

Stravinsky & Beethoven

Saturday, April 20, 2013 • 7:30 p.m.

First Free Methodist Church

Orchestra Seattle
Seattle Chamber Singers
Eric Garcia, conductor



CARL MARIA VON WEBER (1786–1826)

Overture to *Der Freischütz*

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)

Symphony of Psalms

♩ = 92 —

♪ = 60 —

♩ = 44 — ♩ = 80 — ♩ = 48 — *Molto meno mosso* — Tempo I

—Intermission—

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92

Poco sostenuto—Vivace

Allegretto

Presto—Assai meno presto

Allegro con brio

Please silence cell phones and refrain from the use of cameras and recording devices during the performance.

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About the Conductor

Guest conductor **Eric Garcia** was assistant conductor for both the Seattle Symphony and the Eastern Music Festival during the past two seasons. He formerly served as director of orchestral activities and professor of conducting at the University of Evansville and music director of the Evansville Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. He has also served as music director at St. Xavier University in Chicago, where he held several conducting positions and appeared as guest conductor with numerous orchestras. Among these, he guest-conducted the Northwest Festival Orchestra of Illinois, working with members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and Civic Orchestra of Chicago.

As a doctoral student at Northwestern University, he conducted performances with the Contemporary Music Ensemble, Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra and Philharmonia. A frequent conductor of contemporary music, Mr.

Garcia has worked directly with composers including John Adams, George Crumb, Frank Ferko, David Lang, Lowell Lieberman and Jay Alan Yim.

Mr. Garcia has attended the American Academy of Conducting at the Aspen Music Festival and School, working with such eminent conductors as Nicholas Kraemer, Murry Sidlin, Leonard Slatkin and David Zinman. At Aspen, he worked with the American Academy of Conducting Orchestra, the Susan and Ford Schumann Center for Composition Studies, and the Aspen Opera Theatre Center. His principal conducting teacher is Victor Yampolsky. Additional conducting teachers include Peter Bay, Dan Lewis and Larry Rachleff. He received a Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music in orchestral conducting from Northwestern University under the mentorship of Victor Yampolsky, and a Bachelor of Music degree in music theory from the University of Texas.

Eric Garcia is the sixth and final candidate for the position of OSSCS music director.

Text and Translation

Exaudi orationem meam, Domine, et deprecationem meam.
Auribus percipe lacrimas meas.
Ne sileas, quoniam advena ego sum apud te
Et peregrinus, sicut omnes patres mei.
Remitte mihi, ut refrigerer
Priusquam abeam et amplius non ero.

Exspectans expectavi Dominum,
Et intendit mihi.
Et exaudivit preces meas;
Et eduxit me de lacu miseriae et de luto faecis.
Et statuit super petram pedes meos:
Et direxit gressus meos.
Et immisit in os meum canticum novum,
Carmen Deo nostro.
Videbunt multi, et timebunt:
Et sperabunt in Domino.

Alleluia.
Laudate Dominum in sanctis ejus.
Laudate eum in firmamento virtutis ejus.
Laudate eum in virtutibus ejus.
Laudate eum secundum multitudinem magnitudinis ejus.
Laudate eum in sono tubae.
Laudate eum in tympano et choro;
Laudate eum in chordis et organo,
Laudate eum in cymbalis benesonantibus,
laudate eum in cymbalis jubilationis.
Omnis spiritus laudet Domino.
Alleluia. Laudate Dominum.

Hear my prayer, Lord, and my supplication.
Let your ears perceive my tears.
Do not be silent: for I am a foreigner in your presence
And alien, like all my fathers.
Send me back, that I may be refreshed,
Before I go hence, and be no more.
—Psalm 38: 13–14

With expectation I have waited for the Lord,
And he was attentive to me.
And he heard my prayers;
And brought me out of the lake of misery and the fetid mud.
And he set my feet upon a rock:
And directed my steps.
And he put a new canticle into my mouth,
A song to our God.
Many shall see, and shall fear:
And they shall hope in the Lord.
—Psalm 39: 2–4

Alleluia.
Praise the Lord in his holiness.
Praise him to the boundaries of his power.
Praise him for his strength.
Praise him according to the abundance of his greatness.
Praise him with the sound of the trumpet.
Praise him with the tambourine and chorus;
Praise him with strings and musical instruments,
Praise him with the fine-sounding cymbals,
Praise him with the cymbals of jubilation.
Let the spirit of all things praise the Lord.
Alleluia. Praise the Lord.
—Psalm 150

Program Notes

Carl Maria von Weber

Overture to *Der Freischütz*

Weber was born in Eutin, near Lübeck, Germany, on November 18, 1786, and died in London on June 5, 1826. He began composing his opera *Der Freischütz* during 1817 and completed it in 1821, with the first performance taking place in Berlin on June 18 of that year. The overture calls for pairs of woodwinds, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani and strings.

