

Hear Together

2021/22 Season



EDMONTON
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

HAYDN, BACH & WAGNER

Friday, October 1 • 7:30 PM

Saturday, October 2 • 7:30 PM

Sunday, October 3 • 2:30 PM



HAYDN, BACH & WAGNER

October 1 – 3



FEATURED MUSICIANS:



Alexander Prior
Conductor



Robert Uchida
Violin and Leader



Eric Buchmann
Violin

HAYDN, BACH & WAGNER

October 1 – 3



J.S. BACH

*Concerto for Two Violins in D minor,
BWV 1043:*

Largo, ma non tanto

WAGNER

Siegfried Idyll

HAYDN

Symphony No. 104 in D Major "London":

Adagio – Allegro

Andante

Menuet: Allegro – Trio – Menuet

Finale: Spiritoso

Concerto for Two Violins in D minor, BWV 1043:

Largo, ma non tanto

Johann Sebastian Bach

(b. Halle, 1685 / d. Leipzig, 1750)

First performed:

c. 1720, though a definitive date is unknown

Last ESO performance of the complete concerto:

February 2013

While employed at Prince Leopold's court in Cöthen, Johann Sebastian Bach was largely freed from the constant need to create church music and, as a consequence, it was during this time (1717-1723) that he wrote the bulk of his purely instrumental music. A decent violinist himself, it is believed Bach wrote this double concerto for Joseph Spiess and Martin

Friedrich Marcus of the court orchestra. The D minor key paints the overall mood of the piece in a darker hue.

The Largo is a surprise to many who do not think of direct, beautiful melodies as a Bach trademark. A plaintive Siciliano 12/8 tempo gently rocks this movement along, the violins weaving delicate textures around each other to warm chords from the orchestra.

Siegfried Idyll

Richard Wagner

(b. Leipzig, 1813 / d. Venice, 1883)

First performed: December 25, 1870, at Tribschen

Last ESO performance: February 2018

In the history of romantic Christmas gifts, it is probably wise to cede first prize to Richard Wagner – topping it would take some doing. Following the 1869 birth of Siegfried, his son with his second wife Cosima, Wagner conceived the idea of composing a piece of music inspired by the happy event. He kept it secret from Cosima, and when the family spent the Christmas of 1870 at Tribschen, on the shores of Lake Lucerne in Switzerland, he rehearsed the

musicians away from their villa – even to the extent of rehearsing on a boat on the lake. Wagner scored the work for 13 instruments, including a brief solo trumpet part played at its premiere by conductor Hans Richter.

And what a premiere! Cosima awoke Christmas morning to the sounds of the music, played by the musicians who lined the stairs of the villa. The work became known as the *Siegfried Idyll*, and while Wagner intended the piece to be kept private, he did eventually publish the work in 1878. Today, it is typically performed by a larger orchestra. This afternoon's version features pairs of clarinets and horns, along with single flute, oboe, bassoon, and trumpet, with strings.

Symphony No. 104 in D Major “London”

Franz Josef Haydn

(b. Rohrau, Lower Austria, 1732 / d. Paris, 1809)

First performed: May 4, 1795 in London

Last ESO performance: June 2009

The last dozen of Josef Haydn’s 104 symphonies are, collectively, known as the London Symphonies. One of Europe’s most celebrated composers even during his lifetime, Haydn spent some of his golden years travelling, and being fêted, throughout the continent. He visited London twice during that time, at the invitation of impresario Johann Peter Salomon. It was while in England that the grand elder statesman of music (he was already known by this time as “Papa”

Haydn) was bestowed with several honours, and wrote new and eagerly-anticipated symphonies for many of these occasions.

The final symphony he wrote is separately distinguished from the other 11 London Symphonies with the designation as the *“London” Symphony*.

Who knows? Maybe when you are trying to provide evocative descriptors for nearly a 104 of them, you run out of original ideas after the first few dozen.

It is to Haydn’s great credit as a musical genius that, even in his twilight years, he did not settle, or become old-fashioned in his compositions. As time and trends changed, he adapted and even embraced the changes, recognizing the worth of new ideas

and those who espoused them. He certainly saw the awesome genius of Mozart before many did, and his *104th Symphony* is reminiscent of Mozart's innovative symphonic style.

The almost operatically dramatic opening in D minor leads into the first movement, dominated by a driving, insistent main theme – matched against an altogether more restrained and elegant one. The second movement is a gently paced Andante, whose serene nature is interrupted periodically by some surprisingly dark moments, echoing the drama of the opening of the first movement. There is a good-natured bluster to the Menuet, which opens and closes the third movement. In between, there is a trio section borne aloft on airy strings and light woodwind

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accents. The finale is marked “Spiritoso,” and while it begins somewhat gently, that “spirited” nature soon dominates the movement, one in which the sense of joy and vivacity is irresistible.

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