Fantasmagorique

Saturday, November 2 | 7:30 pm
Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Performing Arts

CONDUCTOR
Alexander Platt

Danny Elfman (b. 1953), arranged by John Wasson. Music from Spider-Man
Hector Berlioz (1803-1869), Marche hongroise (Hungarian March) from Le Damnation de Faust

Danny Elfman (b. 1953), Batman Theme
Paul Dukas (1865-1935), L'apprenti sorcier (The Sorcerer's Apprentice)
Danny Elfman (b. 1953), Theme from Edward Scissorhands
Cesar Franck (1822-1890), Le Chasseur Maudit (The Accursed Huntsman)

INTERMISSION

Charles Gounod (1818-1893), Ballet Music from Faust
   No.1 Allegretto
   No.2 Adagio
   No.3 Allegretto
   No.4 Moderato Maestoso
   No.5 Moderato con moto
   No.6 Allegretto
   No.7 Allegro Vivo

Andrew Lloyd Webber (b. 1948), Selections from The Phantom of the Opera

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Please turn off all cellular phones and other digital devices. We respectfully request members of the audience to refrain from the use of camera equipment or recording devices during the performance.
WELCOME FROM THE WISCONSIN PHILHARMONIC

Happy Halloween and welcome to the Wisconsin Philharmonic’s second concert of the season, Fantasmagorique! Defined as an experience where elements of reality and imagination are blurred, Fantasmagorique is a brilliant juxtaposition of thrilling music by French composers and film scores by Danny Elfman. As we continue our season’s musical journey around the world, you will not only be transported to France, but you will experience the chilling tale of Le Chausseur Maudit and the spellbinding story of L’apprenti sorcier. At the end of the night, you’ll find yourself wondering, “Is this real life?”

We end tonight’s program with a “Philharmonic favorite” – the smashing medley from the Phantom of the Opera. If you’re a Phantom fan and are looking for a fun way to support our orchestra… bring out your finest black tie attire and a creative disguise, because we’re throwing our own Masquerade on Saturday April 25th at Chenequa Country Club! Stay tuned to our website: www.wisphil.org and social media outlets for more details.

With the Wisconsin Philharmonic, I wear many “masks,” and truly get to experience our concerts from every possible angle. As a violinist in the orchestra, I could not wait to start working on this program. When Maestro Platt first came up with the idea for this concert over a year ago, I was immediately hooked when he said we’d be playing the Ballet Music from Faust. As the librarian, this concert has been an absolute blast to put together. It’s been exciting receiving boxes of music over the past two months – especially when some of the Danny Elfman pieces came here from Hollywood! Large programs like this are a large undertaking for librarians, but I love the detailed work and long hours (and late nights!) with a score that goes into it. As someone who does a little bit of everything behind the scenes, I’ve loved interacting with our patrons, hearing firsthand how you’ve been looking forward to this performance for quite some time! Seeing it all come together tonight is magical and I sure hope this concert is everything you hoped it would be and more.

Whether you are a longtime supporter of our orchestra, or if this is your first time at the Philharmonic, I hope you will join us again this season! Save the date for our next performance: Sunday December 8th, where we will return to Carroll University for The First Noel – our annual holiday concert. In addition to traditional holiday favorites with a multitude of local high school choirs, we will be joined by two very special guest artists: violist Fitz Gary, and 2019 Chapman Memorial Piano Competition Winner, Andy Liu.

On behalf of the Wisconsin Philharmonic, thank you for supporting our orchestra. We are so lucky to have an audience full of supporters and patrons that are devoted to keeping classical music alive in Waukesha County and beyond.

Musically Yours,

Ashley Rewolinski
Violinist, Music Librarian, and Personnel Manager
ALEXANDER PLATT}

