

LIVERMORE AMADOR
SYMPHONY

Lara Webber
Music Director & Conductor
Arthur P. Barnes
Music Director Emeritus
Saturday May 20, 2023, 8 p.m.
Bankhead Theater, Livermore

*Drama and Fantasy,
O'Connor plays Beethoven*

Prelude Talk at 7 p.m. by Lara Webber

**Overture to *The Abduction*
from the *Seraglio* (1782) K. 384**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor (1803)
Opus 37

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Largo
- III. Rondo – Allegro

John O'Connor, soloist

————— INTERMISSION —————

The Enchanted Lake (1909)
Opus 62

Anatoly Liadov
(1855–1914)

The Firebird (1919 Suite)

Igor Stravinsky
(1882–1971)

1. Introduction –The Firebird and Its Dance –
The Firebird's Variation
2. The Princesses' Khorovod (rondo, round dance)
3. Infernal Dance of King Kastcheï
4. Berceuse (lullaby)
5. Finale

Season Tickets for 2023–2024 are on sale in the lobby.

The audience and performers are invited to enjoy a reception
hosted by the Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild
in the lobby after the concert.

Music Director position underwritten by the Chet and Henrietta Fankhauser Trust;
John O'Connor's appearance sponsored by Linda Tinney.



Orchestra

Conductor

Lara Webber

First Violin

Joseph Fath
Concertmaster

Juliana Zolynas
*Assistant
Concertmaster*

Norman Back
Feliza Bourguet
Judy Eckart

Susan Ivie
Doug Morrison
Michael Peach
Nick Travia
Anthony Westrope

Second Violin

Ursula Goldstein
Principal

Stephanie Black
Mary Burchett
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Viola

Judy Beck
Principal
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Peter Bedrossian
Principal
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Aidan Epstein
Kate Fisher
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Elise Van Gelder

String Bass

Aaron Plattner
Principal
Richard Hibbs
Nick James
Navaz Jasavala

Flute

Marianne Beeler
Principal
Victor Villarreal
Beth Wilson

Oboe

Eva Langfeldt
Principal
Jeanne Brown

Clarinet

Lesley Watson
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Christy Diggins

Bassoon

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James Hartman
Roger Henderson
Bryan Waugh

Trumpet

Michael Portnoff
Principal
Anthony Manuel

Trombone

Diane Schildbach
Principal
Andwar Johnson

Bass Trombone

Marcus Schildbach

Tuba

Betsy Hausburg

Timpani

April Nissen

Percussion

April Nissen
Principal
Tom Dreiman
Aren Durand
Bill Taylor

Piano/Celesta

Todd Evans

Harp

Constance Koo

Librarians

Audrey Horning
Stacy Hughes
Patty Crohare

**The Livermore-Amador Symphony
requires all musicians and guest artists to be fully vaccinated.**

**LAS is in full compliance with all current Alameda County health mandates
plus rehearsal and performance-venue health policies.**

Program Notes

Overture to *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1782) K. 384

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

Mozart was already a well-established, albeit not financially well-off, composer in 1781 when he was summoned to Vienna by his employer, the Archbishop Colloredo, to attend the celebrations of Emperor Joseph II's accession to the Austrian throne. The new emperor was an avid patron and supporter of the arts, and Mozart highly desired a position in the emperor's employ. Riding a wave of success from his opera *Idomeneo*, Mozart hoped that his dealings with the new ruler would be fruitful even though Mozart was still under the employ of the archbishop. In a letter to his father, Leopold, dated March 24, 1781, Mozart remarks:

My main goal right now is to meet the emperor in some agreeable fashion. I am absolutely determined he *should get to know me*. I would be so happy if I could whip through my opera for him and then play a fugue or two, for that's what he likes.

The senior Mozart, as well as the archbishop, were against this plan, and the strife culminated in a much-talked-about firing, leaving Mozart free to live in Vienna and earn a living as a freelance composer.

