

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

Orchestra

Harmonious Saints

With

Josh Lovell, tenor soloist

UVic Concerto Competition Winner

Ajtony Csaba, conductor

Friday, November 1, 2013, 8:00 p.m.

University Centre Farquhar Auditorium

MacLaurin Building, University of Victoria

Adults: \$17.50 / Students & seniors: \$13.50

Program

Johann Christian Bach
Sinfonia No. 2 in B-flat

Allegro assai – Andante (solo: Allison Phillips) – Presto

Heinrich Ignaz Biber
Battalia

Presto

Die liederliche Gesellschaft allerly Humor (The dissolute society of all sorts)

Presto II

Der Mars (The March) solo: Aliayta Foon-Dancoes

Presto III

Aria

Die Schlacht (The Battle)

Lamento der verwundeten Musquetirer (Lament of the Wounded Musketeers)

Giovanni Gabrieli
Canzon XVII

George Frederic Handel
Look Down, Harmonious Saint, HWV 124

Giovanni Gabrieli
Canzon VI

Intermission

Piotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky
Symphony No. 2 in C minor, Op. 17 (“Little Russian”)

I. Andante sostenuto – Allegro vivo

II. Andantino marziale, quasi moderato

III. Allegro molto vivace

IV. Moderato assai – Allegro vivo – Presto

*The University of Victoria Orchestra appreciates the support of the
Learning Without Borders Curricular Fund.*

PROGRAM NOTES

Welcome

Harmonious Saints features works from a range of eras spanning almost three hundred years, each with vastly different musical practices. The music of the Baroque era, which spans the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth centuries and produced three of the pieces performed tonight, is characterized by a predominantly delicate touch and a preference for procedural ornamentation. This is evident in the music's melodic figuration as much as it is in the florid architecture and social rites of the period. Whereas this musical zeitgeist is one of measured restraint, that of the Romantic era is anything but. Developments in technology resulted in instruments which could play a wider range (horn), faster (clarinet), and louder (tuba). Additionally, the want to express a range of emotions through music which began with the *Sturm und drang* trend in the Classical era, came to vogue in the Romantic, and the expanded orchestra was now perfectly suited to the task.

It has been our task over the past several weeks of rehearsals to study these performance practices with the aim of creating a faithful reproduction of these pieces as they would have sounded in their respective eras: as their composers and their contemporaries might have heard them. Notably, we have had the fortune of working with a collection of Baroque-style bows, which produce a lighter, thinner sound than the bows we use today. The University of Victoria Symphony Orchestra appears tonight as a collection of many new players and some familiar faces. We have enjoyed learning the practices of these musics together and becoming united as an ensemble in the process. From the stately *Canzoni* through to Tchaikovsky's bombastic orchestrations of Russian folk melodies, we hope that you will enjoy tonight's palette of timbres as much as we do.

Symphony No. 2 in B-flat, Overture to Lucio Silla (1775)

Johann Christian Bach (5 Sept 1735 – 1 Jan 1782)

J. C. Bach, eleventh son of the more well-known J. S. Bach, was a proponent of the galant style. Known as the "London Bach" due to the time he spent in that city, J. C. Bach was an important influence on the young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, whom he mentored in composition and performed with in England, undoubtedly influencing him toward the style. A forerunner of the Classical movement, galant music is characterized by simplicity, a clearly perceivable melody, and increased freedom in the treatment of dissonance—three features contrasting the strict counterpoint favoured in Baroque church music. Since the galant style was foremost about light-hearted expression of joy, some proposed that it would lead to the degeneracy of music, and a renewed interest in strict counterpoint came about in the late eighteenth century.

Lucio Silla, the opera to which J. C. Bach's *Symphony No. 2* is an overture, was commissioned by Carl Theodor, Prince-Elector and Count of Bavaria. The work received its premiere in Mannheim on 5 November 1775 after a delay caused by the loss of a portion of the work's manuscript. The influence of the galant movement is evident in the composition of the piece, especially notable in its privileging of melody and compositionally restrained harmony. Also telling is the way in which the composition employs its instrumental forces. Though the ensemble includes an ample woodwind

section, strings are dominant in both melodic and harmonic statements. In the former, ornamentation is at an absolute minimum. The playing style of this era, which though unwritten our players have been happy to duplicate, includes holdovers from the Baroque era. The most audible of these are a “yawning” attack at a note’s beginning (a result of the reduced tension on Baroque bow hair) and a decrescendo at phrase’s end—*un sospiro*.

