

Welcome friends to the opening concerts of the 2018-2019 Starlight Symphony Orchestra season!

"All About That Solo Bass" is a celebration of the orchestral double bass. It is one of the fundamental instruments of the orchestra and is rarely heard as a solo instrument. Our opening concerts feature our principal bassist, Andrew Rogers in a performance of Giovanni Bottesini's Concerto in A minor. This is a Romantic period work with a stunningly difficult solo part. Also on the program are other 19<sup>th</sup> century blockbusters! Verdi's overture to *La Forza del Destino*, Smetana's *Moldau*, and Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody No.2*. The program is designed to wake you into the new season. Hold on to your seats and enjoy the ride.

### **Verdi, *La Forza del Destino***

Our concert opens with Giuseppe Verdi's powerful overture to *La Forza del Destino*. This is translated as "The Power of Fate" (often also translated as "The Force of Destiny"). The overture begins with the three chords presenting the "fate" motive. The opera itself is serious and dark and some of the powerful musical moments are highlighted in the overture. With this opera, there is plenty of drama. The moral from the opera is that one cannot avoid the fate of destiny. This overture can leave chills.

### **Smetana, *Má Vlast, No.2 Moldau***

This work is an amazing single part of a set of six symphonic poems. *Má Vlast* is translated as "My Homeland" in the Czech language. The *Moldau* is the name of a river and this work uses tone painting to describe sounds of the river *Vltava* which translated to English is "Moldau."

Smetana himself described this work, "The composition describes the course of the Vltava, starting from the two small springs, the Cold and Warm Vltava, to the unification of both streams into a single current, the course of the Vltava through woods and meadows, through landscapes where a farmer's wedding is celebrated, the round dance of the mermaids in the night's moonshine: on the nearby rocks loom proud castles, palaces and ruins aloft. The Vltava swirls into the St. John's Rapids; then it widens and flows toward Prague, past the Vyšehrad, and then majestically vanishes into the distance, ending at the Labe" (or Elbe, in German, which is a major river in Central Europe).

When listening to the music, close your eyes and imagine the small tributaries forming into streams then to rivers and gathering a current, then to rapids. This is a delightful use of tone painting.

### **Bottesini, Concerto in A minor**

Giovanni Bottesini was considered the Paganini of the double bass. He was a virtuoso player and also a conductor and composer. For operas that he conducted, he would go on stage during intermission and play fantasies on the evenings' opera with his bass.

The A minor concerto is a dramatic concerto with focus on the players virtuosity and expressiveness. The lyrical style of the concerto brings out the largely unfamiliar song-like nature of the double bass. If you have been to a recent Starlight Symphony fundraiser, then

likely you have heard our soloist play an unaccompanied solo in the background. If you were there, you know you are in for a treat with Andrew Rogers on bass.

### **Liszt, Hungarian Rhapsody No.2**

Pianist Franz Liszt was highly influenced with Hungarian folk music and other local music he heard as a child. As you will quickly hear, his grasp of gypsy-styled music with rhythmic spontaneity is captivating. Liszt wrote 19 rhapsodies for piano. Of those 19, only 6 were orchestrated. This one is by far the most famous orchestration of his set. The opening has a brief dramatic introduction, after which it continues with a slow Hungarian folk dance. The pace is picked up quickly and the dance is on! Liszt frequently reminds the listener of the dramatic gypsy feel when the second part picks up in a quick pace. The work continues with these fantastic reminders of historical gypsy music when the end is presented with three great chords followed by three quick notes.

Enjoy the music. We prepared it especially for you.

*David Oertel*

**Overture to *La Forza Del Destino***

**Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)**

***Má Vlast, No.2: Moldau***

**Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884)**

### ***Intermission***

**Concerto in A Minor**

**Giovanni Bottesini (1821-1889)**

I. **Moderato**

II. **Andante**

III. **Allegro**

Andrew Rogers, double bass

**Hungarian Rhapsody No.2**

**Franz Liszt (1811-1886)**