ALEXANDER PLATT has built a unique career spanning the worlds of symphony, chamber music, and opera. He is Music Director of the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra, the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra, and the Wisconsin Philharmonic, and spends his summers as the Music Director of the Maverick Concerts in Woodstock, New York, the oldest summer chamber-music festival in America. He also serves as the artistic director for music at the Westport Arts Center. He also spent twelve seasons as Resident Conductor and Music Advisor at Chicago Opera Theater, where he led the Chicago premieres of such landmark 20th-century operas as Britten's *Death In Venice*, John Adams' *Nixon in China*, Shostakovich's *Moscow Paradise*, Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Peter Brook's *The Tragedy of Carmen*, the Tony Kushner/Maurice Sendak *Brundibar*, the first full staging of Schoenberg's *Erwartung*, and the world-premiere recording of Kurka's *The Good Soldier Schweik* — all to high acclaim in *The New York Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Opera News*, *Opera Canada*, and both the Chicago papers. The former chief conductor of the Racine Symphony, the Boca Raton Symphonia, the Minnesota Philharmonic and the Marion, Indiana Philharmonic, he began his career as the Apprentice Conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Minnesota Opera, where he earned universal acclaim for his conducting of Colin Graham's production of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*.

A graduate of Yale College, King's College Cambridge (where he was a British Marshall Scholar) and conducting fellowships at both Aspen and Tanglewood, he has guest-conducted the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Illinois Philharmonic, the Freiburg Philharmonic in Germany, the Aalborg Symphony in Denmark, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, the City of London Sinfonia, Camerata Chicago, the Banff Festival, the Aldeburgh Festival, and the Houston, Charlotte, Columbus and Indianapolis Symphonies. In 2013 he made his debut at the Ravinia Festival, the summer home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, to high praise in the *Chicago Tribune*. He has recorded for Minnesota Public Radio, National Public Radio, the South-West German Radio and the BBC, and his Cedille Records disc with Rachel Barton of Max Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy* is still often heard on radio stations throughout the world.

The Wisconsin Philharmonic also offers Planned Giving Programs, designed to ensure that The Wisconsin Philharmonic will continue for future generations. Options include Wills and Bequests, Trusts (like a Charitable Remainder Trust), Insurance (an old cash value policy), Appreciated Stock and Retirement Plan Proceeds.

In-kind donations are also accepted. For more information about any of these options, contact The Wisconsin Philharmonic office at 262-547-1858.
MEET THE MAESTROS!

Can you name every Maestro that has conducted the Wisconsin Philharmonic (Waukesha Symphony)? Bonus points if you know when they held the baton!
Hint: They are NOT listed in chronological order.
*various guest conductors from 1995-1997 not pictured


Join us for our upcoming performances:

The First Noel: Sunday December 8th at 3:00 pm

Wisconsin Philharmonic String Quartet Benefit Concerts for the Salvation Army: December 12th-15th

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Melodious Women: Sunday February 9th at 3:00 pm

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It’s always fun to perform classical music around the theme of Hallowe’en, especially as there’s more great music related to the subject than you might think -- though for some reason, most of it has something to do with Russia, or France.

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) was, along with Schubert and Beethoven, one of the founding geniuses of the Romantic era in music. Like the novelist Victor Hugo and the painter Eugene Delacroix, his life and his art ignited the spirit of French romanticism -- most especially in his “Symphonie fantastique” of the early 1830’s, in which he basically made public his unrequited love for the Irish Shakespearian actress Harriet Smithson (Miss Smithson ultimately assented to his pleas for marriage, with disastrous results). An even more mature and sprawling work from 1846 is his “dramatic legend” *The Damnation of Faust*, based on Johann von Goethe’s *Faust* and which to this day is arguably the greatest musical rendering of that masterpiece by the most immortal of German poets. It all begins with a Hungarian march -- this has nothing to do with the plot, it’s just that Berlioz, inspired by his friend Franz Liszt, really wanted to write a Hungarian march! Whatever the inspiration, it appropriately sets the wild, supernatural tone of the work, in which the brilliant but aging doctor Faust, the man who must have everything, sells his soul to the Devil (Mephisto, or Mephistopheles) for the sake of his obsession with an innocent young maid.

Goethe was also the inspiration for another French composer of two generations later: the underrated master Paul Dukas (1865-1937), whose majestic Symphony in C sadly gathers dust on the shelves. *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*, long the most famous work of this profoundly self-critical composer, was composed in 1897, inspired by both the fiery program music of his forebears Berlioz and Liszt, and by the 1797 poem of Goethe himself. The poem’s story is famous: a young apprentice, bored with fetching water from a pail, knows just enough magic to instruct a broom to do it for him; the result being that he doesn’t know enough magic to keep the broom from replicating itself, and turning his house into a floodplain. (The young apprentice’s master, of course, in the end saves the day.) Goethe’s tale, ultimately about the dangerous limits of man’s knowledge and ambition, is brought to life by Dukas’ brilliant orchestration and knack for tone-painting: in the opening chords, you can just feel the boredom of the young apprentice, with the sunlight floating through the cobwebs of his cell. But of course what made Dukas’ work immortal was Walt Disney using it as the cornerstone of his 1940 animated film *Fantasia*, in which Mickey Mouse played the apprentice. The result, with Leopold Stokowski leading the Philadelphia Orchestra, was a masterpiece of American popular art.

