# CONCERT PROGRAM Friday, March 11, 2016, 8:00pm Saturday, March 12, 2016, 8:00pm

Leonard Slatkin, conductor Kelley O'Connor, mezzo-soprano Sean Panikkar, tenor Renaud Delaigue, bass St. Louis Symphony Chorus Amy Kaiser, director

**BERLIOZ** Roméo et Juliette, Symphonie dramatique, op. 17 (1839)

(1803-1869)

Introduction et Prologue
Combats—Tumulte—Intervention du prince
Récitatif
Strophes
Récitatif et Scherzetto
Roméo seul—Tristesse—Concert et bal—
Grande fête chez Capulet
Scène d'amour

#### INTERMISSION

La Reine Mab, ou la Fée des Songes (Scherzo)

Convoi funèbre de Juliette

Roméo au tombeau des Capulets—Invocation—Réveil de Juliette

Final: La Foule accourt au cimetière—Rixe des Capulets et

des Montagues—Récitatif et Air du Père Laurence—

Serment de réconciliation

Kelley O'Connor, mezzo-soprano Sean Panikkar, tenor Renaud Delaigue, bass St. Louis Symphony Chorus Amy Kaiser, director

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

These concerts are part of the Wells Fargo Advisors Orchestral Series.

Leonard Slatkin is the William and Laura Orthwein Guest Artist.

Kelley O'Connor is the Essman Family Foundation Guest Artist.

Amy Kaiser is the AT&T Foundation Chair.

The St. Louis Symphony Chorus is underwritten in part by the Edward Chase Garvey Memorial Foundation.

The concert of Friday, March 11, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Sally S. Levy.

The concert of Saturday, March 12, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Gilbert and Yelena Standen.

The concert of Saturday, March 12, is supported by AARP.

Pre-Concert Conversations are sponsored by Washington University Physicians.

Large print program notes are available through the generosity of Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum and are located at the Customer Service table in the foyer.

## **CONCERT CALENDAR**

Call 314-534-1700 or visit stlsymphony.org for tickets



David Halen

# **HALEN PLAYS BEETHOVEN: March 18-20**

Jun Märkl, conductor; David Halen, violin

BEETHOVEN *Fidelio* Overture BEETHOVEN Violin Concerto SCHUMANN Symphony No. 3, "Rhenish"

Presented by Thompson Coburn LLP Sponsored by the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation



Youth Orchestra

# ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA: March 18

Steven Jarvi, conductor; YO Concerto Competitions Winners: Aidan Ip, violin; Leah Peipert, flute

TCHAIKOVSKY Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture CONUS Violin Concerto HÜE Fantasy for Flute and Orchestra BERNSTEIN Symphonic Dances from West Side Story

Sponsored by St. Louis Children's Hospital



Susanna Phillips

# MAHLER 4: April 2-3

David Robertson, conductor; Susanna Phillips, soprano

RAVEL *Mother Goose* Suite VIVIER *Lonely Child* MAHLER Symphony No. 4

Presented by Thompson Coburn LLP



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# E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL: April 8-10

Erik Ochsner, conductor

Bring the entire family to Powell Hall for Steven Spielberg's *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, on the big screen with John Williams's Academy Award-winning score performed live by the St. Louis Symphony.

# LOVE STORIES

BY RENÉ SPENCER SALLER

### **HECTOR BERLIOZ**

Roméo et Juliette, Symphonie dramatique, op. 17

## **TIMELINKS**

1839

## **BERLIOZ**

Roméo et Juliette, Symphonie dramatique, op. 17 Louis Daguerre takes first photograph of the Moon In what he called the "supreme drama" of his life, Hector Berlioz fell in love with Shakespeare by way of an Irish-born actress named Harriet Smithson. Shakespeare, who died in 1616, was virtually unknown in France when Smithson's English troupe brought bowdlerized versions of the Bard's greatest hits to Paris's Odéon Theatre. There, on September 11, 1827, Berlioz took in Hamlet, and then, a couple of nights later, Romeo and Juliet; Smithson played Ophelia and Juliet. Berlioz was an instant convert. Never mind that the 24-year-old music student didn't understand English. As he recalled in his Mémoires, "Shakespeare, coming upon me unawares, struck me like a thunderbolt. The lightning flash of that discovery revealed to me at a stroke the whole heaven of art, illuminating it to its remotest corners. I recognized the meaning of grandeur, beauty, dramatic truth."

