

## **New Jersey Symphony Stars**

### **ONE-MINUTE NOTES**

#### **Gioachino Rossini: Overture to *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (The Barber of Seville)**

**Gioachino Rossini's** most beloved opera, *The Barber of Seville*, was first produced when he was barely 24. He was no novice: it was his seventeenth opera. Though the premiere was a notorious failure, the opera proved to be an enduring favorite with audiences and singers. The sparkling Overture encapsulates the madcap antics of the plot. It comprises a stately slow introduction in E major that suggests subterfuge and sly jests. An allegro in the surprise key of E minor follows. Together they form a shortened symphonic sonata form, but what you will remember are delightful themes, a signature "Rossini crescendo," and a joyous E major conclusion that assures us all will end well.

#### **Darryl Kubian: *The Well of Urðr* – A tone poem for three soloists and orchestra**

First violinist **Darryl Kubian** is also an accomplished composer who has written extensively for television, as well as concert works. His latest composition, *The Well of Urðr*, is his third commission from the New Jersey Symphony: a triple concerto for trumpet, horn and cello featuring principals from our orchestra. Both the work title and its movements titles are drawn from Norse mythology. "*The Well of Urðr* is one of the three wells that lie beneath the roots of Yggdrasil, which is the World Tree," Kubian explains. "It is where the three Norns, which are the titles for movements 2-4, weave the fate, the wyrd, of mankind." The soloists come from different instrumental families to highlight their roles as the Past (cello), Present (horn) and Future (trumpet), respectively. Together, their lines comment on the intertwining inevitability of fate, free will and the life cycle's continuity.

#### **Giovanni Bottesini: Gran Duo Concertante**

**Giovanni Bottesini** was known as 'the Paganini of the double bass' in the 19th century. This **Gran Duo Concertante** originated as a piece for two double basses in the 1840s when Bottesini was a student. Years later, when he began touring with the violinist Camillo Sivori, the two of them adapted the work for violin and double bass. Both solo parts are filled with operatic flourish and

abandon. The work's three principal sections offer abundant opportunity for violin and double bass to display their technical prowess. Despite differences in range and timbre, the pair find common ground in lyrical passages, while also demonstrating the romantic era's celebration of the virtuoso in full flower.

### **Georges Bizet: Selections from *L'Arlésienne* Suites Nos. 1 & 2**

**Georges Bizet** is justly celebrated for *Carmen*, his operatic masterpiece. But that was not his only stage work. The selections that conclude this concert are taken from incidental music he composed in 1872 for Alphonse Daudet's pastoral tragedy *L'Arlésienne* (The Young Woman of Arles). Bizet ingeniously incorporated several folk tunes from Provence into some numbers; others are his own original music. Throughout, his gift for memorable melody and colorful orchestration bring the score to life.

### **Gioachino Rossini: Overture to *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (The Barber of Seville)**

#### **Gioachino Rossini**

**Born:** February 29, 1792 in Pesaro, Italy

**Died:** November 13, 1868 in Passy, near Paris, France

**Composed:** 1813-1814; 1816

**World Premiere:** February 20, 1816 at the Teatro Argentina in Rome, Italy

**New Jersey Symphony Premiere:** 1940-41 season

**Duration:** 7 minutes

**Instrumentation:** flute, piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, percussion (bass drum and cymbals) and strings.

Rossini's most famous and beloved opera, *The Barber of Seville*, is both cousin and prequel to Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. The two operas are both based on plays by the French pre-revolutionary dramatist Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais and involve many of the same principal characters. Beaumarchais's trilogy of Figaro plays was well known in the early nineteenth century, and other composers besides Mozart drew on them as a source for libretti. One 1782 operatic setting of *The Barber of Seville*, by Rossini's older contemporary Giovanni Paisiello (1740-1816), was presented more than one hundred times in Russia, France, Germany and Austria as well as Italy.

The title character in Paisiello's, Mozart's and Rossini's operas is a clever jack-of-all-trades who

earns only part of his living as a barber; the rest of his “business” is wheeling and dealing. In Rossini’s opera, he assists dashing Count Almaviva in courting Rosina, a lovely young woman held on a tight leash by her elderly guardian, who seeks to marry her himself. Rossini’s overture, curiously, has only a couple of specific musical links to the opera it precedes. It uses only two excerpts from the score: Count Almaviva’s *cavatina*, “Ecco ridente in 3rama” in the slow introduction [*Andante maestoso*] and, in the *Allegro con brio*, the music that accompanies the payment of the musicians. There is a good reason for this apparent disconnect: the overture – or *sinfonia*, as it would have been called in Rossini’s day – originated as preludes to two earlier works: an *opera seria*, *Aureliano in Palmira* (1813), and a *3rama*, *Sigismondo* (1814). Rossini recycled and expanded those two pieces of music for his overture to the 1816 production of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* in Rome.

