# October 18, 2025

**7:30 pm**

## "Opening Night and a World Premiere"

## America the Beautiful

***Samuel A. Ward – music (1848 - 1903)***
***Katharine Lee Bates – lyrics (1859 - 1929)***

## Johannes Brahms: Symphony in F Minor, Op. 34

***Orchestrated by Daron Hagen after the Piano Quintet, Op. 34 and the Sonata for Two Pianos, Op. 34b ("Symphony No. 0")***
***(Commissioned in honor of the Centennial of the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra – World Premiere)***
***Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897)***
***Daron Hagen, orchestrator (b. 1961)***

*I. Allegro non troppo*
*II. Andante, un poco adagio*
*III. Scherzo: Allegro*
*IV. Finale: Poco sostenuto – allegro non troppo – Presto, non troppo*

## INTERMISSION

## Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47

***Jean Sibelius (1865 - 1957)***

*I. Allegro Moderno*
*II. Adagio di molto*
*III. Allegro ma non troppo*

## Yevgeny Kutik, violin

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## America the Beautiful

***Samuel A. Ward – music (b. Newark, New Jersey, December 28, 1848; d. Newark, New Jersey, September 28, 1903)***
***Katharine Lee Bates – lyrics (b. Falmouth, Massachusetts, August 12, 1859; d. Wellesley, Massachusetts, March 28, 1929)***

This is a truly melodious song and is always performed with cherished devotion to our country. What a wonderful way to begin the 2025-26 LSO Concert Season! The song is one of the most popular of the many American patriotic songs, a wonderful American hymn.

Ace Collins writes in his book, *SONGS SUNG – Red, White, and Blue*, "Scores of editorials stated that *America the Beautiful* reflected the complete American story. Perhaps many Americans had decided it was the nation's hymn."

Katharine Lee Bates, a professor at Wellesley College in the Boston area, is best remembered as a patriot. She gave our country one of its most memorable anthems: Ms. Bates composed the lyrics to *America the Beautiful.*

Collins continues, "In 1893, Bates was invited to journey west to teach a summer session at Colorado College in Colorado Springs. On her way riding the train from the East Coast of Massachusetts to the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, she viewed the nation's most fertile farmland."

While in Colorado she hiked up Pike's Peak seeing flowers, trees, and mighty snowcapped peaks. "She looked east and saw the flat wheat fields, towns, rivers, roads, and tiny farmhouses. When she turned west, she observed a wall of mountains that were so high they seemed to touch the heavens.

"In those moments, the young woman was not just awed but inspired. The words of the poem came to her during these moments. All the wonder of America seemed to be displayed there, with the sea-like expanse. Bates picked up her notebook and jotted down each phrase that flew into her mind," continues Collins.

"After some polishing, Bates sent her poem *America the Beautiful* to a magazine named the *Congregationalist* which published it on July 4, 1895."

Another author, C. A. Browne, writes in the book, *The Story of Our National Ballads*, that "*America the Beautiful* tugs at the heart more than any other song which America has accepted as a proud possession. Its purpose was solely to put into words the love for the varied natural beauties of the land and the ideal of brotherhood held by its citizens 'from sea to shining sea.'"

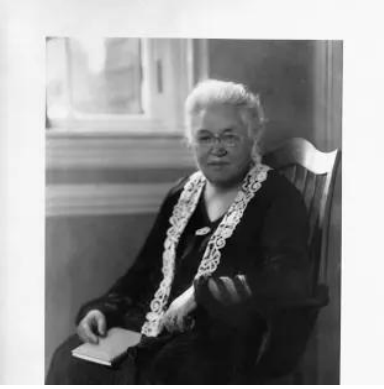
In 1904, Clarence A. Barbour, a Baptist minister, set the poem to music, a tune called "Materna." This piece (Materna) was written by Samuel Ward, a Newark, New Jersey church musician and organist, in 1882. Ward studied under several teachers in New York City before taking his position as organist at Grace Episcopal Church in his home town in 1880.

"First performed at the Lake Avenue Baptist Church in Boston, the newly merged lyrics and music quickly made their way into other venues," continues Collins. "In 1910, when Barbour placed this version of *America the Beautiful* into his best-selling *Fellowship Hymns*, the union seemed to be everlasting."

C. A. Browne continues, "In 1922 the composition was selected by the General Federation of Women's Clubs as its official song. *America the Beautiful* is unique among national songs in that it is a true hymn rather than a mere patriotic song."

It was Bates' adventurous spirit that led to this masterpiece that is still sung from sea to shining sea.

