

# Anchorage Symphony Orchestra

## NEWS RELEASE

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## Anchorage Symphony Orchestra

### *Musical Perceptions*

*featuring Mateo Messina, piano*

Saturday, January 26, 2019 – 8:00pm

Atwood Concert Hall, ACPA

**Anchorage, Alaska – December 6, 2018** – Every composer has a muse, a person, a place, or a memory. They all have something that gives them great inspiration to write their perception of the world in music. On Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, the Anchorage Symphony offers an evening of some of those *Musical Perceptions*. From a satire on English Society to Arctic adventures to an artistic departure, it is a night of varying perspectives and perceptions.

Samuel Barber composed his first piece for full orchestra, *Overture to The School for Scandal*, while studying at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Inspired by the satirical play about English high society by the same name, in this piece Barber shows off his playful side referencing familiar tunes such as the children's song "I Sent a Letter to My Love". This playful, high-energy piece is a great opening to the evening.

The Anchorage Symphony's commissioning club, Musica Nova, has commissioned fourteen new works over the years; some have gone on to be performed at Carnegie Hall, others have been performed by numerous orchestras across the country, and one was the impetus for a new work that won a Pulitzer! Each year Musica Nova members have the opportunity to participate in the creation of new work and to directly access the composers and musicians who bring that music to life. This year they have commissioned a piece by LA-based film and TV composer Mateo Messina.

Perhaps best known for his Grammy Award-winning work on the film *Juno*, Messina's work can also be heard in *Blockers*, *Butter*, *Up in the Air*, *August Osage County*, and *Thank You for Smoking*, as well as TV shows such as *The Office*. Beyond the silver screen, he has also premiered over 20 symphonies, each premiere a benefit concert for the families at Seattle Children's Hospital. These benefit concerts have raised over \$20 million!

ASO Music Director Randall Craig Fleischer comments, "I saw several videos of Mateo's works and truly was impressed with his humor, creative spark, and the beauty of his music. It's a musical language that our audience will recognize and love. And there's something refreshingly wacky about Mateo. He's a charming and funny guy and perfectly great at this! This is going to be a Musica Nova commission to remember. I think Anchorage is going to love him."

Mateo found inspiration for his new piece, *Uncharted* in Leslie Melvin's book *I Beat the Arctic*. In his book, Melvin recounts his journey aboard *The Hazel* in the winter of 1931-32 when it became iced in at Martin Point, AK. He then journeyed solo by dog sled from Martin Point to Nome along the Arctic coast. As one can imagine, Melvin experienced several perilous situations along the way, escaping death as he made his way back to civilization. Mateo incorporates narration in his musical interpretation of Melvin's Arctic quest.

Two other Messina pieces will have their ASO premiere on January 26th: *30,000 Days* and *Precious*. While both examine the fragility of life, *30,000 Days* focuses on how quickly a child grows up, featuring a video of a young girl literally growing up before our eyes with Messina's poetic music as our guide.

Inspired by an obscure Japanese metronome experiment about energy and balance, Messina explores a moment of near-tragedy in *Precious*. He writes about his piece, "Every day the possibility exists that our lives could be altered or taken away in a matter of seconds. Life IS precious. It's true. So we set out to explore the lucidity of a harrowing event with the short film 'Precious,' where mere seconds of a nearly tragic event are examined in slow motion."

Closing this night of musical perceptions is Brahms' *Symphony No. 2*, "Romantic". A bit of a departure for Brahms', his second symphony is often compared to Beethoven's 6<sup>th</sup> Symphony with its cheer and warmth. Seeming to understand his reputation for darker pieces, Brahms couldn't help but pull his publisher's leg and penned a note to send with this new score saying that his new piece was "so melancholy that you will not be able to bear it. I have never written anything so sad and the score must come out mourning."

Randy describes Brahms' second symphony as "an old friend. This symphony is an utterly glorious masterpiece with magnificent waves of emotion washing over the listener like some great ocean of humanity in sound. There is all the drama one might expect of any great symphony, but there is also a comfort and an ease as well. I love, love, love this wonderful symphony."

*Anchorage Symphony's Musical Perceptions, Saturday, January 26, 2019, (8pm) in the Atwood Concert Hall, Alaska Center for the Performing Arts. Infrared headphones for the hearing impaired are available concert night from the House Manager on the Orchestra Level. Tickets: Adult, \$52-\$27; Youth, \$24.75-\$12.50; Senior, \$46.50-\$24.50 (prices include surcharges and fees). Military, student, and group discounts available. To purchase tickets, visit the CenterTix Box Office at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts or [www.centertix.com](http://www.centertix.com) or call 263-ARTS (2787), toll-free at 1-877-ARTS-TIX.*

### **Program**

BARBER Overture to The School for Scandal  
MATEO MESSINA 30,000 Days  
MATEO MESSINA Precious  
MATEO MESSINA Uncharted (World Premiere)  
BRAHMS Symphony No. 2 (Romantic)

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