

**May 4, 2024**

**7:30 pm**

**“Spring Finale and a World Premiere”**

**Madrigal Divine**

*Nathaniel Dett (1882 – 1943), orch. Jonathan Bailey Holland (b. 1974)*

*World premiere, commissioned by the LSO for its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

**Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16**

*Edvard Grieg (1843 - 1907)*

- I. Allegro molto moderato
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro moderato molto e marcato – Quasi presto – Andante maestoso

**Andrey Gugnin, piano**

**INTERMISSION**

**“March of the Toreadors” from *Carmen***

*Georges Bizet (1838 - 1875)*

**Scherzo from Incidental Music to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Op. 61**

*Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847)*

**Wannabe Conductors**

**Symphony No. 3, Op. 52 in C Major**

*Jean Sibelius (1865 - 1957)*

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Andantino con moto, quasi allegretto
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**Madrigal Divine**

***Nathaniel Dett, orch. Jonathan Bailey Holland***

***Dett: (b. Drummondville, Quebec, October 11, 1882; d. Battle Creek, Michigan, October 2, 1943)***

***Holland: (b. 1974, Flint, Michigan)***

***World premiere, commissioned by the LSO for its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary***

**Nathaniel Dett**

Robert Nathaniel Dett was a pianist and composer who studied at Harvard where he won the Bowdoin Literary Prize and the Francis Boot Music Award. “In 1927 he received a medal from the Harmon Foundation,” reads *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians – Fifth Edition*. “After earning a Master’s degree at the Eastman School of Music, he went to Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger. He then received the honorary degree of Doctor of Music from Harvard in 1924. In 1926, he also received an honorary degree of Doctor of Music from Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio.”

“In 1925 he gave a series of piano recitals in the US and Canada and later he directed musical activities for the USA - United Service Organization during World War II. Dett took a prominent part in advancing the musical education in the USA.”

“Dett’s music ranges from short melodic pieces to extended virtuoso works,” writes Maurice Hinsen in *Guide to the Pianist’s Repertoire*. “Although his work became more complex as Dett developed as a composer, he never broke from his strong roots in the lyricism of the Negro spiritual.”

Hinsen continues listing Dett’s piano works: “*The Collected Piano Works* of Dett includes ‘Eight Bible Vignettes: Madrigal Divine.’” This is the work that Jonathan Bailey Holland has orchestrated for the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra for its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. “These vignettes are descriptive, romantic in style.”

*The Pianist’s Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* by Jane Magrath reads, *The Collected Piano Works of R. Nathaniel Dett* includes the complete sets of ‘Magnolia,’ ‘In the Bottoms,’ ‘Enchantment,’ ‘Cinnamon Grove,’ ‘Tropic Winter,’ and his ‘Eight Bible Vignettes.’” “These are levels 8 – 10 for teaching piano,” adds Magrath.

**Jonathan Bailey Holland (orch.)**

“Originally from Flint, Michigan, composer Jonathan Bailey Holland began studying composition while a student at the Interlochen Arts Academy, where he received a school-wide award for his very first composition,” reads the composer’s website. According to his website, *jonathanbaileyholland.com*, “After graduation from Interlochen, he continued his composition studies with Ned Rorem at the Curtis Institute of Music, where he earned a Bachelor of Music degree. He went on to receive a Ph.D. in Music

from Harvard University in 2000, where his primary teachers were Bernard Rands and Mario Davidovsky. He has also studied with Andrew Imbrie, Yehudi Wyner, Robert Saxton, and Robert Sirota.”

The website continues, “Holland has recently been named the Jack G. Buncher Head of the School of Music at Carnegie Mellon University. He has served as Chair of Composition, Contemporary Music, and Core Studies at Boston Conservatory at Berklee, and was a Founding Faculty member in the low-residency MFA program in Music Composition at Vermont College of Fine Arts, where he also served as Faculty Chair from 2016 until 2019.”

“Holland’s works have been performed and commissioned by numerous organizations,” reads his website. “This includes performances by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, the Dallas Symphony, the Detroit Symphony, the National Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, the St. Louis Symphony, the Indianapolis Symphony, the Chicago Sinfonietta, the Atlanta Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and many others.”

“He has received awards and honors from the Guggenheim Foundation, The Boston Foundation, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Fromm Foundation at Harvard University, the American Academy of Arts & Letters, ASCAP, the Presser Foundation, and others,” continues his website.

