

CLASSICAL SERIES
2018/19 SEASON



MENDELSSOHN'S "SCOTTISH" with BARBER'S PIANO CONCERTO

Friday and Saturday, March 8-9, 2019 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, March 10, 2019 at 2 p.m.

DAVID LOCKINGTON, *guest conductor**
ALESSIO BAX, *piano*

ROSSINI Overture to *Guillaume Tell* (William Tell)

BARBER Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, op. 38
I. Allegro appassionato
II. Canzone
III. Allegro molto
ALESSIO BAX, *piano*

INTERMISSION

MENDELSSOHN Symphony No. 3 in A Minor, op. 56, "Scottish"
I. Andante con moto — Allegro agitato
II. Scherzo. Vivace non troppo
III. Adagio cantabile
IV. Finale guerriero. Allegro vivacissimo — Allegro
maestoso assai

The 2018/19 season is generously sponsored by
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Guest artist Alessio Bax sponsored by
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* Maestro Lockington is the new guest conductor for this concert.



William Tell was Rossini's final opera. The overture includes a violent thunderstorm, a shepherd's call to his flock and the thrilling concluding episode, which is one of the best-known moments in all of concert music.

GIOACHINO ROSSINI (1792-1868)

Overture to *Guillaume Tell* (*William Tell*) (1829) 12 minutes

Piccolo, flute, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, triangle and strings.

Gioachino Rossini based his final opera, *William Tell*, on Friedrich Schiller's play, "Wilhelm Tell." *William Tell* takes place in 14th-century Switzerland and tells the story of the Swiss victory over their Habsburg oppressors. For this epic work, Rossini provided music of extraordinary power and eloquence, departing from early 19th-century bel canto practices, which often favored vocal display at the expense of the drama.

William Tell earned the praise of such demanding and revolutionary musical dramatists as Hector Berlioz and Richard Wagner. Berlioz deemed *William Tell*

"seriously thought out, considered at leisure and conscientiously executed from beginning to end." Wagner particularly admired the title character's eloquent aria "Sois immobile." During an 1860 meeting, Wagner told Rossini the aria "reached the highest summits of lyric expression." Rossini replied, "So I made music of the future without knowing it." To which Wagner responded, "There, Maestro, you made music for all times, and that is the best."

The famous Overture to *William Tell* begins with an extended slow-tempo introduction and a magical combination of five solo

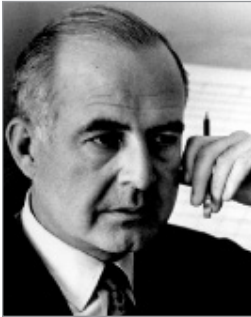
RECOMMENDED RECORDING

ROSSINI Overture to *William Tell*

London Symphony Orchestra / Pierino Gamba, conductor

Label: London/Decca Weekend Classics Catalog # 417692

cellos. The rustlings of the strings and winds are prelude to a storm sequence of tremendous power. After the storm abates, the English horn, in tandem with the flute, offers a *ranz des vaches*, the traditional call of the Swiss herdsman to his cattle. Trumpet fanfares launch the triumphant final section. The music, known (perhaps all too well) for its association with the 1950s television series “The Lone Ranger,” still generates tremendous excitement on its own terms.



Samuel Barber composed his concerto for the brilliant American pianist John Browning. The concerto features virtuoso writing, juxtaposed with Barber’s noted gift for lyrical expression.

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981)

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, op. 38 (1962) 26 minutes

Solo piano, piccolo, 3 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, antique cymbals, bass drum, cymbals, tom-tom, snare drum, suspended cymbals, tam-tam, triangle, whip, xylophone, harp and strings.

Samuel Barber composed his Piano Concerto in response to a 1959 commission by G. Schirmer. The music publishing firm commissioned the work in celebration of its centenary. The premiere of the concerto was scheduled to coincide with the 1962 opening of Philharmonic Hall at New York’s Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. From the time Barber received the commission, he envisioned

the work as a vehicle for the talents of the brilliant young American pianist, John Browning (1933-2003).