Over the next three decades, Berlioz composed many major works inspired by Shakespeare, from a "dramatic fantasia" on The Tempest, in 1830, to the opera Béatrice et Bénédict at the end of his career. He chose lines from Macbeth as the epigraph to his Mémoires: "Life's but... a tale/ Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,/ Signifying nothing." Yeah, sure.

He certainly unleashed a load of sound and fury on poor Harriet Smithson. He began by stalking the terrified young woman, who couldn't understand why this French-speaking stranger kept calling her "Henrietta" as he pitched lunatic woo. Finally, in 1833, she broke down and married him. By 1839, when Berlioz finished Roméo et Juliette, he was no longer in love with Smithson. But his love for the play never faltered.

Romeo and Juliet appealed to Berlioz for the same reasons it still speaks to us today, 400 years after its author's death. The story, like so many Renaissance-era plots, is a slurry of recycled myths and twice-told tales. Shakespeare revived

the stale subject by amping up the language. His "star-cross'd" lovers—so sexy and violent and doomed!—speak in sonnets. Vulgar puns nuzzle up to sublime blank verse. Bliss and misery constantly converge, from the "sweet sorrow" of parting to the "happy dagger" that Juliet plunges into her breast. But it wasn't Shakespeare's paradoxical wordplay that moved Berlioz. As a die-hard, capital-R Romantic, he was all about the sex and death: First love, best love. Die young, stay pretty.

GENRE BENDING Berlioz created a new musical form for *Roméo et Juliette*: a dramatic symphony. "There can doubtless be no mistake about the genre of this work," he joked in the published "Foreword." (Like all card-carrying Romantics, he expected to be misunderstood by his contemporaries.) "Even though voices are often used," he continues, "it is neither a concert opera nor a cantata, but a choral symphony. If there is singing almost from the beginning, it is to prepare the listener's mind for the dramatic scenes, whose feelings and passions are to be expressed by the orchestra."

Rather than a symphonic translation of Shakespeare's great tragedy, Roméo et Juliette is more like a devoted fan's musical response. Berlioz throws out the subplots and dialogue, focusing instead on the sensuous death grip of its central conflict. Roméo et Juliette might not share all of the source text's details, but it gets the idea across: young lovers die, in ecstatic abandon, healing the community. Richard Wagner swiped many of its best ideas for his own opera about doomed love, Tristan und Isolde. The closest Wagner came to acknowledging this debt was his gift, in 1860, of an expensive first edition of the published Tristan score, addressed in high-frenemy effusion to "the author of Roméo et Juliette." Berlioz claimed not to understand Wagner's "strange thing." Nine years after the Frenchman's death, Wagner named a pet rooster "Berlioz."

INSTRUMENTAL WORDS Although largely self-taught, Berlioz literally wrote the book on orchestration. His *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration moderne* was originally published as 16 booklets beginning in late 1841.



**Born** December 11, 1803, La Côte-Saint-André, near Grenoble, France

#### Died

March 8, 1869, Paris

#### **First Performance**

November 24, December 1, 15, 1839, in Paris, the first production performed in segments over three evenings

# **STL Symphony Premiere**

November 14, 1913, Max Zach conducted excerpts from the symphony

## Most Recent STL Symphony Performance

February 14, 2010, Ludovic Morlot conducted Scène d'amour (Love Scene)

#### Scoring

solo mezzo-soprano, tenor, and bass mixed chorus 2 flutes piccolo 2 oboes English horn 2 clarinets 4 bassoons 4 horns 2 trumpets 2 cornets 3 trombones tuba 2 timpani percussion 2 harps

### **Performance Time**

strings

approximately 95 minutes

Richard Strauss, who studied it closely, observed that Berlioz's orchestration was "full of ingenious visions... whose realization by Richard Wagner is obvious to every connoisseur."

