

Livermore-Amador Symphony

Lara Webber, Music Director & Conductor
Arthur P. Barnes, Music Director Emeritus
Saturday, December 5, 2015, 8:15 p.m.
Bankhead Theater, Livermore



Symphonic Stories

Hänsel and Gretel Prelude

Engelbert Humperdinck
(1854–1921)

Peter and the Wolf

Sergei Prokofiev
(1891–1953)

narrated by John Marchand, mayor of Livermore

————— **INTERMISSION** —————

Presentation of student awards

by Denise Leddon, LAS Association president,
to Jeffrey Seidl, Irene Su, Talia Wang, and Kevin Yang

Mother Goose Suite

(Ma mère l'oye, Cinq pièces enfantines)

- I. Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty
- II. Tom Thumb
- III. Laideronnette, Empress of the Pagodas
- IV. Conversations of Beauty and the Beast
- V. The Enchanted Garden

Maurice Ravel
(1875–1937)

Sleeping Beauty Suite

1. Introduction
2. Adagio: *Pas d'action*
3. *Pas de caractère*
(Puss in Boots and the White Cat)
4. Panorama
5. Waltz

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840–1893)

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

Orchestra

Conductor

Lara Webber

First Violin

Kristina Anderson

Concertmaster

Juliana Zolynas

Assistant

Concertmaster

Ajan Adriano*

Norman Back

Feliza Bourguet

Judy Eckart

Susan Ivie

Julie Mae

Jutta Massoud

Marianne Walck

Anthony Westrope*

Second Violin

Ursula Goldstein

Principal

Anne Anaya

Gale Anderson

Stephanie Black

Mary Burchett

Lisa Burkhart

Jeana Ernst

Jeannie Guzis

Denise Leddon

Jacqueline McBride

Nissa Nack

Leslie Stevens

Beth Wilson

Viola

Judy Beck

Principal

Lynda Alvarez

Adrian Boiangiu

David Friburg

Audrey Horning

Dora Scott

Cello

Peter Bedrossian

Principal

Naomi Adams

Alan Copeland

Kate Fisher

Muriel Haupt

Chris Jackson

Joanne Lenigan

Paul Pappas

Sharon Schumacher

Joseph Swenson

String Bass

Nick James

Principal

Alan Frank

Patricia Lay

Anya Massoud*

David Sullivan

Flute

Marianne Beeler

Nan Davies

Beth Wilson

Piccolo

Nan Davies

Oboe

Eva Langfeldt

Jeanne Brown

Jeff Lenigan

English Horn

Jeanne Brown

Clarinet

Lesley Watson

Kathy Boster

Bassoon

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Betsy Hausburg

Timpani

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Percussion

Scott Jackson

Jarret Lafleur

Harp**

Constance Koo

Celesta

Anna Lorenz

Librarians

The Horning Family,

Anne Les, and

Monisa Wilcox

* *High school student*

** *The Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild is underwriting the cost of providing a harp player at every LAS concert during the 2015–2016 season.*

Program Notes

Hänsel and Gretel Prelude

Engelbert Humperdinck

(1854–1921)

The “real” Engelbert Humperdinck, as distinct from his more recent namesake, was a hard-working and prolific composer, responsible for, among other things, twenty choral works, eight suites of incidental music, and more than fifty songs. He also wrote nine other stage works besides *Hänsel and Gretel*, yet it is more or less for that work alone that he is remembered today.

The most important event in Humperdinck’s professional life was in 1880, when he met Richard Wagner after Humperdinck won the Mendelssohn Prize for composition. Both the great man and his wife seem to have taken to the young composer: he became “friend Humperdinck” in Cosima’s diaries and was even allowed to write some extra music to cover a scene change in *Parsifal*.

Humperdinck’s *Hänsel and Gretel* is, on the face of it, the least Wagnerian opera imaginable. It began life as no more than a children’s play with simple music and even as a finished opera retained a simple, poetic plot. The music requires no more than a standard orchestra; the tunes are fresh and simple, yet it has survived in the repertoire for the reason that its composer understood Wagner better than any other imitator, in particular that Wagner’s most powerful music is very often his quietest and that his most expressive motives are his simplest. The result is an opera that is, in its own way, perfect: tuneful, expressive, and glowing throughout with true Wagnerian magic.

