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Chapman Symphony Orchestra

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CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents the

Chapman Symphony Orchestra

Larry Curtis, conductor

Jordan Witherspoon, double-bass

November 20, 2005 • 4:00P.M.
Memorial Hall Auditorium

Program

Overture, *The Marriage of Figaro*, K. 492

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Concerto in A
Allegro Moderato

attributed to Domenico Dragonetti
(1763-1846)

Jordan Witherspoon, double-bass

Fantasia and Fugue in c minor, BWV 537

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)
trans. Edward Elgar

Intermission

Symphony No. 5 in e minor, Op. 64

Andante; Allegro con anima

Andante con alcuna licenza

Valse: Allego moderato

Finale: Andante maestoso; Allegro vivace

Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky
(1840-1893)

Program Notes

Overture, The Marriage of Figaro, K. 492 (1786)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

When *The Marriage of Figaro* was first performed in 1786 in Prague, it generated an astounding sensation; such wild success can perhaps be understood today only in the context of a new Broadway hit. For *Le Nozze de Figaro*, the oldest Mozart opera in the standard repertory, Mozart used a libretto that was derived from Beaumarchais's play in French, and it was the kind of play that excited the French aristocracy and garnered sensational acclaim. The overture instantly sets the tone for its own madcap mood, its whirlwind humor. Although it begins quietly, before the listener becomes aware of it, the slight beginning motif becomes a full-blown theme that the whole orchestra, with the force of trumpets and drums, articulates. Supposedly, Mozart had originally composed a slow middle section for the overture with a solo oboe carrying the theme. But he thought better of breaking the overture into a tripartite structure, and he cut the slow part out. After the overture reaches its climax, Mozart has the orchestra return to the brilliant, bubbling, opening theme. The main purpose of the music is to establish the breathless pace of the madcap intrigues to come, and although the overture contains no music from the opera itself, it perfectly sets the tone for this greatest of all comic operas.

Concerto in A for Double-bass

Domenico Dragonetti

Dragonetti's life spanned the Golden Age of the Double Bass, a period in which the double bass emerged from being a purely orchestral instrument and into a capable solo instrument. Great Classical period composers such as Dittersdorf, Haydn, Hoffmeister, Stamitz, and Vanhal all wrote Concertos and chamber music featuring the Double Bass. Dragonetti quickly became the center of all of this attention. Essentially a self-taught bassist, his extensive career began with his appointment as the Principal Bassist of the Venetian Opera Buffa Orchestra at age 13. Renowned throughout Europe for his solo performances Dragonetti was able to befriend such great musicians as Beethoven, Haydn, Paganini, and Rossini.

Ever since the publication of this Concerto in 1925, however, controversy has surrounded its true origin. Generally it is believed that it is actually the work of Edouard Nanny (1872-1942) who, as the title page of the original manuscript suggests, may have written it in homage of Dragonetti. Likewise, the British Museum houses a collection of Dragonetti manuscripts. Among the collection are 10 Concertos for the Double Bass; none of which share any relation to this work. Additionally, this Concerto shares remarkable melodic and technical similarities to another Concerto composed by Nanny for the Double Bass.

Controversy aside, this Concerto represents one of the most important works in the solo repertoire for the Double Bass. Its brilliance lies in its ability to show off the Double Bass' unique lyrical and technical qualities and allows the audience a rare opportunity to listen to the beautiful sounds of an often underappreciated and misunderstood instrument.

Fantasia and Fugue in c minor, BWV 537

Johann Sebastian Bach

In the music of Bach, the listener often can feel the strength and power of the man's personal religious convictions. *Fantasia and Fugue* appears to convey an appreciation for the beauty of life and confidence in the eventual victory of the human spirit over earthly concerns.

There are probably more orchestral transcriptions of Bach's organ works than any other class of music. Dozens of conductors and many major composers have tested their musical skills by trying to express Bach's unique genius in a setting that would show off the modern symphony orchestra. The music itself is so identifiably Bach that these transcriptions never seem to reflect their transcriber, but always the ideas Bach himself. This orchestration by English composer Edward Elgar is perhaps more Romantic in nature than Baroque, but what was Bach is undeniably still Bach; ageless, empowering, and unblemished by time.

