Season Finale

Wesley Schulz, Music Director and Conductor

Thursday, May 20, 2021, 7:30pm
Federal Way Performing Arts and Event Center

Program

Danses concertantes .................................... Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)
  I. Marche-Introduction
  II. Pas d’Action
  III. Themé varié
  IV. Pas de Deux
  V. Marche-Conclusion

Symphony No. 41, K. 551 in C major, “Jupiter” . . . . . . Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
  I. Allegro vivace
  II. Andante cantabile
  III. Menuetto
  IV. Molto allegro

Auburn Symphony Orchestra Musicians

VIOLIN 1
Emilie Choi
Concertmaster
Sol Im
Asst. Concertmaster
Mark Lotz
Lynn Bartlett Johnson
Anne Cady

VIOLIN 2
Ingrid Fredrickson
Principal
Coral Sepulveda
Bill Boyd
Elizabeth Phelps
Martha Garrett

VIOLA
Joyce Ramee
Principal
Eileen Swanson
Michael Watson
Sue Jane Bryant

CELLO
Brian Wharton
Principal
Olga Ruvinov
Andrea Chandler

FLUTE
Wendy Wilhelmi
Principal

OBOE
Shannon Spicciati
Principal
Tad Margelli

CLARINET
Jennifer Nelson
Principal

BASSOON
Mona Butler
Principal
Marlene Weaver

DOUBLE BASS
Todd Larsen
Principal
Stephen Schermer

FRENCH HORN
Rodger Burnett
Principal
Danielle Lemieux

TRUMPET
Sarah Viens
Principal
Vincent Green

TROMBONE
Keith Winkle

TIMPANI
Mona Butler
Principal
Phillip Hanson
Wesley Schulz, conductor

Wesley Schulz is in his third season as Music Director of Auburn Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, Schulz serves as the Associate Conductor of the North Carolina Symphony. Previously, Schulz served as Music Director of the Bainbridge Symphony Orchestra and Seattle Festival Orchestra, and as Director of Orchestras at the University of Puget Sound. Upcoming and recent conducting engagements include the Bozeman Symphony Orchestra, Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra, Fox Valley Symphony, and the Austin Symphony Orchestra.

In his first two seasons with the North Carolina Symphony, Schulz conducted 150 performances. This included a last-minute Masterworks debut conducting Bernstein’s Serenade with violinist Philippe Quint as well as the entire ballet score to Bernstein’s Fancy Free and Schubert’s Unfinished Symphony. One reviewer wrote, “The North Carolina Symphony and Schulz definitely drew the utmost life out of Schubert’s themes....Schulz did a spectacular job.” As the main conductor of the Symphony’s Pops series, Schulz has collaborated with Pink Martini, Cirque de la Symphonie, Broadway By Request, Leslie Odom Jr., Michael Cavanaugh and more. In addition, Schulz leads dozens of performances in the Young People’s Concerts, SummerFest, Holiday and Education series.

From 2014-2015 Schulz served as Conducting Fellow of the Seattle Symphony. He made his Benaroya Hall debut with the orchestra in a sold-out performance with singer and songwriter Gregory Alan Isakov. Schulz has received multiple invitations to return to the podium of the Seattle Symphony conducting a collaborative concert with singer and songwriter Amos Lee and to prepare the orchestra for the Oscar winning conductor and composer, John Williams. Additionally, Schulz has been a regular guest conductor of the Austin Symphony Orchestra developing and conducting family and educational performances that reach over 15,000 young people annually.

Program Notes

Igor Stravinsky’s Danses concertantes is, in a way, fitting for this time in history. In 1939 Stravinsky had the worst year of his life: his daughter, wife and his mother all died within months of each other. Compounding these losses, World War II exiled Stravinsky from his adopted home in Paris to the United States. Despite all the tragedy he had endured in the couple years prior, this music is full of vitality and life. The style is neo-classical, a style of music that harkens back to the time of Haydn and Mozart.

Danses concertates is in five movements and begins and ends with a March – though a march with some interestingly off-placed accents to keep your ears perked. The second movement is called Pas d’action, a ballet term for an ensemble dance. The third movement is a theme and variations with shifting textures and open-air melodies. The fourth movement also borrows from ballet and is titled Pas de deux, a dance for two – here embodied by the oboe and clarinet. The return of the March in the fifth movement brings the work to a close. Though this music was commissioned for the concert stage it is obvious that Stravinsky composed with dance in mind. Shortly after the piece premiered George Balanchine used the music for a production with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

Our final work of the season is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s Symphony No. 41 in C major, subtitled “Jupiter.” Jupiter is used here as a literary reference – acknowledging this symphony as one of the supreme triumphs of all symphonic composition. The symphony unfolds over four movements, each displaying Mozart’s sheer musical brilliance. The finale is so masterfully crafted that commentators for centuries have described it as one of the finest examples of music ever written. Dispensing with drawn out melodies, Mozart gives us fistful upon fistful of motivic ideas that not only lodge in your mind as an earworm, but they give Mozart endless opportunities to improvise and further explore their potential. When we reach the final moments of the symphony Mozart leaves no question that he is at the height of his powers. He gives us a fugal closing with no less than five musical lines all sounding at the same time, but in perfect, musical harmony. This is symphonic music at its very best. Poignant, expressive, electrifying, radiant bordering on the euphoric.

Wesley Schulz