"It is often said of the poem that it expresses for the millions of Americans their loftiest ideal of patriotism. For them, it rejoices in the gifts of their great country, it honors their dead, it pays homage to their past, it utters their aspirations, and it lifts their prayers. It is truly an American anthem," writes Dorothy Burgess, a recent biographer of Bates.



***Katharine Lee Bates***

***Samuel A. Ward***

## Johannes Brahms: Symphony in F Minor, Op. 34

***Orchestrated by Daron Hagen after the Piano Quintet, Op. 34 and the Sonata for Two Pianos, Op. 34b ("Symphony No. 0")***
***(Commissioned in honor of the Centennial of the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra – World Premiere)***
***Johannes Brahms (b. Hamburg, Germany, May 7, 1833; d. Vienna, Austria, April 3, 1897)***
***Daron Hagen, orchestrator (b. Milwaukee, Wisconsin, November 4, 1961)***

***I. Allegro non troppo***
***II. Andante, un poco adagio***
***III. Scherzo: Allegro***
***IV. Finale: Poco sostenuto – allegro non troppo – Presto, non troppo***

**Daron Aric Hagen** is an American composer, writer, and filmmaker born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Since 1983 he has created 14 operas, 3 operafilms, 6 symphonies, 14 concertos, over 50 chamber, choral, and electroacoustic works, and over 300 artsongs. Commissions have come from the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, National Symphony, the Buffalo Philharmonic, Seattle Opera, and a dozen other orchestras including this commission from the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra.

Hagen is a Guggenheim Fellow, recipient of the Kennedy Center Friedheim Prize, two Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Fellowships, the Bogliasco Fellowship, the ASCAP-Nissim Prize, and two American Academy of Arts and Letters Awards, among others. He has taught at Bard College, the Chicago College of Performing Arts, City College of New York, the Curtis Institute of Music, New York University, and the Princeton Atelier. A graduate of Curtis and of the Juilliard School, he is married to composer-singer Gilda Lyons; they have two sons.

*daronhagen.com/*

Growing up in New Berlin, Wisconsin (a suburb of Milwaukee), he studied piano with Adam Klescewski and studied composition, piano, and conducting at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music while attending Brookfield Central High School. At the age of fifteen, he conducted the premiere of his first orchestral work, a recording and score of which came to the attention of Leonard Bernstein, who enthusiastically urged Hagen to attend Juilliard to study composition with classical music composer David Diamond.

Instead, he stayed in the state, and after two years at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where his studies included conducting, piano, and composition, he was invited to attend the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia by Ned Rorem (with whom he developed a lifelong friendship). While a student of Rorem's at Curtis, he studied piano and also studied conducting privately with Lukas Foss (former conductor of both the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra).

Hagen moved to New York City in 1984 to complete his formal education as a student at Juilliard, studying for two years with Diamond. After graduating, Hagen was a Tanglewood composition fellow (Tanglewood Music Center is the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and includes a summer school for aspiring music students) before briefly living abroad, first at the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France, and then at the Rockefeller Foundation's Villa Serbelloni in Bellagio, Italy, where he has twice been a guest.

When he returned to the United States, Hagen studied privately with Bernstein, whose guidance during the composition of Hagen's *Shining Brow* (1992) — the opera that launched Hagen's career internationally — prompted him to dedicate the score to Bernstein's memory.

### BRAHMS: SONATA FOR TWO PIANOS in F minor, Op. 34b (after the Piano Quintet, Op. 34)

*Published 1872. Dedicated to Her Royal Highness Princess Anna of Hessen*

When Brahms drafted an *F-minor String Quintet* with two cellos in 1862 (following Schubert's example) and submitted it to his friends for criticism, violinist, conductor, teacher, and composer Joseph Joachim found that the

extraordinarily rich and dramatic content overtaxed the medium of strings alone. It appears that, while not heeding other criticisms about the content, Brahms was convinced that the scoring was not right.

The first revision was what we now know as the *Sonata for Two Pianos*. It is unclear whether he meant this to be the final form. Incidentally, Brahms would come to use two pianos as an arrangement medium for larger works (such as the symphonies) to help familiarize musicians and music lovers with their sound.

The two-piano predecessor to what would become the *Piano Quintet* is on a different level from these arrangements. Not only did it precede the final form, but Brahms published it six years later with a separate sub-opus number. He and Carl Tausig, a brilliant virtuoso student of Liszt, performed the *Sonata for Two Pianos* publicly in Vienna in 1864, and it was well received. Clara Schumann, a close friend of Brahms and a piano virtuoso, was not satisfied with it, however, and considered it an "arrangement," spurring Brahms to produce the final piano quintet version.