Look Down, Harmonious Saint (1736)

George Frederic Handel (23 Feb 1685 – 14 April 1759)

Whereas *Lucio Silla* was written after the galant style had developed to maturity, Handel’s *Look Down, Harmonious Saint* was written while the style was still young. This cantata was originally composed for *Alexander’s Feast*, an ode for the feast day of Saint Alexander, but was used instead in the intermission music, *Cecilia, Volgi Un Sguardo*, an ode for St. Cecilia’s Day. Handel, the master synthesist who integrated the styles of Italy, France, England, and his native Germany into his own writing, did so here with the emerging galant and the predominant Baroque. The former is represented in the melodic dominance and restrained harmonic writing, while the latter can be found in sections of occasional active harmonic figures and counterpoint. This piece also demonstrates the favoured orchestration of the period: heavily string based, the bowed instruments augmented by plucked instruments such as the harpsichord and lute. As with *Alexander’s Feast*, *Look Down, Harmonious Saint* is a celebration of music itself.

RECITATIVE

Look down, harmonious Saint, whilst we
do celebrate thy art and thee!
Of Music’s force the wonders show,
the most of Heav’n we here can know.

Musick! that all-persuading art,
which soothes our griefs, inspires our joys,
soft love creates, stern rage destroys,
and moulds at will each stubborn heart.

ARIA

Sweet accents all your numbers grace,
touch ev’ry trembling string;
each note in justest order place,
of Harmony we’ll sing.

It charms the soul, delights the ear;
to it all passions bow; it gives us hope,
it conquers fear,
and rules we know not how.

(Lyrics by Newburgh Hamilton)

Canzoni VI & XVII (from *Canzoni e Sonate* 1615)

Giovanni Gabrieli (c. 1554 – Aug 1612)

Gabrieli was a Venitian composer of German training. He served as an apprentice under Orlande de Lassus in Munich, then as organist and composer with his uncle at San Marco Basilica in Venice. These two instructors heavily influenced his writing, which was almost exclusively sacred. The set of *Canzoni e Sonate* (comprising seventeen songs and four sonatas), from which we have adopted numbers VI and XVII, was published posthumously. As was the practice in the period, Gabrieli did not specify orchestration for most of these pieces, and it would have been designated ad hoc depending on the constitution of the ensemble. The extent of his instrumentation for these pieces is the instruction “to be played on all sorts of instruments with organ bass”. Much of his music takes advantage of the spatial effects made possible by the acoustics of San Marco, specifically in dazzling antiphonal passages.

Battalia (1673)

Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber (c. 12 Aug 1644 – 3 May 1704)

One hundred years before *Lucio Silla* was first performed, Biber penned the *Battalia*, a piece of battle music for strings. A virtuosic violinist, Biber was known for writing string pieces which capitalized on his intimate knowledge of the instruments, and *Battalia* is no exception. The work makes use of many advanced techniques, such as *battuto* playing (striking the strings with the bow) and the weaving of paper through the strings. These techniques aptly portray the sounds of combat, placing the work within the tradition of battle music. However, Biber additionally calls for theatrical elements which would have been completely foreign to concertgoers' conception of music. The piece enacts scenes from the battle, including a group of drunken soldiers literally swaggering and singing, and a deluge of gunshot. Written in 1673, it is likely this piece was meant to commemorate the Thirty Year War. Cinematic beyond its time, this piece was part of the musical avant-garde movement toward *dramma per musica*, a forerunner of opera seria. It is no surprise that *Battalia* carries a dedication to Bacchus, the god of (among other things) theatre.

Symphony No. 2, "Little Russian" (1872)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (25 April 1840 – 25 Oct 1893)

Our program closes with its most recent piece. Tchaikovsky was one of the earliest Russian composers to adopt the increasingly extensive and programmatic western European orchestration and mix it with folk melodies, leading to the grandiose patriotic character which has come to be associated with Russian orchestral music. "Little Russian", originally written for piano four-hands in 1872 and revised in 1879, is emblematic of this style. It marks Tchaikovsky's most pervasive use of folk music: three of the four movements are based on folk melodies. Of particular note is the finale, which comprises almost exclusively iterations of a Ukrainian tune known as "The Crane". In fact, the only other melody heard in the movement is from a different folk song. This music would have entertained and unified concertgoers in nineteenth century Russia, as it does us today.

