

The background of the poster is a photograph of a turbulent ocean with white-capped waves under a dark, overcast sky. The text is overlaid on this image.

BARDOLOGY

SHAKESPEARE, MUSICALLY SPEAKING

SOUND & FURY

ELGIN YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
2013/14 SEASON



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2013

RANDAL SWIGGUM, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



2008
CONDUCTOR
OF THE YEAR

2000, 2007
YOUTH ORCHESTRA
OF THE YEAR

2005
PROGRAMMING
OF THE YEAR

2001
ELGIN IMAGE
AWARD

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra welcomes you to the 2013-14 season! As we begin our 38th season, I am happy to announce that the EYSO remains a growing organization that is as strong as ever. We continue to experience solid growth as reflected in the record high number of auditions and enrollment. This season, the EYSO has 351 active students that represent 63 different communities and our Chamber Music Institute can boast record enrollment as well. As President of this wonderful organization and on behalf of the full Board of Directors, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our parents, supporters and students for the hard work and dedication to make this happen.

I have been part of the Board of Directors since 2002 and I am very impressed with the strength and stability of the organization as well as the strong leadership provided by our Executive Director, Kathy Matthews and our Artistic Director, Randal Swiggum. The tireless efforts put forth by these two individuals is always incredible.

As a volunteer for this great organization, I share the belief that our goal should be much more than great concerts. My desire to support youth, education, and the arts as well as the opportunity to work alongside an exceptional staff, are the glue that has held me close to the EYSO for all these years.

If these observations ring true to any of you and you have the ability and desire to contribute your time, talents and resources to the EYSO, please feel free to contact me or Kathy Matthews to learn about volunteer opportunities. We can't do what we do without the generous help of our community.

Please put away your cell phones, take a deep, relaxing breath and enjoy the performances of "Bardology: Shakespeare, Musically Speaking."

Sincerely yours,

Jeffrey A. Wheeler
EYSO Board President

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BARDOLOGY

SHAKESPEARE, MUSICALLY SPEAKING

SOUND & FURY

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2013 ECC BLIZZARD THEATRE

2:00 CONCERT

PRELUDE ORCHESTRA
ANDREW MASTERS,
CONDUCTOR

SINFONIA
JASON FLAKS,
CONDUCTOR
ANDREW MASTERS,
ASSOCIATE CONDUCTOR

PHILHARMONIA
DAVID ANDERSON,
CONDUCTOR

4:30 CONCERT

BRASS CHOIR
JASON FLAKS,
CONDUCTOR

PHILHARMONIA
DAVID ANDERSON,
CONDUCTOR

YOUTH SYMPHONY
RANDAL SWIGGUM,
CONDUCTOR

7:30 CONCERT

YOUTH SYMPHONY
RANDAL SWIGGUM,
CONDUCTOR

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Established in October 2013 with donations given to honor and remember Tom Matthews, loving husband of EYSO Executive Director Kathy Matthews and father of alum Sarah Matthews Jacobs, this fund was created to allow the purchase of auxiliary orchestral instruments. A much needed A clarinet has been purchased already; and as the fund grows other instrument needs will be addressed, providing an important resource for EYSO students.

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

BARDOLOGY

SHAKESPEARE, MUSICALLY SPEAKING

I. SOUND AND FURY

Sound and fury. In Shakespeare's inimitable way he combined three words whose essence rings with both sense and sound—the energy of its consonants and rhythm sending out as much significance as the meaning of the words themselves.

This little phrase became the title of a Faulkner novel, at least two feature films, and several rock bands. But the astute Shakespearean and EYSO fan might question our use of it for a concert title, especially when considered in its original context (from the last act of Macbeth) where the defeated king sees his own impending doom approaching and is surrounded by the death and havoc he has wreaked, including the sudden death of his own wife.

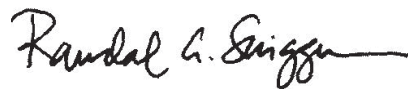
Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing.

Macbeth, whose reckless ambition and desire for more has gone unchecked, is now pondering the possibility that life has no final meaning. It is contrived and senseless, and will fade into nothingness. It is merely “sound and fury”—an actor who struts about in an absurdist play—and ultimately empty.

The only reason this bleak view resonates with us—and we feel some pity for this ruthless murderer—is because we are all “meaning-makers”, wanting to believe that we can make sense of things, that life has order and coherence, and that ultimately things do matter.

It is this drive to make meaning that informs the EYSO approach to studying music. Of course it's not all serious and not all big “meaning of life” questions we are exploring. But we do believe that digging deeply into great masterworks of music does offer a kind of meaning. That music is more than just pleasant (but ultimately empty) entertainment. That it is a way of knowing, another lens through which to see the world, a way of understanding the human experience.

Thank you for joining us today on part of that journey, as we walk alongside some of the greatest composers who have ever lived, and also one of the greatest “meaning-makers,” William Shakespeare.



Randal Swiggum

P.S. We continue to celebrate what's special about the EYSO and the rich arts scene in Elgin through our Only in Elgin initiative, launched three years ago as part of our 35th anniversary celebration. Watch for the special logo to highlight what is truly unique and innovative about the EYSO.



We love kids, but not all kids love concerts. Although the EYSO welcomes kids of all ages to participate in and enjoy our concerts, some find the experience a bit “challenging.”

Every EYSO concert is recorded and each concert represents the extraordinary effort and hard work of our young musicians. We want them to remember their performance for its artistry, not its interruptions.

If you think your child may be too young to enjoy the concert, please consider stepping out to the lobby with them to watch the performance on the monitors.
Thank you for your cooperation!

Please turn off all electronic devices. No audio or video recording or photography of any kind is permitted during the concert. Video cameras should be checked in the lobby.

