

Livermore-Amador Symphony

Lara Webber, Music Director & Conductor

Arthur P. Barnes, Music Director Emeritus

Saturday, December 6, 2014, 8 p.m.

Bankhead Theater, Livermore



MUSIC OF THE VALLEY

Musical Masterpieces

Prelude Talk at 7 p.m. by Lara Webber

Academic Festival Overture

Opus 80 (1880)

Peer Gynt Suites

selections from Opp. 23, 46, and 55 (1875–1891)

Prelude
Ingrid's Lament
The Death of Ase
Morning
Arabian Dance
Anitra's Dance
In the Hall of the Mountain King

Johannes Brahms

(1833–1897)

Edvard Grieg

(1843–1907)

INTERMISSION

Presentation of student awards by Denise Leddon, LAS Association president, to Dana Anex, Ethan Ha, Jennifer Jo, and Alice Williams

Symphony No. 8

Opus 88, B. 163 (1889)

I. Allegro con brio
II. Adagio
III. Allegretto grazioso – Molto vivace
IV. Allegro ma non troppo

Antonín Dvořák

(1841–1904)

CONDUCTOR

Lara Webber

FIRST VIOLIN

Kristina Anderson
Concertmaster

Norman Back
JoAnn Cox
Laurel Dahlgren
Judy Eckart
Daniel Gibbard*
Ethan Ha*
Susan Ivie
Doug Morrison
Anthony Westrope*

SECOND VIOLIN

Ursula Goldstein
Principal
Ajan Adriano*
Gale Anderson
Stephanie Black
Mary Burchett
Lisa Burkhart
Jeana Ernst
Denise Leddon

Jacqueline McBride

Virginia McFann
Nissa Nack
Leslie Stevens
Beth Wilson

VIOLA

Judy Beck
Principal
Lynda Alvarez
Adrian Boiangiu
Karen Connolly
David Friburg
Audrey Horning
Jessica Hurst*
Dora Scott

CELLO

Aaron Urton
Principal
Naomi Adams
Jim Aikin
Pip Fenton
Muriel Haupt
Hildi Kang
Joanne Lenigan
Paul Pappas
Sharon Schumacher
Joseph Swenson

STRING BASS

Nick James
Principal
Alan Frank
Ray Hoobler
Patricia Lay

FLUTE

Marianne Beeler
Nan Davies
Lisa Maher

PICCOLO

Nan Davies

OBOE

Eva Langfeldt
Jeff Lenigan

ENGLISH HORN

Eva Langfeldt

CLARINET

Lesley Watson
Kathy Boster

BASSOON

Doug Stark
Lynn Stasko

HORN

Christine-Ann Immesoete
James Hartman
Bryan Waugh
Robert Williams

TRUMPET

Michael Portnoff
Mark Williams
Brian Maddox

TROMBONE

Diane Schildbach
Marcus Schildbach

BASS TROMBONE

Darryl West

TUBA

Betsy Hausburg

TIMPANI

April Nissen

PERCUSSION

Del Eckels
Phillip Kerr
Beth Wilson

PIANO

April Nissen

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STUDENT AWARDS

Each year, as many as four graduating high school seniors are presented with an award from funds administered by the Symphony Association. Chosen from a group of outstanding applicants, each has made significant contributions to school and community musical activities.

Arthur P. Barnes Award

This Livermore-Amador Symphony Association Award honors Music Director Emeritus Arthur P. Barnes.

Ethan Ha receives the first annual Arthur P. Barnes Award. Ethan has played violin in LASYO, the Livermore-Amador Symphony Youth Orchestra, for the past six years, serving as concertmaster in 2013 and 2014. In addition, he has been a member of the LAS first violin section since 10th grade. At Livermore High School, Ethan has been concertmaster of the orchestra since 9th grade. He has given command performances at the Livermore school district's Solo and Ensemble Festival from 2010 through 2014. For musicals at LHS and for performances by Valley Dance Theatre, Tri-Valley Repertory Theater, and more, Ethan has played violin in pit orchestras. He was selected to play in the first violin section of the CODA (California Orchestra Directors Association) Honors Symphony Orchestra in 2012 and was principal second violin in the 2013 orchestra. He is vice president of the Tri-M Music Honor Society at LHS. Ethan plans to study both molecular biology and music in college.

John H. Green Memorial Award

This award is given in memory of John H. Green, son of the late Tot and John W. Green; he played horn, attended Granada High School, and received a Symphony Association Award.

The recipient of the John H. Green Memorial Award this year is violin and viola player **Dana Anex**, a Livermore High School student. In the LHS Orchestra, Dana was co-concertmaster during grades 9 to 11 and this year is principal violist. In LASYO, Dana was principal second violin in grade 9, associate concertmaster in grade 10, and principal viola this year. She played violin in the Oakland Symphony Youth Orchestra during grades 10 and 11 and this year is playing viola as a member of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra. An experienced pit orchestra musician, Dana has played for LHS musicals and at the Bankhead for *The Nutcracker* and as a substitute player for *Spamalot*. Dana is president of the Tri-M Music Honor Society at LHS and has given command performances at the Livermore school district's Solo and Ensemble Festival for the past four years. Because Dana hopes to become a professional violist or writer, she will pursue degrees in viola performance and English.