With Beethoven's monumental Ninth Symphony in mind, Berlioz went big and bold with his scoring for *Roméo et Juliette*, calling for a hundred musicians, a hundred singers, eight harps, offstage choirs, and countless sonic innovations.

BEETHOVEN'S HEIRS Just as rock critics prattle on about new Dylans, 19th-century tastemakers were obsessed with anointing a new Beethoven. Like Wagner and the rest of the competition, Berlioz desperately wanted this title. When, after decades of trying, he realized that he probably wasn't the new Beethoven, he became bitter.

Roméo et Juliette is the culmination of Berlioz's most productive decade, 1830 to 1839. Despite his many creative triumphs, these were years of struggle. Mired in debt and forced to crank out music reviews, he was overjoyed in 1838, when Nicolò Paganini gave him 20,000 francs, equivalent to more than a year's wages. Allegedly, the superstar violinist knelt before him and proclaimed, "Beethoven has at last a successor." At any rate Berlioz set about honoring Paganini in the most Beethovenian manner imaginable. In Paris, in 1839, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was by no means the programming warhorse that it is today; the addition of a chorus to a symphony was still a major breach of classical etiquette. By composing his own choral symphony, Berlioz was playing the Beethoven card. Although he hoped to please Paganini, the work's dedicatee, the ailing virtuoso died without hearing it.

AN IMMENSE TERRITORY On January 11, 1829, a decade before he composed *Roméo et Juliette*, Berlioz wrote a letter describing Beethoven as a "benefactor" and "friend." "Now that I have broken the chains of routine," he exclaimed, "I see an immense territory stretching before me, which academic rules forbade me to enter." In subsequent years, he would write lengthy appreciations of all nine symphonies and conduct them whenever he could. As David Cairns explains, for Berlioz "the symphonies—the Ninth above all—were the beginning of modern music."

In January 1839, Berlioz sent a scenario of *Roméo et Juliette* to Émile Deschamps, who turned the composer's prose into poetry. The symphony was finished by September. Its design was as bold and broad as its orchestral palette: seven movements, subdivided into shifting scenes, some with voices, others purely instrumental. Berlioz opted not to provide a detailed program, as he had for his *Symphonie fantastique*; instead the arias, choruses, and recitatives would function as a kind of sung program. Rather than assigning solo singers to portray the doomed lovers, Berlioz gives these central roles to the orchestra.

In his published foreword, Berlioz explained how the gradual introduction of the chorus preserved the composition's unity: "The prologue, where (as in Shakespeare's drama) the chorus presents the action, is sung by only fourteen voices. Later the chorus of Capulet men is heard offstage alone; then in the funeral ceremony, the Capulets, both men and women. At the beginning of the finale both choruses of Capulets and Montagues appear with Friar

Laurence, and at the end, all three choruses together." Never one for false modesty, he added, "This last scene of the reconciliation between the two families is the only one that falls into the domain of opera or oratorio. It has never been performed on any stage since Shakespeare's time, but it is too beautiful, too musical, and it concludes a work of this nature too well for the composer to dream of treating it differently."

LOVE SOUNDS The first movement comprises four scenes. Sawing strings and jabbing brass evoke the lethal thrust and parry at the beginning of Shakespeare's play. A mini-chorus intones a plainchant-inflected prologue. In the "Strophes" section, the mezzo-soprano soloist submits to the punishing dazzle of first love. Kissed by harp arpeggios, the chorus sounds like a benediction.

Anyone familiar with the so-called *Tristan* chord will feel a shock of recognition during "Roméo seul" (Romeo Alone) in the second movement. The long, expressive violin melody—which Berlioz called an *idée fixe* and Wagner a *leitmotiv*—enacts the hero's drawn-out desire.

