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2019-2020 PROGRAM

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2019, 3:00 PM

Beethoven: Egmont Overture

Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 20

SOLOIST DEBRA LEW HARDER

Dvorak: Symphony No. 8

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY AMBLER CAMPUS, LEARNING CENTER AUDITORIUM

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2020, 3:00 PM

Rossini: William Tell Overture

Mozart: Clarinet Concerto

SOLOIST RICARDO MORALES

(Principal Clarinet, Philadelphia Orchestra)

Brahms: Symphony No. 1

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY AMBLER CAMPUS, LEARNING CENTER AUDITORIUM

SUNDAY, MAY 5, 2020, 3:00 PM

Wagner: Overture to Tannhauser

Mozart: Exsultate, Jubilate

SOLOIST ELENA PERRONI

Beethoven: Symphony No. 6

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Independence Sinfonia

DANIEL MATSUKAWA

Conductor and Music Director

2019-2020 SEASON

featuring soloists from the Philadelphia Region



DEBRA LEW HARDER
Piano



RICARDO MORALES
Clarinet



ELENA PERRONI
Soprano

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THE INDEPENDENCE SINFONIA was founded in 1995 by musicians from throughout the Philadelphia area. Our members include talented players from all walks of life, including professional musicians, music teachers, professors, lawyers, accountants and scientists, all of whom are united in their love of music. Our mission is to support and enhance the musical life of our communities through the presentation of an annual program series, both for our own enjoyment and for the enjoyment of our audiences. We are a volunteer organization made up of serious instrumental musicians who seek to develop and grow as an ensemble through regular rehearsal and performance of the orchestral repertoire.



OUR CONDUCTOR AND MUSIC DIRECTOR, DANIEL MATSUKAWA, is also the Principal Bassoonist of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Born in Argentina to Japanese parents, he moved with his family to New York City at age three and began studying the bassoon at age 13. Mr. Matsukawa studied at Juilliard for two years before attending the Curtis Institute of Music.

Daniel Matsukawa studied conducting privately with Otto Werner Mueller, former head of the Conducting Department at Curtis. His orchestral conducting debut took place in Japan in 2009 at the Pacific Music Festival's 20th anniversary concert, garnering Maestro Christoph Eschenbach's appraisal of Mr. Matsukawa as a "new conducting star".

Since then, he has been invited back to conduct in Japan every year including a tour of concerts in Sapporo, Hamamatsu and Tokyo receiving glowing reviews. He regularly conducts the PMF Link Up Concerts, based on the partnership program with Carnegie Hall and has also conducted concerts at the Curtis Institute of Music. Mr. Matsukawa made his American professional conducting debut with the Virginia Symphony Orchestra in the 2016-17 season.

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PROGRAM

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2019, 3PM

Daniel Matsukawa Conductor
Debra Lew Harder Piano

BEETHOVEN: Overture to *Egmont*, Op. 84

MOZART: Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K. 466
I. Allegro
II. Romance
III. Rondo: Allegro assai

Intermission

DVORÁK: Symphony No. 8 in G major, Op. 88
I. Allegro con brio
II. Adagio
III. Allegretto grazioso
IV. Allegro ma non troppo



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SOLOIST, DEBRA LEW HARDER



With doctorates in both medicine and music, pianist Debra Lew Harder believes in the power of music to transform people's lives. Debra started playing the piano by ear at age three and began formal lessons at six, making her orchestral debut at twelve. At sixteen, she performed and recorded the Ravel G Major Concerto with the World Youth Symphony.

After earning a medical degree and practicing as an ER physician, she received a doctorate in music from The Ohio State University, where she studied with American virtuoso Earl Wild. Debra has performed with orchestras and in solo recitals around the world, including appearances at Wigmore Hall in London, The Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series in Chicago, Xavier University Piano Series,

American University in Washington, DC, Colorado Music Fest, the historic Barocksaal in Rostock Germany, Haverford College's Guest Artists Series and its Music and Conversation series, Jefferson Medical College's Dean's Concert Series, The Curtis Institute, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia. She was the founder of the Grand Piano Concert Series in Columbus, Ohio. As a collaborative pianist, she performs with members of the Philadelphia Orchestra and regularly with her Trio MiReSol.

Debra was recently named Classical Mid-Day Host at WRTI-FM in Philadelphia, broadcasting live Tuesday-Friday from 10-2. You can also hear Debra host her popular "Saturday Morning Classical Coffeehouse," also on WRTI. She conducts Philadelphia Orchestra broadcast interviews, hosts live-to-broadcast performances, and produces arts news features for the station as well.

Her creative output includes numerous transcriptions for solo piano from the medieval, jazz, orchestral and non-Western repertoire. Debra has taught for many years at Haverford and Bryn Mawr Colleges in Pennsylvania and is currently working with students at Jefferson University developing a Medicine + Music program for its Co-Curriculum Initiative.



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PROGRAM NOTES CONTINUED

3. *Allegretto grazioso—molto vivace*: Elegantly combining dance and design, Dvorák “floats” this charming dumka through subtlety of scoring and avoidance of those boring old “regular eight-bar phrases.” The tunes follow a “verse and refrain” pattern: in the outer sections, a lilting “verse” alternates with a haunting, descending “refrain”, while in the middle a swaying tune is coupled with an elaboration of itself. The tempo picks up smartly for a sprightly coda based on the central theme, and an unexpectedly quiet ending.

