

Livermore-Amador Symphony

Lara Webber, Music Director & Conductor
Arthur P. Barnes, Music Director Emeritus
Saturday, May 20, 2017, 8 p.m.
Bankhead Theater, Livermore



Arabian Nights

Prelude Talk at 7 p.m. by Lara Webber

Piano Concerto in A Minor

Edvard Grieg

Opus 16

(1843–1907)

1. Allegro molto moderato
2. Adagio
3. Allegro moderato molto e marcato

Frank Wiens, soloist

————— INTERMISSION —————

Scheherazade

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Opus 35

(1844–1908)

- I. The Sea and Sinbad's Ship:
Largo e maestoso, Allegro non troppo
- II. The Kalandar Prince:
Lento, Andantino, Allegro molto, Con moto
- III. The Young Prince and the Young Princess:
Andantino quasi allegretto
- IV. Festival at Baghdad /The Sea/The Shipwreck:
Allegro molto, Vivo, Allegro non troppo maestoso

Kristina Anderson, violin solo

*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.*

Orchestra

Conductor

Lara Webber

First Violin

Kristina Anderson

Concertmaster

Juliana Zolynas

Assistant

Concertmaster

Norman Back

Feliza Bourguet

JoAnn Cox

Judy Eckart

Susan Ivie

Jackie Maruskin

Jutta Massoud

Doug Morrison

Anthony Westrope*

Second Violin

Ursula Goldstein

Principal

Anne Anaya

Stephanie Black

Mary Burchett

Jeana Ernst

Stacy Hughes

Denise Leddon

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Leslie Stevens

Debbie Weir

Viola

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Co-Principal

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Cello

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Acting Principal

Nita Cooley

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String Bass

Nick James

Principal

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Flute

Marianne Beeler

Principal

Nan Davies

Stacie Manuel

Piccolo

Nan Davies

Stacie Manuel

Oboe

Eva Langfeldt

Principal

Jeanne Brown

English Horn

Jeanne Brown

Clarinet

Lesley Watson

Principal

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Bassoon

Lisa Canter

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Chris Werner

Horn

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Principal

James Hartman

Bryan Waugh

Robert Williams

Trumpet

Michael Portnoff

Principal

Steven Anderson

Trombone

Diane Schildbach

Principal

Marcus Schildbach

Bass Trombone

Tom Munns

Tuba

Betsy Hausburg

Timpani

April Nissen

Percussion

April Nissen

Principal

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Tom Dreiman

Todd Evans

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Harp**

Constance Koo

Librarians

Audrey Horning

Monisa Wilcox

* High school student

** The Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild is underwriting the cost of providing a harp player at LAS concerts during the 2016–2017 season.

Program Notes

Piano Concerto in A Minor

Opus 16

Edvard Grieg

(1843–1907)

The most successful and best known of nineteenth-century Scandinavian composers, Edvard Grieg, was one of the great exponents of Romantic nationalism. He saw it as his role in life to bring Scandinavian musical and literary culture to the attention of the rest of Europe. As a composer, pianist, and conductor, he became a sought-after fixture in Europe's music centers. His wife, Nina, was an accomplished singer, and the two traveled extensively together, popularizing his songs and piano works. In the process, he also helped introduce to the rest of Europe the writings of Scandinavian poets and dramatists, particularly Henrik Ibsen, for whose play *Peer Gynt* he composed incidental music.

As a student, Grieg had been a failure. He quit school at 15, never to return. Under the sponsorship of Norwegian violinist Ole Bull, he was granted a scholarship to the Conservatory in Leipzig but hated his teachers and never forgave them their conservatism and pedantry. Understandably, he was not happy with the constraints of the classical sonata form; of all his surviving output, only eight works fall into this category, among them his piano concerto. In all his other compositions, he insisted on the freedom of form so dear to the Romantic sensibility.

All his life, Grieg felt most comfortable with and excelled in smaller musical forms: songs, miniature piano pieces, orchestral dances, and reworkings of folk melodies. His aptitude for orchestration was indifferent at best. It is, therefore, surprising that his piano concerto, his only completed large-scale orchestral work outside of a student symphony, would end up as one of the most popular Romantic concerti.

Composed in 1868 and revised extensively five times—the last revision coming shortly before the composer's death—the concerto was modeled after the piano concerto of Robert Schumann, with considerable Lisztian influence. Franz Liszt was Grieg's idol, and Grieg consulted with the older composer on phrasing and piano technique, particularly in the large cadenza. Although the concerto's themes are not ethnic Norwegian—the work was written before Grieg became interested in Norway's folk music—it still has a “northern” mood and does incorporate Norwegian dance rhythms. Early in its life, the concerto was not well received, since its introverted style was foreign to a public used to the fire and bravura of concerti à la Liszt. Ironically, it was the enthusiastic endorsement by Liszt himself that turned the tide and converted audiences as well as pianists to the work. Later in his life—his hero worship notwithstanding—Grieg had second thoughts about some of Liszt's suggestions and, in the last revised version, removed some of the latter's more bombastic additions. This final version is the one commonly heard today.

