“New Beginnings”

Welcoming
Dr. Jeffrey Jacobsen
to the podium

Saturday, November 12, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

West Middle School
West Middle Avenue
Binghamton, NY 13905
2011 - 2012 Season

Annual STMTA Concert
Sunday, March 4, 2012 - 3:00 p.m.
West Middle School Auditorium, Binghamton, NY

Repertoire will include:
Beethoven - Egmont Overture
Chaminade - Concertino
Bloch - Suite Hebraique
Dvorak - Slavonic Dances

Featuring 2011 Southern Tier Music Teacher Association Concerto Winners -
Emily Bartz, flute
Amanda Schmitz, viola

Spring Concert
May 5, 2012 - 7:00 p.m.
Sarah Jane Johnson Church, Johnson City, NY

Repertoire will include:
Hailstork - Intrada
Wagner - Siegfried Idyll
Moulds - Egloga
Kalinnikov - Symphony No. 1 in G

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Thank you to the BCO Board of Directors, Binghamton City School District, Donna Tarsia, West Middle School Custodial Staff, Laura Hine, Joel Smales, and Melanie Valencia.

We are deeply saddened by the recent passing of BCO violinist, Gay Stannard.

In remembrance of violinist, founding member, and former board member of the BCO, Lucille Tye
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Sunday, November 27, 2011, 4:00 p.m.
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Sunday, March 11, 2012, 4:00 p.m.
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Dear Audience:

Welcome to our “New Beginnings” series! I am extremely excited to be able to work with this ensemble. The Binghamton Community Orchestra enjoys a well-deserved reputation of fine performances and I am pleased to be in the succession of conductors. The ensemble has been working tirelessly over the past few months in preparation for this performance and I’m sure you will not be disappointed by their efforts. The dedication of the musicians in this ensemble would be for naught without your support and we are very grateful for your presence. I would like to thank the Board members for offering me this opportunity and hope you all get a chance to thank them personally. They are an inspirational group of forward thinkers who have the best interests of the ensemble and the community it serves in mind.

We begin our season with several B’s and a G. American composer Samuel Barber, the (immortal) beloved Beethoven, Edvard Grieg, and, of course, Brahms. Our second performance will feature STMTA Concerto Competition winners Emily Bartz performing the Chaminade Concertino for Flute and Amanda Schmitz performing the Bloch Suite Hebriaque for Viola. The concert will open with Beethoven’s Egmont Overture and close with Schubert’s Symphony No. 8 (Unfinished). Our final concert will be the first weekend of May and will feature: Intrada by Adolphus Hailstork; Siegfried Idyll by Richard Wagner; Égloga by R. A. Moulds (Premiere Performance); and the Symphony No. 1 in G minor by Vassili Kalinnikov.

We have been having a wonderful time preparing the program for this performance. I am delighted you are here to enjoy this wonderful music and this fantastic ensemble!

Sincerely,

Jeff Jacobsen
Music Director
Dr. Jeffrey Jacobsen

Dr. Jacobsen is a sought-after conductor and clinician who has been invited to conduct orchestras at national and international music festivals and camps. He currently serves as Director of Orchestral Activities and Opera at Mansfield University of Pennsylvania and has recently been appointed as Music Director of the Binghamton (NY) Community Orchestra. He has conducted numerous All-State and All-Region Honor Orchestras in the United States and Canada as well as professional orchestras in Europe. Dr. Jacobsen served for five seasons as the Music Director of the Orchestra of the Pines in Nacogdoches/Lufkin, Texas, and Director of Orchestral Activities and Opera at Stephen F. Austin State University. He founded and served as Music Director of the Blue Valley Chamber Orchestra, a regional orchestra in the Kansas City area. Jacobsen was affiliated with the Youth Symphony of Kansas City, initially as the Music Director of the Symphonette and later as Music Director of the Philharmonic East Orchestra. He taught in public schools in Overland Park, Kansas, Boulder, Colorado and Williamsburg, Virginia.

Dr. Jacobsen's ensembles have performed at state music conventions, and national and international music festivals. These same ensembles consistently earned highest ratings at competitive festivals and, at several, Dr. Jacobsen was named outstanding director. He received the Mary Taylor Award for Excellence in Classroom Teaching at Boulder High School and was featured twice on the KCNC-TV's "Teachers Who Make a Difference" series. Jacobsen was the Boulder Valley School nominee for the Sallie Mae National Teachers Award, received the Teacher Recognition Award from the University of Kansas, and was named the Outstanding High School Orchestra Director for the Northeast District of the Kansas Music Educators Association.

