

## **Excerpts from Program Notes by G. Haas and R. Hales**

### **Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16 (1<sup>st</sup> movement) Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)**

Edvard Grieg's Piano Concerto tops most people's "favorite" list. Composed when Grieg was 25, the work, which premiered in Copenhagen in 1869, catapulted the young composer into the world's attention. Despite the work's success, Grieg, went on to make more than six revisions to the score, the last only months before his death. The edition most often performed today is a posthumous revision made in 1917 by the pianist Percy Grainger. Compositions would continue to flow from Grieg's pen for most of his life, and many of his later works, such as the incidental music to *Peer Gynt* have also become worldwide favorites. But, it can be argued that it is the Piano Concerto, his only concerto and largest orchestral piece, that crowns his musical offerings.

### **Bassoon Concerto in F Major, Op. 75 (J. 127) (3<sup>rd</sup> movement) Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)**

Weber spent much of his youth and life on the road, performing at the piano and staging and conducting his several operas. In 1811, Weber spent several months in Munich, where he composed three clarinet concertos and a concerto for bassoon. In accordance with the practice of the time, the concerto begins with an orchestral introduction. Once the bassoon enters, Weber gives a fresh and invigorating voice to the instrument, expressing a wide range of emotions. The score calls for moods marked from *con fuoco* (with fire), to *dolce* (sweetly), to *brillante*. In the concerto's three movements, each of these emotions is splendidly realized.

### **Flute and Harp Concerto in C Major, K. 299 (1<sup>st</sup> movement) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) was born in Salzburg. By age 18, he had already composed three oratorios, nine masses, 23 sonatas and many shorter works. Mozart's music could often be both joyous and almost raucous. He wrote both simple, direct melodies as well as complicated contrapuntal works. He was a prolific composer, and his output of more than 600 compositions includes symphonic music, concertos, chamber music, opera, and choral works. Mozart composed his Flute and Harp Concerto, K. 299 in 1778 while in Paris.

### **Cello Concerto in B minor, Op. 104 (1<sup>st</sup> movement) Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)**

Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904) was born in rural Bohemia, but was fortunate enough to study in Prague. He was a good violist, and his music attracted the attention of Johannes Brahms who arranged for Dvořák's works to be published by one of the major European publishers. Dvořák spent three years in the United States (1892-1895), and it was during that time he composed his *Concerto for cello in B minor*, Op. 104, with its expressive power and melodic beauty. Dvořák's compositions include orchestral music, chamber music, piano music, operas, and songs.

### **Suite for String Orchestra, "Nocturne" (3<sup>rd</sup> movement) Frank Bridge (1879-1941)**

The prolific English composer Frank Bridge was not only admired for his many compositions, which range from solo piano works to symphonic suites, choral music and an opera, but also for his skill at conducting and performing on the violin and viola. String players are particularly fond of his compositions, as his writing for strings is scrupulously matched to the demands and capabilities of these instruments. One of his early and well-received compositions is the Suite for String Orchestra (1908). Its music is aptly described by musicologist Emilie Elsner as "Edwardian" – combining freedom of expression with classic breadth and formal coherence.

**“El Camino Real”****Alfred Reed (1921-2005)**

Alfred Reed, the American neoclassical composer, published more than 200 works for concert band, orchestra, chorus and chamber ensemble. While a trumpet player in the Air Force Band during World War II, he became deeply interested in music for concert band. After studying at the Juilliard School of Music, he became a staff composer and arranger with NBC and, subsequently, with ABC. “El Camino Real,” like many of his compositions, is alive with the brilliant sonorities of a concert band that pulsates with dramatic action.

**“Gershwin in Concert”****Arranged by Chuck Sayre**

George Gershwin (1898-1937), born in Brooklyn, was an American composer and pianist. Gershwin's compositions span both popular and classical genres – from Tin Pan Alley to the Broadway and Hollywood stages. Among his best-known works are the orchestral compositions “Rhapsody in Blue” and “An American in Paris,” and the opera *Porgy and Bess*. Because Gershwin’s compositions bridged musical styles, both his concert works – recognizably jazzy – and his popular songs were admired by an ever-widening public. Sayre’s arrangement incorporates several works that have become jazz standards: “I Got Rhythm,” “Someone to Watch Over Me,” “S Wonderful,” and “Rhapsody in Blue.”