

DIVINE *I*NSPIRATIONS

Saturday | November 19, 2011 | 8 pm | Symphony Hall at the DECC
Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra | Mariusz Smolij, conductor
Matthew Faerber, DSSO Chorus Director | **DSSO Chorus**

NOV
19
2011

Tchaikovsky

Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture ca. 19'

Kilar

Exodus ca. 23'

DSSO Chorus

I N T E R M I S S I O N ca. 20'

Brahms

Song of the Fates, op. 89 ca. 14'

DSSO Chorus

Respighi

Pines of Rome ca. 23'

The Pines of the Villa Borghese

Pines near a Catacomb

The Pines of the Janiculum

The Pines of the Appian Way

This concert is generously sponsored by The Pachel Foundation

7pm Behind the Music is hosted by William Bastian.
His profile appears on page 57.

Mariusz Smolij's profile appears on page 52.
Matthew Faerber's profile appears on page 52.

Program subject to change

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DIVINE INSPIRATIONS

An interpretation of Shakespeare's famous story of doomed love...a modernist composer's striking take on the Exodus...and a work inspired by a poem about the unbridgeable gulf between divine perfection and human misery.

Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) was young and relatively inexperienced when a friend, composer Mily Balakirev, encouraged him to compose an orchestral work based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. In the throes of hopeless love himself (he had not yet admitted his homosexuality and

In the throes of hopeless love himself... [Tchaikovsky] composed his *Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy Overture after Shakespeare* in 1869.

was infatuated with a recently-married soprano, Désirée Artôt-Padilla), Tchaikovsky was receptive to the idea. He composed his "Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy Overture after Shakespeare," in 1869. Shortly afterward, he watched one of Artôt-Padilla's performances, tears running down his cheeks.

Tchaikovsky's disappointment in love was followed by the disappointing reception of "Romeo and Juliet." He wrote of the post-premiere dinner, "No one said a single word to me about the overture the whole evening. And yet I yearned so for appreciation and kindness." Tchaikovsky revised the work two times before finally achieving the mature version of 1880 that found world-wide popularity.

Rather than creating a musical narrative of Shakespeare's plot, Tchaikovsky uses Shakespeare-inspired themes within a fairly conventional sonata-form structure. Friar Laurence is represented in the hymnlike introduction, followed by ominous foreboding of tragedy in the strings. As the tempo quickens, we hear the violent theme of the feuding Montagues

and Capulets, contrasted by the tender love theme of "Romeo and Juliet." At the end, the love theme is transformed first into a mournful funeral march, then into a transcendent expression of lovers united in death.

INSTRUMENTATION: Two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (cymbals, bass drum), harp and strings.

HISTORY: Tonight marks the fifteenth performance of this work by the DSSO. Half of the concerts featuring this work date back to the first twenty years of the Orchestra's history. This work was performed by the Orchestra in 1934, 1938, 1940, 1941, 1944, 1947, 1949, 1952, 1959, 1967, 1972, 1977 (with guest conductor Stephen Simon), 1986, and most recently on January 19, 2008.

...
Wojciech Kilar (b. 1932), a Polish composer, has composed over 150 film scores. He is also a "serious" composer who, after studying with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, became one of Poland's leading modernist composers. Kilar ranks his concert works higher than his film scores: "In film, my music is just one of many elements, while a symphony or an oratorio is my work from beginning to end." "Exodus" is an extended one-movement composition for orchestra and chorus, composed in 1981.

By the time he composed "Exodus," Kilar had moderated the strikingly modern style of his early works in favor of a simpler musical language marked by

strong propulsive rhythms, sustained sonorities, and folklike melodies. This style change disappointed some critics but appealed to wider audiences. Kilar has said he wants to keep in mind "the people who have their feet firmly planted on the ground."

Religion is important to Kilar and many of his compositions show its influence. "Exodus" was inspired by the biblical account of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea and celebrating their arrival with singing and dancing. To depict this long and arduous journey, Kilar borrowed musical ideas and processes from Ravel's "Bolero." The basic ingredients are simple—a rhythmic ostinato, given first in the pulsing harps; a simple melody that evokes the ancient Israelites; and slowly-changing harmonies. These ideas cycle over and over in a procession of accumulating instruments, changing tone colors, and increasing volume that suggests the power and perseverance of the Israelites. The chorus enters only near the end, with exclamations of faith and joy.

