

Livermore-Amador Symphony

Lara Webber, Music Director & Conductor
Arthur P. Barnes, Music Director Emeritus
Saturday, April 13, 2019, 8 p.m.
Bankhead Theater, Livermore



Dramatic Dvořák

Prelude Talk at 7 p.m. by Lara Webber

Capriccio espagnol

Opus 34

- I. Alborada
- II. Variazioni
- III. Alborada
- IV. Scena e Canto gitano
- V. Fandango asturiano

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

(1844–1908)

Cello Concerto

- I. Adagio
- II. Andante and Allegro
- III. Rainstorm and Danza

George Kahn

(b. 1952)

Rondo for Cello and Orchestra

in G Minor

Antonin Dvořák

(1841–1904)

Evan Kahn, soloist

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 7

- I. Allegro maestoso
- II. Poco adagio
- III. Scherzo: Vivace
- IV. Finale: Allegro

Antonin Dvořák

*The audience and performers are invited
to enjoy cookies, cider, coffee, and sparkling wine in the lobby after the concert
at a reception hosted by the Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild.*

Music Director position underwritten by the Chet and Henrietta Fankhauser Trust

Orchestra

Conductor

Lara Webber

First Violin

Kristina Anderson

Concertmaster

Juliana Zolynas

Assistant

Concertmaster

Norman Back

Feliza Bourguet

Judy Eckart

Susan Ivie

Jutta Massoud

Doug Morrison

Nicholas Travia

Second Violin

Ursula Goldstein

Principal

Anne Anaya

Jeana Ernst

Jeannie Guzis

Stacy Hughes

Denise Leddon

Jacqueline McBride

Nissa Nack

Elizabeth Paik*

Leslie Stevens

Beth Wilson

Jocelyn Zhu*

Viola

David Friburg

Principal

Judy Beck

Lynda Alvarez

Robin Newmark

Sheri Schultz

Dora Scott

Brandon Tran

Esteban Zapiain

Cello

Peter Bedrossian

Principal

Alan Copeland

Aidan Epstein

Kate Fisher

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Hildi Kang

Joanne Lenigan

Paul Pappas

Joseph Swenson

String Bass

Markus Salasoo

Acting Principal

Alan Frank

James Schulz

Flute

Marianne Beeler

Principal

Nan Davies

Beth Wilson

Piccolo

Nan Davies

Oboe

Eva Langfeldt

Principal

Jeanne Brown

English Horn

Jeanne Brown

Clarinet

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* High school student

** The Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild is generously underwriting the harp position for the 2018–2019 season.

Program Notes

Capriccio espagnol

Opus 34

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

(1844–1908)

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a push by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's fellow Russian composers was under way to cultivate a distinctly Slavic brand of music. But the principle of mining the riches of folkloric dance and melody encouraged a skill that could be readily transferred to other cultures. Thanks to his parallel career in the Russian navy, Rimsky-Korsakov was widely traveled and had, in fact, passed through Spain as a young cadet.

Written in 1887, *Capriccio espagnol* was originally envisioned as a violin concerto (hence the prominent role of violin solos, especially in the fourth movement). As it took shape, the *Capriccio* came to include many solo-like passages for other instruments as well: the musical term *capriccio* connotes images of virtuosity and fantasy.

In addition to the Spanish associations it elicits, the *Capriccio*, which was an instant success, can be enjoyed as a crash course in the marvelous contrasts and combinations of sound a brilliant orchestrator can call forth.

Rimsky-Korsakov cast the *Capriccio* in five continuous movements. The brief “Alborada” (a morning song) provides a wonderfully vibrant opening that gives the principal clarinet and then the concertmaster a workout. The slower following movement is a theme and five variations in which four French horns state the initial melody. A return of the opening “Alborada,” with the solo violin now more prominent, gives way to the “Scena e Canto gitano” (“Scene and Gypsy Song”). This movement opens with a series of orchestral cadenzas for fanfare-like horns and trumpets; then for solo violin; followed by a joint one for flute, clarinet, and harp accompanied by percussion. The rest of the movement is a dance leading to the final “Fandango asturiano” (“Asturian Fandango”), named for a lively dance from a region of northwestern Spain. The glittering conclusion prominently features virtuoso writing for the violin before one last and particularly rousing reprieve of the “Alborada” theme.

Cello Concerto

George Kahn

(b. 1952)

In the words of the composer:

There is a fundamental contrast and conflict in this piece between tonality and atonality. It is a conversation between the orchestra and the solo cello.

