

# SEASON OPENER

# An Enchanted Evening

September 10, 2022

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Sponsored by Periodontal Associates of North Florida and Synovus

Darko Butorac, Conductor  
Stefan Jackiw, violin

Georges Bizet  
(1838-1875)

Carmen Suite No. 1

Jean Sibelius  
(1865-1957)

Violin Concerto in D Minor, Op. 47  
Allegro moderato  
Adagio di molto  
Allegro, ma non tanto

## INTERMISSION

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky  
(1840-1893)

Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74 "Pathetique"  
Adagio – Allegro non troppo  
Allegro con grazia  
Allegro molto vivace  
Finale: Adagio lamentoso

*Soloist Sponsored by Ms. Elfie Stamm  
Stefan Jackiw is represented exclusively by Opus 3 Artists*

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## Program Notes

Both of his parents were musicians, and French composer **Georges Bizet (1838-75)** was musically precocious enough to be accepted into the Paris Conservatory before he turned ten. While there, he studied with Charles Gounod and became friends with Camille Saint-Saëns. Bizet was a brilliant student who won numerous awards, including the Prix de Rome, but he had problems completing many compositions; nevertheless, his one-act opera *Djamileh* led to a commission for another opera for the Opéra-Comique. Premiered just three months before the composer's sudden death, ***Carmen*** was not initially well received. The behavior of Carmen and her friends, smoking and fighting, shocked many in the first Parisian audience, even though they were fascinated by the exoticism of the story and its setting in Spain. To briefly synopsise the drama, Carmen is a factory worker who plays with the affections of several men, including a soldier, Don José, and a macho toreador, Escamillo. In the opera's tragic conclusion, Don José murders Carmen outside the bullfight arena. After Bizet's death, his friend, Ernest Giraud, arranged two concert suites from the opera score. With an accompaniment of string tremolos, ***Carmen Suite No. 1*** begins with a brief **Prelude** that introduces a "fate motive" that recurs throughout the opera. ***Aragonaise*** is suggestive of a sultry afternoon outside the bull ring, with plucked strings imitating Spanish guitars. In the **Intermezzo** a beautiful flute melody expresses Don José's infatuation with Carmen. Clarinet, English horn, and bassoon, accompanied by harp, all contribute to the flute's idyll. Dances were an important part of the allure of Spain, and in the opera, Carmen's **Séguedilla** accompanies the seductive drama that results in Don José releasing her from prison after her arrest for a knife attack on another woman. A parody of a military march comprises **Les Dragons d'Alcala**, which features the two bassoons. In the perennially popular

**Les Toréadors**, dotted rhythms suggest the swaggering of the bullfighters, providing a rousing conclusion to the suite. After Bizet's heart attack at age 36, on his sixth wedding anniversary, more than 4,000 people attended his funeral. Gounod broke down while delivering a eulogy at the burial site. That evening after a special performance of *Carmen* at the Opéra-Comique, music writers who had previously criticized the opera now declared Bizet a master. *C'est la vie*. Today, *Carmen* is one of the most frequently performed operas in the world.

Finland's best-known composer, **Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)**, lived most of his long life in Finland and is most famous for his tone poem *Finlandia*. The hymn portion of this work is a popular national song in Finland, and it is also well known in the U.S. as a Christian hymn, "Be Still My Soul." Sibelius's violin concerto is one of the most widely performed and recorded concertos of the twentieth century. It was not well-received at its 1904 premiere, so the composer revised it and re-released it in 1905. The work has three movements, with a lyrical and poignant Adagio sandwiched between lively outer movements. The composer himself was quite pleased with the beginning of his concerto, writing to his wife in 1902 about his "marvelous opening idea." Traditionally the orchestra presents the primary theme of a concerto and it is then repeated by the soloist, resulting in a "double exposition." But here *pianissimo* strings provide a pulsating backdrop for the soloist to enter immediately with an evocative folk-like melody that is briefly echoed by the clarinet. Sibelius presents a rich canvas of melodic ideas for both soloist and orchestra. And just as he could not wait to present the violinist at the beginning, he does not wait until the end of the movement, as is customary, for the soloist's cadenza. The distinctive four-note motto of the primary theme figures prominently in this solo section in the middle of

