

## Two Orchestras

Saturday, October 28 – 8 pm

Alexander Shelley, conductor

Jessica Linnebach, violin

National Arts Centre Orchestra (Alexander Shelley, Music Director)

Symphony Prelude, 7 pm on the Upper Circle (Third Level) Lobby with D.T. Baker

### ESTACIO

***King Arthur Suite: Dances from the Ballet King Arthur's Camelot*** (17')\*

King Arthur and Merlin: Allegro maestoso

Guinevere and Her Entourage: Vivo, playfully

Lancelot, and Induction to the Knights of the Round Table: Allegro, virile

Picnic Bacchanale: Somewhat sultry

### MOZART

***Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major, K.216*** (23')\*

Allegro

Adagio

Rondeau: Allegro

INTERMISSION (20 minutes)

### DVOŘÁK

***Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op.95 "From the New World"*** (40')\*

Adagio – Allegro

Largo

Molto vivace

Allegro con fuoco

program subject to change

\*indicates approximate performance duration

***King Arthur's Camelot: Suite***

**John Estacio**

(b. Newmarket, Ontario, 1966)

The ballet was first performed February 13, 2014 in Cincinnati

The ESO performed the world premiere of the suite in June 2016. This is the ESO's second performance of the piece

Program note by the composer:

The much beloved tale of King Arthur has enjoyed life in novels, movies, television, plays, video games, a musical, but not much on the ballet stage. In 2012, the Cincinnati Ballet approached composer John Estacio to create a score for a full length ballet. With a story adapted by Eda Holmes, *King Arthur's Camelot* tells the story of the young Arthur who, upon pulling out the sword from the stone, becomes king and grows up to marry his beloved Guinevere and form the benevolent Knights of the Round Table. The story also includes Arthur's protector, the wizard Merlin, and his friend/opponent Lancelot, who eventually steals the affections of Guinevere. The ballet also features the mysticism of the Ladies of the Lake and the villainy of Mordred.

The suite, however, focuses on the heroes of the story. It is in four movements, designed to create a logically constructed work for the concert hall, rather than attempt to "miniaturize" the story of the ballet. The titles of the first two movements are self-explanatory. In the third movement, the bold and brash Lancelot arrives unannounced at the wedding of Guinevere and Arthur and creates a ruckus. Arthur, impressed by the demeanour of the young man, inducts him into the Knights of the Round Table; the movement concludes with Arthur sweeping his new wife into his arms and walking off into the starry evening. In the final movement, the knights and the ladies of the court go for a picnic prior to a jousting match; food, libation, fun, and frivolity. *King Arthur's Camelot* premiered in Cincinnati in 2014 and was remounted in February 2017.

***Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major, K.216***

**Wolfgang Amadé Mozart**

(b. Salzburg, 1756 / d. Vienna, 1791)

Score completed on September 12, 1775 in Salzburg

Last ESO performance: November 2012

At the age of 19, Wolfgang Amadé Mozart wrote five major violin concertos. The year was 1775, and the works were composed between April and December, while Mozart was Concertmaster in the court of Salzburg and a violinist of some reputation himself. The concertos were written both for himself, and for the leader of the Salzburg Hofkapelle orchestra, Antonio Brunette. Mozart's father Leopold was the author of a famous and still studied treatise on the art of violin playing. He taught Mozart, and often expressed the wish that Mozart would focus his considerable talents more in that direction. "...if you

would only do yourself justice and play with boldness, spirit, and fire, you would be the first violinist in Europe.”

The violin concertos were written with an abundance of melodies and musical ideas. The *Violin Concerto No. 3* is more complex and dramatic than the preceding two. A syncopated, elegant orchestral opening leads to a cheerful, spry solo violin entrance. A reason for the movement’s overall mood of delight and vigour can be attributed to the fact that Mozart took as its main theme music he wrote that same year for *Il rè pastore* (“The Shepherd King”), in which the title character sings of his contentment with life. There is a cadenza which rhapsodizes the main material leading to the coda.

