

BEETHOVEN, MOZART, & MENDELSSOHN

August 23 & 25, 2023 • 7:00 PM

Symphony at Snow Valley presented by RE/MAX

Featuring:

Robert Bernhardt, conductor – *see bio on page 4.*

Angela Ryu, violin (ESO Debut) – *see bio on page 5.*

To read the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra roster, see page 6.

MOZART

The Marriage of Figaro, K.492: Overture

(4')*

MENDELSSOHN

Violin Concerto in E minor, Op.64

(30')*

I - Allegro molto appassionato

II - Andante

III - Allegro non troppo – Allegro molto vivace

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op.92

(36')*

I - Poco sostenuto – Vivace

II - Allegretto

III - Presto

IV - Allegro con brio

Program subject to change.

*indicates approximate performance duration

The Marriage of Figaro, K.492: Overture

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

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

Opera premiered: May 1, 1786, in Vienna

Last ESO performance of the overture: Symphony Under the Sky 2022

Le nozze di Figaro (“The Marriage of Figaro”) was a major hit for 30-year-old Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The story is based on the play by Beaumarchais (1732-1799), which caused a stir at its early performances (Louis XVI banned it after he read it), as it aims its barbs squarely at the aristocracy. It is a sequel to the Figaro story told in *The Barber of Seville*. The opera was the first of three collaborations between Mozart and the masterful librettist Lorenzo da Ponte. It played in Prague following its 1786 Vienna premiere, and Mozart happily wrote home that the whole town seemed to be whistling the opera’s tunes. While not quoting from any of the opera’s themes (a practice that was still decades away), the brisk overture is full of the mischief that features so much in the story of the opera itself.

Violin Concerto in E minor, Op.64

Felix Mendelssohn

(b. Hamburg, 1809 / d. Leipzig, 1847)

First performed: March 13, 1845, in Leipzig

Last ESO performance: November 2019

Felix Mendelssohn arrived in the world at a house in Hamburg where, only a year later, in that very same house, a boy named Ferdinand David was born. Mendelssohn became one of the greatest composers and conductors of his day, while David became one of its most gifted violinists. The two also developed a close friendship after they first met when Mendelssohn was 16 and David 15.

In 1835, the 26-year-old Mendelssohn, as the new conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, appointed David to the position of concertmaster. In 1838, Mendelssohn wrote to his friend, “I should like to write a violin concerto for you next winter.” Work on the concerto was slow, however, and it was not completed until 1844. David, naturally enough, assisted greatly with the violin passages, and in all likelihood shaped the lion’s share of the cadenzas. The work finally premiered on March 13, 1845, but while David was indeed the soloist, illness kept Mendelssohn from conducting.

All three movements are played without a pause. After only a single bar from the orchestra, the violin makes its entrance, stating the elegant and passionate first subject. Violin and orchestra develop this, as well as a countersubject. The second principal theme of the movement is first presented on flutes and clarinets, over the violin’s sustained low G. The development of this material is lavish, including some transcendent passages for the soloist.

The second movement also begins with only the briefest of orchestral introductions, ushering in a solo violin passage that ranks as one of Mendelssohn’s most poignant melodies. The second subject contrasts with an agitated feel, but the violin restores the serenity of the movement by the end. A brief Allegretto non troppo leads to the vivacious and spirited Rondo finale, with a principal theme that is quintessential Mendelssohn: sprightly and effervescent, a vibrant conclusion to a work that stands as a cornerstone of the violin repertoire.

Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op.92 **Ludwig van Beethoven**

(b. Bonn, 1770 / d. Vienna, 1827)

First performed: December 8, 1813, in Vienna

Last ESO performance: February 2015

Beethoven's sketchbooks tell us that he actually began formulating ideas for what would become his *Seventh Symphony* even before the fifth and sixth, but he did not gather them into their final form until 1813. After the titanic architecture of the fifth and the personal salute to nature in the sixth, the *A Major Symphony* might be thought as almost impersonal – but that does it very little justice.

