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Seraph Brass Quintet

MARY ELIZABETH BOWDEN, trumpet
RAQUEL RODRIQUEZ SAMAYOA, trumpet
RACHEL VELVIKIS, horn
HANA BELOGLAVEC, trombone
GRETCHEN RENSHAW JAMES, tuba
2:30 PM, Sunday, February 16, 2020
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
University of the Pacific

HOLBERG SUITE (1884) (arr. Jeff Luke) EDVARD GRIEG (1843-1907)
PRELUDIUM

"DER HÖLLE RACHE" from Die Zauberflöte, K.620 (1791) (arr. Jeff Luke) W A MOZART (1756-1791)

CAKEWALK SUITE II (1890) (arr. Jeff Luke) CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)
RÉVERIE, L68

POLOVETSIAN DANCES from Prince Igor (c.1887) (arr. Rolf Smedvig) ALEXANDER BORODIN (1833-1887)

THREE PIECES FROM SUITE ESPAÑOLA (1886) (arr. Jeff Luke) ISAAC ALBENIZ (1860-1909)
GRANADA
ASTURIAS
SEVILLA

7 ROMANCES, OP. 47, NO. 6 (1880) (arr. Benjamin Miles) PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)
ДЕНЬ ЛИ ЦАРИИ? (DOES THE DAY REIGN?)

FANTASTIC POLKA (1939) (arr. Hana Beloglavec) ARTHUR PRYOR (1869-1942)

TUTTARANA (2014) REENA ESMAIL (b. 1983)

— INTERMISSION —

GO (2009) ANTHONY DILORENZO (b. 1967)

HORA STACCATO (1906) (arr. Tim Olt) GRIGORAȘ DINICU (1889-1949)

WEST SIDE STORY (1957) (arr. Jack Gale) LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1918-1990)
MARIA
I FEEL PRETTY
AMERICA

ASTERIA (2017) CATHERINE MCMICHAEL (b. 1954)
II. VIRGO, THE LOVER OF JUSTICE

CŠÁRDÁS (1904) (arr. Gretchen Renshaw James) VITTORIO MONTI (1868-1922)

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY NO. 2 (1847) (arr. Jeff Luke) FRANZ LISZT (1811-1886)

Manhattan Music Ensemble, Reggie Bahl, Artist Manager
phone: 212-721-1343 * email: reggie@mmensemble.com

SeraphBrass.com

Season Sponsor: C. A. Webster Foundation-

ARTIST PROFILE



Winners of the 2019 American Prize in Chamber Music, Seraph Brass is a dynamic ensemble drawing from a roster of America's top female brass players. Performing primarily as a quintet/sextet, Seraph Brass is committed to engaging audiences with captivating programming. Seraph Brass presents a diverse body of repertoire that includes original transcriptions, newly commissioned works and well-known classics. Seraph released their debut studio album, *Asteria*, on Summit Records, winning a Silver Medal Global Music Award. Seraph Brass is in residency at the Walton Art Center's Artosphere Festival, alongside the Dover Quartet, in the festival orchestra.

Seraph Brass has toured extensively throughout the United States, China, Mexico and Europe. Featured performances of Seraph's 2019-20 touring schedule include performances at the Busan Maru International Music Festival in Korea and a residency at the Interlochen Arts Academy. Seraph has performed as the featured ensemble at the International Women's Brass Conference. The group has also toured extensively as Allied Concert Services artists. Many members of Seraph Brass performed with Adele on her North American tour in 2016.

Enthusiastic about education, Seraph has developed strong relationships with Venezuelan "El Sistema" programs in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., and has performed fundraising concerts for Play-On Philly! and Bridges: Music Through Harmony. Seraph offers a variety of entrepreneurship and career development workshops, in addition to traditional brass pedagogy and technique master classes.

Committed to introducing new works into the chamber music repertoire for brass, Seraph Brass commissioned and premiered Wolf for solo soprano and brass quintet from Philadelphia-based composer Joseph Hallman. In its efforts to promote the work of women composers, Seraph has commissioned new works by Catherine McMichael and Rene Orth. Seraph also premiered Lucy Pankhurst's *Ouroboros*, with euphonium soloist Hélène Escriba, at the International Women's Brass Conference. In addition to these original works, Seraph also has many original arrangements by trumpeter Jeff Luke featured on *Asteria* and Seraph Brass Live!

