

Markus Stenz, conductor
David Halen, violin

Friday, October 13, 2017 at 10:30AM
Saturday, October 14, 2017 at 8:00PM

BERLIOZ
(1803–1869)

Roman Carnival Overture, op. 9 (1844)

KHACHATURIAN
(1903–1978)

Violin Concerto in D minor (1940)
Allegro con fermezza
Andante sostenuto
Allegro vivace

David Halen, violin

INTERMISSION

WALTON
(1902–1983)

Symphony No. 1 in B-flat minor (1935)
Allegro assai
Presto, con malizia
Andante con malinconia
Maestoso — Briosio ed ardentemente — Vivacissimo — Maestoso

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2017/2018 Classical Series is presented by **World Wide Technology**, **The Steward Family Foundation**, and **Centene Charitable Foundation**.

The concert of Friday, October 13 is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Gordon and Susie Philpott**.

The concert of Saturday, October 14 is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Ted and Robbie Beatty**.

David Halen is the **Ann and Paul Lux Guest Artist**.

Pre-Concert Conversations are sponsored by **Washington University Physicians**.

ROMANTIC DISCLOSURES

BY RENÉ SPENCER SALLER

TIMELINKS

1844 Samuel Morse writes out “What hath God wrought” in the first telegraph message.

1935 Bruno Hauptmann goes to trial for kidnapping and murdering Charles Lindbergh’s baby.

1940 Winston Churchill succeeds Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

The composers on this program came from France, Russia, and England, all highly distinct cultural contexts, and yet all three men were shaped by Romanticism. Romanticism—in music, literature, fine arts—lasted more than a century, and by some definitions it never actually died. The Beethoven scholar Maynard Solomon defined it as a yearning for a state of mind beyond ordinary experience. The point isn’t novelty, or newness, or even originality so much as being alive to the world, in all of its maddening complexity.

Hector Berlioz, whose *Roman Carnival Overture* opens the concert, epitomizes the early French Romantic. A gifted critic and memoirist, he worshiped Shakespeare, Goethe, and Beethoven. Unlike most major composers, he hadn’t mastered keyboard instruments; he took flute and guitar lessons for a while, but he never became particularly good at either instrument. Yet his deeply original harmonic language and his genius for orchestration distinguished him from his more conventionally trained peers. He craved new, never-before-imagined sonorities, and he figured out ways to create them.

Just shy of a century later, in Soviet Russia, the Armenian-Russian composer Aram Khachaturian composed his only Violin Concerto, a masterpiece of creative assimilation. Armenian folk riffs, slippery harmonies, and sturdy folk rhythms re-invigorate classical conventions. The Violin Concerto’s harmonic language screams late Romantic-nationalist; there is nothing remotely modern about it. Unlike many violin concertos, Khachaturian’s doesn’t sacrifice musicality at the altar of technical proficiency. The work holds up even without its lead instrument: a 1968 arrangement by celebrity flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal remains a staple of the flute-virtuoso’s 20th-century repertoire.

After the intermission, we’ll hear Symphony No. 1 by William Walton, the English ex-chorister who flunked out of Oxford and then insinuated himself among the English boho-aristocrat set. Composed five years before Khachaturian’s Violin Concerto, Walton’s First Symphony shares a similar expressive urgency—an emotional directness verging on the cathartic.



HECTOR BERLIOZ

Born December 11, 1803,
La Côte-Saint-André, France
Died March 8, 1869, Paris

Roman Carnival Overture, op. 9

Hector Berlioz wrote many overtures over his long career. Some were meant to precede operas, and others resembled what Franz Liszt later rebranded “symphonic poems”: short, freestanding symphonic works based on a literary or descriptive program. The *Roman Carnival Overture* is a bit of both types. Most of the music comes from Berlioz’s 1838 opera *Benvenuto Cellini*, a spectacular failure. The audience, as Berlioz dryly recalled, “hissed with admirable energy and unanimity.” The production closed after three performances, and *Benvenuto Cellini* wasn’t staged again for more than a decade.

Although he blamed the conductor’s incompetence and the musicians’ lack of preparation, his faith in the quality of his score never wavered. He salvaged some of his favorite music from the opera and created *Le carnaval romain*. It was an immediate hit at the 1844 debut in Paris, under his own baton; in fact, the audience demanded an immediate encore.

