. The score calls for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, four bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, two harps, and strings.

Like George Frederic Handel, Hector Berlioz, and Charles Ives, Emmanuel Chabrier gave in to societal (and parental) pressure to pursue a “practical” career, despite his passion and talent for music. Though a gifted piano prodigy in his youth, the young Chabrier eventually settled into a minor clerical post at the French Ministry of the Interior where he remained for 20 years, indulging his musical inclinations only in his spare time. In 1880, after a trip to Bayreuth, Germany, to hear Richard Wagner’s operas, he decided that 20 years of working for the bureaucratic system was quite enough, and he quit the ministry to devote himself to musical composition.

During the remaining 14 years of his life, he became one of the most influential Parisian musicians, counting the poet Paul Verlaine and the painters Édouard Manet, Claude Monet, and Auguste Renoir among his friends, and composers Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Richard Strauss, and Igor Stravinsky among his admirers. Ravel admitted that Chabrier was the primary influence upon his composing style. While overshadowed by the immense popularity of *España*, Chabrier’s other works, including the operas *Le roi malgré lui* (*The King in Spite of Himself*) and *L’Étoile* (*The Star*) are charming,

well-crafted, and worthy of further performances.

In 1882, Chabrier and his wife took a vacation in Spain, soaking up the local culture, especially the sounds of Spanish folk and popular music. Upon returning home, Chabrier amused his friends by improvising fantasies on the piano based on the Spanish melodies he had heard. In time, he set one of his extemporaneous flights of fancy down on paper and created a piano work, which he originally titled *Jota* but soon changed to *España*. He played it for his friend, the conductor Charles Lamoureux, who immediately urged him to orchestrate the work. Chabrier did so, and Lamoureux conducted the premiere. The work was a smash hit and catapulted Chabrier to fame literally overnight. The work was so popular that the famous waltz composer Émile Waldteufel wrote a waltz based upon the tunes Chabrier used in *España*.

The great Spanish composer Manuel de Falla wrote that “no Spaniard has succeeded better than Chabrier in giving us, with such authenticity and genius, the variety of jota shouted by the country folk of Aragon.” *España* is a brilliant and witty synthesis of two Spanish dances, the sensual malagueña and the vibrant jota aragonese juxtaposed with original material of Chabrier’s invention. He takes full advantage of the rhythmic interplay of the two dances, and clothes them in a brilliant and colorful orchestration, creating an orchestral showpiece that serves as a fitting souvenir of his visit to sunny Spain.

Erich Wolfgang Korngold

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

Erich Wolfgang Korngold was born in Brünn, Moravia, on May 29, 1897, and died in Los Angeles on November 29, 1957. His Violin Concerto was written in 1946 and given its first performance in St. Louis on February 15, 1947, by Jascha Heifetz and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Golschmann. The concerto is scored for solo violin, two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes (one doubling English horn), two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon), four horns, two trumpets, trombone, percussion, celesta, harp, and strings.

Having Europe's foremost conductor heap praise upon a composer's work doesn't happen every day, but it is not necessarily unusual. What is extraordinary is when the conductor in question is Gustav Mahler (never one to give compliments easily), and the composer is only 11 years old. Mahler pronounced young Erich Wolfgang Korngold a musical genius upon hearing the young man's cantata *Gold* in 1909. He told his father that there was no need to send him to a music conservatory; the young composer already had far more skills than he could ever learn in school (an opinion later seconded by Richard Strauss).

Korngold's father, Julius, was Vienna's most influential music critic, inheriting the position from Eduard Hanslick, famous friend of Johannes Brahms and archenemy of Richard Wagner. Korngold exhibited musical talent from an early age, playing piano duets at the age of 5 and writing his first compositions at 7. The Vienna Court Opera staged his ballet *Der Schneemann* (*The Snowman*) in 1910, and his first two operas, *Der Ring des Polykrates* and *Violanta*, were performed in Vienna in 1914. As a young adult, his music was championed by singers, instrumentalists, and conductors, but his brand of lush, late-Romantic

expression soon fell out of fashion. While Korngold's operas and concert music were still receiving acclaim, much of his time was spent adapting the operettas of Johann Strauss II for new productions.

With the rise of the Nazis in the early 1930s, Korngold realized that the clock was ticking on his time in Europe, and that if Austria succumbed to Hitler's forces, he would be shown no mercy. As the result of a timely invitation, Korngold and his family left Vienna in 1934 and moved to a place where his compositional style would be appreciated, a place where Romanticism never dies: Hollywood.

In Europe, Korngold had collaborated often with the great director Max Reinhardt. Shortly after he moved to the United States in 1933, Reinhardt invited Korngold to come to Hollywood to adapt Mendelssohn's music for Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for a film score. The 1935 film (starring James Cagney as Nick Bottom and 15-year-old Mickey Rooney as Puck) failed at the box office but gained Korngold the reputation as a master orchestrator and arranger for films. Korngold soon became Warner Brothers' house composer for heroic films, a category for which he set the musical standard. Korngold's Hollywood career produced a string of epic scores: *Captain Blood*, *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *The Sea Hawk*, *The Sea Wolf*, *King's Row*, and many others.

During the Second World War, Korngold completely shelved his concert music projects, vowing to write only film music until the Nazis had been defeated. With the surrender of the Axis powers, Korngold returned to writing concert music. He began work on a violin concerto for the great Polish violinist Bronislaw Huberman, but by the time Korngold had finished the concerto, Huberman was too ill to perform it. The premiere was given by Jascha

Heifetz, who performed it frequently and made a famous recording of the work.

The other influence on the Violin Concerto was Korngold's father. Though he told Korngold that writing for films was a waste of his time and talent, he conceded that the quality of Korngold's film music was excellent. He frequently urged his son to adapt this music for concert use. In the Violin Concerto, Korngold does exactly that; all three movements are built upon music from his film scores. The concerto is not a pastiche of melodies from those movies, but a full symphonic reworking of the musical material to create something new.

The yearning opening theme of the concerto comes from the 1937 film *Another Dawn*. A section of violin pyrotechnics transitions into the beautiful second theme, adapted from the 1939 film *Juarez*. Korngold commented on the concerto that "the work with its many melodic and lyric episodes was contemplated rather for a Caruso of the violin than for a Paganini. It is needless to say how delighted I am to have my concerto performed by Caruso and Paganini in one person: Jascha Heifetz."

A theme from the 1939 film *Anthony Adverse* creates the primary musical material for the slow movement. A more enigmatic middle section separates the two outer parts based on the *Anthony Adverse* theme. The movement concludes with a brief reference to the mysterious central section.

The exuberant finale draws from the 1937 film *The Prince and the Pauper*, cleverly transformed into a theme and variations, which also follows a sonata-form structure. When Heifetz first received the score for the work, he urged Korngold to make the violin part even more difficult, and the result proves that Korngold took the advice. The jaunty main theme is treated to

every manner of violin acrobatics, bristling with ferociously difficult passagework, double-stops, and virtuoso bowings. The ending ramps up virtuosity yet another notch, giving us a thrilling and satisfying Hollywood ending.

Aaron Copland *El Sal3n M3xico*

Aaron Copland was born on November 14, 1900, in Brooklyn, New York, and died in North Tarrytown on December 2, 1990. El Sal3n M3xico was written between 1932 and 1936 and given its first performance in Mexico City on August 27, 1937, by the Orquesta Sinf3nica de M3xico conducted by Carlos Ch3vez. The work is written for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, piano, and strings.

It's not often you'll hear a piece that immortalizes the sounds of a nightclub, but that's exactly the sonic picture that Aaron Copland paints in his *El Sal3n M3xico*. In 1932, Copland was invited to Mexico by his composer friend Carlos Ch3vez, and Copland gladly accepted the invitation. He spent two months living in the town of Tlaxcala, where he soaked up the sights, tastes, smells, and especially the sounds of Mexican culture.

One evening, Ch3vez took him along to the Mexico City dance club Sal3n M3xico. Copland had read in a tourist guide that the venue was a "Harlem type night-club" with "three halls: one for people dressed in your way, one for people dressed in overalls but shod, and one for the barefoot." Copland made a note of what the book omitted: "a guard stationed at the bottom of the steps leading to the 'three halls' [who] would nonchalantly frisk you as you started up the stairs just to be sure you had checked all your 'artillery' at the door."

In speaking of the genesis of *El Sal6n M6xico*, Copland wrote:

From the beginning it was associated in my mind with a dance hall in Mexico City called Sal6n M6xico, a real ‘hot spot’ where one somehow felt a close contact with the Mexican people...Bands played a kind of music that was harsh, flavorsome, screechy, and potentially violent. El Sal6n M6xico is, I suppose, a sort of musical souvenir... I was attracted by the spirit of the place and by the Mexican people. Using Mexican melodies seemed appropriate. My purpose was not merely to quote literally, but to heighten without in any way falsifying the natural simplicity of Mexican tunes...It wasn’t the music that I heard, but the spirit I felt there which attracted me and what I hope I have put into my music.

While Copland began composing *El Sal6n M6xico* in 1932, he didn’t complete it until 1936. His friend Carlos Ch6vez, who first brought him to Mexico, conducted the first performance in August of 1937, leading the Orquesta Sinf6nica de M6xico. The work was immediately popular in both Mexico and the United States and has remained in the orchestral repertoire ever since.

Copland did not use the tunes he heard at the dance hall, but instead incorporated four melodies that he had purchased as sheet music while in Mexico: “El palo verde,” “La Jesusita,” “El mosco,” and “El malacate.” They occur in a smooth transition from one tune to the next, progressing from the sophisticated upper-class dance floor down through to the raucous celebration of the barefoot hall at the end. The work is full of the rhythmic and melodic spirit of Mexico, dressed in Copland’s brilliant and colorful orchestration. Truly a memorable souvenir of the joy and energy of Mexico.

George Gershwin *An American in Paris*

George Gershwin was born on September 26, 1898, in New York City and died in Los Angeles on July 11, 1937. An American in Paris was written in 1928 on commission from conductor Walter Damrosch and the New York Philharmonic and given its first performance on December 13, 1928. The work is scored for three flutes (3rd doubling on piccolo), two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, four taxi horns, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone (all saxophones doubling soprano saxophones), and strings.

More conservative aficionados of classical music might be somewhat horrified to discover that not only were George Gershwin and Arnold Schoenberg good friends and tennis partners, but that Gershwin had asked the father of atonal serialism for composition lessons. Schoenberg politely refused. Gershwin made a similar plea to Maurice Ravel, who declined with a reported reply “why should you be a second-rate Ravel when you can be a first-rate Gershwin?”

Gershwin’s first foray into concert music (today we would undoubtedly call it a “crossover hit”) was his 1924 premiere of *Rhapsody in Blue*, written for the Paul Whiteman Band and later scored for full symphony orchestra. Walter Damrosch, conductor of the New York Philharmonic, heard a performance of the *Rhapsody* and commissioned Gershwin’s Piano Concerto in F in 1925. The concerto’s success prompted a second commission for an orchestral work from Damrosch and the Philharmonic, to be premiered during the orchestra’s 1928–29 season.

Gershwin worked on *An American in Paris* during a trip to Europe in the spring of 1928, a trip where he met Igor Stravinsky, Sergei Prokofiev, and other cutting-edge composers of the time. Gershwin finished the work at the beginning of August. In an interview with the magazine *Musical America* given later that month, Gershwin emphasized that *An American in Paris* did not have a specific program associated with the music – and then proceeded to outline a remarkably specific program for the piece:

My purpose here is to portray the impressions of an American visitor in Paris as he strolls about the city, listens to the various street noises, and absorbs the French atmosphere. As in my other orchestral compositions, I've not endeavored to present any definite scenes in this music. ... The opening gay section ... is followed by a rich 'blues' with a strong rhythmic undercurrent. Our American friend, perhaps after strolling into a café, and having a few drinks, has suddenly succumbed to a spasm of homesickness. The harmony here is both more intense and simple than in the preceding pages. This 'blues' rises to a climax followed by a coda in which the spirit of the music returns to the vivacity and bubbling exuberance of the opening part with its impressions of Paris. Apparently, the homesick American, having left the café and reached the open air, has downed his spell of the blues and once again is an alert spectator of Parisian life. At the conclusion, the street noises and French atmosphere are triumphant.

an expanded rhythm section, and builds into a raucous, uninhibited New Orleans stomp for the entire orchestra. This ushers in a return of the “blues” theme in full cinematic splendor, leading to the final rush into the boisterous sounds of Parisian city life – including four taxi horns.

– David Cole

The portion of the work to which Gershwin doesn't refer in the interview occurs after the “blues,” and is intended to dispel his wandering expat's homesickness: a wonderful imitation of a Dixieland band, which starts as a brash trumpet solo over



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Schumann Symphony No. 3

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2022, 7:30 P.M.