Bill King Memorial Award

This award is given in memory of Bill King, son of Jean and Walter King; he loved music and played cello and trombone at Jackson and East Avenue Middle Schools.

Trombone and piano player **Alice Williams** receives the Bill King Memorial Award this year. She is a student at Granada High School in Livermore, where she has been a member of

the symphonic band, marching band, pep band, jazz band, and orchestra winds since 9th grade. Since grade 11, she has been the symphonic band's trombone section leader and a center guide in the marching band. As president of the GHS music council this year, she organized a band camp and activities. She has paraded with the marching band, played the national anthem at an Oakland A's game with the jazz band, and more. Alice founded Trombone Christmas, at which trombone players perform holiday tunes in downtown Livermore, and she has tutored and taught trombone to elementary and middle school children at Junction and Arroyo Seco schools in Livermore. After college, Alice would like a career that involves music, humor, and, perhaps, teaching.

Symphony Association Award

This award is given in memory of Al Oliver, a founding member of LAS who played violin and viola in the orchestra for more than forty years.

Flute, piccolo, and piano player **Jennifer Jo** receives the Association Award in memory of Albert Oliver, Jr. As a selected entrant in the Competition for Young Musicians, Jennifer performed for the LAS Guild in 2012 and 2013, and she played piccolo in LASYO in 2012 and was principal flute in 2013. At Pleasanton's Amador Valley High School, Jennifer plays flute and piccolo in the marching band and a wind ensemble—and she played piano in the pit orchestra for *Hairspray* at Amador in the spring of 2013. She has played for four years in Alameda County Honor Bands and in California All-Northern Honor Bands; she was a member of the California All-State Honor Bands in 2011 and 2014. She is principal flute in the Oakland Symphony Youth Orchestra. Jennifer has won awards as a flute/piccolo player (in the Junior Bach Festival and the American Protégé International Concerto Competition, *e.g.*) and also as a piano player (in the United States Open Music Competition, *e.g.*). She has spent many hours as piano accompanist for the local Korean Parents' Association youth choir, and she tutors middle school music students. Jennifer plans to pursue a dual degree in flute performance and English. She would like to be an orchestral musician and a private instructor.

PROGRAM NOTES

Academic Festival Overture Johannes Brahms Opus 80 (1833–1897)

In May 1853, Brahms was introduced to violinist-composer Joseph Joachim, who invited Brahms to join him in Göttingen, where he would be taking some summer courses in philosophy and history at the local university. For two glorious months that summer, Brahms enjoyed—in addition to general student camaraderie—reading, debates, pleasant walks, beer drinking sessions, and songfests at the local “Biergartens.”

It was in 1879 that the University of Breslau conferred upon Brahms the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Brahms was flattered and sent a postcard of thanks to the faculty. However, a subsequent letter from his friend Bernhard Scholz, director of music in Breslau, made it clear that the university expected him to express his gratitude in musical form. While vacationing at

Bad Ischl, Austria, during the summer of 1880, Brahms penned his musical “thank you”: the “Academic Festival Overture.”

With a masterful balance of serious and lighthearted elements, the emphasis is on the “festival” rather than the “academic” in an overture that brims with an irrepressible sense of fun that Brahms himself described as “a very boisterous potpourri of student songs.” Indeed, excerpts from four student Biergarten tunes play a significant role in the orchestral texture in what is, perhaps, a fond backward look at the carefree summer days of 1853.

Selections from *Peer Gynt* from Opp. 23, 46, and 55

**Edvard Grieg
(1843–1907)**

“Dear Mr. Grieg: I am writing to you with regard to a project I propose to undertake, and in which I invite your participation.... I propose to adapt *Peer Gynt*, which will soon go into its third printing, for the stage. Will you compose the music it requires?”

With this letter, written by the Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen, began one of the most successful collaborations in history between a playwright and a musical contemporary. Ibsen had published his drama *Peer Gynt* seven years earlier, setting it in verse and with scant thought for the practicalities of theatrical production. Rather, he meant it to serve as a national epic poem. But in 1873, Ibsen was persuaded to compress *Peer Gynt* into a form that could be presented in a theater.

Grieg immediately accepted the invitation to collaborate on *Peer Gynt* and wrote 23 piano duets as incidental music to accompany Ibsen’s work. The stage version, first performed in Christiania (now Oslo) in 1876, proved a tremendous success. A review in the city’s principal morning newspaper proclaimed it “a most exceptional piece of work ... and there is bold originality in the entire musical treatment.”

In the winter of 1887, Grieg arranged four numbers from his incidental music as a concert suite for orchestra, and five years later, he fashioned a second suite of four numbers. In the concert suites, these numbers do not follow in their original sequence. Grieg’s *Peer Gynt* music includes several famous melodies.