Weber himself described the plot of *Der Freischütz* as follows: "An old hunter in the service of a Prince wants to give his loyal assistant, Max, the hand of his daughter, Agathe, and also appoint him his successor. The Prince agrees to this, but there exists an old law that requires the young man to undergo a severe shooting test. Another malicious and dissolute hunter's assistant, Kaspar, also has his eye on the girl but has sold himself to the Devil. Max, who is otherwise an excellent shot, misses everything during the time immediately preceding the shooting test and, in his despair, is enticed by Kaspar into making so-called 'free bullets,' of which six invariably find their way home, but in return for which the seventh belongs to the Devil. This is meant to hit the poor girl and thereby plunge Max into despair and suicide, etc. However, heaven decrees otherwise; at the shooting test Agathe falls but so does Kaspar—the latter as the victim, the former only from fright."

Weber's overture encapsulates the overall arch of the action into a brilliant tone poem that employs musical material from the opera. English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, writing in a program note for an April 1932 performance he conducted, called the overture "a typical product of the Teutonic romantic movement of the early nineteenth century. The story... leaves a modern Anglo-Saxon audience, alas!, cold. But we must remember that out of this farrago evolved the great supernatural music dramas of Richard Wagner... The dramatic tension engendered by *tremolando* strings and heavy drum notes, which we find in the introduction of this overture, became almost a bad habit with Wagner at tragic situations." This slow introduction establishes the opera's sylvan setting, the work's opening bars yielding to an extended passage for four horns that Richard Taruskin has called "an unprecedented and electrifying effect that forever changed the nature of orchestral horn writing." There follows an eerie passage derived from the second-act "Wolf's Glen" scene, during which the magic bullets are cast. Weber wrote that this music "had to be a dark, gloomy color—the lowest register of the violins, violas and basses, particularly the lowest register of the clarinet, which seemed especially suitable for depicting the sinister."

The tempo shifts to *molto vivace* as Weber presents a melody from Max's first-act aria in which the hero laments being ensnared by sinister powers. The tonality modulates from C minor to E \flat major as solo clarinet introduces a theme taken from the finale of Agathe's Act II aria in which she expresses her thanks for Max's safe return. ("There can be little doubt," Vaughan Williams wrote, "that if Weber had

not written [this melody] Wagner would never have thought of Tannhäuser's song in praise of Venus. Whether this is a subject for rejoicing or regret is a matter of individual taste.") An extended development intermingles the themes of Max and Agathe, with the Wolf's Glen music returning briefly before a blast of C major opens the coda, its jubilant harmonies foreshadowing the opera's ultimately happy conclusion.

—Jeff Eldridge

Igor Stravinsky

Symphony of Psalms

Stravinsky was born at Oranienbaum, Russia, on June 17, 1882, and died in New York on April 6, 1971. He composed his *Symphony of Psalms* at Nice and Charavines between January and August 15, 1930, on a commission from the Boston Symphony and its music director, Serge Koussevitzky, on the occasion of the orchestra's 50th anniversary. In addition to chorus, the work employs 4 flutes, piccolo, 4 oboes, English horn, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 5 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, piano, harp, timpani, bass drum, cellos and basses.

The composer wrote at length about *Symphony of Psalms* in his 1963 book *Dialogues* and a *Diary*, co-authored with Robert Craft, from which the following is excerpted. The "publisher" to whom Stravinsky refers was Koussevitzky. Illness caused the planned premiere to be postponed, with the result that Ernest Ansermet conducted the *Société Philharmonique de Bruxelles* in the first performance on December 13, 1930. Koussevitzky and the BSO gave the American premiere six days later.

The commissioning of the *Symphony of Psalms* began with the publisher's routine suggestion that I write something popular. I took the word, not in the publisher's meaning of "adapting to the understanding of the people," but in the sense of "something universally admired," and I even chose Psalm 150 in part for its popularity, though another and equally compelling reason was my eagerness to counter the many composers who had abused these magisterial verses as pegs for their own lyric-sentimental "feelings." The psalms are poems of exaltation, but also of anger and judgment, and even of curses. Although I regarded Psalm 150 as a song to be danced, as David danced before the Ark, I knew that I would have to treat it in an imperative way. My publisher had requested an orchestral piece without chorus, but I had had the psalm symphony idea in mind for some time, and that is what I insisted on composing.

