

Anchorage Symphony Orchestra

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jennifer Cargile, 907-274-8668



Anchorage Symphony Orchestra

Season Finale

*featuring Anchorage Concert Chorus,
Alaska Chamber Singers, and West High Concert Choir*
Saturday, April 6, 2019 – 8:00pm
Atwood Concert Hall, ACPA

Anchorage, Alaska – March 19, 2019 – Film music captivates us. It can make us afraid to go into the water, swoon as lovers unite, hide our eyes in anxious anticipation, or feel like we can leap tall buildings in a single bound. Whether it is an original score, or using contemporary or classical repertoire, music is a powerful artistic tool that influences a film’s emotional impact and storytelling. On April 6th, Maestro Randall Craig Fleischer will give the final downbeat to *your* Anchorage Symphony Orchestra’s 2018/19 season. This special Season Finale features classical music from award-winning films including pieces by Leonard Bernstein, Mozart, John Williams, and Prokofiev.

Leonard Bernstein’s *On the Waterfront* Orchestral Suite is arranged from the only score he wrote specifically for a film. Elia Kazan’s 1954 drama, *On the Waterfront*, features a star-studded cast, including Marlon Brando, Karl Madden, Rod Steiger, and Eva Marie Saint. Nominated for 12 Academy Awards, it went on to win eight and is currently ranked as #8 on the American Film Industry’s 100 greatest films in history. A favorite Marlon Brando imitation is his line from the film, “I coulda been a contender”. Perhaps done a little backwards, *On the Waterfront* was almost completed before Bernstein was hired to write the score. With some bad blood between Bernstein and the film’s director, Kazan, it took Bernstein a while to come on board. When he finally agreed to consider the project and screened the film, Bernstein is quoted as saying, “I heard music as I watched – that was enough”.

Bernstein felt the work warranted being heard beyond the movie theatre and should be performed in the concert hall as well. “My purpose was to salvage some of the music that would otherwise have been left on the floor of the dubbing room,” Bernstein explained. He crafted the 20-minute Symphonic Suite following the chronology of the film, and maintaining the grit, passion, and depth that Kazan captures on-screen.

While not written *for* a film, Mozart’s *Requiem* is arguably one of the most famous works in the classical repertoire. And Milos Forman’s *Amadeus* is the most famous film about the charismatic, talented, and complex composer. Perhaps one of his most memorable film roles, Tom Hulce was nominated for an academy award for his portrayal of Mozart. Prior to taking on this grand task, Hulce learned to play the piano and conduct. Though it is probably his laugh that is most memorable.

Written while on his deathbed, Mozart was not able to complete his *Requiem* before passing away. His friend, and former student, Franz Zaver Sussmayer very thoughtfully completed several of the movements. Critics from the time and now agree that Zaver did an excellent job. One historian wrote, “It is Mozart’s genius that shines through.”

If you were to ask a random person to name a film composer, the most popular answer would probably be John Williams. Perhaps the most prolific contemporary composer, John Williams has written music for the concert hall, TV and music scores for over 100 films. One of those films is Spielberg’s World War II drama, *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). Featuring Tom Hanks and Matt Damon, *Saving Private Ryan* artfully and respectfully portrays the horrors, intensity, and human toll of war.

From the beginning, Williams had challenges writing for this film. Spielberg requested that most of the movie not have any music, he wanted the images to speak with only the sounds of battle. Not one to back down from a challenge, Williams began composing in his seemingly effortless way, capturing every emotion intended by the director. His haunting theme *Hymn to the Fallen* was saved for the end credits. Spielberg wrote that he wanted it there “because it will stand the test of time and honor forever the fallen of this war and possibly all wars.”

While John Williams is at the top of the list of most recognized film composers, you may have to go down the list a while to find Serge Prokofiev. Nevertheless, when Russian film director Sergei Eisenstein began working on his new project, *Alexander Nevsky* (1938), he knew he wanted Prokofiev to collaborate with him.

Known at the time as one of the 20th century’s finest composers, Prokofiev accepted Eisenstein’s offer. The plot of his new film would focus on Russian hero, Prince Alexander of Novrogod, thought to be the founder of Russia (later called Alexander Nevsky). Ironically, as the film was produced in 1938, fears of a German invasion into Russia began building.

During World War II *Alexander Nevsky* was shown to Russian soldiers as propaganda to boost morale. Surprisingly the movie was a box office smash not only in Russia but also in the West. Feeling inspired by this experience, Prokofiev took his score and made it into a stand-alone concert piece (much like Bernstein did with *On the Waterfront*). Taking the most dramatic portions of the score, he developed a cantata of seven emotional and intense sections. Joining us for Prokofiev’s masterpiece is mezzo-soprano Teresa Buchholz, an accomplished artist, known for her colorful, clear voice and thoughtful interpretations. Over 250 vocalists from the Alaska Chamber Singers, Anchorage Concert Chorus and West Anchorage High School Concert Choir join the Anchorage Symphony to bring this concert’s works by Mozart, John Williams and Prokofiev to life.

Anchorage Symphony’s Season Finale, Saturday, April 6, 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 or call 263-ARTS (2787), toll free at 1-877-ARTS-TIX.

Program

BERNSTEIN *On the Waterfront*: Symphonic Suite

JOHN WILLIAMS *Hymn to the Fallen* from *Saving Private Ryan*

MOZART *Dies Irae, Confutatis, Lacrimosa* (Mozart Requiem) from *Amadeus*

PROKOFIEV *Alexander Nevsky* (featuring Teresa Buchholz, mezzo-soprano)

#