

**Beaverton
Symphony
Orchestra**

30th Anniversary Season

A Concert of Chamber Music



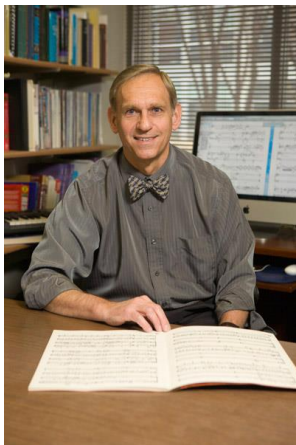
3:00pm Sunday, April 12, 2015

beavertonsymphony.org

The composers on this program:



Felix Mendelssohn



Roger Vogel



Vytas Nagisetty



George Gershwin



Franz Schubert



Dmitri Shostakovich

Beaverton Symphony Orchestra

Travis Hatton, Music Director

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

Octet for Strings, Op. 20

Allegro moderato ma con fuoco
Presto

Kris Keyes Oliveira, violin
Sarah Brody Webb, violin
Dave Abbott, violin
Sobyun Westin, violin
Shauna Keyes, viola
Deborah Baxter, viola
Lisa Fishman, cello
Dave Keyes, cello

Music donated by Jack Konner

Roger Vogel
(b. 1947)

Love Letters, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 6, 9 and 11

Your Letter Moved Me (Margaret Lawrence, 1942)
I Lie Awake (Pliny the Younger, 1st century A.D.)
Dear Miss West Forty-seventh Street (John Steinbeck, 1949)
My Darling, Dear, Delightful Ringo (to Ringo Starr, 1964)
Everything Measurable Passes (Gustav Flaubert, 1846)
Adieu, I Seal My Letter (Gustav Flaubert, 1846)

Alicia Davenport, soprano
Stephen Galvan, tenor
Rachael Susman, violin
Yvonne Yang, piano

Vytas Nagisetty
(b. 1971)

Bobby Fischer (world premier performance) **Danser** (world premier performance)

Ellen Bercovitz, flute
Rachael Susman, violin
Maggie Cuneo, cello
Mark Cuneo, bass

Intermission

George Gershwin
(1898-1937)
arranged by Bill Holcombe

Selections from Porgy and Bess

Overture, Catfish Row
Summertime
A woman is a sometime thing
My man's gone now
I got plenty o' nuttin'
Bess, you is my woman now
It ain't necessarily so
I loves you Porgy
There's a boat dat's leavin' soon for New York
Oh Lawd, I'm on my way

Ellen Bercovitz, flute
Joanna Gunderson, oboe
Richard Boberg, clarinet
David Taylor, bassoon
Michael Gunderson, French horn

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Der Hirt auf dem Felsen, D. 965 (The Shepherd on the Rock)

Madeline Ross, soprano
Don Barnes, clarinet
Paul Hanau, piano

Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906-1975)

String Quartet No. 8, op. 110

Largo – Allegro molto – Allegretto – Largo – Largo

Jonathan Novack, violin
Sarah Novack, violin
Adele Larson, viola
Kristin Dissinger, cello

Program Notes

Felix Mendelssohn: String Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20

Mendelssohn wrote his String Octet in E-flat major in the autumn of 1825 at age 16. This Octet and his *Overture* to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which he wrote a year later, are his best known early works. He wrote the Octet as a birthday gift for his friend and violin teacher Eduard Ritz (1802-1832); it was slightly revised in 1832 before the first public performance on 30 January 1836 at the Leipzig Gewandhaus. Conrad Wilson summarizes much of its reception ever since: "Its youthful verve, brilliance and perfection make it one of the miracles of nineteenth-century music." Many commentators have asserted that no other composer – not even Mozart – has ever written a major piece of such astounding quality at such a tender age.

Of course, the *Octet* did not emerge out of thin air. Mendelssohn only began saving his compositions at age 11, but in that single year he wrote 60 movements ranging from piano sonatas to a cantata. By his 15th birthday he had written dozens of major works, including symphonies, concertos and operas, largely for the family musicales. Most notable (and still performed) were his dozen string symphonies, in which he developed a style of which John Horton considers the *Octet* to be the richest flowering – beyond techniques drawn from predecessors, including Haydn's derivation of second themes from opening melodies and Beethoven's development of cyclic structures, they contained experiments in unusual string groupings.