INSTRUMENTATION: Three flutes (all doubling on piccolo, third also doubling on alto flute), three oboes (third doubling on English horn), four clarinets (third doubling on E-flat clarinet and fourth doubling on bass clarinet), three bassoons (third doubling on contrabassoon), six horns, four trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, four tom toms, two drums with ropes, tambourine, woodblock, guiro, lastra, bells, four suspended cymbals, cymbals, six gongs), two harps, two pianos (second doubling on celesta), strings and chorus.

HISTORY: This evening's concert presents the first piece by Wojciech Kilar the Orchestra has performed.

...
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) first made his mark as a composer with works for chorus. In 1868, shortly after his "German Requiem" propelled him into the

international spotlight, he began work on “Schicksalslied (Song of Destiny),” Op. 54. He completed it three years later, in 1871.

Brahms’s inspiration was a poem that he ran across in 1868: “Hyperion’s Song of Destiny,” by Friedrich Hölderlin. This poem, which stirred Brahms profoundly, had first appeared in Hölderlin’s novel, *Hyperion or The Hermit in Greece* (pub.1797-99), about an idealist struggling to reconcile his perfect image of ancient Greece with the sordid realities of the present. “Song of Destiny” is Hyperion’s lament about the unbridgeable gulf between divine perfection and human misery.

Two of the three stanzas describe the blissful tranquility of the gods, while the last describes the confusion and suffering of humans. Brahms’s warm, long-breathed melodies evoke the ineffable beauty and “eternal clarity” of the divine realm. Only the timpani rhythm offers a distant echo from the troubled mortal realm. Then a dissonant frenzy erupts as Brahms depicts the anguish of mortals stumbling about in blind confusion. The final sentiment of the poem, and Brahms’s music for it, is utterly bleak: “Downward through the years into uncertainty.”

The end of the poem posed problems for Brahms, who preferred that his works progress from darkness to light. Accordingly, he decided to round off the piece with a return to the “blissful” music. But he struggled with what to do with the chorus. At first he decided to include the singers and to have them repeat the opening stanzas. Recognizing that this would distort the poetic structure, he also considered having the chorus simply sing “ah.”

Finally, Brahms overcame his fear that the audience would not want to sit through a long orchestral postlude and decided to omit the chorus from the final section. Changes in key and instrumentation make this section even more luminous than the opening—it is not merely a return but a transformation. Brahms advised a conductor, “If you perform it,

above all work on this postlude. The flutist must play very passionately, and you must have a large section of violins playing very beautifully.”

As for the integrity of the poem, Brahms admitted, “I’m certainly saying something that the poet doesn’t say, and indeed it would have been better if

movement to evoke the sound of the ancient Roman army. He also used the latest technology: at the end of the third movement, he specifies that a gramophone play “Song of the nightingale.” This innovation created quite a stir. “Pines of Rome” offers a final “divine” reference this evening, when sounds of plainchant and

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this missing element had been his chief point.” He did not say in words what this “missing element” is, but by letting the orchestra alone convey it Brahms reminds us that instrumental music has meaning beyond what words can express.

INSTRUMENTATION: Two flutes (first doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, contra bassoon, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, strings and chorus.

HISTORY: Tonight is the DSSO’s first performance of this work. The only other pieces with chorus by Brahms which the Orchestra has performed are his “German Requiem,” Op. 45 (1971, 1984, 2001, and 2006) and the “Alto Rhapsody,” Op. 53 (on November 11, 1994 with guest conductor Murray Gordon Gross and mezzo-soprano Lucille Beer).

The popularity of **Ottorino Respighi** (1879-1936) rests largely on three colorful tone-poems depicting scenes from Rome. “Pines of Rome,” Op.141, written in 1924, is the second of these. It would become the most popular work of this most famous Italian composer of his generation.

In transforming Roman sites into sounds, Respighi used the orchestra brilliantly. Among his special effects are the six flügelhorns used in the final

psalm recitation echo from the catacomb in the second movement.