Peter Rubardt, Conductor

Rachel Lee Priday, Violin

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809 - 1847)

The Hebrides (Fingal's Cave), Op. 26

Michael Senturia
(b. 1937)

Petra

Max Bruch
(1838 - 1920)

Scottish Fantasy, Op. 46
I. Introduction: Grave. Adagio cantabile
II. Scherzo: Allegro
III. Andante sostenuto
IV. Finale: Allegro guerriero

Featuring Rachel Lee Priday, Violin

The movements are played without pause.

INTERMISSION

Robert Schumann
(1810 - 1856)

Symphony No. 3 in E \flat Major, Op. 97, "Rhenish"
I. Lebhaft
II. Scherzo: Sehr mäßig
III. Nicht schnell
IV. Feierlich
V. Lebhaft

The fourth and fifth movements are played without pause.

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Photo by Dario Accosta

Rachel Lee Priday Violin

A consistently exciting artist, renowned globally for her spectacular technique, sumptuous sound and deeply probing musicianship, violinist Rachel Lee Priday has appeared as soloist with major international orchestras, among them the Chicago, Houston, National, Pacific, St. Louis, and Seattle Symphony Orchestras, Boston Pops Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, and Germany's Staatskapelle Berlin. Her distinguished recital appearances have brought her to eminent venues, including Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts' Mostly Mozart Festival, Chicago's Ravinia Festival, and Dame Myra Hess Memorial Series, Paris' Musée du Louvre, Germany's Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, and Switzerland's Verbier Festival. Priday has also toured the United Kingdom and South Africa.

Since making her orchestral debut at the 1997 Aspen Music Festival, Priday has performed with numerous orchestras across the United States, including those of the Alabama, Bangor, Colorado, Knoxville, Rockford, and Springfield Symphonies, as well as the New York Youth Symphony. In Europe and Asia, she has appeared at Germany's Moritzburg Festival and with orchestras in Graz, Austria, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Korea, where she performed with the KBS Symphony Orchestra, Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, and Russian State Symphony Orchestra on tour.

Passionately committed to new music and creating enriching community and global

connections, Priday's wide-ranging repertoire and multidisciplinary collaborations reflect a deep fascination with literary and cultural narratives. Recent seasons have seen a new Violin Sonata commissioned from Pulitzer Prize Finalist Christopher Cerrone and the world premiere of Matthew Aucoin's *The Orphic Moment* in an innovative staging that mixed poetry, drama, visuals, and music. She has collaborated often with Ballet San Jose and was lead performer in *Tchaikovsky: None But The Lonely Heart*, theatrical concerts with the Ensemble for the Romantic Century at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Priday's work as soloist with the Asia America New Music Institute promoted new music relationships and cultural exchange between Asia and the Americas, combining music premieres and educational outreach in the United States, China, Korea, and Vietnam.

Priday began her violin studies at the age of 4 in Chicago. Shortly thereafter, she moved to New York City to study with the iconic pedagogue Dorothy DeLay; she continued her studies at The Juilliard School Pre-College Division with Itzhak Perlman. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Harvard University and a Master of Music from the New England Conservatory, where she worked with Miriam Fried. In the fall of 2019, she joined the faculty of the University of Washington School of Music as Assistant Professor of Violin.

Priday has been profiled in *The New Yorker*, *The Strad*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Family Circle*. Her performances have been broadcast on major media outlets in the United States, Germany, Korea, South Africa, and Brazil, including a televised concert in Rio de Janeiro, numerous appearances on Chicago's WFMT and American Public Media's *Performance Today*. She has also been featured on the Disney Channel, *Fiddling for the Future* and *American Masters* on PBS, and the GRAMMY Awards.

Priday performs on a Nicolo Gagliano violin (Naples, 1760), double-purflled with fleurs-de-lis, named Alejandro.

Schumann Symphony No. 3

Felix Mendelssohn *The Hebrides (Fingal's Cave)*, Op. 26

Felix Mendelssohn was born on February 3, 1809, in Hamburg, Germany, and died in Leipzig on November 4, 1847. The Hebrides (Fingal's Cave) was written in 1830-31 and was premiered in London on May 14, 1832, with Thomas Attwood conducting the Philharmonic Society of London. The piece is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

In the summer of 1829, the 20-year-old Felix Mendelssohn was invited to London by Sir George Smart of the Philharmonic Society of London. Under their sponsorship, his Symphony No. 1 was premiered to rapturous acclaim. In the aftermath of this triumph, Mendelssohn met up with his childhood friend Karl Klingemann, who served as a secretary for the Prussian delegation to London, to embark upon a walking tour of Scotland and the Hebrides Islands.

On their journey, Mendelssohn was particularly taken with the rugged island of Staffa, a small island rising from the sea on hexagonal basalt columns, much like the Giant's Causeway in Ireland. Despite being dreadfully seasick on the steamer over to the island, Mendelssohn was so taken with the Romantic remoteness of the location that he sent a letter to his sister Fanny with the inscription "In order to make you understand how extraordinarily The Hebrides affected me, I send you the following, which came into my head there." Underneath the brief note, Mendelssohn wrote 21 measures that would become the opening bars of *The Hebrides*. Mendelssohn and his friend took a rowboat to visit the mouth of Staffa's primary tourist attraction, Fingal's Cave, named for the legendary Scottish hero. Because

of the rough seas and treacherous rocky coastline, Mendelssohn's digestion fared no better on this trip; Klingemann reported that Mendelssohn "got along better with the sea as an artist than as a human being with a stomach." They both gazed in wonder at the large sea cave, nearly 240 feet deep and 200 feet high, pounded by the relentless winds and waves of the Atlantic.

Though Mendelssohn was immediately struck by the Romantic beauty of the spot, turning his impression into music took considerable time. He completed the overture in Rome in 1830, but expressed that he was dissatisfied with the results, at one point writing that the middle section "tastes more of counterpoint than of whale oil, seagulls, and salted cod." He made considerable revisions before its premiere in London in 1832, and he altered it further before it was published in its final form in 1833.

For a work that seems so evocative of a particular place, its title gave Mendelssohn a great deal of trouble. When first completed in December 1831, Mendelssohn gave it the title *Overture to The Lonely Island*, yet five days later, he produced a second revised version which he called *Die Hebriden (The Hebrides)*. By the time of the premiere, Mendelssohn had produced a third version which bore the title *Overture to the Isles of Fingal*. Even in the published version of 1833, the confusion over the title continued, with the score labeled *The Hebrides* but the set of parts printed with the name *Fingal's Cave*. Even today the overture is known by both names, and it will often be listed in orchestra programs as *The Hebrides (Fingal's Cave)*.

Where overtures in the eighteenth century generally preceded theatrical productions, *The Hebrides* is one of the earliest examples

of the concert overture, an overture expressly written for the concert hall and intended to paint a picture or give a musical impression of a particular subject. This idea would later expand into a longer and more complex piece of musical storytelling called the symphonic poem, developed by Franz Liszt and Richard Strauss.

Even though *The Hebrides* evokes the Romanticism of nature, the form of the music follows the same structure as the opening movement of a Classical symphony. The work begins with the uneasy murmurings of the sea, heard in lower strings and bassoons. After the initial surges of the opening theme, the second musical idea, heard on the clarinet, is calmer and more lyrical. These two ideas appear in various guises throughout the work, just as the sea and the sky change appearance from moment to moment. Rather than ending in agitation, the clarinet gives a final echo of the opening theme, and three light pizzicato notes in the strings bring the work to a quiet close.

Michael Senturia

Petra

Michael Senturia was born in Washington D.C. in 1937. Petra was completed in September of 2008 and given its first performance in February 2009 by the Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra conducted by Tim Smith. The work is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, percussion, and strings.

In 1959, Michael Senturia joined the Harvard music faculty as a theory instructor in the department and conductor of the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra. From 1962 until his retirement in 1992, he was on the music faculty of the University of California, Berkeley, directing the University Symphony and teaching theory, conducting, and music literature in the Department of Music. During this period, Senturia was thrice invited to the Central

Conservatory of Music in Beijing, China, to teach Western contemporary music to their graduate conducting students. While at the university, he founded and for 15 years directed The Young Musicians Program of the University of California, a community outreach program of scholarship music instruction for talented, low-income, secondary-school students from the Bay Area. Since his retirement, Senturia has written instrumental music for wind and string groups and vocal music for his classical a cappella group “Coro D’Amici.”

Michael Senturia gave this description of his orchestral work *Petra*:

The ancient ruin of Petra, set in the hills of the Jordanian desert and reached by a descent through a narrow gorge which cleaves high rock walls on both sides, inspires awe and mystery both for its human imprint and the natural setting which surrounds it. Of the remains of this first century B.C. city, none is more impressive than the Treasury, a temple hewn out of a sheer sandstone wall which greets visitors as they emerge from the twists and turns of the narrow defile with high multi-colored rock walls rising on both sides.

The tension between man’s attempt to tame his physical surroundings and nature’s eternal sway finds musical reflection in an opening dialogue contrasting wide-spaced pitches with the hollow, taut responses of tom-toms and tambourine and cymbal, all punctuated by silence. Where there was once song and dance and ritual there is now an arid, desolate, and mute ruin.

Following the introduction there is a dance-like first theme in the oboe and English horn and muted trumpets and a lyric second theme in the strings which builds in register and intensity. This is abruptly interrupted at the piece’s

midpoint. An episodic development follows with various calls and responses amid interjections in the percussion, progressing to triplets in the flutes and violins, running sixteenths in the winds, and finally to agitated tremolos in the strings.

All of this dissolves upwards to the climax, a chord of all 12 tones, as it rises in layers, like the facade of the Petra Treasury.

The music then retreats, backwards, to its beginning, and ends.

Max Bruch **Scottish Fantasy, Op. 46**

Max Bruch was born on January 6, 1838, in Cologne, Germany, and died on October 2, 1920, in Friedenau. Scottish Fantasy was written in 1879 and 1880. It was first performed on February 22, 1881, in Liverpool, England, with Joseph Joachim as the soloist and the composer as conductor. The work is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings.

The Rathausturm (City Hall Tower) in Cologne, Germany, was nearly destroyed during the Second World War, and was restored only in 1975. In 1981, the city decided to commission statues of famous people who were significant in the city's development to decorate the outside of the structure. The tower would thus serve as a visual history of the city, progressing chronologically from the bottom to the top. On the third floor of the south face of the tower, there is a statue of a man dressed in an old-fashioned frock coat, sporting long, thick hair down to his shoulders, a short but luxuriant beard and a bushy walrus mustache. He poses holding one hand up to his ear, signifying that listening was an important part of his life. This Dickens-like figure is composer Max Bruch, born in Cologne in 1838, and, in his lifetime, one of the most

famous composers in all of Europe.

Just as time and weather relentlessly erode and alter statues, time and the fickle dictates of musical fashion inevitably take their toll upon the popularity and reputation of every composer, for good or ill. While composers like Ludwig van Beethoven, Richard Wagner, and Igor Stravinsky created new musical innovations throughout their lives, Bruch, whose training was firmly rooted in the “Classical” Romanticism of Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann, and Johannes Brahms, was still writing in the same conservative style at his death in 1920 as he did 60 years earlier. Of his more than 100 works, only three are heard with any frequency today: Violin Concerto No. 1, *Kol Nidrei*, and his *Scottish Fantasy* for violin and orchestra.

The *Scottish Fantasy* reflects Bruch's interest in Scottish culture and music. Though his first visit to Scotland didn't happen until after he had written the *Fantasy*, he did have access to an anthology of Scottish folksongs called *The Scots Musical Museum* and used these as the basis for the work. He also delved into the literature of the great Scottish writers Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns, attempting to recreate their Romantic depictions of the Scottish Highlands in music.

Bruch had written the *Fantasy* with the great German violinist Joseph Joachim, but he became displeased with Joachim's cavalier attitude toward the work. Bruch's correspondence after the premiere indicated he considered Joachim poorly prepared for the concert. He wrote to a friend:

Joachim played the Scottish Fantasy here on 22 February carelessly, with no modesty, very nervously, and with quite insufficient technique—and ruined it. On the one hand he praises

it all over the place, and yet, given this opportunity, he proves himself to be the old enemy and the old hypocrite. He calls Sarasate a clown and makes fun of our relationship. It was exactly Joachim's untrustworthiness and partisanship that drove me directly into Sarasate's arms.

Pablo de Sarasate, the famous Spanish virtuoso, adopted the *Scottish Fantasy* into his repertoire and championed it throughout Europe. Even though Joachim provided the bowings and fingerings for the first published edition, Bruch dedicated the work to “his friend, Pablo de Sarasate.”

Though designated “Fantasy,” the work is a four-movement violin concerto with each movement leading to the next without pause. Bruch described the first movement’s slow introduction as evoking “an old bard, who contemplates a ruined castle and laments the glorious times of old.” The prominent harp part contributes to the atmosphere of an ancient Celtic bard singing to an accompanying harp, an atmosphere which carries into the main melody of the first movement, “Auld Rob Morris.”

