School of Music
University of Washington

The School of Music
presents the 64th program of the 1991-92 season.

The University Symphony Orchestra

Peter Erös — Conductor

Beethoven

"Triple Concerto"

Steven Staryk, violin
Toby Saks, cello
Bela Siki, piano

Verdi – La Forza Del Destino: Overture
Bizet – L'Arlesienne: Selection from Suites 1 & 2

Thursday, February 20, 1992
8:00 PM, Meany Theater

Program

DAT #11,922 CASS #11,923

DAT
1D2 **La Forza del Destino: Overture** ... 6'56 ..... GIUSEPPE VERDI
(1813 - 1901)

1D3 **Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Piano** ... LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
13'14" (1770 - 1827)

Allegro
Largo
Rondo alla Polacca

Steven Staryk, violin
Toby Saks, cello
Bela Siki, piano

CASS SIDE A
SIDE B

Intermission

1D4 **L'Arlesienne** ..... 22'15 ..... GEORGES BIZET
Selection from Suites 1 & 2

Pastorale
Minuetto
Adagietto
Carillion
Minuetto
Farandole

University Symphony Orchestra

Peter Erös, Conductor

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Dan Weber
Ed Pias
Lilia Pias
Walter Hampton II

I cannot understand how it was that I found myself all alone in the death chamber. I have wondered how I should have been admitted in that way. Verdi lay on his bed, dressed in black. Candles had not yet been lighted, nor flowers placed around him. I stayed beside him for a time, I kissed him on the forehead, then I went away. (Arturo Toscanini, recalling the morning of January 27, 1901: quoted from Marcia Davenport: "Verdi and Tocanini.")

The aspects of Romanticism found in Italian arts and letters of the nineteenth century differs from that of the countries north of the Alps. While in the north there was a preoccupation with "a mish mash of witches and ghosts, a systematic disorder, ... an abdication of common sense" (Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873), Italians were more concerned with issues of national unity and independence from France and Austria. Putting together the many pieces of the giant puzzle confronting Italian writers and politicians, for example, was that there was no national language. French, German, and Latin were the languages of court and society, depending on where one lived. Manzoni's writings blended regional dialects in his novel *I Promessi Sposi* (1842) making it readable from Venice to Palermo. Other obstacles to national unity remained, among them the intense rivalry and distrust between neighboring provinces. (If this strikes a resonant chord in the reader, perhaps it is because many of the same stuggles are current events of the 1990's, particularly in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.) There was a practicality about Southern Romanticism. The Italians were building their country, and all efforts of mind and imagination were fixed on that goal.

Giuseppi Verdi grew up in the province of Parma, studying music in his home town of Le Roncole and neighboring Busetto with the organists there. He went to Milan (in Lombardy) at age 19 to study composition. *In the three years I spent with him* (Vincenzo Lavigna) *I did nothing but canons and fugues, fugues and canons, served up in every fashion.* (quoted from *The New Groves.*) In 1835 he returned to Busetto where he was appointed *maestro di musica* to the town. In February 1839 he moved back to Milan with his young family and launched his career as an opera composer. His *Nabucco* (1842) at La Scala carried his name around the world. Verdi's role in the *Risorgimento* (literally, *rising again*) of his country, ran the gamut from the quiet politics of the salons of Milan to "gun running" (Marcia Davenport) in the 1859 Piedmont fight the Austrian army. In 1861 he was a "non-speaking member of the first United Italian Parliament." (Spike Hughes: "Verdi and Rossini Overtures".)

La Forza del Destino owes its genesis to a commission in 1861 from the Imperial Theater, St. Petersburg, Russia. It was premiered there on November 10, 1862. Verdi was present. The libretto is based on *Don Alvaro, o la Fuerza del Sino*, a play by the Spanish Duke of Rivas (1791-1865) which had been produced in Madrid in 1835. The scene of the narrative is Spain and Italy at the end of the eighteenth century. All the elements that make Verdi's operas so perennial are present, among them love, jealousy, hatred, murder, revenge, religious convictions, and war.

