

Marquette Symphony Orchestra

SOUL FORCE

Saturday, April 13, 2024
7:30pm at Kaufman Auditorium
Octavio Más-Arocas, Music Director

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Claudia Drosen

*String players and Balcony Brass
are listed alphabetically.*

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Marquette Symphony Orchestra

Octavio Más-Arocas, Principal Conductor

presents

SOUL FORCE

Saturday, April 13, 2024 – 7:30 p.m.

Kaufman Auditorium

Special thanks to our Orchestra Section Sponsor Flourish Financial Partners

Soul Force for orchestra Jessie Montgomery

Eine Kleine Nachtmusik W. A. Mozart

Allegro

Romanza – Andante

Menuetto – Allegretto

Rondo – Allegro

Spartacus: Ballet Suite No. 2 Aram Khachaturian

1. Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia

INTERMISSION

THE INTERMISSION WILL BE 15 MINUTES IN DURATION

The Pines of Rome (Pini di Roma) Ottorino Respighi

The Pines of Villa Borghese

The Pines near a Catacomb

The Pines of the Janiculum

The Pines of the Appian Way

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Marquette Symphony Orchestra

2024 / 2025 CONCERT SEASON

Octavio Más-Arocas, Music Director

Jul 11, 2024 Concert in the Park	Oct 5, 2024 Estancia, Granados, & Rimsky-Korsakov	Dec 14, 2024 Sounds ^{of} Holidays	Jan 17, 2025 A Broadway Matinee	Mar 1, 2025 Brahms with MSO Youth Concerto Soloist	Apr 12, 2025 Shostakovich & Tchaikovsky
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Tickets on sale this summer!

Octavio Más-Arocas, Musical Director

Octavio Más-Arocas is a versatile and dynamic conductor whose achievements demonstrate his talent and musicianship. Más-Arocas is the Director of Orchestras and Professor of Orchestral Conducting at Michigan State University College of Music, and serves as Music Director and Conductor of the Mansfield Symphony Orchestra in Ohio, Music Director and Conductor of the Marquette Symphony Orchestra in Michigan, Music Director and Conductor of the Clinton Symphony in New York, and Conductor-in-Residence at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in California.

Mr. Más-Arocas served as Principal Conductor of the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra, Wisconsin, and held the positions of Director of Orchestras and Professor of Orchestral Conducting at Ithaca College in New York, Director of Orchestral Studies and Opera Conductor at the Lawrence University Conservatory of Music in Wisconsin, Director of Orchestral Studies and Associate Professor of Conducting at the Baldwin Wallace University Conservatory of Music in Ohio, Director of Orchestras at the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, Resident Conductor of the Sewanee Summer Music Festival in Tennessee, and Assistant conductor of the National Repertory Orchestra in Colorado. In 2013, simultaneously to his work with the Lawrence Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Más-Arocas was the Resident Conductor of the Unicamp Symphony Orchestra in Campinas, Brazil, where he also was a Visiting Professor of conducting at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas. Mr. Más-Arocas spends part of his summers in the Grand Traverse area, where he continues his association as conductor at the Interlochen Center for the Arts.

An award-winner conductor, Mr. Más-Arocas won the Robert J. Harth Conducting Prize at the Aspen Music Festival, the Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Award, given by Kurt Masur, is the recipient of the Thelma A. Robinson Award from the Conductors Guild, a Prize Winner of the Third European Conductors Competition, and a winner of the National Youth Orchestra of Spain Conductors Competition. Mr. Más-Arocas was selected by the League of American Orchestras to conduct the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in a showcase event during the League's National Conference in Dallas.

Chosen by Kurt Masur, Mr. Más-Arocas was awarded the prestigious Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Scholarship. Consequently, he worked as Maestro Masur's assistant with

the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and the Helsinki Radio Orchestra, and made his German conducting debut with the Leipziger Symphonie-orchester. The offer came after Mr. Más-Arocas' New York debut concert sharing the podium with Maestro Masur and the Manhattan School of Music Symphony.



In the last few years Mr. Más-Arocas has conducted orchestras across North and South America and Europe including the Filarmonica George Enescu in Romania, the Orquesta de Valencia and Granada City Orchestra in Spain, the Leipziger Symphonieorchester in Germany, the Orquestra Sinfônica da Unicamp in Brazil, the Green Bay, Traverse City, Bluewater, Catskill, Clinton, Fort Worth, Spokane, Toledo, Phoenix, Memphis, Kansas City, and San Antonio Symphonies, the National Repertory Orchestra, the Manhattan School of Music Symphony, the orchestras of Viana do Castelo and Artave in Portugal, the Interlochen

Philharmonic, the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico Philharmonic, the Rosario Symphony in Argentina, Kharkov Symphony in Ukraine, the National Youth Orchestras of Portugal and Spain, the Pescara Symphony in Italy, the Amsterdam Brass in the Netherlands, and the Ciudad Alcala de Henares Symphony. In addition, Mr. Más-Arocas has served as assistant conductor at the Madrid Royal Opera House.