Bagpipes and Scottish dancing come to mind in the second movement, based on the tune “The Dusty Miller.” We hear the drones of the bagpipes in the orchestra, but also in the challenging double-stops (playing on two strings at once) given to the violin soloist. A nostalgic reminiscence of “Auld Rob Morris” is heard just before the end of the movement, just before the transition into the third movement. For the true slow movement of the work, Bruch writes a set of variations on the melody “I’m Doun for Lack O’ Johnnie,” which the violin decorates with increasingly elaborate figuration.

The serene close of the movement is interrupted by the warlike strains of “Scots Wha’ Hae,” originally a poem by the great Scottish poet Robert Burns imagining Robert the Bruce’s speech to his soldiers before the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314:

*Scots, wha hae wi’ Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory!*

Bruch’s treatment of the tune creates a spectacular virtuoso finale, from the soloist’s brusque chords at the opening through to the final reminiscence of “Auld Rob Morris” before the final dazzling flourish.

Robert Schumann **Symphony No. 3 in E♭** **Major, Op. 97, “Rhenish”**

Robert Schumann was born June 8, 1810, in Zwickau, Saxony, and died July 29, 1856, in Endenich, Prussia. He wrote the Symphony No. 3 in November and December of 1850. The first performance of the “Rhenish” Symphony was given in Düsseldorf, Germany, on February 6, 1851, with the composer conducting. The symphony is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones (in the fourth and fifth movements only), timpani, and strings.

Sometimes a random circumstance turns into a lucky break, and it changes our lives forever. In the case of composer Robert Schumann, his stroke of luck came in 1850, when his friend Ferdinand Hiller left his position as Music Director for the city of Düsseldorf, Germany, to accept a similar, but more lucrative, position for the city of Cologne. When asked to recommend a replacement, he suggested Schumann, who accepted the job on March 31, 1850.

The change in employment was both a cultural and musical shift for Schumann. He had lived his entire life in his native Saxony, and moving his family to the Rhine Valley gave him a new perspective. The citizens of Düsseldorf were more open and friendly than those of Dresden and Leipzig, and they greeted Schumann with great ceremony, with numerous balls, parties, concerts, and speeches of welcome. Schumann responded to this warm reception by writing two of his most famous orchestral works: his Cello Concerto, written in just 15 days in October of 1850, and his Third Symphony, written and orchestrated over the course of a single month between November 2 and December 9 of the same year.

Sadly, this musical honeymoon did not last; both Schumann's conducting and his administrative skills were lacking, and he was unhappy with the informal atmosphere of the concerts and the casual attitude of the musicians. Matters finally came to a head and he was asked to resign in October of 1852. Two years later, he attempted suicide by throwing himself into the Rhine, and he was confined to an asylum in Endenich until his death in 1856.

The Third remains to us as the joyous souvenir of one of the happiest times in Schumann's life, living among the outgoing Rhinelanders. While the nickname "Rhenish" came from Schumann's publisher, Simrock, the composer did write that the symphony reflected many aspects of the great river and its people. The opening movement (marked *Lebhaft*, "lively") begins with a bold, heroic theme, deriving much of its energy from the ambiguity of its meter; the feeling of rapid triple time does not firmly establish itself until the seventh measure. The first movement continues this broad melodic sweep throughout its span, reveling in its various permutations. It is the prime refutation to those critics who claim Schumann could never create a cohesive large-scale symphonic structure.

The second movement (*Sehr mäßig*, "very moderate") is nominally a Scherzo, but the moderate triple meter is neither a rapid scherzo nor a leisurely minuet, but more in the manner of a German *ländler* folk dance. Woodwinds dominate the minor-key middle section before the liting *ländler* returns, leading to a quiet ending.

The slow movement (*Nicht schnell*, "not fast") creates a calm, peaceful atmosphere, more like a brief *intermezzo* than an extended symphonic slow movement. Winds and horns sing warmly over string accompaniment.

The brief fourth movement serves as Schumann's reminiscence of a trip he and his wife Clara made to Cologne in mid-November of 1850 to visit the city's renowned cathedral. The occasion was the elevation of Cologne's Archbishop to the rank of Cardinal, and Schumann's original score for this movement bears the inscription "in the character of an accompaniment to a solemn ceremony." By the time of publication Schumann had honed down the description to just one word, *Feierlich* ("solemnly"), but the ritual aspect is readily heard in the music, with the three trombones (heard for the first time here) intoning a dignified chorale melody. The contrapuntal writing in this movement reflects the ceremonial and ecclesiastical nature of the setting.

The fifth movement steps out of the sober darkness of the cathedral and into bright sunlight. This cheery, optimistic movement has been compared to a Rhineland festival, but could just as easily be described as a portrait of the Rhinelanders themselves. Schumann skillfully brings back reminiscences of both the first and third movements as well as a final, glorious appearance of the cathedral music before ending his greatest symphony in triumphant exultation.

– David Cole



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Peter Rubardt, Conductor
Bronson Norris Murphy, Vocalist
Madison Claire Parks, Vocalist
Mamie Parris, Vocalist

Frederick Loewe/Alan Jay Lerner
Arr. Robert Russell Bennett *My Fair Lady* Selections

George Gershwin/Ira Gershwin
Arr. Rob Berman; Orch. Larry Blank "S Wonderful" from *Funny Face*

Richard Rodgers/Lorenz Hart
Arr. Bill Holcombe "Falling in Love with Love" from *The Boys from Syracuse*

Richard Rodgers/Lorenz Hart
Orch. Hans Spialek; Ed. John Wilson "Johnny One Note" from *Babes in Arms*

James Van Heusen/Sammy Cahn
Arr. Bill Holcombe "Thoroughly Modern Millie"

Andrew Lloyd Webber/Tim Rice
Orch. Andrew Lloyd Webber/David Cullen "Memory" from *Cats*

Andrew Lloyd Webber
Orch. David Cullen "All I Ask of You" from *The Phantom of the Opera*

Jerry Bock/Sheldon Harnick
Arr. Ira Hearshen Symphonic Dances from *Fiddler on the Roof*

INTERMISSION

Leonard Bernstein/Stephen Sondheim
Arr. Maurice Peress *West Side Story* Overture

Leonard Bernstein/Stephen Sondheim

"Maria" from *West Side Story*

Richard Rodgers/Oscar Hammerstein II

"I'm In Love With A Wonderful Guy" from
South Pacific

Elton John/Tim Rice

Arr. Steve Reineke/Erich Kunzel

"Circle of Life" from *The Lion King*

Claude-Michel Schönberg

"I Dreamed a Dream" from *Les Misérables*

Andrew Lloyd Webber

"Think of Me" from *The Phantom of the Opera*

Andrew Lloyd Webber

"Til I Hear You Sing" from *Love Never Dies*

Stephen Schwartz

"Defying Gravity" from *Wicked*

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Bronson Norris Murphy

Vocalist

Kentucky-native Bronson Norris Murphy, 2010 Summa Cum Laude Graduate of New York University's Program in Vocal Performance and

2008 Summa Cum Laude graduate of Western Kentucky University's program in Music Education, is an active performer on Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional, and concert stages. Murphy toured the United States and Canada to critical acclaim in Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's hit musical *Cats*. In 2014, Murphy made his Broadway debut in *The Phantom of the Opera* and has performed 10 roles in that production to date, including his 2017 principal Broadway debut as Raoul. He is, perhaps, best known to American audiences for premiering the role of The Phantom in the first North

American production of Lloyd Webber's *Love Never Dies: The Phantom Returns*, which toured the United States in 2017 and 2018. As a symphonic concert artist, Bronson has performed in *I Am Harvey Milk* at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall with Kristin Chenoweth, Andrew Lipa, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. Murphy currently serves as the Associate Artistic Director for *The Stephen Foster Story*. Follow him on Instagram @BronsonBiz.



Madison Claire Parks

Vocalist

Madison Claire Parks is a musical theatre actress and vocalist most well known for starring as Luisa in *The Fantasticks* Off-Broadway at the Jerry Orbach Theatre in New York. She most recently completed her

run as Lilli Vanessi/Kate in *Kiss Me Kate* with the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina. Prior to that, she starred as Portia in the West Coast regional premiere of *Something Rotten!* with Musical Theatre West. Parks has gained critical acclaim as one of the up-and-coming classical leading ladies, having starred as Laurey Williams in *Oklahoma!* with North Shore Music Theatre and Musical Theatre West, Nellie Forbush in *South Pacific*, opposite Broadway's Ben Davis as Emile de Becque, and Sarah Brown in *Guys and Dolls* with both Musical

Theatre West and Theatre Under The Stars. Parks also starred Off-Broadway as Katherine Talbot in *The Day Before Spring* with The York Theatre Company. She is one of the leading sopranos in concert work and a frequent guest soloist with numerous orchestras and symphonies across the country, from the Rochester Philharmonic to The Florida Orchestra, The Grant Park Orchestra and Music Festival in Chicago, and many more. Parks is a third-generation performer and dedicates her work to her grandmother, MGM Star Betty Garrett.



Mamie Parris

Vocalist

Mamie Parris has been studying strangers' habits and creating imaginary worlds since she was a toddler. It was just a matter of time until she put those skills to use. As a result, she has developed a diverse and unique body of work throughout her extensive career. Best known for her one-of-a-kind rendition of the iconic "Memory," she is no stranger to the work of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, having starred as Grizabella in the Broadway revival of *Cats*, as Rosalie (closing cast) and Patty (opening cast) in Broadway's *School of Rock*, and, most recently, in the U.S. premiere of the Lloyd Webber retrospective *Unmasked*. Other Broadway appearances include the Tony-nominated revivals of *Ragtime*, *110 In The Shade*, and *On The Twentieth Century*, as well as the Tony-winning musical *The Drowsy Chaperone*. Across

the country, she appeared as Elphaba in the First National Tour of *Wicked*, as well as performing with the touring companies of *Legally Blonde* and Dolly Parton's *9 To 5 The Musical*. Other credits include roles at Arena Stage, The Old Globe, The Goodspeed Opera House, Pittsburgh CLO, the St. Louis Muny, The Macau International Music Festival, and more. Film and television credits include *The Blacklist*, *State of Affairs*, and *A Standup Guy*.

A native of Fort Worth, Texas, Parris attended the Paseo Academy of the Arts in Kansas City, Missouri, before graduating from the American Musical and Dramatic Academy. She currently resides in the Pocono Mountains with her husband, Johnathan, and shih tsu mix, Cookie.



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Lawrence Loh, Guest Conductor

Carlos Simon
(b. 1986)

The Block

Claude Debussy
(1862 – 1918)

Prelude to *The Afternoon of a Faun*

Polina Nazaykinskaya
(b. 1987)

Winter Bells

Hector Berlioz
(1803 – 1869)

Roman Carnival, Op. 9

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770 – 1827)

Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92
I. Poco sostenuto – Vivace
II. Allegretto
III. Presto
IV. Allegro con brio

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Lawrence Loh

Guest Conductor

Lawrence Loh is Music Director of Symphoria, in Syracuse, New York, and the West Virginia Symphony. Loh concluded his 12-year tenure as Music Director of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic in 2017. Loh had a decade-plus association with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, where he currently leads annual pops and other select programs.

Loh's previous positions include Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Syracuse Opera; Resident Conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra; Music Director of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra; Associate Conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra; Associate Conductor of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, and Music Director of the Denver Young Artists Orchestra.

Having a particular affinity for pops programming, Loh has been engaged for repeat performances with Chris Botti, Idina Menzel, Ann Hampton Callaway, The Texas Tenors, and more. He has assisted John Williams on multiple occasions and conducted numerous

sold-out John Williams tribute concerts. He is particularly adept at conducting concerts synchronizing live orchestral music with film and has led *Star Wars Ep. IV & V*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Jaws*, *Pixar in Concert*, *Disney in Concert*, *Wizard of Oz*, *Casablanca*, and *Singin' in the Rain*, among others.

Loh is active as a guest conductor, both in the United States and abroad, including engagements with the Seattle Symphony, San Diego Symphony, and the Grant Park Festival. Recent engagements include the National, Indianapolis, Tacoma, Naples, Knoxville, Florida, Dallas, El Paso, San Luis Obispo, Edmonton, Colorado, Charleston, Detroit, Malaysia, Daejeon (South Korea), and Greater Bridgeport Orchestras. His summer appearances include the festivals of Bravo! Vail, Aspen, Mann Center in Philadelphia, Breckenridge, Las Vegas, Hot Springs, the Kinhaven Music School, and the Performing Arts Institute in Pennsylvania. During the summer of 2016, he made his debut at Tanglewood, conducting Shostakovich's 5th Symphony with the Boston University Tanglewood Institute Young Artists Orchestra.

Loh received his Artist Diploma in Orchestral Conducting from Yale University, his Master of Music in Choral Conducting from Indiana University, and his Bachelor of Arts and Certificate of Management Studies from the University of Rochester.