The Abduction from the Seraglio premiered in 1782 with considerable (but not financial) success. It was written in the style of the *Singspiel*, a comic opera with spoken dialogue, and the plot revolves around the Spanish nobleman Belmonte trying to rescue his betrothed, Constanze, from the palace of a high-ranking Ottoman politician. (The word *seraglio* is derived from the Persian word for *palace, saray*.) Both Mozart and Beethoven had a fascination with the Turkish culture, especially the music of the Janissary soldiers, hence the liberal use of triangle and cymbals.

Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor (1803) Opus 37

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

Ludwig van Beethoven holds a unique place in the span of music history; through his compositions, one can easily trace the evolution from the Classical to the Romantic period. Sketches of this concerto date to approximately 1796, and he completed this work in 1803.

The year 1792 saw Beethoven move from his native Bonn to Vienna to study with Haydn. Even though the tutelage didn't work out, Beethoven still held the utmost respect for Haydn. Deeply inspired by an earlier piano concerto in C minor by Mozart as well as Beethoven's esteem for Haydn, the Piano Concerto No. 3 adhered to the already established Classical concerto structure, and it sounds unmistakably Classical while exhibiting hints of Romanticism. In the first movement, after a sizable introduction by the orchestra lasting nearly three and a half minutes, the soloist's entrance unleashes a flurry of ascending scales that echoes the first theme that was initially stated by the orchestra, demonstrating the passionate and aggressive style we have come to associate with Beethoven. A second theme, introduced by the clarinet, leads to the development section. Following a cadenza, a coda signals the conclusion of the movement. (Legend has it that Beethoven improvised the cadenza on the spot at the first performance.)

The slow ("Largo") middle movement begins with the soloist introducing the theme, to be later joined by the orchestra. Even in the quiet moments of this movement, we can hear evidence of Beethoven's Romantic-era writing starting to come to the surface.

In the third movement, the piano introduces the rondo theme, which is soon energetically repeated by the orchestra. The minor rondo theme returns as expected, in contrast with the major contrasting themes of the corresponding sections, and, in the words of musicologist Dr. William E. Runyan, "the movement ends triumphantly in C major, having won out over the darkness in typical Beethoven fashion."

The Enchanted Lake (1909)

Opus 62

Anatoly Liadov

(1855–1914)

Anatoly Liadov (or Lyadov) was born in 1855 in St. Petersburg, Russia, into a very musical family; his family tree is a who’s-who of the Russian arts scene. Initially taught informally by his stepfather, chief conductor of the Imperial Opera, he entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory to study piano and violin and also studied composition under Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. After graduation, he taught at the conservatory, where his pupils included one Sergei Prokofiev.

Composed toward the end of his life, “The Enchanted Lake” is a symphonic poem. Liadov himself referred to it as a “fable-tableau.” Among his compositions, it was his favorite. In a letter to a friend, he wrote, “How picturesque it is, how clear, the multitude of stars hovering over the mysteries of the deep. But above all no entreaties and no complaints; only nature—cold, malevolent, and fantastic as a fairy tale. One has to feel the change of the colors, the chiaroscuro, the incessantly changeable stillness and seeming immobility.” Liadov banished the sounds of trumpets and trombones from this piece, but his choice of the harp and celesta—as well as the choice of particular chords and harmonies—adds to the shimmering effect.

An interesting side note: Sergei Diaghilev, impresario of the Ballets Russes, approached Liadov about writing the ballet music for his adaption of the Russian folktale of the firebird. Liadov turned Diaghilev down, fearing it would take too long to compose for inclusion in the 1910 season, and the commission went to Igor Stravinsky instead.

The Firebird (1919 Suite)

Igor Stravinsky

(1882–1971)

Igor Stravinsky was a 27-year-old relatively unknown composer when he was tapped by Sergei Diaghilev to write the music to a Ballets Russes production of *The Firebird*, a ballet based on a mythological Russian folktale.

Firebirds appear in many cultures’ folktales. The mythical bird’s feathers can guard the Earth and protect those who possess them. Stravinsky and Diaghilev took a bit of creative license in the plot, borrowing characters from other Russian folktales. Even though this suite includes only a few movements of the ballet, it is still quite easy to follow the story.