4. *Allegro, ma non troppo*: Bright trumpets march cheerfully in, pre-echoing the stately subject (which soon appears on the cellos) and heralding a procession of artful variations. First the theme becomes sturdier, then races off, fast and punchy, with the horns having a field-day. The mood becomes a bit bucolic as a stomping rhythm takes over, from whence the festivities enter a distinctly Brahmsian “developmental” mode.

All this hustle and bustle is complemented by an extended lyrical sequence, fading gently, lingering lovingly over the theme. Party animals, however, are no respecters of peace and quiet: in bounces the coda, expanding on the “fast and punchy” episode to round off this happy symphony with a festive flourish.

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PROGRAM NOTES

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN: (1770-1827) Overture to *Egmont*, Op. 84

Beethoven was known as a musical revolutionary who also often celebrated the spirit of political revolutions. In his overture and incidental music to Goethe's play about the Count of Egmont, Beethoven provides a portrait of heroism against despotic rule, in this case the life of Egmont during his fight against the Spanish rule of the Netherlands in the 16th century. Although he was eventually executed for his efforts, Egmont sparked a national uprising that eventually led to the independence of his country. Our new associate conductor from Curtis is originally from the Netherlands and credits Egmont with his speaking Dutch and not Spanish!

The overture is one of the last works of Beethoven's middle period and is famous for its expressive themes and powerful writing throughout. Towards the end of the piece, listen for the chopping off of Egmont's head by the first violins, followed by a short funeral by the woodwinds before a return to the rousing and inspirational finish.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART: (1756-1791) Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K 466

Composed in 1785, Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20 was first performed in Vienna in February of that year, with the composer as conductor and soloist. A few days after that performance, the composer's father, Leopold, wrote to his daughter Nannerl about her brother's recent success: "[I heard] an excellent new piano concerto by Wolfgang, on which the copyist was still at work when we got here, and your brother didn't even have time to play through the rondo because he had to oversee the copying operation."

This piano concerto is the first of two that Mozart wrote in a minor key, and its brooding D minor is the same he used for his *Requiem*. The cadenza Ms. Harder plays in the first movement is by Beethoven, and the brilliant cadenza for the third movement is one of her own composition.

Notes by Kevin Aires

ANTONÍN DVORÁK: (1841-1904) Symphony No. 8 in G major, Op. 88

Antonín Dvorák was something of a "mixed-up kid." The son of the village butcher at Nelahozeves, in Bohemia, Antonín left school at 11 to learn the trade. However, showing promise as a violinist, he was sent off to an uncle in Zlonice—to learn German! While there, he took up viola, organ, piano and counterpoint but, apparently, not harmony. Eventually, he entered the Prague Organ School, graduating not as an organist but as a violist. Around this time, he "straightened himself out." He joined a band that became the core of the Provisional Theatre Orchestra, which was often conducted by Smetana. When his own music began to attract attention, Dvorák left the orchestra to concentrate on composition, supporting himself in time-honored fashion by working as a church organist and giving private music lessons.



PROGRAM NOTES CONTINUED

His income was bolstered by Ministry of Education stipends in 1875 and 1877. A further application in 1888 brought interest from Hanslick and Brahms, who commended him to the publisher Simrock. He quickly achieved prominence, attracting the attention of such as luminaries Joachim, Richter and Bülow, and made several visits to England.

Far from being diminished by his influences, Dvorák absorbed and took nourishment from them. Having subsumed an early Wagnerian influence, the Smetana experience fired him with a passion for his native folk-culture. Dvorák brilliantly integrated the vital, attractive Czech folk-idioms—which admirably complemented his Schubertian talent for melody and pastoralism—with classical form and counterpoint.

This is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the Eighth Symphony of 1889. This carefree composition finds him free of the dark demeanour of the preceding Seventh (1884-5), which was composed in the shadow of the death of his beloved mother, in a period he described as "of doubt and obstinacy, silent sorrow and resignation." Equally, since he hadn't yet crossed the Atlantic, the Eighth was unaffected by the emotional ambivalence of the Ninth (1893), in which the excitement of new and vibrant cultures collided with a nagging, dispiriting homesickness.

1. *Allegro con brio*: The introductory theme's solemn chorale is like a dawn mist, soon dispelled by a dew-fresh flute announcing the sunny first subject. A contented sighing of strings ushers in a second subject that matches the first in both vitality and generosity of ideas. Twice the introductory theme returns, firstly to launch a development section positively stuffed with characteristic energy, and secondly (in climactic convenience) to signal the start of a reprise that, in its desire to get to the second subject, nearly forgets about the first!

2. *Adagio*: Almost dreaming, the movement muses on thematic fragments for fully three minutes before a daintily stepping rhythm establishes a sense of direction. Woodwinds, succeeded by a tender solo violin, sing the lyric in full flow, coaxing a passionate climax of chorale-like brass punctuated by timpani. From the ensuing peace, the entire pattern is repeated, though the scenery changes considerably—doleful horns momentarily threaten a storm, but succeed only in making the recapitulation of the theme glow more richly, while the sunset is serenity itself.

continued on next page

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS...

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