Yet the story, taken by Humperdinck’s librettist Adelheid Wette from the fairy tales of the brothers Grimm, is another matter: a tale of two innocent children sent off into the forest by their poverty-stricken, uncaring mother to fall into the hands of a fearsome witch. True, they manage to get home, but in their absence, their mother has died. However, Wette and Humperdinck softened the details of this painful tale. The way they tell it, father and mother find their way to the witch’s gingerbread house, where the children are held captive, and the family is happily reunited, the witch perishing messily inside her own oven. She is reincarnated as a large honey cake, as all her previous victims, who had formed the cottage fence, are restored to life.

The prelude, or *Vorspiel* (like Wagner, Humperdinck was a fiercely patriotic German and preferred not to use the French term *overture*!), is an affectionate homage to Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* overture. Wagner begins with quiet horns playing the “Pilgrims’ Hymn”; Humperdinck begins with quiet horns playing Hänsel and Gretel’s “Evening Prayer.” Wagner’s hymn returns at the end of the overture; so does Humperdinck’s prayer, evoking the hushed magic of a woodland evening with the simplest of methods. The prayer builds to a broad climax, dies away again, and is followed by a lively fanfare: the motive in the opera with which the witch’s spell is broken. The various themes of the opera are worked together to a climax in the best Wagnerian *Meistersinger* manner, and the prelude fades to a gentle close with a radiant sunset coda, a passage of the highest poetry. Humperdinck understood that operatic redemption did not need gods or tragic lovers; he found it in the peaceful sleep of two children in a woodland evening.

Peter and the Wolf

Sergei Prokofiev

(1891–1953)

Sergei Prokofiev was born in Sontsovka, Ukraine, on April 27, 1891. As a child, he showed exceptional musical abilities, composing his first piano piece at the age of 5 and his first opera at 9. In 1904 he moved to St. Petersburg, where he was

admitted to the conservatory at the particularly young age of 13. His teachers, who included Rimsky-Korsakov, found him eccentric and arrogant, and he, in turn, described his education as boring and unsatisfactory. He began to develop a reputation as the *enfant terrible* of the music world, developing an anti-Romantic compositional style based on the use of disjointed melodies, dissonant harmony, and sudden dramatic key shifts. His works, however, always adopted a popular idiom, and his reputation as a composer began to grow.

His conflict with the authorities came to a head in 1914 over his entry for the coveted Rubenstein prize for piano. The competition rules required all contestants to play a classical concerto, but Prokofiev insisted on playing his own. The directors of the conservatory at first refused his entry and then agreed only on the condition that he would provide each member of the jury with a copy of his score. Contrary to expectations, Prokofiev managed to get the score printed in time. The performance was a great success with the audience, and the jury grudgingly awarded him the prize. (The chairman, Alexander Glazunov, at first refused to make the presentation.)

After the Russian revolution, Prokofiev began a long period of self-imposed exile from Russia, at first in the USA and later in Paris. In 1923 he married the Spanish singer Lina Llubera, a marriage that sadly did not last. As time drew on, Prokofiev started to long for Russia again, and he organized more and more of his premieres and commissions to be in his home country. In 1934 he finally moved back to the Soviet Union, at a time when the official Soviet policy sought to control and regulate musical composition. Against this backdrop “Peter and the Wolf” was composed.

“Peter and the Wolf” isn’t an opera (there’s no singing), and it isn’t a ballet (although it can be performed that way), nor is it a play (there are no actors). Instead, it’s a musical tale in which the *orchestra* tells the story, helped along by a narrator.

Prokofiev wrote “Peter and the Wolf” at the invitation of Natalia Satz, the director of the Moscow Children’s Theater, who gave him the idea of composing music that would entertain but that would also help children get to know the instruments of the orchestra. So this fantastic tale, with its charming music, has an ulterior motive. Each character in Prokofiev’s musical fairy tale is represented by a different instrument of the orchestra: the **bird** by a twittering flute, the **duck** by a plangent oboe, the **cat** by a mellifluous clarinet, Peter’s grumpy **grandfather** by a bassoon, the dreaded **wolf** by three horns, and **Peter** by all the strings of the orchestra playing a jaunty march tune. The timpani have their part to play when the **hunters** turn up, shooting their rifles.

“Peter and the Wolf” was an immediate success with the toughest critics of all: children. Prokofiev wrote the story himself, and since he had two sons of his own, he knew how to capture the childish imagination by making Peter a bold but rebellious hero: “Peter paid no attention to his grandfather. Boys like him are not afraid of wolves.”