Mr. Más-Arocas was assistant conductor of the National Repertory Orchestra, which he conducted in subscription, family, and pops concerts. As the Resident Conductor at the Sewanee Summer Music Festival he conducted the Festival, Symphony, and Cumberland Orchestras. Other festival appearances include the Aspen Music Festival, the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, the Festival Internacional Carlos Gomes in Campinas, Brazil, the Interlochen Music Festival, the Bach Festival at Baldwin Wallace University, and the MidAmerican Center for Contemporary Music.

His ability to work, inspire, and transform young talents has led him to be a frequent guest conductor with prominent music education organizations and ensembles around the world. He has worked with the World Youth Symphony Orchestra, the national youth orchestras of Portugal and Spain, has conducted All-State Honor Orchestras, and has been in residence with university orchestras in Chicago, Cornell University, Portugal, and Brazil. Mr. Más-Arocas has lead tours with the National Youth Orchestra



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Octavio Más-Arocas ——— *continued from page 4*

“Templarios” of Portugal, the Interlochen Symphony, the Baldwin Wallace Symphony, and toured Argentina with the Silleda Wind Symphony.

In demand as a conducting teacher, Mr. Más-Arocas has taught workshops and masterclasses in the USA, Portugal, Brazil, and Spain and is currently on the faculty of two of the world’s most competitive conducting workshops, the Cabrillo Festival Conducting Workshop, which attracts the most talented conducting students from all around the world, and the Ithaca International Conducting

Masterclass. He has taught at the Queens College Conducting Workshop in New York and lead the very selective graduate orchestral conducting program at Ithaca College.

Mr. Más-Arocas is an alumnus of the prestigious American Academy of Conducting at Aspen, where he studied with David Zinman. He completed doctoral studies and his main mentors include Kurt Masur, Harold Farberman, and Emily Freeman Brown.

Soul Force for orchestra

Jessie Montgomery

Born 1981



Jessie Montgomery, the Mead Composer-in-Residence of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Musical America's 2023 Composer of the Year, is an acclaimed composer, violinist and educator. She is the recipient of the Leonard Bernstein Award from the ASCAP Foundation and the Sphinx Medal of Excellence, and her works are performed frequently around the world by leading musicians and ensembles. In 2024, Jessie Montgomery won the Grammy Award for "Best Contemporary Classical Composition" for her *Rounds*, recorded by Awadagin Pratt and A Far Cry for New Amsterdam Records. Her music interweaves classical music with elements of vernacular music, improvisation, poetry and social consciousness, making her an acute interpreter of 21st-century American sound and experience. Her profoundly felt works have been described as "turbulent, wildly colorful and exploding with life" (Washington Post).

Her growing body of work includes solo, chamber, vocal and orchestral works. Recent premieres include CSO com-

missions *Hymn for Everyone* and *Transfigure to Grace*, *Five Freedom Songs*, a song cycle for soprano Julia Bullock; a set of concertos, *DIVIDED* and *Rounds*. Earlier highlights include *Shift, Change, Turn*, commissioned by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra; *Coincident Dances*, for the Chicago Sinfonietta; *Caught by the Wind*, for the Albany Symphony and the American Music Festival, and *Banner*, written to mark the 200th anniversary of *The Star-Spangled Banner* — for the Sphinx Organization and the Joyce Foundation. Her *Soul Force* (2015), which the MSO will perform this evening, is featured on the 2022 Grammy Award-winning recording by the New York Youth Symphony.

