

## Rodrigo: *Concierto de Aranjuez*. Mark Hilliard Wilson, soloist

I. Allegro con spiritoII. AdagioIII. Allegro gentile

~ intermission ~

# **Bizet: Carmen Suites No. 1 and 2**

- I. Les Toreadors
- II. Prelude
- III. Aragonaise
- IV. Seguedille
- V. Les dragons d'Alcala
- VI. Marche des contrebandiers
- VII. Habanera
- VIII. Nocturne
- IX. Chanson du Toreador
- *X. La Garde Montante*
- XI. Danse Boheme

Sunday February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 6:00pm Maple Park Church 17620 60<sup>th</sup> Ave W Lynnwood, WA 98037

## Johan Louwersheimer, Music Director



Maestro Johan Louwersheimer's unique musical background and training has provided him with the enviable ability to stand in front of both professional and community orchestras and choirs. Maestro Louwersheimer began his training in conducting in his late thirties, when he received an international scholarship to pursue doctoral studies in conducting at the University of Washington in Seattle. While in Seattle, Maestro Louwersheimer initiated the University Summer Orchestra program, which he conducted for three consecutive summers. In addition, Maestro Louwersheimer toured with the Washington University Symphony and founded the Octava Chamber Orchestra in collaboration with concertmaster Matthew Weiss. With Octava, Maestro Louwersheimer toured Washington and the Fraser Valley. Octava has featured renowned soloists

including Bela Siki, and Steven Stark. While at the University of Washington, Maestro Louwersheimer received the Warren Babb Memorial Award.

In 1993 Maestro Louwersheimer moved back to British Columbia, to spend more time with his family, where founded the Abbotsford Symphony Orchestra and Abbotsford Symphony Orchestra Chorus. With the Abbotsford Symphony he has collaborated with outstanding Canadian musicians including; Judith Forst, Anton Kuerti, Robert Silverman, Stephen Lemelin, Jonathon Crow, Jennifer Lim and Ian Parker. Maestro Louwersheimer developed the much-loved educational Discovery Concerts to promote orchestra music to school age children.

In 2007, Maestro Louwersheimer received the Paul Harris Fellow Award from the Abbotsford Rotary club for his commitment promoting music in the community. The scope of Maestro Louwersheimer musical career has included a national award winning high school music program, Artistic director of the UW summer program and Artist in Residence at the University of Washington and Lee in Virginia.

Maestro Louwersheimer has been the Artistic Director with the Handel Society since 1995 in White Rock, British Columbia. Under his baton the choir has performed large-scale choral orchestral masterworks including St. Matthew Passion and St. John Passion by J.S. Bach, Haydn's Masses and Creation, Mozart's Masses and Requiem, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Schubert's great Masses, Puccini's Messa di Gloria, and the music of Benjamin Britten. For the celebration of the Handel Society's 30th Anniversary, Mr. Louwersheimer was instrumental in commissioning a new Canadian composition by Bruce Ruddell.

Since September 2009, Maestro Louwersheimer also serves as the artistic director of the Chilliwack Metropolitan Orchestra. This last season, Maestro Louwersheimer commissioned the Divertimento for Three Trombones by Canadian composer, Michel R. Edward.



### Mark Hilliard Wilson, guitar soloist



Mark Hilliard Wilson has an engaging approach to teaching and programing concerts that draws from the deep well of history and a desire to relate contemporary interests to universal themes.

Born in Palo Alto, California in 1965 his childhood was spent moving every two years from Minnesota to Holland, to Washington DC to Payette, Idaho before his parents finally found their slice of heaven in Boise, Idaho. Mark continued to travel to Bellingham, Rochester and visit other countries before finding his base in Seattle in 1995.

Mark founded the Seattle Guitar Orchestra in 2000 and became the cathedral guitarist at St. James Cathedral in Seattle 2006. He has taught at Whatcom Community College, Bellevue College, the Rosewood Guitar and is currently at the Holy Names Academy.