Prelude

The prelude begins with an energetic introduction to Peer Gynt himself— young, confident, and rushing into the world. Then suddenly we hear the soulful music of Solveig, her song of devotion to our misguided hero. He has left her, but she will wait for him forever. These two musical ideas continue to alternate back and forth.

Ingrid’s Lament

This music depicts Peer Gynt kidnapping Ingrid, who is about to be married, and taking her to the mountains. It starts out quickly and then becomes sad and dramatic.

The Death of Ase

After adventures with trolls, the fugitive Peer returns home. His old, frail mother, Ase, is lying on her bed, close to death. She blesses him, and he reminisces, with some fantasy added for good measure. As he rambles on, he turns to find his mother dead. The music, marked *Andante doloroso*, is scored

for strings alone. This elegy of great poignancy is played as a prelude to Act III and is repeated toward the end, when it is played very, very softly.

Morning

The opening captures the beginning of the day in the glorious mountains and forests of Norway. Birds sing, the sun rises, and everything is fresh and lovely.

Arabian Dance

This charming little dance evokes Peer Gynt’s travels in Morocco.

Anitra’s Dance

Dressed in Oriental robes and resting in the tent of an Arab chieftain, Peer is drinking and smoking a hookah. For his further entertainment, Anitra and her troupe perform a sinuous belly dance. Here Grieg weaves a sensuous melody over a mazurka rhythm. This number is scored for strings and the mellifluous sound of a lone triangle.

In the Hall of the Mountain King

Peer Gynt is out in the forest and encounters a woman in green. Together they ride on the back of a huge pig into the Royal Hall of the Troll King, amid great uproar. Once within, Peer is taunted and tormented by grotesque supernatural beings who want to kill him. He eventually escapes and is subsequently found asleep in a mountain pasture.

Symphony No. 8 in G Major Opus 88, B. 163

**Antonín Dvořák
(1841–1904)**

Throughout the 1860s and most of the 1870s, Antonín Dvořák struggled to support himself. He was a church organist, and he played viola with café and theater orchestras in Prague. Only after years of perseverance did the triumph of his enormously popular *Slavonic Dances* at last place the composer and his family in comfortable circumstances. Recognition and fortune, when they finally came his way, did not turn his head. Dvořák’s growing reputation eventually brought invitations to the musical capitals of Europe, and soon to America also. But although the composer spent time in these and other locales, he remained deeply attached to his native Bohemia and the simple lifestyle he had always known.

One of the first expressions of Dvořák’s newfound prosperity was the purchase of a modest country house. This became the composer’s sanctuary and workshop, and it was there, in 1889, during a particularly cheerful period in his life, that he wrote his Eighth Symphony. The work mirrors both Dvořák’s contented frame of mind and the Czech countryside in which it was created. It is one of the composer’s happiest creations and is infused with unmistakable local color in the form of melodic inflections that mirror those of Czech folk music.

The symphony’s first movement is in the bright key of G major, but Dvořák begins in the minor mode, with a melody that exploits the rich timbre of the cellos and clarinets. This passage serves as a prelude to the movement’s principal theme (announced by the flute), but without being a distinctly separate

PROGRAM NOTES

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section, as we more typically find. A long, energetic transition leads to the second subject, which emerges from the dying tone of a brief horn solo. Here we find two distinct melodic ideas, both of which display a common characteristic of Czech folk music: an initial phrase that is begun three times, as if to gather momentum. A rather heroic final theme then leads into the central development section. When the principal subject makes its definitive return, it is transformed into a blazing trumpet call.

The ensuing Adagio is exceptionally rich in moods and ideas. Moving fluidly between intimate and grandiose expression, it is by turns grave and playful.

Although the rhythms and broad A-B-A format of the third movement indicate a scherzo, its relaxed pace and wistful tone are more in character with the intermezzo movements Brahms favored for his symphonies.

An arresting trumpet fanfare heralds the finale. Once again Dvořák enlists the cellos, which present a broad theme related not only to the preceding trumpet call but also to the flute melody of the first movement. Several variations of this melody follow, but Dvořák breaks the conventional pattern of strophic variations to inject what seems to be, paradoxically, a cheerful little funeral march. After a frenzied development section and restatement of the movement's theme, a tumultuous, joyful coda passage brings matters to a close.

*program notes compiled by Kathy Boster
from Internet sources
edited by Eva Langfeldt*

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May concert program.*

VDT NUTCRACKER—December 13, 14, and 19–21—with ties to LAS that include Valley Dance Theatre Director (and LAS tuba player) Betsy Hausburg, VDT Pit Orchestra Conductor (and LAS horn player) Bob Williams, and quite a few LAS musicians.

NEXT CONCERT—“Young Love,” February 21, 2015—featuring Competition for Young Musicians winners Misha Galant and Vincent Liu as piano soloists.

Livermore-Amador Symphony is a member of the Livermore Cultural Arts Council and a resident company of the Bankhead Theater.
See the Cultural Arts Calendar at www.independentnews.com.