But it is evident that he still considered the *Sonata for Two Pianos* version to have worth, as shown by its later publication. Like the *Quintet*, it was dedicated to Princess Anna of Hessen, who was very fond of the *Sonata for Two Pianos* version. It is important to note that neither of the two piano parts matches the piano part from the *Piano Quintet*. Brahms' scoring of each version is thus largely independent. Some stretches from one piano part or the other were directly transferred into the quintet version which Brahms wrote later. Other passages were re-scored for strings alone. But this was not its final stop!!

Jan Swafford pens in his book *Johannes Brahms, A Biography*, "Clara Schumann (wife of composer Robert Schumann) had been playing the *F Minor Sonata for Two Pianos* with a pianist friend. Clara herself wrote to Brahms, "'That this is masterly from every point of view but – it is not a sonata, but a work whose ideas your might – and must – scatter over an entire orchestra. Please, for this once, take my advice and recast it.'"

Thus, today, we have *Symphony No. 0* by Johannes Brahms orchestrated by Daron Hagen. The *Sonata for Two Pianos* is now written for a symphony orchestra!!

## Daron Hagen himself authors the following to be included in our program notes …

*Summer 2023. A good French meal nearly demolished sitting between us, family (musical and otherwise) discussed, the unending conversation about life and art recommenced. "You promise that there will be no xylophone, right?" asked [La Crosse Symphony Orchestra Music Director Alexander] Platt, only very slightly over half-way serious, fork poised in midair. He had just asked me to dream on the idea of crafting an arrangement for the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra of Johannes Brahms' great Opus 34, the final iteration of which – after the original quintet version had been withdrawn and turned first into a sonata for two pianos before being recast a second time for piano quintet – was premiered in 1866.*

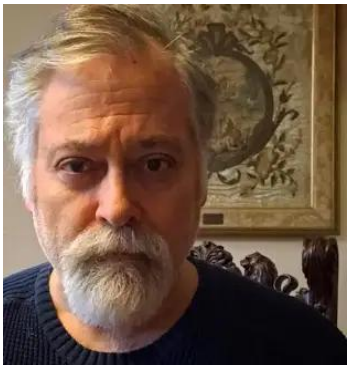
*Alexander reminded me that we first met at a New Haven Symphony rehearsal of Schoenberg's 1937 orchestration of Brahms' First Piano Quartet led by his mentor Murray Sidlin in February 1986 by the Symphony. I immediately recalled that I (who had not heard the arrangement before) had at the time looked up at him in shock at the point at which a xylophone entered, so out of character was it. Otto Klemperer is said to have liked Schoenberg's arrangement so much that he declared, "You can't even hear the original quartet, so beautiful is the arrangement." 25-year-old me, arrogant in my youth, declared to Alexander, "That's the moment when Schoenberg's temerity is revealed—a xylophone? Really?"*

*Consequently, thirty-seven years later, extremely reluctantly, I told Alexander that I would dream on it; but, inside my own head I had already said no. A year went by. Again, we faced each other over a demolished meal at the same restaurant. "So," asked the maestro, "are you up to the challenge?" I told him that I was. What had changed? Over the course of the intervening year, I had come to view Brahms' great Opus 34 as a musical / historic*

*inflection point—so musically sturdy, so filled with past, present, and future—that even the slightest instrumental nudge one way foreshadows the music Mahler would compose in only a few years; an instrumental nudge in another direction brought Beethoven back to life.*

*So how did I muster the temerity to approach the project? I sublimated my so-called "creative ego / voice" and used my skills as an orchestrator to join Brahms not in the sacred moment of inspired creation that is rightly between him and his inner voice, but in the conduit of expressing those musical ideas. I was honored to spend what I feel in retrospect was 90 percent of my time executing (based on his very clear orchestral style as it comes to us in his published symphonic works) an orchestration as he would, and 10 percent of my time making subtle "pushes" toward the way that Mahler would dress the same ideas a decade later, or Beethoven a few years earlier, and, yes, how the young Schoenberg might have stressed a dissonance more than another set of ears. And then, with the slightest addition of a doubling here or there, or the elimination of a traditional woodwind underpinning elsewhere, the gestalt of Schubert might emerge, and then evaporate; Schubert, whose ghost I somehow sensed in nearly every transition. It was my honor to celebrate Brahms' genius, to have spent the summer months of 2024 as a pilgrim enmeshed in the warp and woof of a work so filled with wisdom, yet so unaware of the human-driven disasters that would soon sweep over Europe and the world.*

***Johannes Brahms***



***Daren Hagen***

## INTERMISSION

## Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47

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

***I. Allegro Moderato***
***II. Adagio di molto***
***III. Allegro ma non troppo***

## Yevgeny Kutik, violin

*The Violin Concerto was composed in 1903, subjected to considerable revision, and in its later form first played on October 19, 1905. The work is scored for solo violin, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings.*

Finland – the country of Sibelius – is a nation with two distinct languages: Finnish and Swedish. Guy Rickards writes in his book, *Jean Sibelius*, "More than any other single factor, the music of Jean Sibelius is quintessentially the product of the natural landscapes (physical, ethnic, historical, and political) of his native country, Finland – a country of extremes and opposites." He continues, "The current population of Finland is of western, predominantly German, origin."