In the first movement, the orchestra plays a 10-measure phrase with a melody that wanders somewhat aimlessly, ending in a place of indecision as to whether to be a “major” or “minor” tonality. This 10-bar phrase continues throughout the movement. Above this somewhat moody and ambiguous pad, the solo cello plays a questioning melody based on a set of 12 tones. At times this tone row appears in an exact form, and other times it appears in various incomplete forms and does not hold rigidly with the 12-tone concept. The cello cadenza continues to explore options and finally settles into a duet with the concertmaster based on the original orchestral theme. After some deliberation, the orchestra settles into a chord that supports the soloist's original questioning phrase.

The second movement begins with the solo cello exploring a tonal center based in D.

Once again the orchestra tries its best to create a tonal sense of the solo cello voice. After a brief *allegro*, the solo cello returns to its opening theme, and the movement ends where it began.

The final note of the second movement triggers the start of the third movement. Seemingly random rhythms coalesce. The orchestra forms a cloud of sound. The solo cello is now freed from the tone row and plays a very tonal (and iconic) phrase based on an A-major triad. Finally, the soloist realizes it is time to stop asking questions and time to start dancing. The piece ends on a chord consisting of 10 pitches—not quite all 12, but pretty close.

Rondo for Cello and Orchestra

in G Minor

Antonin Dvořák

(1841–1904)

Slavic traditions take center stage in this mercurial voyage that Czech composer Antonin Dvořák produced in December 1891 in order to showcase the talents of his friend cellist Hanuš Wihan. The two musicians were embarking upon a tour of Bohemia with violinist Ferdinand Lachner, a venture enabling Dvořák to bid farewell to his homeland before departing to assume the directorship of the newly established National Conservatory of Music in New York. The piece proved a success, and this orchestral version was published in 1893, a prelude to the concerto the composer would begin writing for Wihan the following year. The cello soloist leads the ensemble through a compelling series of contrasting scenes, a poised dance giving way to more-tempestuous gestures. Quickstep outbursts frame an impassioned song for the cello, but even this apparent optimism cannot prevent the piece from ending in the gloom with which it began.

Symphony No. 7

Antonin Dvořák

Throughout music history, we can find instances of older, more established composers mentoring younger composers and opening doors that otherwise would have been closed to them. Schumann mentored Brahms, and Brahms returned the favor by mentoring Antonín Dvořák. Brahms had become aware of the little-known Czechoslovakian nationalist composer while serving on the Austrian State Stipendium, a jury convened to award money to talented young composers. Brahms was immediately impressed with Dvořák's music (Dvořák won the stipend), and the two men eventually became friends and mutual admirers of one another's music. In a show of devotion, Brahms even convinced his longtime publisher, Fritz Simrock, to sign Dvořák.

The premiere of Brahms's Third Symphony, in 1883, so deeply affected Dvořák that it was a turning point for the composer. Dvořák found the new symphony of Brahms to be astounding and considered it the finest symphony ever written. Dvořák thought he perhaps needed to become more international (read: Austro-German) in his writing style for his music to have such far-reaching appeal as that of Brahms, but to do so would mean perhaps losing his folk, nationalist style, which he so valued. As Dvořák pondered this conundrum, he suffered two tragedies in close succession: the death of his mother, just weeks after the premiere of Brahms's Third, and the mental decline and eventual commitment of his colleague and compatriot Bedřich Smetana, in April 1884.

In the midst of these tragedies, Dvořák received an astounding honor: Based on the success of his *Stabat Mater* in London in 1883, the esteemed Royal Philharmonic Society

(the same society that had commissioned Beethoven's Ninth Symphony) commissioned a symphony from Dvořák. It would be the only symphony of the composer's to be written as a commission. The prospect was dizzying for Dvořák, but he set to work fervently in December 1884 and finished his Symphony No. 7 in March 1885. (The symphony was originally published as Symphony No. 2—it was the seventh symphony to be written but only the second to be published. All of Dvořák's symphonies were later renumbered according to their chronology of composition, not publication order.) Dvořák wrote in December 1884, "I am now busy with the new symphony (for London), and wherever I go, I have no thought for anything but my work, which must be such as to move the world—well, God grant that it may be so!"

Much of Dvořák's music is known for its brightness and folk-theme-filled melodies. The Seventh Symphony is a departure, a little less sunny (some unofficially refer to the Seventh as Dvořák's "tragic" symphony) and containing less folk material than his earlier works. This is not to say that the work does not contain decidedly Slavic elements; they are just less prominent than in many of his earlier compositions, from which he had gained his reputation. The first movement is written in sonata-allegro form, with its first theme dark and foreboding and its second theme lyrical and pastoral. The second movement is considered one of Dvořák's finest works and the heart of the symphony. It is in this movement that the "tragic" is most prevalent. The scherzo movement is perhaps the most overtly Slavic, inspired by the furiant, a Bohemian dance best known for its shifting of accents and cross-rhythms. The finale opens as did the first movement, tormented and dark. Themes abound in this movement, but ultimately Dvořák turns tragedy around and ends this D minor symphony, resoundingly, in D major.