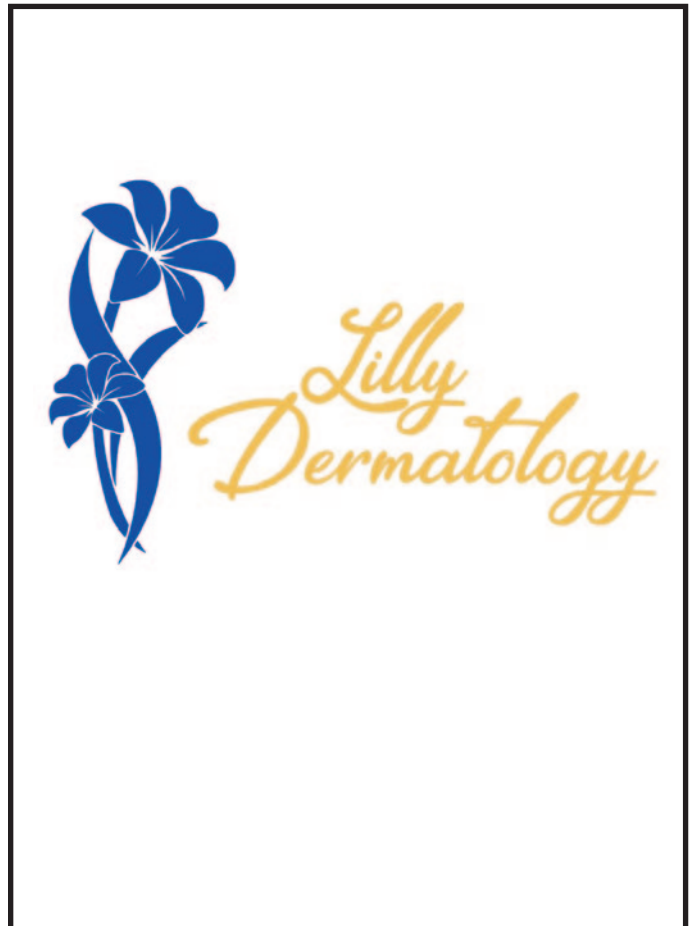
Jessie Montgomery was born and grew up on Manhattan's Lower East Side in the 1980s, during a time when the neighborhood was at a major turning point in its history. Artists gravitated to the hotbed of artistic experimentation and community development. Her parents — her father, a musician; her mother, a theater artist and storyteller — were engaged in the activities of the neighborhood and regularly brought their daughter to rallies, performances and parties where neighbors, activists and artists gathered to celebrate and support the movements of the time. It is from this unique experience that Montgomery has created a life that merges composing, performance, education and advocacy.



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Since 1999, she has been affiliated with the Sphinx Organization, which supports young African-American and Latino string players, and has served as composer-in-residence for the Sphinx Virtuosi, the organization's flagship professional touring ensemble. She was a two-time laureate of the annual Sphinx Competition and was awarded its highest honor, the Sphinx Medal of Excellence. She has received additional grants and awards from the ASCAP Foundation, Chamber Music America, American Composers Orchestra, the Joyce Foundation and the Sorel Organization.

Montgomery began her violin studies at the Third Street Music School Settlement, one of the nation's oldest community organizations. A founding member of PUBLI-Quartet and a former member of the Catalyst Quartet, she continues to maintain an active performance career as a violinist, appearing regularly with her own ensembles, as well as with the Silkroad Ensemble and Sphinx Virtuosi. She holds degrees from the Juilliard School and New York University and is currently a graduate fellow in music composition at Princeton University. She is a professor of violin and composition at The New School. In July 2021, she began her three-year appointment as the Mead Composer-in-Residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.


Soul Force is a one-movement symphonic work which


attempts to portray the notion of a voice that struggles to be heard beyond the shackles of oppression. Montgomery says she has drawn the work's title from Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech in which he states: "We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force." In the piece, Montgomery begins with dramatic, deep and bursting percussion, the kind that rings a listener into being. The melancholy of bassoon comes in beneath it, followed by a tremulous call-and-response. The music takes on the form of a march which begins with a single voice and gains mass as it rises to a triumphant goal. Drawing on elements of popular African-American musical styles such as big-band jazz, funk, hip-hop and R&B, the piece pays homage to the cultural contributions the many voices, which have risen against aggressive forces to create an indispensable cultural place. This stirring piece is 8 emotional minutes in duration. The MSO is privileged and excited to bring it alive for you this evening.

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Eine kleine Nachtmusik
(A Little Night Music)
for strings in G major, K. 525

Allegro
Romanza – Andante
Menuetto – Allegretto
Rondo – Allegro

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Born 1756—Died 1791




Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart is admittedly quite a long name, but by the age of four years old, this child exhibited musical abilities so astonishing that he had more than grown into his title. Perhaps he sensed that a long stay on earth just wasn't in the cards because his musical life raced ahead like a bullet train. The young boy scaled the heights of the harpsichord bench, and just sort of nudged his sister Nannerl over, so he could play note-for-note what she played. This was the beginning of a musical legacy that remains one of the finest achievements in all Western art.

His musical memory was unerring, and his aural sophisti-

cation way beyond his years. Therefore, his father, violinist and music teacher Leopold Mozart, decided he'd better teach his son to play the keyboard and violin, although he complained that there was very little to teach him that the child didn't already seem to feel in his musical bones.

This genius, about whom legend continues to grow more than two centuries after his death, was born in 1756 in Salzburg, Austria, to Anna Maria and Leopold Mozart. He and his sister were the only two among seven children to survive infancy. Today the world remembers Mozart not only as the greatest musical prodigy who ever lived, but also as a man whose music is unsurpassed in lyric beauty and seemingly effortless melodic line. He wrote his first piece of music at age six, and his last composition sat unfinished on his bed when he died shortly before turning thirty-six.


