

CU ★ PRESENTS

2021-22 Season



College of Music
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

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Spring 2022

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AT THE PERFORMANCE

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CU ★ PRESENTS is the home of performing arts at the University of Colorado Boulder.



The mission of the **University of Colorado Boulder College of Music** is to inspire artistry and discovery, together.



The College of Music acknowledges that the university sits upon land within the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples. Further, we acknowledge that 48 contemporary tribal nations are historically tied to Colorado lands.

CU Campus Orchestra

Kedrick Armstrong, conductor

Renee Gilliland, conductor

7:30 p.m., Monday, April 18, 2022

Macky Auditorium

Program

Overture from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Otto Nicolai (1810-1849)

Renee Gilliland, conductor

Symphony No. 2 in B minor

Alexander Borodin (1833-1887)

I. Allegro moderato

Kedrick Armstrong, conductor

Othello Suite, Op. 79

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)

I. Dance

II. Children's Intermezzo

III. Funeral March

IV. Willow Song

IV. Military March

Kedrick Armstrong, conductor

Symphony No. 8, op. 88, G Major

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

IV. Allegro ma non troppo

Renee Gilliland, conductor

Program notes

Overture from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Otto Nicolai (1810-1849)

Carl Otto Ehrenfried Nicolai was born in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) on June 9, 1810, and died in Berlin on May 11, 1849. He composed his “comic-fantastic opera in three acts” *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor* (“The Merry Wives of Windsor”) to a libretto by S.H. Mosenthal after Shakespeare’s comedy in late 1848 and early 1849. It was produced at the Berlin Court Opera on March 9, 1849.

Shakespeare created Falstaff, the genial buffoon of immense avoirdupois, in his *Henry IV* plays. Later, according to legend, he responded to a special request from Queen Elizabeth to show “Falstaff in love” with the comedy *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which has served as the basis of operas by Nicolai, Verdi, Holst, Vaughan Williams and probably others. Verdi’s Falstaff is one of the supreme masterpieces of the operatic literature and is deservedly the best known of these works. But in German-speaking countries, at least, Nicolai’s delightful work remains a fairly common part of the repertory; and its overture is known and loved all over the world.

The music of the overture is entirely drawn from the opera, most of it from the magical scene at midnight in Windsor Park. The hushed opening and the first theme of the Allegro are connected to the “fairies” (the children of Windsor that Ann Page has disguised to fool the credulous Falstaff). The lovely second theme, marked “sweetly, with spirit,” depicts Mistress Page herself, the merriest of merry wives. Just as the development gets underway we encounter a rather uncouth idea huffing and puffing in F minor: the boorish Falstaff himself. The remainder of the overture plays hide-and-seek with all of these ideas, capturing the vigor and wit of a delightful comic story.

—*Program note by Steven Ledbetter*

Symphony No. 2 in B minor

Alexander Borodin (1833-1887)

Borodin's busy schedule as a chemist left him little time for writing music, and he dubbed himself a "Sunday composer." Other than vacations and an occasional weekend, Borodin could only compose when he was too ill to leave home. Given the often frail state of his constitution, those days were quite frequent and not unwelcome, and his musical friends actually wished him sickness rather than health so that could devote himself to his creative work. The Second Symphony was completed while Borodin was confined to bed with an inflamed leg.

Borodin had taken up the cudgel of forging a national musical identity for his native land in 1862, when he became associated with his friend Modeste Mussorgsky and three others in the group of Russian composers known as "The Five." In 1869, Borodin told Vladimir Stasov, a musicologist and the chief journalistic champion of The Five, that he was interested in composing an opera on a Russian historical topic, and the writer drew up a scenario based on the ancient tales about Prince Igor. Some of the early sketches for *Prince Igor*, to which Borodin returned throughout his life but never completed, were borrowed for the Second Symphony. Indeed, so much of the mood and matter of the opera found their way into the Symphony that Stasov wrote, "Borodin was haunted when he wrote this Symphony by the picture of feudal Russia, and he tried to paint it in his music."

Stasov reported that Borodin had specific images in mind when composing this work: the first movement was purportedly inspired by a vision of a gathering of 11th-century warriors; the third by a legendary Slavic minstrel; the finale, featuring approximations of the sounds of ancient instruments, by a hero's banquet.