In his preface to the published score, Berlioz explained why he made the climactic love scene instrumental: "The very sublimity of this love made its depiction so dangerous for the composer that he had to offer his imagination a latitude that the precise meaning of sung words would not have allowed, and thus to turn to the language of instrumental music—a language that is richer, more varied, less restricted, and by its very vagueness incomparably more powerful in such a case."

With its through-composed, freewheeling structure, this movement features variations on three main themes (one for Romeo, one for Juliet, and one composite theme representing the pair), punctuated by contrasting passages. Berlioz was especially fond of this passage. As he reminisced in late 1858, "If you ask me which of my pieces I prefer, my answer is that of most artists: the love-scene in *Roméo et Juliette*. One day, at Hanover, at the end of [rehearsing] that piece, I felt myself pulled from behind; and turning round, found that the musicians round the desk were kissing my coat-tails."

FAIRY QUEENS AND FUNERALS Recalling an exceptionally fine performance in Germany, Berlioz praised the orchestra's performance of the fourth movement: "...Queen Mab, in her microscopic car, attended by the buzzing insects of a summer's night, and launched at full gallop by her tiny horses.... [T]he orchestra identified itself completely with Shakespeare's fascinating fancy, and became so tiny, agile, minute, and soft, that I do not think the imperceptible queen ever threaded her silent harmonies more happily."

Berlioz wrote another detailed description of the fifth movement, which represents the sleeping Juliet's funeral procession: "A fugal march, at first instrumental, with a psalmody on one single note in the chorus, then vocal, with the psalmody in the orchestra." The fugue, intricate and chromatic, is passed from the orchestra to the chorus; the chant, insistent and deceptively plain, goes in the opposite direction. A fearful symmetry ensues.

FATAL IRONIES, FINAL REWARDS Berlioz's title for the sixth movement is a mouthful: "Romeo at the tomb of the Capulets'—Invocation—Awakening of

Juliet—Delirious joy, despair, ultimate anguish, and death of the two lovers." In a departure from Shakespeare's original, Berlioz doesn't let the pair die without recognizing, too late, their mistake.

In the extended ensemble-finale, Berlioz marshals the choral and orchestral forces for a big grand-opera finish. In his *Mémoires*, he recalled an especially rewarding performance in St. Petersburg: "I do not know how many ovations I received. But I confess I did not pay much attention to the public; and such was the impression made on me by that divine Shakespearean poem as I sang it to myself that after the finale I fled for refuge into one of the side rooms, where [a friend] found me a few moments later in a flood of tears. 'Ah, your nerves are unstrung!' he said; 'I know well what that is.' And he supported my head and let me cry like a hysterical girl for a good quarter of an hour."

Program notes © 2016 by René Spencer Saller

#### LEONARD SLATKIN

WILLIAM AND LAURA ORTHWEIN GUEST ARTIST

Internationally acclaimed conductor Leonard Slatkin is Music Director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO) and the Orchestre National de Lyon (ONL). He also maintains a rigorous schedule of guest conducting and is active as a composer, author, and educator.

Highlights of the 2015-16 season include a three-week Brahms festival in Detroit; engagements with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and NHK Symphony in Tokyo; debuts with Beijing's China Philharmonic Orchestra and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra; and a summer tour of Japan and China with the ONL.

Slatkin's more than 100 recordings have garnered seven Grammy awards and 64 nominations. His recent Naxos recordings include works by Saint-Saëns, Ravel, and Berlioz (with the ONL) and music by Copland, Rachmaninoff, Borzova, McTee, and John Williams (with the DSO). In addition, he recorded the complete Beethoven and Tchaikovsky symphonies with the DSO (available online as digital downloads).

A recipient of the prestigious National Medal of Arts, Slatkin also holds the rank of Chevalier in the French Legion of Honor. He has received Austria's Declaration of Honor in Silver, the American Symphony Orchestra League's Gold Baton Award, and the 2013 ASCAP Deems Taylor Special Recognition Award for his book, Conducting Business.

