



PLAYING. SHARING. INSPIRING.

Yuri Ivan, Artistic Director

Kenneth Freed, violin and guest conductor

Beethoven *Violin Concerto!*

Saturday, October 31, 2015

7:30 PM

Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church
Minneapolis, Minnesota

~ Program ~

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 61

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

- I. Allegro ma non troppo
- II. Larghetto
- III. Rondo. Allegro

Kenneth Freed, violin

~ 10 Minute Intermission ~

En Saga, Op. 9

Jean Sibelius
(1865-1957)

Danzón No. 2

Arturo Márquez
(b. 1950)

Kenneth Freed, conductor

~ Program Notes~

Beethoven Violin Concerto: First performance: December 23, 1806, Theater an der Wien, Vienna, Beethoven, conductor; Franz Clement, soloist.

The works Beethoven finished in the last half of 1806—the Violin Concerto, the Fourth Symphony, and the Fourth Piano Concerto among them—were completed rather rapidly by the composer following his extended struggle with the original version of his opera *Fidelio*, which had occupied him from the end of 1804 until April 1806. The most important orchestral work Beethoven had previously completed was the *Eroica*, in which he overwhelmed his audiences with a forceful new musical language reflecting both his own inner struggles in the face of impending deafness and also his awareness of the political atmosphere around him. The next big orchestral work to embody this “heroic” style would be the Fifth Symphony, which began to germinate in 1804 but was completed only in 1808. Meanwhile, a more relaxed sort of expression began to emerge, incorporating a heightened sense of repose, a more broadly lyric element, and a more spacious approach to musical architecture.

The prevailing lyricism and restraint of Beethoven's Violin Concerto doubtless also reflect the particular abilities of Franz Clement, the violinist for whom it was written. More than just a virtuoso violinist, Clement was also an accomplished pianist, score-reader, conductor and concertmaster. Beethoven headed the autograph manuscript with the dedication, “Concerto par Clemenza pour Clement, primo Violino e direttore al Teatro a vienna dal L.v. Bthvn 1806.” It seems that Beethoven completed the concerto barely in time for the premiere at the Theater an der Wien on December 23, 1806. In Alexander Wheelock Thayer's *Life of Beethoven* we read that one contemporary noted “that Clement played the solo a vista, without previous rehearsal.” Even if it is a slight exaggeration to say that Clement sight-read his part—we do not know—these are frightening conditions for the first performance of an extraordinarily difficult and novel work. Long afterwards, in 1842, Beethoven's pupil Carl Czerny recalled that Clement had played the new work “with very great effect” and that there had been much applause.

Only later, however, did the concerto come to win its place in the repertory, after the thirteen-year-old violin virtuoso Joseph Joachim played it in London on May 27, 1844, with Felix Mendelssohn conducting. (Joachim left a set of cadenzas for the concerto that are sometimes still heard today, as did another famous interpreter, Fritz Kreisler.)

An appreciation of the first movement's length, flow, and musical argument is tied to an awareness of the individual thematic materials. It begins with one of the most novel strokes in all of music: four isolated quarter-notes on the timpani usher in the opening theme, the first phrase sounding dolce in the winds and offering as much melody in the space of eight measures as one might wish. The length of the movement grows from its duality of character: on the one hand we have those rhythmic drumbeats, which provide a sense of pulse, on the other the tuneful, melodic flow of the thematic ideas, against which the drumbeat figure can stand in dark relief.

The slow movement, in which flute and trumpets are silent, is a contemplative set of variations on an almost motionless theme first stated by muted strings. The solo violinist adds tender

commentary in the first variation (the theme beginning in the horns, then taken by the clarinet), and then in the second, with the theme entrusted to solo bassoon. The strings have a restatement, with punctuation from the winds, and then the soloist reenters to reflect upon and reinterpret what has been heard, the solo violin's full- and upper-registral tone sounding brightly over the orchestral string accompaniment. Yet another variation is shared by soloist and plucked strings, but when the horns suggest still another beginning, the strings, now unmuted and forte, refute the notion. The soloist responds with a trill and improvises a bridge into the closing rondo.

