



Civic Orchestra of Tucson

Program Notes for October 13 & 14, 2018 Concerts

by Charles Bontrager, Music Director

Mozart — Overture to “The Magic Flute” (“Die Zauberflöte) (K620, 1791)

It is disappointing to speak only of a brief overture and neglect the three glorious hours that follow, but alas, space, patience, and perhaps interest are limiting forces. So, we confine commentary to Mozart’s Masonic extravaganza featuring three temples, three ladies, three boys, a birdwatcher, Queen of the Night and, of course, a serpent. Ah yes, and three large orchestral chords—announced twice—in the key of E Flat Major (three flats).

That being said, this little seven-minute gem sparkles with fluttering winds, dashing about strings, and punctuating brass and timpani. All combine to announce that something special is in the wings, literally, Mozart’s final opera. Today the overture announces that something special is in the works, Civic Orchestra’s first concert of the 2018–2019 season!

Magic Flute Overture is scored for (two each) flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets, plus three trombones, timpani, and the usual body of strings.

Saint-Saëns — Danse Bacchanale from the opera *Samson et Delilah* (1877)

Performed only at the October 13 concert at Flowing Wells High School with string students from its orchestras.

One of the most well-known tunes from Saint-Saëns’ most well-known opera, the Danse Bacchanale actually takes place in the final scene of the final act of Samson and Delilah. It is the occasion for local priests to join in a wild and frenetic dance (bacchanale) not long before Samson brings down the temple (and the curtain) on his head, the heads of his enemies, and of course, Delilah!

The original score for the Bacchanale is three each flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, four horns and trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, multiple percussion, harp, and strings.

Mozart — Clarinet Concerto in A Major (K622, 1791)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart tragically left this world on December 5, 1791, just two months following the premiere of his last purely instrumental work, the Clarinet Concerto (and just three months after the premiere of Magic Flute). It was a sad and too soon passing of the young genius, born in Salzburg on January 27, 1756. There is little doubt that humankind is enriched by what Mozart left behind, and this concerto is but one of many examples.

Typical for its time, the clarinet concerto is in three movements:

- I. Allegro (in A major and in sonata form)
- II. Adagio (in D major and in ternary form)
- III. Rondo: Allegro (in A major and in rondo form)

The Clarinet Concerto is scored for paired flutes, bassoons, and horns, plus the usual complement of strings.

Dvořák — Symphony No. 8, Op. 88 in G Major

Antonin Dvořák arose from simple roots, the son of an innkeeper and butcher in the village of Nelahozeves on the banks of the Moldau not far from Prague. Daddy wished his son to carry on the butchering tradition, but having learned to play the violin from the village schoolmaster, young Antonin had other ideas. He left home at the age of sixteen to study in Prague and the rest, as they say, is history.

Originally labeled as No. 4, the symphony that Civic Orchestra of Tucson performs this weekend is actually No. 8 in order of composition (1888). His final work in this genre and also his most familiar and popular is the 9th Symphony (“From the New World”), which was premiered by the New York Philharmonic on December 15, 1893, conducted by Anton Seidl. That being said, curious audiophiles are encouraged to dig out the 6th and 7th symphonies, which are masterpieces in their own right and, unfortunately, not so frequently heard in contemporary performances.

As is traditional, Dvořák’s 8th symphony is in four movements (fast, slow, waltz time, fast) and is scored for two each flutes (one doubles piccolo), oboes (one doubles English Horn), clarinets, and bassoons. In the brass and percussion there are four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, and timpani. And of course, strings.

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Thank you for sharing this opening event of Civic Orchestra of Tucson’s 43rd season. We hope to see you and your friends again in December!

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