Emulating his models, Grieg opens the concerto with a strong piano declamation, spanning almost the entire range of the keyboard and followed by a wave of arpeggios before the first theme appears in the orchestra. Only then is the theme taken up by the piano and elaborated. During the transition into the second theme, Grieg reveals his debt to his mentor, Liszt, with passages of unusual dissonance and ambiguous tonality that resolve into lyric expansiveness. The cellos introduce a

lyrical second theme, which Grieg had scored for the trumpets (probably on Liszt's advice) in the earlier versions. The written-out cadenza is expansive and, of course, technically challenging. The second-movement adagio is a tender songlike theme on muted strings. When the piano finally enters, it gently embellishes the theme.

It is in the last movement that Grieg's folk impulses break out in a Norwegian dance, the *halling*. A gentle middle section introduced by the flute with string accompaniment serves as a contrast to the ebullient dance. After a brief cadenza, the soloist launches into a coda recasting the dance theme into the rapid triple time of the popular Norwegian *springdans*. The concerto ends with the gentle flute theme now thundered out by orchestra and soloist.

Scheherazade

Opus 35

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov

(1844–1908)

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov was born on March 18, 1844, in Tikhvin, Russia, and died on June 21, 1908, in Lyubensk. He was formally educated as a naval officer and was known for his disciplined demeanor; strong ethical standards; and deep sense of Russian nationalism, especially in regard to the country's musical culture. He was part of the group of composers known as "The Five," which, in addition to himself, comprised César Cui, Mily Balakirev, Modest Mussorgsky, and Alexander Borodin. Rimsky-Korsakov's genius lay not only in his compositional prowess but also in his amazing ability to orchestrate. In addition to his own incredibly lush and pictorial music, he orchestrated the performance versions of Mussorgsky's "Night on Bald Mountain" and Borodin's *Prince Igor*.

Surely it was destiny that led Rimsky-Korsakov to compose a piece inspired by the *Arabian Nights* legends. He spent decades acquiring the necessary skills to do the material justice, above all a mastery of colorful orchestration and a flair for composing sweeping, exotic melodies.

During a summer holiday in 1888, when he and his family withdrew to a quiet lakeshore in the Russian countryside, he set down the music that had been burning feverishly within him since the previous winter. Three weeks was all the time he needed to finish *Scheherazade* to the very last note.

Like many other composers who have written music inspired by outside sources, he suggested that audiences not listen too closely for specific events in the music. He gave all the movements subtitles but then removed them; he did include in the printed score the following introduction, drawn from the original stories: "The Sultan Shahriar, convinced of the falsehood and inconstancy of all women, had sworn an oath to put to death each of his wives after the first night. However the Sultana Scheherazade saved her life by arousing his interest in the tales that she told during the 1001 nights. Driven by curiosity, the Sultan postponed her execution from day to day and at last abandoned his bloodthirsty design."

The orchestration of *Scheherazade* is masterful, drawing the maximum in color from what is a not particularly large ensemble. Rimsky-Korsakov achieved much of this brilliance by continuously dotting the score with passages for solo instruments. The suite is bound together by a recurring motive, a bewitching melody sung by the solo violin: the voice of Scheherazade.

The first movement gives a strong impression of the sea, complete with the swell of ocean breezes, the roll of the waves, and the adventurous call of foreign ports. Rimsky-Korsakov knew such an atmosphere well, having served in the Russian navy for several years. His voyages brought him as close to us as Niagara Falls.

At the start of the second movement, Scheherazade's theme again declares, "Once upon a time . . ." The solo bassoon launches the tale, sinuously, like the chant of an ancient storyteller. A warlike fanfare introduced by trombones and the tuba plays an important role in the fantastic proceedings.

The third movement cannot represent anything but a love scene. A dance, tinged with light percussion, appears at the core. The Scheherazade violin theme puts in an appearance, leading to a brief, ecstatic climax—a first kiss? The central dance theme returns, warmed by recent experience, before the tranquil close.

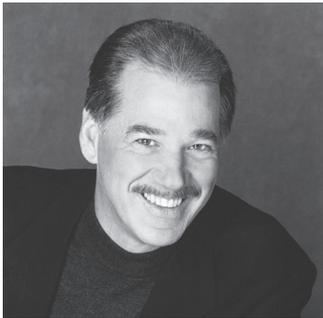
The finale will really get your blood racing. It opens with alternations of furious orchestral outbursts and passionate violin solos. Rimsky-Korsakov then kicks off a boisterous carnival, where themes heard earlier in the suite jostle for attention. At the height of festivities, we seem to return to the sea, sailing majestically until a colossal climax is reached. The Scheherazade theme returns one last time, keening softly to close our heroine's storytelling—for tonight.

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

Piano Soloist Frank Wiens

Frank Wiens is a concert pianist who makes his home in Stockton, California. He has toured the United States annually in recital and with orchestra since 1974.