Between the ages of seven and fifteen, Mozart spent about half his time on tour. He would demonstrate for the courts and the public his ability to improvise and sight-read, and he would entertain them with his musical tricks. Some people disapproved of the way Leopold paraded his *wunderkind* around Europe, feeling that this kind of life was unfit for a child. Nonetheless, during his travels Mozart absorbed a vast amount of musical knowledge, and began formulating his own mature style.



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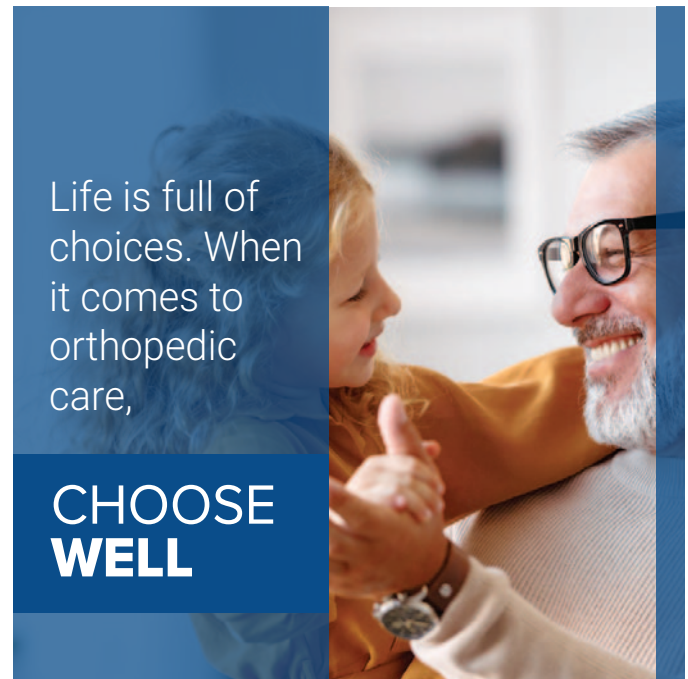
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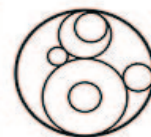
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Mozart is probably the only composer in history to have written masterworks in almost every musical genre. In addition to forty-one symphonies, he dreamed up serenades, divertimenti and dances, written on request for the nobility. He created vocal and choral music of unparalleled beauty, organ and piano music, music for the church.

He composed sixteen operas, the first one at the age of 12, and the last, the glorious *Magic Flute*, written in the year of his death.

With all his great skill, eagerness and dedication, one would logically think that Mozart should have an exceptionally successful career. And he thought so too. Excited and ready for what would come his way, he and his mother traveled to Munich and Paris in 1777 to scope out his prospects. But his mother died suddenly in Paris in 1778, and Mozart was jobless. He returned to Salzburg in great sadness. After several frustrating years as the court organist to the Archbishop in Salzburg, he resigned and became one of the first musicians to take on a free-lance career.

He moved to Vienna in 1781, where he met Haydn, who came to love him as his own son, and had great reverence for his talents. Mozart stayed with his old family friends, the Webers, and fell in love with their 17-year-old daughter, Aloisia. Unfortunately, she was already hitched, so Mozart turned his attentions to their third daughter, Constanze, whom he married a year later. Things looked bright for a while. He turned out one masterpiece after another in every form imaginable. He became a regular at the court of Emperor Joseph II, where he wrote much of his greatest music, of which the last ten string quartets, the *Quintet for Clarinet and Strings*, the *Mass in C minor*, the unfinished *Requiem*, the late piano concertos and the last six symphonies, are just a sampling.

But the year 1788 brought misery to Mozart, then 32 years old. His wife was not in good health, his medical bills were high. Theresia, their infant daughter died. And the cultural climate in Vienna changed. Mozart was no longer the darling of the public he had once been. Having no secure position, he had to rely on students and commissions, neither of which was widely available at the time. Then word came that Leopold died, and it was as if a part of Mozart had passed with him.

In the face of all these events came the creation of his wonderful *G Minor Symphony No. 40*, in July, 1788. Ironically, the darkness Mozart felt and the lack of Classical convention made the symphony popular even when Mozart was otherwise being shut out by the Romantics. But fortune would never be his. In 1791, Mozart was commissioned to write a requiem. He was by that time gravely ill and imagined that the work was for himself, which it did prove to

be. This work stands alongside Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* as the supreme example of vocal music. His death at only 35 years old, gave rise to false rumors of poisoning, though it is thought to have resulted from kidney failure. After a modest funeral at Saint Stephen's Cathedral, he was buried in an unmarked grave at the cemetery of Saint Marx.

Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, K. 525, arguably one of the most beloved and surely one of the most recognizable pieces of classical music, was penned in 1787. It has been dubbed a "supreme mastery in the smallest possible frame." Oddly, the work's origins remain a mystery. Despite the large collection of letters, documents, and notes left by Mozart, the only mention of the composition is in the composer's personal catalogue of works. No commission request is listed, and the piece was published posthumously. Hence, theories abound as to why Mozart wrote the piece in the first place.