The **Overture to La Forza del Destino** opens with three loud knocks on the door, octave E's in the full orchestra. Themes from throughout the opera are introduced. The rushed *agitato* that follows is taken from the Marchese's discovery of the attempted elopement. Three more loud knocks lead into a succession of themes: an *andantino* in E minor; another in G, heard in the opera as Leonora waits outside the monastery wall; and Leonora's theme of joy upon making her confession to Padre Guardiano, Superior of the monastery and receiving his assurances of asylum. A chorus of brass instruments sings a chorale, interrupted by fragments of Leonora's theme, bringing us to the brilliant climax in fiery E major.

Beethoven had no trouble with a lack of musical inspiration during the years 1803-1806. In that brief span, his mind and pen were busy indeed, churning out works of astonishing virtuosity and appeal. His "Waldstein" Sonata and another Sonata in F are Op. 53 and 54; the powerful Third Symphony, "Eroica," is Op. 55; the "Concertante," or Triple Concerto (sketched in the spring of 1805) is Op. 56; his "Appassionata" Sonata, Op. 57; Fourth Piano Concerto, Op. 58; three String Quartets, "Razumovsky," Op. 59; Fourth Symphony, Op. 60; the D major Violin Concerto, Op. 61; and the *Coriolan* Overture, Op. 62. Proof enough? There's more. Drafts of his opera *Fidelio*, and the Fifth Symphony were aleady taking shape even as he was putting the finishing touches on the others.

Depending on which critical account of the Triple Concerto one consults, the work is either of "inferior conception" (Paul Bekker), or "a comparatively modern exfoliation of the concerto grosso of the Bach period" (Henry Krehbiel, 1854-1923). Sir Donald Tovey (1875-1940), exclaimed in the face of those critical of the work: *Let us take it on its own terms. If it were not by Beethoven, but by some mysterious composer who had written nothing else and who had the romantic good fortune to die before it came to performance, the very people who blame Beethoven for writing below his full powers would be the first to acclaim it as the work of a still greater composer.* (Bagar & Biancolli: *The Concert Companion*,)

All criticisms aside, there are some reasons why the piece is not better known. The sheer expense of assembling three world class soloists to play a standard length concerto makes orchestra managers think twice about such a request from the music director. That's three soloists and their agents to deal with instead of one. Further, the Triple Concerto is one of a very few of Beethoven's pieces that has had no continuous performance tradition from the time of its composition to the present day. After its premiere at the Augarten in Vienna in the summer of 1807, it appears not to have been played again until 1830, three years after Beethoven's death. There was enough *other* Beethoven, after all. The *concerto grosso*, or several soloists playing in ensemble with orchestral accompaniment, was a late seventeenth-eighteenth century concept. No one had ever put a piano trio up against an orchestra before. Another reason is the sheer technical demands upon the soloists. While the piano and violin parts are difficult enough, Herculean demands are placed on the cellist's music stand, challenging all three soloists to work very hard for ensemble among themselves and with the orchestra.

The first movement, *Allegro*, at nearly eighteen minutes, is one of the longest in all of his writing. Beginning quietly, it unfolds into a double exposition of the two principal themes, first by the orchestra, then by the soloists. The extended development section fragments, transposes, and modulates the themes before bringing them back home again to C major. The second movement, *Largo*, opens in the key of A-flat with muted strings followed almost immediately by a lengthy statement from the solo cello. Piano and woodwinds play a short interlude until the solo violin and cello take up the theme in parallel tenths. Over a long pedal note, the transition into the final movement, *Rondo alla Polacca*, is achieved without a break. The solo strings take the new theme in turn, then the full ensemble and soli engage in contrasting statements of tone color, register placement, and modulation. A sudden jump in tempo brings the piece joyously into the home stretch.