He was born in Southern California of Korean parentage and raised in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Loh and his wife Jennifer have a son, Charlie, and a daughter, Hilary. Follow him on Instagram @conductorlarryloh or Twitter @lawrenceloh or visit his website LawrenceLoh.com.

Beethoven & Blue Jeans

Carlos Simon *The Block*

Carlos Simon was born in Washington, D.C. in 1986. He wrote The Block in 2018, and it received its first performance that summer at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in California. The work is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, two trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, piano, and strings.

Carlos Simon is a native of Atlanta, Georgia, and his music ranges from concert music for large and small ensembles to film scores with influences of jazz, gospel, and Neo-Romanticism. Simon is the Composer-in-Residence for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

As a part of the Sundance Institute, Simon was named as a Sundance Composer Fellow in 2018, traveling to Lucasfilm's historic Skywalker Ranch. His string quartet, *Elegy*, memorializing the lives of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and Eric Garner was recently performed at the Kennedy Center for the Mason Bates JFK Jukebox Series. With support from the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo and the United States-Japan Foundation, Simon traveled with the Asia/America New Music Institute (AANMI) on a two-week tour of Japan in 2018, performing concerts in some of the country's most sacred temples and concert spaces, including Suntory Hall in Tokyo, Japan.

Simon earned his doctoral degree from the University of Michigan, where he studied with Michael Daugherty and Evan Chambers. He has also received degrees from Georgia State University and Morehouse College. Additionally, he studied in Baden, Austria, at the Hollywood Music Workshop with Conrad Pope and at New York University's Film Scoring Summer Workshop.

Carlos Simon provided this description for his 2018 orchestral work *The Block*:

The Block is a short orchestral study based on the late visual art of Romare Bearden. Most of Bearden's work reflects African-American culture in urban cities as well as the rural American south. Although Bearden was born in Charlotte, North Carolina, he spent his most of his life in Harlem, New York. With its vibrant artistic community, this piece aims to highlight the rich energy and joyous sceneries that Harlem expressed as it was the hotbed for African-American culture.

The Block is comprised of six paintings that highlight different buildings (church, barbershop, nightclub, etc.) in Harlem on one block. Bearden's paintings incorporate various mediums, including watercolors, graphite, and metallic papers. In the same way, this musical piece explores various musical textures which highlight the vibrant scenery and energy that a block on Harlem or any urban city exhibits.

Program notes for *The Block* courtesy of COLiverSimon.com.

Claude Debussy *Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun*

Claude Debussy was born on August 22, 1862, in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France, and died on March 25, 1918, in Paris. Debussy wrote the Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun in 1894, and it was first performed in Paris on December 22, 1894, with the orchestra of the Société Nationale de Musique conducted by Gustav Doret. The work is scored for three flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two harps, two crotales (antique cymbals), and strings.

If you've ever tackled the daunting task of preparing your own income tax return, you know the frustration of dealing with the seemingly endless list of tax rules and their exceptions. On the surface, it seems very simple: if you make X amount of income, you pay X amount of tax. But wait, do you own a house? Do you have medical expenses? Farm or business income? Are you self-employed? At some point you might wonder that if there are so many exceptions to the rules, do the rules have meaning any longer?

Composers in the late-nineteenth century faced a similar daunting problem. While the "rules" of conventional harmony were well known, composers from Johann Sebastian Bach to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Franz Schubert created new chords that bent or broke the rules but were eventually accepted as standard musical practice. By the time of Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (1865), the harmonic universe had been completely transformed. Wagner's musical language resembled Bach's about as much as the English of Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* sounded like that of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Many musicians felt that the boundaries of conventional harmony had been reached, and that new paths needed to be blazed.

When asked by one of his Paris Conservatory professors what compositional rules he followed, Debussy replied "Mon plaisir ("as I please"). Though Debussy was a devoted Wagnerian in his youth, he soon concluded that he had to seek new paths, and he looked to other cultures for inspiration. He was fascinated by the Javanese gamelan orchestras (an ensemble of bronze instruments, including drums, strings, and a flute) at the 1889 Paris Exposition, and he began to employ pentatonic scales (scales of five notes) and whole-tone

scales, where the pitch distance is exactly the same between each note. These six-note scales create exotic chord sequences that are worlds away from conventional European harmony.

The France of Debussy's youth was a hotbed of revolution in the arts. The Impressionist painters stormed the barricades of conventional art beginning in the 1870s, but the earliest shots in France's artistic revolution came from the Symbolist poets, led by Charles Baudelaire and his younger colleagues Arthur Rimbaud and Stéphane Mallarmé. Symbolists felt that emotions should be expressed indirectly, and that their poetic words were metaphors for other ideas. The Symbolists used words just for their sounds, much as Debussy used harmonies and textures, creating startling, imaginative, and sometimes even distasteful poetic images. While the Symbolists were well-grounded in poetic rhythm and meter, they were also unafraid to employ free verse and other avant-garde techniques in expressing their fantastical ideas. The result was ambiguous, sensual, and surreal poetry, full of double meanings and unconventional visions.

Mallarmé's *L'après-midi d'une faune* ranks as one of his greatest poems, and one of the landmark works of Symbolism. The poem's subject is the inner meditations of a faun (half man, half goat), who may or may not have just awoken from a nap in a woodland glade on a sultry summer afternoon. The creature may have unsuccessfully chased after some nymphs, but that pursuit might have taken place only in his dream as he slept. The poem is full of brief, fleeting images, shifting moods and meanings from line to line and phrase to phrase, reveling in sonorous ambiguity. The sensual imagery in the poem delayed its publication for more than a decade.

Debussy and Mallarmé had become acquainted sometime in the 1880s, and Debussy was a regular at the poet's weekly soirées by around 1890. We know Debussy contemplated a musical depiction of *L'après-midi d'une faune* as early as 1892, but the final orchestrated version appeared in 1894. It is scored for a relatively modest orchestra of strings, double woodwinds and four horns, with no trumpets or trombones. Antique cymbals are the only percussion instruments.

The work begins with the faun's own instrument, a solo flute. The rhythm, like the poem, is vague and improvisatory in nature. The flute's opening is answered by woodwinds, harp, and horn, echoing back a moment later. Throughout the work, the fragments of all the musical ideas are varied, augmented, and subtly developed, but in a free and fluid manner, mirroring the imagery of the poem. Vague rustlings hint at the faun's pursuit of the nymphs, and a languid and wide-ranging string melody eventually emerges gloriously over a pulsing accompaniment. After this climax, the work gradually subsides to a quiet conclusion, with the faun returning to his dreams and fantasies.

Polina Nazaykinskaya *Winter Bells*

Polina Nazaykinskaya was born on January 20, 1987, in Togliatti, Russia. Her orchestral work Winter Bells was written in 2009 and given its first performance by the Minnesota Orchestra under the direction of Akiko Fujimoto in 2010. The work is scored for three flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings.

The music of the award-winning composer Polina Nazaykinskaya has become a staple of orchestral, chamber, and solo

repertoires in the United States, Russia, and Europe. Her first symphonic poem *Winter Bells* is in high demand every season by orchestras such as Minnesota Orchestra and the Russian National Orchestra, among others. Her latest symphonic poem, *Fenix*, was premiered by Albany Symphony.

This season Nazaykinskaya's music will be performed by Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, Salina Symphony, The Florida Orchestra, Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes, The Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, and Portland Youth Philharmonic. In October 2021, Nazaykinskaya's recent ballet *Reverse Perspective* was performed at the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow and the Jaani Kirik in Saint Petersburg, Russia. In March 2022, San Francisco Ballet premiered a new piece based on Nazaykinskaya's composition *The Rising*, choreographed by Yuri Possokhov. In Spring 2022, MorDance performed her new ballet *Encounters* at Symphony Space in New York City.

Nazaykinskaya's collaborators include internationally renowned choreographers Pascal Rioult, Jonah Bokaer, and Ulyana Bochernikova. Nazaykinskaya works closely with the world's leading conductors, such as Osmo Vänskä, Teodor Currentzis, Fabio Mastrangelo, Sarah Hicks, Toshiyuki Shimada, Lawrence Loh, and Hannu Lintu. Her compositions are actively performed by internationally acclaimed soloists such as trombonist R. Douglas Wright, violinist Elena Korzhenevich, and pianist Anton Nel.

Nazaykinskaya began work on *Winter Bells* in 2009, though the process of composition was not an easy one. It was her first substantial composition for orchestra, and she chose to write a symphonic poem. She started to sketch musical material, but she did not have a

central programmatic idea for the piece.

On a visit to Russia, she hiked and camped in the Volga region, spending time by herself and recording ancient folk songs that were sung to her by the people of the district. It was here that inspiration came to her, and she saw her way forward to compose *Winter Bells*.

*I was all alone, with the vastness of space
and rocks stretching in all directions,
when it came to me. It was a choral,
religious motif – and I knew that I had
found a key to the symphonic piece.*

Winter Bells opens with a quiet splash of silvery percussion, leading to flute and oboe conversing over a carpet of string texture. A more rapid, dance-like section, led by the violins and punctuated by brass and percussion, recalls features of traditional Russian music. Fanfares in the brass and busy woodwind and string figurations gradually build to a climax before the calm of the opening returns. The subsequent section invokes the vast open landscapes of Jean Sibelius, with warm strings colored by tuned percussion. A brief silence ushers in a rapturously mysterious section that grows in intensity over brass fanfares and energetic strings. The energy and tension build to a peak, then suddenly the dense texture dissipates to murmuring strings and a single bell note, leading to the quiet conclusion.

Program notes courtesy of
PolinaComposer.com and
FloridaOrchestra.org.

Hector Berlioz **Roman Carnival, Op. 9**

Hector Berlioz was born on December 11, 1803, at La Côte-Saint-André, France, and died March 8, 1869, in Paris. Roman Carnival was written in 1844 and first performed in Paris on February 3, 1844, conducted

by the composer. The overture is written for two flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), two oboes (2nd doubling English horn), two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, timpani, percussion, and strings.

The aphorism “Life imitates art” applies perfectly to the account of Berlioz’s ill-fated attempts to stage his opera *Benvenuto Cellini*. The pairing of composer and subject seemed to be a perfect match – Berlioz’s fiery Romantic idealism found a special resonance in the swashbuckling escapades of the sixteenth-century Florentine goldsmith (whose autobiography remains one of the raciest literary works of the Renaissance). While the original libretto was rejected for performance, a new one by Léon de Wally and Henri Auguste Barbier was approved by the Paris Opéra in 1835, and Berlioz set to work to bring *Cellini* to life onstage.

Berlioz’s trials and tribulations in staging *Benvenuto Cellini* eerily parallel the goldsmith’s difficulties in casting the great statue of Perseus, which forms the focal point of the opera. Faced with a less-than-stellar libretto, problems with the censors, singers either unwilling or unable to cope with the musical complexities of the work, and an indifferent and incompetent conductor, Berlioz must have felt like his hero, whom the Pope commanded to cast the enormous bronze statue in one day or be hanged for his crimes. In the end, *Cellini* was an abject failure at its first performance in 1838 – Berlioz noted that the audience “hissed with admirable energy and unanimity.” The tenor in the lead role quit after the third performance, prompting the management to shut down the production, leaving the composer depressed and discouraged.

Berlioz knew that *Cellini* contained some of his best music, which deserved a better fate than the Paris audience had given it. No stranger to musical repurposing (his

Symphonie Fantastique and *Harold in Italy* both contain material from earlier works), in 1844 Berlioz created a concert overture titled *Roman Carnival* from portions of the music from *Cellini*. *Roman Carnival* became one of his most popular works (he included it frequently on concerts he conducted), and it remains so to this day. In the infrequent modern revivals of *Benvenuto Cellini*, the overture often serves as an instrumental prelude to the second act of the opera, an option originally suggested by the composer.

The overture opens with a brash flourish from the carnival music from Act II of *Cellini*. The subsequent English horn melody comes originally from a duet for Cellini and his beloved, Teresa, heard at the end of Act I. The melody sings alone first, and then in canon, accompanied by a festive, jingling chivaree from the orchestra's brass and percussion sections. Swirling woodwind flourishes signal the return of the saltarello carnival music in the overture's main *Allegro*, characterized by witty rapid-fire interplay between the woodwind and string sections. The duet music returns in a long *fugato* section over the underlying *saltarello* rhythm, building to an impressive climax that brings back the carnival music in full force. The dance music's muscular energy wins the day, joyfully frolicking to the final blazing A-major chord, clothed in Berlioz's brilliant orchestration.

Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn, Germany on December 16, 1770, and died in Vienna on March 26, 1827. The Symphony No. 7 was written in 1811–12 and was first performed on December 8, 1813, in Vienna, conducted by the composer. The symphony is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets,

two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

“The Symphony is the Apotheosis of the Dance itself: it is Dance in its highest aspect, the loftiest deed of bodily motion, incorporated into an ideal mold of tone.”

– Richard Wagner on Beethoven's Symphony No. 7

“What can you do with it? It's like a lot of yaks jumping about.”

