

LYNN

Conservatory of Music



Philharmonia No. 3

Saturday, November 12, 2022

Sunday, November 13, 2022

2022-2023 Season



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Sincerely,
Jon Robertson
Dean of the Lynn Conservatory of Music

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Philharmonia No. 3

Featuring the Winners of the Concerto Competition

Guillermo Figueroa, conductor

Frederic Renaud, cello

Gioia Gedicks, violin

Miguelangel Garcia Marquez, trombone

Carlos Fernando Jr Medina Romero, piano

Saturday, November 12, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 13, 2022 at 3:00 p.m.

Keith C. and Elaine Johnson Wold Performing Arts Center

Also live-streaming on both days

Please silence or turn off all electronic devices, including
cell phones, beepers, and watch alarms.
Unauthorized recording or photography is strictly prohibited.

Program

Schelomo: Rhapsodie Hebraïc for
Violoncello and Orchestra

Ernest Bloch
(1880-1959)

Frederic Renaud, violoncello

Violin Concerto, op. 14

I. Allegro moderato

II. Andante

III. Presto in moto perpetuo

Samuel Barber
(1910-1981)

Gioia Gedicks, violin

INTERMISSION

Concertino for Trombone and String
Orchestra, op. 45, no. 7

Lars-Erik Larsson
(1908-1986)

- I. Preludium: Allegro pomposo
- II. Aria: Andante sostenuto
- III. Finale: Allegro giocoso

Miguelangel Garcia, trombone

Piano Concerto No. 5 in F major, op. 103
("The Egyptian")

Camille Saint-Saëns
(1835-1921)

- I. Allegro animato
- II. Andante
- III. Molto allegro

Carlos Fernando Jr Medina Romero, piano

Music Director & Conductor



Guillermo Figueroa

One of the most versatile and respected musical artists of his generation - renowned as conductor, violinist, violist and concertmaster - Guillermo Figueroa is the Principal Conductor of the Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra. He is also the Music Director of the Music in the Mountains Festival in Colorado and Music Director of the Lynn Philharmonia in Florida. Additionally, he was the Music Director of both the New Mexico Symphony and the Puerto Rico Symphony.

International appearances, among others, include the Toronto Symphony, Iceland Symphony, Orquesta Sinfonica de Chile and the National Symphony of Mexico. In the US he has appeared with the orchestras of Detroit, New Jersey, Memphis, Phoenix, Tucson and the New York City Ballet.

As violinist, his recording of Ernesto Cordero's violin concertos for the Naxos label received a Latin Grammy nomination in 2012. Figueroa was Concertmaster of the New York City Ballet, and a Founding Member and Concertmaster of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, making over fifty recordings for Deutsche Grammophon. Also accomplished on the viola, Figueroa performs frequently as guest of the Fine Arts, Emerson, American, Amernet and Orion string quartets.

Figueroa has given the world premieres of four violin concertos written for him: the Concertino by Mario Davidovsky, at Carnegie Hall with Orpheus; the Double Concerto by Harold Farberman, with the American Symphony at Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center; the Violin Concerto by Miguel del Aguila, commissioned by Figueroa and the NMSO and Insula, by Ernesto Cordero with the Solisti di Zagreb in Zagreb.

Artist Biographies



Frederic Renaud

Frederic Renaud began his cello studies at the age of twelve and has studied in programs such as Juilliard MAP and Mannes Prep. He has performed and premiered works in major halls in New York, (Jazz at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, DiMenna

Center, Symphony Space, Merkin Hall) & Scotland (Aberdeen Music Hall) as a member of ensembles including Face The Music, ISO Symphony Orchestra, Holland's Amersfoort Youth Orchestra in Scotland, in collaboration/instruction with the Kronos Quartet, and a performance/workshop in collaboration with Joshua Bell. He is also a substitute cellist of the Brevard Symphony Orchestra. Frederic has made appearances on multiple televised programs including Mass Appeal on WWLP featuring solo Bach. He has recently taken counselor positions at Lyra Music Festival and was an Artist in Residence at the PianoSonoma Music Festival in 2020. He has been a finalist in the Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition in 2017, prize winner of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American String Teacher's Association (ASTA Competition) in 2018, and winner of the Lynn Concerto Competition in 2022. Frederic was a Clement Camp Scholar in 2015 at the Interlochen Music Festival and is the first instrumentalist to be a recipient of the Presidential Scholarship at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee in 2017. He is currently residing in Boca Raton Florida, completing his Masters degree at the conservatory at Lynn under the instruction of cellist David Cole.