Program Notes

Symphony No. 5 in e minor, Op. 64 (1888)

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Composed shortly after a long European tour, the Fifth Symphony is typical of the artistic balance Tchaikovsky struck; it is not explicitly nationalistic, but a distinctively Russian flavor pervades many of the themes. There is also a related, but deeper, artistic issue in the work. The idea of an "unspoken program" was certainly in the composer's mind as he sat down to compose this symphony; in the spring of 1888 he noted a possible approach: "Introduction. Complete resignation before Fate - or, what is the same thing, the inscrutable designs of Providence." Although he eventually dropped the specific programmatic references, it is clear that this symphony projects some kind of dramatic struggle. The broad outlines are made clear by a recurring idea known as the "Fate" motive.

The Symphony's first movement opens (*Andante*) with a clarinet statement of the "Fate" theme which is to be heard in all four movements. The *Allegro* is ushered in by a slow-march theme given out by the woodwinds over string accompaniment; the strings take up this theme and build it to a pitch of considerable intensity, setting the stage for the entrance of a simple motif (in B minor) with a sweet, yearning quality. The development is concise, the coda is based on a more energetic statement of the slow-march theme, and the movement ends in the same murky irresolution in which it began.

The second movement contains two celebrated themes whose emotional burden is unmistakable. (Both were borrowed for popular songs in the late 1930's, when there were still such things as popular songs and Tchaikovsky's tunes turned up in several.) The first of these is the famous tune sung by the solo horn, which Tchaikovsky marked *dolce con espressione*, and over which, in his first draft, he wrote, "*O que je t'aime!, O, mon amie!*" The second theme, introduced by the oboe as a counterpoint to the first, is subsequently taken up by the full orchestra and eventually built to a powerful climax. Two further motifs are heard: a fanciful connective interlude for clarinet and bassoon, and the "Fate" motto from the work's opening, which appears abruptly and this time quite powerfully. The movement ends quietly, on a note of bittersweet resignation.

The bittersweet mood is continued in the third movement, one of Tchaikovsky's characteristic waltzes in place of a conventional scherzo. The theme came from an Italian song he heard sung by a child in Florence. Here we are on rather neutral ground emotionally—never really happy, never really sad—and when the "Fate" motto makes its inevitable appearance it is no longer fierce and foreboding, but casual, subdued, almost self-mocking.

In the final movement the motto is presented in an altogether new light. In the extended introduction it is transformed into a majestic and confident processional. In the finale proper, initiated by an eruption of drums and a savage dance-like passage, a more startling metamorphosis takes place: through a kaleidoscopic sequence of new tunes (actually variants on the motto) and instrumental colos, the motto takes on a wholly different character, now exultant, jubilant, ringing with self-confidence. Following a false ending, a long, triumphal coda—the "Fate" motto as a march, with the slow-march theme from the first movement similarly transformed into a fanfare as a final embellishment—ends the work on a note of exuberant affirmation.

LARRY CURTIS is a distinguished educator and professional conductor. His diverse musical background is exemplified by his more recent guest conducting engagements which include performances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, the Americus Brass Band, an ensemble which performs on authentic instruments of the 19th century, and "Imagination Celebration" concert in conjunction with New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, a live concert broadcast from Suisse Romane Studios in Geneva, Switzerland, a command performance for the "Society for the Preservation of Film Music" as well as conducting at the Hollywood Bowl. Larry Curtis has established an international reputation with performances and conducting engagements in Japan, Scotland, Canada, England, Austria, Switzerland, Germany and Australia.

During his 25 year tenure as conductor of wind performance at California State University, Long Beach, the Wind Symphony was considered to be one of the nation's finest collegiate instrumental ensembles. It performed for regional and national conferences of the College Band Directors National Association, American Bandmasters Association, National Wind Ensemble Conference, Japan Bandmasters Association, California Music Educators Association and the Music Educators National Conference. Curtis holds honorary life membership in Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Kappa Kappa Psi and the California Parent Teacher Association.

Currently, Curtis serves the City of Long Beach as its Director of Music where his duties include conducting the nation's most distinguished professional community wind band and its related jazz ensembles. The Long Beach Municipal Band is presently enjoying its 96th continuous year of service. Larry Curtis is an author, performer, educator and conductor. His sensitivity, interpretation and dynamic attention to musical detail offer audiences a truly exciting listening experience.

Curtis' latest achievement was the establishment of the American Winds, a professional wind band of symphonic instrumentation, which performed its inaugural concert as part of the 1999 Hollywood Bowl Summer Season. This event marked the first professional wind band concert at the Hollywood Bowl and to date the American Winds has enjoyed four highly successful return engagements performing for an average attendance of 15,000.

JORDAN WITHERSPOON is a sophomore who began his musical career playing the cello in elementary school. In the 7th grade his Orchestra Director, Mr. Brendan McBrien encouraged him to switch to the Bass, and he has never regretted it! Jordan was born deaf and had to endure several surgeries as a child in order to hear normally. Thus he has always had an immense appreciation for his hearing ability and would like to thank his parents for raising him on Classical music from such an early age. His passion is the historically accurate performance of early music and he performs regularly on the Viola da Gamba under the tutelage of Dr. Bruce Bales. Special teachers, mentors and tutors like Mr. McBrien, Mr. Randy Gravett, Mr. David Black and Professor Mark Laycock have all enhanced both his love of Classical music and his deep appreciation for the challenges of performance. Jordan's future goals are to graduate with a degree in Accounting and to continue life as an amateur musician.

~Coming Events~

42nd Annual Wassail Banquet

Friday, December 2 • 6 p.m.

Saturday, December 3 • 6 p.m.

Wassail and Dinner in Beckman Hall.

Concert in the **Fish Interfaith Center**

Contact (714) 997-6812 for ticket sales and info.

Opera Chapman

Friday & Saturday, April 21 & 22 • 8 p.m.

Sunday, April 23 • 4 p.m.

Chapman University Memorial Hall

Fully Staged with Chamber Orchestra:

Mozart's *The Magic Flute*

Chapman University

Symphony Orchestra

Flute

- I - Laura Recendez *
- II - Maya Kalinowski

Oboe

- I - Victoria Lee *
- II - Maralynne Mann

Clarinet

- I - Monica Mann *
- II - Samantha Pankow

Bassoon

- I - Teren Shaffer *
- II - Chris Hughes

Horn

- I - Piotr Sidoruk *
- I - Valerie Johnson
- II - John Acosta
- III - Aubrey Acosta
- IV - Jon Harmon

Trumpet

- I - Eric Jay *
- II - Beckie Takashima

Trombone

- I - Lindsay Johnson *
- II - David Andersson

Bass Trombone

- III - Jeremy DelaCuadra

Tuba

- Justin Jerome

Timpani

- Bernie Diveley

Percussion

- Tizoc Ceballos
- Joshua Foy
- Collin Martin

Violin I

- Mira Khomik **
- Kathleen Mangusing **
- Adriana Hernandez
- Lauren Jackson
- Sam Nordrum
- Bud Neff

Violin II

- Nadia Lesinska *
- Ryan Lam
- Vincent Bartens
- Valerie Macias
- Vanessa Ceballos
- Jessica Ross
- Kalena Bovell
- Pat Pearce
- Beth McCormick

Viola

- Phillip Triggs *
- Si Tran
- Amy Noonan
- Matt Byward
- Dana Grossi
- Kelly Derrig
- Eileen Halcrow

Violoncello

- Sara Awaa *
- Alex Wilson
- Brent Dickason
- Marissa Gohl
- Kim Birney
- Tiffany Glenn-Hall
- Justin Dubish
- Hilka Natri

String Bass

- Jordan Witherspoon *
- Mark Buchner
- Mike Freeman
- Candice Grasmeyer
- Alec Henderson
- Robert Klatt

Harp

- Brian Noel

*Principal

**Co-Concert Mistress