We meet Prince Ivan in pursuit of the firebird in the realm of the evil Kastchei (“Introduction” – “The Firebird and Its Dance” – “The Firebird’s Variation”). Ivan captures the firebird, who then gives him one of her magic feathers with instructions to use it to summon her when he is in grave danger.

Kastchei has been capturing princesses from the surrounding kingdoms and casting spells over them, holding them captive. During “The Princesses’ Khorovod” we imagine these captives performing a Russian folk dance called a *khoro vod*. Ivan falls in love with one of the princesses and confronts Kastchei to try to win her release. When Ivan is pursued by Kastchei’s henchmen, he summons the firebird, who causes Kastchei and the henchmen to dance wildly (“Infernal Dance”) and then fall into a deep slumber (“Berceuse,” a lullaby). While they sleep, the firebird reveals to Ivan the whereabouts of an egg that holds Kastchei’s soul and the one way to kill him. Ivan then defeats Kastchei by smashing the egg that held his soul. The spells are broken, awakening and freeing the princesses (“Finale”).

Program notes written by Kathy Boster

Edited by Eva Langfeldt

Piano Soloist John O’Conor

“A pianist of unbounding sensitivity” (*Gramophone*). “He represents a vanishing tradition that favors inner expression and atmosphere over showmanship and bravura” (*Chicago Tribune*). “Impeccable technique and musicality...it would be hard to imagine better performances” (*Sunday Times, London*). “This artist has the kind of flawless touch that makes an audience gasp” (*Washington Post*). “Exquisite playing” (*New York Times*).



The Irish pianist John O’Conor has been gathering wonderful reviews for his masterly playing for over forty years. He studied in his native Dublin and in Vienna with Dieter Weber and was tutored by the legendary Wilhelm Kempff. His unanimous 1st Prize at the International Beethoven Piano Competition in Vienna in 1973 opened the door to a career that has brought him all around the world.

His recordings of the complete Beethoven piano sonatas led *CD Review* to say that he “by now should be recognized as the world’s premier Beethoven interpreter,” and his recent recordings of the complete Beethoven piano concertos with the London Symphony Orchestra led by Andreas Delfs have also been greeted with acclaim. In the past two years, he released three new CDs on the Steinway label: one of Beethoven’s *Diabelli Variations* and two

of Haydn sonatas. He has also been featured on tonebase.com with videos on teaching and discussing Beethoven and Haydn sonatas. Last summer he recorded a CD of the complete Beethoven cello sonatas with the Irish cellist Ailbhe McDonagh.

A Steinway Artist, he is chair of the piano division at Shenandoah University in Virginia, professor of piano at the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, distinguished visiting artist at the TU Dublin Conservatoire of Music, and visiting professor at Showa University in Japan.

For his services to music, he has been decorated as “Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres” by the French government and awarded the “Ehrenkreuz für Wissenschaft und Kunst” by the Austrian Government and the “Order of the Rising Sun” by the emperor of Japan.

Music Director Lara Webber

Lara Webber is dedicated to inspiring audiences and community engagement through the power of symphonic music. She has been praised by fellow musicians for her musical depth, genuine expression, strong personal vision, and collaborative spirit. Now in her ninth season as music director and conductor of LAS, she has brought music to Tri-Valley elementary schools, coached chamber musicians, and advocated for the arts.

Webber holds degrees in music from Oberlin and USC and 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. She is music director of the Palo Alto Philharmonic. Her guest-conducting activities have included multiple performances with the symphonies of Houston, Pittsburgh, Santa Barbara, and Modesto, among others. She has served as cover conductor for the San Francisco Symphony and the National Symphony Orchestra and was a conductor of the Emmy-nominated Disney’s Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra. Her operatic associations include posts as assistant conductor at Glimmerglass Opera and conductor of the Baltimore Opera Studio.



60th Anniversary Season! 2023–2024

Pops Concert, September 30, 2023

Concert at 3 p.m.

For the third year in a row, our annual Pops concert will be al fresco on the Shea Stage in the Bankhead Plaza on an autumn afternoon. Bring a picnic or snack. No need for tickets, but donations will be accepted happily! As always, Pops is sponsored by the Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild, with all donations going to the Symphony. Join us on Saturday September 30 at 3 o'clock!