Gioia Gedicks

Known for her vibrant performance style and engaging musicality, Gioia Gedicks is a classically trained violinist with a myriad of experiences and interests, including solo performing, chamber music, orchestra, musical theater (pit and on stage), dance pits, both free and stylistic improvisation, bands (rock, pop, country, and jazz), contemporary music, film

orchestra, and teaching. Gedicks has won the Boston Conservatory at Berklee Concerto Competition (Boston Conservatory Orchestra, Boston, MA), the Lee Strebel Memorial Competition (Cayuga Chamber Orchestra,

Ithaca, NY), the Rhodes Competition (Springfield Symphony Orchestra, Springfield, MA) and was named alternate to the national Finals of the Music Teachers National Association Competition (MTNA). She has performed as a soloist with the Boston Conservatory's Hemenway Strings and Conductor's Orchestra, as well as served as concertmistress with the Boston Conservatory Orchestra and the Berklee Performance Orchestra. Gedicks has performed and coached as an Artist in Residence for *pianoSonoma*, a music festival directed by Michael and Jessica Shinn, and as an Emerging Artist with the chamber festival *Music from Salem* directed by Lila Brown. Gedicks has performed at notable venues across the United States and throughout the world, including Germany, Spain, and Canada. Additionally, she is a featured soloist on a Cannes International Film Festival Official Selection, as well as featured on several albums released by singer/songwriter Charles Paul. Gedicks received her Bachelor of Music from Boston Conservatory at Berklee studying with Katie Lansdale, and is currently pursuing her Master of Music degree at Lynn Conservatory with Guillermo Figueroa.



Miguelangel Garcia

Miguelangel Garcia is a Venezuelan trombonist who grew up in El sistema Venezuela, with study in the Miguelangel Espinel Conservatory of Music and in the Simon Bolivar Conservatory of Music. He was part of the Regional Orchestra of Tachira and was invited to be part of the National Trombone School in Caracas. In 2017, Miguelangel won a position in the National Youth Orchestra of Venezuela, which toured all over the world, playing music of John Adams, Gustav Mahler, and Sergei Prokofiev, as well as Venezuelan and contemporary Latin music.

During this time, Miguelangel became interested in composition, and he wrote several pieces based on poems of Venezuela for strings, winds, and violin and piano that were performed by the National Youth Orchestra. Miguelangel's formal composition studies began with Angel Lovera, a recognized contemporary Venezuelan composer living in Vienna, Austria, who continues to help him refine his skills.

Miguelangel counts renowned Venezuelan trombonists Pedro Carrero, Adrian Corredor, and Alejandro Diaz among his previous teachers. Currently, Miguelangel is a sophomore at Lynn Conservatory of Music, where he studies trombone with Dan Satterwhite and composition with Dr. Thomas McKinley.



Carlos Fernando Jr Medina Romero

Pianist Jr Medina is currently finishing his second year of Professional Performance Certificate program at Lynn University Conservatory of Music in the studio of Dr. Roberta Rust.

Jr. has been awarded numerous prizes for his artistry in his homeland, Guatemala, and in Cuba, Mexico and the United States. These include First Prize (category B, 2008) and Second Prize (category C, 2009) of the Concurso Nacional de

Piano Juan de Dios Montenegro (Guatemala), Third Prize at the Concurso Internacional De Piano Musicalia (Cuba, 2019), Special Prize for Best Performance of the required Mexican work at the “Jose Jacinto Cuevas” Yamaha International Piano Competition (Mexico, 2021) and he recently was selected as a winner of the LYNN Concerto Competition (USA, 2022).