The *Octet* was strikingly original. Eric Werner calls it Mendelssohn's first work for which it is futile to search for outside influences. The only ostensible precedent was Louis Spohr's 1823 *Double String Quartet in d minor*. Yet even Spohr himself readily discounted any similarity – in his autobiography, he distinguished Mendelssohn's *Octet* as "belong[ing] to quite another kind of art, in which the two quartets do not concert and interchange in double choir with each other, but all eight instruments work together."

The original score is for a double string quartet with 4 violins and pairs of violas and cellos. Mendelssohn instructed in the public score, "This Octet must be played by all the instruments in symphonic orchestral style. Pianos and fortes must be strictly observed and more strongly emphasized than is usual in pieces of this character." Mendelssohn wrote to Goethe that his *Octet* was "full of life."

The piece has four movements of which, today, we will be hearing the first and last.

Roger Vogel: Love Letters

Roger Craig Vogel is an American composer of contemporary classical music and a music educator. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio and received his Ph. D. in Music Theory and Composition from the Ohio State University in 1975. He is currently Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of Georgia. Since joining the faculty in 1976, he has written and published over 100 works. His compositions have won prizes in national contests and have been performed at conventions and festivals throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and South America.

Love Letters was written in 2002 and received its premier at the University of Georgia in 2005. The excerpts selected for this song cycle were chosen to represent many different aspects of the universal emotion of love: from longing, exuberance, excitement, and playfulness to sorrow and despair.

1. Your Letter Moved Me.

Your letter moved me. To see your firm, strong writing on the envelope was enough--almost. I held it in my hand and looked at it. I did not expect it, and it was sweet to have, just a letter.

Margaret Lawrence to Benedict Greene, June 21, 1942.

Text from *Love Letters to Baruch*. Musson Book Company, © 1973.

Margaret Lawrence was a noted Canadian author and Benedict Green was a Canadian publisher. Their long and happy marriage began in 1943.

2. I Lie Awake.

You will not believe what a longing I have for you. I lie awake the greatest part of the night thinking of you. And by day my feet carry me of their own accord to your chamber at those hours I used to visit you; but not finding you there, I return sick and sad at heart like a rejected lover.

Pliny the Younger to Calpurnia, 1st century A.D.

All will pass, except my passion for you.

Catherine the Great to Colonel Peter Zavadovskii, 1776.

By all accounts Pliny the Younger's marriage to Calpurnia was an extraordinarily happy one. This letter was written when they were newly married and were apart for the first time because of business and family concerns.

Catherine's passion for Zavadovskii, like that of so many other of her loves, did indeed pass.

3. Dear Miss West Forty-seventh Street.

Dear Miss West Forty-seventh Street between Eighth and Ninth: Am a widower with 10,000 acres in Arizona and seven cows so if you can milk I will be glad to have you give up that tinsel life of debauchery and sin and come out to God's country' where we got purple sage.

PS. Can you bring a little sin and debauchery along? You can get too much purple sage, but you

can only get just enough sin.

John Steinbeck to Elaine Scott, June 6, 1949.

Text used by permission from *Steinbeck: A Life in Letters*. The Viking Press, © 1975.

John Steinbeck and Elaine Scott were married in 1950. This letter was written shortly after they became acquainted.

6. My Darling, Dear, Delightful Ringo

My Darling, Dear, Delightful Ringo,

Could you please send me something of yours? Anything, a lock of hair, a thread from your coat, a smoked cigarette, a button from your shirt, a piece of old toast, or a bristle from your toothbrush.

I would treasure it forever.

My love, Mary L.

Mary L., New York City, to Ringo Starr, 1964.

Text from *Love Letters to the Beatles* © 1964 by Bill Adler.

During the early 1960's the British rock group The Beatles received hundreds of thousands of fan letters. This delightful letter from Mary L. was one of them.

9. Everything Measurable Passes

Everything measurable passes, everything that can be counted has an end. Only three things are infinite: the sky in its stars, the sea in its drops of water, and the heart in its tears.

Gustave Flaubert to Louise Colet, August 9, 1846.

Text used by permission from *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert 1830-1857*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 1980.

Although they never married, Gustave Flaubert and Louise Colet enjoyed a relationship that lasted nearly a decade. This letter was written shortly after they met.

11. Adieu, I Seal My Letter.

Adieu. I seal my letter. This is the hour when alone amidst everything that sleeps, I open the drawer that holds my treasures. I look at your slippers, your handkerchief, your hair, your portrait. I re-read your letters and breathe their musky perfume. If you could know what I am feeling at this moment! My heart expands in the night, penetrated by a dew of love!

A thousand kisses, a thousand, everywhere -- *everywhere*.

Gustave Flaubert to Louise Colet, August 6 or 7, 1846.

Text used by permission from *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert 1830-1857*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 1980.

Vytas Nagisetty: Bobby Fischer and Danser

Vytas Nagisetty began writing songs when he was 14 years old. Later, he studied music at the University of California, Berkeley. When he spent a year abroad living in Paris he began composing music for film. After graduating he worked as a bassist in the San Francisco Bay Area with such notable artists as recent MacArthur Genius Grant recipient, Vijay Iyer, and the legendary saxophonist, Pharaoh Sanders.

In 1997 Nagisetty moved to New York City to focus on composing for independent film. He composed the scores for 5 feature films and numerous shorts. He also made contributions to several film soundtracks as a songwriter and performer. His compositions and songs show an appreciation and influence of many styles of music including European Classical, jazz, rock, Latin, West and East Indian, and the Avant Garde.

In 2003, Nagisetty left New York City and returned to his hometown of Toledo, Ohio. While there he wrote and recorded over 40 original songs with two different groups: The Electric Outfit – a rock “power” trio, and Local Honey – an eclectic ensemble of voice, guitar, mandolin, vibraphone, contrabass, and drums. He also studied vocalese – a style in which improvised melodies are transcribed and given lyrics – with Toledo-native and jazz icon, Jon Hendricks.

In 2011, he moved to Portland, Oregon. Soon after arriving he joined the Beaverton Symphony Orchestra as a bassist. Outside of performances with the orchestra, he has played bass with several local jazz and rock groups, and with nationally touring artists. He has also performed his original songs at the Portland Saturday Market.

Besides being a musician, Nagisetty has also worked as a computer programmer and more recently as a teacher. He holds degrees in music, French literature, mathematics, and education. He currently teaches French and graphic design at Liberty High School in Hillsboro.

About the music -- **Bobby Fischer:**

After I learned that I would have an opportunity to have a piece performed at the Beaverton Symphony chamber music concert I started experimenting with a handful of musical ideas I had at the time to see if I could expand one of them further. I wanted to create a short, simple piece that I knew I could finish in time for the concert. The opening motif of “Bobby Fischer” was one of those ideas. I tinkered with the melody and accompaniment, and looked for counter-melodies, and before too long more ideas followed and the piece was completed. For me the piece is pensive at times and playful at others. It also contains elements of call and response. There are tinges of blues and European folk styles. When I was trying to name it, I kept thinking (for whatever reason) of the famous chess champion Bobby Fischer. It was nothing really more profound than that. I suppose if there was ever a film made about Bobby Fischer I could hear this music being used as his theme. Or I can think of it underscoring a short chess match in which Maestro Fischer swiftly dismisses an opponent. But really I have no good reason for the name, other than the piece needed a name, and Bobby Fischer stuck in my head.

Danser:

This piece is a medley of melodies that I improvised and sang to my daughter, Vivienne, since she was born one year ago. There actually are lyrics that go with many of the melodies that you hear in the piece. All of the lyrics are in French (I primarily speak French to Vivienne). I list some of these phrases below. Over the course of the last year I recorded these fragments into my phone as they came up. Then later I transcribed and arranged those fragments into this instrumental piece you hear today. My goal was in part to write something in celebration of Vivienne's first birthday. During the piece the music shifts between driving rhythms to sparse melody and back to driving rhythms while keeping the same underlying pulse. Some of the musical influences that you might hear alluded to during the piece are the Avant Garde, ragamuffin, bluegrass, and Japanese koto music. Here are some of the lyrics (that you won't hear) with translations:

Danser, on va danser. Danser. Tout de Suite. On va danser. Tout le monde. Danser. Allez-y. On va danser. Après moi. Danser. Maintenant. On va danser. On y go !

To dance, we are going to dance. To dance. Right Away. We are going to dance. Everybody. To dance. Go. We are going to dance. After me. To dance. Now. We are going to dance. Let's go !

Moi je suis Vivienne. J'aime bien danser. J'aime me reposer. J'aime bien danser. J'aime me reposer.

I am Vivienne. I like to dance. I like to relax. I like to dance. I like to relax.

Qu'est-ce que tu penses ? Qu'est-ce que tu penses tu penses ? Qu'est-ce que tu penses ?

What do you think? What do you think you think? What do you think?

This piece is the first in what will hopefully be a suite of pieces dedicated to and inspired by my daughter.

George Gershwin: Selections from Porgy and Bess

Porgy and Bess is an English-language opera composed in 1934 by George Gershwin, with a libretto written by DuBose Heyward and Ira Gershwin from Heyward's novel *Porgy* and later play of the same title. *Porgy and Bess* was first performed in New York City on September 30, 1935 and featured an entire cast of classically trained African-American singers—a daring artistic choice at the time.

George Gershwin worked on the opera in Charleston, South Carolina. He drew inspiration from the James Island Gullah community, which he felt had preserved some African musical traditions. This research added to the authenticity of his work.

The music itself reflects his New York jazz roots, but also draws on southern black traditions.

Gershwin modeled the pieces after each type of folk song which the composer knew about; jubilees, blues, praying songs, street cries, work songs, and spirituals are blended with traditional arias and recitatives.

The most fundamental influences on the compositions and orchestrations in evidence throughout *Porgy And Bess*, along with those coming from American Jazz and Black religious music, are the European (particularly Russian) composers whose music Gershwin studied. In addition, as biographers and contemporaries have noted, some Gershwin melodies bear similarities at times to melodies heard in Jewish liturgical music. Gershwin biographer Edward Jablonski noted such a similarity between the melody to "It Ain't Necessarily So" and the Haftarah blessing, while others hear similarities with Torah blessing. One musicologist detected "an uncanny resemblance" between the folk tune *Havenu Shalom Aleichem* and the spiritual "It Take a Long Pull to Get There".

Porgy and Bess contains many songs that have become popular in their own right, becoming standards in jazz and blues in addition to their original operatic setting. The arrangement being played today is by noted arranger Bill Holcombe, who studied flute at the Juilliard School in New York, and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in musicology. As a composer and arranger, Bill worked with Tommy Dorsey, 101 Strings, Peter Nero, and over 100 symphony orchestras, nationally and internationally. He also wrote more than 15 film scores.

Franz Schubert: Der Hirt auf dem Felsen (The Shepherd on the Rock), D. 965

The Shepherd on the Rock" is a Lied (song) for soprano, clarinet, and piano, composed in 1828 during the last months of Schubert's short life. It was written as a belated response to a request from the operatic soprano Pauline Anna Milder-Hauptmann, a friend of Schubert, who had requested a showpiece that would allow her to express a wide range of feelings. It was published a year and a half after Schubert's death, and Milder sang it for the first time at the House of the Blackheads in Riga on 10 February 1830.

Of the seven verses, the first four and the last came from the poetry of Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827), while verses five and six were written by Karl August Varnhagen von Ense (1785-1858). The Lied is multi-sectional with the clarinet and the voice equally challenged. The first section is warm as the lonely shepherd, high on the mountaintop, listens to the echoes rising from below. The second section becomes quite dark as the shepherd expresses his all encompassing grief and loneliness. The third and last section is a sign of hope as the shepherd anticipates the coming of spring and with it rebirth.

Here is the text of the poems:

Wilhelm Müller – “Der Berghirt” – “The Mountain Shepherd”

Wenn auf dem höchsten Fels ich steh,
ins tiefe Thal herneider seh,
und singe, und singe,
fern aus dem tiefen, dunkeln Thal
schwingt sich empor der Wiederhall,
der Wiederhall der Klüfte.
Je weiter meine Stimme dringt,
je heller sie mir wiederklingt,
von unten, von unten.
Mein Liebchen wohnt so weit von mir,
drum sehn ich mich so heiß nach ihr
hinüber, hinüber.

When on the highest peak I stand
and look down into the valley below,
and sing, and sing,
then from the distant vale’s dark depths,
the echo soars up towards me,
the echo of the chasm.
The farther my voice carries,
the brighter it echoes back from below,
from far below.
My sweetheart lives so far away,
that’s why I long to be with her,
over there, over there.

Karl August Varnhagen von Ense – “Nächtlicher Schal” -- “Nocturnal Sounds”

In tiefem Gram verzehr’ ich mich,
mir ist die Freude hin,
auf Erden mir die Hoffnung wich,
ich hier so einsam bin, ich hier so einsam bin.
So sehnend klang im Wald das Lied,
so sehnend klang es durch die Nacht,
die Herzen es zum Himmel zieht
mit wunderbarer Macht.

By deepest grief I am consumed,
I am robbed of every joy.
Hope has left me here on earth,
I am so lonely here, I am so lonely here.
So longingly did the song sound in the wood,
so longingly did it sound through the night,
it lifted hearts up to heaven
with miraculous power.