The first movement of the Symphony creates a characteristically Russian quality through several techniques: its melodic and harmonic modalism, which evokes a certain oriental or even primitive mood; the vivid brilliance of its scoring, often dominated by the brasses (Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov had undertaken extensive studies of the military band, and believed that the brass

instruments were capable of more virtuosity than had hitherto been required of them); and the elemental rhythmic energy that accumulates around the many repetitions of its craggy opening motive. There are several lyrical episodes in this sonata-form movement, but the music's dominant impression is one of ferocious and enduring strength.

—*Program note from Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus concert program, Aug. 14, 2013*

Othello Suite, Op. 79

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)

The *Othello Suite* was commissioned for a Herbert Beerbohm Tree production of Shakespeare's *Othello* at His Majesty's Theatre in London. Comprising five movements, the work contains several strong and contrasting themes, which much have sounded most impressive in their original theatrical setting.

The gramophone was still in its infancy when Coleridge-Taylor created most of his works, and he died before it became a major force in home entertainment. 78 rpm recordings were destined to predominate for more than fifty years, thereby imposing a discipline on future light orchestral composers, obliging them to develop fully their ideas within three or four minutes. The three-minute single orchestral cameo would probably have seemed trivial to 19th-century composers, more familiar with grouping their works into suites of three or four movements. No doubt this was necessary in many instances to ensure concert performances, yet when we listen to these pieces individually today they can usually stand alone. Possibly titles such as *Four Waltzes* or *Gipsy Suite* may seem somewhat mundane by our standards (although purists would probably strongly disagree!), but it is the music that matters. On this basis, the work of Coleridge-Taylor compares most favorably with the very best.

—*Program note by David Ades*

Symphony No. 8, Op. 88, G Major

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

In 1889, Dvořák had two more symphonies left to write, plus a cello concerto and a series of symphonic poems. Twelve years earlier, Brahms had championed Dvořák's music (especially the *Moravian Duets*), leading to the international success of the *Slavonic Dances* and securing Fritz Simrock as the publisher for the Czech composer's music. Ironically, the G-major Symphony was not published by Simrock, whose insulting offer of merely one-sixth of the fee paid for the D-minor Symphony (No. 7, Op. 70) was refused by the composer. Dvořák had recently become quite popular in England, and the G-major Symphony was published in that country by Novello in 1892.

Despite occasional dramatic outbursts, the predominant tone of the Eighth Symphony is one of bucolic euphoria, the sheer joy of being alive in a world of natural wonders. The composer's biographer Otakar Šourek explains that Dvořák had “[h]is own garden in Vysoká [the state-sponsored retreat in southern Bohemia], which he loved ‘like the divine art itself’, and the fields and woods through which he wandered ... [These were] a welcome refuge, bringing him not only peace and fresh vigor of mind, but happy inspiration for new creative work. In communion with Nature, in the harmony of its voices and the pulsating rhythms of its life, in the beauty of its changing moods and aspects, his thoughts came more freely.... Here he absorbed poetical impressions and moods, here he rejoiced in life and grieved in its inevitable decay, here he indulged in philosophical reflections on the substance and meaning of the interrelation between Nature and life.”

Dvořák, it could be said, was reflecting a worldview in which “intelligent design” is the source of both wonderment and woe. The opening of the Eighth Symphony's first movement, a serious and rather somber chorale for low strings, gives way quickly to an audacious flute solo. Without ever subduing the dramatic element, Dvořák gives free reign to the poetic side of his nature through the ensuing movements of this beloved score, from the often melancholy rhetoric of the *Adagio* to the folk-flavored, waltz-like *Allegretto grazioso* and the invigorating theme and variations of the rousing finale. Over the course of his career, Dvořák composed in many genres, although it

was as an opera composer that he most wished for success. Having earlier turned from his overtly Wagnerian sympathies to a more “absolute” formal path, Dvořák had, by the time he was about to produce his G-major Symphony, entered another new phase. In this work, he relied less on structural rigor and more on the immediate appeal of more “pictorial” elements, making eloquent use of the regular juxtaposition of contrasting sections in major and minor keys. This new approach to musical form would lead eventually to those symphonic poems that capped his orchestral catalog in 1896.

—*Program note by Dennis Bade*

Personnel

Kedrick Armstrong, conductor

Praised by the Chicago Tribune for his ability to “simply let the score speak for itself,” conductor Kedrick Armstrong enjoys a wide range of work spanning early music to premiering new works. This season, he returned to the Knox-Galesburg Symphony to conduct Handel’s *Messiah* after his debut performance conducting the orchestra in 2020. Armstrong is an alum of Chicago Sinfonietta’s Project Inclusion Freeman Conducting Fellow program, where he served as assistant conductor during the 2018-2019 season. He made his subscription debut conducting on the orchestra’s annual MLK Tribute Concert in 2019. Applauded for his “knack for balancing orchestral-choral forces,” he was invited back the following season, where he led the Chicago premiere of Joel Thompson’s *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*.