By way of contrast, the music of the finale is mainly down-to-earth and humorous; among its happy touches are the outdoorsy fanfares that connect the two main themes and, just before the return of these fanfares later in the movement, the only pizzicato notes asked of the soloist in the course of the entire concerto. These fanfares also serve energetically to introduce the cadenza, after which another extended trill brings in a quiet restatement of the rondo theme in an extraordinarily distant key (A-flat) and then the brilliant and boisterous final pages, the solo violinist keeping pace with the orchestra to the very end.

Jean Sibelius was a Finnish violinist and composer of the late Romantic and early-modern periods. Widely recognized as his country's national composer, Sibelius is often credited for supporting the rise of the Finnish national identity in the country's struggle for independence.

En Saga: Sibelius' greatest music is contained in the series of seven symphonies and a dozen or so tone poems which comprise his main orchestral music. The first major tone poem, *En Saga*, predates the first symphony, while the last tone poem, *Tapiola*, came shortly after the last symphony. The title, marvellously vague yet suggesting something epic, is inevitably intriguing, and many have wondered what it might mean. Sibelius never explained what the 'saga' in question might be, even though many people asked him. Premiered in 1893, *En Saga* helped make Sibelius' name in his native Finland and a decade later in Europe, when Busoni invited him to conduct in Berlin. Five decades after its premiere, Sibelius told his secretary: '*En Saga* is the expression of a state of mind. I had undergone a number of painful experiences at the time and in no other work have I revealed myself so completely. It is for this reason that I find all literary explanations quite alien.'

En Saga has the high colour and romantic rhetoric from which Sibelius would turn away in time, but it is as masterly in design as any of the more mature tone poems.

The work as we know it today is the result of revisions the composer made to it in preparation for the Berlin performances in 1902. The earlier, wilder version roamed through different keys even more freely than this one, was more rhapsodic and contained an episode with soaring strings against pulsating woodwind figures redolent of a Tchaikovsky pas de deux. In the 'new' *En Saga*—a creation of the period of the Second Symphony—the signature Sibelian pedal points are longer, the themes more uniformly narrow in their range of melodic movement, and the transitions between sections far smoother. In the intervening decade, Sibelius had become more discerning and less impulsive, and he shortened the work by more than 100 bars, while refining its orchestral palette to more closely match his current thinking. The unusual absence of timpani is common

to both versions and, like the 'original' *En Saga*, the revised one ends as the piece seems to move inexorably back into the world of legend from which it came.

En Saga starts quietly and slowly, as fragments of various themes are hinted at. A long melody emerges from the depths of the orchestra; the tempo soon picks up and the long melody is transformed into a more optimistic incarnation. Several other themes are presented, all related to the opening material—this close relationship of all the themes is a feature of Sibelius's best music, and one of the reasons his music sounds so natural and organic, yet is also so subtle and complex. After a big climax the music relaxes and almost fades out completely. The pick-up is swift and the next fast section thrilling and dramatic. It ends with that single cymbal smash ("Let it ring" directs Sibelius) and the final section, with the keening clarinet solo fading into stillness, is as desolate as anything Sibelius ever penned.

Arturo Márquez is a Mexican composer of orchestra music who incorporates musical forms and styles of his native Mexico into his compositions. He is the only one of nine children in his family who became a musician, although his father played in a mariachi band and his paternal grandfather was a Mexican folksinger. His family immigrated to La Puente, California, during his middle school years. He studied piano, trombone and violin during his school years. At age 16, Márquez began to compose. When it was time to go to college, he decided to go back to Mexico, where he studied composition at the Mexican Music Conservatory. After completing his studies there, he was awarded a scholarship to study composition in Paris with Jacques Castérède. Later, Márquez was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study in the United States. He completed his Master of Music degree in composition at the California Institute of the Arts, where he studied with Morton Subotnik, Mel Powell, Luck Mosko, and James Newton. Márquez fuses Mexican nationalistic styles with classical composition techniques to create music that is exciting and dynamic to the public. He composes not only for the symphony orchestra, but also writes music for solo instruments, chamber music, and film.