PROGRAM / 2:00 PM CONCERT

PRELUDE ORCHESTRA

ANDREW MASTERS, CONDUCTOR

EARL OF OXFORD MARCHE

WILLIAM BYRD (1540-1623)

William Byrd is one of the most respected composers of the English Renaissance. Well known in his day, his skills as a singer, keyboardist, and composer were highly regarded and quickly earned him favor and patronage among English royalty and nobility. It was while working in the Royal Court that he developed a close professional rapport with the 17th Earl of Oxford, Edward DeVere.

Like Byrd, Lord DeVere was artistically inclined. He was a gifted poet and trained musician which undoubtedly strengthened their bond. The title Earl of Oxford was the third highest rank among the British Peerage system of nobility, held exclusively by the DeVere lineage for five and a half centuries from 1141 to 1703. As his title demanded, he was also a skilled jousting and trained military leader, having commanded troops on the front line. By the time he met Byrd he had already seen real battle and was a well-respected leader.

It was customary in all Renaissance courts for such noblemen to be announced by the sound of trumpet fanfares or “tuckets.” In fact, these high-ranking individuals often had their own unique “tucket tune” by which they were identified. Shakespeare plays are filled with mentions of such fanfares, especially in history plays like Henry V.

The piece you will hear today originally was written for the virginal, an early keyboard that predated the harpsichord. One of its earliest publications was given the title “March Before the Battle” as a introduction to a ten-section piece called “The Battle Suite.” Later publications of the same music for mixed instruments adopted the name “Earl of Oxford Marche,” probably because of the known camaraderie Byrd and Oxford shared and Oxford’s association with the British military.

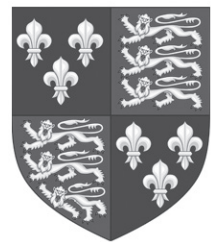
The piece has all the earmarks of an Elizabethan fanfare. Rhythmically compelling, stately, and uplifting, it echoes the style of trumpets and drums and is today often performed with brass. It is likely that the central tune of the piece was the official fanfare for The Earl of Oxford, and given his musical background may have even been written by DeVere himself to be later developed by Byrd as an homage in his keyboard suite.

SUITE FROM HENRY V (1944)

WILLIAM WALTON (1902-1983)

II. Passacaglia: Death of Falstaff

IV. Touch her Soft Lips and Part



Henry V is the story of a king powerfully leading England to victory over France, and specifically frames the events surrounding the historic battle of Agincourt.

Henry was not always a strong leader. Shakespeare’s account of Henry V actually begins in his two part epic of Henry IV, when Hal is a young, rebellious prince, influenced by the boisterous, unruly Falstaff. Henry repents, however, at the end of the play when his father is near death and Henry’s inheritance of the throne becomes apparent. In order to lead England effectively, and with his eye on the French throne, he knows he has to put to rest his old life, including the negative influence of his friend Falstaff. Henry allows Falstaff and his cronies to be ordered to prison until they are reformed. By the second act of Henry V, Falstaff dies, broken hearted at the rejection of his young friend, now king.

The lyrical beauty and emotional current of the play is beautifully captured in William Walton’s 1944 film score for Lawrence Olivier’s Henry V. For Prelude, the emotional heart of the story of Henry V drove our rehearsals.

“Death of Falstaff” is a passacaglia which features a dark four-measure ostinato in the lower strings repeated over and over throughout the movement. Above it is an elongated, mournful melody in the upper strings. Prelude students were charged with thinking of a time that they may have had to make a life-changing decision that had an uncomfortable result, but was ultimately for the best, such as the one Henry had to make with Falstaff.

It is in the same scene in Act 2 while mourning the loss of Falstaff that the English soldiers are preparing to leave for battle in France. Among the reluctant young men is Pistol, who only just recently married his sweetheart Nell Quickly, but is now having to say goodbye, perhaps forever, as he goes into battle. The music of “Touch her Soft Lips and Part” is sweet and tender—a yearning melody in triple meter harmonized in thirds. Accompanying the lovely melody like a heart beat is a rhythmic “long, short-long” pulse. Muted strings and richly textured extended major seventh harmonies add to the warmth of the music as we imagine two young lovers never wanting to end their potentially last embrace.

SYMPHONY NO. 8 IN G MAJOR

ANTONIN DVORAK (1841-1904)

IV. Finale

The dramatic final movement of Dvorak’s Eighth Symphony does not hold a direct, intentional relationship to Shakespeare, but using the Bard’s genius as a lens to study the drama in Dvorak’s music made it a natural fit.

The music is set in a unusual combination of two standard forms: theme and variations and sonata form. This gave Prelude orchestra a unique opportunity to study the different treatments of the main theme as if it were the main character in a Shakespeare play finding himself in different situations within the plot. Of the different types of Shakespeare’s plays, this music might best be compared to a history play, set in pastoral Bohemia (instead of England) centered around a confident and heroic main character. Our hero is brought to the stage by a proud introductory fanfare and utters his first line, played legato by the violins in an understated, relaxed tempo demonstrating our hero’s “calm under pressure” attitude. He is quickly called to action in a vibrant, up-tempo setting, with riveting sixteenth notes and flashy bow (sword) technique.

The development section introduces a new character and new musical material bringing conflict to the plot. Ultimately victory is achieved and the hero is welcomed home in the recapitulation with an even greater sense of pride and deep admiration by the town’s people. Using their imagination and powers of speculation, the Prelude students grew to understand the dramatic line inherent in this music which helped bring it to life.