Dr. Jacobsen received a Master of Science degree in music education with a secondary emphasis in performance from the University of North Dakota and a Doctorate of Music Education degree with a secondary emphasis in jazz pedagogy from the University of Northern Colorado. Dr. Jacobsen was selected for the American Symphony Orchestra League Donald Thulean conducting workshop with the Detroit Civic Orchestra. He was invited to the International Conducting Workshop in the Czech Republic and has taken post-doctoral studies in conducting at Northwestern University, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and the universities of Iowa, Illinois State and South Carolina. His instructors include William LaRue Jones, Kirk Trevor, Mariusz Smolij, Kirk Muspratt, Tsung Yeh, and Marvin Rabin.

As a professional musician, Dr. Jacobsen has served as principal bassist of numerous ensembles, including the Tabor Opera Company (Denver) and the Liberty Symphony Orchestra (Missouri). Jacobsen is currently Principal Bassist of Millennium Orchestra and a recording artist for Naxos and ERM. He performed on a regular basis in the jazz clubs of Williamsburg, Kansas City and Denver, and along with other members of the ensemble, received a Grammy Award nomination for the jazz recording "Hot IV."

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Program Notes

Overture to Fidelio
Ludwig van Beethoven

In composing his only opera, Fidelio, Beethoven had been provoked not only by his own habitual and almost obsessive working and reworking of musical thought, but he had been under heavy pressure from his friends to revise his opera for greater theatrical effect. He did, in fact, undertake not only two radical revisions of Fidelio, but at least four separate versions of the overture.

The first three are known as the “Leonore” Overtures Nos. 1, 2, and 3. Only the fourth is known as the Fidelio Overture. The “Leonore” Overture No. 1, composed for the first version of the opera, was performed only once during Beethoven’s lifetime, at a private tryout, after which Beethoven decided that it was too slight to do justice to the overwhelming subject matter of the opera. The boldest and most experimental of the Overtures, No. 2, was the one performed at the world premiere of the opera in 1805. The “Leonore” Overture No. 3, composed for the revision of 1806, has, for most listeners, a more powerful emotional impact – so powerful that Beethoven realized it threatened to overpower the entire opera.

With this in mind, he composed the completely different fourth, or Fidelio Overture, for the 1814 revision of the opera. It is this Overture which normally precedes the opera today and it is this Overture which will open this season of the Binghamton Community Orchestra.

In composing his only opera, Fidelio, Beethoven avoided any anticipation or artistic summary of the operatic drama to come. Instead he composed a joyous, festive score, one of his sunniest works, in the warm key of E Major, with a richly colored orchestra giving special prominence to the glowing tone of the horn. In terms of the musical theater, this proved to be the most effective preparation for his opera. In terms of the concert hall, it has become one of the most rewarding short symphonic works of the repertory.

The Overture’s opening pages are built around a characteristically abrupt and sprightly jumping figure for the entire orchestra and the pensive, romantic mood evoked by a duet of solitary horns followed by pairs of clarinets and other woodwinds.

The main body of the Overture is built on a lively horn theme which incorporates and extends the fanfare figure of the opening. A sprightly skipping figure of the strings offers a moment’s distraction, but the orchestra keeps returning to the opening figure, which is developed and, at last, glorified in an exultant presto coda.

Three Orchestral Pieces for the Incidental Music to “Sigurd Jorsalfar,” Op. 56
Edvard Grieg

The Norwegian writer Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832-1910), like his slightly older contemporary Henrik Ibsen, began his career as a dramatist with plays based on Norse saga literature. Bjørnson’s Sigurd Jorsalfar (“the Crusader”) was written in 1872. It deals with the rivalries and eventual reconciliation of the brother kings, Øystein and Sigurd, who reigned jointly over Norway in the heroic age of the twelfth century. Øystein (or Eystein) remained in Norway, ruling with justice and wisdom, and building roads, harbors, and churches, while Sigurd went on crusades, fought valiantly, and admired the wonders of Byzantium and the Holy Land. Bjørnson clearly regarded, and thus stressed in dramatic form, the need for nineteenth century Norwegians to balance their impulse towards exploration, missionary activities, and overseas settlement against the development and consolidation of social, economic, and political institutions within the homeland itself.