He was in the midst of writing his opera buffa *Don Giovanni*, which ends with the main character being dragged off to hell. This dark comedy seems to be a reflection of Mozart's life in that moment. The composer was short on work, out of money, and had recently lost his father. The jubilant sounds of A Little Night Music may simply have been Mozart's attempt to bring some light into his quickly darkening world.

"A little night music" is the direct translation from the German, but in Mozart's day, *Nachtmusik* indicated a serenade. Normally this sort of serenade was intended for a social occasion, but there is no record of such an event. Today we know the work with four movements, although originally Mozart listed five: an additional minuet has been lost. *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* wound up being sold in a lot by his widow for needed cash.

The instrumentation is for string quartet and added bass but is typically played by string orchestras. The size of the ensemble would have been determined by the available forces at the time. The opening Allegro in G major has been heard in many iterations of pop culture, from a Mario Brothers video game to the movie *Alien*. It also figured prominently in the Academy Award-winning 1984 biopic *Amadeus*.

What we have is a wonderfully incomplete string serenade the size of a symphony that epitomizes both the refined vitality of the Classical period and that singular Mozartean blend of utter simplicity and natural eloquence. The effortless opening theme propels the music forward. The Romanze in C Major consists of very free lyrical variations on its tender opening strain. The existing Menuetto in G major with a Trio in D major is charming in its brevity and ease, with a graceful trio section. The final Rondo is in G

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major. The movement's bouncing refrain is also memorable. Although it contains undertones of darker chromatic expression, it is high-spirited and goes out with an irresistibly satisfying finish.

Spartacus: Ballet Suite No. 2

Aram Khachaturian
Born 1903—Died 1978

1. Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia



Aram Ilich Khachaturian was the most celebrated Armenian composer of his time. Born to a modest Armenian family near Tbilisi, the capital of the country of Georgia in the summer of 1903, his first experience of music was hearing his mother's singing and other folk music in his hometown. This Armenian folk tradition later inspired some of his music.

Unlike many famous musicians who were child prodigies, Khachaturian did not begin the formal study of music until he was nineteen. As a child he played the tuba and taught himself piano. For his career as a composer, he is known principally in the West for his instrumental concerti, notably the *Piano Concerto* and the ballets *Gayaneh*, which contains the brilliant *Sabre Dance* that just about everyone on the planet has heard, and the ballet *Spartacus*, in which the stunning *Adagio from Spartacus and Phrygia* is featured. The MSO will perform the *Adagio* this evening. The composer's output also encompassed symphonies and other works for orchestra, film and theater music, works for band, chamber music, and a large number of patriotic and popular songs.

Khachaturian originally intended to become a biologist but, one could say, as luck would have it, he got sidetracked into a musical career. When, in 1921, he moved to Moscow and entered the University to study biology, he also became enthralled with the cello and pursued serious study at the Gnesin Institute. Without skipping a beat, he rapidly switched gears, working ardently and learning all he could about creating music. His skills progressed to the point where he became a faculty member in Composition at Gnesin, and then entered the Moscow Conservatory in 1926, studying composition and remaining there until completing his graduate studies in 1936, (the same year he debuted his *Piano Concerto*). He quickly became a rising star among composers of the region.

Khachaturian was the first composer to synthesize the musical styles of his age with his traditional Armenian heritage. He was especially interested in folk music, and he traveled to his native Armenia to collect folk songs and write music based on them. In 1933, he married Russian composer Nina

Makarova, who had great interest in Russian folksongs. When asked about their differences, she said “He is Armenian—temperamental, strong and a bit Oriental. I am Russian and lyric.”

During and after his extensive education, Khachaturian mixed with a wide range of artists including writers Gorky and Hemingway, musicians and composers Oistrakh, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Boulanger, Karajan, Messiaen, Rostropovich, Rubinstein, Sibelius, and Stravinsky. He emerged along with Prokofiev and Shostakovich, as one of the most popular and successful composers of the Soviet period.

Khachaturian’s unique musical idiom was indelibly marked by his Armenian heritage; his scores are noted for their sensuous, singing melodic writing, colorful orchestration, and elemental rhythmic drive. His interesting devices are frequently derived from Mugham, which is a complex folk composition from Azerbaijan that combines classical poetry and musical improvisation. It is said that his stirring, toccata-like passagework would occasionally seem maddening to Western ears. His is not a particularly cerebral music and it tends to be aggressive, self-confident and even brash.

After completing many of his successful works—the 1940s brought the *Violin Concerto* and the *Cello Concerto*, *Masquerade Suite*, the *Anthem of the Armenian SSR*, and three symphonies, Khachaturian focused less on composition, and more on conducting, teaching, bureaucracy and travel. He went on tour with concerts of his own works to around 30 countries.