the **Allegro moderato**. At one point in the cadenza, the violinist plays a countermelody to his own melody in a beautiful passage of double-and-triple stops. After a haunting conclusion to the first movement, the **Adagio** features a long-breathed solo violin melody with an impassioned orchestral response. Wistful interactions between the soloist and orchestra complete the three-part movement. Low strings and tympani then launch the final **Allegro**. The soloist quickly joins them with a jaunty, rhythmic theme. As the violin solo becomes increasingly virtuosic, the bows in the orchestral strings literally bounce off the instruments (*spiccato*). A strongly syncopated (off beat) secondary theme is introduced by the orchestra. The violinist has many opportunities to display his technique, including an eerie passage of harmonics (very high notes produced by lightly touching the string instead of pressing down normally). Sibelius described this movement, with its unexpected twists of pitch and rhythm, as "a *danse macabre* across the Finnish wastelands."

### DID YOU KNOW?

Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* Symphony premiered in St. Petersburg seven weeks before Dvorak's "New World" Symphony premiered in Carnegie Hall in NYC.

At age twenty-one, **Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)** quit law school to study composition and orchestration at St. Petersburg Conservatory. After graduating in 1865, he was hired to teach harmony at the Moscow Conservatory, where he remained until 1875, when severe depression led him to resign from teaching. Tchaikovsky, whose music was greatly influenced by the West, was often depressed and pessimistic, and much has been written about his (closet) homosexual angst. His Sixth Symphony, which the com-

poser conducted at its premiere 28 October 1893, is dedicated to his nephew, with whom he reportedly was enamored. Tchaikovsky died of cholera ten days later, and it is still debated whether he knowingly drank unboiled water during the epidemic. (Ironically, Tchaikovsky's mother died of cholera when he was fourteen.) The symphony did not receive enthusiastic support until its second performance following the composer's death. The nickname "Pathétique" was suggested by his brother, and Tchaikovsky originally liked the idea but later told his publisher not to print it, so it is unknown whether he might have ultimately embraced the title by which it is so well known today.

Two unusual aspects of Tchaikovsky's **Sixth Symphony** are that it starts and ends *adagio* (slowly), and instead of a transcendent conclusion, the last movement slinks away quietly, still full of angst. The opening **Adagio** begins ominously with string basses and a solo bassoon in its low register. A buoyant secondary theme provides some lightness with Tchaikovsky's signature woodwind flutterings. His gift for writing lyrical themes laden with romantic longing is evident in the lovely string melody (a nod to Bizet's *Carmen*) that is probably the most memorable of the Pathétique's themes. The Adagio also includes declamatory statements in the form of brass chorales, another Tchaikovsky staple. (Beware! a blast of sound jolts listeners out of a ppp reverie about ten minutes into the first movement.) **Allegro con gracia** is a light-hearted contrast to the first movement. You may feel a bit like waltzing to the swaying opening theme, but you will have to modify your dance steps to fit an unusual 5/4 meter. After a contrasting middle section, the delightful dance theme returns. **Allegro molto vivace** is an energetic march, rhythmic and exciting, a joyous vehicle for the brass instruments. If Tchaikovsky had concluded the "Pathétique" with this

movement's fanfare, it surely would have had a different nickname. BUT Tchaikovsky did not end the symphony here, and the final **Adagio** begins somberly and pensively. Filled with the symbolism of descending scales and musical sighs (descending half-step slurs), this last movement is ponderous, with each repetition of the main theme becoming heavier and increasingly despairing. The "Pathétique" ends bleakly, with measured beating on the drum.

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 Dr. Akers has a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance from Indiana University and a Ph.D. in Historical Musicology from Florida State University.



**Stefan Jackiw** is one of America's foremost violinists, captivating audiences with playing that combines poetry and purity with an impeccable technique. Hailed for playing of "uncommon musical substance" that is "striking for its intelligence and sensitivity" (*Boston Globe*), Jackiw has appeared as soloist with the Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco symphony orchestras, among others.

In Summer 2021, Jackiw returned to the Cleveland Orchestra performing Prokofiev 2 with Rafael Payare, the Boston Symphony performing Mozart Concerto no. 5 with Alan Gilbert, and the Aspen Music Fes-

tival performing the Beethoven Triple Concerto, alongside Alisa Weilerstein, and Inon Barnatan. In the 2021-2022 season, he will premiere a new violin concerto by Conrad Tao with the Atlanta Symphony and the Baltimore Symphony; he will also return to the Indianapolis Symphony to perform Korngold Concerto, and to the Oregon Symphony with Schumann Concerto. In Europe, he will perform with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra and Alan Gilbert, and with Orchestre National de Lyon under Nikolaj Znaider.

