

Eddins conducts Bernstein & Falla

Friday, April 26 – 7:30 pm

Saturday, April 27 – 8 pm

William Eddins, conductor

Ed Hanley, tabla

Robert Uchida, violin

Elizabeth Turnbull, mezzo-soprano

Afterthoughts, Friday post-performance, Main Lobby with William Eddins, Ed Hanley, Robert Uchida & Elizabeth Turnbull

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

BERNSTEIN

West Side Story – Suite for Violin (arr. Newman) (18')*

WIJERATNE

Concerto for Tabla (26')*

Canons, Circles

Folk Song: White in the moon the long road lies (that leads me from my love)

Garland of Gems

INTERMISSION (20 minutes)

FALLA

El sombrero de tres picos (“The Three-Cornered Hat”) (39')*

Introducción (Introduction)

Atardecer (Afternoon)

Danza de la molinera (Dance of the Miller’s Wife - Fandango)

Las uvas (The Grapes)

Danza de los vecinoa (The Neighbours’ Dance - Seguidillas)

Danza del molinro (The Miller’s Dance - Farruca)

Danza del Corregidor (The Corregidor’s Dance)

Danza final (Final Dance - Jota)

program subject to change

*indicates approximate performance duration

***West Side Story – Suite for Violin* (arr. Newman)**

Leonard Bernstein

(b. Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1918 / d. New York, 1990)

Newman suite first performed: July 2, 2011 in Jackson Hole, Wyoming

Last ESO performance: Symphony Under the Sky 2018

The initial reception to the Broadway show conceived by Jerome Robbins, based on an updating of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, was pretty good, but not earth-shattering. *West Side Story*, with music by Leonard Bernstein (at the time of the Broadway show's 1957 debut, "Lenny" was as close to a pop star as the American classical music world had), enjoyed a quite respectable run of over 700 performances, and had won two Tonys (none for Bernstein). But since then, it has worked its way into the American cultural landscape in a way that few other stage works have managed. A legitimate classic in its own right, an award-winning film, numerous revivals and countless stagings around the world are a testament to a stature which has only grown over time.

The Bernstein estate is quite protective of this singular work's music, and granted special permission for composer David Newman to adapt some of Bernstein's score into a suite written as a vehicle for American violinist Sarah Chang. In interviews, Ms. Chang has said that the true challenge in creating the suite was in crafting a work that showcased the violin, stayed true to the spirit of the original music, and that satisfied the Bernstein estate. Newman, a violinist himself (and the son of legendary Hollywood composer Alfred Newman), had to get the various rewrites approved both before the work's 2011 premiere, and those subsequent to that.

Newman's suite does not follow the show order, and is based on the Broadway version (as opposed to the Hollywood version). Many of the show's memorable songs ("Somewhere," "Tonight," "I Have a Love," "Maria") are heard, as are a number of the instrumental segments brought to life on stage by Robbins' Tony-winning choreography. ESO Concertmaster Robert Uchida has performed the solo role in this suite before, when the orchestra presented it at last fall's Symphony Under the Sky.

Concerto for Tabla

Dinuk Wijeratne

(b. Sri Lanka, 1978)

First performed: February 9, 2012 in Halifax

This is the ESO premiere of the piece

Program note by the composer:

While the origins of the Tabla are somewhat obscure, it is evident that this “king” of Indian percussion instruments has achieved global popularity for the richness of its timbre, and for the virtuosity of a rhythmically complex repertoire that cannot be separated from the instrument itself. In writing a large-scale work for Tabla and symphony orchestra, it is my hope to allow each entity to preserve its own aesthetic. Perhaps, at the same time, the stage will be set for some new discoveries.

