



THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC PRESENTS

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Friday, March 26, 2021, 4:10 P.M.
University Theatre

Diego Piedra, conductor

PROGRAM

Concerto in D minor for Two Violins and Orchestra

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Diego Piedra and Katharina Uhde, violins

Danzón

Diego Piedra
(b. 1980)

Intermission

Pelléas et Mélisande Orchestral Suite, Op. 80

Gabriel Fauré
(1845-1924)

PROGRAM NOTES

Concerto in D minor for two violins BWV 1043

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Johann Sebastian Bach, also known as The Father of Music, is responsible for some of the greatest music ever conceived. His music has and will continue to influence future generations of composers and performers, because there is no match for the intellectuality, perfection, variety and scope of his oeuvre.

Bach was mostly known as a virtuoso organist in his time, and while he lived he did not enjoy the status that he has today. He had a hard time finding jobs, and he was actually thought of being a third rate musician in some cases, hired because there was no one else better... Despite composing at least over a thousand works, he was almost forgotten, and even some of his sons enjoyed more recognition and fame than he did while he lived. That changed after Felix Mendelssohn revived his music through a performance of St. Matthew's Passion in 1829, which was so good that it reignited interest in Bach's music. After that, no serious musician could ignore the magnitude of Bach's genius, and his music today is equal in importance to the Bible for instruments such as the violin and piano.

The concerto in D minor for two violins, also known as The Double Violin Concerto is a testament to one of his most popular works. It is composed for a string orchestra with basso continuo (harpsichord) and it features two solo violins. The concerto is structured in three movements with contrasting moods: fast-slow-fast.

- I. Vivace
- II. Largo ma non tanto
- III. Allegro

Danzón

Luis Diego Piedra
(b. 1980)

Diego Piedra is currently the Director of Orchestras at Valparaiso University. He began his musical education at age 6 in Costa Rica, his home country. He studied violin with Guido Calvo at the Conservatory of the University of Costa Rica until he graduated from high school. He went on to study at Baylor University where he graduated Cum Laude, and then to the University of Michigan, where he obtained three degrees, the last being in Orchestral Conducting.

Danzón is a piece inspired on the well known Danzón #2 by Mexican composer Arturo Márquez. It was composed in 2011 for the orchestra students at SINEM (National System of Music Education) in Costa Rica, where Dr. Piedra was working building orchestral programs throughout the country. The piece came to be due to a lack of accessibility to repertoire. There was nothing pedagogically appropriate for the students, so the solution was to create it. The result is a piece intended to expose the students to a different type of music, one that is not typically found in concert halls played by symphony orchestras, but one that still is very likable and fun. The piece was conceived around the players' talents and strengths.

Danzón became popular within SINEM, and the National Youth Orchestra Manuel María Gutiérrez founded by Dr. Piedra has kept playing it on national tours, and it has been played here in the country with the Dubuque Symphony Orchestra and Spectrum Orchestra, with Dr. Piedra conducting.

Pelléas et Mélisande Suite for Orchestra, Op. 20.

Gabriel Fauré
(1845-1924)

Gabriel Fauré was a French composer, organist, pianist, teacher and choir master. He studied music from an early age and among his teachers there is the figure of Camille Saint-Saëns, another French composer who was very well known and who became a friend for a long time.

Fauré's musical, professional journey took him to several different positions, mostly either performing, or in charge of a choir, or even directing schools. This left him relatively not enough time for composing music. Nevertheless, he was able to find moments of inspiration, and perhaps more accurately moments in which he was away from administrative work so that he could compose. Nowadays, Fauré is regarded as one of the most important French composers of all time. His music, style and language is one that influenced his peers and later composers. His lifetime and music occurred at a time and place with which he connected the romantic and the modern periods, perhaps unknowingly.

Pelléas et Mélisande was originally composed as incidental music, that is music composed for a play or film or any kind of medium whose main purpose is not music. Because it was composed in a rush, and Fauré didn't have enough time for composing, he put the piece together using fragments of other pieces that were either unfinished or unsuccessful, and he even had one of his pupils orchestrate it! Later on, after the incidental music was played in London or the play, he revised the piece and came up with this suite, and he orchestrated it himself, adding more instruments, refining the music altogether.

The story of the play is about Golaud, who had been a widower for some time, takes a second wife, Mélisande. However, she is suddenly inescapably attracted to Golaud's younger brother, Pelléas. Golaud discovers them as lovers, and in his rage he slays Pelléas. Soon after, Mélisande dies giving birth to a daughter, and Golaud is left haunted forever.

The suite follows the play Pelléas et Mélisande by Maurice Maeterlinck, and it is set in four movements.