Wiens gave his New York debut at Carnegie Hall in 1984. His London recital debut took place in 1986. He made his European continental debut in Vienna, Austria, in 1987 at the Brahms-Saal of the Musikverein. Other international performances have included a concert tour of the Soviet Union, two tours of South Korea, and engagements in Romania and Poland.



He has performed as soloist with the Atlanta, Denver, and Detroit Symphonies and has been a touring artist with the Iowa Arts Council and the California Arts Council.

Wiens first performed the piano concerto by Grieg with the Denver Symphony on the heels of winning first prize in that symphony's North American Young Artist Competition in 1975. He has since performed the work on several occasions.

In the fall of 2012, Wiens engaged in a special project involving the music of Edvard Grieg and traveled to Bergen, Norway, the composer's hometown, to learn more about his life and music and to coach many solo works with one of Norway's leading Grieg experts. This led to a season featuring a solo recital program devoted to that composer's piano works and lectures about his life and compositions.

A native of New Haven, Connecticut, Frank Wiens received his bachelor's and

master's degrees in music from the University of Michigan, where he was awarded the Stanley Medal, that school's highest award for musical excellence. He has taught at Drake University and, since 1976, at the University of the Pacific, where he holds the position of Professor of Piano. He was honored with the University of the Pacific's Distinguished Faculty Award in 1997 and with the university's Faculty Research-Lecturer Award in 2000.

Wiens lives in Stockton with his wife, mezzo-soprano Lynelle Frankforter Wiens. In his spare time, he enjoys playing golf and trying his hand at gourmet cooking.

Violin Soloist Kristina Anderson

Kristina Anderson is in her ninth season as the LAS concertmaster. Born in South Dakota, she moved with her family to Sacramento at age 6 and began violin lessons through her school music program in the 6th grade. She was accepted to the Peabody Conservatory at age 17



after early high school graduation. Her major violin instructors include Jascha Brodsky, Aaron Rosand, Berl Senofsky, and Zoya Leybin.

Anderson's professional orchestral experience includes: New Orleans Philharmonic (first violin), Colorado Springs Symphony (concertmaster), Charlotte Symphony (concertmaster), Oakland Symphony (first violin), West Bay Opera (concertmaster), and Santa Cruz Symphony (concertmaster). She has also served as the concertmaster/violin coach for community orchestras: Curry County Community Orchestra in Oregon and Diablo Symphony Orchestra in Walnut Creek.

Anderson enjoys working with community musicians. "The players in community orchestras bring such positive energy and are willing to tackle even the most difficult music. I am so proud of the work we do in the Livermore-Amador Symphony and look forward to every season."

Competition for Young Musicians, 2017–2018

September 10, 2017: Applications due. October 1, 2017: Competition.

Youth Outreach

Between March 2015 and April of this year, several thousand children in Pleasanton and Livermore attended LAS performances at elementary school assemblies. Our full orchestra introduced symphonic music and the different instruments of the orchestra to our youth. In addition, LAS has been holding regular open dress rehearsals to reach even more youth in our community.

For six years, LAS's Fiddle Club has introduced violin-playing to elementary school children. The 2017 program, taught by LAS violin player Jutta Massoud, provided eight weeks of after-school classes to 4th graders at Marylin Avenue Elementary in Livermore.

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(Corrections or questions? Please contact Judy Eckart, judy@justjudy.com.)*

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We Invite You to Join the A.P. Barnes Society

Members of the A.P. Barnes Society have included the symphony in their estate plans. For more information, contact APBarnesSociety@livermoreamadorsymphony.org.

More in 2017

Rose Night for the 2017–2018 Season—Tonight!

It's a Symphony Guild tradition: Season ticket subscribers for 2017–2018 are entitled to pick up a rose in the lobby tonight.



LASYO Concert—July 22

The Livermore-Amador Symphony Youth Orchestra's ninth season is about to begin! After auditions in early June, rehearsals will commence on June 20—twice a week this year—with returning conductors Don Adkins and Göran Berg. A free public concert will be presented on July 22 at 8 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church in Livermore.

Bankhead Gala—September 9

The Bankhead Theater's eleventh season begins with the Brilliance at the Bankhead gala on September 9. This fundraiser for the Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center will feature the Indigo Girls, accompanied by the LAS orchestra. See lvpac.org for information and tickets.

Pops Concert—October 20

Call 925.447.6454 starting on September 11 to reserve tickets for “Heroes and Villains at the POPS,” presented by the Symphony Guild on October 20 at the Livermore Community Center.

Family Concert—December 2 Afternoon

LAS will perform at a family concert on the afternoon of December 2, after which orchestra players will staff an “instrument petting zoo.”

Musical Heroes—December 2 Evening

The LAS concert on the evening of December 2, Musical Heroes, will include works by Beethoven, Prokofiev, and Sibelius. We hope to see you there!

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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www.livermoreamadorsymphony.org