Medina holds a bachelor’s degree of Art with a specialization in Music and is a cum laude graduate from the Universidad InterNaciones (Guatemala). He graduated with high honors from the Conservatorio Nacional de Música Germán Alcántara (Guatemala) as a Bachelor of Art major with a specialization in Piano. In addition, Jr is a teacher of Music Education, graduating from the Instituto Pedagógico Alfredo Colom (Guatemala).

His performances as soloist includes the National Symphony Orchestra of Guatemala, the National Conservatory Germán Alcántara Orchestra, and the Municipal Youth Orchestra of Guatemala. His performances have taken place in important theaters and concert halls, such as WOLD Performing Arts, Amarnick Goldstein Concert Hall, and Helen K. Persson Hall (USA), Oratorio San Felipe Neri (Cuba), Teatro Peón Contreras and Felipe Carrillo Puerto (México), Sala María Clara Culléll (Costa Rica), Conservatorio Nacional, Teatro de Cámara Hugo Carrillo, Teatro Dick Smith, Centro Cultural Alvaro Arzú Irigoyen (Guatemala), among others.

He has had as teachers Xavier Beteta, Zoila Luz García Salas (Guatemala) and Leonardo Gell (Cuba/Costa Rica). He also has received master classes with Antonio Carbonell, Ulises Hernandez (Cuba), Henry Kelder (Netherlands) and Grigory Gruzman (Germany), among others. Besides, he belongs as cultural manager and co-founder to the non-profit organization, Encuentro de Pianistas de Guatemala.

In Costa Rica, he recently participated in the professional recording of the album “12 musas” piano music by the composer Andrés Soto, in addition to spreading and recording the Latin American Music project for left hand solo.

Lynn University Philharmonia Roster

Violin 1

*Esther Platt
**Ava Figliuzzi
Victoria Bramble
Nathan Clifford
Miriam Smith
Dina Bikzhanova
Benjamin Kremer
Amelia Dixon
Lily West
Sebastian Orellana
David Mersereau
Sol Ochoa Castro
Eliza Willett

Violin 2

*Angela Fiedler
**Yu Xie
Adriana Fernandez
Clarece LaMarr
Vincent Cart-Sanders
Carlos Avendano
Francesca Puro
Emin Huseynov
Ruvit Bracho Marquez
Manuel Mendes
Moises Molina

Viola

*Rosa Zoraida Ortega
Iannelli
**Bella Mazzone
Elena Galentas
Daniel Guevara
Walid Abo Shanab
Roberto Henriquez

Cello

*Anttuan Rios
**Peter Pao
Jonathan Dills
Yoonki Lee
Jon Cruz Cruz
Megan Hagel
Niloufar Mirzanabi Khani
Megan Savage

Double Bass

***William Penn
Julian Rauh
Ethan Sanchez
Benjamin Joella

Flute

Zhanbota Balgabekov
^Youbeen Cho
+SungKyung Lee
#Isaiah Obey

Oboe

Juan Fernandez
^+Kari Jenks
#Olivia Oakland

Clarinet

^Nataniel Farrar
#Madison Miller
+Lauren Washburn

Bassoon

+Sutton Fransen
Graydon Howard
^Fabiola Hoyo
#Keegan Neely

French Horn

Andres Borja
+#Jeffrey Chapman
^Clair Ives
Paula Mora Alfaro
Baran Zolfaghari

Trumpet

^Juan Diaz
+Jafet Diaz Martin
Daniel Meneses Leal
#Matthew Montelione
Luis Pulido
Benjamin Shaposhnikov

Trombone

+#Kenton Campbell
Fabiola Parra Diaz

Bass Trombone

Raphael Robles

Tuba

+^#Mark Severeniuk

Timpani

+#Tyler Marvin
^Jeremiah Grace

Percussion

Isaac Fernandez Hernandez
+^Jeremiah Grace
Juanmanuel Lopez
Tyler Marvin

Harp

+Yubin Zhang
Noa Michaels

Keyboard

Marina Machado

An asterisk (*) denotes the concertmaster and principal for Bloch and Barber.
Two asterisks (**) denote the concertmaster and principal for Larsson and Saint-Saens.
A plus sign (+) denotes the principal for Bloch.
A caret (^) denotes the principal for Barber.
A number sign (#) denotes the principal for Saint-Saens.



