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# ACU Orchestra in Concert, with Dr. Steven Ward as Conductor

Abilene Christian University

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THE ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC  
PRESENTS

ACU Orchestra  
in concert

Dr. Steven Ward,  
conductor



Thursday, February 19, 2015

7:30 pm

Cullen Auditorium

Program

Fanfare to *La Péri*

Paul Dukas  
(1865-1935)

Dr. Brandon Houghtalen, conductor

Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 10  
I. *Allegro Briosso*

Sergei Prokofiev  
(1891-1953)

Michelle Sulaiman, piano

“Una voce poco fa”  
from *Il barbiere di Siviglia*

Gioacchino Rossini  
(1792-1868)

Jennifer Magill, mezzo-soprano

Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80

Johannes Brahms  
(1833-1897)

# Program Notes

## **Fanfare to *La Péri***

**Paul Dukas**

Paul Dukas last major work was the oriental ballet *La Péri* (1912) about a man who reached the Ends of the Earth in a quest to find immortality and comes across a mythical Peri (an imaginary fairy-like being in Persian mythology), holding The Flower of Immortality. He steals it from her only to fall in love with her later on and lose the flower and his immortality with one kiss from the Peri.

At the last minute before its premiere production, Dukas added the brilliant fanfare prelude for brass instruments, and today this two-minute prelude is far more often heard than the ballet score as a whole. Some speculate Dukas added the fanfare to allow the typically noisy audiences of the day time to settle down in their seats before the very quiet opening passages of the ballet began.

*-Program Note by Rhode Island Philharmonic*

## **“Allegro brioso” from Piano Concerto No. 1**

**Sergei Prokofiev**

Prokofiev premiered his 1st Piano Concerto in the summer of 1912 while still a student at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. With his teen prodigy days now behind him, he had the ironic reputation as a “modernist” which, true or not, would have disturbed his conservative instructors. He dedicated the concerto to one of the more critical among them, “the dreaded Tchernin.”

Though he was an excellent pianist, this was Prokofiev’s first appearance with an orchestra. He understood the stakes, both as a composer and performer, when he admitted that he would need to “know it cold” before the expected huge audience. The crowd loved it, even if the critics did not. One claimed Prokofiev “ripe for the straitjacket” while another stated that he lacked the capacity for “novelty” in “the inner depths of his nature” and wondered if the piece even deserved “to be called music.” Brutal, to be sure, but the composer’s incisive playing won over the audience and in all the ways that mattered to him, won the day. Like the 1st Violin Concerto, Prokofiev originally planned the piece as a more modest Concertino but decided en route to give it more weight and significance. The composer later stated that he regarded the 1st Piano Concerto as his first fully mature work and it undoubtedly signaled his

arrival as a talent that could not be ignored. So sure was he of the work's merit that he entered with it in the Conservatory's concerto performance competition, normally the domain of Tchaikovsky and Beethoven. Whether blissfully innocent or woefully overconfident, the move was certainly brazen...and successful!

*-Program note by Jeff Counts, Utah Symphony*

## **“Una voce poco fa”**

**Gioacchino Rossini**

Rossini composed his first opera when he was only 16, and it was such a success that he wrote an average of almost two a year until he was 37. Then, for reasons that have never been explained, he stopped writing music altogether, except for a few sacred works and some short salon pieces. The most famous of his operas is *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (“The Barber of Seville”), his 17th.

Cesare Sterbini's libretto was based on *Le Barbier de Seville*, the first comedy of the French playwright Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, which was first performed in 1775. Beaumarchais incorporated perennial themes and comic types and used humorous wordplay and lively characterization, which Rossini drew on for his opera.

Rosina's entrance aria, “Una voce poco fa”, is indicative of the *Barber's* irrepressible good humor and spirit of rascality. It captures to perfection the personality of the coy and clever heroine as she sings first of her secret love for the mysterious stranger Lindoro, and then of her determination to pursue the object of her desire – and woe to anyone who tries to obstruct her!

*-Program note by Robert Markow*

## **Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80**

**Johannes Brahms**

In 1879 the University of Breslau conferred upon Brahms the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. He was flattered and sent a postcard of thanks to the faculty. However, a subsequent letter from his friend Bernhard Scholz, Director of Music in Breslau, made it clear that the university expected him to express his gratitude in musical form. While vacationing at Bad Ischl during the summer of 1880, Brahms penned his musical “thank you” – the *Academic Festival Overture*.

With a masterful balance of serious and light-hearted elements, the emphasis is on the “festival” rather than the “academic” in an overture that brims with an irrepressible sense of fun. The work also sports the most extravagant orchestral forces the composer ever employed. Brahms himself described the piece as “a very boisterous potpourri of student songs.” Indeed, excerpts from four student beer-hall tunes play a significant role in the orchestral texture in what is, perhaps, a fond backward look to the carefree summer days of 1853.

A hushed, but urgent statement launches the Overture, followed by a dramatic succession of contrasting ideas and dynamics. The principal idea here is an adaptation of the Rakóczy March, a favorite tune with the composer since his youth. Following a soft drumroll, three trumpets then present the first of the traditional students’ songs: “Wir hatten gebauet ein stattliches Haus” (We have built a stately house). Its roots lie in a Thuringian folk song, which had been transformed into a defiant protest song in the East German town of Jena when the students’ association there was disbanded in 1819. After Brahms develops and mixes this song with the earlier Rakóczy adaptation, the melody of “Der Landesvater” (The father of our country) appears in a sweeping, lyrical rendition introduced by violins and violas.