In 1965, Khachaturian was briefly admitted to the hospital after a heart attack. However, he was able to recover and travel again. His 1968 visit to Washington, D.C. to conduct the National Symphony Orchestra’s program of his compositions was very successful. In a six-week tour he visited seven American cities.

In the last two decades of his life, Khachaturian wrote three concert rhapsodies for violin, cello and piano, and solo sonatas for unaccompanied cello, violin and viola. After a long illness, just short of his 75th birthday, he died in Moscow on May 1, 1978.

The four-act ballet *Spartacus* was written in 1954 and produced in Leningrad in 1956 (so it’s roughly contemporary with *West Side Story*, though there all similarity ends). It was again staged in 1958 at the Moscow Bolshoi, the musical score and composer winning the Lenin Prize later that year.

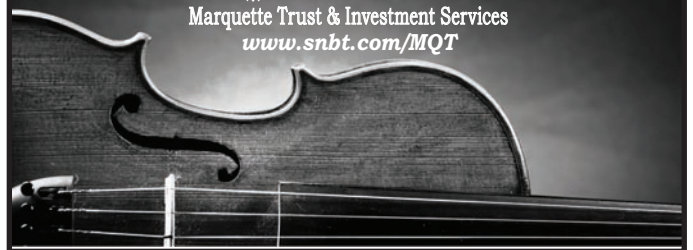
The ballet (Khachaturian’s third) is based on the true story, using a well-chosen plot line for a Soviet climate—the slave/proletariat leader Spartacus, the King of Thrace, is taken

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- C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*

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captive and forced to fight as a gladiator, while his wife, *Phrygia*, is taken as a concubine. Spartacus leads the other slaves in rebellion, but (spoiler alert!) he is later found, and the ballet ends with his death by impaling. Within the work, the *Adagio* appears in the Second Act. Spartacus rescues his wife Phrygia (their love scene is the first movement, *Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia*). It was choreographed by Leonid Yakobson and premiered in 1956 at the Kirov Theatre in Leningrad. Although most of the music from the ballet is not heard outside its context, the *Adagio* which the MSO will perform this evening, is often used as a stand-alone concert piece.

Huge expanses of its spectacular action are accompanied by propulsive, rhythmic passages in this balletic adventure. Thus the *Adagio*, when it arrives, sticks out like a sore thumb, as the most memorable (if not quite the only) tune in the ballet. And what a magnificently glorious tune it is.

The ballet's mood shifts to tell the story. In the first act, the tension gradually builds as Spartacus, his wife Phrygia, and the other Thracians are brought into Rome and sold at a slave market. Spartacus and his friend Harmodius are sold as gladiators, while Phrygia is bought by a courtesan named Aegina. The act ends with "Dance of the Gaditanae," which portrays a dramatic fight between two groups of gladiators. It is chaotic and frenzied, with heavy percussion and brass, until Spartacus and his men emerge victorious.

Act 2 opens in stark contrast to Act 1, with the slow, smooth *Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia*. In this scene, Spartacus and Phrygia share a bittersweet reunion, soundtracked by swelling strings and gentle flute melodies. However, the action soon picks up again as the gladiators revolt against the Roman general Crassus.

The drama continues through Act 3. Spartacus's troops are victorious, but soon Spartacus is betrayed by Harmodius. Though Act 3 closes with his death, it is a noble, triumphant ending, as the gladiators haven't given up their fight for freedom.

The *Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia* opens with a delicate syncopated rhythm from the upper strings, and the flute embellishes the developing theme with a sequence of trills. The offbeat eighth-note movement in the string parts keeps a gentle rocking feel as various wind instruments begin to develop the opening theme of the piece. A slow ascending scale played by cellos moves us into the next section of the work, with the oboe finishing the top end of the scale and easing the music into the famous 'love theme' for the first time.

The oboe plays the lyrical 'love theme' with the accompa-



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niment of the upper strings, who play the same offbeat eighth note movement from the introduction. The harp is also playing here, and the delicate plucking of the strings effectively adds to the intense atmosphere. The lower strings begin to enter slowly to support the melodies above, and the cellos play small countermelodies every eight bars. The flute joins in with a more prominent countermelody to the oboe, with the two working together to represent Spartacus and Phrygia.

A slow rumble in the lower strings lets us know that the music is moving forward from this solo melody and accompaniment form. The atmosphere begins to intensify as the strings ascend into their upper registers for the first time. This small burst of color here is such a release, and Khachaturian's extended orchestrations here are what makes this section so impactful. There is a wash of sound from the upper strings, with the upper winds embellishing the melody once more. The lower strings are marked *pizzicato*, and the delicate plucking of the strings creates an interesting clash between the full string melody and the sparse accompaniment.