## **Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16**

*Edvard Grieg (b. Bergen, Norway, June 15, 1843; d. Bergen Norway, September 4, 1907)*

- I. Allegro molto moderato
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro moderato molto e marcato – Quasi presto – Andante maestoso

### **Andrey Gugnin, piano**

*The score includes two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings.*

A Norwegian composer and pianist, Edvard Grieg is widely considered one of the leading Romantic era composers, and his music is part of the standard classical repertoire worldwide. His use of Norwegian folk music in his own compositions brought the music of Norway to fame, and helped to develop a national identity, much as Jean Sibelius did in Finland and Bedřich Smetana in Bohemia. The Edvard Grieg Museum at Grieg's former home, “Trolldhaugen” is dedicated to his legacy.

Edvard Grieg was raised in a musical family. His mother was his first piano teacher and taught him to play when he was aged six. During the summer of 1858, Grieg met the eminent Norwegian violinist Ole Bull, who was a family friend; Bull's brother was married to Grieg's aunt. Bull recognized the 15-year-old boy's talent and persuaded his parents to send him to the Leipzig Conservatory to study piano (his conservatory piano teacher had been a good friend of Mendelssohn and Schumann). Grieg enrolled in the conservatory, concentrating on piano, and enjoyed the many concerts and recitals given in Leipzig, including a piano recital by Clara Schumann playing her late husband's piano concerto. He also enjoyed the study of organ, which was mandatory for piano students.

During the spring of 1860, he survived two life-threatening lung diseases, pleurisy and tuberculosis. Throughout his life, Grieg's health was impaired by a destroyed left lung and considerable deformity of his thoracic spine. He suffered from numerous respiratory infections, and ultimately developed combined lung and heart failure.

In 1861, Grieg made his debut as a concert pianist in Karlshamn, Sweden. Later in 1862, he finished his studies in Leipzig and had his first concert in his hometown, where he performed Beethoven's *Pathétique* Piano Sonata. During the summer of 1868, Grieg wrote his *Piano Concerto in A Minor* while vacationing in Denmark. Edmund Neupert gave the concerto its premiere performance on April 3, 1869 in the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen.

Grieg met Liszt and showed him the manuscript of his *Piano Concerto*, which Liszt proceeded to sightread (including the orchestral arrangement). Liszt's rendition greatly impressed the composer, although Grieg said gently to him that he played the first movement too quickly. Liszt also gave Grieg some advice on orchestration.

Grieg had close ties with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, and later became Music Director of the orchestra from 1880 to 1882. In 1888, Grieg met Tchaikovsky in Leipzig and was quite impressed by the Russian composer. Tchaikovsky thought very highly of Grieg's music, praising its beauty, originality and warmth.

Pianist Artur Schnabel (1887 – 1982) writes in his autobiography *My Young Years* about meeting Edvard Grieg. Schnabel had been invited to a party honoring Grieg while he was in Warsaw. The party was given by the Steinway and Bechstein (two wonderful piano manufacturers) agent (who was a representative for both companies). The agent wanted Schnabel (who had performed many times in solo recitals and with orchestras in the United States) to play for Grieg. Schnabel writes, "He liked my playing very much. That was the only time I was to ever meet the composer. He died shortly after that."

Interestingly, on December 6, 1897, Grieg and his wife performed some of his music at a private concert at Windsor Castle for Queen Victoria and her court. Grieg was awarded two honorary doctorates, first by the University of Cambridge in 1894 and the next from the University of Oxford in 1906.

During 1906, he met the composer and pianist Percy Grainger in London. Grainger was a great admirer of Grieg's music and a strong empathy was quickly established and lasted a long time, which we will read about later.

The Norwegian government provided Grieg with a pension as he reached retirement age. During the spring of 1903, Grieg made nine 78-rpm gramophone recordings of his piano music in Paris. All of these discs have been reissued on both LPs and CDs, despite limited fidelity. Grieg also recorded player piano music rolls for the Hupfeld Phonola piano-player system and Welte-Mignon reproducing system, all of which survive and can be heard today. He also worked with the Aeolian Company for its 'Autograph Metrostyle' piano roll series wherein he indicated the tempo mapping for many of his pieces.