– British conductor Sir Thomas Beecham on the last movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7

For most listeners, Beethoven and his music might be imagined as a storm cloud hovering over a scowl.

The most popular of his works tend to be the most dramatic and contain the most extreme contrasts, not to mention that most of them are in minor keys: the Fifth and Ninth Symphonies, the *Pathétique Sonata*, etc. Even works like the “Eroica” Symphony and the *Hammerklavier Sonata* are overwhelming in their breadth and depth of musical expression. From the human perspective, we remember Beethoven dumping a plate of meatballs over a waiter's head, and proudly asserting his independence to one of his patrons: “Prince, you are what you are by accident of birth; I am what I am because of what I have made of myself. There always will be hundreds of kings and princes; there is only one Beethoven.” As listeners, this is the Beethoven with which we are most familiar: the heaven-storming champion of the rights of man, boldly slinging musical thunderbolts in the name of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

Yet Beethoven had another side, one that delighted in slightly coarse humor and the occasional drink with friends. Beethoven himself described this condition (applied

to himself and his music) as “*Aufgeknöpft* (*unbuttoned*),” a state of unbridled joy, free from the cares of everyday life. It can be seen in delightful pieces like his *Rage Over a Lost Penny*, an exuberant rondo for piano.

His Symphony No. 7 in A Major is a perfect example of *Aufgeknöpft*, full of boundless energy and high spirits. Written in 1811 and 1812 while the composer was recuperating at the Bohemian spa at Teplitz, the Seventh Symphony marked Beethoven’s return to symphonic writing after a hiatus of several years.

It was first performed in Vienna on December 8, 1813, at a benefit concert for Austrian veterans from the Battle of Hanau. The orchestra for the event was an all-star group, from Ignaz Schuppenzigh (Beethoven’s favorite quartet interpreter) as the concertmaster, to composers Antonio Salieri, Giacomo Meyerbeer, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, and Mauro Giuliani playing in the orchestra. The great Italian bass virtuoso and composer Domenico Dragonetti (whom Beethoven had consulted on the bass parts of the “Pastorale” Symphony) led the bass section.

The symphony opens with the longest introduction of any Beethoven symphony. The material explored doesn’t seem to be much more than chorale-like chords and scale patterns, but it is important to note that this lengthy introduction explores the keys of C major and F major in addition to the main key of A major, keys that are very important throughout the entire structure of the work (the third movement is based in F major). For all its hearty energy, the introduction eventually lands upon the note E, which gets tossed back and forth between flutes and oboes, almost as though no one wants to continue the movement. The oboes finally take the lead and turn it into the long-short-long rhythm that sneaks us into

the ensuing *Vivace* and gives us the perky and lilting first theme, quietly at first and then unleashed in a full-throated roar in the entire orchestra, led by the horns. This entire movement is an exploration of this galloping initial rhythm, from the oboe’s initial graceful segue through to the triumphant coda.

The A-minor second movement is not really a slow movement. The *Allegretto* tempo gives the impression of a solemn ritual or perhaps a stately dance like a pavane. This immediately memorable movement is made up largely of an extremely simple repeated melodic pattern (long-short-short-long-long) which has a very narrow melodic range.

The third-movement *Scherzo* follows the model of the Sixth Symphony for a five-part scherzo (A-B-A-BA). The scherzo sections contrast a leaping and capricious opening with quietly bustling string and woodwind figures. The trio sections are more hymnlike, starting quietly in the woodwinds and breaking forth majestically in the full orchestra.

The whirlwind finale is a high-octave joyride from start to finish. From the initial fanfares, the movement glows with energy and enthusiasm, even when the melodic lines turn briefly more lyrical. The repetitive nature of the motives gives Beethoven ample room to build tension and excitement throughout the movement. Even though the dynamic occasionally drops to piano and the texture sometimes lightens to just a few instrumental parts, it is the relentless *joie de vivre* of the movement that has the final say, dancing joyfully to the exuberant final chords.

– David Cole

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Troupe Vertigo

Fusing elements of cirque acrobatics, classical dance, and contemporary theatre, Troupe Vertigo brings audiences on a spellbinding journey through the world of artistic movement. Consisting of world-class aerial artists, contortionists, and ballet dancers, the Los Angeles-based company was founded in 2009 by Artistic Director Aloysia Gavre, formerly of the internationally renowned Cirque du Soleil, and Technical Director Rex Camphuis, whose background is with the fabled Pickle Family Circus. Troupe Vertigo, whose “dizzying acts defy gravity and leave its lucky audiences in awe” (*Los Angeles Times*) has performed with major orchestras across North America.

The company is known for their collaborative, custom thematic programs with symphony orchestras from *Cirque Goes to Broadway*, *Cirque Goes to Hollywood*, *Cirque Dances featuring The Firebird* to complete cirque-ballet presentation of *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, and *Cinderella*.

The ensemble premiered its first offering, *Big Top for a New Generation*, in 2010 at the Ford Amphitheater and has gone on to present *Nighthawks: A Film Noir Circus*, inspired by American jazz, Edward Hopper paintings, and crime novels. In 2016, they presented *Tableaux*, featuring five women grappling with the constrictions

of society, at the Bootleg Theater in Los Angeles. Husband and wife team, Gavre and Camphuis, frequently bring their gifts and knowledge to the film and television industry, most notably with Rebel Wilson’s aerial performance in *Pitch Perfect 2* and with Reese Witherspoon and Christoph Waltz in the film *Water for Elephants*.

Troupe Vertigo’s facility is also home to Cirque School Los Angeles, which inspires an appreciation for the circus arts for “anybody with any body.” Cirque School uses training, performance, and community outreach to foster passion for the circus arts in a supportive, non-competitive environment.

Encompassing more than 50 weekly classes to the public, student performances, team building workshops, pre-professional intensives, and television and film projects, Cirque School thrives as the premier cirque training program in Los Angeles.

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Verdi Requiem

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2023, 7:30 P.M.

Peter Rubardt, Conductor
Danielle Talamantes, Soprano
Kirstin Chávez, Mezzo-Soprano
Jonathan Yarrington, Tenor
Kevin Short, Bass-Baritone

The Hattiesburg Choral Union
Dr. Gregory Fuller, The University of Southern
Mississippi Director of Choral Activities
Dr. Jonathan Kilgore, The University of Southern
Mississippi Associate Director of Choral Activities

Giuseppe Verdi
(1813 – 1901)

Messa da Requiem

I. Requiem
II. Dies irae
Dies irae
Tuba mirum
Mors stupebit
Liber scriptus
Quid sum miser
Rex tremendae
Recordare
Ingemisco
Confutatis maledictis
Lacrymosa

BRIEF PAUSE

III. Offertory
Domine Jesu Christe
Quam olim Abrahae
Hostias
IV. Sanctus
V. Agnus Dei
VI. Lux aeterna
VII. Libera me

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Danielle Talamantes

Soprano



Last season, Danielle Talamantes' engagements included Henry Dehlinger's *Kohélet* for the Washington Master Chorale and the Santa Clara Chorale, Mimi in *La bohème* for Jackson Symphony,

and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony for Fairfax Symphony Orchestra. She also made her Washington National Opera debut as Maria Hernández in Kamala Sankaram's *Rise* as part of their production *Written in Stone*, and *Mosaic for Earth* at Virginia Tech. This season's engagements include Mahler's Fourth Symphony with the National Philharmonic.

Talamantes first earned a spot on the Metropolitan Opera roster in the spring of 2011, covering the role of Najade in *Ariadne*

auf Naxos, and was subsequently reengaged to cover the role of the Flower Maiden in Richard Wagner's *Parsifal*, joined the house for their production of *The Exterminating Angel*, the soprano in the quartet of lovers in the Baroque pastiche *The Enchanted Island*, and in Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. This rising star made her exciting stage debut as Frasquita in Georges Bizet's *Carmen* in a return to The Metropolitan Opera and has since returned to perform the role of Anna in *Nabucco*. Other notable operatic engagements include the role of Marzelline in *Fidelio* with the Princeton Festival; Mimi in *La bohème* with the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas; the title role of Susannah with Opera Roanoke; Violetta in *La traviata* with Finger Lakes Opera; and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* at Cedar Rapids Opera; the role of Sergente in *Veremonda* at Spoleto Festival USA; and Act I of *La bohème* with the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas at Walton Arts Center.

A native of Northern Virginia, Talamantes made her Carnegie Hall debut in a sold-out solo recital in 2007.

Kirstin Chávez

Mezzo-Soprano



Kirstin Chávez is considered one of the most riveting and significant mezzo-sopranos today. The combination of her magnificent voice, expansive range, and dramatic intensity of

her acting makes her an arresting and unique presence on the operatic stage.

Chávez captures attention and acclaim and is recognized as one of the definitive interpreters of *Carmen* of our generation. She has performed Georges Bizet's iconic heroine with great success throughout the world with leading opera companies and symphonies.

This season, Chávez creates the role of Carlotta de Obragon in the world premiere of Hector Armienta's *Zorro* for Fort Worth Opera and sings the role of Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* for Dallas Opera. On the concert stage, she performs as mezzo-soprano soloist in Mozart's Requiem with the Paducah Symphony Orchestra, performs in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 at Virginia Symphony Orchestra, and brings her signature role of *Carmen* to the Helena Symphony.

Chávez earned a Bachelor of Music from New Mexico State University and a Master of Music in Voice Performance and Performance Certificate from the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester.

Jonathan Yarrington

Tenor



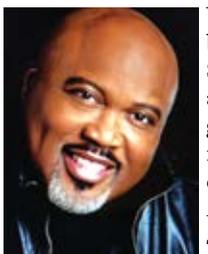
A native of Idaho Falls, Idaho, tenor Jonathan Yarrington was a member of the Dallas Opera Studio in 2011–14, singing nearly a hundred performances in the title roles of their education and

outreach productions of *Doctor Miracle* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*. In 2012 he made his mainstage debut with the Dallas Opera as The Messenger in *Aida*. Yarrington has sung more than 15 leading roles with

UNT Opera, UNL Opera, and BYU Opera. He has appeared in concert with the Rapides Symphony Orchestra, Plano Civic Chorus, the Dallas Chamber Orchestra, the Fort Worth Baroque Society, Texas Camerata, the South Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, and the Utah Festival Opera Company. Yarrington earned his Doctor of Musical Arts in Vocal Performance at the University of North Texas, where he studied with Dr. Stephen F. Austin. He is a former student of retired Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Ariel Bybee and won the Nebraska District of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in 2005.

Kevin Short

Bass-Baritone



Versatile American bass-baritone Kevin Short is thrilling audiences around the globe in repertoire ranging from the depths of Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione*

di Poppea to Verdi's *Attila*, and Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer*.

A sampling of his North America appearances include performances with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Washington Opera, Seattle Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Opera Pacific, Florida Grand Opera, Opera Festival of New Jersey, Sarasota

Opera Company, Spoleto Opera Festival, Canadian Opera Company, Vancouver Opera, Edmonton Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Theater of St. Louis, and the Opera de las Americas.

Kevin also enjoys an active concert and recital schedule and has performed with the Boston Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, National Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Moscow Philharmonic, St. Petersburg Symphony, the Kazan Symphony for the opening of the Universiade Games in Kazan, Russia, and the Winter Olympics Festival Orchestra for the opening ceremonies of the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan.

Kevin received his training at Morgan State University, the Curtis Institute of Music, and The Juilliard School of Music's American Opera Center.

Gregory Fuller

The University of Southern Mississippi
Director of Choral Activities



Dr. Gregory Fuller is a Professor of Music and the Director of Choral Activities at The University of Southern Mississippi. He conducts the Southern Chorale and the Hattiesburg

Choral Union, teaches graduate conducting courses, and supervises candidates in the master's and doctoral conducting program.

Fuller has hosted more than 100 graduate conductors over 20 years from more than 25 states and countries. Previously, he held

conducting appointments at The University of Missouri in Columbia and Briar Cliff University in Sioux City, Iowa.

Fuller has appeared as a conductor or clinician in 20 different countries and 30 states. He has organized and executed more than 60 tours, including more than 30 international trips to three continents. Included in that travel portfolio are many concert tours, study groups, pilgrimages, and four conducting symposiums for choral graduate students in Estonia, Salt Lake City, Russia, and Sweden. He has served the Mississippi Chapter of American Choral Directors Association as College and University Chair, Convention Site Coordinator, and President.

Jonathan Kilgore

The University of Southern Mississippi
Associate Director of Choral Activities



Dr. Jonathan C. Kilgore is the Assistant Professor of Music and Associate Director of Choral Activities at The University of Southern Mississippi, where he conducts Concert Choir, Spirit

of Southern, The Southern BelleTones, and The Southern Miss Gulf Coast Civic Chorale. Additionally, he teaches courses in Choral Conducting and Choral Literature.