Danzón No. 2: This work was commissioned for the National Autonomous University of Mexico's Philharmonic Orchestra and was debuted in 1994. It features solo sections for piano, violin, trumpet, and clarinet. The rhythmic quality of the piece is at the center of the composition; accents shift throughout the piece making it feel as if the tempo is shifting.

The danzón has its roots in a Cuban dance form and is also a very important part of folklore in the Mexican state of Veracruz. The Golden Age of the danzón was the 1940's, when it was very popular in the ballrooms and dance halls of Mexico.

Notes from the composer written for the premiere: "The idea of writing the Danzón 2 originated in 1993 during a trip to Malinalco with the painter Andrés Fonseca and the dancer Irene Martínez, both of whom [have] a special passion for the danzón, which they were able to transmit to me from the beginning, and also during later trips to Veracruz and visits to the Colonia Salón in Mexico City. From these experiences onward, I started to learn the danzón's rhythms, its form, its melodic outline, and to listen to the old recordings by Acerina Mariano Merceron and his

Danzonera Orchestra. I was fascinated and I started to understand that the apparent lightness of the danzón is only like a visiting card for a type of music full of sensuality and qualitative seriousness, a genre which old Mexican people continue to dance with a touch of nostalgia and a jubilant escape towards their own emotional world; we can fortunately still see this in the embrace between music and dance that occurs in the State of Veracruz and in the dance parlors of Mexico City.

"Danzón 2 is a tribute to the environment that nourishes the genre. It endeavors to get as close as possible to the dance, to its nostalgic melodies, to its wild rhythms, and although it violates its intimacy, its form and its harmonic language, it is a very personal way of paying my respects and expressing my emotions towards truly popular music."

~ Biographies ~

Kenneth Freed is in his eighth season as Music Director of Minnesota's Mankato Symphony Orchestra. He has also served as an Assistant Conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra, where he led performances on its Family and Young People's concert series. He has conducted the Duluth Superior, Fargo-Moorhead and San Juan symphony orchestras, the Mankato Ballet Company and for more than a decade has been a conductor at Greenwood Music Camp in Cummington, Massachusetts. Mr. Freed also served as Music Director of the Kenwood Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Freed is well regarded as an orchestra builder, skilled in external relations and community and artistic collaboration. His tenure in Mankato has been marked by a combination of community outreach, artistic quality and innovation, exciting artistic partners and advocacy for state support of the orchestra.

After attending The Juilliard School's Pre-College Division, Mr. Freed received a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from Yale College, as well as a Master of Music Performance from the Yale School of Music. He began conducting while at Yale, and attended the National Symphony Orchestra's Conductor's Institute, headed by Leonard Slatkin, at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. He also participated in conducting courses taught by the renowned Finnish maestro, Jorma Panula.

In addition to his active conducting schedule, Mr. Freed has been a violist with the Minnesota Orchestra since 1998. He was also President and Founder of the Learning Through Music Consulting Group. Before coming to Minnesota, Mr. Freed was a regular substitute violist for the New York Philharmonic and a five-year member of the Manhattan String Quartet, with whom he recorded and toured internationally. He also played second violin with the Rosalyra String Quartet, and has recorded and toured with that ensemble, winning a prestigious McKnight Artist Fellowship.

Mr. Freed is a winner of a 2011-12 Yale School of Music Alumni Ventures award for assisting English Language Learners in Mankato through music, a project that is a collaboration between the Mankato Symphony Orchestra and the Mankato School District using music to find a solution to the achievement gap between native English speakers and English Language Learners at the elementary school level.

Mr. Freed and his wife, Gwen, enjoy ballroom dancing in their spare time. They have three wonderful children.