Under the Roman pines, four scenes unfold without pause, as described in the preface to the score:

I. The pines of the Villa Borghese. Children are playing in the pine groves of the Villa Borghese. They dance round in circles, they play at soldiers marching and fighting, they are intoxicated by their own shrieks. Like swallows at evening, they move in a swarm. Suddenly, the scene changes, and...

II. Pines near a catacomb....we see the shadows of the pines that ring the entrance to a catacomb. From the depths rises the sound of mournful psalm-singing, floating through the air like a solemn hymn, and gradually and mysteriously vanishing.

III. The pine-trees of the Janiculum. A tremor passes through the air: in the clear light of a full moon, the pine trees of the Janiculum stand in profile. A nightingale is singing.

IV. The pines of the Appian Way. Misty dawn on the Appian Way. Solitary pines guard the tragic countryside.

Written in 1924...[“Pines of Rome,” Op.141] would become the most popular work of this most famous Italian composer of his generation.

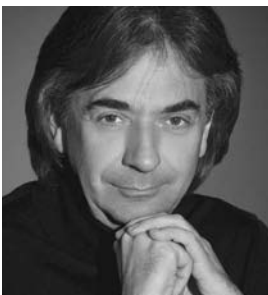
Muffled, ceaseless rhythm of unending footsteps. In the poet's fantasy appears a vision of ancient glories: trumpets blaring, a consular army bursts forth in the radiance of the morning sun, towards the Sacred Way, to ascend in triumph to the Capitol.

INSTRUMENTATION: Three flutes (third doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contra-bassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, six flugel horns (parts cover by trumpets and horns), tuba, timpani, percussion (glockenspiel, tam tam, triangle, cymbals, tambourine, bass drum, two small cymbals, ratchet), nightingale recording, harp, celesta, piano, organ and strings.

HISTORY: This music has been heard on eight Classical Series concerts with the DSSO. The first concert featuring this piece was in 1954. It was performed again in 1959, 1967 (as the closing work on Joseph Hawthorne's first concert with the DSSO), 1975, 1987, 1992, 2001 (with guest conductor Andrews Sill), and on September 29, 2007. The fourth movement was performed as part of the New Year's Eve concert in 1993 with guest David Itkin conducting.



MARIUSZ SMOLIJ,
CONDUCTOR



Mariusz Smolij is considered one of the most exciting conductors of his generation. Praised by the New York Times for "compelling performances," he has led almost 100 orchestras in 25 countries on 5 continents, including many of the major U.S. orchestras. Born near Katowice, Poland, Mr.

Smolij is an accomplished violinist and was the founder and violinist of the internationally recognized Penderecki String Quartet.

Mr. Smolij holds a doctorate degree from the Eastman School of Music. He served as the Assistant Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra 1994-1997 and served on the faculty of the School of Music at Northwestern University in Chicago-Evanston as a professor of conducting and director of the chamber orchestra 1996-2000. At that time he was the youngest full-time conducting faculty member among the top conservatories and universities in North America. Between 2000 and 2003, at the invitation of Maestro Christoph Eschenbach, Mr. Smolij served as the Resident Conductor of the Houston Symphony.

Mr. Smolij's recent engagements include collaborations with the Sinfonieorchester Basel, Switzerland (CD recording and series of concerts including the Tonhalle in Zurich); a residency with the Johannesburg Philharmonic in South Africa; a collaboration with the Budapest Concert Orchestra; performances with Florence Chamber Orchestra in Italy; Israel Symphony Orchestra, Israel Sinfonietta as well as numerous orchestras in Germany and Poland. He is in his sixth season as the Music Director of the Acadiana Symphony Orchestra in Lafayette, Louisiana and his thirteenth season as the Music Director of the Riverside Symphonia in New Jersey. Mr. Smolij regularly records for NAXOS International.

MATTHEW FAERBER,
CHORUS DIRECTOR



Dr. Matthew Faerber is beginning his 13th year as leader of the all-volunteer DSSO Chorus. Dr. Faerber is Director of Choral Activities at the University of Wisconsin-Superior, where he also teaches conducting and vocal music education. He has earned advanced degrees from the University of Iowa and Brigham Young University. Dr. Faerber is also active as a clinician and pianist. He and his wife Betsy are the parents of four children.



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For more information contact Nikki Kohlmeier at 218-355-8888 or chorus@dssocom