Grieg died at the Municipal Hospital in Bergen, Norway, on September 4, 1907 at age 64 from heart failure. He had suffered a long period of illness. The funeral drew between 30,000 and 40,000 people to the streets of his hometown to honor him. Obeying his wish, his own *Funeral March in Memory of*

*Rikard Nordraak* was played with orchestration by his friend Johan Halvorsen, who had married Grieg's niece. In addition, the Funeral March movement from Chopin's *Piano Sonata No. 2* was played.

A century after his death, Grieg's legacy extends beyond the field of music. There is a large sculpture of Grieg in Seattle, while one of the largest hotels in Bergen (his hometown) is named Quality Hotel Edvard Grieg. Even a large crater on the planet Mercury is named after Grieg! Its name was adopted by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) in 1985.

In 1993, Norway organized a celebration for the 150th anniversary of Grieg's birth, entitled "Grieg in the Schools," which included programs for children from pre-school to secondary school. The programs were repeated in 1996 in Germany, and were called Grieg in der Schule, in which over a thousand students participated. There were Grieg observances in 39 countries, from Mexico to Russia. Further celebrations of Grieg and his music were held in 2007, the 100th anniversary of his death. Bosnia and Herzegovina held a large-scale celebration, the *Piano Concerto* was performed in a public concert for children and adults.

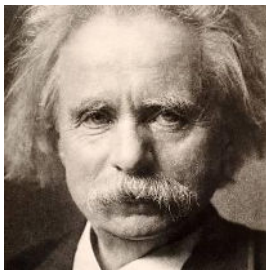
### **What to Listen For**

Grieg revised his *Concerto* many times. Michael Steinberg in *The Concerto – A Listener's Guide* writes, "What we hear now is an edition prepared in 1917 by the Australian composer and pianist Percy Grainger who became friends with Grieg earlier in his life. This edition includes changes Grainger said were authorized by Grieg. Grainger had studied the concerto with Grieg, who declared that Grainger would play it better than anyone." Most of these revisions affect the orchestration and details of performance directions.

The first movement has lots of energy. It culminates in a cadenza which is virtuosic and shows off the pianist's skill reminiscent of Liszt with seemingly a firestorm!

The slow second movement has muted strings and beautiful sounds, with lyricism. "Certainly, it left its mark on the Russian composer Rachmaninov whose works sound somewhat like Grieg's," continues Steinberg.

"The finale is at times very Norwegian, with contrasting themes and is fresh in design and colorful in detail. Steinberg concludes, "This work has delighted countless pianists who have brought audiences to their feet with this work. It has made its way with its singular and charming personality as well as perfect simplicity."



**Edvard Grieg**

## INTERMISSION

### **"March of the Toreadors" from *Carmen***

**Georges Bizet (b. Paris, France, October 25, 1838; d. Bougival, France, June 3, 1875)**

### **Wannabe Conductor**

*Carmen* is an opera in four acts by the French composer Georges Bizet. The opera was first performed by the Opéra-Comique in Paris on March 3, 1875. Bizet died suddenly after the 33rd performance, unaware that the work would achieve international acclaim within the following ten years. *Carmen* has since become one of the most popular and frequently performed operas

*The Toreador March*, ("March of the Toreadors") is the popular name for the Carmen aria "Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre" ("I toast you"), music composed by Georges Bizet to a libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy. The character Escamillo sings the Toreador song from Bizet's opera *Carmen*.

A toreador is a person who fights bulls – a bullfighter. Boris Goldovsky in his book *Bringing Opera to Life*, states that in a performance of *Carmen* which includes dancing, "Marching steps are always performed in time with the individual beats of the musical rhythm. In order to keep track of the music, dancers within the opera usually count the beats, number them, and train themselves to remember which step, turn, or other movement coincides with a particular number."

### **Scherzo from Incidental Music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Op. 61**

**Felix Mendelssohn (b. Hamburg, Germany, February 3, 1809; d. Leipzig, Germany, November 4, 1847)**

### **Wannabe Conductor**

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) wrote music for William Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on two separate occasions. He first wrote the concert overture in E Major, Op. 21, in 1826 at the age of seventeen for no other reason than the love that he and his siblings had for Shakespeare's stage works.