"Sibelius' own background is just as mixed as that of his country's with ancestors both Finnish and Swedish," writes Rickards. "He inherited his musical disposition from the Swedish side of his ancestry. Music was a pastime of the home," continues Rickards.

The work performed this evening is Sibelius' very popular *Violin Concerto*. Program notes from the Boston Symphony Orchestra Concert at Tanglewood in July 1976 read that "A prominent critic when hearing the first version wrote that it seemed that this concerto was an orchestral piece with an integral obbligato violin part and really a traditional display piece – not a violin concerto. Sibelius then revised his score in the direction of orchestral interest."

Rob Hubbard writes in the *Minnesota Star Tribune*, "Sibelius pulled the original version of the concerto from circulation after it premiered to lackluster reviews. He subsequently revised it, and the original was never again played in his lifetime. The Sibelius family's permission is required to perform the original."

Hubbard continues, "While the original work is more difficult to play, the elements that have made the oft-played revision so popular – the dark beauty of the Adagio, the bright and bouncy theme of the frolicsome Finale – are in the original as well."

Michael Steinberg writes in his book, *The Concerto: A Listener's Guide*, "Sibelius began composing his *Violin Concerto* in September 1902. The first performance was given in Helsinki on February 8, 1904, with Victor Nováček as soloist and the composer conducting the Helsinki Philharmonic."

"Yet, Sibelius was determined to revise the work, and this version – with extensive changes to the first and third movements – had its Berlin premiere on October 19, 1905, with Karl Halir as soloist and Richard Strauss on the podium," continues Steinberg. "He shortened the work slightly and integrated the violin more effectively with the orchestra providing a more subdued, less technical approach. Still, the work has moments of incredible virtuosity and melodic beauty."

Sibelius wrote this concerto for himself. He wanted to be a violinist but began with lessons at the age of fourteen. To be a serious violinist, he should have picked up the instrument many years earlier. Sibelius himself said, "It was my wish, my overriding ambition, to become a great violin virtuoso. However, I had the handicap of starting late and the quality and level of violin teaching in Finland was 'provincial.'"

Instead, he went to Vienna to study composition with Karl Goldmark where he also played violin in the conservatory orchestra. Here he eventually realized that his true talent was composition.

This work made Sibelius happy – he had a 'marvelous opening idea', he wrote to his wife speaking of the soloist's first notes which were more beautiful.

**<u>What to Listen For</u>**

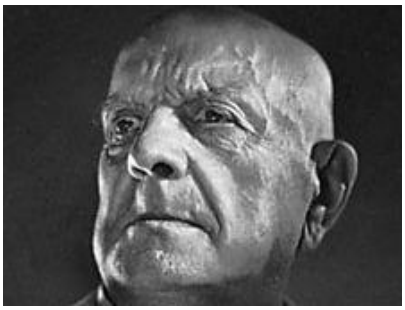
*Writings selected from Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood Program Notes – John N. Burk (1976)*

**Allegro Moderato** This movement is somewhat in the nature of an improvisation. In fact, the traditional two themes are treated on a rhapsodic rather than a formal manner. The first chief theme is given to the solo violin at the beginning, over an accompaniment of violins, divided and muted, and is of a dark and mournful character. Soon an unaccompanied passage for the solo violin leads to a climax. The orchestra then brings in the

announcement of a more tranquil second theme and again the solo violin plays an unaccompanied cadenza (an instrumental solo passage) stating the dark first theme. Both themes appear and reappear, but in altered rhythms. The movement ends in a brilliant climax. The soloist has some highly virtuosic parts.

**Adagio di molto** This is a contemplative romanza, which includes a first section based on the melody played by the solo violin after a short prelude, and a contrasting middle section. The latter begins after an ornate passage-work used a figuration against the melodious first theme, now for the orchestra. The solo violin has the close of the melody. There follows a short conclusion section.

**Allegro ma non troppo** The first theme of this aggressive rondo is given to the solo violin. The development leaps to a climax. The second theme – it is of a resolute nature – is given to the orchestra with the melody in violins and cellos. The movement is built chiefly on these two motives. A persistent and striking rhythmic figure is couples with equally persistent harmonic pedal-points.



***Jean Sibelius***