

Livermore-Amador Symphony

Lara Webber, Music Director & Conductor
Arthur P. Barnes, Music Director Emeritus
Saturday, April 9, 2016, 8:00 p.m.
Bankhead Theater, Livermore



Dvořák Cello Concerto

Prelude Talk at 7 p.m. by Lara Webber

***Khovantchina* Introduction**

Modest Mussorgsky
(1839–1881)

***Romeo and Juliet* Suite No. 2**

Sergei Prokofiev
(1891–1953)

Opus 64b

The Montagues and the Capulets
Juliet, the Young Girl
Friar Laurence
Dance
Romeo and Juliet Before Parting
Romeo at the Grave of Juliet

————— **INTERMISSION** —————

Cello Concerto in B Minor

Antonín Dvořák
(1841–1904)

Opus 104, B. 191

Allegro
Adagio, ma non troppo
Finale: Allegro moderato–Andante–Allegro vivo

Austin Huntington, soloist

*The audience and performers are invited
to enjoy cookies, champagne, sparkling cider, and 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

Norman Back

Judy Eckart

Susan Ivie

Jutta Massoud

Doug Morrison

Karen Paik

Anthony Westrope*

Second Violin

Ursula Goldstein

Principal

Anne Anaya

Gale Anderson

Stephanie Black

Mary Burchett

Lisa Burkhardt

Jeana Ernst

Jeannie Guzis

Denise Leddon

Jacqueline McBride

Nissa Nack

Leslie Stevens

Beth Wilson

Viola

Judy Beck

Principal

Lynda Alvarez

Adrian Boiangiu

Karen Connolly

David Friburg

Audrey Horning

Dora Scott

Cello

Peter Bedrossian

Principal

Naomi Adams

Alan Copeland

Kate Fisher

Muriel Haupt

Chris Jackson

Hildi Kang

Paul Pappas

Joseph Swenson

String Bass

Nick James

Principal

Alan Frank

Elijah Kane*

Patricia Lay

Flute

Marianne Beeler

Nan Davies

Stacie Manuel

Piccolo

Nan Davies

Oboe

Eva Langfeldt

Jeanne Brown

Jeff Lenigan

English Horn

Jeanne Brown

Clarinet

Lesley Watson

Kathy Boster

Bass Clarinet

Phil Pollard

Bassoon

Douglas Stark

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Contrabassoon

Matt Volkar

Tenor Saxophone

George March

Horn

Christine-Ann

Immesoete

James Hartman

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Harp**

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Piano

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Mary Martin

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* *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

***Khovantchina* Introduction**

Modest Mussorgsky

(1839–1881)

Modest Mussorgsky was born in Karevo, in the district of Pskov, Russia, on March 21, 1839, and died in St. Petersburg, Russia, on March 28, 1881.

In the 1860s, a circle of five composers based in St. Petersburg emerged as an important force in Russian music. The group, led by Mily Balakirev, also included Alexander Borodin, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. They sought to establish a particularly Russian form of musical expression. It was critic Vladimir Stasov who dubbed this nationalist group of Russian composers “The Five” and “The Mighty Handful.”

It was also Stasov who suggested to Mussorgsky that he consider the historical subject that led to *Khovantchina*, an opera the composer referred to as “a national music drama.” The story deals with a particularly turbulent period in Russian history (1682–89) that involved a clash between old and new regimes, culminating in the rise to power of Czar Peter the Great.

In 1872 Mussorgsky began to collect materials relating to the relevant historical period. In July of that year, Mussorgsky dedicated *Khovantchina* to Stasov:

“Now a new work, your work, is seething, and I am beginning to live it. How many invaluable impressions, how many new lands to discover! Wonderful! So, I pray you, accept the essence of my tumultuous self, with the dedication of *Khovantchina*—a dedication which you begot together with the work itself.”

Mussorgsky started composing *Khovantchina* the following year. Although he continued to work on the opera during the remainder of his life, *Khovantchina*—like many of his other compositions—remained unfinished at the time of his death. It was Rimsky-Korsakov who ultimately revised, completed, and orchestrated *Khovantchina*, which received its premiere in St. Petersburg on February 21, 1886.

This concert features the orchestral introduction to *Khovantchina*. Mussorgsky described this brief, atmospheric piece as depicting dawn on the Moscow River.

***Romeo and Juliet* Suite No. 2**

Sergei Prokofiev

Opus 64b

(1891–1953)

In the early 1930s, after nine years spent in the United States and then France, Sergei Prokofiev began contemplating a move back to Russia. As a brash young composer there, he had found himself either praised or reviled as a modernist; in America and France, he was more often seen as a representative of the old Russia he had left behind.

