

simply
symphony
under the **sky**

FESTIVAL FAVOURITES

Friday, September 3 • 7:00 PM

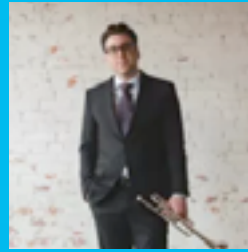
Sunday, September 5 • 7:00 PM



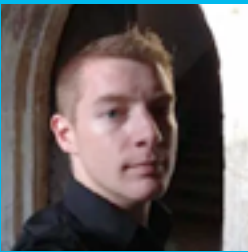
EDMONTON
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA



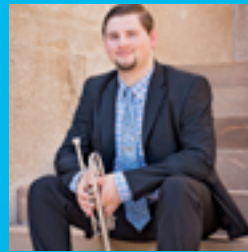
Cosette Justo Valdés
conductor



Robin Doyon
trumpet



Frédéric Payant
trumpet



Miles Thomsen
trumpet



Elizabeth Koch
flute



June Kim
oboe



Eric Buchmann
violin

- ESTACIO** Suite from *King Arthur's Camelot*:
King Arthur and Merlin
- BEETHOVEN** *Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op.67*:
1st movement (Allegro con brio)
- ROSSINI** *William Tell*: Overture – Gallop
- VAUGHAN WILLIAMS** *Sir John in Love*: Fantasia on Greensleeves (ARR. GREAVES)
- MOZART** *Serenade No. 9 in D Major, K.320 "Posthorn"*:
4th movement (Rondeau)
- ANDERSON** *Bugler's Holiday*
- MONTI** *Csárdás*
- INTERMISSION (20 minutes)
- TYSON** *Four Strong Winds* (ARR. LAPALME)
- RODGERS** *The Sound of Music*: selections (ARR. BENNETT)
- TCHAIKOVSKY** *1812 Overture, Op.49*

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 Edmonton-based composer **John Estacio** (b. 1966) to create a score for a full length ballet. Estacio subsequently created a four-movement suite from his music, which the ESO had the privilege of premiering in June 2016.

Program note by the composer:

With a story adapted by Eda Holmes, ***King Arthur's Camelot*** (which premiered on February 13, 2014) 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.

King Arthur and Merlin is the first movement of the suite.

Symphony No. 5 is the work that begins with the most famous four notes in all of music, and its evolution was hinted at by **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-

1827) in sketchbooks as far back as 1803, although the work eventually premiered at a massive all-Beethoven concert in 1808. You'd think that a concert at which such masterpieces as the *Fifth AND Sixth Symphonies*, the *Piano Concerto No. 4*, and other works would have been a concert for the ages – yet many in the audience for it hated the experience. It went on for hours, for one thing, and it took place in December in an unheated Viennese concert hall – an endurance contest for all involved.

The entire first movement, in fact, is built upon the seemingly insignificant foundation of those four very famous notes (three Gs and an E-flat, if you've always wondered) – and you can hear that motif echo in all four movements of the symphony. The opening Allegro

takes the motif and varies it, adds to it – and even subtracts from it! – and manipulates it with genius, creating variety with absolute continuity.

Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868) was a rich and celebrated composer in the Italian *bel canto* tradition – secure enough in his standing that he could afford to “experiment” with his last operatic composition. For it, he turned from *bel canto* to the French grand opera tradition, which is why the opera we know in English as ***William Tell*** was written originally under its French name, *Guillaume Tell*. As this, it premiered to great acclaim in Paris in 1829. The opera itself is a large, long affair, based on the German poet Schiller’s account of the legendary Swiss hero of the 14th century, who rallies his countrymen against

the Austrian occupiers. And while the opera has long since fallen from the standard repertoire, its overture has done anything but. Our associations with the *William Tell Overture* now have very little to do with the opera, but each of its four sections is rich, memorable and make for a thrilling work taken all together.

The gallop which concludes the overture begins with a thrilling call to arms on a trumpet, answered by the other brass. Forever linked now to *The Lone Ranger*, it is one of the most famous melodies in all of music.

