# Thirsting for Hope

Sunday, June 3, 2018 • 3:00 p.m. First Free Methodist Church

Orchestra Seattle Seattle Chamber Singers Alastair Willis, conductor



ROBERT BROOKS (\*1963)

The Migration and Death of Esperanza Soledad Hernández — WORLD PREMIERE

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847) *Psalm* 42, Op. 42

Chorus: Wie der Hirsch schreit

Aria: Meine Seele dürstet

Recitative: Meine Tränen sind meine

Chorus: Was betrübst du dich

Recitative: *Mein Gott, betrübt ist meine Seele* Quintet: *Der Herr hat des Tages verheissen* Chorus: *Was betrübst du dich meine Seele* 

Amanda Opuszynski, soprano

— intermission —

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841–1904) Symphony No. 7 in D minor, Op. 70

> Allegro maestoso Poco adagio

Scherzo: Vivace — Poco meno mosso

Finale: *Allegro* 

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 and Ron Haight for all of their assistance in making OSSCS's 48th season possible. Refreshments will be available in the Fine Center during intermission.

## **About the Guest Artists**

Grammy-nominated conductor Alastair Willis is the newly appointed music director of the South Bend

Symphony Orchestra. In past seasons, he has guest conducted orchestras around the world, including the Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Mexico City Philharmonic, Orquestra Sinfônica de Rio de Janeiro, Nordwestdeutsche Philharmon-



ic, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, China National Orchestra (Beijing) and Silk Road Ensemble (with Yo-Yo Ma), among others. His recording of Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortileges* with the Nashville Symphony and Opera for Naxos was Grammynominated for Best Classical Album in 2009.

Mr. Willis recently completed a successful four-year tenure as music director of the Illinois Symphony Orchestra. Last season he was re-engaged by the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, Victoria Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Dresden Philharmonic, Orquestra Sinfonica Barra Mansa, Symphonia Boca Raton, OSSCS and Pacific Northwest Ballet, and made his debuts with the Wichita Symphony, Boise Philharmonic, Illinois Philharmonic, South Bend Symphony and Roosevelt Contemporary Ensemble. This season he returns to Gyor Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, Pacific Northwest Ballet and Boca Raton Symphonia, and makes his debut with Philharmonie Südwestfalen. Previous positions include principal guest conductor with the Florida Orches-

tra's Coffee Concert series (2008–2011), associate conductor of the Seattle Symphony (2000–2003), assistant conductor with the Cincinnati Symphony and Pops Orchestras, and music director of the Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra.

Born in Acton, Massachusetts, Mr. Willis lived with his family in Moscow for five years before settling in Surrey, England. He received his Bachelor's degree with honors from Bristol University, an Education degree from Kingston University, and a Masters of Music degree from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. He currently resides in Seattle.

Hailed for her "luscious," "powerful" voice and "dazzling technical facility," soprano Amanda Opuszynski

returned to Seattle Opera during the 2016–2017 season as the Dew Fairy/Sandman in *Hänsel und Gretel* and Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*, and made her Arizona Opera debut as Bess Erne in the world-premiere production of *Riders of the Purple Sage*. Notable past engagements in-



clude Frasquita in *Carmen* (Santa Fe Opera, Seattle Opera, Atlanta Opera, Pacific Symphony), Najade in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Seattle Opera, Virginia Opera), Musetta in *La bohème*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Johanna in *Sweeney Todd*, Oscar in *Un ballo in maschera* and Nannetta in *Falstaff*. Ms. Opuszynski is the winner of a prestigious Career Development Award from the Sullivan Foundation and Santa Fe Opera's Lilian Caroff Meyer Award, and is a two-time regional finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

#### **Violin**

Azzurra Cox Dean Drescher Whitney Forck Alexander Hawker Stephen Hegg Susan Herring Jason Hershey Manchung Ho Fritz Klein\* Mark Lutz Gregor Nitsche Susan Ovens Stephen Provine\*\* Davis Reed Theo Schaad Kenna Smith-Shangrow June Spector Nicole Tsong

#### Viola

Deborah Daoust Grant Hanner\* Katherine McWilliams Lauren Lamont Emily O'Leary Stephanie Read

#### Cello

Marshall Brown
Peter Ellis
Christy Johnson
Max Lieblich
Katie Sauter Messick
Annie Roberts
Valerie Ross
Matthew Wyant\*