While steeped in tradition, the Tabla lends itself heartily to innovation, and has shown its cultural versatility as an increasingly sought-after instrument in contemporary Western contexts such as Pop, Film Music, and World Music Fusion. This notion led me to conceive of an opening movement that would do the not-so-obvious by placing the Tabla first in a decidedly non-Indian context. Here, initiated by a quasi-Baroque canon in four parts, the music quickly turns into an evocation of one my favourite genres of electronic music: “Drum-&Bass,” characterized by rapid ‘breakbeat’ rhythms in the percussion. Of course, there are some North-Indian Classical musical elements present. The whole makes for a rather bizarre stew that reflects globalization, for better or worse!

A brief second movement becomes a short respite from the energy of the outer movements, and offers a perspective of the Tabla as accompanist in the lyrical world of Indian folk-song. Set in “dheepchandhi,” a rhythmic cycle of 14 beats, the gently lilting gait of the Tabla rhythm supports various melodic fragments that come together to form an ephemeral love-song.

Typically, a Tabla player concluding a solo recital would do so by presenting a sequence of short, fixed (non-improvised) compositions from his/her repertoire. Each mini-composition, multi-faceted as a little gem, would often be presented first in the form of a vocal recitation. The traditional accompaniment would consist of a drone as well as a looping melody outlining the time cycle – a “nagma” – against which the soloist would weave rhythmically intricate patterns of tension and release. I wanted to offer my own take on a such a recital finale, with the caveat that the orchestra is no bystander. In this movement, it is spurred on by the soloist to share in some of the rhythmic complexity. The whole movement is set in “teentaal,” or 16-beat cycle, and in another departure from the traditional norm, my nagma kaleidoscopically changes colour from start to finish. I am indebted to Ed Hanley for helping me choose several “gems” from the Tabla repertoire, although we have certainly had our own fun in tweaking a few, not to mention composing a couple from scratch.

El sombrero de tres picos (The Three-Cornered Hat)

Manuel de Falla

(b. Cádiz, 1876 / d. Alta Gracia, Argentina, 1946)

First performed: July 22, 1919 in London, as a ballet by Ballets russes

Last complete ESO performance: April 2006

Manuel da Falla’s blossoming musical career was already in process when, in 1907, he fulfilled a dream of visiting Paris. His original intention was to stay seven days – he ended up staying seven years. He learned, he listened, he made friends. There was already a strong interest in Spanish music among many Paris-based composers of the day: Ravel, Debussy, Dukas – so they embraced the talented Spaniard warmly. And even though he returned to Spain at the outbreak of the First World War, his links to the French capital remained strong.

So when Sergei Diaghilev, impresario of the Paris-based Ballets russes, commissioned Falla to score a ballet based on a Spanish folk tale, Falla responded by creating what has become one of his best-known works. *El sombrero de tres picos* ("The Three-Cornered Hat") is based on a well-known adaptation by Ruiz de Alarcón of a traditional Andalusian story, another tale in which a working-class couple outfox a stuffy nobleman. Pablo Picasso designed the sets and costumes, and Léonide Massine choreographed. There are sly references throughout the ballet to traditional songs which a Spanish audience would know well, while, as Falla himself said, "My intention has been to evoke, by means of the instrumentation in specific passages, certain guitaristic values."

The story concerns a village magistrate (the Corregidor, whose badge of office is a large, three-cornered hat), who has designs on the miller's pretty wife. Aware of his leering eye, she teases him with a bunch of grapes, leaving him humiliated and seeking revenge. At a party that evening, amid the celebration, the miller himself dances until ominous knocks at the door (a direct quote from Beethoven's Fifth) herald the arrival of soldiers who, on orders from the Corregidor, have come to arrest the miller. The magistrate's own attempt to entice the miller's wife with a dance ends spectacularly badly, and with much confusion and comedy, all is eventually sorted: the miller and his wife happily reunite, and the Corregidor is tossed in a blanket in a whirling Aragonese dance, the Jota.

A solo mezzo-soprano makes two brief appearances in the ballet. During the Introduction, as the colourful scene begins to shouts of "Olé," she sings a sober song of warning. During the miller's dance, she again warns of the entry of the soldiers as the cuckoo clock strikes nine.

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