As the intensity of the melody grows, so do the dynamics. This leads to the first climax of the piece, where the melody becomes slightly agitated and quickly flourishes into a top suspended chord just in the violins. This feeling of stasis and the rest of the orchestra stopping is a technique Khachaturian uses to symbolize a large, musical breath. The melody moves around slowly in different forms, setting the stage for the next section.

The clarinet and oboe section both play pivotal solos. There is a distinct feeling of call and response between the upper strings and each of the upper woodwinds. The cellos are notated in their upper register in this section, which creates an interesting timbre when mixed with the violas and lower winds in particular.

The upper strings lead into a brass fanfare, and this marks a significant change in the music, as up until this point the brass have not played a single note. There is a moody-sounding line in the horns and a staccato trumpet fanfare, which represents the links to war and the army within the ballet. The brass build tension with the use of dynamics, making this section a transition into the biggest climax of the piece.

The strings begin to tremolo and then build up the scale until they hit their highest registers. This explodes into a celebration of the love theme, which is now accentuated by a full orchestra. This falls back into a woodwind transition, which takes us into the final section of the work. The violins repeat the love theme, but this time an octave down, and the upper winds accentuate this melody with eighth-

note movements that keep the tempo driving, below the melody.

Then a solo violin then takes the melody, with the accompaniment of two clarinets. This offers a very different texture to what we have just heard, and it becomes rather poignant how Khachaturian uses the love theme in different ways. The piece ends with the strings unifying back in the home key and slowly dying away after one last swell together.

Spartacus was popularized when the *Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia* was used as the theme for a popular BBC drama series "The Onedin Line" in the 1970s. The climax of *Spartacus* was also used in films "Ice Age: The Meltdown" and "The Hudsucker Proxy."

When Khachaturian composed the score of the ballet and tried to capture the atmosphere of ancient Rome in order to bring to life the images of the remote past, he said "I never ceased to feel the spiritual affinity of Spartacus to our own time." Khachaturian began compiling several suites of music from the ballet between 1955-1957. The second suite includes the *Adagio* being presented for this concert, aptly expressing the passion and depth of emotions when the two are reunited following the uprising and her rescue from slavery.

Khachaturian used many effective practices to relay the emotions of this work. His goal was to let his listeners know something about himself—what he felt in his heart. He said, "No matter how I may waver between various musical languages, I remain an Armenian, but a European Armenian, not an Asian Armenian. Together with other [Armenian composers], we will make all of Europe and the whole world listen to our music. And when they hear our music, people are certain to say, 'Tell us about that people, and show us the country that produces such art.'"

Pini di Roma (The Pines of Rome) *a symphonic poem*

The Pines of Villa Borghese
The Pines near a Catacomb
The Pines of the Janiculum
The Pines of the Appian Way

Ottorino Respighi
Born 1879—Died 1936



Ottorino Respighi, who brought to Italian music both the orchestral color of Russian music and the ferocious harmonic style of Richard Strauss, became Italy's

most important post-Romantic composer. During his career he wore quite a few musical hats—composer, conductor, string-player, pianist and teacher. His own compositional style developed into one that was highly dramatic and never, never dull.

In his operas, he reacted against the realism of Puccini. Still, in these works, the impressive orchestration outshines the vocal writing. While many of his shorter vocal compositions do show great craftsmanship and gentle beauty, Respighi is best known for the piece the MSO will perform this evening—*The Pines of Rome*.

Born in Bologna, Italy, Respighi was said to be shy but very talented. He began studying violin at age eight, and by the time he was thirteen he began to learn composition at the Liceo of Bologna. Later on, he studied with the great Rimsky-Korsakov in St. Petersburg, where he played first viola in the Opera Orchestra. Respighi showed great interest in orchestral music, and from the masters of other nations, he gained a commanding knowledge of orchestral color and texture. He would later put his impressive skills to use, adding his own creative innovations. Ultimately his music, though based on classical forms, was just bigger and brighter, and his symphonic poems are known for their brilliant and luscious scoring. His comic opera *Re Enzo* and the opera *Semirama* brought him recognition and an appointment in 1913 to the Santa Cecilia Academy in Rome as professor of composition. It was also in this year that Respighi fell in love with Rome.

He found inspiration in the city's singular atmosphere—so much so, that he introduced a musical language which captured the feelings he had in his heart. In Respighi's wife Elsa's 1962 biography of her husband, Ottorino Respighi, she recalls that in 1920, he would jot down some of the old children's songs as he sang them about the house. Elsa notes in the book that years later, these tunes turned up in the first movement of *The Pines of Rome*, which the MSO will perform this evening.

Respighi became director of the Academy in 1924, but only stayed on there for two years to give himself more time to compose. Instead, this period wound up yielding two American tours as a conductor and pianist. He accompanied singers, including his wife, Elsa who was a composer as well as a vocalist.