Armstrong shares his time between the concert stage and the opera pit. He will debut in 2022 with the DePaul Opera Theater conducting Leonard Bernstein’s *Candide*. Armstrong also returns to Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2023 to premiere a new opera, *The Factotum*, by Will Liverman and K Rico. He made his Chicago Opera Theater debut in 2021, leading the premiere of Matthew Recio’s *The Puppy Episode*. Kedrick holds a BM in history and literature from Wheaton College and is currently pursuing an MM in orchestral conducting from the University of Colorado Boulder with teacher and advisor Gary Lewis. Armstrong uses his voice and platform as a Black conductor to advocate for classical music’s performance, publication and preservation of minority voices. This advocacy has led to various speaking engagements and his current research into Black women composers within CU Boulder’s Helen Walker-Hill collection.

Renee Gilliland, conductor

Renee Gilliland conducts the University of Colorado Boulder Campus Orchestra where she is pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree under the instruction of Maestro Gary Lewis. Concurrently, she is the assistant conductor of the CU Symphony, Chamber and Philharmonia Orchestras. Gilliland also serves as the assistant conductor of the Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra. Previously, Gilliland was the music director of the Anschutz Medical Campus Symphony Orchestra in Aurora, Colorado and associate conductor of the Denver Philharmonic Orchestra. She was awarded an Artist Diploma in orchestral conducting from the University of Denver where she was the assistant conductor of the Lamont School of Music Symphony and Opera Theater Orchestras. Gilliland has conducted in workshops and festivals in the United States as well as abroad in Bulgaria, Ukraine and the Czech Republic. She has conducted works in concert with the El Paso Symphony, Boulder Concert Band and Bang on a Can All Stars, among others. She enjoys working with diverse musicians of all ages and exploring new repertoire.

Campus Orchestra

Violin

Alice Bainville

Eva Basa

Chris Cholez

Alex Doner

Aubrey Empson

Alia Feltes-Deyapp

Polly Fitton

Ohad Gev

Zander Gilbert

Natalie Golovanov +

Simon Grzebien

Jake Hamon

Lorien Hoshall

Margaret Landis

Aubrey Leavenworth

Alexis Lee

Bea Lowe

Jean McClelland

Matthew Mendoza

Jacquie Pankratz

Nika Plant

Zane Perry

Ashlie Polvogt

Eric Rappeport

Landon Rheuark

Adriana Rivera

Claire Ryan +

Aiden Schlue

Blair Schulze

Alex Schwartz

Nanako Shitara

Eva Thoresen

Geneva Todd

Lucy Vaughan

Jack Walsh

Megan Ward

Kit Winfrey

Viola

James Erikson

Hannah Escareno

Maryam Hadi

Megan Kitts +

Greta Koenig

Quinn Lew

Ella Marshall

Alexis McKay

Kyle Nannig
Kieran Schmitz
Nicholas Torres
Margaret Voss
Jack Wills

Cello

Delos Ashcraft
Natalie Beavers
Joel Buck-Gengler
McKenzie Gallagher
Alex Gibbons
Nick Golden
Morgane Herlory
Sarah Lancy
Alyx Lanthier
Fiana Li +
Nick Loychik
Karl Pankratz
Sam Prestidge
Maria Rodriguez
Esmeralda Svenningsson
Sara Wallen
Ryan Wyngarden

Bass

Sophia Antebian
John-Howard Bissell
Justin Hein +
Keiran McGee
Sarah Mellett
Stefan Rosenboom

Flute

Julia Beattie
Emma Palmer
Emma Shelby
Harlan Smyth
Jordyn Stapleton

Oboe

Yvette Barrales-Fenner

Clarinet

Jaret Anderson
Nathan Ciraula
Valerie Nguyen
Erin Shimoda

Bassoon

Anne Theurkauf
Madison Triplett

Horn

Kira Goya
Maria Long
Ethan Watson

Trumpet

Bryce Bullock
Adam Gunning

Trombone

Florian Bergmann
Novoa Mateo

Tuba

Evan Allenson

Percussion

Teddy Bujalski

** concertmaster*

+ principal or co-principal

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Event details are subject to change, but the CU Presents website will always be up-to-date.

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