While Genevieve Bizet and her husband Georges were awaiting the arrival of their first baby, (Jacques, born July 10, 1872), the composer was busy with the production of his opera *Djamileh* at l'Opera-Comique in late May. In the weeks that followed, he began work on the incidental music for Alphonse Daudet's tragedy, *L'Arlesienne*, (The Woman from Arles).

Recognition and commissions were slow to come Bizet's way, despite the promising musical start that he demonstrated. He was born into a family of professional and amateur musicians who recognized and cultivated his talents. He enrolled at the Paris Conservatoire at age nine to study piano and composition. By the time he was seventeen, he had amassed prizes in solfege, piano, fugue and organ. Also in 1855 he produced in a month's time his Symphony in C Major, a youthful work, to be sure, but still in the repertoire of orchestras nearly 140 years later. He departed for Italy on December 21, 1857, having won the *Prix de Rome* for study and composition in the company of other young musicians, painters, sculpters and architects at the French Academy in Rome. While there, he was witness to some of Italy's struggles for national unity and freedom from Austrian rule. In September 1860 he was called home to be with his family at the death of his mother. His student days were over.

In the twelve years that followed, up until the beginning of his work on *L'Arlesienne*, Georges Bizet gradually built up his reputation as a composer. Most notable of his works from this period are the operas *Les Pecheurs de Perles* (1863), *La Jolie Fille de Perth* (1867), and *Djamileh* (1872). It was the success of his orchestral suites from *L'Arlesienne*, however, that brought him the recognition that he was seeking.

Simply told, for it is a complicated tale, *L'Arlesienne* is a love story set in Provence near the city of Arles. Frederic, a widow's son, is madly in love with, and soon to become engaged to "the woman from Arles" (who, incidentally, never appears on stage). A stranger arrives to announce that Frederic's fiancee-to-be has been his mistress for two years and that he doesn't want to lose her, even though L'Arlesienne and Frederic's family are hoping for the marriage. Frederic is beside himself with grief. Frederic's mother tries to

take his mind off his pain by pairing him with Vivette, a young woman from a nearby town who has been carrying a torch for Frederic. Resignedly, he agrees to marry her. On the day of the engagement party, the broken-spirited young man climbs to the roof of his house and jumps to his death.

The premiere performance of Daudet's *L'Arlesienne* was at the Odeon Theatre, Paris, on October 1, 1872. Musical aspects of the production are given by Michel Cardoze: *The theatre orchestra of the Odeon was small (twenty six players), and not too efficient: and this circumstance to a certain extent dictated the scale and technical difficulty of Bizet's music. Bizet himself supported the choruses with a small harmonium in the wings.* (Cardoze: *Georges Bizet*). The whole enterprise was a critical and box office disappointment, and the show closed after fifteen performances. From the twenty-seven pieces that Bizet composed for the show, he chose four to present in concert on November 10, 1872 in expanded orchestration: 1. *Prelude*, 2. *Minuetto*, 3. *Adagietto*, and 4. *Carillon*. Following the untimely death of Georges Bizet three years later (June 3, 1875), his American-born friend and colleague, Ernest Guiraud (1837-1892)), selected and re-orchestrated four more pieces into a second suite: 5. *Pastorale*, 6. *Intermezzo*, 7. *Minuetto*, and 8. *Farandole*.

