

# 2021.22 MUSICIAN APPRECIATION CONCERT

March 5, 2022

Ordway Concert Hall

## About the Program

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**Gioachino Rossini** 1792-1868

### Overture to *L'italiana in Algeri* (*The Italian Girl in Algiers*)

The 21-year-old Gioachino Rossini already had ten operas under his belt when he composed *L'italiana in Algeri* (*The Italian Girl in Algiers*), and it took him only 18 days to craft the recycled libretto into a two-act dramma giocoso. It was this comic opera, along with the more serious work *Tancredi* composed a few months earlier, that elevated Rossini from a successful working musician in Venice to an international opera star.

The premise of *L'italiana in Algeri* is that the sultan Mustafà, bored with the submissive wives in his harem, decides he must find a strong-willed Italian girl. He lucks out when a shipwreck delivers the beautiful Isabella to his shore, but in the end, she proves to be more than he can handle.

In the overture (or sinfonia in Italian parlance), the music follows the same sonata-allegro structure that Franz Joseph Haydn perfected in his symphonies, including the optional slow introduction that was a Haydn staple. And clearly the young Rossini learned plenty about musical humor from jolly Papa Haydn, as heard in the shocking outburst that interrupts the introduction's idyllic plucking! There is barely a trace of the opera's North African setting in the overture (maybe just a whiff of exoticism in the woodwind solos and the spirited percussion), but audiences at this type of comic opera weren't expecting verisimilitude; they were there to get swept up in Rossini's wild crescendos, unforgettable tunes and infectious joy.

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**Johann Sebastian Bach** 1685-1750

### Concerto for Two Violins

- Vivace
- Largo ma non tanto
- Allegro

MOVEMENTS

- **Steven Copes** violin
- **Kyu-Young Kim** violin

PERFORMERS

Johann Sebastian Bach probably composed his Concerto for Two Violins around 1730, not long after he agreed to lead Leipzig's Collegium Musicum. This talented amateur group, founded in 1702 by a young Telemann, provided an outlet for Bach to play instrumental music in a sociable atmosphere, away from the weekly grind of his church duties. Many of the works that Bach brought to the Collegium were arrangements of works from an earlier period when he worked a secular job in Cöthen, so it is possible that the Double Violin Concerto had its origins in some earlier source material.

Along with Bach's two extant Violin Concertos (also prepared for the Collegium), the Double Concerto borrows from a style popularized several decades earlier in northern Italy by Vivaldi and his contemporaries. Following the Vivaldi model, a ritornello structure in the first movement sets up a strong theme in the accompanying ensemble that makes its presence felt with every return. The added magic in this movement is the sophisticated counterpoint, drawing on the fugue techniques that Bach had advanced far beyond his Italian colleagues. Counterpoint is a crucial feature of the slow movement as well, with the two soloists weaving a patient fugue over an accompaniment that has just enough of a dancing lilt

(and a tempo that Bach made sure to mark as “not too slow”) to propel the melodies forward. The contrapuntal technique of canon — with one voice following close after another in an echo effect — makes for a particularly vibrant finale.

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## Richard Strauss 1864-1949

### Suite from *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (*The Bourgeois Gentleman*)

— Minuet: The Dancing Master  
Prelude to Act II (Intermezzo)

MOVEMENTS

After the enormous success of their 1911 opera *Der Rosenkavalier*, librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal returned to Baroque-era inspiration for his next collaboration with the reigning king of German opera, Richard Strauss. Hofmannsthal suggested reworking Molière’s comedy-ballet *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, which first played for the court of King Louis XIV in 1670 with incidental music by Jean-Baptiste Lully.

Strauss and Hofmannsthal struggled to find the right format for their Molière adaptation. They first incorporated an abridged translation into the 1912 theater-opera hybrid *Ariadne auf Naxos*, but a format that embedded an entire opera within a substantial play proved cumbersome. When they revised *Ariadne auf Naxos* in 1916, they removed most remnants of the Molière play, including the charming incidental music Strauss had composed, some of it based on Lully’s original score. But that music and some new additions came back when they revived the Molière project on its own, and Strauss found an even more congenial home for that material when he assembled this concert suite in 1920.

The suite’s Intermezzo was originally the prelude to the second act, written to accompany the entrance of several aristocrats in music that Strauss marked “galant and graceful.” The tentative hiccups and unsteady chromatic slurs in the Minuet capture the awkwardness of a dance lesson.

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## Fritz Kreisler 1875-1962

### Marche Miniature Viennoise

A violin virtuoso of the highest order, Austria’s Fritz Kreisler was also a mischievous and chameleon-like composer, often attributing his works to long-dead or fictitious forebears. Among his many musical bonbons, the ones rooted in his native Vienna are especially sweet, including this “Miniature Viennese Waltz” from 1924. A minor-key march theme hints at the influence of Roma (i.e. “Gypsy”) musicians on the type of music that filled Vienna’s cafés, while a contrasting major-key theme unfolds in sweet harmony. This version by the German arranger Fredo Jung transfers Kreisler’s tuneful melodies and oom-pah accompaniment to a trio of violin, viola and cello.