SINFONIA

JASON FLAKS, CONDUCTOR

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CORONATION MARCH: CROWN IMPERIAL

WILLIAM WALTON (1902-1983) ARR. STONE

Imagine being tasked with the composition of music for a coronation. The most minute detail about this type of event is agonized over (down to the color coordination of the horses as noted by one Sinfonia member). What pressure, creating music fit for a King! The piece was originally written for the coronation of King George VI of England, and later used at Queen Elizabeth’s coronation in 1953.

One of the great joys of studying and performing this piece has been the opportunity to embrace its layers of detail. Built on four memorable melodies, each of which embodies a “royal” sound, Walton fills out the different sections of the piece with an array of brilliant decisions in the accompaniment.

Pedal point, the use of a repeated tone to create tension with the melody and harmony, is used in several different sections as Walton builds each climax bigger than the last. It allows him to stretch out the climax and push the orchestra to its limit as it works to maintain such intensity. Walton also slows the tempo in several spots causing already noble melodies to take on a new weight and importance. The piece is in many ways the Mt. Everest of coronation music. When one great summit is achieved, another, even more grand, presents itself.

THREE DANCES FROM THE MUSIC TO HENRY VIII

EDWARD GERMAN (1862-1936)

II. Shepherds' Dance

The fairest hand I ever touch'd! O beauty,
Till now I never knew thee!

Love at first sight. Henry utters this line in his first encounter with Anne Bullen. Already questioning his marriage to Queen Katharine, the overwhelming emotions felt during his dance with Anne set in motion events that would rewrite history and lead to the demise of a loyal Queen. Edward German captures all of this in the music for this scene.

The introduction to this dance provided an opportunity to study how music has the power to capture all the complicated levels of emotion in a scene. It features an innocent melody set atop a minor chord, itself set atop a long pedal tone. The melody evokes the excitement of new feelings of love. The minor chord (in the second violin and viola) lurks beneath the melody, reminding the listener of the questionable moral decisions about to be made. The pedal tone could represent the inevitability of the relationship and eventual marriage of Henry and Anne. All this in less than thirty seconds of music.

SYMPHONY NO. 9 “FROM THE NEW WORLD”

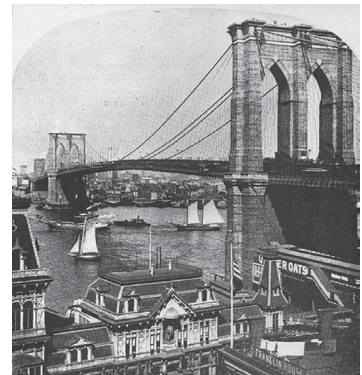
ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

IV. Allegro con fuoco

Between the years 1892 and 1895 Czech composer Antonín Dvořák held tenure as director of the National Conservatory in New York. During this time, he enjoyed traveling the Midwest including a short respite in Spillville, Iowa (a largely Czech community) where he composed his famous and beloved “Symphony from the New World.”

Dvořák was always attracted to folk music. Its simplicity is at the heart of much of his music, most notably in his Slavonic Dances which strongly identifies with his Bohemian roots. With the intention of composing an “American” symphony, composing original music that imitates folk tunes of African and Native Americans seemed only logical. What makes the music in this symphony so special, however, is not just the thematic material—most of the tunes throughout the symphony are only 5 notes long—but how effectively they are developed and brought together in a new light in its culminating finale movement. With the interweaving of melodies and thematic material, Dvorak enhances the dramatic effect.

Dvořák’s symphony can be likened to a journey of self-discovery and adventure; it is one individual’s perspective of a new land and culture. But like a compelling Shakespeare play, we as listeners are called to see ourselves in the story. Can we identify with experiencing something new that changed our life’s perspective? Or have the “stars” ever aligned in a way that allowed something special to take place in our life that otherwise may have never happened? (as in the new experience that is felt when two themes come together in Dvořák’s music.) Questions like these were posed to Sinfonia students throughout rehearsals that deepened their musical awareness and experience.



PHILHARMONIA

DAVID ANDERSON, CONDUCTOR

SLAVONIC DANCE IN G MINOR, OP. 46

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

(please see 4:30 program for notes)

PROGRAM / 4:30 PM CONCERT

BRASS CHOIR

JASON FLAKS, CONDUCTOR

OTHELLO: A SYMPHONIC PORTRAIT IN FIVE SCENES

ALFRED REED (1921-2005)

Jealous suspicion is dangerous even in the most generous of minds. Shakespeare's Othello tells the tragic story of a great general, invincible in battle but, due to a trusting heart, vulnerable to manipulation amongst those closest to him. It is this blind trust that allows him to be tragically manipulated by his disgruntled ensign Iago. Convinced by Iago that his wife has been unfaithful, Othello murders her. Upon learning he has been duped, Othello takes his own life. Each movement of the work is inspired by a scene and corresponding line from the play. The composer described each movement:

I. Prelude (Venice)

The first movement establishes at once the tense, military atmosphere that pervades so much of the play, and reveals itself in Othello's statement to the Duke of Venice in Act I, Scene 3: "The tyrant custom hath made the flinty and steel couch of war my thrice-driven bed..."

II. Aubade (Cyprus)

Aubade means "morning song," or serenade, here played by itinerant musicians under Othello and Desdemona's window (Act III, Scene 1), and titled appropriately, "Good morning, General."

III. Othello and Desdemona

The third movement portrays the deep feeling between Othello and Desdemona, passionate yet tender, and is prefaced by a quotation from Othello's famous speech to the Venetian Senate in Act I, telling of his wooing her: "She loved me for the dangers I had passed, and I loved her that she did pity them."

