

**Concerto-rama**

**Sunday, March 18 – 2 pm**

**Andrei Feher**, conductor

**Daniel Hass**, cello

**Robin Doyon**, trumpet

Sunday Prelude, 1:15 pm on the Upper Circle (Third Level) Lobby with D.T. Baker

Sunday Encore, post-performance in the Main Lobby with Andrei Feher, Daniel Hass & Robin Doyon

**VERDI**

***La forza del destino: Overture*** (8')\*

**MAHLER**

***Adagietto from Symphony No. 5*** (9')\*

**ESTACIO**

***Trumpet Concerto*** (2017 ESO co-commission) (22')\*

Triton's Trumpet: Tranquillo

Ballade: Adagio

Rondo: Fast and lively

**INTERMISSION** (20 minutes)

**DVOŘÁK**

***Cello Concerto in B minor, Op.104*** (38')\*

Allegro

Adagio ma non troppo

Finale: Allegro moderato

program subject to change

\*indicates approximate performance duration

***La forza del destino: Overture***

**Giuseppe Verdi**

(b. near Busseto, 1813 / d. Milan, 1901)

Opera first performed: November 10, 1862 in St. Petersburg  
Last ESO performance of the overture: October 2016

Giuseppe Verdi revised his opera *La forza del destino* ("The Force of Destiny") several times following its premiere in St. Petersburg, and while doing so, he created a new overture for it. In fact, in its original guise, the curtain-raiser to this complex and, in all honesty, contrived and melodramatic story of love and betrayal, was called a "prelude." The overture we have now is an altogether more broadly conceived work, one which has taken its place in the concert hall. The overture is a pastiche of themes to be heard later in the opera, linked by a harsh and foreboding orchestral motive, suggesting the dark hand fate will play in the story. The other dominant musical element here is the beautiful theme of the character of Leonora, from her duet with the Father Superior. Having changed the ending of the opera in the revised version, Verdi used this musical hint of that new ending in the overture, to foreshadow the poignancy the new ending gives the work.

### ***Symphony No. 5: Adagietto***

**Gustav Mahler**

(b. Kalist, Bohemia, 1860 / d. Vienna, 1911)

First performance of the entire *Fifth Symphony*: October 18, 1904 in Cologne

Last ESO performance of the entire *Fifth Symphony*: May 1993

Last ESO performance of the *Adagietto* from *the Fifth Symphony*: January 2012

As a conductor, Gustav Mahler was a famous man in his lifetime. As a composer, he was ever in the shadow of Richard Strauss, and his works languished in relative obscurity until as recently as the 1950s. Those who heard Mahler's music were puzzled by it. The naked emotionalism of his works discomfited many; Mahler held out his heart, his soul, for inspection. Bruno Walter, the noted conductor, and friend of Mahler, felt that each successive symphony Mahler wrote was an ever-more ambitious attempt to answer the question: Why?

Mahler's *Fifth Symphony* was composed in 1903-04, a work Mahler biographer Richard Specht called, "a dirge outshouted by the imperious call of life." The work is in three parts, with five movements spread throughout the parts. Part Three begins with an extended *Adagietto*, and it contains one of Mahler's most beautiful passages, which is why the movement is excerpted and presented on its own frequently. While it became internationally famous thanks to its use in the Luchino Visconti film *Death in Venice* (1971), the *Adagietto* was a frequently performed excerpt well before that.

***Trumpet Concerto*** (2017 ESO co-commission)

**John Estacio**

(b. Newmarket, Ontario, 1966)

First performed: 106 in Kitchener, Ontario

Last ESO performance: June 2017

Program note by the composer:

The first of three movements is titled *Triton's Trumpet* and takes its inspiration from the Greek myth about Poseidon's son, Triton, who used his conch shell as a trumpet to calm or raise the ocean waters. The movement begins in a tranquil state and features a lyrical and florid cadenza for the solo trumpet over sustained tremulous strings. An undercurrent of disturbance by the lower brass warns that this tranquility could be disrupted, but is calmed by the mellifluous tones of the trumpet. Gradually however, the discordance in the depths of the orchestra eventually takes over and builds to a giant wave of sound and energy almost overpowering the soloist. However, as with Triton, the soloist eventually calms the waters and the tranquil music from the opening reappears, albeit in a slightly disquieting setting. The opening themes are developed with solos for the clarinets before the trumpet takes over with a revision of the opening cadenza. However, once again, ominous tones overtake the tranquil mood and suddenly thrust the soloist into a more fervent tempo that eventually builds to a swirl of chaos and incivility that threatens to overtake the solo trumpet. The lengthy first movement is approximately half the length of the concerto.

The middle movement is titled *Ballad* and features extended lyrical phrases for the solo trumpet. The strings introduce a primary melody that feels somewhat unsettled and ungrounded. The winds play a solemn chorale that will eventually become the driving force behind a regal sounding climax. After the portentous first two movements, the third movement, *Rondo*, is a much needed balm. It is written in a quick 6/8 meter and begins with a quixotic melody that will return several times throughout this mercurial kaleidoscope of energy, colour and fanfare.

### ***Cello Concerto in B minor, Op.104***

**Antonín Dvořák**

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

First performance: March 19, 1896 in London

Last ESO performance: March 2017

From 1891 to 1895, the distinguished Bohemian composer Antonín Dvořák received a generous sum of money to head up the newly-formed National Conservatory in New York. But he missed his homeland dearly, and during a break in his tenure in 1894, he took advantage of the time off to make a short trip back home. While there, he began sketches for what would become his *Cello Concerto*, instigated at the behest of Bohemian cellist Hanuš Wihan. Dvořák took to the task with relish, completing most of the concerto by the following February. Soon after that, however, his beloved sister-in-law Josefina Čermakova died. In her memory, Dvořák reworked the piece. His song "Leave Me Alone in My Dreams," which had been a favourite of hers, was quoted in both the Adagio second movement and in the finale. Wihan would eventually take up the concerto, which was dedicated to him, but the first performance took place with Dvořák conducting, and Leo Stern as soloist.

It might seem as if the first theme heard in the work is given relatively short shrift, particularly as the second subject (heard first on the horn) is given much more breadth – it was among the composer’s own personal favourites among the many melodies he composed. The bulk of the movement is spent with each of these musical ideas, with the first theme made much more dominant in the recapitulation.

The second movement is one of Dvořák’s finest slow movements. After an introduction in the woodwinds, the cello enters, quoting that favourite song of Josefina’s. The mood is not tragic, however, but beautiful, serene, and direct. Three horns present an almost organ-like chorale mood, leading to a bridge which ushers in a cadenza for the cello, accompanied by the woodwinds – which in turn leads into the movement’s peaceful conclusion. The finale perks up the pace with a picturesque march tune used as the main subject of a loose rondo movement. Not only does the song from the slow movement return, there are echoes of a theme from the first movement as well, lending a sense of completeness to the finale of this broad, rich concerto, which has taken its place among the best. Upon hearing it, Dvořák’s friend and mentor Johannes Brahms famously said, “Why on earth didn’t I know that one could write a cello concerto like this? Had I known, I would have written one long ago.”

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