Prokofiev died at the age of 61 on March 5, 1953, on the same day as Joseph Stalin. He had lived near Red Square, and for three days, the crowds gathering to mourn Stalin made it impossible to remove Prokofiev’s body for a funeral service. When the funeral did occur, it was accompanied by paper flowers and a tape recording of the funeral march from his ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. All the real flowers in the city were reserved for Stalin’s funeral, as were the services of the musicians. He was finally buried in the Novodevichy Cemetery in Moscow.

Mother Goose Suite

(Ma mère l’oye, Cinq pièces enfantines)

Maurice Ravel

(1875–1937)

“I would settle down on his lap, and tirelessly he would begin, ‘Once upon a time ...’ It was ‘Beauty and the Beast’ and ‘The Ugly Empress of the Pagodas,’ and, above all,

the adventures of a little mouse he invented for me.” So Mimi Godebski reminisced in later years about the visits of Maurice Ravel to her family’s home during her childhood. Ravel, a contented bachelor, enjoyed these visits to the Godebskis and took special delight in playing with the young children—cutting out paper dolls, telling stories, romping around on all fours. Young Mimi and her brother Jean were in the first stages of piano tutelage in 1908, and Ravel decided to encourage their studies by composing some little pieces for them portraying “Sleeping Beauty,” “Tom Thumb,” “Empress of the Pagodas,” and “Beauty and the Beast.” To these he added an evocation of “The Enchanted Garden” as a postlude. In 1911 he made a ravishing orchestral transcription of the original five pieces; added a prelude, an opening scene, and connecting interludes; and produced a ballet with a scenario based on “Sleeping Beauty” for the Théâtre des Arts in Paris.

The *Mother Goose Suite* comprises the five orchestrated movements of Ravel’s original piano version. The tiny “Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty,” only 20 measures long, depicts the good fairy, who watches over the princess during her somnolence. “Tom Thumb” treats the old legend taken from Charles Perrault’s anthology of 1697. “A boy believed,” Ravel noted of the tale, “that he could easily find his path by means of the bread crumbs he had scattered wherever he passed; but he was very much surprised when he could not find a single crumb: the birds had come and eaten everything up.” “Laideronnette, Empress of the Pagodas” portrays a young girl cursed with ugliness by a wicked fairy. The tale, however, has a happy ending in which the empress’s beauty is restored. In “Conversations of Beauty and the Beast,” the high woodwinds sing the delicate words of the beauty, while the beast is portrayed by the lumbering contrabassoon. At first the two converse, politely taking turns in the dialogue, but after their betrothal, both melodies are entwined, and finally the beast’s theme is transfigured into a floating wisp in the most ethereal reaches of the solo violin’s range. The rapt, introspective splendor of the closing “Enchanted Garden” is Ravel’s masterful summation of the beauty, mystery, and wonder that pervade *Mother Goose*.

Sleeping Beauty Suite

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

(1840–1893)

Tchaikovsky’s highly developed gifts in rhythm, drama, and colorful orchestration made him a natural ballet composer. *Swan Lake* (1877), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890), and *The Nutcracker* (1892) occupy the summit of nineteenth-century theatrical dance music. Although *The Sleeping Beauty* is performed in its entirety less often than the other two, many authorities, including Igor Stravinsky, regarded it as the finest of the three in purely musical terms. It was commissioned by Ivan Vsevolozhsky, director of the Imperial Theatres in St. Petersburg. He selected the scenario, about a princess awakened from a magic spell by the first kiss of true love, from French author Charles Perrault’s well-known seventeenth-century books of fairy tales. “I want to stage it in the style of Louis XIV, allowing the musical fantasy to run high and melodies to be written in the spirit of Lully, Bach, Rameau, and such-like,” he wrote to Tchaikovsky.

With renowned choreographer Marius Petipa’s precisely detailed requirements in hand, Tchaikovsky set joyfully to work. The premiere at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, on January 15, 1890, was met with an indifferent reaction by the public and the press. Everyone found the music too cool and sophisticated, too “French,” for their taste. Naturally the ultrasensitive Tchaikovsky was crushed. But the tide of opinion shifted quickly, and within a year, *The Sleeping Beauty* had become extremely popular.

The concert suite from the ballet opens with the “Introduction,” portraying first the evil fairy Carabosse and then the virtuous Lilac Fairy. In the regal “Adagio: *Pas*

d'action,” a group of princes present themselves as suitors for the hand of Princess Aurora. “*Pas de caractère*” (“Puss in Boots and the White Cat”) profiles two whimsical fairy tale characters. The gracious “Panorama” shows the Lilac Fairy leading Prince Désiré through the forest to where Aurora lies in her enchanted sleep. The familiar “Waltz” is danced by the princess’s courtiers in celebration of her birthday.