Less well-known than the two aforementioned works, but equally effective, would be the symphonic poem *Le Chasseur maudit* (“The Accursed Huntsman”), by the Belgian master Cesar Franck (1822-1890), whose bicentennial year will hopefully enjoy an appropriate celebration in the musical world. Born of a French father and a German mother, Franck worshiped the Teutonic masters like Wagner, Schumann, Beethoven and Bach, but became a Frenchman through and through, moving to Paris in the 1840’s and even helping out at the barricades in that catastrophic year of 1871. Franck’s wickedly effective tone-poem, also inspired by the works of Berlioz and Liszt, was based on the ballad of another German Romantic poet, Gottfried August Burger, and tells the deliciously improbable story of a decadent nobleman who, eschewing Sunday morning Mass for the thrill of riding to hounds, gets chased down into Hell by hounds of a different order. Maybe not musically as profound a work as that of Berlioz or Dukas, but quite a ride all the same!
Building on our success last season with the film music of John Williams, it’s such a pleasure to include in tonight’s program some gems of the repertoire of Danny Elfman (b.1953), who is in some ways Williams’ successor as a master of the movie genre. The composer of the theme music for *The Simpsons*, Elfman has had particular success writing scores for the darker side of the Hollywood blockbuster -- *Batman*, *Spider-Man*, and Tim Burton’s Gothic essay *Edward Scissorhands*. The music is so effective in its grand scale and pop-music feeling, but listen too for the influences of Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich and Prokofiev. And while the music of Andrew Lloyd Webber (another popular-music genius with classical roots) certainly needs no introduction, we should remember that *The Phantom of the Opera* takes place in 19th-century Paris.

Finally, proper due must be paid to what remains one of the most elegant masterworks of lighter music, the ballet music from the sprawling, five-act operatic version of *Faust* by that most undervalued of French 19th-century composers, Charles Gounod (1818-1893). A man of many personal failures, Gounod is seen in some quarters as a laughable figure; to this day many Germans refuse to accept Gounod’s opera after Goethe’s immortal poem as to be suitably dignified in expression to be mentioned in the same breath. And yet, along with his equally beautiful operas *Mireille*, a Provencal love-triangle, and *Romeo and Juliet, Faust*, in its sprawling five acts, continues to hold the stage, having been performed literally thousands of times at the Metropolitan Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and all the great houses of Europe.

*Faust* began life in 1859 at the Theatre-Lyrique in Paris; as with another French opera debuted there, Bizet’s *Carmen*, the house operated in the French style of *opéra-comique*, somewhat like our Broadway, in which solo songs and ensembles alternated with spoken dialogue. The spectacular success of Gounod’s opera, however (one cannot stress enough this opera’s popularity in the later 19th century; famously, Queen Victoria commanded a private performance of it from her deathbed), soon demanded that the work be given a formal production at the Paris Opera, in 1869. This however also legally required that Gounod compose a full, formal sequence for the *corps de ballet*, -- *every* opera presented at the Paris Opera, the magnificent Palais Garnier, *had* to have a full-length ballet -- which he shoe-horned into the opera’s fourth of five acts. Taking place (again, rather improbably) in a hunting lodge in the Harz Mountains on the night of *Walpurgisnacht* (basically the Germanic version of Hallowe’en), Doctor Faust, along with his sidekick-turned-ball-in-chain Mephistopheles, is treated to a fantastic vision of beautiful young women, all portraying great courtesans of history (Cleopatra, Helen of Troy, etc.). This ravishing, decadent fantasy produces a sublime set of dances but it soon enough turns into a harrowing nightmare, at which point the scene is set for the opera’s tumultuous conclusion. Faust is damned, the maiden Mauguerite redeemed, and Mephistopheles doubtless goes on to his next bit of work.

Alexander Platt
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