Due to various circumstances, the composition of the concerto spanned a period of three years. Barber finally completed the concerto on September 9, 1962, just two weeks before the scheduled world premiere. The brief remaining time, coupled with the concerto’s extraordinary demands on the soloist, placed intense

pressure on John Browning. Nevertheless, the triumphant premiere took place at Philharmonic Hall on September 24, 1962, with Browning and the Boston Symphony led by Erich Leinsdorf. The audience stood and cheered a work immediately hailed as one of the most important American concert works of recent memory. Barber's Piano Concerto won both the Pulitzer Prize (1963) and Music Critics' Circle Award (1964).

The concerto is in three movements. The first opens with a piano solo in the style of a recitative. The introduction and development of themes leads to a solo cadenza and the fortissimo closing bars. The slow-tempo second movement is a canzone, the Italian word for "song." The flute first plays the principal melody. The finale generates tremendous energy and momentum that rush toward the concerto's thundering conclusion.

RECOMMENDED RECORDING

BARBER Piano Concerto

Xiayin Wang, *piano*

Royal Scottish National Orchestra / Peter Oundjian, *conductor*

Label: Chandos Catalog # 5128

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

Symphony No. 3 in A minor, op. 56, "Scottish" (1842) 43 minutes

2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings.

In April 1829, Felix Mendelssohn departed his native Germany to embark on a series of journeys throughout Europe. These travels provided inspiration for several of Mendelssohn's finest compositions. Mendelssohn first traveled to England, then, in the summer of 1829, to Scotland.

A treacherous voyage to the island of Staffa led Mendelssohn to compose his overture, *The Hebrides* ("Fingal's Cave"), op. 26 (1830). In a letter to his family, Mendelssohn described another visit to a famous Scottish site:

We went, in the deep twilight, to the palace (of Holyrood) where Queen Mary lived and loved. There is a little room to be seen there, with a winding staircase leading up to it. That is where they went up and found Rizzio in the little room, dragged him out, and three chambers away is a dark corner where they killed him. The adjoining chapel is now roofless; grass and ivy grow abundantly in it; and before the ruined altar Mary was crowned Queen of Scotland. Everything around is broken and moldering, and the bright sky shines in. I believe I found today the beginning of my Scottish Symphony.



Mendelssohn's travels to Scotland inspired his Third Symphony. The work includes the composer's impressions of Holyrood and a Scottish bagpipe melody.

That day, Mendelssohn sketched the Symphony's first 16 measures.

In 1830, Mendelssohn traveled to sunny Italy. In a letter of October 10, 1830, Mendelssohn wrote, "This is Italy. What I have been looking forward to all my life as the greatest happiness is now begun and I am basking in it." It is not surprising that while in Italy, Mendelssohn found it difficult to recreate the atmosphere that served as the inspiration for the opening of his "Scottish" Symphony. In March 1831, Mendelssohn confided to his family, "Who can wonder that I find it impossible to return to my misty Scottish mood? I have therefore laid aside the symphony for the present." Instead, Mendelssohn turned his attention to another orchestral work that more closely reflected his jovial frame of mind, the "Italian" Symphony (1833).

It was not until January 20, 1842, almost 13 years after visiting Holyrood, that Mendelssohn finally completed his "Scottish" Symphony. Mendelssohn conducted the work's premiere at the

PROGRAM NOTES By Ken Meltzer

Leipzig Gewandhaus on March 3, 1842. He also conducted the first performance in England at the Philharmonic Society on June 13, 1843. Mendelssohn dedicated the symphony to Queen Victoria.

The “Scottish” Symphony is in four movements. The first begins with a slow-tempo introduction inspired by the mysteries of Holyrood. The introduction’s thematic material serves as the basis for the ensuing, dramatic quick-tempo section. The second movement scherzo is, according to Mendelssohn, based upon “an old Scottish bagpipe melody.” The beautiful slow-tempo movement features two central themes. The finale begins with a martial outburst, and the sublime last measures feature a majestic variant from an earlier melody.

