Monte Perkins, Conductor
presents

“BIGGER IS BETTER”

May 1, 2016  3:00 PM
Pabst Theater
144 E. Wells
PROGRAM

Salome’s Dance ("Dance of the Seven Veils") .................................................................Richard Strauss

Four Last Songs ..................................................................................................................Richard Strauss
  1. Fruehling (‘Spring’)
  2. September
  3. Beim Schlafengehn (‘Time To Sleep’)
  4. Im Abendrot (‘At Dusk’)

Kathy Pyeatt, soprano

Intermission

Overture and Venusberg Music from Tannhauser ..........................................................Richard Wagner

FCS SPECIAL GUESTS

SUPER READERS—children who have earned free tickets for themselves and their families by participating in Milwaukee Public Library’s SUPER READERS program.

CIVIC MUSIC ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION PARTICIPANTS—high school students participating in this competition are invited, along with their families, to be the guests of FCS at one of its "Symphony Sundays" concerts.

PAJAMA JAMBOREE FANS—families who attend our children’s “pops” concerts and earn an opportunity to ‘sample’ one of our "Symphony Sundays" programs.

***Festival City Symphony is a member organization of Association of Wisconsin Symphony Orchestras, the Creative Alliance, VISIT Milwaukee, an affiliate member of UPAF, and a program partner at the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center. FCS made the Business Journal’s “Book of Lists” 2002 – 2007, 2010, and 2012.***

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Good afternoon and welcome to the final concert for this season by Festival City Symphony. To close our season we’ve chosen works that epitomize the Romantic Era, using a large orchestra and grand themes that were once described as “erotic”, “decadent”, “immoral”, and “lascivious”.

Richard Wagner (1813 – 1893) had an overwhelming impact on music that is still debated today. His “music of the future” effected generations of composers of every nationality, whether they adopted his concepts or rejected them. His opera *Tannhauser* was premiered in Dresden in 1845 and deals with the conflicting emotions of spiritual versus sensual love. The knight Tannhauser has gone to the underground palace of Venus, Goddess of Love, captivated by the revelry and seduction. Only when he breaks with these feelings and searches for a more moral and chaste love is he redeemed. The *Overture* contains themes depicting the Pilgrims’Chorus, his song to carnal love, and the seduction song of Venus. The *Overture* leads directly to the opera’s opening scene, the *Bacchanale and Venusberg Music*, describing the erotic and sensual life there.

In many ways Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949) dominated musical life in Europe as strongly as had Wagner. His 1905 opera, *Salome*, certainly broke new ground with its topic and voluptuous music. Based on a play by Oscar Wilde, Strauss wrote a libretto himself telling the biblical story of Salome, her love for John the Baptist, and her seduction of Herod, her stepfather. Both the play and the opera were banned for several years before their approval by censors who had thought them “immoral, anti-religious, and overtly erotic”. The power of the story and the music quickly won over audiences and it remains a solid member of the operatic repertoire. Perhaps the most openly sexual portion is the often excerpted *Dance of the Seven Veils*. Salome dances for Herod, finally lying before him naked. Her sensual movements are usually done by a dancer, though some courageous sopranos have chosen to do the dance themselves. A more voluptuous piece has never been written.

From a 41 year old Strauss we fast forward to the final years of a by now world-revered figure. Strauss wrote a goodly number of songs, many for his wife, the much-admired soprano Pauline Strauss. The 84 year old composer turned to the poetry of Hesse and Eichendorff for what became his final works save one. The *Four Last Songs* were premiered only in 1950 by acclaimed soprano Kirsten Flagstad. The songs describe the love the Strauss’ had enjoyed and the death they knew was not far off. *Spring* is a beautiful text painting of breezes, birdsong, and wonder. *September* is melancholy, telling of the end of summer with falling leaves. *Time To Sleep* features death as the ultimate repose. *At Dusk* has our two companions wandering hand in hand to the setting sun. We are very fortunate to have Milwaukee based and nationally acclaimed soprano Kathy Pyeatt singing these wonderful songs for you today.

We hope you enjoy our concert and invite you to join us again next season when we’ll feature some familiar pieces and introduce you to some works we think will become among your favorites.
ABOUT OUR SOLOIST, SOPRANO KATHY PYEATT

Nationally acclaimed soprano Kathy Pyeatt has recently sung the title role in Tosca with the Asheville Lyric Opera, Bryan (TN) and Springfield (MO) Symphony Orchestras where critics have hailed her as a “greatly talented individual...making the role seem as if it was made for her”. Other recent performances include her debuts with Opéra Louisiane as Rosalinda in Die Fledermaus, Winter Opera St. Louis as Alice Ford in Falstaff, and a return to Asheville Lyric Opera for Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni. A local favorite in Milwaukee, Kathy’s memorable performances here have included numerous roles with the Florentine Opera, where she was recently featured as the show-stopping autocratic Lady Billows in Albert Herring and with Skylight Opera Theatre, where her performances include Flora (Fiordiligi) in Cosi Fan Tutte, Constanza in The Abduction from the Seraglio, and the Mother in Hansel & Gretel. On the local scene Kathy has also appeared as a soloist with the Concord Chamber Orchestra, Festival City Symphony, Bel Canto Chorus, Fox Valley Symphony, Racine Symphony Orchestra, Milwaukee Chamber Orchestra, Kenosha Symphony, Rockford Symphony Orchestra and others.

