FINAL CONCERT (LES PRÉLUDES)
Sunday, August 3, 2014
7:30pm, The Bowl

WORLD YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Jung-Ho Pak, conductor

Overture to Ruslan and Lyudmila .................................................. Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka (1804-1857)


JUNG-HO PAK, conducting

~ PAUSE ~

WORLD YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
INTERLOCHEN PHILHARMONIC
WORLD YOUTH WIND SYMPHONY
INTERLOCHEN SUMMER DANCE ENSEMBLE

Les Préludes, Symphonic Poem No. 3 .................................................. Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

JEFFREY S. KIMPTON, conducting

The audience is requested to remain seated during the playing of the Interlochen Theme and to refrain from applause upon its completion.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Overture to Ruslan and Lyudmila

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka

Born into a family of poets, literary scholars, and civil servants, Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka grew up with the folksongs of the household servants. He enjoyed easy access to Russia’s leading artists when he was barely out of his teens, and in his twenties he spent three years in Italy, met Donizetti and Bellini, and heard their operas. In Rome, he met Berlioz, who would later describe him as among the outstanding composers of his time. Indeed, Glinka rightly deserves credit for creating the models of a national style for the next generation of Russian composers. Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakoff, and Mussorgsky all adapted Glinka’s musical vocabulary for their own purposes. The Overture to Ruslan and Lyudmila has a pertinent example: the whole-tone scale in the descending bass line near the end represents the evil magician, Chernomor, and eventually became known simply as Chernomor’s scale. Rimsky-Korsakoff uses the same device to identify the power of magic in his many fantastical operas.
Ruslan and Lyudmila premiered in 1842, the same year Arthur Sullivan was born. While it had a topsy-turvy plot not unlike those of Gilbert and Sullivan, Glinka’s five-act opera did not immediately cause the public clamor that their shows received. But ultimately, Ruslan and Lyudmila became a mainstay of the Bolshoi Theatre, where it has been performed over 700 times in 172 years. Similar to most nineteenth-century Russian operas, it did not travel very well and was not staged in America until Sarah Caldwell’s Boston Opera production in 1977. Orien Dalley conducted the first Interlochen performance of Overture to Ruslan and Lyudmila here in the Interlochen Bowl on Sunday, August 3, 1952—exactly 62 years ago tonight!

~Program Notes by Byron Hanson and Ashley Turner

Death and Transfiguration, Op. 24

Death and Transfiguration was the second of Richard Strauss’s enduring tone poems, following on the heels of Don Juan, which had set the musical world on fire in 1888. With these two works and the spectacular series that followed—Till Eulenspiegel, Also sprach Zarathustra, Ein Heldenleben, and so on—Strauss created an orchestral rival to the Beethoven-Brahms symphonic tradition that proved as irresistible to audiences then as it remains today. In contrast to the traditional four-movement symphony laid out according to formal structural principles and intended to express purely musical ideas, Strauss’s tone poems were loose in form and aspired to tell in graphic detail a non-musical story through the most advanced use of a very large orchestra. Strauss once bragged he could even describe a knife and fork in music.

In Death and Transfiguration, the composer, then only in his mid-20s, conjured a scene in which an old man lies on his deathbed and reviews the events of his life, then dies to the noble strains of a beautiful “transfiguration” theme. This tone poem’s scenario was a most unlikely choice for a young man who was just launching a brilliant career and had not yet experienced any serious illness. But perhaps this is an early example of the extraordinary dramatic imagination that would later make Strauss such a successful opera composer. Interestingly, in 1949, when the 85 year old composer was actually dying, he was quoted by his daughter-in-law as saying, “Funny—it is just as I imagined it in Death and Transfiguration.”

In 1894, Strauss explained the tone poem thus: “It was six years ago that it occurred to me to present in the form of a tone poem the dying hours of a man who had striven towards the highest idealistic aims, maybe indeed those of an artist. The sick man lies in bed, asleep, with heavy, irregular breathing; friendly dreams conjure a smile on the features of the deeply suffering man; he wakes up; he is once more racked with horrible agonies; his limbs shake with fever. As the attack passes and the pain leaves off, his thoughts wander through his past life; his childhood passes before him; the time of his youth with its strivings and passions, and then, as the pains already begin to return, there appears to him the fruits of his life’s path, the conception, the ideal which he has sought to realize, to present artistically, but which he has never been able to complete, since it is not for man to be able to accomplish such things. The hour of death approaches, the soul leaves the body in order to find gloriously achieved in everlasting space those things which could not be fulfilled here below.”

Though Strauss later disavowed this program, it remains an extremely clear guide to what we hear in the course of this work. Everything he described is easily recognizable in the music: the “heavy, irregular breathing” in the irregular rhythms of the strings in the opening measures; the wistful memories of childhood epitomized by the oboe’s poignant theme, recurring throughout the work; the dying man’s spasms of pain in the loud, agitated passages; and the moment of his death, with the soul leaving the body on a chromatic scale vanishing off the top of the orchestra’s range.

We have to wait some 13 minutes before we hear the beautiful, ascending theme that stands for the ideal the dying man has pursued throughout his life, and it first appears only in a tentative, incomplete form in the brass and violins. This theme does not come into its full glory until the work’s closing “transfiguration” section. There it is expanded, finally culminating in ethereal radiance at the top of the strings, lit by the ruddy glow of the brass.