3RD TRIENNIAL ELMAR OLIVEIRA INTERNATIONAL VIOLIN COMPETITION

FINALS: JANUARY 28-29, 2023

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CREDIT CARD ONLY BY CALLING 561-237-9000 OR VISIT LYNN.EDU/EVENTS.

Program Notes

ERNEST BLOCH

Schelomo: Rhapsodie Hébraïque for Violoncello and Orchestra

Born: July 24, 1880, Geneva, Switzerland

Died: July 15, 1959, Portland, Oregon

Composed: 1916

Premiere: May 3, 1917, in Carnegie Hall, New York; the cellist was Hans Kindler, and the orchestra was conducted by Artur Bodanzky

Instrumentation: Solo cello, 3 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, tam-tam), 2 harps, celesta and strings

Duration: About 20 minutes

The backstory: Born into a Jewish family that was neither devout nor musical, Ernest Bloch's artistic ambitions were met with particular hostility from his father, a watchmaker. In spite of little support, Bloch became a very skilled violinist and vowed to become a musician for life at the age of 9. His early mentors included Eugène Ysaÿe and Claude Debussy, whose influence can be seen in the period preceding his "Jewish Cycle" — a series of epic works on Jewish themes written from 1911-1916 that including settings of Psalms 22 for baritone and orchestra, Psalms 114 and 137 for soprano and orchestra, the Three Jewish Poems, the Israel symphony, and *Schelomo*.

Bloch described the influence Judaism had on his work as "an inner voice, deep, secret, insistent, burning, an instinct rather than any cold, dry reasoning process." He strove for his heritage to penetrate beyond easily observed melodic idiosyncrasies and into the soul. It is from the success of his Jewish Cycle that his career largely flourished. *Schelomo*, a Hebrew rhapsody based on the story of King Solomon (Schelomo), David's successor, is considered Bloch's most well-known composition.

Initially intended to be scored for solo voice and orchestra, *Schelomo's* trajectory was changed after a meeting with the cellist Alexandre Barjansky. The rich tone of the cello, often compared to the human voice, embodied the Old Testament poetry of Ecclesiastes, Kings, and Deuteronomy in the human inflection Bloch sought. He was struggling through a period of depression while composing *Schelomo* and found particular consolation in the first chapter of Ecclesiastes — the words of

King Solomon himself. Solomon repeatedly laments the meaninglessness of life, claiming “all is vanity” and, “all things are full of weariness,” and asking, “What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?” Solomon was granted one wish by God; he asked for wisdom. It is therefore particularly wrenching to see Solomon’s later words in Ecclesiastes 1:18: “For with much wisdom is much sorrow; as knowledge increases, grief increases.”

Solomon’s ancient struggle was felt sympathetically by Bloch. In an essay from 1916 (the same year he composed *Schelomo*) he writes: “There is something tragic in the degree to which music has gradually divorced itself from life and become an ego-centric and an artificial thing ... In all its branch-creation, interpretation, modes of instruction and critique — it had become a cold and calculated thing, lifeless and unspirited.” In essence, *Schelomo* is the antithesis of a piece of music divorced from life; it is the voice, power, and atmosphere of King Solomon and his sometimes contradictory life. Solomon’s fixation on vanity torments him throughout Ecclesiastes, yet he enjoys the riches and power that come with being king of Israel.

The music: The solo cello and orchestra are intertwined, as if to imply the cello’s voice is Solomon’s and the orchestra is his thoughts or worldly surroundings. Its wandering form, emotive angst, and impulsiveness represent the humanistic unity Bloch’s philosophy craved.