IV. Entrance of the Court

The fourth movement, is an amalgam of Shakespeare's Act IV, Scene 1 and Boito's handling of essentially the same action in his libretto for Verdi's opera. Following the terrible scene in Othello, driven half mad with rage and jealousy, first upbraids and strikes Desdemona in view of the court which has come to hail him as a hero, Iago mocks "Behold the Lion of Venice!"

V. Epilogue (The Death of Desdemona)

The fifth and final movement is a summation of the music and final resolution of the tensions heretofore generated, just as Act V, Scene 2 sums up the play and resolves all the wrenching apart of human nature that has preceded it. The music here carries as its quotation Othello's famous last lines, spoken to the dead body of Desdemona "I kissed thee ere I killed thee. No way but this..."



Desdemona's Death Song, Dante Gabriel Rossetti

PHILHARMONIA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

DAVID ANDERSON, CONDUCTOR

SYMPHONY NO. 40 IN G MINOR, K. 550

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

Mozart is known for his gift at writing melodies. Looking at nearly anything he composed, one will notice one melody after another, sometimes related to one other but often completely different. It is no surprise that he was so successful in the operatic genre. In his G Minor Symphony, No. 40, this characteristic is present throughout. After low strings provide accompaniment, the violins present the first melody; it is one of his most well-known tunes. The haunting quality of the melody combined with the churning viola eighth notes provide a certain restlessness and unease. Soon, the scene changes into a B-flat major theme in longer note values over an accompaniment of continual eighth notes by the low strings. A new melody appears, first in the strings, then continued by woodwinds, and this leads to yet other new ideas.

After hearing the melodies once again through a repeat, the music moves into the second large section, called a development. Here, Mozart breaks themes down into fragments all while making use of extremely advanced harmony. This is late Mozart (it was composed in 1788 and is his second to last symphony), and is much more daring in his chord and key choices than he was earlier in his life. The main theme eventually comes back, and the final large section is a varied repeat of the first.

PHILHARMONIA

DAVID ANDERSON, CONDUCTOR

SLAVONIC DANCE IN G MINOR, OP. 46

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

In 1877, Antonín Dvořák was a relatively unknown composer who had just received the Austrian State Stipendium, a grant for artists. One of the members of the judging panel was Johannes Brahms; he was so impressed with Dvořák's Moravian Duets that he put his publisher, Fritz Simrock, in touch with Dvořák. Simrock accepted the duets for publication, and immediately asked Dvořák to compose a set of dances, similar to the Brahms Hungarian Dances he had published a few years before. Even though Dvořák wanted to compose longer, more substantial works, he realized that a set of dances could help get his name out to a broad audience. In early 1878, Dvořák composed his first set of Slavonic Dances for piano duet, then orchestrated them at Simrock's request. This publication, in the words of critic Louis Ehlert, led to "a positive assault on the sheet music shops," and resulted in quick and widespread popularity for the young composer.

Brahms composed his Hungarian Dances as miniatures for piano duet, and made sure people knew that they were only his arrangements of existing tunes. In the Slavonic Dances, Dvořák composed his own melodies in the spirit of Czech (Slavonic) folk tunes. Each movement is in a standard Czech dance form such as Dumka, Polka, Sousedská, or Skočná. The eighth is a Furiant, a lively dance in 2/4 or 3/4 with rapidly shifting accents.

A boisterous theme played by the full orchestra begins this dance; it is felt in one, but because of the syncopated accents in the first two measures, the listener may find it difficult to find the pulse at first. The hemiola figure plays a crucial role throughout the movement. Eventually, the mood does die down and we hear solo winds over light string accompaniment. Just as the tempo slows nearly to a stop, the first theme bursts onto the scene once again, rushing headlong to a breathless coda.

This piece was last heard by EYSO audiences at the January 2012 Faculty Recital, with Randal Swiggum and David Anderson playing the original piano duet.

HAMLET: A SHAKESPEARE SCENARIO

WILLIAM WALTON (1902-1983)

I. Prelude

V. The Question

VIII. Retribution and Threnody

Frank Del Giudice, narration

Since the days of Euripides and the Greek chorus, music has been used in the theatre to help tell the story—to amplify the emotions onstage, to reveal character, and to establish mood and setting. With the advent of film, some of the 20th century's greatest composers contributed symphonic music to the storytelling, not only creating beautiful soundtracks, but often enriching the concert hall repertoire as well.

A wonderful example of this is William Walton's collaboration with actor and director Laurence Olivier in three critically acclaimed Shakespeare adaptations, *Henry V* (1943), played today by Prelude Orchestra and Youth Symphony, *Hamlet* (1947), and *Richard III* (1955). At the 1949 Academy Awards, *Hamlet* won Best Picture, Olivier won Best Actor for playing the title role, and William Walton was nominated for Best Score.

Walton's music is dark, complex, technically challenging, and a fitting match for history's most famous tragedy. The music was so expertly crafted that it was immediately recognized as suitable for the concert hall. Christopher Palmer took Walton's score and adapted it into a nine-movement suite, *Hamlet: A Shakespeare Scenario*. Today we perform four of these movements. Studying them has given us the opportunity to not only play this amazingly sophisticated music, but also to trace the plot of *Hamlet*, and to hear every member of the orchestra quote a few lines of Shakespeare.

The Prelude crashes onto the scene with richly layered textures of rhythmic and harmonic dissonance, all with an undercurrent of instability. Wide leaps, sharply dotted rhythms, and extreme use of quintuplets (five notes to the beat) all contribute to its foreboding quality. The intensity eventually dies away by the end of the movement, but this creates an even more frightening mood, as the orchestra plays a varied reprise of the opening statement followed by a trumpet and flute dotted figure that seems to foreshadow ugly events.