I began with Psalm 150.... After finishing the fast-tempo sections of [that] psalm, I went back to compose the first and second movements. The "Alleluia" and the slow music at the beginning of Psalm 150, which is an answer to the question in Psalm 39 [Stravinsky used the numbering of the Vulgate bible], were written last.

I was much concerned, in setting the psalm verses, with problems of tempo. To me, the relation of tempo and meaning is a primary question of musical order, and until I am certain that I have found the right tempo, I cannot compose. Superficially, the texts suggested a variety of speeds, but this variety was without shape. At first, and until I understood that God must not be praised in fast, *forte* music, no matter

how often the text specifies “loud,” I thought of the final hymn in a too-rapid pulsation. This is the manner question again, of course. Can one say the same thing in several ways? I cannot, in any case, and to me the only possible way could not be more clearly indicated among all the choices if it were painted blue. I also cannot say whether a succession of choices results in a “style,” but my own description of style is tact-in-action, and I prefer to talk about the action of a musical sentence than to talk about its style.

The first movement, “Hear my prayer, O Lord,” was composed in a state of religious and musical ebullience. The sequences of two minor thirds joined by a major third, the root idea of the whole work, were derived from the trumpet-harp motive at the beginning of the allegro in Psalm 150.

The “Waiting for the Lord” psalm makes the most overt use of musical symbolism in any of my music before *The Flood*. An upside-down pyramid of fugues, it begins with a purely instrumental fugue of limited compass and employs only solo instruments. The restriction to treble range was the novelty of this initial fugue, but the limitation to flutes and oboes proved its most difficult compositional problem. The subject was developed from the sequence of thirds used as an ostinato in the first movement. The next and higher stage of the upside-down pyramid is the human fugue, which does not begin without instrumental help for the reason that I modified the structure as I composed and decided to overlap instruments and voices to give the material more development, but the human choir is heard *a cappella* after that. The human fugue also represents a higher level in the architectural symbolism by the fact that it expands into the bass register. The third stage, the upside-down foundation, unites the two fugues.

Though I chose Psalm 150 first, and though my first musical idea was the already quoted rhythmic figure in that movement, I could not compose the beginning of it until I had written the second movement. Psalm 39 is a prayer that a new canticle may be put into our mouths. The “Alleluia” is that canticle. . . . The rest of the slow-tempo introduction, the “Laudate Dominum,” was originally composed to the words of the *Gospodi pomiluy*. This section is a prayer to the Russian image of the infant Christ with orb and scepter. I decided to end the work with this music, too, as an apotheosis of the sort that had become a pattern in my music since the epithalamium at the end of *Les noces*. The allegro in Psalm 150 was inspired by a vision of Elijah’s chariot climbing the heavens; never before had I written anything quite so literal as the triplets for horns and piano to suggest the horses and chariot. The final hymn of praise must be thought of as issuing from the skies, and agitation is followed by “the calm of praise,” but such statements embarrass me. What I can say is that in setting the words of this final hymn, I cared above all for the sounds of the syllables, and I have indulged my besetting pleasure of regulating prosody in my own way. . . . One hopes to worship God with a little art if one has any, and if one hasn’t, and cannot recognize it in others, then one can at least burn a little incense.

—Igor Stravinsky

Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92

Beethoven was born in Bonn on December 16, 1770, and died in Vienna on March 26, 1827. He began this work during late 1811, completing it on April 13, 1812, and conducting the first performance on December 8, 1813. The score calls for pairs of woodwinds, horns and trumpets, plus timpani and strings.

Orchestra Seattle has previously performed Beethoven’s Symphony No. 7 twice: on April 30, 1982, and November 1, 1996, both conducted by OSSCS founder George Shangrow. We are pleased to share with you an adaptation of George’s characteristically charming program notes from that 1996 concert.

Although Beethoven completed this symphony in April 1812, it didn’t receive its first performance until December 1813 at a concert held at the University of Vienna. Also on the program were marches by Dussek and Pleyel (the latter played by Mälzel’s “mechanical trumpeter”) and Beethoven’s *Battle Symphony* (also known as *Wellington’s Victory*)—a work so feeble and tasteless that it is, according to some, deservedly unknown. It is amusing to reflect, however, that it was the *Battle Symphony* and *not* the Symphony No. 7 that truly engaged the attention of the public.