RECOMMENDED RECORDING

MENDELSSOHN Symphony No. 3, “Scottish”

Vienna Philharmonic / Christoph von Dohnányi, *conductor*

Label: London/Decca Double Decker Catalog # 460239

OVER THE PAST 35 YEARS, DAVID LOCKINGTON HAS DEVELOPED AN

impressive conducting career. He served as the music director of the Grand Rapids Symphony from 1999 to 2015, and he is now the orchestra's conductor laureate. He has held the position of music director with the Modesto



Symphony since 2007, and in 2013 was appointed music director of the Pasadena Symphony. He has a close relationship with the Orquesta Sinfonica del Principado de Asturias in Spain, where he was the orchestra's principal guest conductor from 2012 through 2016. In the 2018/19 season, he began a new position as principal artistic partner with the Northwest Sinfonietta in Tacoma, Washington. He has held positions with several other American orchestras, including the Denver Symphony, Opera Colorado, Baltimore Symphony, Ohio Chamber

Orchestra, New Mexico Symphony and Long Island Philharmonic.

Lockington's guest conducting engagements include appearances with the orchestras of Houston, Detroit, Seattle, Vancouver, Oregon and Rochester, as well as the Orchestra of St. Luke's at Carnegie Hall. Internationally, he has conducted the Northern Sinfonia in Great Britain, the Israel Chamber Orchestra and the China Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra in Beijing and Taiwan, and led the English Chamber Orchestra on a tour in Asia.

Recent and upcoming guest conducting engagements include appearances with the orchestras of New Jersey, Indianapolis, Utah, Colorado, Nashville, San Diego, Kansas City, Buffalo, Calgary and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa. His summer festival activities include appearances at the Grand Teton, Colorado Music, Interlochen, Chautauqua and Eastern Music festivals.

A native of Great Britain, Lockington began his career as a cellist. After completing his bachelor's degree at the University of Cambridge where he was a choral scholar, Lockington came to the United States on a scholarship to Yale University where he received his master's degree in cello performance and studied conducting with Otto-Werner Mueller. He was a member of the New Haven Symphony and served for three years as assistant principal cellist with the Denver Symphony before turning to conducting.

About ALESSIO BAX, piano

PIANIST ALESSIO BAX — A FIRST-PRIZE WINNER AT BOTH THE

Leeds and Hamamatsu international piano competitions, and the recipient of a 2009 Avery Fisher Career Grant — has appeared with more than 100 orchestras, including the London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, Japan’s NHK Symphony, St. Petersburg Philharmonic and City of Birmingham Symphony. In the summer of 2017, he launched a three-season appointment as artistic director of Tuscany’s Incontri in Terra di Siena festival, having also appeared at numerous festivals including Music@Menlo, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Switzerland’s Verbier Festival, Norway’s Risør Festival, Germany’s Klavier-Festival Ruhr and Beethovenfest, as well as England’s Aldeburgh Festival, Bath Festival and International Piano Series.

An accomplished chamber musician, Bax’s regular collaborators include his wife, pianist Lucille Chung, superstar violinist Joshua Bell, Berlin Philharmonic principals Daishin Kashimoto and Emmanuel Pahud, and Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. In May 2018, he released his recording of Beethoven’s “Emperor” Concerto with the Southbank Sinfonia, expanding a discography already featuring a solo album of Mussorgsky and Scriabin, Beethoven’s “Hammerklavier” and “Moonlight” sonatas, “Alessio Bax plays Brahms,” “Bach Transcribed,” and “Rachmaninov: Preludes and Melodies.” At age 14, Bax graduated with top honors from the conservatory of Bari, his hometown in Italy, and after further studies in Europe moved to the United States in 1994. ■



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