#### **Bass**

Jo Hansen\* Ericka Kendall Kevin McCarthy Steven Messick Chris Simison

#### Flute

Kate Johnson Shari Muller-Ho\*

## Oboe

Kristine Kiner Rebecca Rice\*

#### Clarinet

Steven Noffsinger\* Chris Peterson

# **Bass Clarinet**

Cynthia Ely

#### **Bassoon**

Aaron Chang Jeff Eldridge\*

#### French Horn

Barney Blough Laurie Heidt\* Jim Hendrickson Matthew Kruse

#### **Trumpet**

Rabi Lahiri Janet Young\*

## **Trombone**

Chad Kirby Jim Hattori\* Steve Sommer

#### Tuba

David Brewer

# **Keyboard** Eric Bradler

**Timpani** Dan Oie

# Percussion

Kathie Flood Emmy Ulmer Amy Vandergon

#### Soprano

Barb Anderson Ann Bridges Sue Cobb Abigail Owens Cooper Kyla DeRemer Cinda Freece Peggy Kurtz § Kathleen Sankey Nancy Shasteen Cassie Van Pay

#### Alto

Sharon Agnew Cheryl Blackburn Deanna Fryhle Pamela Ivezič Ellen Kaisse Lorelette Knowles Theodora Letz Lila Woodruff May Laurie Medill § Annie Thompson

#### **Tenor**

Ralph Cobb Jon Lange § Tom Nesbitt Jerry Sams

## Bass

Timothy Braun
Andrew Danilchik
Stephen Keeler
Dennis Moore
Byron Olivier
Glenn Ramsdell
Steven Tachell
Skip Viau
Richard Wyckoff §

\* principal § section leader

<sup>\*\*</sup> concertmaster

# **Program Notes**

#### **Robert Brooks**

# The Migration and Death of Esperanza Soledad Hernández

Brooks was born in the United States in 1963 and currently lives in Mexico. This work calls for pairs of woodwinds (doubling piccolo and contrabassoon, plus bass clarinet), 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, piano and strings.

Robert Brooks began as rock and blues guitarist and vocalist, but when focal dystonia affected his left hand, leaving him unable to play guitar, he formed a jazz group and began singing jazz. It was at this time that he also began composing instrumental pieces for various types of ensembles. He began devoting more and more time to composition, which through a combination of self-study and lessons with various composers eventually paid off in performances of his work in the United States, Mexico, Costa Rica and Honduras. His music is often lyrical, with touches of jazz. About his newest work, the composer writes:

"The Migration and Death of Esperanza Soledad Hernández is a tone poem that depicts Esperanza, a woman from the Northern Triangle (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador), struggling amidst the violence of her homeland and the decision to migrate to the U.S. It starts with a simple melody representing her at home, then moves rapidly to her reflecting on her country's condition, her decision to leave and informing her mother of her departure.

"From there it moves to 'La Bestia,' the infamous train used by Central American immigrants to travel through Mexico to reach the U.S.; many are injured, assaulted or even die from falling off while asleep. Esperanza survives the Bestia and now is in a foreign land alone and homesick. She must find a 'coyote,' a smuggler to get her over the border. The trip means evading U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, but something goes terribly wrong and she is killed. Her name describes the characteristics that immigrants hold in common: Esperanza means hope, Soledad means loneliness, Hernández means bravery."

# Felix Mendelssohn *Psalm* 42, Op. 42

Jakob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn was born February 3, 1809, in Hamburg, and died November 4, 1847, in Leipzig. He composed four movements of this concert cantata during May 1837, conducting the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra in the first performance on New Year's Day 1838, and leading the same ensemble in all seven movements at a charity concert on February 8. In addition to soloists and chorus, the score calls for pairs of woodwinds, horns and trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, organ and strings.

Prolific and extremely precocious, Felix Mendelssohn possessed fabulous gifts as a composer, conductor and pianist that made him the most successful musician of the 19th century. An astonishingly gifted musical prodigy whose natural talent probably surpassed even Mozart's, Mendelssohn studied violin and piano while a very young child. (He painted and demonstrated significant linguistic gifts as well.) Young Felix made his public debut as a pianist at

age nine, wrote his first piece of music at age 11, and at 17 composed an enduring masterpiece, an overture to Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. He experienced few of the personal tragedies, career vagaries, financial difficulties and physical ailments that seemed to beset most composers, but it may well be that his ceaseless efforts to meet the musical demands of his public contributed to his death from a stroke at the age of 38. He wrote exquisite melodies and made skillful use of orchestral color and of extra-musical elements having literary, artistic, historical, geographical or emotional associations. His dramatic talents are beautifully displayed in his oratorios, of which Elijah is the most famous. He combined "romantic" elements with the economy of means, emotional restraint, refinement, sensitivity, contrapuntal skill and clear formal structures of the Classical period to produce a highly engaging personal style of music writing that still captivates audiences today.

