

CU Philharmonia Orchestra

“Fire and Life”

Joel Schut, conductor

*Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of
the house manager.*

7:30 p.m., Monday, Oct. 7, 2019
Grusin Music Hall
Imig Music Building



College of Music

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

Program

Overture to *The Creatures of Prometheus*

Ludwig Van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

“Andante Moderato” from String Quartet in G Major

Florence Price
(1887-1953)

String Symphony No. 2 in D Major, BWV N2
I. Allegro

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

—Intermission—

Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88

I. Allegro con brio
II. Adagio
III. Allegretto grazioso - Molto vivace
IV. Allegro ma non troppo

Antonín Dvořák
(1841-1904)

Program notes

Tonight's concert is themed “Fire and Life” celebrating the birth of the CU Philharmonia Orchestra at the University of Colorado Boulder College of Music.

Fire is dangerous. Its presence requires courage and promises change. Yet, its potential for destruction also brings new life. The delicate balance between fire and life is woven throughout this evening's program. Each composer has personally played with fire. Ludwig Van Beethoven composed his first ever ballet, Florence Price endeavored against gender and racial inequalities, Felix Mendelssohn dared his voice as a teenage composer and Antonín Dvořák celebrated career accomplishment amidst personal tragedy. Similar to the composers, each

performer brings to tonight's stage a unique fire for artistic creation and musical performance. It is by playing with fire, both in spirit and in metaphor, that we breathe life into the birth of the CU Philharmonia and to the teachings of these timeless masterworks. Thank you for journeying with us.

Program notes written by Joel Schut

Overture to *The Creatures of Prometheus*

Beethoven played with fire when he set out to write what would become his only published ballet, *The Creatures of Prometheus*. While most known for his keyboard, chamber and symphonic works, this dramatic undertaking was the product of a collaboration with Vienna court ballet master and fellow artistic progressive Salvatore Viganò. Based on the story of Prometheus, the titan of

Greek mythology who daringly stole fire from Zeus to create life, the ballet uses a French Enlightenment-era retelling in which Prometheus is cast as both the creator of humanity and its leader in becoming truly alive through the power of the arts. We know from Beethoven's final symphony that he similarly held Promethian ideas about the power of art to transform human society and uphold justice, goodness and universal brotherhood. While Beethoven's overture is more philosophical than directly programmatic, there are several moments of creative intrigue. The overture begins with a sequence of chords that violate standard harmonic practice by harmonizing a different key than the overture proper. This transgression against classical era norms mirrors that of Prometheus against the gods. Similarly, the energetic allegro theme that follows foreshadows the ballet's concluding theme in which Prometheus' "creatures" have attained true animation through the power of the arts. This evening's performance of the overture is in celebration of the Cleveland Orchestra residency and their recently completed "Prometheus Festival" examining Beethoven's major orchestral works through the metaphor of Prometheus.

Andante Moderato

Florence Price had a fire for composition though, sadly, is only now finding her public voice. In 1932, she entered her Symphony in E minor in the Wanamaker Foundation Award Competition, winning first place and a performance by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. This marked the first time a symphonic work composed by an African-American female had been performed by a major American orchestra. As evidence of the gender and racial inequalities of the time, much of her music did not receive consideration or performance. Even her prize-winning

Symphony was not performed again until long after her death. While she wrote several works for string ensembles, String Quartet in G evokes a romantic Hollywood soundscape with shimmering chords and silky, gliding textures. Deeply religious, Price used elements of African-American church music and blues inspired melodies set within European classical techniques. In 2009, a trove of original manuscripts were discovered in an abandoned house slated for demolition outside Chicago. American music critic Alex Ross describes how as an African-American female, "not only did Price fail to enter the canon; a large quantity of her music came perilously close to obliteration. That run-down house in St. Anne is a potent symbol of how a country can forget its cultural history." Tonight's performance is in honor of the 100th anniversary of the women's suffrage movement (1920-2020). Let all voices be given fire and life.

String Symphony No. 2

While best known for his oratorios and mature symphonic masterpieces, Mendelssohn was a fiery youth with a strong desire to prove his compositional skills. By many accounts, he was a child prodigy and prolific composer from an early age. Between the ages of 12 and 14 he wrote twelve string symphonies as tributes to the early classical symphonies of Haydn, CPE Bach and Mozart. While all stand unique, the symphonies represent Mendelssohn's developing mastery of counterpoint, form, harmony and technique. They feature animated string lines laced with classical era style and vitality. The string symphonies, including his String Symphony No. 2 in D Major, were likely first performed in the Mendelssohn family home lending themselves naturally to settings of orchestral chamber music. Because the works were not published until after the composer's death, they likely were not performed publicly

during the composer's lifetime. Tonight, we perform this work in the spirit of which it may have first been heard: without a conductor and in the spirit of chamber music.

Symphony No. 8, Op. 88

Dvořák's Eighth Symphony is often revered as his most upbeat and genial. Yet, looking beneath the surface, the work is shaded with both joy and sorrow. In it, Dvořák sets out to compose something "different from the other symphonies, with individual thoughts worked out in a new way." With regular pivots between major and minor keys, it is apparent there is more fire beneath the surface of a piece generally associated with the ease of life.

Despite being respected as a Czech compositional great, Dvořák remained poor most of his life. He nearly gave up composing had it not been for Johannes Brahms championing his work to his publisher. The Eighth Symphony occupies a unique place in Dvorak's symphonic career. Markedly different from his somber Seventh Symphony and Native American idiom influenced Ninth Symphony, the Eighth is a delicate balance of celebration and tragedy. The work was composed in 1889 in honor of his election to the Bohemian Academy of Science, Literature and Arts. Written within an astounding two and a half months, it reflects a time of both career triumph and reflection of personal loss in which Dvořák and his wife Anna mourned the death of their third child lost in infancy. The work begins in G minor with a mournful theme. Interestingly, this theme serves as a way marker reappearing three times marking the beginning of the exposition, development and recapitulation. Of significant note is the melody at the start of the recapitulation which breaks classical sonata form tradition with the third repetition set in a desperate, wailing cry played by the trumpet.