Grieg was invited to compose incidental music for the first production of Bjørnson’s play in Christiania on Constitution Day, May 17, 1872. The three orchestral pieces and two vocal numbers he provided were published soon afterwards in piano score by Lose of Copenhagen as the composer’s Op. 22. In 1892, the instrumental movements were revised for full orchestra and republished by Peters of Leipzig as Grieg’s Op. 56. At the opening of the new Norwegian National Theatre in 1898, there was a revival of the play with the original music further revised by the composer, and there was yet another important production in 1905 in honor of the accession of Haakon VII to the throne of a completely independent Norway. In the meantime, the orchestral suite had established itself internationally on the concert platform, though it never quite equaled the music of Peer Gynt in popularity.

Prelude: In the King’s Hall

Originally titled At the Matching Game, this march was intended as an introduction to Act II of the drama. “The Matching Game” refers to the scene in which the brothers enumerate and compare their personal merits as men and rulers. Formal emulation of this kind was a traditional Viking pastime, meant to entertain the company sitting at their table but as the scene continues, rivalry becomes more bitter arousing particular hostility in the moody King Sigurd and gradually involving the personal followers of both protagonists. Grieg’s music is based on a Gavotte for violin and piano dating from 1867.

Intermezzo: Borghild’s Dream

Described as “Introduction and Melodrama,” this music provides a setting for the scene in Act I where Borghild, daughter of Olaf of Dal, awakes from troubled dreams in her father’s house. Her close friendship with King Øystein has given rise to gossip, and to prove her innocence she has submitted to the ordeal of walking over a red-hot iron. Soon afterwards, ill-feeling between the Kings is intensified when Sigurd, who is also under the spell of her beauty, attempts to abduct her from her home. The music closely follows Bjørnson’s stage directions:

Quiet music begins before the curtain goes up, and as it rises depicts her restless sleep with weary, subdued passages, until it mounts into acute dread. She cries out, awakes, and starts up. The music depicts the confused waking thoughts that crowd upon her, until it ceases while she whispers, “I am still walking over the red-hot iron.” The music again follows her as she slowly advances, stops, and leans against the back of a chair . . . [lengthy monologue] . . . The music subsides in quiet grief, until it ends with a sudden jerk, and she rises to her feet.

Homage March

This occurs in Act III, introducing the scene in which the Kings are reconciled. A stage direction indicates that as the brothers make their peace with each other, and go out hand in hand, the music is to begin with a grave introduction, and then change to the Homage March itself. The scene is now set for the council at which the Kings announce their final reconciliation. This movement underwent considerable revision and expansion, among the later additions being the fanfares for the brass and the Trio which is reminiscent of the Minuet-Trio of the Piano Sonata, Op. 7, written by Grieg in 1865. It is also interesting to note the similarity between the main theme of
the Homage March, assigned first to four-part cello and the slow movement of Grieg’s Cello Sonata, Op. 36 (1882-3).

First Essay for Orchestra, Op. 12  Samuel Barber

During the summer of 1937, Arturo Toscanini was preparing his programs for the first season of the NBC Symphony Orchestra; Artur Rodzinski was supervising the organization of the new orchestra. When Toscanini asked Rodzinski about some American work to perform, Rodzinski advised him to play a work by Barber. On the strength of this news, Barber set to work. By October he had finished the Essay for Orchestra, which he submitted to Toscanini. He waited for Toscanini’s verdict. At the end of his season, Toscanini sailed for Europe and returned the score to Barber without comment. The disappointed composer began to look for other conductors who might perform his new piece.

That summer (1938) Barber decided not to accompany his friend Gian-Carlo Menotti when Menotti visited the Toscaninis at their summer home on Lake Maggiore, although Barber had visited them there earlier. When Toscanini asked why Barber had not come, Menotti claimed that Barber was ill. “Oh,” said Toscanini, “he’s perfectly well; he’s just angry with me. But he has no reason to be – I’m going to do both his pieces.” (The second piece being Barber’s Adagio for Strings.) But Toscanini did not ask for the scores again until one day before the first rehearsal; he had already memorized them. The premier took place as promised on November 5, 1938, and the Essay for Orchestra became one of Barber’s most popular works.