Many famous musicians played in the orchestra for this concert, among them the great double bass player Dragonetti, along with composers Hummel, Meyerbeer and—most notably—Spohr. Spohr had stories to tell about Beethoven’s conducting of the work: although amusing on the surface, they are nevertheless tragic because the root cause of the “humor” was Beethoven’s increasing deafness.

The Allegretto was encored—as it was four days later at another concert. The next year, the work was published in seven forms: the score, the parts, and arrangements for wind octet, string quintet, piano trio, piano duet and solo piano—an indication of Beethoven’s popular esteem.

The seventh has always been one of my favorite Beethoven symphonies. Isn’t it funny how the odd-numbered ones have such a different character than the even-numbered ones, and that the ninth doesn’t really belong in either set at all—simply because of its altogether different scope, nature and, of course, “orchestration.” So, of the “lower eight,” I must confess a wavering of favoritism between Nos. 3 and 7.

Wagner saw in the seventh “the apotheosis of the Dance; the Dance in its highest condition; the happiest realization of the movements of the body in an ideal form.” I began thinking about this statement, about aerobics classes, ballet, folk dance, pagan ritual dancing and the like. And I decided that Wagner was on to something.

I also considered Leonard Bernstein’s remarks about Beethoven from his marvelous book *The Joy of Music*. He reminds us that Beethoven was a “mediocre melodist, a homely harmonist, an itinerant riveter of a rhythmist, an ordinary orchestrator, a commonplace contrapuntist.” Of course, Bernstein was getting at something that, when combined with Wagner’s remarks, makes Beethoven’s works—and particularly the Symphony No. 7—so special, so peculiar in the world of composed music.

Beethoven may be all those things Bernstein described, but he is also perhaps the greatest *composer* who ever lived. What I mean by this is that it is how he puts all of those elements together: the timing, the spacing, the sudden loud and soft places, the accents, when he uses counterpoint, when he elongates something, when he inserts a joke—this ability to capture in music the essence of dance and the essence of human-ness. This makes Beethoven perhaps the greatest *composer* who ever lived.

Listen to the transition to the Vivace tempo near the opening of the first movement and then the amazing coda at the end, where the final build-up begins with a truly weird line in the lower strings. In the famous Allegretto, listen for the pathos and the grandeur—I particularly love the commonplace contrapuntist’s very quiet fugue in the violins, which inevitably leads to the climax of the movement. And what about that incredibly unsettling conclusion?

The Scherzo zips along, and is so perfectly contrasted *and* balanced by the Trio, with its edgy, sliding harmony (hardly homely)—and, by the way, just how many times is that scherzo-and-trio repeated? Was the ending a study for the great scherzo of the Symphony No. 9? Did he really write the dynamics differently when the scherzo comes back from the trio the first time?

You want to say “How ‘bout them Yankees!” with regard to the last movement. Here’s a rondo that dances like pagans in an all-night ritual concerning who knows what. The compositional details here are nothing less than stunning. The canons between treble and bass abound, the imitation and counterpoint are deceptively simple, but the placement—there’s that great composer again. And the energy is boundless.

Have a good time!

—George Shangrow

Violin

Susan Beals*
Dean Drescher
Stephen Hegg
Susan Herring
Manchung Ho
Fritz Klein**
Pam Kummert
Mark Lutz
Gregor Nitsche
Lorenzo Prelli
Sandy Qiu
Elizabeth Robertson
Randie Sidlinger
Theo Schaad
Janet Showalter
Kenna Smith-Shangrow
June Spector
Nicole Tsong

Viola

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Lauren Daugherty
Katherine McWilliams
Robert Shangrow
Sam Williams*

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Peter Ellis
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Annie Roberts
Valerie Ross
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Matthew Wyant*

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Jo Hansen
Ericka Kendall
Steven Messick*

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Virginia Knight
Shari Muller-Ho*
Melissa Underhill

Piccolo

Elana Sabovic Matt

Oboe

David Barnes*
Eric Brewster
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English Horn

Lesley Bain

Clarinet

Peggy Dees
Steven Noffsinger*

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Judith Lawrence*

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Janet Young*

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Cuauhtemoc Escobedo*
Jim Hattori
Chad Kirby

Tuba

David Brewer

Timpani

Dan Oie

Percussion

Steven Noffsinger

Harp

Naomi Kato

Piano

Lisa Michele Lewis

** *concertmaster*

* *principal*

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