In the famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy Hamlet wrestles with dark and disturbing questions. In "The Question," Walton sets up the famous passage with several minutes of music that rapidly changes mood. After a calm opening in the strings, the pace picks up, the pitches rise, more instruments are added, and the music rushes to a brief climax before slowing back down. Over a chromatic cello ostinato, the low brass punches out an accented figure as strings interject comments; we quickly reach another climax before quickly dying down once again. In the movie, the soliloquy begins here, and Walton's music retreats into the background while still setting the mood. Palmer retained this interplay between orchestra and speaker in the concert suite.



Hamlet includes no less than eight deaths and the pace of murders accelerates as the story reaches its conclusion. Walton's music for the final scene, "Retribution and Threnody," is a stark representation of all the carnage. Like "The Question" it begins more subdued then rushes to a climax, but the music is even more chaotic, more rhythmically and harmonically unstable. After outbursts from the low instruments depicting the dying Hamlet, the final movement, "Threnody," grieves for the dead prince and the other characters. A melody first played by the strings and clarinet dominates the texture throughout, and eventually dies away.

SYMPHONY NO. 2 (A LONDON SYMPHONY)

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)

IV. Andante con moto

Vaughan Williams was an ardent Shakespearean his entire life, often setting the Bard's words in songs and choral pieces, and even writing an entire opera, *Sir John in Love*, based on the character Falstaff in *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Vaughan Williams' "London" Symphony, however, has virtually nothing to do with Shakespeare and in fact has an Epilogue which was actually inspired by a novel by H.G. Wells. So why are we studying it?

Part of what makes the EYSO unique is this idea of looking at a work of art in one discipline and how it can inform our understanding of another. Shakespeare and Vaughan Williams both wrote masterpieces with layer upon layer of meaning, and we have explored how these layers can overlap. Exploring Shakespeare helps us see new meaning in Vaughan Williams and vice versa.

One example: we can look at the iamb, a metrical device common in Shakespeare. This is simply two syllables, one unstressed followed by one that is stressed (like “appear”). Looking through the lens of poetry, we can be on the lookout for motifs in music that are similar. There are countless examples and we have observed this specifically in the one of the first themes presented in Vaughan Williams. A dotted rhythmic figure that appears throughout the movement is clearly played as unstressed/stressed. With this new way to see and hear music, other examples readily reveal (or as Shakespeare would say, “unfold”) themselves.

Going one step further, Shakespeare typically strings several iambs together to form a line. Iambic pentameter is five consecutive iambs—a ten-syllable line starting with an unstressed and alternating throughout. An example from the famous “To be or not to be” soliloquy (which is itself three consecutive iambs) is, “For in that sleep of death what dreams may come.” At times, Shakespeare will present several consecutive lines of iambic pentameter:

To sleep – perchance to dream – ay there’s the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil

then include a phrase that disrupts expectations by breaking the pattern:

Must give us pause. There’s the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.

The effect is unsettling and very much on purpose. Shakespeare wanted to give special emphasis to “must give us pause” as well as what follows immediately.

Composers do something very similar, creating interest by leading us to expect one thing, then surprising with something entirely different. We looked at how this works in the Vaughan Williams, towards the end of the section that opened with all of the musical iambs. He presents the theme in four bar phrases, but just before a critical moment in the piece adds a measure to one of the phrases, creating tension and interest.

The movement begins with a sweeping symphonic gesture followed by a slow, noble march, the “iambic theme” made up of mainly four-bar phrases. Other instruments join, and the main theme transforms into something even more heroic and grand. The music shifts into a quicker tempo with a faster, more punctuated, driving, and even violent idea. Suddenly, the motion comes to a halt, as this latest theme is transformed into something quite different. At first, it is still quite powerful, but quickly deflates to set up another statement of the “iambic theme.” This time, it is compressed and much more harmonically unstable. Themes from the first movement make a quick appearance, followed by chiming of Big Ben.

The Epilogue appears from the mist, presenting a slow theme from the first movement. It is this section of music that has been inspired from the last chapter of H.G. Wells’s novel *Tono-Bungay*.

“Light after light goes down. England and the Kingdom, Britain and the Empire, the old prides and the old devotions, glide abeam, astern, sink down upon the horizon, pass – pass. The river passes – London passes, England passes...”

Starkly contrasting from the rest of the movement, this passage is in no hurry. It serves as an exquisitely beautiful closing to this monumental work.

YOUTH SYMPHONY

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LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1918-1990)

I. Prologue

(please see 7:30 program for notes)

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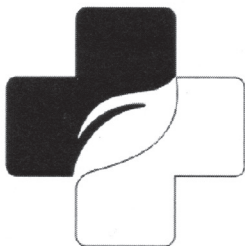
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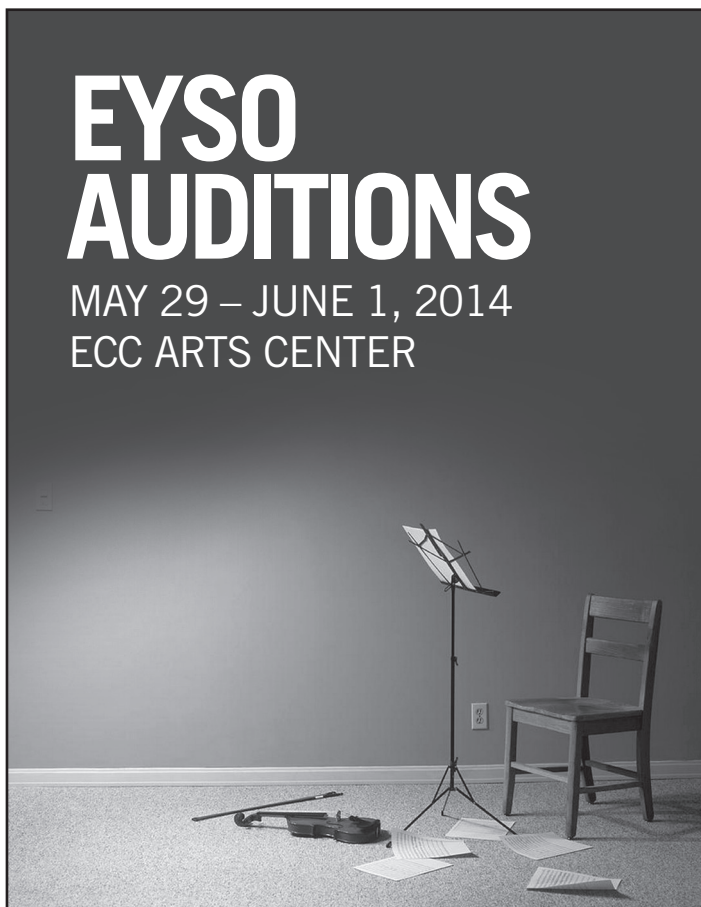
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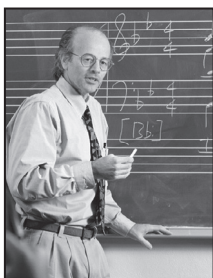
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YOUTH SYMPHONY

