

BRITTEN & DVOŘÁK

November 17,* 18, & 19,** 2023 • 2:00 PM / 7:30 PM

*Friday Classics presented by Lexus of Edmonton

**Sunday Classics presented by The Robbins Foundation

Featuring:

Dinis Sousa, conductor – see *bio on page 4*.

Laura Veeze, violin – see *bio on page 5*.

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

BRITTEN

Peter Grimes: Four Sea Interludes, Op.33a

(17')*

I - Dawn

II - Sunday Morning

III - Moonlight

IV - Storm

CHAUSSON

Poème for Violin and Orchestra in E-flat Major, Op.25

(16')*

INTERMISSION (20 minutes)

DVOŘÁK

Symphony No. 7 in D minor, Op.70

(36')*

I - Allegro maestoso

II - Poco adagio

III - Scherzo: Vivace

IV - Finale: Allegro

Program subject to change.

*indicates approximate performance duration

Peter Grimes: Four Sea Interludes, Op.33a

Benjamin Britten

(b. Lowestoft, 1913 / d. Aldeburgh, 1976)

First performed: The opera *Peter Grimes* premiered June 7, 1945, in London. The Four Sea Interludes as a suite premiered the following week, on June 13, 1945, in Cheltenham.

Last ESO performance: February 2013

With the success of the opera *Peter Grimes*, Benjamin Britten revived English opera to a level it had not seen since the death of Henry Purcell, exactly 250 years before. Based on a part of George Crabbe's poem *The Borough*, Britten and librettist Montagu Slater fleshed out the villainous character of Crabbe's version into a man absolutely at odds with the world. It was a subject, Britten said later, "very close to my heart – the struggle of the individual against the masses. The more vicious the society, the more vicious the individual."

The story centres around a fictional town on the east coast of England, where Grimes is a fisherman. The sea, therefore, plays an integral role in the unfolding drama, and is given special focus in the opera's music. While serving principally as entr'actes, much of the purely orchestral music Britten wrote for the opera evokes the sea as a metaphor for the overwhelming tide of fate which no one, particularly Grimes, can escape. Following the opera's premiere, Britten extracted this music from his score and created a stand-alone suite for the concert hall, called *Four Sea Interludes* and, as the opera had been published as Opus 33, the suite was labeled Op.33a. The sequence of the movements for the concert hall gives a symphonic cohesion to the suite, which begins with the shimmering Dawn. Sunday Morning is an Allegro in which a spritely and even optimistic dance is constantly intruded upon by ominous, dissonant, slightly off-rhythm accents. Moonlight is the third section, a gentle idyll in which a beautiful processional theme builds slowly in grandeur, then departs in an aura of uncertainty and resignation. The final movement is a Storm, churning and roiling menacingly, the timpani pounding out the rhythm of the waves. The central section becomes uneasily quiet, but the final moments bring back the violence and menace in their final, crashing chords.

Poème for Violin and Orchestra in E-flat Major, Op.25

Ernest Chausson

(b. Paris, 1855 / d. Limay, 1899)

First performed: December 27, 1896, in Nancy

Last ESO performance: October 2019

As French music moved on from its obsession with Richard Wagner's new tonal world to the pastel symbolism of Debussy and his contemporaries, it is possible that Ernest Chausson could have had an even more important role to play than he did. Unfortunately, his life was ended too soon; a bicycle accident at the age of 44 silenced an important emerging voice in late 19th century Parisian music. He had spent much of his life in the fortunate position of not needing to make his living via music. The son of a well-to-do family, he got a degree in law while indulging his passion – music – as a sideline. Wagner acolytes Franck and d'Indy were major mentors for him, and he joined a group of other French musical luminaries that included Saint-Saëns, Debussy, and the violinist Eugène Ysaÿe. It was for the latter that Chausson composed his most famous work, the *Poème for Violin and Orchestra*.

Ysaÿe had originally asked Chausson for a concerto, but it is thought that the composer was at the time taken with a novel by Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883), which concerned a doomed love

triangle. An early sketch of the work was even subtitled “Le chant de l’amour triomphant” (“The Song of Love Triumphant”), and indeed the layout of the *Poème* is in five sections (like a classical tragedy, perhaps), alternating slow, dreamlike sequences with more animated second and fourth episodes. While a favourite work for violinists now, Chausson had significant doubts about it, and in fact it was his friend, composer Isaac Albéniz, who paid for the work’s publication out of his own pocket.

Symphony No. 7 in D minor, Op.70

Antonín Dvořák

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

First performed: April 22, 1885, in London

Last ESO performance: November 2019

Two main sparks lit Antonín Dvořák’s inspiration for composing his *Seventh Symphony*. The first was the wildly enthusiastic reception accorded his *Stabat mater* when it was presented in England in 1883. Its success led to invitations from numerous musical societies for Dvořák to return. Being made an honorary member of the Philharmonic Society of London gave Dvořák the impetus to have a new symphony ready for his next visit.

The other spark was ignited when Dvořák first heard the *Symphony in F Major* (No. 3), composed by his friend and mentor Johannes Brahms. It left a powerful effect on Dvořák, as well as giving him an artistic standard at which to aim. “Everywhere I go,” he wrote his friend Antonín Rus, “I think of nothing else but my work, which must be such as to shake the world, and with God’s help it will be so.”

It seems to have worked. The symphony was received rapturously at its premiere and is still regarded by many as Dvořák’s finest symphony. Its D minor home key lends it an air of serious purpose, beautiful as the music is. There is an elusive mysteriousness to the opening: restless and searching until the orchestral forces coalesce into a rolling main theme which, having finally announced itself, withdraws to make way for the more bucolic second theme, heard first in the woodwinds. The Development cleverly intertwines the two ideas, although the movement’s climax brings back the broader main theme. The coda echoes the uncertain yearning of the opening – quiet and expectant.