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## Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756-1791

### Symphony No. 36, Linz

— Adagio – Allegro spiritoso  
Andante  
Menuetto  
Presto

MOVEMENTS

A year after Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart married Constanze Weber without his father’s blessing, the young couple left for Salzburg in the hope of smoothing the family tension. On their return trip to Vienna several months later, they stopped in Linz, where their host, Count Johann Joseph Anton von Thun-Hohenstein, arranged for the court orchestra to perform a concert. Mozart wrote to his father, “I really cannot tell you what kindnesses the family are showering on us. On Tuesday, November 4, I am giving a concert in the theater here and, as I have not a single symphony with me, I am writing a new one at breakneck speed, which must be finished by that time.” It was breakneck speed indeed, for Mozart only arrived on October 30, leaving him less than five days to compose the new piece, copy out the parts, and rehearse with the orchestra.

Mozart’s Symphony No. 36 in C Major, nicknamed “Linz” for its city of origin, betrays no evidence of strained composition. In fact, it is rare among Mozart’s symphonies in that it begins with a leisurely introduction. The opening harmonies wander away from C-major and settle in C-

minor, creating a moody counterpoint to the generally bright disposition of the symphony. Further excursions into minor keys, in the first movement's secondary theme and later in the graceful Andante, echo the tonal rub of the introduction. After a playful Menuetto, the Presto finale sprints through a fluid range of themes, with short motives bouncing among sections. There is a family resemblance between this finale and another C-major movement that is among Mozart's most famous, the contrapuntal closing of the Symphony No. 41 ("Jupiter").

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## Artist Profiles

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### Steven Copes violin

Concertmaster, John M. and Elizabeth W. Musser Chair

Violinist Steven Copes joined The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra as Concertmaster in 1998, and since then has led the SPCO from the first chair in many highly acclaimed, eclectic programs. He appears frequently as soloist with the SPCO and many other ensembles around the world.

A zealous advocate of the music of today, he gave the world premiere of George Tsontakis' Grammy-nominated Violin Concerto No. 2 (2003), which won the 2005 Grawemeyer award and has been recorded for KOCH Records, and also gave the NY premiere of Lutoslawski's *Subito* (1992) for Violin and Piano. In June of 2017 he gave the World Premiere of Pierre Jalbert's Violin Concerto with Thomas Zehetmair conducting the SPCO.

An avid chamber musician, Copes has performed at festivals and concert series such as Aspen, Boston Chamber Music Society, Caramoor, Cartagena, Chamber Music Northwest, Chestnut Hill, La Jolla Summerfest, Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival, Mainly Mozart, Marlboro, Moritzburg, Mozaic, Norfolk, Olympic Music Festival, Piccolo Spoleto, Salt Bay Chamberfest, Santa Fe, Seattle Chamber Music Society, Skaneateles, Styriarte, and at other festivals across the globe. He co-founded the Alpenglow Chamber Music Festival in Colorado as well as *Accordo*, a chamber music group in the Twin Cities, now in its 12th season.

A frequent guest Concertmaster/Leader, Copes has recorded and toured extensively throughout Europe and Asia with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, the Budapest Festival Orchestra, and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and has performed in the same capacity with the likes of the Baltimore Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Halle Orchestra, Houston Symphony, London Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and the San Francisco Symphony.

#### ***What would you be doing if you weren't a classical musician?***

"A chef or sous-chef in some earthy, organic, farm-to-table restaurant in the middle of nowhere, a writer of silly things or children's books, or a cartoonist/illustrator."



### Kyu-Young Kim violin

Artistic Director and Principal Violin, Bruce H. Coppock Chair

Artistic Director and Principal Violin of The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Kyu-Young Kim is one of the most versatile and accomplished musicians of his generation. His appointment as the SPCO's Artistic Director in January 2016 marks the first time a playing member has been tapped to take the artistic helm of a major American orchestra. Previously, Kim served as Director of Artistic Planning with the SPCO while continuing to perform in the orchestra. Since assuming his dual role in 2013, the SPCO has named seven new Artistic Partners, opened its new Concert Hall at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts to great critical acclaim, toured throughout the U.S. and to Europe, and won a Grammy Award in 2018 for its disc of Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* with violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja.

Kim has also toured throughout the world as a founding member of the Daedalus Quartet with whom he won the Grand Prize at the 2001 Banff International String Quartet Competition and was a member of Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Chamber Music Two Program. As a former member of the Pacifica String Quartet, Mr. Kim won the prestigious Naumburg Chamber Music Award. He has appeared as soloist with the Korea Broadcasting System (KBS) Symphony Orchestra, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Amadeus Chamber Orchestra of Poland and the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra. He has also served as guest concertmaster of the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra, and the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, and is an Emeritus Member of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra.

***What is different about performing with the SPCO versus other ensembles?*** "We play such a wide range of music and work with such interesting Artistic Partners. Other great chamber orchestras tend to be specialists, but we can play an amazing Baroque week with someone like Artistic Partner Richard Egarr, then do a world premiere and a Beethoven symphony the next week,

and play chamber music with Jeremy Denk the week after that. You have to be able to turn on a dime in this orchestra, which makes it very challenging but also super fun and rewarding.”

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