Solomon’s wives and concubines are suggestively presented through three waves of thematic material, interspersed with cadenza-like sections. The episodic themes range in energy from brooding to dancing and lack strict boundaries. After the first climax, the bassoon and celesta suggest the sound of the Jewish shofar (ram’s horn) with a repetitive staccato motive punctuated by a leap. Rage and despair take over the last section before the cello submits in defeat.

-- Notes by Ava Figliuzzi

SAMUEL BARBER

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 14

Born: March 9, 1910, West Chester, Pa.

Died: January 23, 1981, New York City

Composed: 1939-40

Premiere: February 7, 1941, played by Albert Spalding with the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy

Instrumentation: Solo violin, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, snare drum, timpani, piano, strings

Duration: About 25 minutes

The backstory: Samuel Barber's Violin Concerto was his first major commission, although his career was already well within a robust upward trajectory. His prodigious talents were recognized and nurtured from an early age by family members in the profession, most notably by his uncle, Sidney Homer, who was a composer. Barber studied at The Curtis Institute of Music from the age of 14, where he honed his skills in piano, singing, composition, and conducting — studying the latter with both Fritz Reiner and George Szell.

A member of the board of trustees at Curtis offered Barber \$1,000 to write a violin concerto for his young adopted son, Iso Briselli. The youngest pupil of Carl Flesch at Curtis, Briselli was critical of Barber's initial drafts of the first two movements, calling them, "too simple and not brilliant enough for a concerto." Barber had gone to Switzerland to write the concerto, and his progress on the concerto's finale in 1939 was sporadic and distracted by the advances of the Nazis, which necessitated the evacuation of Americans from Europe. Amid impending global chaos, Barber took Briselli's criticism to heart and composed a finale so fiendishly difficult that Briselli's father demanded his money back.

Just as Adolph Brodsky famously disproved Leopold Auer's analogous dismissal of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in 1881, a willing virtuoso — Albert Spalding — eventually replaced Briselli for the premiere. Before Barber approached Spalding, Briselli's claim of unplayability was tested out on an unassuming Curtis student, Herbert Baumel, who promptly proved the piece's playability. The premiere elicited immediate and abundant praise for both Spalding's interpretation and Barber's artistic ingenuity. It remains one of — if not the only — violin concerto of the core repertoire that places lyrical, expressive virtuosity as the centerpiece.

Some critics of the piece point to discontinuity between movements, especially between the overtly lyrical opening movements and the third, almost reminiscent of Stravinsky. Barber resisted several editing suggestions, instead deciding to embrace this period of stylistic transition in his career. Several factors contributed to this transition, including his father's terminal illness, the Second World War, and his increasing skill in 20th-century experimental techniques in tonality and rhythm.

The music: The intimate G major opening of the concerto (*Allegro molto moderato*) has an uncorrupted air, which gradually develops through major-minor harmonic shifts. A folksy, dancing melody, set in the Phrygian

mode, is introduced by the clarinet as the second theme. The solo line joins the dancing character and spurs the orchestra toward the development. Although the opening movement is balanced between the exposition, development, and recapitulation, Barber evokes a feeling of incompleteness or melancholic reflection by keeping the recapitulation in the parallel minor.

After an introduction with strings and horns, the second movement (*Andante sostenuto*) finds a mournful oboe solo continuing the reflective character of the first movement. When the spotlight is handed to the solo violin, the music yearns for an answer, moving again between major and minor modes. Agitation grows through this movement, and a satisfying recapitulation fuses the rhythmic motives developed in the middle recitative section with the opening themes.

Devious metrical changes and unexpected points of emphasis make Barber's finale (*Presto in moto perpetuo*) a narrative foil to the wise-but-burdened character displayed previously in the concerto. While the first two movements were balanced in tonality, form, and mood, the finale forgoes recognizable episodic form for what Barber calls an exploitation of "the more brilliant and virtuoso characteristics of the violin."

-- Notes by Ava Figliuzzi

LARS-ERIK LARSSON

Concertino for Trombone and String Orchestra, Op. 45, No. 7

Born: May 15, 1908, Akarp, Sweden

Died: December 27, 1986, Helsingborg, Sweden

Composed: 1955

Premiere: The score was completed in late November 1955, and the first performance was broadcast over Swedish radio in 1958.