Yuri Ivan became the Music Director of the Kenwood Symphony Orchestra in 2007. He completed his formal music training in Ukraine where his main teachers were Jarema Skybinky and Mykola Kolessa. Mr. Ivan also studied with Yuri Simonov, Adalberto Tonnini, Vjacheslav Blinov, and Yuri Lutsiv. After graduating from The State Conservatory of Music in Lviv, he was engaged from 1996 to 2000 as an Associate Conductor at The State Theatre of Opera and Ballet in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, where he conducted productions including *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *Carmen*, *Pagliacci*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Die Fledermaus*, *La Fille Mal Gardée*, *Giselle*, *Don Quixote*, *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*. In 2001, Mr. Ivan was named Artistic Director of Trans-Carpathian Philharmonic, co-founded the Uzhgorod Youth Orchestra and the Young Virtuosi music festival in Ukraine. He also appeared with LVMI Opera, the National Symphony-Pops Orchestra of Ukraine, the National Broadcasting Company Orchestra of Ukraine and the Northern Hungarian Symphony. Mr. Ivan holds a Doctorate Degree in conducting from the University of Minnesota where he studied with Akira Mori and Craig Kirchhoff. Mr. Ivan is the Music Director at St. Constantine Ukrainian Catholic Church and is active in the artistic life of the Twin Cities metro area, collaborating with a range of artistic and educational organizations. He has served since 2006 as the Music Director of the Linden Hills Chamber Orchestra. In 2010, Mr. Ivan founded the Byzantine Choral Festival where he serves as Artistic Director.

The **Kenwood Symphony Orchestra** was founded as the Kenwood Chamber Orchestra in 1972 as an adult education class at the Kenwood Community Center. From those humble beginnings, the orchestra quickly grew in membership, ability, and reputation. Over the years, several gifted conductors have graced the podium, including Uri Barnea, Lee Humphries, Jim Riccardo, Jeannine Wager, William Intriligator, Myles Hernandez, Kenneth Freed, and Jeffrey Stirling. Since September, 2007, the orchestra has been under the direction of Yuri Ivan. Based at Washburn High School, KSO is comprised of over 50 highly accomplished musicians passionate about playing and sharing great music. KSO is a nonprofit organization financed primarily by members' dues, financial gifts from supporters, our annual Masters Concerto and Aria event, performance collaborations with the Metropolitan Ballet, and a 2015/16 Metropolitan Regional Arts Council grant.

~ KSO Members ~

Violin I

Joanna Phillips ◆◆
Leonard Pratt Chair
Erin Grorud
Brenda Haines
Julie Pronovici
Steve Rollin
David Wiebelhaus
Sun-Ming Tong *

Violin II

Jen Bolmer ◆
Alvina Brueggemann
Kassandra DiPietro *
Madelyn Krych
Betsy Lofgren *
Megan Peterson
Andrea Sieber *
Laura Simonson
Clair Ganzel Tyra

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Ann Bur ◆
Sarah Kirby
Pat McCarthy
Erika Neely
Jill Touchette

Cello

Anne Swarts ✧
Todd Grill
Sarah Hernandez
Liesl Koehnen
Kathy Nyseth
John Renwick

Bass

Stacy Aldrich ◆
Al Albers
Neill Merck

Flute

Anne Cheney ◆
Leslie Pietila

Piccolo

Leslie Pietila

Oboe

Julie Brusen ◆
Tammy Wahlin

Clarinet

Mary Beth Huttlin * ✧
Shelagh MacLeod

Bassoon

Ellen Maas Pratt ◆
Nancy Jacobson *

Trumpet

Howard Brahmstedt ◆
Jim Olcott
Bob Zobal

Horns

Ryan Penschorn * ✧
Nicole Danielson
Bob Meier
Becky Monson

Trombone

Timothy Jung * ✧
Hans Arlton
Tim Aune

Tuba

Sam Sharp

Percussion

Corey Sevett ✧
Stacy Aldrich
Bob Zobal

Piano

Franco Holder *

◆◆ Acting Concertmaster ◆ Section leader ✧ Acting section leader * Guest musician

The Kenwood Symphony Orchestra's mission is to play, share, and inspire great music by:

- Offering performance opportunities
- Programming appealing repertoire
- Performing free concerts
- Including under-served communities

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