The second movement is as pastorally beautiful and elegiac as the first was buoyant. As the famous Mozart scholar Alfred Einstein stated: “Suddenly there is a new depth and richness to Mozart’s whole language; instead of an Andante there is an Adagio that seems to have fallen straight from heaven.” Flutes and gentle horns pierce the background of pizzicato cellos and basses and gently undulating upper strings. The violin’s sweetly tender song is kept to the solo instrument’s upper register for the most part, allowing it to float above the orchestra. This movement, too, features a brief cadenza.

As he did with four of the five violin concertos, Mozart gives the French spelling of Rondeau to the final movement, the main theme of which springs to life from the orchestra in one of Mozart’s favourite third-movement tempos: a merry gallop in 6/8, allowing the violin and the orchestra the chance to dance as equal partners to a jovial conclusion. One of the subsections in the movement is a humorously darker-tinged trio, which cannot sustain; the overall *joie de vivre* cannot be held at bay.

### ***Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op.95 “From the New World”***

**Antonín Dvořák**

(b. Nelahozeves, Bohemia, 1841 / d. Prague, 1904)

First performed: December 16, 1893 in New York

Last ESO performance: May 2009

“Z nového světa,” wrote Dvořák on the title page of his *Ninth Symphony* – “From the New World.” Those words have served as the cause of misunderstanding and assumption ever since he etched them. The first work entirely conceived and written in the United States by Dvořák, the symphony was first performed nine days before Christmas, 1893 at Carnegie Hall.

Dvořák had come to New York in 1891 at the invitation of the National Conservatory of Music, to head its composition department and be its artistic director. He was by this time a famous composer, and the American school was anxious that the man who had been celebrated for infusing the indigenous music of his native Bohemia into western art music could help show American composers how to do the same with American indigenous music. To him, “From the New World” was a postcard greeting, almost – the place from which his work came. But critics in Europe lost no time in assuming that Dvořák had quoted

from native American and African-American music throughout the symphony, which in fact was not the case. “This is not true,” Dvořák protested. “I composed the work there, but the motives are my own.”

What Dvořák did borrow from the “native” music he heard in America were some of its idioms; harmonic tendencies, rhythms and syncopations, and drone accompaniments he heard in spirituals and native songs find their way into Dvořák’s ever-melodic natural style, resulting in a work which has been a favourite from its first performance. It begins very simply, out of mists sounded on cello, then flutes. It is shaken to life, and the Allegro begins loudly and boldly. The syncopated main subject is set against sylvan contrasts in the woodwinds – and the almost playful combination of “town and country” is quite suited to a European’s perception of America.

Hymn-like harmonies usher in the second movement’s famous theme, first played in an extended solo for English horn. A flute ushers in a contrasting song with an elusive aboriginal American feel to it. This song, like the first, is explored in various instrumental colours, building a sense of passion and drama. Just before settling back into the memorable opening theme, a birdsong in the woodwinds ushers in a climactic moment recalling material from the opening movement’s grandeur. The tender Largo ends as quietly as it began.

Timpani and triangle dominate the vigorous main subject of the Scherzo – a rousing dance-like section of bracing, pent-up energy. A melody for flute and oboe provide a rustic change of mood and pace, though this theme is quickly syncopated into its own dance. A fleeting reference to the main music of the first movement is heard, followed quickly by yet another dance, symmetrically presented by woodwinds alternating with the violins. All of this material is repeated almost exactly, ushering a grand climax.

An irresistible sense of drive begins the finale, leading to a bright, pulsing trumpet theme, urged on by the strings until hushed by a lovely clarinet theme. But the movement – like the pride and industry of the country for which it was written – cannot be contained, and the blustery good nature rouses the music once again. Distant calls in the brass once again herald music from the opening movement – and even a reference to the second movement is featured in the flutes. With these features as unifying elements, grand and rhythmic swagger keep the finale’s momentum at a consistent boil – a rollicking yet ever-melodic conclusion to the symphony.