Leonard Slatkin has conducted virtually all of the leading orchestras in the world. As Music Director, he has held posts with the New Orleans, St. Louis, and National symphony orchestras, and he was Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. He has served as Principal Guest Conductor of London's Philharmonia and Royal Philharmonic, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, and the Minnesota Orchestra.



Leonard Slatkin is the Conductor Laureate of the St. Louis Symphony. He has conducted the complete Berlioz *Roméo et Juliette* twice with the orchestra, in 1975 and 1985



Amy Kaiser next prepares the Chorus for Vaughan Williams's Flos campi (Flower of the Field) and Holst's The Planets for the 2015-16 season finale.

# AMY KAISER AT&T FOUNDATION CHAIR

Director of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus since 1995, Amy Kaiser is one of the country's leading choral directors. She has conducted the St. Louis Symphony in Handel's Messiah. Schubert's Mass in E-flat, Vivaldi's Gloria, and sacred works by Haydn and Mozart as well as Young People's Concerts. Kaiser has been a regular guest conductor for the Berkshire Choral Festival in Sheffield, Massachusetts, Santa Fe, and at Canterbury Cathedral. She was Music Director of the Dessoff Choirs in New York for 12 seasons and has led many performances of major works at Lincoln Center. Other conducting engagements include concerts at Chicago's Grant Park Music Festival and more than fifty performances with the Metropolitan Opera Guild. Principal Conductor of the New York Chamber Symphony's School Concert Series for seven seasons, Kaiser also led many programs for the 92nd Street Y's acclaimed Schubertiade. She has conducted more than twenty-five operas, including eight contemporary premieres.

Kaiser has taught master classes in choral conducting at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, served as faculty for a Chorus America conducting workshop, and as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts. An active guest speaker, Kaiser presents classes in symphonic and operatic repertoire and is a regular presenter of Pre-Concert Conversations with the St. Louis Symphony.

Amy Kaiser has prepared choruses for the New York Philharmonic, Ravinia Festival, Mostly Mozart Festival, and Opera Orchestra of New York. She also served as faculty conductor and vocal coach at Manhattan School of Music and the Mannes College of Music. A former Fulbright Fellow at Oxford University and an alumna of Smith College, she was awarded the Smith College Medal for outstanding professional achievement. Last season she was honored with the St. Louis Visionary Award for Successful Working Artist and was featured in an interview in *AARP The Magazine*.

#### **KELLEY O'CONNOR**

ESSMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION GUEST ARTIST

Possessing a voice of uncommon allure, musical sophistication far beyond her years, and intuitive and innate dramatic artistry, the Grammy Awardwinning mezzo-soprano Kellev O'Connor has emerged as one of the most compelling performers of her generation. During the 2015-16 season, the California native's impressive calendar includes Mahler's Symphony No. 2 with Robert Spano and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Andrew Litton and the Colorado Symphony, Leonard Slatkin and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony; Mahler's Symphony No. 3 with Franz Welser-Möst and the Cleveland Orchestra and Giancarlo Guerrero leading the Nashville Symphony; Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde with Donald Runnicles at the Grand Tetons Music Festival; and Lieberson's Neruda Songs with Robert Spano and the Minnesota Orchestra.

Performances of the past season included Donizetti's Anna Bolena at the Lyric Opera of Chicago conducted by Patrick Summers and directed by Kevin Newbury, Suzuki in Puccini's Madama Butterfly with the Minnesota Orchestra, and La traviata with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl. She joined Louis Langrée and the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra for Mozart's Requiem and returned to the Philadelphia Orchestra for Janáček's Glagolitic Mass conducted by Alan Gilbert. With Donald Runnicles conducting the Berliner Philharmoniker, she gave performances of Debussy's La Damoiselle élue and Duruflé's Requiem, and presented the world premiere of Christopher Theofanidis's Creation Oratorio with Robert Spano and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

John Adams wrote the title role of *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* for Kelley O'Connor and she has performed the work, internationally, both in concert and in the Peter Sellars production, under the batons of the composer, Gustavo Dudamel and Grant Gershon. She performs the work with David Robertson and the St. Louis Symphony at Powell Hall and Carnegie Hall in 2017.