Instrumental Innovations

Although largely self-taught, Berlioz literally wrote the book on orchestration. His *Grand traité d’instrumentation et d’orchestration modernes* was originally published as sixteen booklets beginning in late 1841. Richard Strauss, who studied it carefully,



Caricature of Berlioz by Étienne Carjat, 1862

observed that Berlioz's instrumentation was "full of ingenious visions... whose realization by Richard Wagner is obvious to every connoisseur."

Berlioz's daring tonal palette invigorates every moment of the overture, but the tambourines, struck instead of shaken, are an especially inspired addition. The tambourines add a smidge of sonic glitter to the saltarello, a triple-time folk dance. This music comes from the second act of the opera, the carnival scene in Rome that also inspired Berlioz's title. In the swirling final measures, rich in syncopation and counterpoint, Berlioz spins the leaping saltarello motive and the lyrical love theme into an ecstatic fugato.

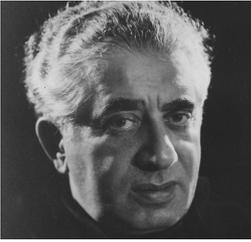
First Performance February 3, 1844, Paris

First SLSO Performance December 5, 1907, Max Zach conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance June 7, 2014, Steven Jarvi conducting

Scoring 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (2nd doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 cornets, 3 trombones, timpani, percussion (2 tambourines, triangle, cymbals), and strings

Performance Time 8 minutes



ARAM KHACHATURIAN

Born June 6, 1903, Tbilisi, Georgia

Died May 1, 1978, Moscow

Violin Concerto in D minor

Born to Armenian parents in Georgia, in 1903, Aram Khachaturian was an ethnic minority in Russia. His musical style was expansive and assimilative; he embraced hybrids, borrowing ideas from the native folk traditions of Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Belarus. Like his predecessor Rimsky-Korsakov, who also collected folk songs and incorporated them into his original compositions, Khachaturian prized exotic colors and punchy instrumental effects.

Khachaturian composed the Violin Concerto in the summer and early autumn of 1940, in a burst of sudden inspiration. “I wrote music as though on a wave of happiness,” he later recalled, “my whole being was in a state of joy, for I was awaiting the birth of my son. And this feeling, this love of life, was transmitted to the music.”

The piece was dedicated to Khachaturian’s colleague and countryman David Oistrakh, five years his junior and one of the leading Russian violinists of the 20th century. On November 16, 1940, Oistrakh debuted Khachaturian’s Violin Concerto. The next year it was awarded the Lenin Prize. Long after the premiere, Khachaturian remained thrilled that a violinist of Oistrakh’s caliber had composed his own cadenza for the work, replacing a very different one in the original score. Addressing the violinist by the diminutive “Dodik,” Khachaturian wrote a fan letter to the dedicatee of his only violin concerto:

In my opinion, had you not liked my concerto, you wouldn’t have written such a wonderful cadenza for it. I consider your cadenza better than mine. Your cadenza is a fantasy on my themes and is convincing in its form. Giving the elements and the rhythm of the first theme, you perfectly prepare the audience to perceive the reprise. I consider you an epochal violinist and artist. Your creative personality reflects our Soviet era and leads our school of violin performers. That’s why it is an honor for me to have provoked your creative imagination.

In 1948, to his shock and horror, Khachaturian was denounced by the central authority of the Communist Party for “formalist tendencies,” an aesthetic crime that could put his life and welfare in jeopardy. Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and several of their colleagues were also targeted for counterrevolutionary expression. Like any dogged survivor, Khachaturian did everything he could to restore his official standing. Six years later, he was named a People’s Artist.

Movement by Movement Khachaturian’s Violin Concerto offers more than virtuosic tricks against an orchestral backdrop. The solo violin alternates between



Aram Khachaturian in 1964.

haunting Armenian folk modalities and wild Orientalist art song, balancing cadenzas against equally demanding interactive parts. Assertively syncopated, dance-derived rhythms propel the three movements. The opening *Allegro con fermezza*, in the home key of D minor, begins with a passionate thematic gesture, played in unison, which gradually develops into the lyrical second theme. The shadowy central movement, marked *Andante sostenuto*, channels the hypnotic, improvisational style of itinerant Armenian folk musicians; listen for this *ashugh* influence in the solo bassoon's opening soliloquy.