It begins with a simple lyric theme in a quiet melancholy mood. Heard first in the sober tone of the violas (yes, the melody is in the violas!), the theme is taken up by the violins, then by horns, and develops to a brief but powerful climax. There follows a delicate scherzo-like middle section, which grows more and more agitated. The opening theme is heard in the background sung broadly by a horn. The agitation increases, and at its height the theme surges back into the foreground in a passionate outburst. Then, instead of a conventional reprise of the opening section, the orchestra suddenly subsides. The music fades on a slow echo of the opening; a phrase of brevity and poignancy.

Symphony No. 3 in F Major, Op. 90  Johannes Brahms

Johannes Brahms was the son of a double bass player. The boy was fortunate in being born into a loving and understanding family; fortunate also in the choice of teachers able to develop his early musical gifts. To supplement the family’s income, at the age of 13, the young Brahms found employment as a pianist in local dance halls, taverns, and a dock-side brothel.

Youthful friendship with the Hungarian violinist Joachim found Brahms touring Germany as an accompanist and composer and playing in chamber music groups. But it was as a composer that Brahms knew his future lay. Broad-shouldered, short of stature, at the age of 20 this flaxen-haired youth knocked on the door of Robert Schumann, who immediately recognized in him a budding genius. Later, Brahms’ life-long friendship with Schumann’s widow Clara is part of music’s folk lore.

During those early years composing piano pieces, chamber works, songs and choral pieces, and dogged by the epithet that he was Beethoven’s natural successor, he was reluctant to indulge himself in orchestral writing until he was confident of his own abilities. It was not until 1876 after he had settled in Vienna that he launched upon the world his First Symphony. The Second followed quickly, but further six years (to 1883) elapsed before No. 3 appeared.

It may not always be realized that all Brahms’ major orchestral works, with the exception of the 1st Piano Concerto were written between 1873 and 1887, the final ten years being, as he began, devoted to piano pieces, chamber music and songs.

Allegro con brio

In his youth Brahms adopted a motto “freiaberfroh” (free but happy). It is the initials of these three words - F.A.F. - that form the three-note motto theme of the Symphony and are played over the opening three bars by woodwind and brass. Although this Symphony is given as being in F Major, Brahms chooses to flatten the A, but in the immediate descending reply from the strings, the A is restored to its natural. This ambiguity of major and minor tonalities pervades the movement and gives it its character. The second subject has a radiance and charm of its own. It is in A Major and 9/4 time, and is initially in the care of woodwind and strings (omitting violins). During the development Brahms works upon the motto theme until, when it is firmly in F Major, the movement ends in quiet resignation.

Andante (marked Semplice)

A folk-like tune is given out by the clarinets, supported by bassoons, with violin and cello interjections. A feature of this movement is the deft scoring, somewhere between chamber music and full orchestra. Trombones are used with great restraint; trumpets and timpani remain silent. The movement ends gently and quietly.

Poco Allegretto

The “scherzo” movement of the symphony opens in C minor and a Schubertian melancholy gently pervades the music. The opening theme is entrusted to the cellos. It is a characteristic of Brahms to place his melodies in lower registers. The cello melody is later taken over by the horns. The trio section has two themes - one in chords for woodwind and the other for strings. The opening theme reappears orchestrated, and the symphony’s three-note motto variant is prominent as the movement reaches a forte climax just six bars from, yet again, another piano ending.

Allegro

The final movement opens in F minor, marked Sotto Voce (subdued voice) and scored for strings and bassoon. Yet despite the modest forces employed, these opening bars suggest that Brahms means to impress, and a substantial symphonic movement is being opened up before us. This movement is one of complex variety. The motto theme continues to be heard in varied form in the woodwinds until trombones introduce a quasi-chorale theme which is then entrusted to woodwinds and strings, and is prominent in the following development. Following the return of the opening theme, a joyful robust tune in C Major is heard in the horns and strings. A grand development follows, combining motifs of the opening and chorale. Then the C Major tune returns and is played out by the full orchestra, only to subside. Muted violas now present a triplet version of the movement’s opening bars in a remote minor key. After this, Brahms works upon all his themes leading to a climax, although not a cataclysmic one. Then, with the recall of the motto theme, the music floats away into a Brahmsian quietude.
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