Although Dvořák's symphonic music did not become popular in the United States until after World War II (save the Ninth, "From the New World"), it was well known in England. In 1935 the preeminent British musicologist, Sir Donald Francis Tovey, unequivocally stated, "I have no hesitation in setting Dvořák's Seventh Symphony along with the C Major Symphony of Schubert and the four symphonies of Brahms as among the greatest and purest examples of this art form since Beethoven." Dvořák had successfully accomplished his goal of composing in a style that was appealing internationally and, in the process, became a first-class symphonist, worthy of being mentioned alongside his mentor, Johannes Brahms.

Program notes compiled by Kathy Boster from Internet sources

Edited by Eva Langfeldt



Cello Soloist Evan Kahn

Cellist Evan Kahn has been praised for the "electrifying... nuanced and colorful" style he brings to all of his collaborations, from concerti to chamber music to contemporary performances. He has commissioned and premiered over 50 works by composers from around the world, including his father's Cello Concerto.

Kahn is principal cello in Symphony Silicon Valley, acting principal cello for Opera San Jose, and assistant principal

cello in San Jose Chamber Orchestra and West Bay Opera Orchestra. As cellist in the Lazuli String Quartet/Sutro Strings, he plays in many local chamber music concert series, and he is a sought-after quartet and piano-trio cellist. He is also a resident cellist for several Bay Area music collectives and ensembles, such as After Everything, Mythica Foundation, and the hip-hop band Ensemble Mik Nawooj. He has performed as a soloist with the San Francisco Conservatory Orchestra after winning its concerto competition and soloed with many other orchestras, including our local Diablo Symphony Orchestra. This season includes concerti with the Bay Area Rainbow Symphony and Palo Alto Philharmonic as well as LAS.

Kahn graduated with college and university honors from Carnegie Mellon University, where he studied with David Premo. He has a master's degree in chamber music from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Jennifer Culp.

In April and May 2018, Kahn served as artist-in-residence with "Performance Today" at NPR, sharing some of his favorite works for cello and his philosophies on music and life. In February 2019, he was named Musical America's New Artist of the Month. He plays on a cello by Italian luthier Carlo Carletti, c. 1900.

Music Director Lara Webber

Widely admired as a dynamic, creative, and engaging conductor, Lara Webber is dedicated to inspiring audiences and community engagement through the power of symphonic music. She has been praised by fellow musicians around the country for her musical depth, genuine expression, strong personal vision, and collaborative spirit. This season marks her fifth as music director and conductor of LAS.

Webber brings a broad range of experience to the podium. She has held the positions of both assistant and associate conductor of the symphony orchestras of Baltimore and Charleston and music director of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra Chorus. Her guest conducting activities have included multiple performances with the symphonies of Houston, Pittsburgh, San Antonio, Santa Barbara, and Modesto, among several others. She has served as cover conductor for the San Francisco Symphony and the National Symphony Orchestra. Webber's operatic associations include posts as the assistant conductor at Glimmerglass Opera and conductor of the Baltimore Opera Studio.

Strongly committed to arts education, Webber was a conductor of the Emmy-nominated Disney's Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra. She has taught student conductors as a faculty member of the League of American Orchestra's conductor workshops and has coached youth and community orchestras. At home in Livermore, she is active in the community, bringing music to the local elementary schools, coaching chamber musicians, and advocating for the arts as an essential part of the educational curriculum and a vital part of our culture.

Webber holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the Oberlin Conservatory, where she studied orchestral conducting with Robert Spano. She received her Master of Music degree from USC, where she studied with Daniel Lewis.



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Please contact Judy Eckart
judy@justjudy.com

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Youth Orchestra: Register by May 1

LASYO, the Livermore-Amador Symphony Youth Orchestra, is open to musicians ages 11 (or in 6th grade) through 21 who play violin, viola, cello, string bass, flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, or percussion. Eleven rehearsals between June 18 and July 30 will culminate in a public concert on August 3. See livermoreamadorsymphony.org/lasyo for detailed schedule and audition information and a link to the registration form. Registration forms are due by May 1.

LAS Guild: Estate Sales Experts

Contact the Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild to manage your next estate sale. Call Marie at 925.447.5521 or Leona at 925.455.0870 for information. We have years of experience, and all of our profits go to the Symphony and its activities.

Next Concert: Classical Contrasts—June 1

At our June 1 concert, the inventive, wacky, and wonderful music of Igor Stravinsky will open an evening of contrasting musical styles. The exceptional pianist Gwendolyn Mok, who has graced many of the world's leading concert halls, will be the soloist for Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4. Robert Schumann's Symphony No. 4 will bring our season to a dramatic finish with a beautiful journey from darkness to light.

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.

LVPAC is a sponsor of this event.



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