Before the outbreak of COVID-19, Jackiw was scheduled to appear with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Oslo Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and Antwerp Symphony, among others. He also recently performed with the Helsinki Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony, RTE Dublin, and Baltimore and San Diego Symphonies. In July 2020, he launched *Stefan's Sessions*, a virtual masterclass series exploring major works with up-and-coming violinists. This free online series has reached thousands of viewers.

Jackiw tours frequently with his musical partners, pianist Conrad Tao and cellist Jay Campbell, as part of the Junction Trio. He also enjoys collaborating with pianist Jeremy Denk with whom he has toured the complete Ives Violin Sonatas, which the pair recorded for future release on Nonesuch Records. He also recently recorded Beethoven's Triple Concerto with Inon Barnatan, Alisa Weilerstein, Alan Gilbert and Academy St. Martin in the Fields.

Highlights of recent seasons include his debut at The Cleveland Orchestra's Blossom Music Festival with Juraj Valcuha, with whom he also reunited for performances in Dallas, Detroit, and Luxembourg; performances of Prokofiev's Second Violin Concerto at Carnegie Hall with Mikhail Plet-

## Guest Artist

nev, as part of a multi-city tour with the Russian National Orchestra; as well as performances with the St. Louis Symphony under Nicholas McGegan, the Minnesota Orchestra under Ilyich Rivas, the Rotterdam Philharmonic under Yannick Nézet-Séguin, the Indianapolis Symphony under Krzysztof Urbanski, and the Pittsburgh Symphony under Juraj Valčuha. He also gave the world premiere of American composer David Fulmer's Violin Concerto No. 2 "Jubilant Arcs", written for him and commissioned by the Heidelberg Festival with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie under Matthias Pintscher. Further afield, Jackiw has appeared with the Tokyo Symphony at Suntory Hall under the direction of Krzysztof Urbanski, and the Seoul Philharmonic under Mario Venzago. He has also toured Korea, playing chamber music with Gidon Kremer and Kremerata Baltica, and toured

with the Australian Chamber Orchestra play-directing Mendelssohn.

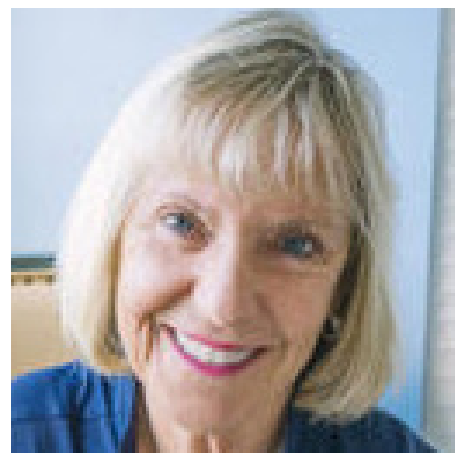
Jackiw has performed in numerous major festivals and concert halls around the world, including the Aspen Music Festival, Ravinia Festival, Caramoor International Music Festival, Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, New York's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Philharmonie de Paris, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, the Celebrity Series of Boston, and the Washington Performing Arts Society.

Born to physicist parents of Korean and German descent, Stefan Jackiw began playing the violin at the age of four. His teachers have included Zinaida Gilels, Michèle Auclair, and Donald Weilerstein. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University, as well as an Artist Diploma from the New England Conservatory, and is the recipient of a pres-

tigious Avery Fisher Career Grant. Jackiw plays a violin made in 1750 in Milan by G.B. Guadagnini, on generous loan from a private collection. He lives in New York City.

## Thoughts From the Author of the Program Notes

My father died when I was nine, but he left me with a love of music. Even though I was very young, he took me to orchestra concerts, and Sunday afternoons were spent listening to Dad's favorite 33s, including Haydn's "Surprise" Symphony, Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherezade*. How fortunate I am that I was able to turn my musical passion into a career! I have now been researching and writing TSO's program notes for the last 15+ years, and I am enthusiastic about the 2022-23 season. It includes one of my Dad's old favorites (which also just happens to be one of my husband's favorites) as well as some new works by composers that I have yet to experience. As I always told my undergraduate classes, "Never stop being curious – never stop learning!" So let's dive into this new season together with excitement, with fondness for the familiar, and with open minds and a sense of wonder at the unknown.



**Thank you, Dr. Ruth Ruggles Akers,  
for your wonderful TSO program notes!**