Kilgore has conducted a variety of ensembles, including concert choirs, show choirs, and vocal jazz and contemporary a cappella ensembles. He has planned and

led concert tours to Brazil, Canada, Hawaii, California, and Texas, as well as many trips in the Southeast. In addition, choirs under his leadership have performed in Austria, the Czech Republic, and throughout Italy.

Active as an adjudicator and clinician in the Southeast, Kilgore has served as President of the Mississippi Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association, responsible for planning and executing six annual events to further choral music and choral music education in the state. He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music in Choral Conducting Performance and Pedagogy from The University of Southern Mississippi and a Bachelor of Science in Music from Millsaps College.

Verdi Requiem

Giuseppe Verdi *Messa da Requiem*

Giuseppe Verdi was born in 1813 near Busseto, Italy, and died in 1901 in Milan. He wrote the Messa da Requiem in 1873-74, and the work was first performed on May 22, 1874, at the church of San Marco in Milan, with soloists, chorus, and orchestra conducted by the composer. The work is scored for four vocal soloists (soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, and bass), three flutes (with the third doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, four bassoons, four horns, eight trumpets (including four offstage), three trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, and strings.

The idea of being Italian has existed since the Middle Ages, most certainly since Dante's *Divine Comedy* gave us one of the cornerstones of all literature, written in the language that would evolve into modern Italian. Yet the nation of Italy is far newer – the separate city-states of the Italian peninsula only unified in 1871. While the patriotic exploits of Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, Giuseppe Garibaldi, and the other soldiers of the *Risorgimento* are well documented, two other Italian patriots were instrumental in forging the modern Italian nation: the poet and novelist Alessandro Manzoni and the composer Giuseppe Verdi.

Manzoni's influence and popularity served to rally Italians from all over the peninsula to the cause of the *Risorgimento*. His landmark novel, *I promessi sposi* (*The Beloved*, 1827) was remarkable for the depth of its characters, its veiled rallying cry for Italian independence, and the sophistication of its language. Manzoni's novel was written in a consistent, logical Italian, one which could be read and understood from the Alps to Sicily. *I promessi sposi* served as the touchstone for Italian spelling and grammar and earned the poet the accolades of his nation.

Verdi's contribution to the revolution was more direct. Several of Verdi's operas fell afoul of the censors, with their plots full of insurrection and the murder of nobility. Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* (*A Masked Ball*, 1859) was considered so volatile because of its story of the assassination of Sweden's King Gustav III, that the censors forced Verdi and his librettist to change the location of the drama from eighteenth-century Stockholm to colonial Boston!

Yet even the censors could not stifle the popularity of Verdi's music. The revolutionaries took up the chorus of Hebrew slaves, *Va, pensiero* from Verdi's *Nabucco*, with its yearning for release from Babylon, as their unofficial rallying cry; even today, it serves as Italy's unofficial second national anthem. Audiences in opera houses around the nation shouted "Viva Verdi!" both to celebrate the composer's genius, but also as a secret code: VERDI became an acronym for the leader of the House of Savoy whom the *Risorgimento* wanted to crown as the new King of Italy: Vittorio Emanuele, Re d'Italia (Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy). When unification was finally achieved, the admiration for Verdi was so great that he was elected to the new National Assembly as the representative for Busseto.

Verdi lived in awe of Manzoni and considered *I promessi sposi* to be a masterpiece. When the renowned composer finally met the famous poet, Verdi wrote:

What can I tell you of Manzoni? How to express the new, inexplicable, happy feeling which the sacred presence of this man aroused in me? I would have knelt before him if men worshipped men.

When Verdi heard of Manzoni's death in May of 1873, he was heartbroken. Even

though throngs of mourners flooded the streets of Milan for Manzoni's funeral procession, Verdi was so weighed down with grief that he couldn't join them. He waited until he could visit Manzoni's gravesite alone and unobserved to pay his respects to his hero and friend.

Verdi had read many tributes to Manzoni in the Italian press but felt none of them did justice to the great man. He decided that he would compose a Requiem Mass in memory of Manzoni, to be performed on the first anniversary of the poet's death. He proposed the idea to the Milan's mayor, who swiftly agreed to the idea and thanked Verdi for spearheading the project. Verdi replied,

You owe me no thanks for my offer to write a Requiem Mass for the anniversary of Manzoni's death. It is an impulse, or I might better say, a need of my heart which impels me to honor, as far as I can, this Great Man whom I so respected as a writer, and have revered as a man, a model of virtue and of patriotism.

A setting of the Mass for the Dead had been in Verdi's thoughts since 1868, when, upon the death of Gioacchino Rossini, Verdi proposed that he and 12 fellow Italian composers each contribute a movement to a Requiem in memory of the great opera composer. The composers were chosen by lot by the famous Italian publishing house, Ricordi; Verdi finished his contribution, the concluding *Libera me*, in short order, and his 12 colleagues followed suit shortly thereafter. Unfortunately, the *Messa per Rossini* was abandoned only nine days short of its first performance (scuttled by bureaucratic red tape and incompetence – organizers were unable to secure performers in time). Verdi shelved the *Libera me* and gave up on the idea of ever hearing the *Messa per Rossini* in performance. (The score and performing materials for the Mass were discovered

in the Ricordi archives, and the *Messa per Rossini* received its first performance in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1988).

Rather than risk the logistical pitfalls that plagued the requiem for Rossini, Verdi decided that he would compose the entire work and supervise all the performance details himself, from choosing the soloists to concert publicity. The triumphal world premiere at the church of San Marco in May of 1874 was followed by three successful performances at La Scala, Milan, and subsequent performances across Europe.

The most severe criticism leveled at the Requiem involved its theatricality. Verdi shunned religion; he would take his wife to church, but he would not attend services himself. Like many of the *Risorgimento*, he felt that the church's accumulation of power and wealth was hypocritical to its mission of caring for the poor and destitute. Like the requiem settings of Johannes Brahms, Hector Berlioz, and Benjamin Britten, Verdi's Requiem was never intended for liturgical performance beyond the world premiere. He responded to the Latin requiem text as a means of expressing his patriotism and his grief at the loss of his friend, Manzoni. He responded to the text not as a religious man, but as a Humanist and as one of the greatest of all opera composers. Perhaps Verdi's wife, Giuseppina, said it best:

A man like Verdi must write like Verdi, that is, according to his own feeling and interpretation of the text. The religious spirit and the way in which it is given expression must bear the stamp of its period and its author's personality.

The work begins in hushed reverence, with the chorus solemnly intoning "Requiem eternam" (Grant them eternal rest). The four soloists lead the lyrical Kyrie eleison, joined by the chorus in their plea that

their prayers will be heard.

Verdi's portrayal of the Day of Judgment (*Dies irae*) opens with a thunderclap, with brutal and implacable chords in the orchestra ushering in obdurate brass fanfares, shrieking woodwinds, and ferocious strings over which the chorus sings of the terrors of all humanity being summoned to judgment. The fanfares that open the *Tuba mirum* begin from afar, but their gradual crescendo builds to a blazing tattoo, where the chorus sings of the last trumpet calling dead souls forth from their graves. The bass soloist sings of the soul-searing vision of departed souls seeking mercy in *Mors stupebit*. The mezzo intones that all deeds are recorded in the Book of Judgment (*Liber scriptus*), followed by the sorrow of *Quid sum miser*, accompanied by a mournful bassoon. The supplication of the duet (*Recordare*) and two arias (*Ingemisco* and *Confutatis*) that follow are swept aside by a return of the *Dies irae* music, but the *Lacrymosa* ends this dramatic sequence with quiet tears.

A respite from these visions of the Apocalypse comes with the Offertory, where the four soloists sing for the salvation of the departed. The calm is broken briefly by the more dramatic (and chromatic) *Quam olim Abrahae*, but the tenor returns us to the quiet reverence of the opening. Verdi wrote the *Sanctus* as a virtuoso double fugue introduced by trumpet fanfares – perhaps the one moment of true joy in the entire work. In the *Agnus Dei*, Verdi clears the air of the previous busy fugue with the ethereal sound of the soprano and mezzo-soprano singing in octaves, completely unaccompanied, and the remainder of this brief movement never strays far from this introspective mood. The three soloists in *Lux aeterna* sing of eternal light over *tremolo* string accompaniment and quietly sinister brass.

The concluding *Libera me*, repurposed from the requiem for Rossini, begins as a dramatic *scena* for the soprano, chorus, and orchestra, music that would be perfectly suited to any of Verdi's operas. The *Dies irae* music interrupts, but the energy and the terror gradually expend themselves, until the soprano sings of eternal peace, discreetly accompanied by the chorus. A passionate fugal setting of *Libera me*, domine for the chorus and orchestra follows, later joined by the soprano. The texture gradually thins, the music makes a transition from agitation to calm, and the solo soprano sings us into eternity with a final supplication of "Libera me."

In conclusion, perhaps the best judgment upon the worth of the Verdi Requiem comes from two of the most curmudgeonly characters of the late nineteenth century. The Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw, who, for a time, wrote music criticism under the nom de plume "Corno di Bassetto" and did not suffer dramatic or musical fools gladly, thought so highly of the work that he asked that the concluding *Libera me* be performed at his funeral. Even more telling might be the pronouncement of Johannes Brahms (also a severe critic of everyone's music, including his own), who said unequivocally "Verdi's Requiem is a work of genius."

– David Cole

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Bronfman Plays Rachmaninoff's Third

SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 2023, 7:30 P.M.

Peter Rubardt, Conductor

Yefim Bronfman, Piano

Igor Stravinsky
(1882 – 1971)

Petrushka – Burlesque in Four Scenes (1947 Version)

I. *The Shrovetide Fair*

II. *Petrushka's Cell*

III. *The Moor's Room*

IV. *The Shrovetide Fair (Evening)*

INTERMISSION

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873 – 1943)

Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30

I. Allegro ma non tanto

II. Intermezzo: Adagio

III. Finale: Alla breve

Featuring Yefim Bronfman, Piano

The second and third movements are played without pause.

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Yefim Bronfman

Piano

Internationally recognized as one of today's most acclaimed and admired pianists, Yefim Bronfman stands among a handful of artists regularly sought by festivals, orchestras, conductors and recital series. His commanding technique, power and exceptional lyrical gifts are consistently acknowledged by the press and audiences alike.

Following summer festival appearances in Verbier and Salzburg and a tour with mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená, the 2022-23 season begins with the opening week of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra followed by return visits to the New York Philharmonic, Pittsburgh, Houston, Philadelphia, New World, Pacific, Madison, New Jersey, Toronto, and Montreal Symphonies. In Europe he will tour with Rotterdam Philharmonic and can also be heard with the Berlin Philharmonic, Bayerischer Rundfunk (Munich), Bamberg, Dresden Staatskapelle, Maggio Fiorentino, and Zurich Opera orchestras.

Bronfman works regularly with an illustrious group of conductors, including Daniel Barenboim, Herbert Blomstedt, Semyon Bychkov, Riccardo Chailly, Christoph von Dohnányi, Gustavo Dudamel, Charles Dutoit, Daniele Gatti, Alan Gilbert, Vladimir Jurowski, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Andris Nelsons, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Sir Simon Rattle, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Jaap Van Zweden, Franz Welser-Möst, and David Zinman. Summer engagements have regularly taken him to the major festivals of Europe and the United States. Always keen to explore chamber music repertoire, his partners have included Pinchas Zukerman, Martha Argerich, Magdalena Kožená, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Emmanuel



Pahud and many others. In 1991 he gave a series of joint recitals with Isaac Stern in Russia, marking Bronfman's first public performances there since his immigration to Israel at age 15.

Born in Tashkent in the Soviet Union, Yefim Bronfman immigrated to Israel with his family in 1973, where he studied with pianist Arie Vardi, head of the Rubin Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University. In the United States, he studied at The Juilliard School, Marlboro School of Music, and the Curtis Institute of Music, under Rudolf Firkusny, Leon Fleisher, and Rudolf Serkin. A recipient of the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize, one of the highest honors given to American instrumentalists, he was further honored as the recipient of the Jean Gimbel Lane prize in piano performance from Northwestern University and in 2015 with an honorary doctorate from the Manhattan School of Music.

Bronfman is represented by Opus 3 Artists.

Bronfman Plays Rachmaninoff's Third

Igor Stravinsky *Petrushka, Burlesque in Four Scenes (1947 Version)*

Igor Stravinsky was born June 17, 1882, in Oranienbaum, Russia, and died on April 6, 1971, in New York. Petrushka was written in 1911 and given its first performance at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris on June 13, 1911, with Stravinsky conducting. The work is scored for three flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, three clarinets (3rd doubling bass clarinet), two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, celesta, piano, and strings.

In Hollywood, it's the sequel curse. In sports, it's the sophomore slump. In British schools, it's called the second-year blues.

It's the problem that every successful individual faces when their first efforts have been a smash hit – what does one do for an encore? How can the next effort equal or surpass the first? Will my movie be the next building block in creating a media franchise or the latest joke on Rotten Tomatoes? Will my team be a decade-long dynasty or a one-and-done wonder? It is the question that plagues the mind of every author of a successful debut novel, every band with a platinum first album, every Rookie of the Year.