Family Concert, December 2, 2023

Concert at 3 p.m.

Our family concert is full of holiday fun for everyone just before Livermore's holiday parade. Presented in coordination with Livermore Arts and in partnership with Valley Dance Theatre, this concert is free of charge.

Winter Tales, December 2, 2023

Concert at 8 p.m. (no preconcert talk)

Celebrate the season with magical music and fairy tales. Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel Suite* takes us back to our childhood adventures, fears, and fantasies. Respighi's shimmering *Trittico Botticelliano* brings a warm glow to the dark days of winter and features music familiar in Christmas carols. Get your holidays off to a festive start with the sounds of the symphony!

Vibrant Variations, February 10, 2024

Inside the Music, 7–7:15 p.m.; concert at 7:30 p.m.

Join us and welcome great young musical talent to the stage from our own community in performances featuring the winners of our annual Competition for Young Musicians. In addition, the orchestra celebrates Chinese New Year with the joyous "Saibei Dance" by An-lun Huang. Benjamin Britten's fantastic "The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra," an audience favorite, is a set of thrilling variations full of energy and humor. The colorful sounds of Mexican composer José Moncayo's "Huapango" infuse the evening with traditional Mexican folk dance. This concert is always a community event you won't want to miss.

Butterflies and Brahms, April 13, 2024

Inside the Music, 7–7:15 p.m.; concert at 7:30 p.m.

Springtime is for lovers and romantics. Open your heart to beautiful music inspired by a timeless Chinese folk tale as Bay Area violin soloist Chase Spruill joins LAS to perform the beloved *Butterfly Lovers' Violin Concerto*. We open the evening with "D'un matin de printemps" ("Of a Spring Morning"), brilliant music of Lili Boulanger. And the lush and passionate Symphony No. 4 by Johannes Brahms is not to be missed. Celebrate springtime with the Symphony!

Delightful Dvořák, June 1, 2024

Inside the Music, 7–7:15 p.m.; concert at 7:30 p.m.

Our season finale features a new work by American composer Lori Laitman. Her beautiful piece "Becoming a Redwood" features tenor Chad Somers, singing the poetry of Dana Gioia. The marvelous woodwinds of LAS are front and center in Richard Strauss' youthful *Serenade in E-flat*. After also hearing the tunes of Dvořák's sunny and sumptuous Symphony No. 6, you'll go out singing.

Buy season tickets or get more information in the lobby.

Early-purchase pricing is available till July 15.

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The Livermore-Amador Symphony Association gratefully acknowledges donations received in 2022 and 2023 from the following.

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APBarnesSociety@livermoreamadorsymphony.org.

Grants and Matching Gifts

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California Relief Grants Art and Cultural Program
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LASYO Concert on July 29

The Livermore-Amador Symphony Youth Orchestra, LASYO, is a summer orchestra established by the Symphony Association and open to musicians ages 11 (or in 6th grade) through 21 who play violin, viola, cello, string bass, flute, piccolo, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, harp, timpani, or percussion.

Don Adkins returns as music director in 2023, with Göran Berg as strings director and Robert Huntington as winds director. A free public concert on the evening of Saturday July 29 will be presented at 7 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 4th & L Streets, Livermore.

LAS Guild: Estate Sales Experts



Symphony Guild volunteers have years of experience managing estate sales: evaluating items and offering advice, sorting, pricing, marketing, and holding the sale. Proceeds are shared between you and the Symphony, as agreed by and contracted with you. Your donations may be tax deductible. All of the Guild's share of the proceeds goes to the Livermore-Amador Symphony. See livermoreamadorsymphony.org, or contact Nancy McKenzie at nancymac360@gmail.com or 925.294.8657.

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Livermore-Amador Symphony
P.O. Box 1049, Livermore CA 94551-1049
www.livermoreamadorsymphony.org

Corrections or questions?

Please contact Judy Eckart: judy@justjudy.com

Livermore-Amador Symphony is a member of the Livermore Cultural Arts Council and a resident company of the Bankhead Theater.

LVPAC is a sponsor of this event.

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