The swaying second movement, in A minor, sticks mostly to the 3/4 meter, with brief spells of common time. The folk-flavored rondo-style finale, in D major, subjects the solo violin to a grueling acrobatic workout in the form of a raucous country dance. The closing movement's length and its relentless barrage of semiquavers require tremendous stamina from the soloist.

First Performance September 16, 1940, Moscow, David Oistrakh as soloist with Aleksandr Gauk conducting the USSR State Symphony

First SLSO Performance January 1, 1949, Carroll Glenn as soloist with Vladimir Golschmann conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance October 16, 2005, Karen Gomyo as soloist with Michael Christie conducting

Scoring solo violin, 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (tambourine, snare drum, suspended cymbal, bass drum), harp, and strings

Performance Time approximately 35 minutes



WILLIAM WALTON

Born March 29, 1902, Oldham, United Kingdom

Died March 8, 1983, Ischia, Italy

Symphony No. 1 in B-flat minor

William Walton first attracted notice as a composer in the avant-garde circles of the celebrated Sitwell siblings (Edith, Sacheverall, and Osbert), who befriended him before he dropped out of Oxford. Starting in the late 20s, Walton began gravitating to more conventional forms, beginning with a Viola Concerto that was rejected by its dedicatee, Lionel Tertis, and performed instead by fellow composer (and exceptional violist) Paul Hindemith, whose brilliant interpretation brought Walton his first mainstream success.

Before Walton completed his Symphony No. 1, he had already finished his opulent jazz-inflected oratorio *Belshazzar's Feast*. He felt capable of scoring for a huge orchestra. He worked on the symphony intermittently for nearly four years, beginning in 1931, and completed it in 1935, when he was 33 years old. During this emotionally volatile stage of his life, he was recovering from the breakup of a five-year love affair with a married woman, the Baroness Imma von Doernberg.

The fourth movement wasn't finished in time for the scheduled premiere, in late 1934, so only the first three movements were performed. Walton put the project on hiatus in 1934 while he composed his first film score (a significant source of future income for him). After several months, he returned to his symphony and completed the final movement in August of 1935. The BBC Symphony Orchestra performed the premiere of the complete, four-movement version on November 6 of that year. According to a contemporary newspaper review, "The applause at the close was overwhelming, and when Mr. Walton, a slim, shy young man, came on to the platform he was cheered continuously for five minutes."

Malice and Melancholy Although Walton's reputation waxes and wanes according to the whims of critical consensus, his Symphony No. 1 has enjoyed widespread praise. As the critic Michael Steinberg once pointed out, "Not many would wish to call Walton one of the great 20th-century composers, but the claim that his First Symphony is one of the great 20th-century symphonies is not excessive."

The first movement is seething and darkly sensual, with jittery rhythms and obsessive figurations. It's meant to disorient and destabilize. As *The Guardian* columnist Tom Service put it, the Allegro assai is "simultaneously one of the most restless, driving first movements in symphonic history, and yet all of its big melodies have, I think, the character of a lament. It's music that's firmly set on a sea of instability."

The two interior movements offer new surprises. Darker than the typical scherzo, the second movement is marked Presto, con malizia (quick, maliciously).

A rough minuet, it enacts a series of thematic transformations. Intimate and intense, the slow movement is marked *Andante con malincolia* (flowing, with melancholy) and set in C-sharp minor. A wistful flute introduces a series of variations based on an abandoned idea from the opening *Allegro*. The clarinet and oboe also take affecting turns in obbligato roles. The mood ranges from anguished to elegiac, registering every emotional nuance.

The finale starts out majestically, with an ascending brass motive, and then digresses, jazz-like, into a fugal passage; at the climax, the piccolo twitters a frenetic ostinato while the timpani thunders and the tam-tam clangs. Aside from the timpani, the percussion instruments are withheld until the final pages. Perhaps jokingly, Walton pronounced this last movement to be “a piece for the mob,” but you’d have to be some special breed of joy-depriving snob not to thrill to his righteous coda.