RANDAL SWIGGUM, CONDUCTOR

The 7:30 pm concert is followed by a post-concert chat with the Youth Symphony members & Mr. Swiggum. It will begin about five minutes after the concert ends.

SYMPHONIC DANCES FROM WEST SIDE STORY

LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1918-1990)

I. Prologue

The Shakespeare play which has inspired more musical works and visual art than any other is indisputably *Romeo and Juliet*. In fact the EYSO will be dedicating its final concert in May, *Star Cross'd*, to this single play. *Romeo and Juliet* has shown itself to be an endless source of interpretation and adaptation—a new production on Broadway, with Orlando Bloom as Romeo, just opened a few weeks ago.

But without question, the most wildly successful and beloved adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* is *West Side Story*, which opened on Broadway in 1957. Its creators, Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim, and Jerome Robbins, fashioned an updated version of the tale, placing the star-crossed lovers Tony and Maria on opposite sides of a conflict between street gangs in the slums of the upper west side of Manhattan.

By the time the 1961 film version of the musical appeared (which won ten Academy Awards, including Best Picture) interest in the show's music had reached a fever pitch, and the film's soundtrack was a best seller. Using the original orchestrations now expanded for a full symphony orchestra, an extended medley—a fantasia, really—was created, tracing the show's plot with its music. Premiered by the New York Philharmonic in 1961, it was titled *Symphonic Dances* and has been a staple in the repertory for American orchestras (and orchestras abroad) ever since.

Notoriously difficult, with a large percussion section and technically demanding wind and brass parts, the entire thirty-minute work is a year-long project for the Youth Symphony, performed in its entirety next May. Tonight's concert features the electrifying "Prologue" which introduces through dance the rivalry between the Sharks and the Jets. The opening three-note motif is a whistle signal used by the Jets and used to identify them throughout the show. The rest of the jazz-inflected music is alternately teasing, taunting, and violently threatening, with the music sometimes saying "Get lost!" and sometimes saying "I dare you..." Finger snaps add an element of adolescent cool, and the police whistle a startling shock.

BALLO (BALLET MUSIC) FROM MACBETH

GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813-1901)

While there have been literally hundreds of operas based on Shakespeare, it is a strange fact that only about five or six of them are in the standard repertory today. And of those, three are by Verdi: *Othello*, *Falstaff* (both creations of the composer's later years, and both undisputed masterpieces) and his stirring psychodrama, *Macbeth*, which was Verdi's first work based on the Bard.

Curiously enough, when Verdi set about to adapt *Macbeth* for the operatic stage in 1846, he had never actually seen a stage production of the play. (Shakespeare was still relatively little performed in Italy in the early 19th century.) But Verdi was no stranger to Shakespeare's genius and had been reading the plays and sonnets in translation for many years; in a letter of 1865 he wrote: "He is one of my favorite poets. I have had him in my hands since my earliest youth."

Clearly the new *Macbeth* opera was unusually important to Verdi, although he had already been successful with nine previous blockbuster hits. Writing to his librettist Francesco Piave, he said: "This tragedy is one of the greatest creations of man... If we can't make something great out of it let us at least try to do something out of the ordinary."

Verdi's relationship with Piave was strained over the collaboration, with Verdi constantly making changes, most of which were intended to make the opera's libretto follow the play more closely. Verdi did alter the original play in several ways: the infamous three witches who open the play became a large female chorus, singing in a fantastic and grotesque style. The opera does not end darkly like the play, but instead with a brilliant chorus celebrating victory over the slain *Macbeth*.

Nearly twenty years later, Verdi was asked to adapt his opera for a production in Paris, premiered April 21, 1865. By now a much more experienced composer (and international celebrity), Verdi made many small changes to the score. Most significantly, he added a ballet, in keeping with French tradition.

The ballet (or “ballo”) opens Act III. The setting is outside a dark cavern where, in thunder and lightning, witches gather around a boiling cauldron and compare their destructive exploits of the previous night. Suddenly the scene fills with spirits, demons, and more witches who, according to Verdi’s instructions, dance wildly around the cauldron. This first section of the ballo is among the most unique and frightening musical creations ever—with its mysteriously hushed but frenetic rhythms played by two solo trumpets and a trombone in high register, there is simply no other piece that sounds like this, before or since.

SYMPHONY NO. 6 (1947)

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)



I. Allegro

II. Moderato

PREMIERE PERFORMANCE BY AN AMERICAN YOUTH SYMPHONY.