Grieg: *Holberg Suite*

The *Holberg Suite*, Op. 40 (more properly *From Holberg's Time* and subtitled "Suite in Olden Style"), a suite based on 18th Century dance forms, was written to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Dano-Norwegian humanist playwright Ludvig Holberg. It embodies 19th Century compositions which employ musical styles and forms from the preceding century. Initially composed for the piano, the piece was adapted by Grieg himself for string orchestra a year later. It consists of an introduction, the *Preludium*, and a set of four dances and is an early example of neoclassicism. It is an attempt to reiterate as much as was known in Grieg's time of the music of Holberg's era. While it is not as legendary as Grieg's incidental music from *Peer Gynt*, numerous critics regard the works as of equal accomplishment.

Mozart: *Der Hölle Rache*

"Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen" ("Hell's vengeance boils in my heart"), commonly abbreviated *Der Hölle Rache*, is an aria sung by the Queen of the Night, a coloratura soprano part, in the second act of Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute* (*Die Zauberflöte*). It graphically portrays a paroxysm of vindictive fury in which the Queen places a knife into the hand of her daughter Pamina and pressures her to kill Sarastro, the Queen's rival, otherwise she will disown and curse Pamina. *Der Hölle Rache* is one of the most famous of all opera arias: brilliant, notable, fast-paced and ominously ostentatious. This rage aria is often described as the Queen of the Night Aria, although the Queen sings another distinguished aria earlier in the opera, "O zittre nicht, mein lieber Sohn."

Debussy: *Rêverie*

"I very much regret your decision to publish *Rêverie*," Debussy petulantly wrote to publisher Fromont. "I wrote it in a hurry years ago and purely for commercial purposes. It is a work of no significance and, frankly, I consider it absolutely no good." Debussy's low judgment of *Rêverie* has not stopped it from becoming the favored among the very best known of his piano works. *Rêverie* is a landmark in that it is the earliest known example of Debussy operating in the "impressionistic" musical language that ultimately became his hallmark. The piece begins with a modal accompaniment figure that is launched on the weakest beat of the bar. This is followed by an early rhythmic uncertainty between the two parts as the elegiac melody gets underway. This is further obscured by the meandering modal nature of the harmony. The piece does not get firmly stabilized until the sixth bar. Debussy applies his melody lightly, and provides a stark,

essentially arpeggiated accompaniment that is abundant in suspensions such as sevenths, ninths, and seconds. *Rêverie* is completely fulfilling as a mood or relaxation piece, and nothing like the multitude of comparably intended salon music that also emerged in the 1880s, it does not in the least seem dated. Of Debussy's works, *Rêverie* has surpassed all anticipations in terms of its performance within the commercial environment, the very facet of the composition that triggered its composer to virtually disown it.

Borodin: *Polovetsian Dances*

Alexander Borodin, it seems, was always trying to compose his music squeezed into his spare leisure hours. For most of the time he functioned as an extremely thriving chemist, lecturing, overseeing the education of others, notable for his work for women's medical education. On top of this, he also had to deal with stretches of ill health, involving cholera and several minor heart attacks. Despite this, he was successful as a composer. The *Polovetsian Dances* comprise a mysterious scene at the end of Act 2 of his opera *Prince Igor*. Even though he had worked on it for more than a decade, the piece remained uncompleted when the composer died unexpectedly in 1887 while at a fancy-dress ball. Listen for strong lyricism, a fine rhythmic appreciation and a suggestion of distant locales. His melodies reflect the personality of Russian folk songs, and like other composers of the Russian national school he used remarkable harmonies that were unconventional in western European music. Most memorably, a number of these themes were incorporated into the 1953 Broadway musical *Kismet*, best known of which was adapted into the song 'Stranger in Paradise'. And at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, the *Polovetsian Dances* opened the games as a flying girl swept through a winter dreamscape.

Albéniz: *Three Pieces*

Isaac Albéniz' *Suite Española* is a composition for solo piano but has been orchestrated in many versions including guitar quartet and harp. It is mainly comprised of pieces written in 1886 that were clustered together in 1887 in honor of the Queen of Spain. Like many of Albeniz' works for the piano, these pieces portray a variety of Spanish regions and their musical styles. The work originally consisted of four pieces: *Granada*, *Cataluña*, *Sevilla* and *Cuba*. The editor Hofmeister republished *Suite Española* in 1912, after Albéniz' death, enhancing it by adding *Cádiz*, *Asturias*, *Aragón* and *Castilla* that had originally been published in other editions and sometimes with different titles (*Asturias* was originally the prelude from the suite *Chants d'Espagne*). The four pieces added by

Hofmeister do not accurately suggest the geographical region to which their names refer. A clear example of this is *Asturias*, whose Andalusian Flamenco rhythms have little to do with the Atlantic region of Asturias. Despite this spurious nature of *Suite Española*, it has become one of the most performed of Albéniz' works.