Text by Dave Riedstra and Ajtony Csaba

The Crane:

ЗНАДИВСЯ ЖУРАВЕЛЬ

Швиденько

За на див ся жу ра вель у ра гать, до са би них
к и п ель, ко по пель Ся кш та кш жу ра вель
ся кш та кш дов го но ги,
ся кш та кш дов го но сиць ко н шель ку всь щ и т а
ся кш та кш ви сту па є

BIOGRAPHIES

Josh Lovell

Since making his debut in the 2009 Victoria Symphony "Splash", tenor Josh Lovell has been a familiar performer throughout Victoria and the Gulf Islands. Concert highlights include Mozart's *Requiem* (Victoria Prima Choir), Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* (Salt Spring Chamber Orchestra), Handel's *Messiah* (Civic Orchestra) and Bach's *St. John Passion* (Victoria Baroque Players). Josh recently performed in Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* (Victoria Choral Society) and will soon perform Handel's *Dixit Dominus* (Victoria Baroque Players). This fall, Josh made his national operatic debut as Bardolfo in Verdi's *Falstaff* with Pacific Opera Victoria. He is also a choral scholar at Christ Church Cathedral and is in his fourth year of voice studies at the University of Victoria studying with Benjamin Butterfield. In the spring, Josh will perform Schubert's *Die Schöne Müllerin* for his Bachelor's Degree Graduation Recital.

Ajtony Csaba

Ajtony Csaba, born in Cluj, Romania, began his studies on the cello and later piano and composition in Budapest at the Academy of Music. He began studying conducting in Vienna and Budapest simultaneously with Tamás Gál, András Ligeti, Uroš Lajovic, Peter Eötvös, Istvan Dénes and Zoltán Pesko. He was awarded many prizes as a conductor and composer, and was a semi-finalist in the first competition for opera in Cluj, Romania. He has had numerous concerts in Hungary and Austria with orchestras including UMZE, Sinfonietta Baden, Webern Sinfonietta, Savaria Symphonic Orchestra, and Danube Symphonic Orchestra. In the 2003/04 season he was the assistant conductor and tutor of the Academy Orchestra Budapest and in 2005 was invited to be the assistant conductor of the Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra with their contemporary program. He made his conducting debut in the Viennese Musikverein with the RSO (Radio-Symphonieorchester, Wien) in 2007.

Since 2006 he has served as the chief conductor of the Central European Chamber Orchestra, and led the orchestra on a tour in China (performances including halls in Shenzhen, Lanzhou and in the Parliament in Beijing), with return engagements in 2007 and 2009. Ajtony Csaba has been the leader of the Vienna Jeunesse Choir since 2007. In 2008 he conducted at the Darmstadt Summer Courses for New Music and was assistant to Peter Eötvös at the Salzburg Festspiele. In 2008 he conducted the EuroMed Youth Orchestra in Damaskus, Syria.

In 2010 he was appointed as Assistant Professor at the University of Victoria, British Columbia where he conducts the UVic Symphony and teaches conducting.

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

VIOLIN 1

Aliayta Foon-Dancoes*
Lindsey Herle
Rochelle Sumamong
Derrick Lee
Elena Bokova
Jasper Meiklejohn
Natalie Dzbik
Peter Weinkam
Cecilia Li
Gabriel Cayer

VIOLIN 2

Jiten Beairsto*
Raina Saunders
Jessica d'Oliveira
Emily MacCallum
Brittany Tsui
Jilaine Orton

VIOLA

Sarah Tradewell*
Matt Antal
Josh Gomberoff
Calvin Yang
Fahlon Smith

CELLO

Maria Wang*
Ella Hopwood
Shiun Kim
Alex Klassen
Steven Jeon
Paul Joo
Lauren Hodgins
Natalia Stoney

DOUBLE BASS

Hudson Thorpe-Double*
Brock Foerster
Mackenzie Carroll
Dylan Powell
Blake Palm

FLUTE

Aleksandra Tremblay*
Kelsey Dupuis

PICCOLO

Sierra Phosy

OBOE

Allison Phillips*
Diana Doublet

CLARINET

Paul Gilchrist*
James Yi
Erin Onyschtschuk

BASSOON

Matthew Robertson*
Eric Boulter

HORN

Samuel McNally*
Georgina Davis
Sam Brunton
Colin Lloyd

TRUMPET

Matt Richard*
Ian Cohen
Ian VanGils

TROMBONE

Liam Caveney*
Megan White
Trevor Hoy

TUBA

Russel Larden

TIMPANI

Brendan Chow*

PERCUSSION

William Exney*
Allyssa Haigh

HARPSICHORD

Josh Herrett

STAGE MANAGERS

Alex Klassen
Fahlon Smith

LIBRARIAN

David Foley

ASSISTANT

Dave Riedstra

* Principal

We appreciate the support of our guest coaches, Soile Stratkauskas and Christi Meyers, as well as the dedication of our regular coaches Joanna Hood and Scott MacInnes.