



Mission Chamber Orchestra of San José

27th Season

Celebration of Italian Musical Heritage

Sunday, January 28, 2024

3:00 PM

Italian American Heritage Foundation
San Jose, California

Program

Overture to *The Barber of Seville* Gioacchino Rossini

***Crisantemi* Giacomo Puccini, arr. Lucas Drew**

***Fountains of Rome* Ottorino Respighi**

**Movements from *Divided:* Alexander Goodhart
An American Symphony (world premiere)**

II. Duetto Lontano

III. Circo scherzo

- Intermission -

***Procession of Duos* Marjan Mozetich**

Intermezzo from *Cavalleria Rusticana* Pietro Mascagni

Suite from *The Jewels of the Madonna* Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari

I. Festa Populaire

II. Intermezzo

III. Serenata

IV. Danza napolitana

No still or video photography is permitted during the performance.

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Emily Ray, Guest Conductor

Violin I

Malin Huffman,
concertmaster
Ann Byler
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Emma Dohner
Carolyn Lowenthal
Mary Lou Meeks
Peggy Spool
Kathleen Thompson

Violin II

Anne Spector *
Zicong Chen
Marian Lin
Eric Macasaet
Alson Wang
Aine Winklebleck

Viola

Goetz Leonhardt *
Ken McKnight
Nicole Shim
Judy Sumerlin
Pragathi Venkatesh

Violoncello

Garth Cummings *
Seán Aodha
Jeanette Haines
Tsung (Ethan) Ho
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Contrabass

Clark Cox *
Lisa Dusseault

Flute

Amelia Archer *
Sarah Lloyd

Piccolo

Kenin Coloma

Oboe

Robert Scott *
Bill Gay
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English Horn

Emily Petersen

Clarinet

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Bass Clarinet

Joanna Dahl

Bassoon

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Contrabassoon

Juliet Hamak

Horn

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Tuba

John Whitecar

Timpani

Stuart Langsam

Percussion

Josh Chase
Niles Flynn
Stuart Langsam
Shota Otaguro
Cade Santos

Harp

Ruthanne
Adams-Martinez *
David Lin

Piano

Geri Actor

Celesta

Debbie Davis

* Principal

** Associate principal

Mission Chamber Orchestra of San José concerts are supported, in part, by a Cultural Affairs grant from the City of San José; a grant from Silicon Valley Creates, in partnership with the County of Santa Clara and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Mission Chamber Orchestra is a member of the Silicon Valley Arts Coalition.

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Program Notes

Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868)
Overture to *The Barber of Seville*



Gioacchino Rossini was born in Pesaro, Italy to a musician father and seamstress mother, who later sang professionally in operas. Rossini began writing music at an early age, and wrote *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (*The Barber of Seville*) at the age of 25, after some earlier successes with some operas he wrote. *The Barber of Seville* is considered by many people to be the finest comic opera ever written. Whether Rossini completed the original overture for this

opera and it got lost, or if he never completed it, the overture we know today for this opera used material from an earlier opera (*Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*) and does not have any thematic connection to the opera.

Rossini went on to write many operas (39 in all) in a relatively short period of time. By the age of 37 he decided to write no more operas, and wrote only small works and sacred pieces, possibly because his health and nerves had suffered from the frenzy of writing so many operas. After the death of his first wife, Rossini remarried and moved to France, to Passy just outside Paris. He lived to be 76 and it is said over four thousand people attended the popular opera composer's funeral.

The Overture begins with two loud chords, followed by quiet, quick notes in the strings. This introduction features a lyrical violin melody that ends with the quiet, quick notes in the strings again. Four loud chords signal the start of the faster section of the overture (*Allegro vivace*.) This faster section features two main contrasting themes: a lively theme consisting of short motives with *staccato* notes in a minor key, connected by a loud passage (bridge) to a soft and more lyrical theme in a major key. A long buildup (a typical Rossini *crescendo*) leads back to the first main theme in the minor key, followed again by a bridge leading to the second theme, then another long buildup brings the overture to a close. While the overture was written originally for a completely different opera, its light-hearted character sets the tone for the rest of Rossini's well loved comic opera.