The slow movement begins organically from this hushed conclusion. Woodwinds, again, take the lead in music that flows unhurried and across a varied landscape. Dvořák actually revised this movement following its London premiere, cutting a substantial number of bars until its proportions aligned with the work as a whole. “Not a superfluous note,” he assured his publisher.

The Scherzo brims with Dvořák’s Bohemian nature – the main song has the rhythmic elements of a Slavonic dance – more town than country, perhaps. By contrast, the Trio section – also ushered in on the woodwinds – has more of the woods and meadows in its swirling colours. The final movement begins, as the opening movement does, in an air of mystery, out of which emerges a ceremonial theme, punctured by timpani and fraught with turbulence. A countersubject seems to emerge out of material from this opening, altering the mood and rhythm. Its alliance to the main theme allows for a clever counterpoint as the Development continues, and the conclusion is, if not radiantly happy or joyous, strong and resolute.

Program notes © 2023 by D.T. Baker

Biographies

Dinis Sousa

Conductor

Dinis Sousa's inaugural season as Principal Conductor of the Royal Northern Sinfonia culminated in his BBC Proms debut with the orchestra in August 2022, following a critically acclaimed season during which they earned praise for their "incisive, ultra-passionate playing" (The Times) and worked with soloists such as Elisabeth Leonskaja, Anastasia Kobekina, and Louis Schwizgebel. Highlights of the coming season include multiple projects with Dame Sarah Connolly, Beethoven's Triple Concerto with Nicola Benedetti, Benjamin Grosvenor, and Sheku Kanneh-Mason, as well as a concert at the Tongyeong Festival in Korea.

Dinis is also the Founder and Artistic Director of Orquestra XXI, an award-winning orchestra which brings together some of the best young Portuguese musicians from around Europe. Orquestra XXI has already established itself as one of the leading performing groups in Portugal, appearing regularly in its main concert halls. Recent highlights include opening the Gulbenkian Foundation season and appearing at Centro Cultural de Belém's festival "Dias da Música" for a televised concert with Orquestra XXI and the Gulbenkian Choir, performing Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri*.

Dinis has worked closely with Sir John Eliot Gardiner and his ensembles — the English Baroque Soloists, Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and the Monteverdi Choir — culminating in his appointment as the Monteverdi Choir & Orchestras' first-ever Assistant Conductor in 2018. Highlights of his tenure include co-conducting the Monteverdi Choir in Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette* at the BBC Proms, and conducting the English Baroque Soloists in Colombia.

As a guest-conductor, recent and forthcoming highlights include projects with the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Euskadiko Orkestra, Edmonton Symphony, BBC Philharmonic, Ulster Orchestra, and Sinfonietta Riga. In summer 2022, he made his Nevill Holt Opera debut (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) and his USA debut conducting two programmes at the Bach Carmel Festival. Dinis' core repertoire is firmly rooted in the Classical to early Romantic eras — with recent performances of Beethoven, Berlioz, Brahms, Schumann, Mozart — but he also regularly conducts a wide range of music from Bach and Rameau through to 20th century and new music.

Dinis studied conducting with Sian Edwards and Timothy Redmond and piano with Philip Jenkins and Martin Roscoe at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he was Conducting Fellow. While at Guildhall, he conducted several different projects, including Bach's *St. John Passion* at Milton Court and a staged production of Harrison Birtwistle's *Down* by the Greenwood Side at the Silk Street Theatre.

In recognition of his work with Orquestra XXI, Dinis was awarded the title of Knight of the Order of Prince Henry in Portugal.

Laura Veeze

Violin

Dutch violinist and violist Laura Veeze has reached audiences on three continents as a soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician. She has held Principal Second Violin positions with the Radio Chamber Philharmonic in the Netherlands and with Symphony Nova Scotia in Canada. In addition to her position with the First Violins of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, she is Concertmaster of the Chamber Orchestra of Edmonton, and Principal Second Violin of the Alberta Baroque Ensemble.

As a chamber musician, Ms. Veeze was a member of the piano trio Ensemble Pavone, the Blue Engine String Quartet in Nova Scotia, and is a frequent guest artist at festivals such as Music by the Sea, Great Lakes International Summer Music Institute, Summer Solstice Music Festival, Scotia Festival, Musique Royale, New Music Edmonton, Early Music Alberta, and the Acadia Summer Strings Festival.

Ms. Veeze also enjoys playing baroque violin and viola, and is currently on faculty at the Alberta Conservatory. She studied in Amsterdam and New York with Alexander Kerr and Sylvia Rosenberg. Laura is married to ESO Concertmaster Robert Uchida, and they enjoy the wonderful Edmonton community with their children, Marten and Noemi.

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

Laura Veeze

Anna Kozak

Aiyana Anderson-Howatt

Anita Walsh

Violin II

Dianne New – Principal

Susan Flook – Assistant Principal

Heather Bergen

Yue Deng

Danielle Greene

Buon Park

Yeeun Ha

Zoë Sellers (on leave)

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 Metzies

Meran Currie-Roberts

Victor Pipkin

Bass

Hilda Cowie – Principal

Chris Jones – Acting Assistant Principal

Janice Quinn

Rob Aldridge

Chantel Leung

Douglas Ohashi (on leave)

*The ESO works in proud partnership with the AF of M
(American Federation of Musicians of the United States
and Canada) Local 390.*

Flute

Elizabeth Koch – Principal

Sarah Pollard – Assistant 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

Ryan Garbett – 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 – Principal

Tuba

Scott Whetham – Principal

Timpani

Barry Nemish – Principal

Percussion

Martin Bui – Principal

Harp

Nora Bumanis – Principal