The poet D'Annunzio had a great appeal for Respighi. In his celebrated symphonic poems, Respighi sought to convey the subtlety and color of the poet's imagination. Historic settings, typical characters, the special sounds of the locale, are all found in these poems. This is what Respighi does the finest. He was acutely interested in turning visual pictures into music, and thus this creative period

included the composition of *The Pines of Rome* in 1924, and other works describing the Roman landscape, such as *The Fountains of Rome* and *Roman Festivals*. In *Roman Festivals*, he broke away from traditional writing and included marked dissonances, boisterous effects and more modern orchestrations.

In the 1930s, he wrote distinctive operas including *Sleeping Beauty* and his last and most original work for the stage, *Lucrezia*. He never finished this work, so his wife took it upon herself to complete it after his death. Respighi suffered more and more periods of ill health towards the middle of the 1930s. Because he had been physically strong for most of his life, he hung on for months, able to survive in a weakened state. But in 1936 he lost his struggle. He passed away in April of that year.

The Pines of Rome, scored for a very large orchestra, is chronologically the second work in Respighi's "Roman trilogy." It had its first Roman performance in December of that year, and is still being enjoyed today. In addition to being played in concert halls all over the world, the piece is featured in the film *Fantasia 2000*. The music of *The Pines of Rome* inspires "an oddly moving fantasy of whales rising out of the icy ocean and swimming amidst the clouds." These animated whale characters were created with the help of cutting-edge software packages for computer-generated imagery.

This work is in four sections played without interruption; each movement representing a different part of Rome, and the feelings aroused in the composer by its landscape. The score is prefaced with an account of the music, which was descriptively written by Respighi and collaborator Claudio Guastalla. Guastalla says "I listened attentively while Respighi played the poem *Pines of Rome* on the piano, and then we sat down at the long table in that room on the corner of the Via Nazionale...on the top floor. Ottorino explained his four portraits to me, and I sat, pencil poised, ready to note down any word that seemed to me most significant: "Children playing by the pines at the Villa Borghese on a sunny morning...laughing, singing their nursery rhymes...playing soldiers...a little march..." In this way, the descriptions were formulated, and here they are word for word:

1. ***The Pines of Villa Borghese:*** Children are at play in the pine grove of the Villa Borghese, dancing the Italian equivalent of "Ring around the Rosy"; mimicking marching soldiers and battles; twittering and shrieking like swallows at evening; and they disappear. Suddenly the scene changes to...

2. ***The Pines near a Catacomb:*** We see the shadows of the pines, which overhang the entrance of a catacomb. From the depths rises a chant which re-echoes solemnly, like a

hymn, and is then mysteriously silenced.

3. *The Pines of the Janiculum*: There is a thrill in the air. The full moon reveals the profile of the pines of Giancolo's Hill. A nightingale sings (represented by a record of a nightingale song, heard from the orchestra).

4. *The Pines of the Appian Way*: Misty dawn on the Appian Way. The tragic country is guarded by solitary pines. Indistinctly, incessantly, the rhythm of innumerable steps. To the poet's fantasy appears a vision of past glories; trumpets blare, and the army of the Consul advances brilliantly in the grandeur of a newly risen sun toward the Sacred Way, mounting the Capitoline Hill."

Here are some impressions drawn from the quotes above. In the first section, the music has all the vigor and imperitence of children in active play. This includes a sort of brash musical jeering on the part of the trumpets towards the end. In the second section, depicting the catacombs, the mood is contemplative, as a somber plainchant begins. The movement heads toward a climax built around a repeated figure in intervals of fifths in the strings. This leads without stopping into the third section, which opens with an impressionistic shower of color from the piano. The piece slowly morphs into a beautiful nocturne interrupted by the recorded sound of a nightingale's chirping. This is one of the first instances where a recorded sound is

asked for in a concert score. The last section changes from a slow, weirdly wonderful beginning into music so thunderous and electrifying that we are taken back to Ancient Rome, and the days of gallant gladiators.

Since music lovers in Italy at the beginning of the twentieth century were very much into opera, they were more reluctant to accept modern musical trends than their European neighbors. Respighi's goal was to bring his native land back to a love for instrumental music. During the preparation of *The Pines of Rome's* 1924 premiere, Respighi was quoted as saying: "Let them boo...what do I care?" Well, they did indeed boo, especially at the irreverent sounds of the trumpets in *Villa Borghese*, and at the recorded bird in *Janiculum*. But they changed their mocking tune with the triumphant march at the conclusion of the work. They were instead, brought to their feet as they offered the orchestra and its conductor Bernardino Molinari a heartfelt ovation.

Respighi's *Pines of Rome* still remains fresh, wholesome and expressive. It is technically quite demanding to perform, but fortunately, it is a breeze to listen to. Like Respighi himself, this great work is almost child-like in its frank appeal to the senses.

—Program Notes by Claudia Drosen

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