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

Crisantemi



Born in Lucca, Italy in 1858, Puccini came from a long line of men who served as the *maestro di cappella* at St. Martin's Cathedral in Lucca. He showed early talent as a musician and eventually attended the Milan Conservatory for three years, where another famous opera composer, Pietro Mascagni, was his roommate. He began his career writing in a late 19th century style quite different from that of Wagner, who was so influential at the time, but his music did display some 20th century influences. Eastern scales (as used by Debussy) particularly permeate *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot*, lending a more "oriental" sound to

these operas. His operas also reflected verismo (realism) influences of the times. When Verdi passed away in 1901, people wondered who would carry on the tradition of Italian opera, but by the end of Puccini's career, the answer was clear: Puccini. Unfortunately, Puccini was a chain smoker of Toscano cigars and cigarettes and developed severe throat cancer. He died of a heart attack a day after undergoing surgery for throat cancer in Brussels at the age of 65.

Though known best for his beloved operas, Puccini also wrote some sacred works and some purely instrumental works. *Crisantemi* was written for string quartet in 1890 after the death of the Duke of Savoy. It is elegiac in character. The two outer sections share thematic material, while the middle section presents a different theme with faster moving notes in the accompaniment. The six-minute work never strays from the main emotion of sadness, however. Today's performance features the entire string section with an added bass part in an arrangement by Lucas Drew.

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Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)
Fontane di Roma (Fountains of Rome)



In 1879 Respighi was born into a musical family in Bologna. Though he did not show interest in music at an early age, he did eventually learn to play the piano, violin, and viola, and taught himself to play the harp. After enrolling at the Liceo Musicale di Bologna, he became principal violist in the Russian Imperial Theatre in 1900, which gave him the opportunity to study with the brilliant orchestrator, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov. The palette of colors heard in Respighi's orchestral works can definitely be attributed to Rimsky-Korsakov's influence. After returning to Rome in 1913, Respighi taught at the Liceo Musicale di Santa Cecilia, where he met his wife, Elsa, 14 years his junior.

As a performer and composer, he and Elsa traveled to various countries in Europe, and later to North America, and South America. What gave Respighi his earliest boost toward fame, however, was a performance of his *Fountains of Rome* conducted by Arturo Toscanini at a series of concerts in Milan in 1918. The 1917 premiere of this work had received only a lukewarm reception, whereas the 1918 performances established him as a leading composer in Italy. From there his successes were many. Respighi died of blood poisoning in Rome in 1936, but his wife lived another 60 years after that and was very dedicated to promoting his music. (She died one week short of her 102nd birthday!)

Fountains of Rome is considered a symphonic poem. While it has four movements, like a symphony, each movement is a musical description of a Roman fountain and bears no resemblance to the formal structures associated with symphonies of Beethoven, Brahms, and the like. The opening movement, *La fontana di Valle Giulia all'alba*, describes the feelings Respighi felt when he viewed the Valle Giulia fountain at dawn, when mists would sometimes hide, sometimes reveal, sheep passing. The use of oboe and clarinet for the main theme at the opening are a natural choice, and we even hear a muted horn implying a shepherd's horn in the distance. The music for this first fountain ends quietly, but the peace is suddenly disturbed by the strong blast of horns representing *La fontana del Tritone al mattino* (*The Triton fountain in the morning*.) This long-short-long horn motive pervades the entire movement as we can imagine nymphs and sea gods frolicking in the water. As the music becomes calm once again, the segue to *La fontana di Trevi al meriggio* (*The Trevi fountain at noon*) consists of rising figures leading to the bold sounds of brass accompanied by undulating woodwinds and strings to portray Neptune and his horse-drawn chariot. The music here is the loudest of the four sections of "fountain music." But as the section draws to a close, the music becomes fainter, as if the

chariot is moving farther and farther away, until we get to *La fontana di Villa Medici al tramonto* (*The Villa Medici fountain at sunset.*) The melancholy sounds of the English horn introduce the theme that begins this movement and also ends it. In between, the peal of a distant church bell sounds the *angelus* (evening prayer), birds chirp as they settle in for the night, and the stars come out. Respighi must have felt a great sense of peace when he saw this fountain at dusk.

Alex Goodhart (1992 -)
Divided: An American Symphony
Duetto lontano; Circoscherzo



French composer Claude Debussy's *L'isle Joyeuse* inspired Alexander Goodhart to become a composer. With a heritage reflecting Russian, Jewish, Italian, and Irish ethnicities, it is no wonder his style is eclectic, a mixture of European-rooted music and alternative rock since the 1960's. His compositions include works for piano, voice, chamber, orchestral and choral works.