In 1837 composer Robert Schumann referred to Mendelssohn's psalm cantata Wie der Hirsch schreit as "his highest elevation as church composer; yes, the highest elevation that modern church music has reached at all." Mendelssohn himself believed that Psalm 42 was "by far my best sacred composition," a work that "I hold in greater regard than most of my other compositions." Mendelssohn produced 19 psalm settings during his career, and the composition of this work began with the writing of four movements in the spring of 1837 while Mendelssohn and his bride, Cécile, were honeymooning near Frieburg; he revised the work and added three movements prior to its publication. The work is modeled on the cantatas of Mendelssohn's hero, J.S. Bach, and, like his other psalm cantatas, probably grew out of Mendelssohn's love both for the psalms as deeply personal Biblical texts meant to be sung and for the hymns of Martin Luther, whose German translation of the psalms Mendelssohn chose to set. Although the cantata was not intended for performance during a church service, its composer doubtless strove, in his own work, to uphold Leipzig's glorious tradition of presenting the very finest sacred music, both in its churches and in its public concerts.

In the cantata's gently flowing F-major opening movement, reminiscent in its rhythm of a waltz, the chorus, sometimes treated contrapuntally and sometimes chordally, sighs as it searches, like the panting hart, for the streams of water that ripple in the orchestra, just as the parched human heart seeks God. The wistful D-minor adagio aria for soprano that follows brings the soloist an oboe's consolation in her quest for the living God for whom she thirsts. A brief recitative, in which the tearful soprano is taunted regarding God's seeming absence, introduces the third movement, in A minor and  $^4_4$  meter. The soloist remembers entering the house of the Lord with rejoicing and thanksgiving as tumbling torrents of sixteenth notes rush through the orchestral strings, and she is joined by a three-part women's chorus in her reminiscences of celebrating with the worshiping crowds.

Unison tenors and basses open the short, majestic F-major fourth movement, a solemn processional that presents the central theme of the 42nd Psalm: "Why are you troubled,

my soul?" "Wait for God!" The fanfare-like refrain "Harre auf Gott" reverberates through this homophonic "dialogue" movement, and also through the fugal seventh movement, as a memorable musical "motto" that brings to mind the desperate vociferation "Baal, we cry to thee" from *Elijah*, as well as the opening of the fourth movement of Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* Symphony.

In the brief arioso/recitative movement that follows without pause, the soprano soloist bewails the billowing waves of water, rising and falling in the orchestra, that rush and roar over her sorrowful soul. In the sixth movement, a chorale-like quintet in Eb major for solo soprano, two tenor parts and two bass parts, the soprano expresses the anguish of a soul attacked by enemies and feeling forgotten and forlorn, while the comforting warmth of the male voices reassures her that the Lord promises His goodness daily as songs and prayers are offered to Him nightly. Mendelssohn seems to have been especially fond of this movement, expressing the belief that, "if the Quintet doesn't succeed, then the whole will not succeed."

The laudatory finale, for the full choir and orchestra in F major and  $_4^4$  meter, brings back the introductory music from the composition's fourth movement and features a grand Baroque-style fugue based on the "Harre auf Gott" motive. The choir's call for praise of Israel's God now and into eternity sounds above the eighth-note waves washing through the orchestra. Throughout the cantata, the arid soul longs and cries out for the refreshment of God's presence, but at last, no longer feeling abandoned by God and overwhelmed by storms and floods, the heart's thirst is quenched and hope for, trust in, and praise of God's unfailing goodness bring the cantata to a magnificent chordal conclusion.