That stated, the music is extraordinarily appropriate to Rossini’s joyous opera, capturing the lightness of spirit that suffuses the stage work. It is unusual among opera overtures in that the slow introduction is in major mode, while the *Allegro con brio* that constitutes the main part of the overture switches to minor mode, at least to begin with. Apart from that, all the standard characteristics that we associate with Rossini are present in both introduction and allegro: delicate string figures that show off an orchestra’s capacity for agility and precision, delicious woodwind solos, and a sparkling build to the finish in a classic “Rossini crescendo.” *The Barber of Seville* is a love story with a happy ending, and the overture concludes on an appropriately exuberant note, firmly rooted in major mode.

## **Darryl Kubian: *The Well of Urðr* – A tone poem for three soloists and orchestra**

(World Premiere, New Jersey Symphony Commission)

### **Darryl Kubian**

**Born:** February 19, 1966 in Denver, Colorado

**Composed:** 2022

**World Premiere:** These performances are the world premiere

**Duration:** 21 minutes

**Instrumentation:** two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (vibraphone, crotales, suspended cymbals, gong, tom toms, bass drum and snare drum), harp, solo cello, solo horn, solo trumpet and strings.

Darryl Kubian has always been interested in world mythologies. When the New Jersey Symphony approached him about commissioning a piece for this centennial season featuring principals in the orchestra, his thoughts turned to Norse mythology. “*The Well of Urðr* is one of the three wells

that lie beneath the roots of Yggdrasil, which is the World Tree,” he explains. “It is where the three Norns, which are the titles for movements 2-4, weave the fate, the *wyrd*, of mankind.

“I also draw from the idea of Charles Ives’s *The Unanswered Question*, but in the opposite direction,” Kubian continues. “What if you got an answer? Of course you do get an answer in the Ives, but I wanted to approach the question from an animistic perspective, wherein everything is imbued with life force, with spirit. This concept is present in Norse, Greek and Egyptian mythologies, and in many other cultures.”

Kubian sought to have a distinctive voice for each Norn – the three soloists. The piece features soloists from three different instrumental families to highlight their roles as representative of the Past, Present and Future. The cello soloist (of the string family) represents *Urór*, the past; the horn (which can function within either the brass or woodwind family) represents *Verðandi*, the present; the trumpet (of the brass family) represents *Skuld*, the future. He explains, “The solo cello and orchestral strings form a base – what has been – while the trumpet is at the opposite temporal end: what will be. Sandwiched between the two is the horn, representing what is unfolding now, that is, the present.”

*The Well of Urðr* comprises four sections that proceed *attacca* [without pause] from one to the next. Part I, “Yggdrasil” illustrates the building of the World Tree. “Everything grows from the bottom,” says Kubian. “We build on the past; so the cello is the root, the lower voice. It functions as both bass voice and base, as the foundation in which the tree grows.” Offstage trumpet sounds briefly, in a motive that recurs throughout *The Well of Urðr*. This initial trumpet entrance symbolizes the idea that the future is a moving target; we are not certain where it comes from – or where it is going.

This introductory section leads to Part II, “*Urór*” (That Which Has Been), which showcases solo cello and, later, horn. Waltz-like and graceful, it is more classical in style. Kubian is careful to keep the orchestration light when the cello is playing, since it does not have the ‘piercing power’ of trumpet or horn to project above full orchestra. He often places the cello in its high register. Kubian adds, “It’s a virtuosic part, and the cello solo lines are meant to be moving in and out of the listener’s perception of sound.”

Part III, “*Verðandi*” (That Which Is Becoming. . .) features the horn, addressing the present. Kubian’s writing is more bitonal, reflecting the ever-evolving, sometimes confusing present. “The horn soloist opens this section with the cello in an accompanying role,” says Kubian. “Midway through, horn becomes more aligned with the trumpet, signaling a shift toward the future. My wife, [New Jersey Symphony violinist JoAnna Farrer,] suggested that I include a jazz possibility,

since Chris [Komer] is an accomplished jazz artist. The improv passage also highlights the idea of free will in the universe.”

At the climax, everything disintegrates into clashing bitonality. A startling duet for trumpet and cello interrupts the clashing chords, suddenly transforming the sound world into a Baroque figuration reminiscent of Bach’s Brandenburg Concerti. It is a momentary imposition of order out of harmonic chaos: the world attempts to reassert control over fate in the face of upheaval. This third segment concludes with a cadenza for all three soloists – the first time they are all featured simultaneously.

Part IV, “Skuld” (That Which Shall Be), links the disparate parts together. Kubian describes it as “the full expression of the 5-note motive that the trumpet has played as ‘signal’ throughout the piece; it is also the basis for the piece’s large-scale harmonic language.” A ground bass anchors the three soloists, now embedded in the orchestral fabric. A chorale-like passage is *The Well of Urðr*’s spiritual climax, a comment on the solemnity and inevitability of the life cycle’s continuation.