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

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.

Jeffrey Seidl receives the Association Award given annually in honor of Arthur P. Barnes. Jeffrey plays bassoon, piano, and trumpet. In the Livermore High School Marching Band, he played trumpet for three years and bassoon as a senior. He also played trumpet with the Symphonic Band in 9th grade, but then picked up the bassoon in 10th and is now the low-woodwind section leader. Jeffrey has played with the Livermore-Amador Symphony Youth Orchestra and in the pit orchestra for Livermore High School musicals. A member of the music honor society Tri-M, Jeffrey also participated in the Livermore school district’s 2015 Solo and Ensemble Festival, where he received a superior rating for bassoon solo and duet. Jeffrey plans to study political science and hopes to work in government. Playing bassoon has grown into a passion for Jeffrey, and he hopes to continue to play: in small groups during college, and then in community orchestras.

Symphony Association Award.

Kevin Yang is this year’s recipient of the second Association Award. An Amador Valley High School student, Kevin has played bass trombone in the Marching Band, Wind Ensemble, and Jazz Band throughout his high school career. He also played in the pit orchestra for the AVHS production of *Anything Goes*. Kevin has had the honor of playing with the SFJAZZ High School All-Stars—an auditioned group that rehearses and performs at the SFJAZZ Center in San Francisco—plus the All-State Wind Symphony of the California Band Directors Association. He has also participated in the Young People’s Symphony Orchestra in Berkeley, the UC Berkeley Summer Symphony, and the Alameda County Honor Band. Kevin has performed with the Livermore-Pleasanton Youth Outreach Symphony as well as providing Easter and Christmas music in church. He plans to study computer science and to continue to play bass trombone 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 piano, violin, and vocal musician **Talia Wang**, an Amador Valley High School student. Talia has played in the AVHS Orchestra throughout her high school career and this year added chamber choir to her schedule. She has also played with the Tri-Valley Chinese Bible Church and is a member of the award-winning Cantabella Children’s Chorus.

You may have seen Talia singing on the Bankhead Theater stage at performances of *The Nutcracker* by Valley Dance Theatre. Talia competed in the United States Open Music Competition for the piano in 9th and 10th grades; she received 4th place in the Open Solo-5D Ruby event in 9th grade and 4th place in the Treasury of Romantic Senior B Event in 10th grade. Talia has not chosen a college major yet, but plans to minor in music and to keep music a part of her life.

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.

Cello player **Irene Su** receives the Bill King Memorial Award this year. She is a student at Amador Valley High School in Pleasanton, where she has been a member of the Chamber Orchestra since 9th grade. This year, Irene is vice president of the AVHS Musicians' Council. She has played in the AVHS productions of *Hairspray* and *Anything Goes*, as well in the Tri-Valley Repertory Theater production of *Les Misérables*. She has also been involved in the AVHS band program as the backfield drum major and as a member of the winterguard. Irene has played cello for St. Clare's Episcopal Church, the Stanford Summer Orchestra, and the Livermore-Pleasanton Youth Outreach Symphony. She has also been a cellist for the past four years in the California Youth Symphony, which played a concert tour through Eastern Europe in 2014. Next year, Irene plans to study biology and is on the pre-med track, but she hopes to continue playing music in college.

Grants and Matching Gifts

The Livermore-Amador Symphony Association gratefully acknowledges funding support from:

City of Livermore Commission for the Arts
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We invite you to join the new A.P. Barnes Society

Members of the A.P. Barnes Society are dedicated supporters of the Livermore-Amador Symphony who have included the symphony in their estate plans. You can help us to:

- Sustain the artistic growth of the symphony
- Provide access and enrichment to young people
- Strengthen the financial foundation of our symphony

For more information, contact APBarnesSociety@livermoreamadorsymphony.org.

If you have already included LAS in your estate plans, we would love to hear from you. All information is confidential.

Color and Romance—February 20, 2016

The LAS February concert will feature “Rainbow Body” by Theofanidis; “Variations on a Theme of Joseph Haydn” by Brahms; and the “Danse Bacchanale” from *Samson and Delilah* by Saint-Saëns, part of which was performed at our 2015 Pops concert; plus Competition for Young Musicians winners Jiho Choi as cello soloist and Dong Hui (Tony) Kim as violin soloist.

Donors

The Livermore-Amador Symphony Association gratefully acknowledges the following donors. These donations for the 2015–2016 season were received between May 7 and November 16, 2015. Corrections or questions? Please contact Judy Eckart, judy@justjudy.com.

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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.



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