- Lorelette Knowles

# Antonín Dvořák Symphony No. 7 in D minor, Op. 70

Dvořák was born September 8, 1841, in the Bohemian town of Nelahozeves (near Prague, now in the Czech Republic), and died on May 1, 1904, in Prague. He composed this work between December 13, 1884, and March 17, 1885, revising it slightly after he conducted the Royal Philharmonic in the first performance on April 22, 1885, at St. James Hall in London. The score calls for pairs of woodwinds (with one flute doubling piccolo), 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani 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, who issued Dvořák's Op. 20 Moravian Duets and 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. Hans Richter requested a symphony to premiere with the Vienna Philharmonic, and so Dvořák set about writing his Symphony No. 6 (known initially as "No. 1" due to it being the first to be published), but anti-Czech sentiment on the part of the Philharmonic musicians relegated the first performance to Prague. Inspired by Brahms' recent Symphony No. 2, Dvořák's new D-major symphony met with great admiration in England (along with his Stabat Mater) and so an 1884 appearance as guest conductor of the the Royal Philharmonic brought about an invitation to return the following year along with a commission for yet another symphony.

Dvořák first heard Brahms' Symphony No. 3 (performed by Orchestra Seattle to open this season) in Berlin during January 1884, but it remained an inspiration to him in December of that year when, as he told a friend, "a new symphony (for London) occupies me, and wherever I go I think of nothing but my work, which must be capable of stirring the world, and God grant me that it will!" The following February he wrote to Simrock: "I don't want to let Brahms down." Certainly the audience at the London premiere felt he had not. "The symphony was immensely successful," Dvořák wrote, "and at the next performance will be a still greater success." Donald Francis Tovey would rank the work "along with the C-major Symphony of Schubert and the four symphonies of Brahms, as among the greatest and purest examples of this art-form since Beethoven."

The opening theme of the symphony "flashed into my mind on the arrival of the festive train bringing our countrymen from Pest." Dvořák loved trains (and pigeons) but his presence at the Prague central station had more to do with the pro-Czech political demonstration for which those aboard the train were returning from Hungary. Although the symphony has no formal program, the political unrest in his homeland likely informed the somber mood that permeates the work. Dvořák initially included a repeat of the exposition, but ultimately opted to plunge listeners directly into the development.

The *Adagio* that follows opens in pastoral fashion but eventually builds to moments of grand drama. After the London premiere, the composer edited a 40-measure section out of the middle of this movement, proclaiming: "Now I am convinced that there is not a single superfluous note in the work."

As is the case in most Dvořák symphonies, the scherzo could easily be taken for one of his famed Slavonic Dances (he composed this work in between the first and second sets of those dances). Here it takes the form of a *furiant* — in  $_4^6$  meter, with 3+3 and 2+2+2 rhythmic patterns colliding — bookending a more relaxed trio section.

Opening dramatically in D minor, the finale later admits a gentler episode in A major (another Slavonic Dance in all but name) but in the closing paragraphs D major and minor struggle for dominance. Major wins out (barely) in the final measures.

— Jeff Eldridge

## **Vocal Text and Translation**

Wie der Hirsch schreit nach frischem Wasser, So schreit meine Seele, Gott, zu dir.

Meine Seele dürstet nach Gott nach dem lebendigen Gotte. Wann werde ich dahin kommen dass ich Gottes Angesicht schaue?

Meine Tränen sind meine Speise Tag und Nacht, weil man täglich zu mir saget:
"Wo ist nun dein Gott?"
Wenn ich dess' innewerde
So schütte ich mein Herz aus bei mir selbst;
Denn ich wollte gerne hingehen
Mit dem Haufen und mit ihnen wallen
zum Hause Gottes,
Mit Frohlocken und mit Danken
unter dem Haufen die da feiern.

Was betrübst du dich, meine Seele, Und bist so unruhig in mir? Harre auf Gott! Denn ich werde ihm noch danken dass er mir hilft mit seinem Angesicht.

Mein Gott, betrübt ist meine Seele in mir. Darum gedenke ich an dich! Deine Fluten rauschen daher Dass hier eine Tiefe, Und dort eine Tiefe brausen; Alle Deine Wasserwogen Und Wellen gehn über mich.

Der Herr hat des Tages verheißen seine Güte, Und des Nachts singe ich zu ihm. Und bete zu dem Gotte meines Lebens Mein Gott, betrübt ist meine Seele in mir. Warum hast du meiner vergessen? Warum muss ich so traurig gehn, wenn mein Feind mich drängt?

Was betrübst du dich, meine Seele, Und bist so unruhig in mir? Harre auf Gott! Denn ich werde ihm noch danken dass er meines Angesichtes Hilfe und mein Gott ist. Preis sei dem Herrn, dem Gott Israëls Von nun an bis in Ewigkeit. As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me: "Where is thy God?"
When I remember these things,
I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude,
I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee.

Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.
Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, now and for all time!

# **Introducing William White**

OSSCS has selected William White as music director and principal conductor of the organization

beginning with the 2018–2019 season. White led the orchestra and chorus as a guest conductor in November 2017 as part of the organization's music-director search. "Will is bold," says OSSCS Board Chair Stephen Hegg. "His joy in music-making, and his deep, fascinating knowledge thrilled the chorus and the orchestra



from the very first rehearsal. He impressed the board with program ideas that will build on our Baroque and masterwork strengths, explore music unheard in the Pacific Northwest, and serve new audiences."

"For me, this is an ideal musical partnership," says White. "What I appreciate most about OSSCS is that it is a group of volunteer musicians who have a professional attitude and an inquisitive spirit. Having studied the organization's history, I have become deeply impressed by its commitment to innovative programming that also maintains a strong connection to the classical tradition. I am humbled by the contributions OSSCS has made to Seattle's artistic life under both of my predecessors, George Shangrow and Clinton Smith, and I am committed to advancing its artistic goals, furthering its growth, and expanding its engagement with the community at large."

Currently based in Portland, Mr. White plans to relocate to Seattle. His musical career has spanned genres and crossed disciplines, including assistant conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra from 2011 through 2015, working in close collaboration with music director Louis Langrée and artists such as Philip Glass, John Adams, Jennifer Higdon, James Conlon and Juanjo Mena. A noted pedagogue, he has led some of the nation's finest youth orchestra programs, including Portland's Metropolitan Youth Symphony and the Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra.

White has significant experience working with choirs and vocal soloists in a variety of contexts, from small *a cappella* ensembles to major symphonic and operatic choruses. He also maintains an active career as a composer of music for the concert hall, stage, church, film and radio.

## OSSCS 2018–2019 Season: Introductions

OSSCS's 2018–2019 season will be one of introductions, as we welcome our new music director, William White, and celebrate the legacy of one of music history's lost musical geniuses, Lili Boulanger.

Lili Boulanger composed some of the most astonishing musical works of the 20th century, but her life was tragically cut short at the age of 24. At the time of her death in 1918, her career was poised for a trajectory unlike that of any female composer who had preceded her. Her childhood was

spent listening to her father teach at the Paris Conservatory, and by the age of 19 she had won the single most important prize for French composers, the Prix de Rome (other winners include Bizet, Gounod and Debussy.)

In her music, Boulanger blended the major styles present in Europe at the turn of the 20th century: the

Russian sensuousness of Stravinsky and Rachmaninov, the French impressionism of Debussy and Ravel, and the bold new directions of Mahler and Schoenberg in Vienna. And yet her musical language is remarkably orig-



inal, her works masterfully written for the human voice, with orchestration so bold it sounds as though it were etched in stone. Lili's sister Nadia (another of music history's remarkable women) championed Lili's works after her death, but they have since fallen into neglect. This coming season, OSSCS will present a retrospective of five of Boulanger's works, paired with music of composers who influenced her, were influenced by her, or who wrote on similar themes, including Copland, Ravel, Stravinsky, Franck—and even our new music director, William White.

## The Bounty of the Earth

October 6, 2018 • First Free Methodist Church We open our season reveling in nature's splendor. Music of White, Copland, Boulanger and Haydn.

# Valor & Remembrance: The Music of World War I

November 2018 • date and location TBD

On the centenary of the end of "the war to end all wars," an examination of the musical life of WWI through the ears of those who lived it. Music of Boulanger, Hindemith, Holst and Ravel.

#### Messiah

December 15, 2018 • First Free Methodist Church December 16, 2018 • Everett

A holiday classic, an OSSCS tradition. The masterwork of George Frideric Handel.

## Symphonies of Psalms

February 9, 2019 • First Free Methodist Church Four centuries of musical approaches to the Psalms of David. Music of Schütz, Stravinsky, Boulanger, Dvořák and White.

## Out of the Depths

March 16, 2019 • First Free Methodist Church The extremes of emotion, from tragedy to triumph. Music of Brahms, Boulanger and Franck.

## **Spring Symphony**

April 27, 2019 • First Free Methodist Church We usher in the season of rebirth and regeneration. Music of Lili Boulanger, J.S. Bach and Robert Schumann.

Visit **www.osscs.org** for season tickets, on sale July 1.