But some fortunate artists are immune to the sophomore slump, and Igor Stravinsky certainly seems to have been one of them. Some of Stravinsky's early orchestral works had come to the attention of Sergei Diaghilev, the flamboyant impresario of the famous Paris ballet company *Les Ballets Russes*. In 1910, Diaghilev had to scramble to find a composer for a new ballet for the upcoming season, either because the

composer to whom it was offered didn't accept it, or because that composer (Anatoly Liadov) was too lazy to fulfill it.

In any event, when the curtain rose on the *Ballets Russes'* new production on June 25, 1910, it featured the premiere of *The Firebird*, with music by Igor Stravinsky. *The Firebird* was a triumph with both audiences and critics. Sergei Rachmaninoff proclaimed it to be a work of genius, and Diaghilev bragged about Stravinsky to Tamara Karsavina, the prima ballerina: "Mark him well – he is a man on the eve of celebrity."

Diaghilev, knowing a good thing when he heard it, wished to capitalize immediately on *The Firebird's* success. When he met with the composer to talk about a sequel, Stravinsky proposed the work that would eventually become *Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring)*. Diaghilev agreed, but when he visited the composer in Switzerland, he was surprised to discover that Stravinsky was working on a completely different piece – a work for piano and orchestra, or, as he expressed it to Diaghilev, a work where the piano and orchestra were pitted against each other. Stravinsky explained it later: "In composing the music, I had in my mind a distinct picture of a puppet, suddenly endowed with life, exasperating the patience of the orchestra with diabolical cascades of arpeggios. The orchestra in turn retaliates with menacing trumpet blasts."

Diaghilev told him that his description reminded him of the puppets found at old Russian fairs, particularly *Petrushka*, the Russian version of Punch of "Punch and

Judy” fame. Sensing another hit on his hands, Diaghilev was more than happy to let Stravinsky shelve work on *Le Sacre* to complete *Petrushka*. Stravinsky wrote:

Diaghilev was so much pleased with it that he would not leave it alone and began persuading me to develop the theme of the puppet’s sufferings and make it into a whole ballet. When he remained in Switzerland, we worked out together the general lines of the subject and the plot in accordance with ideas which I suggested... I began at once to compose the first scene of the ballet.

Once the contractual details were worked out, the premiere was set for Paris in June of 1911. Despite some resistance from dancers and musicians to the thorny complexities of the score, *Petrushka*’s premiere was a resounding triumph, with the title role of the downtrodden puppet danced by the great Vaslav Nijinsky, and the orchestra in the skillful hands of conductor Pierre Monteux.

The music for *Petrushka*, perhaps even more than for *The Firebird*, combines Russian folk music and modernist techniques of harmony and rhythm, wrapped up in the brilliant and colorful orchestration that Stravinsky learned from his mentor, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov. *Petrushka* is notable for Stravinsky’s use of *polyrhythm* (or, more correctly, *polymeter*), where two conflicting meters or rhythm patterns are superimposed upon each other, and *polytonality*, where two different keys or tonal centers are heard simultaneously. The latter can be heard most strikingly when two clarinets play a melody at the same time, one in C major and one in F# major. The resulting sound is so unique that it has been given its own moniker, “The Petrushka Chord.” No mere attempt at “wrong-note” modernism, both polyrhythm and

polytonality paint a vivid portrait of the melancholy puppet, his longing for his beloved, and his hatred for the cruel master who pulls his marionette strings.

The ballet is set in four *tableaux*. In the opening scene, we are treated to a lively pre-Lenten carnival (*The Shrovetide Fair*) in Admiralty Square in Saint Petersburg in the early nineteenth century. The square is filled with street musicians, dancing girls, organ grinders, and a Master of Ceremonies who tries to keep control of it all. The puppet master, known as The Magician, appears with his three dolls: Petrushka the clown, the beautiful Ballerina, and the swashbuckling Moor. The Magician sets his puppets to dancing, and it soon becomes clear that Petrushka is hopelessly infatuated with the Ballerina. His sensitive heart is crushed when he realizes that his stiff, awkward dancing is no match for the Moor’s athletic arabesques.

The second *tableau* finds Petrushka alone in his quarters (*Petrushka’s Cell*), despairing over his fate. This section incorporates the bulk of Stravinsky’s original concept of a work for piano and orchestra, and the piano plays a prominent role throughout. The Ballerina enters, but Petrushka, working far too hard to impress her, frightens her away with his awkward attempts to exhibit his dancing prowess.

The curtain rises on the Moor in his sumptuous quarters at the beginning of the third *tableau* (*The Moor’s Room*). With the Ballerina’s entrance, her chemistry with the Moor is obvious, and they dance to tunes from the pioneering Viennese waltz composer Joseph Lanner (1804-43). Their “waltzing and chill” is interrupted by the bumbling Petrushka, whose ardor for the Ballerina leads him to pick a fight with the Moor. Hopelessly outmatched, he is severely beaten by his opponent and flees

the chamber with the Moor in hot pursuit.

The final scene returns us to Admiralty Square and the revelry of the Shrovetide carnival. The revels are now in full swing, featuring dances of the Romani people, nurses, coachmen, and even a dancing bear. As the celebrations reach a fever pitch, Petrushka appears, fleeing for his life from the furious Moor, who is in turn pursued by the Ballerina, trying to keep him from committing murder. It is to no avail, as the Moor catches poor Petrushka and runs him through with a single sword thrust. The Magician explains to the police and the horrified crowd that no real harm has been done – after all, Petrushka is merely a sawdust puppet. As the crowds disperse, the music of the carnival dies away, and the Magician hauls the puppet's body away, the defiant ghost of Petrushka (characterized again by the bi-tonal trumpets) mocks the Magician from atop the puppet theatre, and the curtain falls as the Magician flees in panic.

Sergei Rachmaninoff **Piano Concerto No. 3** **in D Minor, Op. 30**

Sergei Rachmaninoff was born in 1873 in Semyonovo, Russia, and died in 1943 in Los Angeles. His Piano Concerto No. 3 was written in 1909 and given its first performance on November 28, 1909, with the composer at the piano and Walter Damrosch leading the Philharmonic Symphony of New York. The concerto is written for solo piano, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings.

If the human race ever develops the technology to travel back in time, music lovers might want to schedule a visit to New York City on January 16, 1910, and stand in line for a ticket at Carnegie Hall to hear a collaboration between two of the

greatest musicians of the time. On that evening, Sergei Rachmaninoff appeared as soloist in the third performance of his Third Piano Concerto, with the Philharmonic-Symphony of New York (later the New York Philharmonic) conducted by Gustav Mahler. While both Rachmaninoff and Mahler are best known today as composers, at the time of the Third Concerto's premiere, they were well-known performers with the same problem: the demands of performing greatly diminished any time they had to compose.

In Mahler's case, the strain of composing, conducting, and administration would exacerbate the heart condition that would kill him in the following year. For Rachmaninoff, it would be the Russian Revolution of 1917 that would make him flee his homeland, strip him of both his family estate and the royalties of many of his compositions, and force him to devote most of his remaining lifetime to performing and conducting, with far fewer compositions flowing from his pen between the end of the First World War and his death 25 years later.

The Third Concerto came about partially because of Rachmaninoff's need to pay the bills. Having moved with his family to Dresden in 1906, Rachmaninoff found that he needed to perform regularly in order to afford the luxury of composing. In late 1909, Rachmaninoff undertook a concert tour of the United States. He had originally balked at the idea, but the lure of the concert fees proved to be irresistible, especially because they were sufficient to allow Rachmaninoff to realize a lifelong dream: buying an automobile.

Rachmaninoff wrote the Third Concerto at the culmination of the tour, performing it twice under Walter Damrosch's direction in November 1909, and again in January with Mahler. Rachmaninoff

was especially pleased with the January concert, citing Mahler's meticulous preparation as the primary reason for the performance's success:

Mahler was the only conductor whom I considered worthy to be classed with Nikisch (a great conductor of the same era). He touched my composer's heart straight away by devoting himself to my Concerto until the accompaniment, which is rather complicated, had been practiced to the point of perfection, although he had already gone through a long rehearsal. According to Mahler, every detail of the score was important—an attitude which is unfortunately rare among conductors.

The critics at the first performances were less rapturous about the new work, giving the concerto and composer kudos and respect, but expressing doubts as to the durability of the work with audiences, and concern that only a tiny handful of pianists would ever master the work's complexities. History has proven those critics shortsighted, and the Third Concerto is a perennial favorite in the concert hall.

Even though the concerto is conceived on an epic scale, much like the “symphonic” concertos of Johannes Brahms and Franz Liszt, the opening of the work is simplicity itself: a single, hauntingly memorable melodic line in the piano over quiet murmurings in the strings. The movement is an epic dialogue between piano and orchestra, culminating in an extensive cadenza before returning to the quiet yearning of the opening, and the mysterious conclusion of the movement.

The Intermezzo's introduction, by turns yearning, wistful, and passionate, sets the stage for the soloist's entrance, which veers from quiet meditation to ardent outpourings of passion. The movement's

shimmering central waltz provides a quicksilver interlude amid the piano's exploration of a huge range of emotions.

The finale's manic march bursts in upon the end of the slow movement, full of virtuoso fireworks for both piano and orchestra. Like the first movement, the finale is a lengthy dialogue between soloist and ensemble, full of contrasting interludes ranging from quietly lyrical to mercurial and mysterious. In the end, it is the movement's fiery passion that wins the day. After one final outpouring of passionate lyricism, both soloist and orchestra sprint headlong to the exhilarating final chords.

– David Cole

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Season Finale: Dvořák Symphony No. 7

SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2023, 7:30 P.M.

Peter Rubardt, Conductor

Quinn Mason, Composer & Concert Curator

Johannes Brahms *Tragic Overture*, Op. 81
(1833 – 1897)

Samuel Barber *Essay for Orchestra No. 1*, Op. 12
(1910 – 1981)

Quinn Mason *Inner City Rhapsody*
(b.1996)
I. Nostalgia
II. Struggle
III. Emergence

The movements are played without pause.

INTERMISSION

Antonín Dvořák *Symphony No. 7 in D Minor*, Op. 70, B. 141
(1841 – 1904)
I. Allegro maestoso
II. Poco adagio
III. Scherzo. Vivace
IV. Finale. Allegro

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Quinn Mason

Composer & Concert Curator

Quinn Mason (b. 1996) is a composer and conductor based in Dallas, Texas. Mason has been described as “a brilliant composer just barely in his 20s who seems to make waves wherever he goes,” (*Theater Jones*) and “One of the most sought-after young composers in the country,” (*Texas Monthly*).

His orchestral music has received performances by many orchestras, including the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Utah Symphony Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra of the United States (NYO-USA), New World Symphony, University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra, National Orchestral Institute Philharmonic, New England Conservatory Philharmonia, Memphis Symphony Orchestra, Experiential Orchestra, Mesquite Symphony Orchestra, Wichita Symphony Orchestra, Akron Symphony Orchestra, Toledo Symphony Orchestra, Canton Symphony Orchestra, West Virginia Symphony Orchestra, South Bend Symphony Orchestra, the River Oaks, Reno, Mission and Lowell Chamber Orchestras, Scotland’s Nevis Ensemble, Italy’s Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, and numerous others.

His compositions for winds have been performed by the Cobb Wind Symphony, Metropolitan Winds, and bands of Southern Methodist University, University of North Texas, Texas Christian University, Penn State, Purdue University, University of Minnesota, and Northern Illinois University, as well as other bands throughout the United States and Canada.

His chamber music has been performed by the Voices of Change, loadbang, MAKE Trio, Atlantic Brass Quintet, and the Cézanne, Julius, and Baumer String Quartets, and his solo music has been championed by distinguished soloists such as David Cooper (Principal Horn, Chicago Symphony), Holly Mulcahy (Concertmaster, Wichita Symphony), and Jordan Bak and Michael Hall (viola soloists).



A multiple-prize winner in composition, he has received numerous awards and honors from such organizations as the American Composers Forum, Voices of Change, Texas A&M University, ASCAP, the Dallas Foundation, Dartmouth College Wind Ensemble, Metropolitan Youth Orchestra of New York, Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, Heartland Symphony Orchestra, and Arizona State University Symphony Orchestra. In 2020, Mason was honored by the Dallas Morning News as a finalist for “Texan of the Year.”

Mason has studied composition with Dr. Lane Harder at the SMU Meadows School of the Arts, Dr. Winston Stone at University of Texas at Dallas, and has also worked with renowned composers David Maslanka, Jake Heggie, Libby Larsen, David Dzubay, and Robert X. Rodriguez.

As a conductor, Mason has guest conducted Orchestra Seattle and the MusicaNova Orchestra. He studied conducting at the National Orchestral Institute with Marin Alsop and James Ross, and with Miguel Harth-Bedoya (Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra) and Will White (Orchestra Seattle).