Shakespeare featured into music by **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872-1958) throughout his career. He wrote incidental music to productions of *Henry*

IV Part 2, Henry V, Richard II, Richard III, and The Merry Wives of Windsor. The latter play was also the basis for his opera ***Sir John in Love***, first performed in 1928. Vaughan Williams himself penned the libretto and Sir John, of course, is the lovable, bumbling and blustering John Falstaff. In 1934, Ralph Greaves arranged Vaughan Williams' treatment of ***Greensleeves*** (heard in the opera while Alice Ford awaits the arrival of Falstaff), and this fantasia has become likely the most often-played piece Vaughan Williams ever wrote. The darker-toned folksong one hears in the middle of the Fantasia is another old English tune, *Lovely Joan*.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) left his hometown of Salzburg for Vienna, musical capital of

the German-speaking world, in 1781. In doing so, he closed a significant door; he wanted to escape the relative backwater of Salzburg and make a name for himself in the great city of Vienna, but he also knew that the kind of music he had been paid to compose in Salzburg was of a different order than what would impress the cosmopolitan Viennese. Still, there was some good music from the old days, and Mozart's practical side knew that. The many serenades, divertimentos and other "occasional" works written for patrician Salzburg families and intended to be heard once and perhaps never again, included some pieces in which Mozart took some pride. He was determined they should not be lost. Among those was the ***"Posthorn" Serenade in D Major***, composed in 1779 to mark the end of the Salzburg school year.

Mozart would later adapt movements from the original into works for the Viennese, to great success.

In its original guise, the serenade is in seven movements and is scored for timpani, strings, and pairs of flutes, oboes, bassoons, horns, and trumpets. Movement four is a Rondeau (Mozart often used the French spelling “rondeau” when his movements like this were in a French style), with a sprightly and short main theme interspersed with charming conversations for flute and oboe.

Leroy Anderson (1908-1975) is the king of the orchestral pops miniature. He wrote dozens of them, and many of them have become standards. Written to order for any number of occasions, Anderson’s works

often spotlighted various solo instruments, often in lighthearted ways which took advantage of each instrument's characteristics. The blend of three solo trumpets harmonizing is illustrated to great effect in ***Bugler's Holiday***, written in 1954.

The **Czárdás** is a traditional Hungarian folk dance, yet the most famous example of it was composed by an Italian, **Vittorio Monti** (1868-1922), in 1904. You'll know the tune as soon as you hear it, and you'll also know it as a whirling and bravura piece for violins. In only five minutes, the piece still travels a diverse seven sections, moving from D minor to D Major and back again throughout. Monti's work has been arranged for nearly every instrumental combination one could think of, yet its version for violin soloist and orchestra is

probably the most famous, and a virtuoso display for the violin.

Canada's contribution to what is called "pop music" is at least as long, as varied, and as noteworthy as any country's. In 2007, the Edmonton Symphony presented a gift to our province when it commissioned the talented Music Director of the Red Deer Symphony, Claude Lapalme, to arrange one of Canada's best pop songs for orchestra. And what better – or more obvious – choice than the unofficial anthem of Alberta, **Ian Tyson's** (b. 1933) iconic ***Four Strong Winds***? Since its debut at Symphony Under the Sky, this moving orchestration has become an ESO staple.

The Sound of Music was the final Broadway

collaboration for the legendary team of **Richard Rodgers** (1902-1979) and **Oscar Hammerstein II** (1895-1960). It opened on Broadway on November 16, 1959, and Hammerstein died only nine months into the show's three-year run. Nominated for eight Tony awards, it won five, including Best Musical. The 1965 film version won five Academy Awards, including one for Irwin Kostal's adaptation of Rodgers' music. Both the musical and the film have gone on to cult status, and are filled with some of the most famous songs from any Broadway show. We'll hear melodies from many of them in this arrangement by one of the great unsung heroes of Broadway – Robert Russell Bennett.

Constantly plagued by self-doubt, **Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840-1893) released his music to the

world almost with reluctance, and in the case of some works, tinged with regret. And while the celebratory work which has come to be known as the **1812 Overture** is one of his most-performed, most-loved pieces, he disliked it almost from the outset.

“The Overture will be very noisy,” Tchaikovsky wrote his patroness, Nadezhda von Meck. “I wrote it without much enthusiasm. It has no great artistic value.” This may seem overly self-critical, but to be fair

many a composer has chafed under commissions which mandated a strict format. Tchaikovsky was asked to create a work marking the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Borodino in September 1812, at which

the army of Napoleon, which had penetrated far into Russia, was at last beaten back. The occasion of the 1872 celebration was the outdoor consecration of the Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, so a large, dynamic work was called for.

The Russian hymn *God Preserve Thy People* forms the trenchant opening, depicting the peacefulness of the Russian people which is then attacked by the army of Napoleon. *Le Marseillaise*, the French national anthem, is quoted in snatches, representing the strikes of the French attack. While undoubtedly a pastiche work that under-used Tchaikovsky's immense gifts, the overture is nonetheless a bracing and exciting orchestral tour de force. As Russian tunes gradually overwhelm the French, the victory

is made clear in the pealing of bells and the use of the *Tsar's Theme*, the Russian national anthem at the time. The triumphant march theme, heard earlier on, returns as the grand climax, complete with blazing cannons sealing the victory for the Russian people, and bringing the work to its utterly thrilling climax.

Support the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra

[**Click Here to Donate**](#)