René Spencer Saller is a writer and music critic living in St. Louis. She has also written for the Dallas Symphony, *Illinois Times*, *Riverfront Times*, and *Boston Phoenix*.

First Performance November 6, 1935, Sir Hamilton Harty conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra

First SLSO Performance November 25, 1977, Sir Charles Mackerras conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance December 1, 2007, Bramwell Tovey conducting

Scoring 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, 2 timpani, percussion (cymbals, field drum, and tam tam), and strings

Performance Time approximately 43 minutes



MOLINA VISUALS

Markus Stenz most recently appeared with the SLSO in October 2015.

MARKUS STENZ

Markus Stenz, chief conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, principal guest conductor of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and conductor in residence of the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, is known for his vibrant, masterful musical interpretations. His previous positions have included general music director of the City of Cologne and Gürzenich-Kapellmeister, principal guest conductor of the Hallé Orchestra, music director of the Montepulciano Festival, principal conductor of the London Sinfonietta—one of the most renowned ensembles for contemporary music—and artistic director and chief conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Stenz's expansive, multi-continental 2017–18 season reflects the breadth of his artistry and international regard as an inspirational collaborator. Across North America, he serves as guest conductor of the Colorado, Utah, and San Diego Symphonies, and the Minnesota Orchestra, with a fresh programming mix of the classical canon and lesser-known repertoire. Returning in his role as principal guest conductor of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Stenz gives three performances in the fall of sprawling Germanic works by Mendelssohn, Bruch, and Wagner as a part of the “Wagner’s Quest” series. In the spring, he leads brilliant, lively programs of orchestral works by Beethoven, Korngold, Liszt, Mahler, Rachmaninoff, Schumann, and Wagner. Overseas, Stenz leads programs at major halls in Brazil, Britain, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, and South Korea. He resides in Cologne, Germany with his wife and two children.



David Halen most recently soloed with the SLSO in December 2016.

DAVID HALEN

Ann and Paul Lux Guest Artist

David Halen is living a dream that began as a youth the first time he saw the St. Louis Symphony perform in Warrensburg, Missouri. Born in Bellevue, Ohio, he didn't have to look far for his musical influences: his father, the late Walter J. Halen, was also his violin professor at Central Missouri State University; his mother, a former member of the Kansas City Symphony; and his older brother, the Acting Concertmaster of the Houston Symphony Orchestra. Halen began playing the violin at the age of six, and earned his bachelor's degree at the age of 19. In that same year, he won the Music Teachers National Association Competition and was granted a Fulbright scholarship for study with Wolfgang Marschner at the Freiburg Hochschule für Musik in Germany, the youngest recipient ever to have been honored with this prestigious award. In addition, Halen holds a master's degree from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, studying with Sergiu Luca.

Halen served as assistant concertmaster with the Houston Symphony Orchestra under Sergiu Comissiona and Christoph Eschenbach until 1991. He then came to St. Louis, where he was permanently named concertmaster in September 1995, without audition, and with the endorsement of then music directors Leonard Slatkin and Hans Vonk. He has soloed with the orchestra in many of the major concertos in the violin repertoire. In addition, he has soloed with the Houston, San Francisco, and West German Radio (Cologne) symphonies.

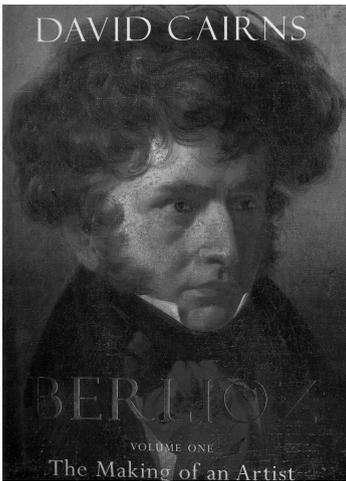
David Halen plays on a 1753 Giovanni Battista Guadagnini violin, made in Milan, Italy. He is married to Korean-born soprano Miran Cha Halen and has a teenage son.

YOU TAKE IT FROM HERE

BY RENÉ SPENCER SALLER

Hector Berlioz was a brilliant writer, and even the most casual fan will enjoy poring over a good translation of his *Mémoires*, which is fascinating, funny, suspenseful, and touching by turn. Berlioz was a perceptive critic, too, although his scathing wit didn't win him many friends. One good place to dip into his vast output is the massive, bilingual website **hberlioz.com**, which contains most of his published writings in an easily searchable online index.