This performance begins with *Pastorale* (5), in ABA form. The first of its two themes is "Shepherd's Theme," grand, heavy with noonday haze, graceful, with time to daydream about the cloud castles. The middle section is built on a Provencal melody given here to the flute, piccolo, and percussion, representing the folk instruments *galoubet* (pipe) and *tambourin* (tabor). *Minuetto* (2) is joyful with just a hint of boisterousness about it. Violins I & II give out the lively tune in parallel thirds, followed by a conversation for winds. A drone-like transition leads into the lyric solo for saxophone, one of the very first orchestral appearances of the new instrument, invented in 1846. The movement closes with a reprise of the first theme. The *Adagietto* (3) sings of the unexpected reunion of the shepherd Balthazar and Mere Renaud, Vivette's grandmother. Both, now old, had been lovers in their youth. Muted strings glow with the tender warmth of their affection, a love that lived in their hearts despite time and separation. *Carillon* (4), the curtain-raiser to Act III, is the celebration of Frederic and Vivette's engagement, which also happens to be the feast day of St. Eloi, the patron saint of silk-worm farmers (the principal occupation of the region). The tower bells (hence, the term *carillon*) are represented by an ostinato motive of three notes: (G#, E, F#). *Minuetto* (7) is also the celebrated Entr'acte from Bizet's opera *La Jolie Fille de Perth* completed in 1867. In ABA form, it is a song for flute and harp. After the contrasting middle section, the final statement of "A" closes with a whisper. The *Farandole* (8) is *a dance of Provence performed by a chain of alternating men and women who follow the leader in a variety of winding patterns, sometimes passing under the raised arms of couples from the chain.* (Randel: *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music.*) As the tragedy nears completion, music from the beginning of the drama is recalled. The principal theme, *March of the Three Kings*, is an old Provencal Noel attributed to King Rene, 1408-1480. Bizet takes it through several variations: unison, canon, and a change from minor to major. Finally, Bizet combines the *March* with the folk-tune *Dance of wild horses*, heard first as a pipes-and-drum folk tune, for a dizzying display of orchestral energy.

— Stephen Long

The Artists

Professor Bela Siki celebrates, this year, the 50th anniversary of his international debut as pianist. The Hungarian-born pianist's career was launched in 1942, when he won first prize in the Franz Liszt Society Piano Competition. A concert artist of international stature, Siki has since been impressing the world music community with his performances. Siki has performed on tour many times in Australia, Japan and the Far East, New Zealand, South America, South Africa, and the United States. He has been acclaimed around the world "as one of the greatest virtuosos of our era," and has performed with the major orchestra of Europe and other continents under such eminent conductors as Ansermet, Sacher, Goosens, and van Otterloo. Siki attracts students of an international background, and counts among his past students pianists such as the University's own Robin McCabe.

Professor Steven Staryk, violin, often referred to as the "Dean of Concertmasters," has been a concertmaster of four of the world's major orchestras: the Royal Philharmonic of London, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Chicago Symphony, and the Toronto Symphony—an unprecedented achievement. Discovered in 1956 by Sir Thomas Beecham, he became the youngest concertmaster of the Royal Philharmonic of London. Since then the Canadian-born violinist has toured Europe, the Far East and North America, as soloist and founding member of Quartet Canada. More than 190 entries in his discography rank him among the world's most prolific recording violinists. Professor Staryk has held professorships at nine universities and conservatories in Europe, the United States and Canada. Staryk joined the University of Washington faculty in 1987, as head of the Strings Division in the School of Music. During his tenure, the University Symphony has experienced dramatic development. The violin studio has more than doubled, with talented young violinists coming from as far away as the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union, Alaska, Michigan, and Canada.

Professor Toby Saks, the well-known UW faculty cellist and music director of the Seattle Chamber Music Festival, is a graduate of the Juilliard School of Music, where she studied with Leonard Rose. She launched her career by winning first prize at the International Pablo Casals Competition, and is a Laureate of the International Tchaikowsky Competition. She has been a recipient of numerous grants, including a Fulbright and a Martha Baird Rockefeller grant. She has toured the United States, Canada, Europe, the USSR and Israel, and participated in International Music Festivals. A former member of the New York Philharmonic, Saks has been on the University of Washington's music faculty since 1976.

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Jazz Combos; February 24 & 25, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

Percussion Ensemble; February 26, 8:00 PM, Meany Studio Theater

Pacifc Northwest Jazz Band Festival; February 28, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

Pacifc Northwest Concert Band Festival; February 29, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

Soni Ventorum; March 1, 3:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

Studio Jazz Ensemble; March 2, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater