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Marshall University Music Department Presents
The Marshall University Symphony Orchestra,
Family Concert, Dr. Elizabeth Reed Smith,
Conductor

Elizabeth Reed Smith

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SCHOOL of MUSIC
and THEATRE

presents

**The Marshall University
Symphony Orchestra**

Family Concert

Dr. Elizabeth Reed Smith, conductor
Dr. Larry Stickler, narrator
Christianna Dixon, piano soloist

Tuesday, March 5, 2013
Smith Recital Hall
7:30 p.m.

This program is presented by the College of Fine Arts through the School of Music and Theatre with the support of student activity funds. For more information about this or other music events, please call (304)696-3117, or view our website at www.marshall.edu/cofa/music.

Program

Overture to Les Vêpres Siciliennes Giuseppe Verdi
(1813-1901)

Piano Concerto in B^b Major, K. 595 W.A. Mozart
(1756-91)

III. Allegro

Christianna Dixon, piano
Winner, 2013 Young Peoples Concert Competition

Peter and the Wolf Sergei Prokofiev
(1891-1953)

Dr. Larry Stickler, narrator

Sea Songs Quick March Ralph Vaughan Williams
(1872-1958)

Acknowledgements: The Women's Club of Huntington,
Dr. David Castleberry, Paul Dempsey, Dr. Larry Stickler,
Dr. Vicki Stroehrer

Program Notes

Overture to *Les Vespres Siciliennes*

When Giuseppe Verdi was approached in 1852 by the Paris Opera to write an opera in the French language for the Paris Exhibition of 1855, he thought the proposed subject - the Sicilian Vespers - to be a rather poor choice to endear him to the French public. The story - often used to stir Italian nationalism, is not kind to the French.

On the outskirts of Palermo, Sicily on the 30th of March in 1282 as the bells rang at the Church of the Holy Spirit to mark the beginning of the Vespers service, there also began an uprising against the tyranny of Charles d' Anjou, the reigning King of Sicily and a Frenchman. Charles, encouraged by a politically corrupt pope, financed an invasion of Constantinople by imposing tax upon tax upon tax on the people of Sicily, but not on the thousands of French men and women who followed Charles's court to the island. In 1282, after nearly 16 years of his reign, the people of Sicily had had enough of Charles and his "French conquest".

In Palermo, as daylight gave way to dark on the Monday after Easter, the bells rang out to call the congregants from their holiday revelries to the evening service of Vespers. Instead, a bloody insurrection against Charles and his French supporters arose. Men ran through the streets crying, "Death to the French", inciting a bloody terror that saw inns, pubs, and houses raided and French men, women, and children killed.

Verdi's nervousness about the subject matter, then, seems well-justified. But the opera's librettist, Eugene Scribe, considered that the vividness of the story and particularly its theme of revolution would see it through.

As a grand opera that features numerous scenes for chorus and ballet *Les Vespres Siciliennes* is quite expensive to produce. Thus it has fallen out of favor with contemporary opera houses. The overture, however, is quite frequently performed, and enjoys a success apart from the opera. It features musical themes from the opera proper, and one Verdi scholar, David Kimbell, offers that the brooding and quiet slow introduction "proves to be expressive of the condition of Sicily and its people," while the faster main sections represent the conspiracy that fills the plot. A stirring conclusion could be said to represent the massacre with which the opera so memorably ends.

Piano Concerto in B b , K 595

As a young child, Mozart was paraded by his father Leopold around the major cities of Europe in hopes of securing the patronage of a prominent and wealthy family. Unfortunately, the Mozarts were not always entirely welcomed by the families whose favors they sought, or else they took advantage of their good nature, wearing out their welcome (the Austrian empress Maria Theresa described them rather harshly as "beggars"). Thus, the young Mozart never quite achieved on these tours the brilliant future that Leopold had intended. Furthermore, as he matured, the luster of his child prodigy status began to fade. Disheartened by the uneven success of their world travels, the Mozarts resettled in Salzburg in 1773, where they were employed by the Archbishop Colloredo. Mozart began composing to order, fulfilling numerous commissions.

Ultimately, he found that Vienna held the greatest opportunities to make a living, and he moved there permanently in 1781 after a falling out with the Archbishop. To cobble together a living, he made use of his performing abilities, playing piano and violin in the music chambers of the grand houses in and around Vienna. To

properly showcase his talents, he wrote for himself numerous virtuoso display works including concertos.

In the last several years of his life, he and his family were in dire financial straits. By January 1791 their situation was almost untenable. Although he had not composed a piano concerto in nearly three years, Mozart returned to the genre for the final time. He finished the work just three weeks before his 35th (and last) birthday, and premiered it at a concert in which he was not even given top billing. It was his final performance before his death in December.

The third movement is cast in a typical rondo design. The piano introduces the rondo theme, followed by its repetition in the orchestra. After a contrasting section, the rondo theme recurs. Another contrasting section follows this reiteration of the theme, after which the rondo theme reappears. Notice that each time the theme reappears it does so after a bit of "bravura" (as Mozart liked to call showy passages) on the part of the soloist. Near the end the soloist performs a lengthy cadenza - a section for the pianist alone to "show off" her technique, and then the rondo theme recurs for the final time.

Peter and the Wolf

Between 1922 and the summer of 1936 Prokofiev lived in exile in Europe, away from the sea of changes that were taking place in the Soviet Union. By 1932, however, he began to think of returning to his homeland, but first had to find a way to assimilate into the new Soviet concept of art, with its call for works to display simplicity, usefulness, and give attention to social and political engagement. In order to ingratiate himself to the government and pave the way for his return he wrote to Soviet newspapers of his new aesthetic direction and its compliance with

Soviet ideals, and in the summer of 1936 he and his family moved back. Prokofiev noted that one Soviet ideal was that music be educational, and so when he was asked to write a work for children he jumped on the chance, completing the work in just four days. He himself had two young sons, so no doubt they were on his mind as he composed this work that never fails to delight audiences young and old.

Sea Songs

In 1924 King George V of England opened the British Empire Exhibition. No expense was spared, and the exhibition was considered to be wildly successful, as more than 27 million people visited between April and October. Vaughan Williams' *Sea Songs*, which was performed in its original brass band version at the Exhibit, featured three English folksongs: "Admiral Benbow", "Princess Royal", and "Portsmouth". All three allude to Britain's naval strength. In 1942 Vaughan Williams made an arrangement of this popular work for orchestra, so that it could reach a wider audience.

~ notes by Dr. Vicki Stroehrer

Orchestra Personnel

Violin I

Angela Scoulas, concertmaster
Molly Page
Olivia Hay
Emiko Lowers-Hori

Violin II

Nathanial Ramsey, principal
Michael Wilcoxon
Kelcey Perkins
Heather Taylor
Samuel Bauserman

Viola

Tim Feverston, principal
Matthew McCroby
Lucia Soltis
Andrew Swing
Vera Miller
Donovan Steele
Jame McCumbee
Christianna Dixon

Cello

Dean Pauley, principal
David Hay
Lena Williams
Jamie Dzierzak
Ronnie Thompson

Bass

Ryan Morgan, principal
Colin Milam
James Arnold

Flute

Allison Kessinger, co-principal
Shey Dillon, co-principal

Piccolo

Shey Dillon

Oboe

Christopher McDerment, principal
Lena Williams

Clarinet

Ryan Striker, principal
Scott Nibert

Bassoon

Christopher McNeese, principal
Michelle McKenzie

Horn

William Holderby, principal
Nicholas Bragg
Danielle Ocheltree
Christian Cremeans

Trumpet

Daniel Ricks, principal
Justin Bahawi
Briana Blankenship

Trombone

Andrew O'Neal, principal
Brianna Williams
Timothy Huffman, bass

Tuba

Nicholas Hartley

Timpani

Andrew Tilley

Percussion

Evan Grover
Evan White
Andrew Tilley

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Melanie Griffis, Director of Development

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