One of the towering masterworks of English music, Vaughan Williams’ Sixth Symphony was premiered shortly after the end of the Second World War, and is a brilliant but deeply unsettling work of art, with the same power to disturb as Othello or Hamlet.

The distinguished musician and scholar Deryck Cooke (who later completed Mahler’s Tenth symphony) was present at the first performance on April 21, 1948. He described the effect of the piece on him as “nothing short of cataclysmic - the violence of the opening and the turmoil of the whole first movement; the sinister mutterings of the slow movement, with that almost unbearable passage in which trumpets and drums batter out an ominous rhythm louder and louder and will not leave off; the vociferous uproar of the scherzo and the grotesque triviality of the Trio; and most of all the slow finale, pianissimo throughout, devoid of all warmth and life, a hopeless wandering through a dead world ending literally in nothingness. This at any rate was my impression while the music was being played. I remember my attention was distracted, near the end, by the unbelievable sight of a lady powdering her nose—one wondered whether it was incomprehension, imperviousness, or a defense-mechanism. The symphony, as a work of art, more than deserved the overwhelming applause it got, but I was no more able to applaud than at the end of Tchaikovsky’s Pathétique Symphony—less so, in fact, for this seemed to be an ultimate nihilism beyond Tchaikovsky’s conceiving: every drop of blood seemed frozen in one’s veins.”

From the standpoint of the EYSO Bardology season, this piece has virtually nothing to do with Shakespeare. It has, however, offered countless opportunities for the Youth Symphony to explore aspects of structure and style shared by symphonic movements and dramatic works.

A symphony, like a Shakespeare play, is a large-scale work created by piecing together thousands of carefully chosen details to create not only a coherent whole, but a work which is essentially dramatic—that is, about a conflict. High school English classes emphasize this feature of plays: the protagonist who battles an antagonist, whether another character, circumstances without, or forces within. A symphony also depends on setting up a dramatic conflict and watching (hearing) how it plays itself out over time.

In this symphony, there are four musical conflicts. To use specific musical vocabulary, they are conflicts between:

- Duple rhythm (moving in twos) and triple rhythm (moving in threes)
- Major thirds and minor thirds
- Keys separated by a half step (F minor and E minor)
- The tritone (augmented fourth)

The last three of these are among the most emotionally painful terms of musical language, which helps explain the shattering effect that this symphony can have on listeners.

Vaughan Williams does something significant which is also a feature of many Shakespeare plays: disclosing what the piece is “about” in a crystallized, almost hidden form in the very first few moments of the piece. Of course, it’s only in retrospect that the audience realizes that the piece’s ideas were revealed at the outset, but this is one of the pleasures of a great work of art: bearing up under repeated listenings and constantly revealing something new or something missed on previous hearings.

How does this work? Take the opening of *Hamlet*, for example, where two men meet on a platform in front of Castle Elsinore. Francisco is the night watchman. Bernardo has arrived to relieve him of his watch:

BERNARDO

Who's there?

FRANCISCO

Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

BERNARDO

Long live the king!

FRANCISCO

Bernardo?

BERNARDO

He.

FRANCISCO

You come most carefully upon your hour.

BERNARDO

'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

FRANCISCO

For this relief much thanks: 'tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.

In just eight lines of dialogue—a masterpiece of concision—we learn that it's night, it's cold, it's hard to see, everyone seems to be tense, there is some kind of political unrest (as Bernardo nervously shouts “Long live the king!”), and something is wrong at Elsinore (“I am sick at heart.”).

Closer scrutiny reveals how Shakespeare secretly points to one of the main themes of *Hamlet*. The words “unfold yourself”—which here mean “reveal who you are,”—stand in as a microcosm of the entire play. *Hamlet* is about the unfolding or deconstruction of the self, the revealing of the real person beneath the exterior pretense—Hamlet in particular, but also the deceptive selves of Gertrude, Claudius, and others, all who seem to be often playing roles with each other. The play, besides being a thriller about murder and suspense, also asks the larger questions: Who are we really, and how do others perceive us? Can we fully know ourselves, or make ourselves known to others?

With the same spare efficiency, Vaughan Williams uses the opening gesture of his symphony to reveal the musical conflicts of the entire symphony. In just the first two measures, are already the seeds that will generate 35 minutes of sonic conflict: two against three, minor third versus major third, F minor versus E minor, and the tritone.



The challenge of understanding what this symphony “means” was compounded by the composer’s own program notes for the first performance, which are trivial, flippant and deliberately unhelpful. All four movements are distinct, but played without a break. (Tonight’s performance is the first two movements only, with the rest to be added next semester.)

The opening allegro begins stormily but eventually subsides. A second jazzy theme appears on trumpets in close harmony, with an accompaniment sounding like a “grotesque Teddy Bears Picnic.” A third melody on the strings—glorious, soaring, and the only hopeful music in the whole work—is more lyrical, but still ambiguously explores the major third versus minor third. This theme eventually breaks through into a sunny E major towards the end of the movement, but the F-minor/E-minor tensions of the beginning return at the end.

The second movement is brooding and threatening. It is underpinned by an obsessive, almost neurotic rhythm which alternates with an ominously quiet string chorale passage. Eventually the rhythm drives the whole orchestra to a massive climax, but even this does not bring relief—it is quickly suppressed, and the dark clouds remain.

SUITE FROM HENRY V (1944)

WILLIAM WALTON (1902-1983)

I., Overture: The Globe Playhouse

III., Charge and Battle

IV., Agincourt Song

When Laurence Olivier set out to translate Shakespeare's Henry V to the screen (his first effort as director) he chose William Walton to compose the music. Christopher Palmer explained the choice this way: "Shakespearean English had attained a warmth, nobility and splendour never since equaled, let alone excelled, and the one contemporary composer whose brand of musical English was rich in those qualities was Walton." Olivier himself spoke of "that exuberance, that spirit, that heart-quickenning feeling" in Walton's music.