One cannot help but wonder if this melody may reflect the mourning of his three lost children amidst an otherwise joyous moment in the composer's career.

The second movement features melodies alternating between C Major and minor in pastoral textures. The movement's form is both complex and contradicting with a wide range of instrumental textures and orchestral timbres. The movement features luscious string sequences as well as a theme and variations showcasing a variety of orchestral timbres, instrumentations and textures. A passionate ornithologist, Dvořák interspersed bird calls in the flute amid these melodies. The third movement is set as a melancholy waltz in minor mode. Its Allegretto grazioso tempo marking may be a nod to Brahms who used the same marking for the third movements of his second and third symphonies. The lovely trio features a unique ease before the return of the waltz and a raucous coda finally in the major key. The final movement begins with an arresting trumpet fanfare before leading to a set of variations. These variations span a wide range of characters featuring everything from a virtuosic flute solo to a determined minor mode march. The symphony ends with a celebratory dance leading to a fiery dash to the finish. From tragedy to triumph, Dvořák ultimately concludes in the promised major key.

May you depart with fire and life!

Personnel

Joel Schut is director of the Philharmonia Orchestra and instructor of music education at the College of Music, where he teaches courses in music education, string pedagogy and orchestral performance. Prior to his appointment at CU Boulder, he served as

interim director of orchestras at the Crane School of Music SUNY-Potsdam, served on music education faculty at Michigan State University and taught for seven years in the Michigan public schools, including leading the nationally recognized Okemos High School Orchestras. As a conductor, he has appeared with the Crane Symphony Orchestra, Michigan State Opera Theatre, Michigan State Symphony Orchestra and the CU Boulder Symphony Orchestra. He served as music director of the Livingston Symphony Orchestra, founding director of the Detroit Medical Orchestra and organizer of the Michigan Teachers Orchestra. He has collaborated with a range of professional artists, including Andrés Cárdenas and Ralph Votapek, and has commissioned works for string and full orchestra. Schut has worked with multiple engagements in Tunisia and Honduras and served as guest faculty

at the Afghanistan Institute of Music. He facilitated a long-running music host exchange connecting German and American young artists and has been featured artist faculty at the Myanmar Music Festival. A graduate of the YOA Orchestra of the Americas Global Leaders Program, he has served as a program mentor, connecting innovators in youth orchestra education throughout the Americas. Schut currently serves as editor for the American String Teacher Journal. He received a doctorate in orchestral conducting from Michigan State University, master’s in orchestral conducting from the University of Colorado Boulder and bachelor’s in violin performance and music education from the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance, where he was awarded the Albert A. Stanley Medal, the school’s highest honor.

CU Philharmonia Orchestra

Violin

Alex Han
Megan Healy*
Sun Mi Jin
Paul Kim+
Soria Nguyen
Lucy Rissman
Anna-Claire Schultz
Helena Schumann
Holly Sidney
Kendalia Spencer
Olivia Taylor
Terry Vis
Rosalee Walsh
Brandon Wu

Viola

Ariel Chien+
Autumn Greenlee
Noah Lykins
Elizabeth Macintosh
Kayla Schlieper

Cello

Hannah Brown
Naia Easterling

Nicholas Johnson
Jessica Lee+
Eric Vasquez
Joshua Viera
Nelson Walker

Double bass

John Bissell
Samuel Conner
Alex Cormican+

Flute

Claire Gunsbury
Madison Hardick
Yuna Langehennig

Oboe

Sophia Oehlers
Curtis Sellers

Clarinet

Anoushka Divekar
Tanner Shiohita

Bassoon

Ethan Schuler
Madison Triplett

Horn

Maggie Barnes
Devin Driggs
Cole Cantor
Kieran Scruggs
Olivia Walt

Trumpet

Karen Buri
Dartagnan Stephen

Trombone

Sebastian Alvarez Piras
Kendall Walker
Douglas Sternberg

Tuba

Elena Zarecky

Timpani

John Sevy

* *Concertmaster*

+ *Principal*

Upcoming performances

💰 Ticketed events 📺 Live stream at cupresents.org

Tuesday, Oct. 8

Faculty Tuesdays

Die schöne Müllerin

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall 📺

Wednesday, Oct. 9

**Artist Series: Chick Corea Trilogy with
Christian McBride and Brian Blade**

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium 💰

Chamber Winds

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall 📺

Thursday, Oct. 10

**Concert Jazz Ensemble and Jazz
Ensemble II**

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall 📺

Oct. 11-13

Edges

By Benj Pasek and Justin Paul

Musical Theatre Program

Old Main Chapel

Friday, Oct. 11

No-No Boy in Concert

Presented by the American Music

Research Center

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Tuesday, Oct. 15

Faculty Tuesdays

Songs We Love to Play

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall 📺

Thursday, Oct. 17

CU Symphony Orchestra

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium 📺

Saturday, Oct. 19

Diverse Musicians' Alliance

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall 📺

Sunday, Oct. 20

Graduate Woodwind Quintet

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Monday, Oct. 21

Concert Band

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall 📺

Tuesday, Oct. 22

Faculty Tuesdays

Masterworks for Oboe and Bassoon

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall 📺

Events are subject to change:

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at cupresents.org to verify.*

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