# **Turning Points**

Sunday, February 8, 2015 • 3:00 PM First Free Methodist Church

Orchestra Seattle Clinton Smith, conductor

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841–1904) Slavonic Dance in C Major, Op. 46, No. 1 Slavonic Dance in E Minor, Op. 72, No. 2 Slavonic Dance in G Minor, Op. 46, No. 8

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906 – 1975)/TRANS. RUDOLF BARSHAI Chamber Symphony in C Minor, Op. 110a

Largo—Allegro molto—Allegretto—Largo—Largo

-Intermission-

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893) Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

I. Allegro moderato

Marie Leou, violin

ARVO PÄRT (\*1935) Fratres

WOLFGANG AMADÈ MOZART (1756–1791) Symphony No. 29 in A Major, K. 201

Allegro moderato Andante Menuetto: Allegretto—Trio Allegro con spirito

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

Special thanks to First Free Methodist Church for all of their assistance in making OSSCS's 45th season possible, and for providing refreshments during intermission. Donations left at the refreshments tables help support FFMC and its programs.

Orchestra Seattle • Seattle Chamber Singers Clinton Smith, music director • George Shangrow, founder PO Box 15825, Seattle WA 98115 • 206-682-5208 • www.osscs.org



## About the Conductor

Now in his second season as music director of Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers, **Clinton Smith** also continues as artistic director and principal conductor of the St. Cloud Symphony, and serves on the music staff of Santa Fe Opera covering and preparing performances of Beethoven's *Fidelio* and the North American premiere of Huang Ruo's *Dr. Sun Yat-sen*. During the 2014–2015 season, Clinton will guest-conduct Baldin Wallace University's production of *La finta giardiniera* and return to Juilliard to cover performances of *Le nozze di Figaro*.

Clinton recently conducted the University of Michigan Opera Theater production of Il barbieri di Siviglia, was cover conductor for Juilliard Opera's The Cunning Little Vixen and Portland Opera's Don Giovanni. For four seasons, Minnesota Opera engaged Clinton as cover conductor and chorus master, where he led main stage performances of La traviata and Madama Butterfly and covered the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and Minnesota Opera Orchestra in over 20 productions. During 2011, Clinton conducted a workshop and prepared the world premiere of Kevin Puts' opera Silent Night, which subsequently won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in Music. For Minnesota Opera's New Works Initiative, and as an avid fan of new music, Clinton prepared workshops of Douglas J. Cuomo's Doubt, Ricky Ian Gordon's The Garden of the Finzi-Continis and the North American premiere of Jonathan Dove's The Adventures of Pinocchio, as well as Dominick Argento's Casanova's Homecoming and Bernard Herrmann's Wuthering Heights.

A native Texan, Clinton received his D.M.A. ('09) and M.M. ('06) in Orchestral Conducting from the University of Michigan, where he studied with Kenneth Kiesler and Martin Katz, and a B.M. in Piano Performance ('04) from the University of Texas at Austin.

## About OSSCS

**Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers** form a partnership unique among Pacific Northwest musical organizations, combining a 60-member orchestra with a 45voice chorus to perform oratorio masterworks alongside symphonic repertoire and world premieres.

George Shangrow (1951–2010) founded the Seattle Chamber Singers in 1969, when still a teenager. The group performed a diverse array of music, from works of the Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque periods to contemporary pieces, partnering with an ad hoc group of instrumentalists to present Bach cantatas and Handel oratorios—many of which received their first Seattle performances under George's direction. In 1979, George formed an orchestra originally called the Broadway Chamber Symphony (after the Broadway Performance Hall on Seattle's Capitol Hill, where it gave its first concerts) and later, beginning with the 1991–1992 season, Orchestra Seattle. With George on the podium (or conducting from the harpsichord), OSSCS became renowned for performances of the Bach Passions and numerous Handel oratorios—particularly *Messiah*. During the "Bach Year" of 1985, the ensembles presented 35 concerts devoted to dozens upon dozens of Bach's works to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the composer's birth.

George Shangrow lost his life in a car crash in 2010, an event that shocked not only OSSCS musicians and our audiences, but the entire Pacific Northwest musical community. Over the ensuing three seasons, the volunteer performers of OSSCS partnered with a number of distinguished guest conductors to carry on the astounding musical legacy George created. Beginning with the 2013–2014 season, OSSCS welcomed Clinton Smith as our new music director.