Mendelssohn wrote the incidental music, Op. 61 (likely the best-known incidental music in the repertoire) in 1842 as a commission from King Frederick William IV of Prussia. In creating the complete later version, the composer incorporated the original overture, Op. 21, as the overture for the incidental music and the first of the 14 numbers. Starting with what must be four of the most evocative and memorable chords in music, the work also is the origin of the Wedding March (No. 9) used in so many ceremonies today, commonly referred to as "Here Comes the Bride."

The work was premiered in Potsdam, Germany, on October 14, 1843, by the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, conducted by the composer. The "Scherzo" movement, No. 1 after the overture is here excerpted as a lighter and shorter piece.

Interestingly, the overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was originally composed as a piano piece for four hands, to be played by Felix Mendelssohn and his sister Fanny, according to the biography, *Felix Mendelssohn and His Times* by Heinrich Eduard Jacob (translated by Richard and Clara Winston). "The composer later arranged it for orchestra. It was first performed on February 20, 1827 using an orchestra that had twelve first violins!" writes Jacob.

### **Symphony No. 3, Op. 52, in C Major**

**Jean Sibelius (b. Hämeenlinna, Finland, December 8, 1865; d. Järvenpää, Finland, September 20, 1957)**

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Andantino con moto, quasi allegretto
- III. Moderato – Allegro (ma non tanto)

*The score is written for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, percussion, and strings.*

This symphony has only three movements. Sibelius dedicated the symphony to the conductor and composer Granville Bantock, one of Sibelius' first and most effective champions in England. Sibelius finished writing his *Third Symphony* in the summer of 1907 and conducted the Helsinki Philharmonic in the first performance on September 26<sup>th</sup> of that year.

While Sibelius also wrote more story-like music in tone poems, of which LSO patrons heard two seasons ago, he states that his "symphonies are music – conceived and worked out as musical expression, without any literary basis." A tone poem is a piece of orchestral music, usually in a single continuous movement, which illustrates or evokes the content of a poem, short story, novel, or other source.

Sibelius continues, "I am not a literary musician: for me, music begins where words leave off. A symphony should be music first and last. I am particularly pleased to see it explicitly stressed that my symphonies are founded on classical symphonic form."

Tomi Mäkelä writes, "Sibelius is a specifically Nordic melancholy." When you hear the sounds of Sibelius' music what feeling comes to mind? Mysterious? Mystical? Eerie? Spooky? Austere? Gloomy? Haunting? Foreboding? Ominous? Scary? Dark? It's been said that "Sibelius and the Finnish landscape is a perfect example of the creation of analogies between feeling music and nature."

Author Tomi Mäkelä states in his biography *Jean Sibelius*, "The crucial importance to Sibelius' fate and to Finland's as well is like the 'history of the twilight zone.'" The music is sometimes more shadowy: it's the mythical North. Mäkelä continues, "Through his symphonies Sibelius made it possible to look into the souls of the Finnish people."

"The basic tone of Finland's people is seriousness, gloominess, and melancholy." Mäkelä writes, "Sibelius' art is the of the Finns. Only in Sibelius' work are the personal, human, and artistic qualities so characteristic and significant that we can appreciate and feel a significant portion of Finnish music. In Sibelius' symphonies we find accurate naturalistic characteristics, the deeply and fully penetrating natural tone, the saturated melancholy."

### **What To Listen For**

Author Michael Steinberg in *The Symphony – A Listener’s* guide states that “The *Third Symphony* is about the pleasure of making music. Its chief traits are modesty and energy. The orchestration is unassuming. The basic, very ‘classical’ sonority is that of strings and woodwinds. The horns and drums are busy, but the trumpets and trombones intervene rarely and economically.”

The first movement shows a very typical feature of Sibelius which is “the emergence of a long-drawn melody from a sustained note that began no one can say exactly when.”

Steinberg continues, “There is no real slow movement, though the second movement brings contrast and repose. Sibelius calls in the basses ever so softly to contradict the flutes and clarinets or the violins. And those basses, though they aren’t very loud, they want very much to be heard!”

“There is no imagery and no drama except that of the musical events themselves. This is like Haydn: You can’t do anything with it except listen to it, and it is meant for people who really listen. Just before the end of this second movement, this ambiguous, discreetly mysterious movement ends on a curiously inclusive note,” writes Steinberg.

“The last movement – the finale – is restless. The tempo changes all the time. Melodic fragments whisk by and bits of the first two movements whirl across the landscape. It ends with the strokes of Thor’s hammer.”



**Jean Sibelius**