

2023-24
39TH SEASON



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ORCHESTRA**
Israel Getzov, Music Director

PRESENTS

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SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 2024, 7:30 PM

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CONWAY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Israel Getzov, Music Director

2023-2024
39th
SEASON

Saturday, April 27th, 2024, 7:30 pm

Windgate Concert Hall, Conway Arkansas

IT TAKES TWO!

Conway Symphony Orchestra

Israel Getzov, Conductor

Linda Hsu, Violin

Stephen Feldman, Cello

Double Concerto for Violin and Cello in A minor, Op. 102 Johannes Brahms

- Allegro (1833-1997)
- Andante
- Vivace non troppo

Linda Hsu & Stephen Feldman

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Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*

Leonard Bernstein

- Prologue (Allegro moderato) (1918-1990)
- “Somewhere” (Adagio)
- Scherzo (Vivace leggiero)
- Mambo (Presto)
- Cha-Cha (Andantino con grazia)
- Meeting Scene (Meno mosso)
- “Cool”, Fugue (Allegretto)
- Rumble (Molto allegro)
- Finale (Adagio)

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Israel Getzov, Music Director

American conductor Israel Getzov begins his nineteenth season as Music Director of the Conway Symphony Orchestra. He also serves as Music Director of the Little Rock Winds, and Artistic Advisor to the Orquesta Filarmónica de Santa Cruz de la Sierra. He previously held the positions of Associate Conductor of the Arkansas Symphony and Principal Conductor of the Tianjin Philharmonic, the resident orchestra of the Tianjin Grand Theater.

Mr. Getzov has conducted orchestras throughout the United States and abroad, including Abilene Philharmonic, Asheville, Symphony, Cleveland Pops, Monroe Symphony, Skokie Valley Symphony, Mid-Texas Symphony, Shanghai Philharmonic, Symphony of the Mountains, Tianjin Symphony, Zhejiang Symphony Orchestra, Bolivia Classica, University of Taipei Symphony, and the Encuentro Jovenes Musicos Festival in La Paz. As an opera conductor, he led the world premiere of *The Scarlett Letter* by American composer Lori Laitman, conducted works of Giancarlo Menotti at the Shanghai Oriental Arts Center and the Cleveland Institute of Music, and worked as Staff Conductor for Tianjin Grand Opera in productions of *La Traviata*, *Il Trovatore*, *Rigoletto*, *Bluebeard's Castle*, and *Oedipus Rex*.

Mr. Getzov was selected by Leonard Slatkin to conduct the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and was chosen by David Zinman for the American Academy of Conducting at the Aspen Music Festival.

Mr. Getzov started the violin at age 3, and later studied viola, piano and percussion. He has performed as an orchestral violinist with many renowned conductors including Barenboim, Boulez, Solti, Mehta and Rostropovich. He was a founding member of the Rockefeller String Quartet, a professional quartet with whom he gave over 200 concerts. Mr. Getzov holds a tenured professorship at the University of Central Arkansas and has given clinics at many conservatories and music schools in the U.S., Asia, and South America. An experienced public speaker, he hosted his own weekly radio program on Arkansas KLRE 90.5FM called "Izzy Investigates" and has performed live as a chamber musician on WFMT and WBEZ in Chicago.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra in A minor, Op. 102

Johannes Brahms
1833-1897

It does not pay to get involved in other people's marital squabbles. When Brahms's friends of 30 years, the violinist Joseph Joachim and his wife entered into a messy divorce battle, Joachim accused Brahms of taking his wife's side and broke off all contact with his friend. The concerto was Brahms's peace offering; and while it brought the two friends back together, they never resumed the warmth of their original friendship. By adding the cello, Brahms also partially fulfilled a promise to Robert Hausmann, cellist of the Joachim quartet, to write a cello concerto.

The material for the concerto, composed during the summer of 1887, originated as sketches for a fifth symphony that never materialized. But Brahms continued to revise it even after the premiere, which took place in October 1887 with Joachim and Hausmann as soloists.

By the date of the Double Concerto, Brahms considered himself an "elder statesman" of music, looking to the past rather than to the future. The Concerto has little of the virtuosic glitter of most Romantic concertos, composed by and for musicians with competitive technical showmanship. Rather, it is introspective and subdued. There are no technical acrobatics for either of the two soloists, only the intensity of the themes and their development drive the work. Listeners used to pyrotechnic fiddling will find none of that in this Concerto. Surprisingly, the cello is the dominant instrument of the two soloists, creating a somber, autumnal cast to the entire work.

Most double concertos feature identical instruments or at least instruments of similar range in order to insure equality when both soloists are in "opposition," or perfect blending when they are in "accord." The combination of extremes in this concerto had only a few distant precedents in double concertos and symphonies concertantes for violin and cello, including concertos by Vivaldi, Telemann, J. C. Bach, Carl Stamitz and Louis Spohr.

The presentation of the themes throughout the Double Concerto comes in stages, often interrupted by solo passages, so that a complete melody emerges only after a considerable length of time; the entire first theme occurs only several minutes into the movement. Much of the movement becomes a rhapsodic interplay between the soloists and the orchestra, in which three themes are dissected and reconstituted in a myriad of ways, straying into distant keys and exploring the limits of the possible sonorities of the instruments.

The Andante is a simple ABA form. The two soloists have long singing lines that twine sinuously around each other – in a similar manner to another double

PROGRAM NOTES

concerto, the second movement of Bach's Concerto in D minor for two violins and Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for violin and viola. It opens with a four-note motive in the winds, the beginning of the main theme, which is introduced by the violin and cello playing an octave apart.