The tempo shifts to *animato* for the freshman’s song known as The Fox-Ride (“Was komm dort von der Höh’ ” – What comes from afar). Bassoons, accompanied by off-the-beat violas and cellos, add a touch of humor that must have raised a faculty eyebrow or two at the premiere. Not forgetting to stir in his original material, Brahms then plays the three student songs off one another in a light-handed development. For the grand finale, a rambunctious version of the imposing “*Gaudeamus igitur*” (Therefore, let us be merry) makes a joyful noise and provides a rousing conclusion with its blazing brass and full orchestral forces. The Overture has been one of Brahms’ most often played works ever since the composer himself conducted the premiere in Breslau on January 4, 1881.

*-Program note by Kathy Henkel, Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra*

# Biographies



**Jennifer Magill**, mezzo-soprano, is a senior Vocal Performance and Music Education major from League City, TX. At ACU she is a member of the A Cappella Chorus, Opera, Big Purple Marching Band, and Wind Ensemble. In the annual competition hosted by the National Association of Teachers of Singing, she has been selected as a semifinalist the past three years. She has performed on the Honors Recital, and this year she was one of three students selected to receive the Harsh/Hall scholarship. Ms. Magill has traveled to France, Germany, and Italy with the ACU Opera and made her Italian debut as Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* this past January. Other roles include Mercedes in *Carmen*, the Announcer in *Gallantry*, and Mrs. McLean in *Susannah*. Additionally, she appeared as Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Opera Breve in Wichita Falls, and was selected to participate in the Taos Opera Institute. This spring she will appear as the Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*. Ms. Magill studies voice with Dr. Paul Piersall.



**Michelle Sulaiman** is a senior Piano Performance major from Jakarta, Indonesia. At ACU she accompanies the University Chorale, and has sung with the University Chorale and the A Cappella Chorus. She has also performed with the ACU Orchestra. In her freshman and junior years, she was selected to perform in the Honors Recital. Ms. Sulaiman has participated in master classes and workshops with Dr. Jerome Reed, Dr. José Ramón Méndez, and Sean Chen, and has taken lessons with Dr. Joy Thurmon, Eduardus Halim, Eteri Andjaparidze, Dr. José Ramón Méndez, and Dr. Marilyn Nonken. This past summer, Ms. Sulaiman travelled to New York in order to participate in NYU Summer Piano Intensive. Ms. Sulaiman studies piano with Dr. Pauline Bjorem.

# Personnel

## Violin I

Sean Estes, concertmaster  
Claire Warlick  
Chanel Brown  
Emily Guajardo  
Julia Taylor  
#Thomas Roberts

## Violin II

McKenzie Meenan, principal  
Regina Nieman  
James Mallon  
Destiny Bennett  
#Charles Robinson  
#Sarah Reason

## Viola

Nattapat White, principal  
^Katherine Kinnaman  
\*Mark Riggs  
\*Susan Teel

## Cello

Roger Gee, principal  
Chris Campbell  
Zach Carstens  
Ruth Martin  
Reagan Dukes  
Steven Yang  
Erin Miller

## Bass

Gao Catchawarat  
Nicholas Grandell

#Guest Musician  
\*ACU Faculty  
^ACU Orchestra Alum

## Flute

Hannah Hamilton  
Dakotah Martinez  
Meredith Sellers (Piccolo)

## Oboe

Megan Cromis, principal  
Abby Alford (+English Horn)  
Parker Gordon (+English Horn)

## Clarinet

Dayna Coppedge, principal  
Megan Cooper (+Bass Clarinet)  
Danna Swearingen

## Bassoon

Janelle Ott, principal  
Rachel Sakakeeny

## Trumpet

Andrew Penney, principal  
Grayson Hancock  
Jordan Morris

## Horn

Daniel Archer, co-principal  
Stephanie Bradley, co-principal  
Kirsten Clemons  
Justin Rangel

## Trombone

Geoffrey Driggers, principal  
Ben Kimble  
George Galindo (Bass)

## Tuba

Taylor Lovett

## Percussion

Jonathan Dannheim  
Robert Herrera  
Travis Houy  
Austin Lemmons



# Upcoming Events

A Cappella “Coming Home” Concert	February 26, 7:30 pm Recital Hall
Bands Concert	February 28, 7:30 pm Cullen Auditorium
Recital: Julie Brinkman, mezzo-soprano	March 22, 2:00 pm Recital Hall
ACU Opera: The Magic Flute	March 26 & 28, 7:30 pm Cullen Auditorium
University Chorale and Chamber Singers	March 31, 7:30 pm Chapel on the Hill
ACU Opera: Violet	April 10, 7:30 pm April 11, 2:30 pm Recital Hall
Percussion Ensemble Concert	April 13, 7:30 pm Cullen Auditorium
Jazz Ensemble Concert	April 21, 7:30 pm Cullen Auditorium
Bands Concert	April 24, 7:30 pm Cullen Auditorium
Orchestra Concert	April 28, 7:30 pm Cullen Auditorium
Choirs Concert	April 30, 7:30 pm