The two paramount features of this symphony are rhythm, and the relationship between the keys of A Major, F Major and C Major. The long, slow introduction establishes this tonal relationship, touching on all these keys. And when the A Major Vivace finally emerges, the underpinning rhythmic drive is irresistible. As with all the other movements, there is a steady, rhythmic ostinato prominently beating under this movement, interrupted only with the introduction of a beautiful, pastoral theme first presented by a solo flute. But as it is taken up by the orchestra, its pace quickens, and it also becomes part of the dance. These two melodic ideas dominate the rest of the movement.

The famous second movement, in the tonic minor, is so stately, ceremonial, and beautiful, it often accompanies such occasions as funerals. But it is marked Allegretto, so it is often slowed to a pace to which Beethoven might have viewed as overly slow. After a solemn chord, this movement's obligato is introduced, a long-short-short-long-long pulse that is presented several times, soon complemented by a beautiful and deceptively straightforward theme in the violas and cellos. The passion builds, though the rhythm remains constant, until the opening obligato pulse is loudly proclaimed by the entire orchestra. The mood softens again, and the movement concludes quietly.

The third movement is a Scherzo and Trio in the key of F Major – recalling the key relationship from the symphony's introduction. The Scherzo theme (again, listen for the rhythmic pattern over which the theme is played) is first heard in the oboe, for all the world sounding like it is laughing. The Trio, cast in D Major, is in a slower tempo, a syncopated three-note figure over held notes in the upper strings. The Trio repeats twice, and sounds as if it will return again, only to be interrupted rudely (and with rough good humour) by the Scherzo, which hastens the movement to its end.

The finale should, by all the "rules," be in A Major – and it will be. But it doesn't start there – we're actually in C Major (completing the reference back to the introduction) and it is in high spirits and a lot of musical busy-ness that, with great propulsive energy, we eventually arrive at a thunderous theme in A Major, played first on the horns with strings underneath, then immediately after by the strings with the horns providing the pulse. This theme becomes the main one, though other ideas are presented briefly. So important is rhythm to this work that Wagner famously dubbed this symphony "the apotheosis of the dance."

Program notes © 2023 by D.T. Baker.

Biographies

Robert Bernhardt

Conductor

Since his debut in 2006, when he first fell in love with the ESO and the City of Edmonton, Bob Bernhardt has been a popular and welcomed guest several times each season. Whether for Classics, Pops, Specials or Symphony Under the Sky, he delights in his work with the orchestra, and in entertaining its audiences.

His 40-plus years of experience – as a Music Director, in the opera pit, and in Pops – gives him a unique perspective on all of his work. As a musical omnivore, he has rarely met any music he doesn't love.

In the 2021-22 season, Bob celebrated a remarkable milestone: his 40th anniversary with the Louisville Orchestra, where he continues as Principal Pops Conductor. He is concurrently Principal Pops Conductor of the Grand Rapids Symphony (his 10th year) and Music Director Emeritus of the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera (his 31st year).

Formerly, he was Principal Conductor/Artistic Director of the Rochester Philharmonic, Music Director and Conductor of the Tucson Symphony, Music Director and Conductor of the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera, Principal Guest Conductor of Kentucky Opera, Music Director and Conductor of the Amarillo Symphony, and Artistic Director of the Lake Placid Sinfonietta.

He made his debut with the Boston Pops in 1992 at John Williams' invitation and has returned there often. He's appeared frequently as a guest conductor with the Baltimore Symphony, the Detroit Symphony, the Cincinnati Pops, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Dallas Symphony, the Seattle Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony, the Pacific Symphony, the Florida Orchestra, the Las Vegas Philharmonic, the Fort Worth Symphony, the Santa Barbara Symphony, and many others.

He has worked with scores of stars in the musical universe, from Kelli O'Hara to Brian Stokes Mitchell; from the B-52s and Ben Folds to Wynonna and Ricky Skaggs; from Renee Fleming to Emanuel Ax; from Randy Newman and Jason Alexander to Ne-Yo!