In the Finale, Brahms rolls out an astonishing number of themes, only some of them separated by the rondo refrain. The clue to rationale for the melodic proliferation in this movement rests with its relationship to the dances of the time. Waltzes and polkas introduce one melody after another, only periodically punctuated by a refrain. Popular – and inauthentic – Roma music followed the same pattern, and the rondo theme recalls Brahms Gypsy and Hungarian Dances.

Ralph Vaughan Williams once recalled hearing the Concerto played as a piano trio in Berlin in 1897 with Joachim and Hausmann as soloists and Karl Barth as the pianist taking the place of the orchestra. We tend to forget how difficult it was to disseminate orchestral music before the days of sound recording. In those days piano and chamber transcriptions were the most popular way to familiarize the public at large with new orchestral compositions and were a thriving industry. Brahms himself may have made the transcription.

Symphonic Dances from West Side Story

Leonard Bernstein
1918-1990

West Side Story was Leonard Bernstein's attempt to demonstrate that it was possible to write a Broadway musical with the characteristics of high art. He succeeded beyond all expectations. With lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and with Jerome Robbins as director and choreographer, the show opened on Broadway on September 26, 1957 and ran for over 1,000 performances. The movie was just as spectacular a success, as was the recording.

But its birth was not easy. The show was originally conceived eight years earlier as a conflict between Jews and Catholics during the Easter-Passover celebrations and at one point was to be called East Side Story. The protagonists were finally switched to ethnic gangs on the Upper West Side, but no backers could be found. West Side Story became notorious for having been turned down by nearly every producer because no one thought that such a tragic story was suitable material for Broadway. Finally, Harold Prince and Robert Griffith, two successful Broadway producers, emerged as the show's financial "angels."

Casting was another problem. The perfectionist Robbins wanted a cast of 38 who could both dance and sing – a nearly impossible demand in those days, but now the rule rather than the exception. A choreographer first and

PROGRAM NOTES

foremost, Robbins finally settled on dancers who could sing – as opposed to singers who could dance. When Bernstein, unencumbered by staging constraints, re-recorded *West Side Story* in 1988, he used opera singers for the main roles: Kiri Te Kanawa, José Carreras, Tatiana Troyanos and Marilyn Horne. It became another bestseller.

While describing the tragic life of ordinary people in a New York Puerto Rican ghetto, *West Side Story* tackles an archetypal theme: love clashing with prejudice and clan hatred, an inner city Romeo and Juliet.

The Symphonic Dances, which Bernstein extracted from the musical, are not played in the order of the original show. Consisting of nine segments played without pause, the suite was first performed by the New York Philharmonic in 1961:

- Prologue: Portrays the rising violence between the two street gangs, the Sharks and the Jets in harsh, jazzy dissonances and rhythms.
- Somewhere: Tony and Maria's idyllic dream sequence in which the gangs are joined in friendship and the lovers united, originally from Act 2 after Tony has stabbed Maria's brother.
- Scherzo: The dream continues as the two gangs leave the city for the idyllic countryside.
- Mambo: The rival gangs compete at a school dance, originally from Act 1 when the two lovers first meet.
- Cha-Cha. Tony and Maria, from opposing gangs, meet for the first time and dance together.
- Meeting Scene: The lovers hesitantly exchanging their first words.
- "Cool" Fugue: The hostility of the Jets gradually builds in anticipation of street warfare.
- Rumble. The violent, dissonant climax results in the final tragedy in which both rival gang leaders are killed.
- Finale: Tony dies in Maria's arms, a victim of gang violence. In an ironic twist, the dream melody of "Somewhere" hauntingly reappears during the funeral procession.

Program notes by:
Joseph & Elizabeth Kahn
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GUEST ARTISTS



Linda Hsu
Violinist

Violinist Linda Hsu is a professor at the University of Central Arkansas and concertmaster of the Conway Symphony Orchestra. Her numerous performances worldwide include New York Debut Recital at Carnegie Weill Recital Hall and recitals at the National Taiwan Recital Hall in Taipei. In addition, she has appeared as a concerto soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan, the Taipei Century Symphony Orchestra, the Greece Symphony Orchestra of New York, the Blue Lake Festival Orchestra, the Pine Bluff Symphony Orchestra, and the Conway Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Hsu received her bachelor's degree from Yale University and master's and doctorate degrees from the Eastman School of Music. Her violin teachers include Nien-Fu Liao, Albert Markov, Sidney Harth, Catherine Tait, and Jeremy Zhu. Ms. Hsu has presented at the American String Teachers Association National Conference, the Arkansas Music Educators Association Conference, and the Arkansas All-State Music Conference, as well as given violin and chamber music masterclasses in Mexico, Taiwan, and the US.



Stephen Feldman
Cellist

Cellist Stephen Feldman has been appearing on the stages of central Arkansas for 25 years and is well-known as a gifted and enthusiastic communicator in recital, chamber music and as a soloist. Dr. Feldman joined the faculty at the University of Central Arkansas in 2001 after holding teaching positions at the University of Virginia, Penn State University, and DePauw University. After earning degrees in both English Literature and Music from Swarthmore College, he went on to study at the Eastman School of Music and SUNY Stony Brook with cellists Steven Doane and Timothy Eddy. Formerly a member of the Fetter and Rivanna String Quartets, Stephen also performed as cellist in the Quapaw and Sturgis String Quartets during his time as a member of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra. His current obsessions include the life and music of composer, conductor, pianist, and educator Ingolf Dahl and celebrating and making better known the compositions and pedagogical materials of Rudolf Matz.



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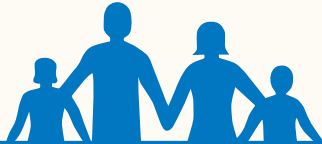
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