~Program Notes by Janet E. Bedell
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Les Préludes, Symphonic Poem No. 3
Franz Liszt

The tradition of concluding each Interlochen summer with Les Préludes began with the very first National High School Orchestra and Band Camp in 1928. For the final concert, Dr. Maddy opened with the Brahms Symphony No. 2 and closed with Les Préludes by Franz Liszt. The next summer’s orchestra members asked to play Les Préludes for their final concert also; thereby launching the tradition that has continued through all 87 summers of camp. Some faculty members joined the campers in those early years, and the full band was included in 1931. In 1933, alumni joined to form an even larger ensemble and played Les Preludes on a Tuesday, the only time in the tradition’s history. The next morning, the entire camp took the train to Chicago and closed the eighth week of camp with six concerts at the city’s World Fair, “A Century of Progress”. Over the next 60 years, the spectacle of Les Préludes grew to include dancers, choirs, and Intermediate Division musicians—nearly a thousand performers in all. The Interlochen Bowl was reconfigured at the turn of the century, and now the production features over 300 high-school musicians and dancers. Tonight, President Kimpton conducts Les Préludes for the eleventh time.

At the outset, Liszt intended to compose an introduction to precede Les quatre éléments, his setting of four poems by Joseph Autran. That choral project was put on hold for a time, however, and what he initially intended to be an introduction eventually evolved into a symphonic poem, Les Préludes. Since symphonic poems customarily imply a literary association, Liszt found a text he associated with his composition after the piece was already written, reversing the normal compositional process. Liszt chose a poem by Alphonse de Lamartine, a poetic meditation on life’s constant cycle of beginnings, struggles, and reflections. The published score of Liszt’s third symphonic poem contains his own paraphrase of de Lamartine’s meditation.

In 1931, during the fourth summer of camp, program writer Ms. Sadie Rafferty offered the following translation of Liszt’s inscription on the score: "What is life but a series of preludes to that unknown song whose united solemn note is tolled by Death? The enchanted dawn of every life is love; but where is destiny on whose first delicious joys some storm does not break, a storm on whose deadly blast disperses youth’s allusions, whose fatal bolt consumes its altar? And what soul thus cruelly bruised, when the tempest rolls away, seeks not to test its memories in the pleasant calm of rural life? Yet man allows himself not long to taste the kindly quiet which first attracted him to Nature’s lap; but when the trumpet gives the signal he hastens to danger’s post, whatever be the fight which draws him to its lists, that in the strife he may once more regain full knowledge of himself and all his strength."

For each camper, the annual performance of Les Préludes symbolizes the achievements of an enriching, Interlochen summer, a celebratory prelude to whatever the future may hold.

~Program Notes by Byron Hanson and Ashley Turner

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JUNG-HO PAK has conducted the World Youth Symphony Orchestra since 2003, is Artistic Director and Conductor of the Cape Cod Symphony Orchestra and former Artistic Director and Conductor of Orchestra Nova San Diego. In 2007, he was named Music Director Emeritus of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra. Previously, as Music Director of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Pak led the orchestra from bankruptcy to a nationally recognized artistic and financial success. He has also served as music director with the University of Southern California Symphony, San Francisco Conservatory of Music and University of California, Berkeley, the Emmy-nominated Disney Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra, the International Chamber Orchestra, NEXT Chamber Orchestra, Colburn Chamber Orchestra and Diablo Ballet. He has conducted several orchestras in Europe, the Soviet Union, South America and Asia. Mr. Pak is also a frequent speaker on television and radio about the relevance of art in society and the importance of music education, as well as a clinician and guest conductor at national music festivals. He holds degrees from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the University of Southern California, and the University of California.
JEFFREY KIMPTON is the seventh president of Interlochen Center for the Arts, where he leads all aspects of its distinguished programs in arts education, public broadcasting, presentations and engagement. A graduate of the University of Illinois with degrees in music education and music and arts administration, Mr. Kimpton has four decades of leadership in arts education, having taught and led regional and nationally recognized K-12 programs in music and arts education in New York, Minnesota and Kansas. He served as director of education at Yamaha Corporation of America, leading strategic planning, program development and publishing in music education, and later as director of research and professional development in school change and public engagement at Brown University's Annenberg Institute. He was director of the School of Music and professor of music education at the University of Minnesota before coming to Interlochen in 2003. Since his appointment, Interlochen has undertaken significant change initiatives in futures planning that have led to growth in artistic quality, program and curricular growth, adding motion picture arts, comparative arts, singer-songwriter and Interlochen College for adult learners. Interlochen’s engagement with the world has grown through strategic investments in marketing, communications, technology and media, and the expansion of Interlochen Public Radio. More than 165,000 square feet of new or renovated buildings have revitalized the campus infrastructure. Invested assets and endowment have grown from $25M to more than $85M, with financial aid and scholarship support increasing from $5M to $12M. Interlochen received the National Medal of Art in 2006 for its leadership in arts education.

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WYSO BROADCAST ON IPR
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(schedule subject to change)

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