In preparation for composing *The Well of Urðr*, Kubian asked each of the soloists what they don’t like to do. “Chris told me he hates playing muted, but loves playing high. For Nayoung [Baek], I walked up to her out of the blue and asked ‘E minor or D minor?’ She replied ‘D Minor.’ That gave me the starting key for her section. Garth [Greenup] likes playing on different horns, so I wrote sections where he can switch.” The result is a work that is personal to all of them, unified by the thread of mythological narrative and Kubian’s skilled development of his musical material.

A member of the New Jersey Symphony’s first violin section since 1992, Darryl Kubian is also active as a composer, thereminist and audio and video engineer. He holds two degrees from Rutgers, where he studied violin with Arnold Steinhardt, Hiroko Yajima and Benjamin Hudson. His major composition teacher was Charles Wuorinen. Most of Kubian’s experience as a composer has been in television scores. As a composer, Kubian has written extensively for the Discovery, National Geographic, Learning, and Disney channels. As a thereminist, he has performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Cincinnati Pops, Oregon Symphony, Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, and the New Jersey Symphony.

*3-2-1*, composed in 2008 for concertmaster Eric Wyrick, was the first time Kubian had written for large orchestra and soloist. In 2015, he brought considerably more experience to the table with *O For a Muse of Fire*. Now in 2023, as part of the New Jersey Symphony’s centennial season celebration, he has written *The Well of Urðr* for three of his colleagues and our orchestra.

Kubian makes his home with his wife, New Jersey Symphony violinist JoAnna Farrer, in northern Vermont, with their many musical instruments, 12 chickens, 3 goats, a farm dog and 8 cat companions.

## **Giovanni Bottesini: Gran Duo Concertante**

### **Giovanni Bottesini**

**Born:** December 22, 1821 in Crema, Italy

**Died:** July 7, 1889 in Parma, Italy

**Composed:** Unknown

**Arranged by:** Max Fleschig in 1880

**World Premiere:** Undocumented, first documented performance in Belfast in March 1852

**New Jersey Symphony Premiere:** These performances are the first for the Symphony

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Instrumentation:** solo violin, solo bass and strings.

**Other Historical Performance Notes:** The original version was likely performed in Milan by Bottesini and Luigi Arpesani, a fellow student at the Conservatory. Violinist Camillo Sivori and Bottesini performed a Duet in Belfast in March 1852 that may have been the Gran Duo Concertante. Other documented performances are a Grand Duo on "Airs italiens" in Belfast in January 1860, and a Duo Concertante in Belfast in November 1862.

## **Virtuoso composer performer - on an unusual instrument**

"The Paganini of the double bass," they called him during his lifetime. Giovanni Bottesini may be an obscure figure today, but in the mid-19th century, he was renowned throughout Europe and the Americas as a double bass virtuoso, conductor and composer. In an era when travel across the ocean was time-consuming and risky, he managed to tour the United States twice by 1853. He also conducted in Paris, Russia, Scandinavia and Spain, finding a particularly warm reception on the podium of international opera houses.

Who was this man? Born into a musical family in the small northern Italian town of Crema, Giovanni Bottesini showed sufficient talent on violin as a child for his father to inquire about educational opportunities in music when the boy was fourteen. The Milan Conservatory in 1835 replied that scholarship openings remained only in bassoon and double bass. Giovanni switched to bass, landed the scholarship, and was winning prizes within a couple of years. By the late 1840s he was playing principal bass in Venice's Teatro San Benedetto orchestra, where he struck up a friendship with Giuseppe Verdi during rehearsals for a production of Verdi's early opera /

*due Foscari*. The friendship lasted a lifetime: at Verdi's invitation, Bottesini travelled to Cairo in 1871 to conduct the premiere of *Aida*.

The Gran Duo Concertante has a convoluted history. It originated as a Duo for two double basses and piano, probably in the late 1830s or early 1840s when Bottesini was a student in Milan. His first duo partner was almost certainly his classmate and friend Luigi Arpesani. By the late 1840s, Bottesini's international career was flourishing. He first met the violinist Camillo Sivori in 1848 in Havana. Sivori, acknowledged by the legendary Niccolò Paganini as "the only person who can call himself my pupil," was on tour in the Americas, and asked a mutual friend to introduce him to Bottesini. Their paths crossed again in Italy in 1851, when they began concertizing together. That is when Sivori adapted the second double bass part of the original Gran Duo for violin. His contribution was significant enough so that he claimed the Gran Duo on his own list of works; today it is listed as a collaboration with Bottesini. The pair toured together in France, Italy and England regularly between 1851 and 1870. In a version for violin, double bass and orchestra, the Gran Duo Concertante was published in 1880 in Paris.