Tchaikovsky: *Does the Day Reign?*

We tend to think of Tchaikovsky as a composer of works on a grand scale (Romeo and Juliet, Nutcracker, Pathétique, 1812, etc.), but he also worked in more intimate formats. There are well over 100 lyrical piano pieces and songs – or romances as they are often titled – that span his whole creative life. *Does the Day Reign?* (or *Is Day King?*) is the sixth of Tchaikovsky's *Seven Romances*, Op. 47, completed in August 1880; but it is possible that it was the first of the seven to have been composed. Following the dress rehearsal of a concert of his works in which Panayeva-Kartsova took a principal role, Tchaikovsky was in conversation with the poet Aleksey Apukhtin. Being a fervent admirer of the performer's singing talent, the composer asked Apukhtin if he would dedicate one of his poems to her. In reply, Apukhtin silently gestured that some notepaper was to be brought to him upon which he jotted down some short verses in pencil. Tchaikovsky took these pages and scanned through them before quickly leaving Apukhtin's home without a word; a day or two later he called on his friend again, bringing with him the romance, fully composed.

Pryor: *Fantastic Polka*

Arthur Pryor is remembered primarily for his 12 years as the amazing trombone soloist with the John Phillip Sousa Band, where he would soon be known as the "Paganini of the Trombone." This moniker stuck despite his face being partly paralyzed early in life after he was kicked by a mule. In addition, he was also a prolific composer and conductor, his best-known composition being "The Whistler and His Dog."¹ He began a work on an opera titled *Peter and Paul*, with libretto by L. Frank Baum; alas, the libretto has been lost. He worked for an early recording company and cut an enormous number of phonograph records while the recording industry was still in its infancy. Pryor formed his own band following his years with Sousa and wrote many trombone solos designed to dazzle audiences with his virtuosity. *Fantastic Polka* is such a work and is thought by many to be Pryor's most difficult piece.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FDtVe04Z5I>

Esmail: *Tuttarana*

The title of this piece is a hodgepodge of two words: the Italian word 'tutti', meaning 'all' or 'everyone', and the term 'tarana' designating a specific Hindustani (North Indian) musical form, whose closest Western counterpart is the 'scat' in jazz. Made up of rhythmic syllables, a tarana is the singer's opportunity to demonstrate agility and dexterity while making sounds imitative of a tabla. Although a Hindustani tarana is by tradition a solo form, the composer has brought the tarana into an ensemble setting. *Tuttarana* was commissioned by the Mount Holyoke College Glee Club for their 2014-15 season (the original arrangement being for women's choir). The arrangement for SATB choir was premiered by Tonality, a multicultural, social justice-minded choir based in Los Angeles. The latest arrangement is for Brass Quintet.

Composer's addendum: "*Three years after I wrote this piece, the #metoo movement, created by Tarana Burke broke on social media. It occurred to me that the title of this piece, if read a different way, literally means "We are all Tarana." I couldn't believe the incredible coincidence that this work, a powerful 3-minute tidal wave of sound, written for an all-female ensemble from the oldest women's college in the country, bore this name. I'm so grateful for what this movement has done to move the discussion forward about the horrors we face as women, and how we can begin to change and heal our society.*"

DiLorenzo: *Go*

Emmy Award winning composer Anthony DiLorenzo grew up in Stoughton Massachusetts. His music is performed throughout the world by symphony orchestras and chamber groups, including The San Francisco Symphony, The New World Symphony, The Louisiana Philharmonic, The Utah Symphony, The Tokyo Symphony, and The Boston Pops Orchestra. You can also hear his music weekly on ABC's College Football, Ice Skating, Horse racing and countless cues for ESPN, HBO, FOX and numerous campaigns for NBC. During the past twelve years Anthony has composed more than 80 film scores, including *Toy Story*, *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, *Red Dragon*, *The Lost World*, *Final Fantasy*, *Fools Gold*, *Bee Story* and *The Simpsons* movie in 3D. Anthony is a member of the Center City Brass Quintet which is an additional outlet for his compositional ability. Recently, Anthony was commissioned by conductor Naoto Otomo and the Tokyo Symphony to compose a high energy concerto grosso for brass quintet and orchestra, titled *Chimera*. His new Brass Quintet, *Go*, picks up on *Chimera's* high energy, fast pace and dazzling exhilaration generating powerfully driving, unyielding machine-like complex rhythms.