## About the Soloist

Violinist **Marie Leou**, winner of the 2014–2015 OSSCS Concerto Competition, began her violin studies with Jan Coleman and is currently a student of Simon James and Hiro David. She has previously performed as soloist with the Bayshore Symphony, Eastside Symphony and Seattle Festival Orchestra, played in quartets through the Academy of Music Northwest and Chamber Music Mania camps, and has served as concertmaster of the Everett Youth Symphony. In addition to violin, Marie has studied piano with Tien-Yin Chen since age four. She received honorable mention in piano at the 2013 SCMTA concerto competition and placed first at the 2012 Anna Rollins Johnson Scholarship Competition. Currently a ninth grader at Interlake High School in Bellevue, she also enjoys reading, chess, traveling with her family and playing tennis.

## Save the Date!

The 2015 OSSCS Gala Dinner and Auction will be held the evening of Saturday, May 9, 2015, at the beautiful 415 Westlake event space near South Lake Union. We'll have live music throughout the evening and be joined by talented actor, auctioneer and MC Matt Smith, whose credits include *Spider-Man, Sleepless in Seattle, Almost Live!, Outsourced* and *Northern Exposure*. He's known in Seattle for his humorous monologues *My Last Year with the Nuns, My Boat to Bainbridge, Helium* and *Beyond Kindness*. We're going all out to make this our most exciting gala to date—don't miss it!

## 2014–2015 Composer Competition

On May 17, OSSCS will present the world premiere of the winning entry in our inaugural composer competition: *Breathe*, a work for chorus and orchestra by Portland-based composer Stacey Phillips, with lyrics drawn from the 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and Paul Dunbar's poem "Sympathy." Written during the months following protests in response to the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, *Breathe* "raises the continuing question of how this country, founded on the principles of equality, continues to struggle with questions of social justice."

## **Program Notes**

#### Antonín Dvořák Three Slavonic Dances

Dvořák was born September 8, 1841, in the Bohemian town of Nelahozeves (near Prague), and died on May 1, 1904, in Prague. He composed his first set of eight Slavonic Dances for piano fourhands over a six-week period between March and May of 1878, and began orchestrating them simultaneously. During the summer of 1886, Dvořák produced a second set of eight dances, orchestrating them later that year. The orchestral versions use pairs of woodwinds (plus piccolo), 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, triangle, cymbals, bass drum and strings.

Trained as an organist, Antonín Dvořák played viola in Prague's Bohemian Provisional Theater Orchestra during the 1860s, supplementing his income by giving piano lessons. Although his Op. 1 dates from 1861, his music apparently received no public performances until a decade later, when he quit the orchestra to devote more time to composing. While his music began to achieve some measure of success in Prague, he remained in need of two things: money and wider recognition of his talents.

In 1874, Dvořák applied for the Austrian State Stipendium, a composition prize awarded by a jury consisting of composer Johannes Brahms, music critic Eduard Hanslick and Johann Herbeck, director of the Imperial Opera. Brahms in particular was overwhelmingly impressed by the 15 works Dvořák submitted, which included a song cycle, various overtures and two symphonies. Dvořák received the 1874 stipend, and further awards in 1876 and 1877, when Hanslick wrote to him that "it would be advantageous for your things to become known beyond your narrow Czech fatherland, which in any case does not do much for you."

Seeking to help in this regard, Brahms passed along a selection of Dvořák's music to his own publisher, Fritz Simrock, writing: "For several years I have enjoyed works sent in by Antonín Dvořák... of Prague. This year he has sent works... that seem to me very pretty.... Play them through and you will like them as much as I do. Dvořák has written all manner of things: operas (Czech), symphonies, quartets, piano pieces. In any case, he is a very talented man. Moreover, he is poor! I ask you to think about it!"

Simrock published Dvořák's Op. 20 Moravian Duets, then commissioned some four-hand–piano pieces modeled after Brahms' successful Hungarian Dances. These Op. 46 Slavonic Dances proved so popular that they launched Dvořák's worldwide fame and prompted Simrock to request a second set, to which Dvořák reluctantly agreed (needlessly fearing he would not be able to duplicate his success).