Mark's compositions are published by Seconda Prattica and performed widely. In the fall he leads small tours of

Catalonia, Spain celebrating the major contributions of both well-known and obscure classical guitarists of the region while also savoring the food and delights in nature and villages of the region.

Mark has also ventured into acting as of late, playing the part of all-powerful guitar-wielding super being in the Star Trek fan series Egotastic Trek Ep.4 "The Oracle" written and produced by Matt Weiss.

### **PROGRAM NOTES:**

## **Rodrigo:** *Concierto de Aranjuez*

The Concierto de Aranjuez is a classical guitar concerto by the Spanish composer Joaquín Rodrigo. Written in 1939, it is by far Rodrigo's best-known work, and its success established his reputation as one of the most significant Spanish composers of the 20th century.

Rodrigo, nearly blind since age three, was a pianist. He did not play the classical guitar, yet he still managed to capture and project the role of the guitar in Spanish music.

This concerto was inspired by the gardens at the Royal Palace of Aranjuez, the spring resort palace and gardens built by Philip II in the last half of the 16th century and rebuilt

in the middle of the 18th century by Ferdinand VI. The work attempts to transport the listener to another place and time through the evocation of the sounds of nature.

In 1939, the Spanish Civil War had just ended, beginning (or continuing, depending on the part of Spain) the Spanish State of dictator Francisco Franco. A work premiered in Spain in this highly charged environment had to celebrate the current political situation, or at least pretend to.

In the words of Mr. Rodrigo, the first movement is "animated by a rhythmic spirit and vigour without either of the two themes... interrupting its relentless pace"; the second movement "represents a dialogue between classical guitar and solo instruments (cor anglais, bassoon, oboe, horn etc.)"; and the last movement "recalls a courtly dance in which the combination of double and triple time maintains a taut tempo right to the closing bar." He described the concerto itself as capturing "the fragrance of magnolias, the singing of birds, and the gushing of fountains" in the gardens of Aranjuez.

Rodrigo and his wife Victoria stayed silent for many years about the inspiration for the second movement, and thus the popular belief grew that it was inspired by the bombing of Guernica in 1937. In her autobiography, Victoria eventually declared that it was both an evocation of the happy days of their honeymoon and a response to Rodrigo's devastation at the miscarriage of their first pregnancy.

Rodrigo dedicated the Concierto de Aranjuez to Regino Sainz de la Maza.During his Italian stay,

## **Bizet: Carmen Suites No. 1 and 2**

The Carmen Suites are two suites of orchestral music drawn from the music of Georges Bizet's 1875 opera Carmen and compiled posthumously by his friend Ernest Guiraud. They adhere very closely to Bizet's orchestration. However the order of the musical allusions do not adhere to the operatic versions entirely, although the Suite is directly inspired by Bizet's opera.

Carmen is an opera in four acts by the French composer Georges Bizet. The libretto was written by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, based on the novella of the same title by Prosper Mérimée. The opera was first performed by the Opéra-Comique in Paris on 3 March 1875, where its breaking of conventions shocked and scandalised its first audiences.

In the Paris of the 1860s, despite being a Prix de Rome laureate, Bizet struggled to get his stage works performed. The capital's two main state-funded opera houses—the Opéra and the Opéra-Comique—followed conservative repertoires that restricted opportunities for young native talent. Bizet's professional relationship with Léon Carvalho, manager of the independent Théâtre Lyrique company, enabled him to bring to the stage two full-scale

operas, Les pêcheurs de perles (1863) and La jolie fille de Perth (1867), but neither enjoyed much public success.