Kelley O'Connor most recently performed with the St. Louis Symphony in May 2013.



Sean Panikkar makes his St. Louis Symphony debut in these concerts.

### **SEAN PANIKKAR**

Sean Panikkar is recognized for his "surpassing musicality and passion, commanding self-confidence and gorgeous expression." The American tenor of Sri Lankan heritage made his Metropolitan Opera debut under the baton of James Levine in *Manon Lescaut* (commercially available on DVD on EMI), and his European operatic debut in Mozart's *Zaīde* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival in a production directed by Peter Sellars and conducted by Louis Langrée (commercially available on DVD on Opus Arte).

Panikkar opened the 2015-16 season at Michigan Opera Theatre as Rodolfo in La Bohème and continues the season in a return engagement with the Washington National Opera as the Leader in Lost in the Stars, Kurt Weill's gripping musical tragedy based on Alan Paton's classic 1948 novel Cry, the Beloved Country, directed by Tazewell Thompson and conducted by John DeMain. Frequently showcased in contemporary music, the tenor creates the role of Agent Henry Rathbone in David T. Little's IFK at the Fort Worth Opera and assays the title role of Jack Perla's Shalimar the Clown when Opera Theatre of Saint Louis presents the world premiere conducted by Jayce Ogren and directed by the company's Artistic Director James Robinson.

Sean Panikkar bowed at the Metropolitan Opera last season as Molqi in John Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer* conducted by David Robertson in a powerful new production by director Tom Morris (*War Horse*) and made his debut at Teatro alla Scala in the world premiere of Giorgio Battistelli's *CO2* in a new production directed by Robert Carsen and conducted by Cornelius Meister. Panikkar gave a role debut as Nikolaus Sprink in *Silent Night* at the Lyric Opera of Kansas City and returned to the Glimmerglass Festival as Tamino in a new production of *The Magic Flute*.

#### **RENAUD DELAIGUE**

In recent seasons Renaud Delaigue lent his distintive bass to productions of *Don Giovanni* (the Commander and Masetto), and *Tannhäuser* (the Landgrave) in Centre lyrique de Clermont-Ferrand; *Julius Caesar* (Curio) and *The Magic Flute* at the Téâtre des Champs-Elysées; *Tosca* (Angelotti) in Reims; and *Carmen* (Zuniga) at the Opéra de Lille.

This season he prepares a recital of Josquin des Prez's *De profundis clamavi* in Dijon with the Traversées baroques, an ensemble with which he frequently collaborates. He also sings the role of Haly in *L'italiana in Algeri*, conducted by Jean-Claude Malgoire, in Tourcoing and in the Téâtre des Champs-Elysées.

Renaud Delaigue first sang major bass roles in Mozart, in particular at the Festival of Saint-Céré (Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, supervised by Stéphane Denève), before being spotted by early music conductors such as Dominique Visse, who engaged him with the Ensemble Clément Janequin, and Jean-Claude Malgoire, who awarded him significant parts in such works as *L'Enfance du Christ*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Don Giovanni*, *La clemenza di Tito*, Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's Requiem, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9.



Renaud Delaigue makes his St. Louis Symphony debut this weekend.

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Mary Murphy Wissinger Ruth Wood-Steed Susan Donahue Yates Carl Scott Zimmerman

Daniel Zipperer

<sup>\*</sup> Member of Prologue small ensemble

# CLASSICAL CONCERT: DVOŘÁK 7



Karen Gomyo

Friday, April 22, 10:30am Saturday, April 23, 8:00pm Sunday, April 24, 3:00pm Jakub Hrůša, conductor; Karen Gomyo, violin

JANÁČEK *Jealousy* SIBELIUS Violin Concerto DVOŘÁK Symphony No. 7