Brahms had employed actual Hungarian melodies in his dances, but Dvořák crafted original tunes while employing a variety of Slavic dance forms, including the *furiant* (a vigorous Bohemian dance often marked by shifting accents, heard in the two Op. 46 pieces performed this afternoon) and the *dumka* (derived from a Ukrainian dance form marked by slower tempos and shifting moods, as heard in Op. 72, No. 2).

#### Dmitri Shostakovich Chamber Symphony in C Minor, Op. 110a

Shostakovich was born September 25, 1906, in St. Petersburg, and died in Moscow on August 9, 1975. He composed this string quartet, later transcribed for string orchestra by Rudolf Barhsai with the composer's approval, in July 1960.

During the summer of 1960, Shostakovich traveled to Germany to score the film *Five Days—Five Nights*, set against a backdrop of the February 1945 firebombing of Dresden. He instead produced—in three days' time—his eighth string quartet, writing to friend Isaak Glikman: "[T]ry as I might I was unable to compose the film music, even in rough. And instead I wrote a quartet that's of no use to anybody." Shostakovich officially dedicated the work to "the memory of the victims of fascism and war," but privately his letter to Glikman revealed: "I've been thinking that when I die, it's hardly likely that anybody will ever write a work dedicated to my memory. So I have decided to write one myself. The dedication could be printed on the cover: 'Dedicated to the memory of the composer of this quartet.'" The quartet may well have been a musical suicide note.

The work opens with the composer's musical signature: four pitches  $(D-E^{\flat}-C-B^{\natural})$  derived from the German transliteration of his name (Dimitri Schostakowitch) and the German names for  $E^{\flat}$  ("Es") and  $B^{\natural}$  ("H"). This DSCH motive, which previously appeared in his second violin concerto and tenth symphony, pervades the quartet. The first movement-of five, all played without pause-quotes a number of Shostakovich compositions, including the first and fifth symphonies. The second movement, a violent scherzo in G<sup>#</sup> minor, employs in its trio section a melody from Shostakovich's Piano Trio No. 2. The tempo slows a bit for the G-minor third movement, largely a sardonic waltz that uses a theme from the first cello concerto. The fourth movement, in C<sup>#</sup> minor, features a recurring—and frightening-three-note rhythm that the composer's son, Maxim, called "knocks on the door by the KGB," as well as the revolutionary song "Tormented by Grievous Bondage" and an aria from Shostakovich's opera Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District. The C-minor finale revisits material from the end of the opening movement.

Prior to the premiere, Shostakovich arranged a private reading at his home. Violinist Rostislav Dubinsky recalled: "We finished the quartet and looked at Shostakovich. His head was hanging low, his face hidden in his hands. We waited. He didn't stir. We got up, quietly put our instruments away, and stole out of the room."

#### Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

Tchaikovsky was born May 7, 1840, in Votkinsk, Russia, and died in St. Petersburg on November 6, 1893. He composed this concerto during March 1878 at Clarens, Switzerland, completing the orchestration on April 11 of that year. Violinist Adolf Brodsky premiered it, with Hans Richter conducting the Vienna Philharmonic, on December 4, 1881. The accompaniment requires pairs of woodwinds, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings. In July 1877, Tchaikovsky hastily married "a woman with whom I am not the least in love," an ill-fated union that drove the composer to a nervous breakdown and a suicide attempt. During his recovery, he traveled with his brother Modest to a resort on the shores of Lake Geneva, where one of Tchaikovsky's composition students, a talented young violinist named Yosif Kotek, paid them a visit. Kotek may have inspired—at least in part— the composer to begin work on a violin concerto, which he sketched over the course of a mere 11 days, orchestrating it almost as quickly. "From the day I began to write it, [a] favorable mood has not left me. In such a spiritual state composition loses all aspect of work—it is a continuous delight."

When Leopold Auer, the concerto's original dedicatee, deemed it "unplayable" and "too revolutionary," Tchaikovsky worried about "the effect of casting this unfortunate child of my imagination into hopeless oblivion," until violinist Adolf Brodsky expressed interest in the work, taking nearly two years to master the challenging solo part.

Many of the critics who witnessed its Vienna premiere despised the concerto, chief among them Eduard Hanslick, who found it "long and pretentious," reporting that the work "brought us face to face with the revolting thought that music can exist which stinks to the ear." Nevertheless, an anonymous review in the *Wiener Abendpost* came much closer to predicting how this concerto would become universally embraced by audiences around the world, praising "[t]he first movement with its splendid, healthy themes," and asserting that the work "would claim an outstanding place among contemporary compositions."