- I. Prélude
- II. Fileuse
- III. Sicilienne de Pelléas et Mélisande
- IV. La Mort de Mélisande

Program Notes by Dr. Diego Piedra

ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR

Diego Piedra is the Orchestra Director at Valparaiso University. A strongly driven performer and educator, Dr. Piedra feels at home working on the podium with student and professional orchestras. Recent professional conducting engagements have included the Music Directorship and Conducting of Spectrum Orchestra, visiting orchestral positions at Luther College and the University of Toledo, and guest conducting appearances with the Oakland Symphony Orchestra in Michigan, the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica, and the Municipal Orchestra of Cartago. In Costa Rica Dr. Piedra was in high demand as the orchestral conducting professor at

the University of Costa Rica as well as a guest teacher and performer in Venezuela, Honduras and Guatemala. He founded the national youth orchestra called Manuel María Gutiérrez at SINEM (the Costa Rican version of Venezuela's El Sistema), and was its Music Director and Conductor from 2009-2011. Since 2014, Dr. Piedra has been Music Director at the Dubuque Symphony Orchestra's Summer String Camp, working as a conductor, violinist and composer. As a professional violinist he has been a member of the prestigious New World Symphony in Miami, South Bend Symphony Orchestra, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, Oakland Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica and Concertmaster of the Orquesta de Cámara de Costa Rica. Dr. Piedra participated as violinist and assistant conductor in the tour and recording of the University Symphony Orchestra of the University of Michigan (winner of four Grammy awards in 2006), which culminated at Carnegie Hall, New York. At Michigan, Dr. Piedra was the Music Director of The Campus Symphony Orchestra and the Campus Philharmonia Orchestra, and he conducted two full opera productions and numerous symphonic concerts. In the summer of 2017 Dr. Piedra was awarded an honorary mention at a conducting competition in London, England. Dr. Piedra holds a DMA in Orchestral Conducting, two Master's degrees from the University of Michigan, and a BM from Baylor University. He lives in Valparaiso with his wife Maria and daughter Clara. He studied violin with Yehonatan Berick, and conducting with Kenneth Kiesler and participated in master classes with Simon Rattle, Carl St. Clair, Giancarlo Guerrero and Miguel Harth-Bedoya.

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Mark Sweeney, Warrenville, Ill. (meteorology)
*Dr. Katharina Uhde, Assistant Professor of Music

Violin 2

Jeremy Freed, Three Rivers, Mich. (meteorology)
Olivia Maass, Fishers, Ind. (exploratory)

Viola

^Anton Pham, Goshen, Ind. (meteorology)
Reiana Thomas, Portage, Ind. (music)
Drew Fleming, Western Springs, Ill. (computer science)
Keelie Cantwell, Demotte, Ind. (biochemistry)

Cello

^Nick Evans, Crown Point, Ind. (bioengineering)
Hallie Wolf, Kenosha, Wis. (astronomy)
Thomas Paul, Bloomfield Hills, Mich. (biology)
Evee Curtis, Mishawaka, Ind. (music education)
Cassi Niemeyer, Grand Rapids, Mich. (biochemistry)
Ben Hamilton, Wheaton, Ill. (psychology)

Bass

^Jakob Wiegand, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. (civil engineering)

Flute

^Genevieve Brown, Williamston, Mich. (music performance)

Clarinet

^Alex Appel, Valparaiso, Ind. (computer engineering)
Camille Ancevicus, Homer Glen, Ill. (nursing)
Max Ehlers, Milwaukee, Wis. (biology/chemistry)

Bassoon

^Nicholas Sanchez, Hobart, Ind. (music education)
Joel Stoppenhagen, Ossian, Ind. (music education)

Horn

^Maiah Deogracias, Fort Wayne, Ind. (art)

Trumpet

^Ryan Gee, Princeton, Ill. (music)
Mary Emma Zimmermann, Saint Charles, Ill. (biology)

Trombone

Matthew Yee, Auburn, Calif. (civil engineering, music)
David Lee, Schererville, Ind. (music education)
Evee Curtis, Mishawaka, Ind. (music education)

Tuba

David Lee, Schererville, Ind. (music education)

Percussion

Olivia Norris, Franklin, Ind. (civil engineering)
Alana Swopes, Lorrain, Ohio (music)
Cassi Niemeyer, Grand Rapids, Mich. (biochemistry)

Harp

Alana Swopes, Lorrain, Ohio (music)
Olivia Norris, Franklin, Ind. (civil engineering)

Harpichord

Joel Stoppenhagen, Ossian, Ind. (music education)

+Denotes concertmaster

^Denotes principal

*Denotes faculty



Department of Music