Kathy’s versatile acting, intelligent singing, and “impeccable voice” (Waukesha Freeman) have garnered warm praise from the press everywhere. The Chicago Tribune proclaimed her a “genuine triple threat.” The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel noted her voice’s “richness and elegance...attuned to every harmonic and emotional nuance.” Pioneer Press described her stage persona as “passionate in the extreme.” The Springfield News-Leader hailed her “warm and luscious” voice.

Upcoming, Kathy will be returning to the Milwaukee Opera Theatre as Diane Samuels in the world premiere of Thank You, Next, and to Rockford Symphony for Strauss’ Four Last Songs.

Kathy has also appeared with St. Petersburg Opera, Natchez Opera Festival, Opera Company of North Carolina, Light Opera Works, Springfield Regional Opera, Opera Theatre Highland Park, DuPage Opera Theatre, Chicago City Opera, Impresario Productions, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Pamiro Opera, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, First Stage Milwaukee, and The Milwaukee Opera. Favorite roles include Tosca (Tosca), Violetta (La Traviata), Constanza (The Abduction from the Seraglio), Donna Elvira (Don Giovanni), Rosalinda (Die Fledermaus), Hanna (The Merry Widow), Fiordiligi (Cosi Fan Tutte), Micaela (Carmen), Ilona (Gypsy Love), The Queen of the Night and The First Lady (The Magic Flute), Sybil Vane (The Picture of Dorian Gray), and Adina (The Elixir of Love).

Equally at home on the concert stage her wide ranging repertoire includes performances of Verdi’s Requiem, Poulenc’s Gloria, Beethoven’s 9th Symphony, Mozart’s Requiem, Canteloube’s Chants d’Auvergne, Whitbourn’s Annelies, Mozart’s Exsultate, Jubilate, Samuel Barber’s Knoxville: Summer of 1915, Mahler’s Fourth Symphony, Mendelssohn’s Elijah and Villa Lobos’ Bachianas Brasileiras.

Ms. Pyeatt has been a top prize winner in numerous competitions, including the District and Regional levels of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, the
ABOUT OUR SOLOIST, SOPRANO KATHY PYEATT CONT.

MacAllister Awards and the National Association of Teachers of Singing. When Kathy is not on stage singing you can usually find her backstage. She is currently serving as Director for the Wisconsin District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and is the President for SOS, Supporters of Opera Singers, Inc., a nonprofit arts organization aimed at promoting and supporting young opera singers. She has also served as the Education Consultant for the Opera Company of North Carolina in the building of their new Educational Outreach and Young Artist Program.

In her spare time you might find Kathy hiking, golfing, scuba diving, skiing, sailing, or fostering dogs. Her favorite pastime is hanging out with husband, daughter, and naughty chocolate Labrador Mocha, in their 100+ year old late Victorian farm home they all restored together in Cedarburg, Wisconsin.

ABOUT FSC MUSICIAN, JULIE ROUBIK

Julie Bamberger Roubik has played VIOLA with Festival City Symphony for 7 years

**Birthplace:** Milwaukee, WI

**Education:** BM, Summa Cum Laude in Viola Performance from the U of MN, Twin Cities; MM, Viola Performance with Suzuki Pedagogy Emphasis from the HARTT Conservatory in Hartford, CT

What I enjoy most about playing the violin/viola: The beautiful, rich, dark tone and being the glue that holds the harmony together.

What I find most challenging about playing the viola: Octaves! My hand is small and my instrument is large! 😊

Other instruments I play: Violin, Piano, Koto

Other musical involvements: String Department Chair at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music; I also play with Racine & Kenosha Symphonies and freelance.

Non-musical activities: Reading, Studying Japanese, Guinea Pigs and the Green Bay Packers

Unusual facts about me: I was in the movie “Major League,” a regular towns person on the TV show “Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman” and a runner up on NPR’s “Ask Me Another”.

Music I play on my iPOD, CD player: I’m partial to Shostakovich, Bernstein or Copland ANYTHING and the Unaccompanied Bach Suites. I also love listening to musicals.

Favorite musical memory: Traveling with the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra to Europe twice and with the Whitefish Bay High School orchestra to the former Soviet Union.

Advice to young musicians: You can’t listen enough to recordings of the music you are studying. Music is first and foremost a language, and by immersing yourself in the language of music, you will find greater success in learning it and having fun with it.
Children will clap along when Festival City Symphony duels it out with local bluegrass trio, “Above the Town.” The group features Jerry Loughney on fiddle and vocals; Bill Brenckle on guitar, mandolin, and vocals; and Jon Peik on banjo, bass, and vocals. Music will include selections from “Oklahoma”, “Pop Hoedown” and more.

The popular FCS tradition of young audience members conducting the orchestral finale, “Stars and Stripes” by John Philip Sousa, will bring this concert to a close.

Pajama Jamboree concerts are hosted by education director Jayne Perkins who narrates the program and guides audience participation. Dress is casual with pajamas welcome for the very young. Attendees are invited to sit on the floor, up close, to “meet” the orchestra. Conventional seating is also available.

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2016  7:00 PM**
*Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, in the Bradley Pavilion*
*Use 129 E. State Street entrance*

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