In 2022, the Mission Chamber Orchestra commissioned Goodhart to write a multi-movement work. The first movement, Overture, premiered in September of 2022 at the Hammer Theatre Center in San Jose. While the second movement was nearly completed in time to be performed at a concert in January of 2023, Alex's move from San Francisco to Bensalem, Pennsylvania (near Philadelphia) stopped progress on the composition of this work, so it was decided the next two movements (of a now proposed four-movement symphony) would be premiered at the subsequent Italian Musical Heritage concert in January, 2024, so today we will hear the second and third movements.

The symphony is inspired by the increasing sociopolitical tension of the 21st century in the U.S. The music illustrates societal divide without partisanship, via a language marked by tension, aggression, mournfulness, and ever-shifting focus. The second movement, *Duetto lontano* (*Distant duet*) is conceived as a polytonal duet. A bittersweet love-song in E-flat is juxtaposed with a monotonous dirge in A minor. These two worlds are conceived as being born of the same yolk but forever divided, a tragic irony as one languishes without the other, or naively awaits their return. They move and climax separately at first, and finally together. The ideas of

masculinity and femininity as well as hope and despair are used as contrasts, while the themes are unified in their sense of longing and transformation.

The third movement, *Circoscherzo* (*Circuscherzo*) reflects the glut and saturation of information that permeate Americans' daily lives. Entertainment, news, advertisement, agitprop, and social media are represented through stylistically distinct sections (with inspiration from Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Adams, Adès) which are joined like circus rings in a juggling act of themes and gestures derived from the previous two movements. The movement swerves between the serious humorous, relaxation to distress, and styles romantic and modern. A theremin was meant to be used for one of the themes in this movement, but a solo violin supported by flutes and clarinets is being substituted for this performance. The movement ends on a dischord, because it is meant to segue directly into the fourth movement, which we will look forward to hearing in the future.

Marjan Mozetich (1948 -)

Procession of Duos



Marjan Mozetich was born in Gorizia, Italy of Slovene parents. He began his musical training studying piano at the age of nine and received his piano performance degree in 1971 and a Bachelor of Music from the University of Toronto in 1972. Subsequently he furthered his studies in Italy and England on several Canada Council Grants. In 1976 he received second prize at the Gaudeamus New Music Competition in Holland and was first prize winner of the CAPAC(SOCAN)-MacMillan Award in 1978. As a founder of ARRAY (now called ARRAYMUSIC) he was their co-artistic director from 1976 to 1978. In 1983 the Music Gallery presented a retrospective concert of his works.

Since then he has maintained an independence as a freelance composer. From 1991 he has been teaching composition at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario where he currently resides.

Stylistically he has evolved over the years from avant-garde expressionism, to minimalism, to a post-modern romanticism. Throughout, his music has remained accessible while still retaining an artistic individuality and integrity. Paradoxically, since the late 80's he has achieved an overtly 'traditional' and yet distinctively modern voice: a blend of the traditional, popular and the modern which has been enthusiastically received by the musical public. His works have been performed and broadcast throughout Canada and abroad, even on Canadian Airline's 'in flight' music programs.

Procession of Duos is a work for a full symphony orchestra commissioned by the Phoenix Symphony (Arizona) and dedicated to the conductor Michael Christie. The title comes from the featuring of pairs of instruments, not only pairs of the more commonly heard instruments, but also pairs like contrabassoon and bass clarinet, or two tenor trombones paired against bass trombone and tuba. The work starts with a big crescendo in the percussion to the very loud statement of the main theme of the work. This theme is played both by pairs of instruments and as a bridge section between the featuring of pairs. Near the end of the work it is played much more quietly. As the piece winds down, it becomes almost ethereal, in great contrast to the grandiose opening.

Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945)

Intermezzo sinfonico from *Cavalleria Rusticana*



Born in Livorno, Tuscany, on December 7, 1863, Pietro Mascagni was the son of a baker. His earliest significant musical training came from the Istituto Luigi Cherubini (previously known as the Istituto Musicale di Livorno), and between the ages of 15 and 17 he wrote several works there, including his first opera. In 1881 he enrolled in the Milan Conservatory but left in 1885 without completing his studies. He eked out a living as a conductor and teacher until 1889 when he won first prize for his opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* in a contest sponsored by the publisher Sonzogno. This achievement launched his career as a composer, since the opera was soon performed in various parts of Italy, in Budapest (conducted by Gustav

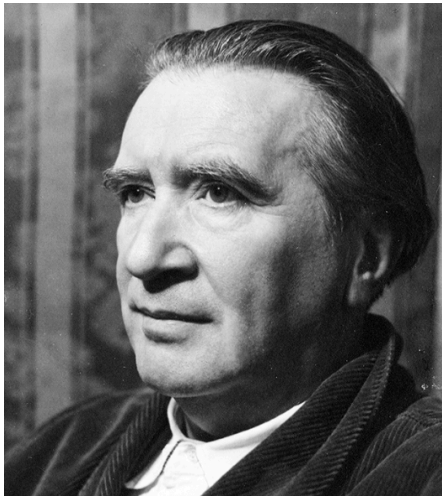
Mahler), in Germany and other parts of Europe including Vienna, and in Buenos Aires. Unfortunately for Mascagni, none of the operas he wrote after that achieved the success of *Cavalleria Rusticana*. He did become a successful conductor (often of his own works), but his ties to the Fascist party caused many of his friends and admirers to reject him after World War II. He died in disgrace and poverty in Rome on Aug. 2, 1945.

Mascagni's introduction of more realistic characters and situations in his *Cavalleria Rusticana* ushered in a new style of opera, *verismo*. The success of this opera influenced other composers to write in a similar style, including Puccini. *Cavalleria Rusticana* (*Rustic Chivalry*) is a story about common people, and the setting is a public square in Sicily on Easter Sunday. The music is as much a part of the drama as the action on stage, and herein lies its popularity. The *Intermezzo*, which has become quite famous, provides an interlude between when Turridu, who

is having an affair with Alfio's wife, argues with the young woman who is in love with him, throws her down, then follows Alfio's wife into the church. The square is empty, and the *Intermezzo* begins serenely, reminding the listener it is Easter Sunday. But as the music progresses, it becomes more passionate, hinting at the violence that is soon to come. The 3-minute interlude ends quietly, bringing the listener back to a feeling of peace before the opera resumes.

Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari (1876-1948)

Suite from *I gioielli della Madonna* (*The Jewels of the Madonna*)



Born Jan. 12, 1876 in Venice to August Wolf, a German painter, and Emilia Ferrari, Ermanno began studying piano early in life. However, at first he was more interested in studying art and following in the footsteps of his father. He studied art in Venice and Rome, but after moving to Munich to do the same, he became more drawn to the world of music after enrolling in some composition and counterpoint classes, and it was at this time he wrote his first musical compositions. In 1895 he added his mother's last name to his father's, and around the same time he moved back to Venice. Early attempts at opera failed in Italy, however, whereas German

audiences were much more approving. At this point, Wolf-Ferrari turned to writing comic operas, which were wildly popular and were some of the most performed operas in the world before the outbreak of World War I.

The Jewels of the Madonna (from 1911) was Wolf-Ferrari's first attempt at *verismo*, though the libretto was written in German. (Later it was performed with Italian text, which has become more common.) The opera was quite popular for a while, especially in the United States. During World War I, however, Germany and Italy were at war with each other, and the saddened composer moved to neutral Switzerland. He composed a lot less during that time, but once the war was over, he started writing more and teaching more. He eventually moved back to Venice, where he died in 1948.

The suite from *The Jewels of the Madonna* opens with the *Festa popolare* in celebration of the feast of the Madonna. It is a mixture of carnival and superstition, the music representing the noisy crowd and much activity with its many themes. The ensuing *Intermezzo* has a much more serene feeling, tinged with sadness. This movement is often performed in concerts by itself. Next, a lively, dancelike *Serenata* changes the mood, bringing a bit of levity before the *Danza napoletana*, a fast dance that gets progressively faster and wilder until the end. Wolf-Ferrari's music is very

colorful throughout the opera, even calling for mandolins and guitars (not being used in today's performance), timbres that give the music an even more authentic Italian "flavor".

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Upcoming Mission Chamber Orchestra 2024 concerts:

Symphonies and Memories

Saturday, Feb. 24, 7:30PM

Hammer Theatre Center, 101 Paseo de San Antonio, San Jose

Thomas Shoebottom, guest conductor

Illumination

Saturday, May 11, 7:30PM

De Anza College

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