A lover of opera, he conducted productions with Kentucky Opera for 18 consecutive seasons, and for 19 seasons with his own company in Chattanooga, as well as many guest conducting engagements with the Nashville Opera.

He received his Masters degree with Honors from the University of Southern California's School of Music, studying primarily with Daniel Lewis. He received his BA-Fine Arts degree from Union College in Schenectady, NY, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa, Summa cum laude, an Academic All-American Baseball Player, and was captain of the soccer team. He lives with his wife, Nora, in Signal Mountain, Tennessee.

Angela Ryu

Violin (ESO Debut)

Canadian violinist, Angela Ryu, is an emerging young artist committed to connecting music with her audiences worldwide. Angela began her musical studies at the age of five in New Denver, British Columbia and spent her formative years in Calgary, Alberta with William van der Sloot at the Mount Royal Conservatory.

She is a prizewinner of several national competitions including First Prize and Prize for the Best Performance of the Test Piece at the Shean Strings Competition, First Prize at the Canadian Music Competition, and the Grand Prize at the National Music Festival. Most recently, Angela received First Prize at the Tuesday Musical Club Young Artist Competition and was a semi-finalist of the Klein International Strings Competition and Washington International Competition for Strings. Angela has enjoyed performing across Canada and the United States receiving fellowships from the Aspen Music Festival and School, Toronto Summer Music and the Tanglewood Music Center. Named one of CBC's "30 Hot Classical Musicians Under 30", Angela has soloed with the Calgary Civic Symphony, the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and will perform the Sibelius Violin Concerto with the Shepherd Symphony Orchestra under Hans Graf this October.

Currently, Ms. Ryu studies with Paul Kantor at Rice University, Shepherd School of Music where she received her Bachelor of Music degree and is continuing her Master of Music degree with support from the Dorothy Richard Starling Foundation.

Meet the Musicians

Michael Stern, Artistic Advisor

Cosette Justo Valdés, Resident Conductor and Community Ambassador

William Eddins, Music Director Emeritus, Conductor

Violin I

Robert Uchida, Concertmaster

The John & Barbara Poole Family Concertmaster Chair

Eric Buchmann, Associate Concertmaster

Broderick Olson

Ewald Cheung

Joanna Ciapka-Sangster

Susan Flook

Laura Veeze

Anna Kozak

Aiyana Anderson-Howatt

Anita Walsh

Violin II

Dianne New – Principal

Susan Flook – Assistant Principal

Heather Bergen

Zoë Sellers

Yue Deng

Danielle Greene

Buon Park

Yeeun Ha

Viola

Keith Hamm – Principal

Ethan Filner – Assistant Principal

Clayton Leung

Rhonda Henshaw

Stefan Jungkind

Cello

Rafael Hoekman – Principal

The Stuart & Winona Davis Principal Cello Chair

Julie Hereish – Assistant Principal

Ronda Metszies

Meran Currie-Roberts

Derek Gomez

Victor Pipkin

Bass

Hilda Cowie – Principal

Janice Quinn – Acting Assistant Principal

Douglas Ohashi

Rob Aldridge

Flute

Elizabeth Koch – Principal

Oboe

June Kim – Principal

Paul Schieman – Assistant Principal

The Steven & Day LePoole Assistant Principal Oboe Chair

Clarinet

Julianne Scott – Principal

David Quinn – Assistant Principal

Bassoon

Bianca Chambul – Principal

Edith Stacey – Assistant Principal

Horn

Allene Hackleman – Principal

Megan Evans – Assistant Principal

Donald Plumb – Assistant Principal

Trumpet

Robin Doyon – Principal

Frédéric Payant – Assistant Principal

Trombone

John McPherson – Principal

Kathryn Macintosh – Assistant Principal

Bass Trombone

Tyler Cairns – Acting Principal

Tuba

Scott Whetham – Principal

Timpani

Barry Nemish – Principal

Harp

Nora Bumanis – Principal

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