Generally known as a slow and careful composer, William Walton could put a score together quickly when need be. This talent, plus his keen dramatic sense, made him a natural at composing film music. When the subject got his creative juices flowing—as it did most strongly with Henry V, Hamlet (from 1948, performed earlier today by Philharmonia) and Richard III (1955), the three brilliant Shakespearean films he scored for director/star Sir Laurence Olivier—he lavished upon it the same mix of inspiration and craftsmanship that characterizes his finest concert music.

The score for Henry V consists of original material in his own style, red-blooded and majestic, or warm and tender when called for. He gave it dashes of historical flavor by including adaptations of authentic English music of the period, using tunes from The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book (the most important collection of keyboard music in the Elizabethan period) and Canteloube's Chants d'Auvergne, a collection of French folk songs. The score earned Walton an Oscar nomination when the film was released in the U.S. in 1946.

Recognizing the superior quality of the film's score, the original conductor Muir Mathieson arranged a suite of five movements for concert performance in 1963. They create a natural dramatic arc which closely follows the film's plot. (Two movements were performed earlier today by the Prelude Orchestra)

PROLOGUE:

The orchestra majestically sets the scene for a performance of Henry V at the Globe Theatre, London, about 1600. After an opening shot of a playbill wafting in the air (beautifully captured by a solo flute) Walton uses pastiche, authentically imitating the sound and color of Elizabethan fanfares and theatre music.

CHARGE AND BATTLE:

Henry climbs on a cart and delivers his eloquent rallying speech to the soldiers gathered around him. Despite being outnumbered four to one, the English army prevails. The French practice of riding in full, heavy armour slows them down drastically in the marshy area where the battle is fought. It also makes them vulnerable to the continuous flocks of arrows that the skilled English bowmen launch from higher ground at a safe distance.

Walton provides suitably rugged and brawny music for the battle. He weaves into it variations on a fifteenth-century French battle song, Réveillez-vous, Piccars. After the battle music, the mood softens.

In the Louvre palace in Paris, peace between the two countries is sealed. King Henry woos and wins Princess Katherine of France. With solo woodwinds, Walton quotes several gentle folk songs that Joseph Canteloube collected in the Auvergne district of France. This was Olivier's suggestion, and it works beautifully.

AGINCOURT SONG:

Once the conflict is over, Henry solemnly names the battle after the nearby castle of Agincourt. Walton introduces the traditional English hymn, Agincourt Song, which had been brought to his attention by fellow composer Ralph Vaughan Williams and dates from the time of the battle, 1415. It becomes a bold and thunderous hymn of victory.

Youth Symphony examined the original song, with its a mixture of Latin and medieval English:

Our King went forth to Normandy, with grace and might of chivalry.
There God for him wrought marvelously, wherefore England may call and cry:
Deo gratias Anglia redde pro victoria! [England, give thanks to God for victory!]

In 1943, with the war in Europe raging, Olivier dedicated his film to "the Commandos and Airborne Troops of Great Britain, the spirit of whose ancestors it has been humbly attempted to recapture in some unsung sense." In other words, Olivier too had powerful reasons to identify with the inspiring, nationalistic narrative of Henry V, and hoped that his audience would find the same hope and fortitude that Shakespeare wished for his own audience in 1600.

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Shaina Huang, Gilberts
Vandana Karan, Naperville
Calvin Kuntz, West Chicago +
Matthew Landi, Glen Ellyn
Ellen Maloney, Wheaton •
John Mazzocco, Elmhurst
Raquel Navarro, Carol Stream
Gina Park, Inverness
Michael Priller, Arlington Heights •
Andrew Reed, Naperville • ^
Jeff Rollins, South Elgin
Lina Saleh, Naperville •
Mehak Sarang, Saint Charles
Meghan Shaughnessy, Schaumburg •
Mariko Siewenie, Inverness •
Monika Stoskute, Saint Charles
Rose Thompson, Aurora
Christine Wang, Naperville
Austin Wu, South Barrington
Sarah Zhu, Carol Stream

VIOLA

Christina D'Antonio, Wheaton •
Marlies Emmelot, Lake Zurich
Sadie McCloud, Wheaton
Rhiannon Owano, Algonquin •

BASSOON

Rachel Hecht, Sycamore •
Bradley Johnson, Carol Stream

HORN

Madeleine Bolz, Saint Charles
Ethan Burck, Aurora
Mary Cyr, Winfield
Scott Eriksen, Aurora •
Emily Krasinski, Aurora • *

TRUMPET

Kevin Farley, Geneva • *
Thomas Schafer, Batavia
Benjamin Van Wienen, Sycamore • *

TROMBONE

Matthew Granger, Elgin
Rodolfo Hernandez, Elgin •
Luke Molloy, Wayne
Carter Taylor, Aurora • *

TUBA

Christopher Miller, Yorkville • *

PERCUSSION

Makena Barickman, Geneva
Allison Rychtanek, Elgin
Nikesh Patel, Oswego
Katherine Sherburne, Carol Stream

HARP

Abigail Hughes, Saint Charles
Teddi Barclay, South Barrington

PIANO

Amanda Gao, Batavia

-
- + Co-concertmaster
 - Chamber Music Institute
 - * Maud Powell String Quartet
 - ^ Sterling Brass Quintet
 - ^ Hanson String Quartet

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VIOLA

David D'Antonio, Wheaton

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SUNDAY, MAY 4, 2014
2:00 PM, 4:30 PM, 7:30 PM
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