### **Opera-style flourishes for a pair of soloists**

Like most of his Italian contemporaries, Bottesini was primarily a composer of operas. That, and the knowledge that he was extremely well-traveled for his day, explains the fact that his Gran Duo Concertante is so urbane and multi-stylistic. Both bass and violin have parts filled with operatic flourish and abandon, as if they were undisputed primo uomo and prima donna. Bottesini's renown as an opera composer and his astounding technical proficiency on the string bass contributed to the Gran Duo's surprising appeal.

The work is an extended single movement that comprises three sections, offering ample opportunity for each soloist to display his technical and musical prowess. The music has strong connections to opera, with recitative-like sections ceding to glorious melodies. Despite their differences in range and timbre, the two soloists find common ground in the lyrical passages, while also demonstrating the 19th century's celebration of the virtuoso in full flower.

## Georges Bizet: Selections from *L'Arlésienne* Suites Nos. 1 & 2

### Georges Bizet

**Born:** October 25, 1838 in Paris, France

**Died:** June 3, 1875 in Bougival, France

**Composed:** Incidental music composed in 1872; Suite No. 1 assembled in 1872; Suite No. 2 assembled in 1879

**World Premiere:** October 1, 1872 in Paris at the Théâtre du Vaudeville

**New Jersey Symphony Premiere:** Suite No. 1 in 1925–26 season, Suite No. 2 in 1951-52 season

**Duration:** 22 minutes

**Instrumentation:** two flutes (second doubling piccolo), two oboes (second doubling English Horn), two clarinets, two bassoons, alto saxophone, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, timpani, percussion (snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine), harp and strings.

Georges Bizet is justly celebrated for his immortal opera *Carmen*. He was not, however, a one-work composer. The Symphony in C, the delightful *Jeux d'enfants*, and several other operas – *The Pearl Fishers*, *La Jolie Fille de Perth*, *Djamileh* – all attest to his skill as a melodist and orchestrator. Right up there with those masterworks is the incidental music to Alphonse Daudet's *L'Arlésienne* (The Young Woman of Arles).

Daudet's drama – a pastoral tragedy that delves into the character and customs of Provence – originated as a novella. Early in 1872, the impresario Léon Carvalho suggested that Daudet and Bizet pool resources for a new dramatic production with music. Daudet rewrote the novel as a three-act play. Composer and playwright collaborated on *L'Arlésienne* with unusual warmth and mutual admiration. Daudet loved music and the two men got along splendidly. Bizet's score comprises 27 numbers, including several short choruses. Each movement is a masterpiece of dramatic insight, full of color and eloquent expression.

For budgetary reasons, Carvalho had restricted Bizet to 26 musicians for the initial production. The premiere in October 1872 was a failure. The composer immediately extracted four numbers for an orchestral suite, expanding the ensemble to full orchestra. After Bizet's death in 1875, his friend Ernest Guiraud arranged the Second Suite.

*L'Arlésienne* is deservedly popular. The two Suites' movements are familiar, in part because Bizet adapted several traditional themes. For example the Prélude – the overture to the incidental music and first movement of first Suite – is based on a Provençal Christmas tune known as “Marche des rois” (March of the Kings). After a bold unison statement for strings, Bizet spins a



series of variations on the melody. A quiet interlude introduces a haunting melody for alto saxophone, one of that instrument's first uses in a symphony orchestra. The Prélude's third and final section is music associated with the older brother Frédéri's love for the woman in Arles.

Much of the succeeding music is original, however, including the lovely Adagietto. In the play, it frames a quiet conversation between two subsidiary characters. The French call this type of setting a *mélodrame*: spoken text against a musical background. In character, the Adagietto attests to Bizet's sensitive handling of Daudet's drama.

In the complete incidental music, the Pastorale serves as a prelude to the play's Act II. The scene is the Provençal marshland in the Camargue region known as the Étang de Vaccarès this is where the cattle graze. The bold, brassy chords of the opening suggest the blazing summer sun. The principal melody recurs in varied form, with brief interludes evoking bird song and other pastoral activity.

The Minuetto is borrowed from Bizet's opera *La jolie fille de Perth*. It is a curious choice, given the richness of the original material in *L'Arlésienne*'s incidental music – but Bizet knew the value of a good tune. He adapted melodies sung in the opera, assigning them to individual instruments. The lovely harp and flute duet that opens is a sure-fire audience pleaser. The saxophone countermelody at the restatement is equally lovely. One can easily imagine this music being the backdrop for an on-stage ballet sequence.

The Act III march, Farandole, reintroduces the 18th century Marche des rois that we heard in the Prélude. Though it has become associated with Christmas and the journey of the three kings to Bethlehem, its origins are probably French military music. In Bizet's Farandole it alternates with another Provençal melody. Their superimposition at the end makes for a zesty conclusion.