In 1934 he began discussions with the Kirov Theater in Leningrad (now the Mariinsky Theater, in St. Petersburg) about writing a lyrical ballet; the Kirov

suggested *Romeo and Juliet* but later backed out of the agreement. So in 1935, Prokofiev signed a contract with the Moscow Bolshoi Theater for a ballet based on Shakespeare's play, but the Bolshoi subsequently rejected the work, calling it "impossible to dance to." Eventually the composer signed contracts with the Leningrad Ballet School in 1937 to stage the first performance, where its success led to further productions by the Kirov and later the Bolshoi Ballet.

Pragmatically, Prokofiev arranged his ballet music into two orchestral suites, both of which capture the essential mood of the ballet and have become firm favorites in the repertoire.

The second suite opens with "The Montagues and the Capulets," music drawn from the beginning of the ballet. It features Juliet's formal dance with Paris, who had been chosen by her family to be her husband. "Juliet, the Young Girl," from Act I, Scene II, portrays the playful nature of Juliet, who is only a child of 14. The music ends quietly as Juliet sees her reflection in a mirror and realizes she is on the threshold of becoming a woman. "Friar Laurence" represents the kind priest who befriends Romeo and Juliet, first in a melody in the bassoons, tuba, and harp and later in one played by divided cellos. "Dance" is from the opening scene of Act II. First an oboe, then a flute, pipe the jaunty main tune; later, the violins inject a sensuous melody into the proceedings. In the next movement, "Romeo and Juliet Before Parting," Romeo is in Juliet's bedroom just before dawn. They swear their love before Romeo departs, and Juliet contemplates their fate. "Romeo at Juliet's Tomb," the final scene, depicts the mourners carrying the body of Juliet, who is not dead but only drugged. After the grieving Capulets leave, Romeo appears and takes the poison that will kill him before Juliet awakes.

Cello Concerto in B Minor

Opus 104, B. 191

Antonín Dvořák

(1841–1904)

"I have...written a cello concerto but am sorry to this day I did so, and I never intend to write another," said Antonín Dvořák to one of his composition students. "The cello is a beautiful instrument, but its place is in the orchestra and in chamber music. As a solo instrument, it isn't much good." These comments may surprise music lovers, who revere Dvořák's cello concerto as one of the finest works in the orchestral repertoire and the standard by which all subsequent cello concertos have been measured.

A Czech from Bohemia, Dvořák was the eldest son of an outgoing and popular peasant family—his father was not only the village butcher but also ran the main inn in the village and was a competent singer, fiddler, and zither player.

As a boy, Dvořák learned to play the violin, viola, piano, and organ, but his father wanted him to take over the family butchery trade. Gradually parental opposition was overcome, and Dvořák went to Prague to train formally. He spent the next 10 years or so working on his craft privately, writing many scores that he destroyed and earning his keep by playing viola in an orchestra and occasionally teaching. It was not until his mid-30s that he achieved real success, partly through the friend-

ship and support of Johannes Brahms, who was just six years older. It was through Brahms that he signed up with Simrock, a publisher that enabled Dvořák's music to be heard all over the world—and made itself a fortune in the process.

All his life, Dvořák retained characteristics of his peasant background, being neither intellectual nor manipulative but direct, open, and honest. He was no idiot: He soon realized that Simrock was making more from his music than he was himself, so he learned to negotiate higher fees with some guile.

When Dvořák was 50, he was invited to become director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. After much heart-searching (and haggling over terms), he accepted and subsequently spent three years in America. Musically they were very productive and saw the creation of the “American” string quartet and the New World Symphony as well as the cello concerto.

American operetta composer and cellist Victor Herbert, who wrote the operetta *Babes in Toyland*, changed Dvořák's low opinion of the cello as a solo instrument after Dvořák heard Herbert perform his own cello concerto in March 1894. Inspired, Dvořák decided to write a concerto for the instrument. Although the cello concerto, like Dvořák's New World Symphony, was written while Dvořák lived in America, it has no obvious American flavor. Instead of the New World's extroverted and profoundly American energy, the cello concerto is a deeply personal Slavic work, full of beautiful and well-crafted melodies.

Of particular interest is the “Adagio ma non troppo,” in which Dvořák quotes from the song “Kéž duch můj sám” (“Leave Me Alone”). Many years earlier, Dvořák had fallen in love with Josefina Čermáková, and this song was among her favorites. Josefina did not return his feelings, and Dvořák ultimately married her younger sister Anna. In time Dvořák grew to love Anna deeply, but his youthful feelings for Josefina never totally disappeared. While Dvořák was writing the cello concerto, in the fall and winter of 1894–95, he received word that Josefina had fallen gravely ill, and his concern for her took musical shape in the form of this personal quote.