#### Arvo Pärt

#### Fratres

Arvo Pärt was born September 11, 1935, in Paide, Estonia. He composed Fratres in 1977 for string quintet plus wind quintet, later rearranging and rescoring it for various other ensembles. This version for string orchestra and percussion (claves and bass drum) dates from 1991.

Estonian composer Arvo Pärt's early output included neoclassical piano music and works influenced by Prokofiev and Shostakovich. During the 1960s he embraced serialism, collage and other avant-garde techniques, while at the same time immersing himself in the music of Bach. This culminated in his 1968 *Credo*, a work that displeased Soviet authorities for its overt religiosity as much as for its cutting-edge musical style. Pärt subsequently fell into a years-long period of "creative silence," during which he produced few compositions, instead devoting himself to the study of Medieval and Renaissance music, including Gregorian chant.

By 1976, Pärt had developed a new style he dubbed "tintinnabulation" and the following year composed *Fratres* (meaning "brothers," perhaps as a reference to the monks who might sing Gregorian chant) utilizing this technique. "Tintinnabulation is an area I sometimes wander into when I am searching for answers—in my life, my music, my work," the composer wrote in 1984. "In my dark hours, I have the certain feeling that everything outside this one thing has no meaning. The complex and many-faceted only confuses me, and I must search for unity. What is it, this one thing, and how do I find my way to it? Traces of this perfect thing appear in many guises—and everything that is unimportant falls away. Tintinnabulation is like this. Here, I am alone with silence. I have discovered that it is enough when a single note is beautifully played. This one note, or a silent beat, or a moment of silence, comforts me. I work with very few elements—with one voice, with two voices. I build with the most primitive materials—with the triad, with one specific tonality. The three notes of a triad are like bells. And that is why I call it tintinnabulation."

#### Wolfgang Amadè Mozart Symphony No. 29 in A Major, K. 201

Joannes Chrisostomus Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart was born in Salzburg on January 27, 1756, and died on December 5, 1791, in Vienna. He started calling himself "Wolfgango Amadeo" around 1770 and "Wolfgang Amadè" in 1777. This symphony, dating from April 1774, calls for string orchestra plus pairs of oboes and horns.

Although Mozart's final symphony (the so-called "Jupiter") is listed as No. 41, he composed nearly 70 such works between the age of eight (!) and his death at age 35. And while the traditional numbering scheme omits many early entries in this genre, it also includes at least two symphonies now known to be the work of other composers (Carl Friedrich Abel and Michael Haydn).

Few of Mozart's youthful symphonies—charming as they may be—have found a place in the standard repertoire. The earliest two such works date from the months following a trip to Vienna Mozart and his father took in the summer of 1773: the Symphony No. 25 in G Minor, composed in October of that year, and the Symphony No. 29 in A Major, completed the following April. While ostensibly undertaken to visit Anton Mesmer (the inventor of "mesmerism" and a Mozart family friend), the journey was likely an unsuccessful job-hunting venture. The two months Mozart spent in Vienna, however, did expose him to a wealth of new music much of it by Franz Joseph Haydn, including a new batch of string quartets and some *Sturm und Drang* symphonies, which undoubtedly influenced the two symphonies Mozart would compose on his return to Salzburg.

The first movement of K. 201—unlike all but one of its predecessors, another A-major symphony—opens quietly; the initial descending-octave figure recurs throughout this movement (including its contrapuntal coda), as well as in the first theme of the finale. In the slow movement, Mozart employs muted violins (perhaps another Haydn influence), while dotted rhythms dominate the minuet. Although the first three movements may exhibit the influence of Joseph Haydn, the  $\frac{6}{8}$  finale closely resembles the closing movement of a 1771 symphony (also in A major) by Salzburg resident Michael Haydn—Joseph's younger brother, and a friend and colleague of Mozart.

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**DURUFLÉ** *Requiem*, Op. 9 **HOLST** *The Planets*, Op. 32

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Saturday, April 18, 2015 • 7:30 p.m. Roupen Shakarian, conductor

HANDEL Israel in Egypt, HWV 54

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The OSSCS board of directors is currently recruiting! If you have some extra time each month and interest in helping OSSCS continue to grow, please contact board chair Hilary Anderson at hiljill@hotmail.com for more information.