Dinicu: *Hora Staccato*

Hora staccato is a virtuoso violin showpiece by Grigoraş Dinicu. It is a short, fast work in a Romanian hora style, and has become a favorite encore of violinists, especially in the 1932 arrangement by Jascha Heifetz (It is rumored that Heifetz once said that Dinicu was the greatest violinist he had ever heard). The personality of the piece mandates the notes be delivered in a crisp and clear fashion so that the vivacity of music emerges. Dinicu wrote it in 1906 for his graduation from the Bucharest Conservatory, and performed it at the ceremony. Subsequently it has been arranged for other combinations of instruments, notably trumpet and piano and for full symphonic orchestra.

Bernstein: *West Side Story*

West Side Story is a musical inspired by William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*. Set in the Upper West Side neighborhood in New York City in the mid-1950s (now the location of Lincoln Center), the musical explores the rivalry between two teenage street gangs of different ethnic backgrounds. The dark theme, extended dance scenes, sophisticated music, and focus on social problems marked a turning point in American musical theatre. Bernstein's score for the musical includes many well-known songs, including the three we hear today, and marked Sondheim's Broadway debut. The score for *West Side Story* blends jazz, Latin rhythms, symphonic scope and musical-comedy conventions in pioneering ways.

McMichael: *Asteria*

Having its roots in both Greek and Latin, the ancient word "asteria" refers to stars. There are variations linked to the word asteria in the aster flower with its starry petals, the six sparkling rays of the star sapphire (asterism), and Astraea, star-maiden goddess of justice. The title for this suite serves as a banner for the three constellations portrayed: Andromeda, Virgo, and Pleiades. Virgo, which we hear today, is also known as Astraea, Ishtar, Dike or the Lover of Justice and holds the scales of justice (Libra) in her hand. Catherine McMichael, a graduate of the University of Michigan in piano performance and chamber music, presently lives in Saginaw, Michigan and composes for chorus, chamber ensemble and orchestra, as well as for solo piano, flute quartet and choir, brass choir and quintet, handbells and saxophone. Commissioned by Seraph Brass (composed of all women), the composer (also a woman) logically chose constellations that were female figures as musical portraits. The timbre of a brass quintet is particularly well suited to the themes of drama, dignity and pageant featured in this meditative piece.

Monti: *Csárdás*

Preachers denounced it and aristocrats disowned it, but the "tango of the east" captured the hearts of the ordinary people of Hungary. Csárdás is a rhapsodical folkloric concert piece based on a Hungarian traditional folk dance. The origin of the csárdás can be traced back to the 18th Century Hungarian music genre the verbunkos, used as a recruiting dance by the Austrian army. It is characterized by a tempo variation: beginning slowly (lassú) and ending in a very fast tempo (friss, literally "fresh"). There may be other tempo variations, called ritka (sparsely), sűrű (densely) and szökös (skipping). Monti's Csárdás, probably the most famous of them all, was originally composed for violin, mandolin or piano, but there are arrangements for orchestra and for a number of solo instruments. The Csárdás is a living institution that's still certain to set your toes tapping and your heart beating faster.

Liszt: *Hungarian Rhapsody #2*

This is the second in a set of 19 Hungarian Rhapsodies by composer Franz Liszt and is by far the most famous. The Hungarian-born composer and pianist was strongly influenced by the music heard in his adolescence, particularly Hungarian folk music, with its distinctive gypsy scale, rhythmic spontaneity and straightforward, seductive manifestation. The Hungarian Rhapsodies are an ideal example of his nationalistic output, and the piece consists of two distinct sections. The first, like the csárdás, is slow, with its succinct but dramatic introduction. The mood is largely dark and moody, although it contains some lighthearted and unpredictable moments. The second section is quick. It launches quietly, evoking a theme from the slow beginning. The vacillating dominant and tonic harmonies swiftly grow in volume and the tempo acquires impetus on its flight of ever-increasing dynamism and bravura. Before the closing vortex of sound, a twinkling of tranquility prevails. Ultimately, there is a crescendo of prestissimo octaves that climb and then fall bringing the Rhapsody to a finale. In both the original piano form and in the orchestrated version, this composition has enjoyed use in popular culture including animated cartoons (Mickey Mouse in 1929's *The Opry House*), movies (the "dueling pianos" scene featuring the two most famous ducks in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*), television shows (*The Muppets*) with its themes also serving as the basis of several popular songs including "Lobachevsky" by Tom Lehrer.

— notes © Dr. Michael Spencer

64TH SEASON

2019-2020

*Presented in Cooperation with
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2:30 PM Sunday, September 22, 2019
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
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Quatuor Arod

2:30 PM Sunday, October 20, 2019
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2:30 PM Sunday, November 17, 2019
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Seraph Brass Quintet

2:30 PM Sunday, February 16, 2020
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FOCM welcomes children to our concerts. An adult must accompany children ten years of age and younger (please, no babes in arms). At the request of artists, children should not sit in the first four rows.

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