The finale continues Dvořák's tribute to Josefina, who died in May 1895. Having returned home to Prague by that time, Dvořák revised the ending to include the most famous part of this great work, the coda. Dvořák's son Otakar, in his book of reminiscences, *Antonín Dvořák, My Father*, wrote, “This impressive ending to the concerto was my father's tribute to and final departure from his lost love.”

Dvořák dedicated the cello concerto to his friend and fellow Czech Hanuš Wihan, who provided Dvořák with technical knowledge regarding the cello's capabilities. However, Wihan, not content with his advisory role, suggested and apparently insisted on so many revisions that Dvořák finally rebelled. In a letter to his publisher, Dvořák wrote, “I will give you my work only if you promise not to allow *anybody* to make changes—friend Wihan not excepted.”

Critics and audiences received the cello concerto with enthusiasm. *The London Times* wrote, “In wealth and beauty of thematic material, as well as in the unusual interest of the development of its first movement, the new Concerto yields to none of the composer's recent works; all three movements are richly melodious.” Brahms

was also a fan; in a letter to Simrock, Brahms wrote, “Cellists can be grateful to your Dvořák for bestowing on them such a great and skillful work.” From his deathbed, Brahms continued to praise Dvořák’s cello concerto: “Why on earth didn’t I know one could write a cello concerto like this? If I’d only known, I’d have written one long ago!”

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

Soloist—Austin Huntington, cello

Austin Huntington was appointed principal cellist of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra in June 2015 at the age of 20, and he is currently one of the youngest principal musicians of any major American orchestra. Previously, he served as principal cello in the Colburn Orchestra, the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra, and the Encore Chamber Orchestra and also was a substitute cellist for the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Huntington was the first-prize winner of the Aspen Music Festival’s Low Strings Competition in 2013, both the Irving M. Klein and MUSICAAS International String Competitions in 2012, the Stulberg International String Competition in 2011, and the Music Teachers National Association’s Junior Performance Competition in 2009.



He has collaborated in chamber music performances with artists including violinists Itzhak Perlman, Augustin Hadelich, and Mark Kaplan; violist Cynthia Phelps; cellist Robert deMaïne; pianists Wu Han, Garrick Ohlsson, and Jean-Yves Thibaudet; and bassist Edgar Meyer.

Since his debut as an orchestral soloist at age 10 with the South Bend Youth Symphony, Huntington has gone on to perform as guest soloist with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Marin Symphony, Colburn Orchestra, Peninsula Symphony, Santa Cruz Symphony, San Jose Chamber Orchestra, and Northwest (Chicago) Symphony Orchestra, among others.

In the summer, he has attended the Verbier Festival in Switzerland, the Kronberg Academy in Germany, and the International Music Academy of Montpellier in France, plus the Aspen Music Festival and School in Colorado, the Credo Chamber Music Festival in Ohio, and both the Meadowmount School of Music and the Perlman Music Program in New York.

Huntington is 21 years old and a fourth-year Bachelor of Music student at the Colburn School, where he studies with Ronald Leonard. His previous teachers include Richard Hirschl, Brinton Smith, Paul Katz, David Finckel, and Richard Aaron. He plays an Italian cello made by Francesco Ruggeri of Cremona, c. 1690.

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Summer Youth Orchestra Registration

Applications for LASYO, the Livermore-Amador Symphony Youth Orchestra, are available at livermoreamadorsymphony.org. Sign up by May 1 for the summer of 2016. LASYO is open to musicians ages 11 (or in 6th grade) through 21. The music directors this summer will be Don Adkins and Göran Berg.

A Tale of Two Cities—May 21, 2016, 8 p.m.

In May we welcome the radiant-voiced soprano Heidi Moss, singing Barber's "Knoxville: Summer of 1915." From the American South, we are transported to New York City as three energetic sailors on shore leave take in the sights and sounds of the Big Apple in Bernstein's *On the Town*. The gorgeous music of Bizet's *L'Arlésienne* Suites brings our concert to a rousing finish.

Competition for Young Musicians

Recordings due September 18, competition October 9, 2016.

Estate Sales Managed by the Guild

The Symphony Guild volunteers are experts at running professional estates sales. All Guild profits from the sales are donated to LAS. Find out more: If it's time for an estate sale, contact the LAS Guild! Call Nancy McKenzie, 925.294.8657; Marie Ruzicka, 925.447.5521; or Adela Cook, 925.216.7280.

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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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