Instrumentation: Trombone, string orchestra (violin, viola, cello, bass)

Duration: About 12 minutes

The backstory: Lars-Erik Larsson had a long, successful and busy career in Swedish musical life, winning national recognition early for his *Sinfonietta* for string orchestra (1932). A graduate of the Stockholm Conservatory (now the Royal College of Music, Stockholm), where he studied composition and conducting, he wrote one of the earliest notable 12-tone works in Sweden, a group of piano pieces, after a year of study in Vienna with Alban Berg in 1929-30.

He then worked as an opera coach, a music critic for a daily newspaper and as a music teacher before joining Swedish radio in 1937, where he was a producer, composer and conductor, eventually becoming supervisor of the radio orchestras. In his later years, he taught at the Stockholm Conservatory and Uppsala University before his retirement in 1971.

After World War II, Larsson's neoclassical compositional style was influenced by the music of Paul Hindemith, whose example of writing instrumental sonatas for practical use likely served as an example when Larsson set out in the years 1955 to 1957 to write a set of 12 concertinos (little concertos) for various solo instruments and string orchestra. The concertinos were intended to beef up the repertory of Sweden's state-supported amateur orchestras, with solo parts that were technically challenging but not overly so.

The Concertino for Trombone is the best-known of the set of 12, having established itself as standard repertoire for student trombonists. It is written in a pleasant neoclassical style popular with Swedish audiences of the time, and congruent with the music of composers such as Dag Wirén and Kurt Atterberg.

The music: All 12 of the concertinos are in three movements, and reuse thematic material throughout. The writing for the solo instrument in the Trombone Concertino is athletic without being dazzlingly virtuosic, and Larsson explores a good deal of the instrument's tonal beauty in what is essentially a lyrical work.

The Trombone Concertino opens with a *Praeludium* (marked *Allegro pomposo*) that starts with the strings playing a rising four-note figure spanning an octave that sets the stage for the trombone's first entrance with the theme that will be heard in various guises throughout the piece: Three ascending notes outlining an octave, followed by a "blue note" that resolves to the third above. The trombonist plays no fewer than three cadenzas as the music becomes quieter (*Molto tranquillo*) before the strings bring back the opening bars to close the movement.

In the second movement, titled *Aria* (*Andante sostenuto*), the soloist offers a fervent melody over gently pulsing strings that briefly crosses into a passionate minor-key climax. The movement ends with the trombonist recalling the opening theme of the first movement.

The *Finale* (*Allegro giocoso*) begins with the strings playing a faster version of the concertino's main theme; when the trombone enters, the strings offer counterpoint by imitating the trombone music a measure later. This jolly semi-fugal atmosphere continues until soloist and strings slow things

down to *Andante sostenuto* for a short return of the Aria slow movement. The initial tempo and high spirits return, and the work closes with an abrupt final “wink” from the trombone.

-- Notes by Greg Stepanich

(CHARLES) CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

Piano Concerto No. 5 in F major (*Egyptian*), Op. 103

Born: October 9, 1835, Paris

Died: December 16, 1921, Algiers

Composed: 1896

Premiere: June 2, 1896, in Paris for a “Festival-Concert” celebrating the 50th anniversary of Saint-Saëns’ public debut in 1846; the composer was the soloist, Paul Taffanel conducted

Instrumentation: Solo piano, 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets (in B-flat and A), 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets (in F), 3 trombones, tam-tam, timpani, and strings

Duration: About 28 minutes

The backstory: Camille Saint-Saëns pursued other interests besides music with as great a passion as he did his profession. He loved archaeology and astronomy, wrote plays, a book of philosophical musings and scientific papers, and was a restless traveler who visited much of the globe and was fascinated by other cultures outside the West.

His fifth and final piano concerto, composed in 1896 in the city of Luxor, Egypt, celebrates his wide travels as well as his own career. It was written for a special concert in Paris marking the 50th anniversary of his professional debut as a pianist in May 1846. At that debut concert at the Salle Pleyel, the 10-year-old Saint-Saëns played two Mozart concertos as well as other works, and offered, as an encore, to play any of the 32 Beethoven piano sonatas from memory.