He also counts Richard Giangulio (Greater Dallas Youth Orchestra), Edwin Outwater (San Francisco Conservatory), and John Axelrod (City of Kyoto Symphony Orchestra) as mentors.

Mason is a member of ASCAP and the Conductors Guild. He is professionally represented by Cadenza Artists.

Season Finale: Dvořák Symphony No. 7

Johannes Brahms *Tragic Overture, Op. 81*

Johannes Brahms was born May 7, 1833, in Hamburg, Germany, and died in Vienna on April 3, 1897. His Tragic Overture was written in the summer of 1880 and was given its first performance in Vienna on December 26, 1880, by Hans Richter and the Vienna Philharmonic. The work is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings.

“One weeps, the other laughs.” So wrote Johannes Brahms to his friend and biographer Max Kalbeck about the two concert overtures he composed in the summer of 1880. As with many of his works, Brahms wrote the two overtures on vacation, in this instance at the Austrian spa town of Bad Ischl. The “laughing” overture was his *Academic Festival Overture*, Op. 80, written in response to an honorary doctorate from the University of Breslau. In typically mischievous fashion, Brahms created the work not as a solemn and dignified response to the great honor, but as a medley of student songs, which must have delighted the undergraduates in the audience at its first performance in Breslau on January 4, 1881.

The “weeping” overture – his *Tragic Overture*, Op. 81 – was not a response to a life event or even intended to depict a specific tragedy, but rather is an indication that Brahms’ personality needed to express both joy and melancholy. In writing to Clara Schumann about the two works, Brahms said “I (simply) could not refuse my melancholy nature the satisfaction of composing an overture for tragedy.”

The *Tragic Overture* gave Brahms some difficulty in its composition. He wrote to his friend, the physician and amateur musician Theodor Billroth, “The *Academic* has led me to a second overture which I can only entitle the *Dramatic*, which does not please me.” Even the title did not come easily; Brahms wrote to Bernard Scholz, the orchestra conductor in Breslau, “You may include a ‘dramatic’ or ‘tragic’ or ‘Tragedy Overture’ in your program for January 6; I cannot find a proper title to fit it.”

While Brahms insisted that the work was not inspired by a particular tragedy, there is some evidence to suggest that some of the material in the overture derives from material Brahms had written for a production of Goethe’s *Faust*, a project which was ultimately abandoned. The overture makes no attempt at description but evokes a feeling of tragedy through its melody and harmony, much in the manner of Ludwig van Beethoven’s *Coriolan Overture* or Robert Schumann’s *Manfred*.

Two brusque chords introduce an undulating, uneasy idea, which soon explodes into anger in repeated dotted rhythms and disruptive syncopations. A more optimistic second theme provides momentary contrast, but the overture roils in stormy conflict; even a brief march interlude dissolves into tragic sighs. The main themes of the opening return before the overture concludes in grim solemnity.

Samuel Barber Essay for Orchestra No. 1, Op. 12

Samuel Barber was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, on March 9, 1910, and died in New York City on January 23, 1981. The First Essay for Orchestra was written in 1938 and given its first performance on November 5, 1938, in a nationwide broadcast from New York by Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony Orchestra. The work is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, piano, and strings.

At the age of 9, a concerned Samuel Barber wrote this heartfelt letter to his mother:

Dear Mother: I have written this to tell you my worrying secret. Now don't cry when you read it because it is neither your nor my fault. I suppose I will have to tell it now without any nonsense. To begin with I was not meant to be an athlet(sic). I was meant to be a composer, and will be I'm sure. I'll ask you one more thing—Don't ask me to try to forget this unpleasant thing and go play football—Please—Sometimes I've been worrying about this so much that it makes me mad (not very).

It's unlikely that Barber's mother was surprised at her son's musical ambitions. His aunt, Louise Homer, was an internationally known operatic contralto, and his uncle Sidney Homer was a prominent composer and teacher who tutored Barber for more than 25 years. The precocious Barber was accepted as a student at the Curtis Institute at the age of 14 and scored the trifecta of completing degrees in composing, piano, and voice. He even sang the vocal part himself for the first commercial recording of his song *Dover Beach*, accompanied by the Curtis Quartet. After graduation, the musical world was his for the taking – singers, instrumentalists, and conductors all wanted to play his music. He won

awards (both the Prix de Rome and a Guggenheim Fellowship) and received numerous commissions.

In 1938, Barber's *Essay for Orchestra* was programmed for national broadcast by the NBC Symphony under the direction of the great Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini. Because the *Essay* was relatively short, Toscanini requested another brief work from the young composer. Barber had no other new orchestral works at hand, so he sent Toscanini his arrangement of the slow movement of his string quartet, to which he gave the title *Adagio for Strings*. Toscanini returned both scores to Barber without comment, which gave the young composer a severe bout of self-doubt. As it turned out, Toscanini had already memorized both works and so had no need of the scores until the day of the performance.

The idea of a musical essay is Barber's own, first attempted in his early *Three Essays for Piano* of 1926. Just as with a literary essay, Barber's musical essays (he wrote two additional *Essays for Orchestra* in 1942 and 1978) pursue the logical exposition and elaboration of an idea to a satisfactory conclusion.

The *First Essay* opens with a solemn chorale, richly and darkly scored in divided violas and cellos. This idea is repeated and developed until it reaches a climax in declamatory brass and then gradually fades back into the opening string texture. Strings introduce the quixotic middle section, a ghostly, skipping scherzo based on a six-note figure that flits around the orchestra like a hyperactive insect. The piano attempts to restore order by insisting on its own version, played as an *ostinato*, over which the clarinet adds its own repetitive figure. Horn calls herald the onset of an enormous climax, with the opening chorale heard in solemn grandeur in the full orchestra before two trumpets

call in the distance, and the violins ask their final question before fading into silence.

Quinn Mason *Inner City Rhapsody*

Quinn Mason was born in 1996 in Dallas, Texas. Inner City Rhapsody was written in 2018–19 on a commission from the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. The first performance was given by the Dallas Symphony under the direction of Katharina Wincor on September 4, 2019. The work is scored for two flutes, oboe, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings.

Quinn Mason wrote this synopsis of his *Inner City Rhapsody*:

Inner City Rhapsody tells the story of a fictional composer (based on the actual composer's own story) and their quest to try to find their musical voice and belonging. The piece is in three distinct sections; the first, Nostalgia, is told in a flashback form and contains the seeds of musical ideas that will be explored later in the piece. The second, Struggle, is an energetic yet agitated scherzo that contains many musical ideas fighting against each other in an effort to be heard. That leads us to the final section, Emergence, in which a singular ostinato builds to a fantastic and light-infused climax which represents the composer's found musical voice in full breadth.

As part of his composer's blog, Quinn Mason also related this history about his *Inner City Rhapsody*:

The first DSO concert I ever attended was a part of a school field trip in 2006. On the program was one lone work, Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* conducted by Andrew Litton (then in his last year as music director) and narrated by Sting (it may

be worth noting that at the time I didn't know who Sting was and now, more than 10 year later, I'm still not entirely sure who he is). I have been attending rehearsals and concerts regularly since 2008, and I started interacting with the players around that time as well. I've spent a lot of time backstage at the DSO since then, mostly because one of my closest mentors is the (now retired) principal percussionist with the orchestra. That afforded me an up-close view and not only gave me a chance to see how the orchestra worked from the inside out, but to gauge the strengths of the individual players. Therefore, most of the material in the music was written with specific members of the DSO in mind.

For the longest time, I've wanted to make an artistic statement from the point of view of a composer from the inner city because I realized that that isn't a view represented in the concert hall often.

This being the twenty-first century, we've seen composers write music that reflects the situations of early-twentieth century suffragettes (Ethel Smyth) to composers during the Harlem Renaissance (William Grant Still) to music during a time of siege (Karel Husa).

But have we ever seen a young composer of color in their early 20s write about where they came from?

The truth is, my journey to become a composer was a not an easy one, especially coming up in a public school system that had limited opportunities for musical enrichment. I'm very lucky to have had people (mostly professional musicians in my area) who have cared deeply enough to look after my career for over a decade. This piece isn't meant as a social commentary of any sort. This piece is for them.

Let's face it; not many people of color go to orchestral concerts. But I'm willing to

bet that someone out there can relate to my story, regardless of what color they are. Most of my music is autobiographical, but it's my sincere hope that someone else can relate to it.

This piece can also be a tribute to the city of Dallas and its vibrant musical community. It's a place I've lived for about 15 years now, and that is officially a part of my musical identity.

Program notes courtesy of
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Antonín Dvořák **Symphony No. 7 in D Minor,** **Op. 70, B. 141**

Antonín Dvořák was born on September 8, 1841, in Nelahozeves, near Kralupy, Bohemia, and died in Prague on May 1, 1904. Dvořák composed his Seventh Symphony between December 1884 and March 1885. He conducted the Philharmonic Society of London Orchestra in the premiere performance on April 22, 1885 at St. James Hall in London. The symphony is scored for two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings.

In 1884 Dvořák made the first of several visits to London at the invitation of the Philharmonic Society of London. His music was already well known in Britain, but even so the composer was overwhelmed by the enthusiastic reception he received there. He conducted a concert of his own *Hussite Overture*, the *Second Slavonic Rhapsody*, his *Stabat Mater* for chorus and orchestra, and his jubilant *Symphony No. 6*.

In a letter to a friend, Dvořák describes the warm welcome he received as he stepped onstage for the concert:

As soon as I appeared, I received a tempestuous welcome from the audience of 12,000. These ovations increasing, I had

to bow my thanks again and again, the orchestra and choir applauding with no less fervor. I am convinced that England offers me a new and certainly happier future, and one which I hope may benefit our entire Czech art. The English are a fine people, enthusiastic about music, and it is well known that they remain loyal to those whose art they have enjoyed. God grant that it may be so with me.

The Philharmonic Society of London elected Dvořák to their membership shortly thereafter and commissioned a new symphony from him. Dvořák had been planning a symphony ever since hearing Brahms' Third Symphony, for which he had traveled to Berlin in 1884. Brahms had expressed his opinion that Dvořák's next symphony would be nothing like the Sixth, and Dvořák was eager to prove that opinion to be correct. Dvořák began work on the Seventh Symphony in December of 1884 and completed it in March of the following year. Dvořák conducted the premiere in the St. James Hall in London at the end of April 1885, to a rapturous reception from the audience and critics alike.

The London journal *Athenaeum* expressed great satisfaction with the new symphony in its review of the premiere performance:

Let it be said at once and decidedly that the new work fully satisfied the highest expectations that had been formed regarding it; and that his Symphony in D Minor is not only entirely worthy of his reputation, but is one of the greatest works of its class produced in the present generation.

The Seventh is an unusual work for Dvořák in that it contains few of the fingerprints of Bohemian folk music that characterize the rest of his output. It is first and foremost a symphony of "absolute" music, i.e., with little or no programmatic elements. It represents a turning point in Dvořák's

career, where he takes the first step from being a regional composer, influenced by the music of his homeland, to being an international composer who has integrated his native music into a language that speaks to the world.

The first movement begins ominously, with the opening theme heard in low strings, murmuring uneasily, but with a sudden outburst at the end. This small “outburst” idea will figure prominently throughout the movement. The sunny second theme, heard in the clarinets and then in the strings, is at the opposite emotional pole: warm and lyrical, providing an oasis of calm amid this dramatic movement. When it appears that the movement will end in a wave of ferocious musical energy, Dvořák gradually reduces the momentum, and the movement falls back into the same uneasy quiet with which it began.

The Poco Adagio begins in a mood of serenity, with woodwinds spinning out a long chorale-like melody, answered ardently by the strings. While the overall mood is serene, an ominous undercurrent seems to threaten the calm. This unrest breaks the tranquility on several occasions, with each interruption growing more forceful. The calm music has the final say, closing the movement in a mood of quiet peace.

The bewitching waltz of the third movement Scherzo, by turns playful and passionate, provides the one truly folk-inspired moment in the entire symphony, taking its rhythmic structure from a traditional Czech dance, the *furiant*. There is great interplay between the metric feel of three pulses spread across two measures, and the “normal” meter of one beat per measure, a tension that Dvořák heightens by presenting this lilting idea in an ever-shifting kaleidoscope of textures and countermelodies. The contrasting

middle section sings simply and sweetly before the beguiling dance music returns and ends with a furious outburst of sound.

It is in the Finale that the parallels with Brahms’ Third are the most obvious. After its quiet opening, most of the movement is devoted to an energetic conflict that rages throughout the orchestra, expressed in dramatic swirls of counterpoint, with only a few contrasting brighter sections. At the end, instead of ending in tranquility as Brahms’ Third does, the music swells in solemn grandeur, the brass intoning a glorious chorale-like version of the opening theme which turns from sorrowful D minor to exultant D major only in the majestic final bars.

– David Cole

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