Those interested in a critical account should check out this magisterial, multivolume Berlioz biography:



Berlioz: Volume One: The Making of an Artist, 1803–1832

Berlioz: Volume Two: Servitude and Greatness, 1832–1869

by David Cairns

University of California Press, 2000–2003

Nearly everything you might want to know about Aram Khachaturian can be found on the Khachaturian website: **khachaturian.am/eng/index.htm**.

William Walton lived until 1983, which means that you can watch many filmed performances and interviews online. *William Walton At the Haunted End of the Day* is a great documentary currently available through a search on YouTube. (Toward the 55-minute mark, there's a live clip of the First Symphony.)

For the classic Walton biography, see:

Portrait of Walton

by Michael Kennedy

Clarendon Press, 1998

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Augustin Hadelich

SHOSTAKOVICH 1

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Saturday, Jan 13 at 8:00PM

David Robertson, conductor

Augustin Hadelich, violin

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BRITTEN Violin Concerto

SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No. 1

Lauded by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* for his “playing of brilliance, gorgeous tone and breathtaking facility,” German violinist Augustin Hadelich performs Britten’s Violin Concerto, a work of noble themes and sinister rhythms. Written when the composer was just eighteen, Shostakovich’s First Symphony mesmerizes with dry wit, displaying the young composer’s exciting and enduring hallmarks that fascinate to this day.



James Ehnes

EHNES PLAYS SAINT-SAËNS

Saturday, March 10, 2018 at 8:00PM

Sunday, March 11 at 3:00PM

Cristian Măcelaru, conductor

James Ehnes, violin

BRITTEN *Sinfonia da requiem*

SAINT-SAËNS Violin Concerto No. 3

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS Symphony No. 4

“A supreme virtuoso of the instrument” (*Daily Telegraph*), violinist James Ehnes returns to astound with Saint-Saëns’ Violin Concerto No. 3, a tour-de-force culminating in a grandiose finale. Guest conductor Cristian Măcelaru brings Vaughan Williams’ fierce and defiant Fourth Symphony to life in a work full of imagination and lyricism, leading the listener to a grandiose finale of fury.



FROM THE STAGE

JONATHAN REYCRAFT

trombone

“Berlioz and Walton with Khachaturian: all friendly romantic offerings. Berlioz was among the first composers to write melody parts for trombones, Khachaturian had another piece featured throughout the Coen Brothers film, The Hudsucker Proxy from the 1990s with Tim Robbins. And the Walton symphony is a tour de force for the entire orchestra.”

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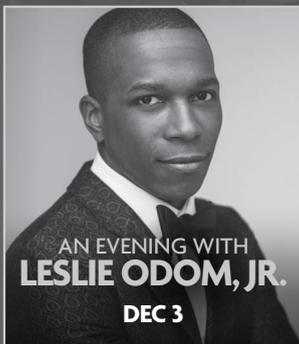
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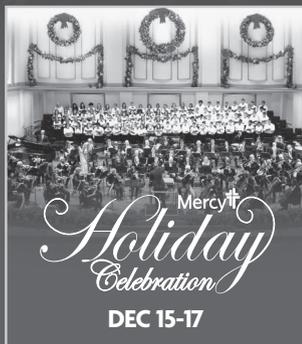
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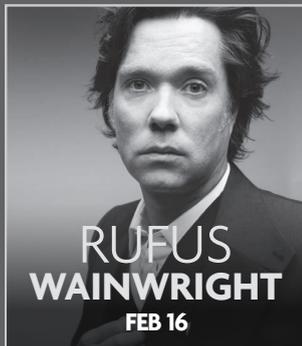
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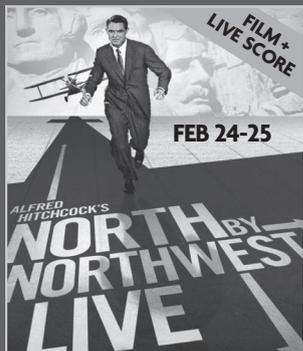
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APR 6-8

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FILM + LIVE SCORE

MEREDITH
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