By the time he came to write the Fifth Concerto, the composer was one of France’s most eminent musical figures, but his popularity had faded, and some of the pieces by which he is best-known today — the First Cello Concerto, the Third Violin Concerto, the *Organ* Symphony, the *Danse Macabre* and the *Carnival of the Animals* — were behind him. Of his piano concertos, only No. 2 is still in regular repertory, and not as much as it once was.

But the Fifth is an unusual and rewarding work, full of beguiling ideas and special orchestral effects, and a sparkling piano part whose third

movement Saint-Saëns repurposed as a solo piano etude. While other composers of the time were turning their piano concertos into weighty statements in search of profundity, Saint-Saëns's Fifth instead exemplifies the French Romantic style he did so much to define — a style of clarity, wit, precision, elegance and melodic charm.

The music: The first movement (*Allegro animato*) opens quietly and gently, with the soloist introducing the wistful, waltz-like main theme, which is then taken up by the strings and followed by a military-style motto in the horns that leads to washes of harp-like figurations in the piano. The soloist introduces a secondary theme in the minor, a delicate but restless motif that includes prominent octave leaps.

Some of the earlier material returns, this time subjected to development, with shifting harmonies and a more agitated mood; the second theme returns, also affected by the feeling of tumult. But the piano then slyly leads back to the opening theme, succeeded by a fresh development of both themes. The movement closes softly, with two piano chords and two short notes in the orchestra.

The second movement (*Andante*) gives the concerto its nickname, but this fantasia-style movement can be thought of as a travelog that takes in more than Egypt, one of Saint-Saëns' favorite vacation spots. The composer called this movement “sort of an Eastern journey that goes all the way to the Far East.”

The listener is brought with a short orchestral punch into agitated violins and violas, setting the stage for a big piano flourish using the “Spanish Gypsy scale.” The soloist then plays a secondary motif, this time using the closely related “Arabic scale,” all of it in an atmosphere of high drama. The pianist hushes the proceeds with somber chords, then high keyboard filigree in which a solo flute enters, outlining the exotic scales as it climbs to a high F-sharp.

Under repeated octaves in the right hand, the pianist's left hand now introduces the secondary theme, a “Nubian love song” Saint-Saëns claimed to have heard boatmen sing as he floated down the Nile River in a *dahabiya* (houseboat). The strings take up this tune, which is lightly developed, and which is then followed by a remarkable passage in which muted violins and the high register of the piano play repeated C-sharps, which Saint-Saëns said were meant to evoke the croaking frogs and chirping crickets along the river.

But the pianist's left hand is far from Egypt, playing an entirely pentatonic tune characteristic of East Asia. After this brief interlude, the music returns to the dramatic mood, and scales, of the opening pages, ending very softly

as the piano slowly climbs to a hushed D-minor chord.

The finale (*Molto allegro*), which was written with the “joy of a sea voyage” in mind, as the composer said, opens with a thumping figure in the piano over a long roll in the timpani, which quickly builds to glittering piano figurations and a breezy theme sounded in the winds. This moves into a triplet-based rhythmic figure that rapidly modulates, followed by a smoother secondary theme in the strings that the piano soon takes up.

After soloist and orchestra play the secondary theme, the piano enters with a third theme: A catchy little march-like tune, which winds then play as the piano returns to its rapid figurations. Both themes are developed as the mood darkens to the minor, with the soloist returning to the thumping pattern with which it opened the movement. A tempestuous development ensues, with the piano displaying athletic virtuosity and a piccolo crying out above the waves, before the suave second theme comes back in the strings, and then the march tune reappears in the winds.

The piano has one more go at the march tune, then the orchestra breaks off as the piano starts a rapid-fire series of octaves powering up from the bottom of the keyboard to the top. The piano continues its octave display as the orchestra plays a vigorous coda, bringing the concerto to a brilliant, joyous conclusion.

-- Notes by Greg Stepanich

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