When artistic life in Paris resumed after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, Bizet found wider opportunities for the performance of his works; his one-act opera Djamileh opened at the Opéra-Comique in May 1872. Although this failed and was withdrawn after 11 performances, it led to a further commission from the theatre, this time for a full-length opera for which Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy would provide the libretto. Halévy, who had written the text for Bizet's student opera Le docteur Miracle (1856), was a cousin of Bizet's wife, Geneviève; he and Meilhac had a solid reputation as the librettists of many of Jacques Offenbach's operettas.

Bizet was delighted with the Opéra-Comique commission, and expressed to his friend Edmund Galabert his satisfaction in "the absolute certainty of having found my path". The subject of the projected work was a matter of discussion between composer, librettists and the Opéra-Comique management; Adolphe de Leuven, on behalf of the theatre, made several suggestions that were politely rejected. It was Bizet who first proposed an adaptation of Prosper Mérimée's novella Carmen. Mérimée's story is a blend of travelogue and adventure yarn, possibly inspired by the writer's lengthy travels in Spain in 1830, and had originally been published in 1845 in the journal Revue des deux Mondes. It may have been influenced in part by Alexander Pushkin's 1824 poem "The Gypsies", a work Mérimée had translated into French; it has also been suggested that the story was developed from an incident told to Mérimée by his friend the Countess Montijo. Bizet may first have encountered the story during his Rome sojourn of 1858–60, since his journals record Mérimée as one of the writers whose works he absorbed in those years.

After the premiere, most reviews were critical, and the French public was generally indifferent. Carmen initially gained its reputation through a series of productions outside France, and was not revived in Paris until 1883. Thereafter, it rapidly acquired popularity at home and abroad. Later commentators have asserted that Carmen forms the bridge between the tradition of opéra comique and the realism or verismo that characterised late 19th-century Italian opera.

Bizet died suddenly after the 33rd performance, unaware that the work would achieve international acclaim within the following ten years.

Carmen has since become one of the most popular and frequently performed operas in the classical canon; the "Habanera" from act 1 and the "Toreador Song" from act 2 are among the best known of all operatic arias.

The music of Carmen has since been widely acclaimed for brilliance of melody, harmony, atmosphere, and orchestration, and for the skill with which Bizet musically represented the emotions and suffering of his characters.

## The Octava Chamber Orchestra Personnel

(section members listed alphabetically)

#### Violins

Matthew Weiss Concertmaster Luis Nenninger Assistant Concertmaster Brant Allen \*principal Brigittie Tijerina Eileen Aagaard Jamie Stewart Joanne Ho Nathan Jensen Sada Doup

Violas Elizabeth Gue \*principal Charlene Utt Jennifer Schillen

Cellos Chris Worswick \*principal Aaron Nation

Bass Anthony Balducci

#### Flute

Alec Keith \*principal Helen Lee

**Oboes** John Dimond \*principal Kamil Tarnawczyk

**English Horn** Kamil Tarnawczyk

**Clarinets** Eliza Siracusan \*principal Ned Gerhart

Bassoons Lesley Petty \*principal Michael Murray

Horns Carey LaMothe \*principal Benjamin Gessel Jeff Boersema Lance Ellis **Trumpets** Rob Rankin \*principal Colin Chandler

Trombones Scott Higbee \*principal Steve Sommer

**Bass Trombone** Bryce Ferguson

Timpani Scott Friend

**Percussion** Ian Alvarez \*principal Ashley Fly Mackenzie Alvarez

**Harp** Melissa Walsh

**The Octava Chamber Orchestra** was originally formed by Maestro Johan Louwersheimer and Concertmaster Matthew Weiss in 1991 after they met as students at the *University of Washington School of Music*. We put on a number of performances in the USA and Canada before disbanding after Johan completed his studies and returned to his home in Abbotsford, Canada. Octava reformed in the summer of 2007 and we have been going strong ever since!

The Octava Chamber Orchestra is a non-profit corporation in the State of Washington, a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

~ Our Board Members ~

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CULTURE

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The Octava Chamber Orchestra would like to thank everyone at Maple Park Church for their enthusiasm and support in today's concert.

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