Wilhelm Müller – “Liebesgedanken” – “Love Thoughts”

Der Frühling will kommen,
der Frühling meine Freud,
nun mach ich mich fertig zum Wandern bereit.

But now Spring is on its way,
Spring, my delight,
now I make myself ready to go out wandering.

Dmitri Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 8, Op. 110

Shostakovich's **String Quartet No. 8** was written in three days (12–14 July 1960) as a distraction from a project to write a film score about the Dresden fire bombings of WWII, and was premiered that year in Leningrad by the Beethoven Quartet. The piece was written shortly after two traumatic events in the life of the composer: the first presentation of debilitating muscular weakness that would eventually be diagnosed as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, and his reluctant joining of the Communist Party. In a letter, Shostakovich sarcastically dismissed it as an “ideological piece of no use to anyone”; officially, he dedicated it to the “Victims of Fascism and WWII”. His son, Maxim, interprets this as a reference to the victims of all totalitarianism, while his daughter Galina says that he dedicated it to himself, and that the published dedication was imposed by the Russian authorities. Shostakovich's friend, Lev Lebedinsky, said that Shostakovich thought of the work as his epitaph and that he planned to commit suicide around this time.

In the liner notes of the Borodin String Quartet's recording of the quartet in 1962, critic Erik Smith wrote: *The Borodin Quartet played this work to the composer at his Moscow home, hoping for his criticisms. But Shostakovich, overwhelmed by this beautiful realisation of his most personal feelings, buried his head in his hands and wept. When they had finished playing, the four musicians quietly packed up their instruments and stole out of the room.*

The quartet, extremely compact and focused, is in five interconnected movements and lasts about twenty minutes. The first movement opens with the DSCH motif, from the German transliteration of his name (**D**mitri **S**Hostakovich). In German music notation, the letters spell a four note musical motive, D, E-flat (S), C, B (H). This musical theme saturates the entire quartet, appearing in numerous, immediately recognizable transformations throughout the texture from violin to cello, from melody to accompaniment. This slow, extremely sad theme can also be heard in his Cello Concerto No. 1, Symphony No. 10, Violin Concerto No. 1, Symphony No. 15, and Piano Sonata No. 2. The motif is used in every movement of this quartet, and is the basis of the faster theme of the third movement.

The work is filled with quotations of other pieces by Shostakovich: the first movement quotes his *Symphony No. 1* and *Symphony No. 5*; the second movement uses a Jewish theme first used by Shostakovich in his *Piano Trio No. 2*; the third movement quotes the *Cello Concerto No. 1*; and the fourth movement quotes the 19th century revolutionary song "Tormented by Grievous Bondage" and the aria *Seryozha, my love* from Shostakovich's opera, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. The fifth contains a play upon a motif also from *Lady Macbeth*.

This is the Beaverton Symphony's 30th Anniversary Season

The Beaverton Chamber Symphony was founded in 1984 by Charles Encell, a professional carpenter who also happened to have a Masters degree in Music from PSU and a Ph.D. in Conducting from the University of Washington. He started the orchestra, he recalls, "because there wasn't one out in the wild western communities of Portland at the time and I thought there needed to be one. And because I wanted a place to conduct."

The orchestra played its first public performance at a fundraiser for the Beaverton Arts Commission in November of 1984, and its first public concert in December of that year. At that time the orchestra consisted of around 25 players. Charley conducted the orchestra for its first 25 seasons before retiring in 2008 with his wife (and our former concertmaster) Gwen Isaacs to Victoria, BC, where he continues to play in and conduct various amateur groups.

During the 2008-2009 season, the orchestra, by then having about 50 musicians, auditioned several candidates and chose Travis Hatton as its second conductor and music director. At that time, in recognition of our growth over the years into a full size symphony orchestra, the members voted to change our name to the Beaverton Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra has since grown to about 65 members and eagerly looks forward to its next 30 years.

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Travis Hatton's versatile conducting career spans a broad range of musical organizations around the world. He has led opera and ballet companies throughout Europe and America, and has appeared as a guest conductor with orchestras in Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and in Boston, Tennessee, Indiana, California, Alaska, Colorado, Washington, Oregon and Texas. He holds a Bachelors of Music degree (awarded Magna Cum Laude) in Music Theory and Composition from the University of the Pacific and a Masters of Music degree in Orchestral Conducting from the New England Conservatory of Music.



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