54th Annual Concerto Concert
Sunday 14 April 2013
Miller Auditorium
3:00 p.m.

UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Bruce Uchimura, Conductor
Jeffrey Spenner, Graduate Assistant Conductor
Ahmed Anzaldúa, Guest Graduate Student Conductor

D. GILES SIMMER, Soprano Soloist
YOUYANG QU, Violin Soloist
MINGYUAN YANG, Bassoon Soloist

Giuseppe Verdi
1813–1901
Overture to La forza del destino

Gaetano Donizetti
1797–1848
“Quel guardo il cavaliere” from Don Pasquale
D. Giles Simmer, Soprano
Ahmed Anzaldúa, Conductor

Jean Sibelius
1865–1957
Violin Concerto in D Minor Opus 47
I. Allegro
II. Adagio di molto
III. Allegro, ma non tanto
Youyang Qu, Violin

intermission

Johann Nepomuk Hummel
1778–1837
Bassoon Concerto in F Major
I. Allegro moderato
Mingyuan Yang, Bassoon
Jeffrey Spenner, Conductor
Felix Mendelssohn  
1809–1847

Symphony Number 5 in D Major Opus 107  
(“Reformation”)  

I. Andante: Allegro con fuoco  
II. Allegro vivace  
III. Andante  
IV. Andante con moto – Allegro vivace – Allegro maestoso

The WMU Orchestra thanks Jennet Ingle and Robert Whaley (Professor Emeritus) for their expertise in preparation for this concert. We are also grateful to all of the WMU School of Music faculty and staff for their musical contributions and support to the WMU Symphony Orchestra.

Building emergencies will be indicated by the flashing exit lights and sounding of alarms within the seating area. Please walk, DO NOT RUN, to the nearest exit. Ushers will be located near exits to assist patrons. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during the performance. Because of legal issues, any video or audio recording of this performance is prohibited without prior consent from the School of Music. Thank you for your cooperation.
Verdi, Overture to La Forza del Destino

Fate and destiny knock on life’s door with a bold statement by the orchestra brass section, of three declamatory notes at the beginning of Giuseppe Verdi’s tragic opera La forza del destino (The Force of Destiny). Premiered in 1862 and then again in 1869 with a revised version, the work contains all the essentials of late romantic Italian opera. La forza del destino is a tragic story of love, betrayal, misunderstanding, and hopelessness.

The overture is one of Verdi’s most popular concert works. Composed in distinct and separate sections, each episode portrays some emotional aspect of the opera’s tragedies. It is a fantastic and engaging overture that will keep the audience begging to hear the plots and emotions that will follow in the opera. Verdi was also an incredible orchestrator and uses his instruments in a very personal and recognizable style.

– Bruce Uchimura

Donizetti, “Quel Guardo il Cavaliere” from Don Pasquale

The aria “So anch’io la virtù magica” can be found in the first act of Gaetano Donizetti’s opera Don Pasquale. Donizetti was born into a very poor family with little musical influence. Through his own hard work, as a young choir boy Donizetti received scholarship to further his musical studies. His studies eventually lead to contracts in Naples, Rome, Milan, and Austria. Don Pasquale is considered one of Donizetti’s most famous operas and a masterpiece in the opera buffa style. It was written for and premiered in Paris in 1843 by four of the most famous singers of the time. This aria is our first glimpse of the young widow, Norina, who has been conspiring with Dr. Malatesta to teach Don Pasquale a lesson for being so foolish to think that he could get married at such a belated age. In this scene, Norina is alone and reading a book from which she recites a passage only to toss the book aside as she laughs at the situation she describes. This gives a great deal of insight into Norina’s own feelings that men are very easily deceived by her many charms, which she describes as she continues to wait for Dr. Malatesta’s arrival.

– D. Giles Simmer

Sibelius, Violin Concerto in D Minor

In no violin concerto is the soloist’s first note, delicately dissonant and off the beat, so beautiful. Indeed, in September 1902, Sibelius wrote to his wife that he had just had “a marvelous opening idea” for a concerto. At the beginning of 1904 Sibelius had time to put the finishing touches to his Violin Concerto in D Minor. The first public performance of the concerto was on February 8, but the soloist Viktor Novácek could not convince the audience of the value of the work. Sibelius withdrew the concerto; he condensed it and made the solo part easier. On October 19, 1905, the concerto received its premiere in its final form in Berlin. The piece had been re-dedicated to the Hungarian child prodigy, Franz von Vecsey, who was at the time only 12-years old. Vecsey championed Sibelius’ concerto, and first performed it at age 13. Shortly afterwards, Sibelius’ friend Rosa Newmarch told him that “in fifty years’ time, your concerto will be as much a classic as those of Beethoven, Brahms and Tchaikovsky.” How right she was!

The opening movement employs sonata form, modified in that a succinct cadenza for the soloist replaces the usual development section. The exposition consists of three theme groups — a doleful melody announced by the soloist over murmuring strings, a yearning theme initiated by bassoons and cellos with rich accompaniment, and a bold, propulsive strophe in march rhythm. The development-cadenza is built on the opening motive and leads directly into the recapitulation of the exposition themes, here considerably altered from their initial appearances. A coda, filled with flashing figurations for the soloist, closes the movement.

The second and third movements proceed from another level of ambition, which does not mean, however, that the Adagio is anything other than one of the most moving pages Sibelius ever achieved. Between its introductory measures and the main theme there is a fascinating disparity. Clarinets and oboes in pairs suggest an idea of rather tentative tone (and surprisingly Wagnerian cast), a gentle beginning leading to the entry of the solo violin and to a melody of vast breadth. It is to be played sonoro ed espressivo. It speaks in tones we know well and that touch us deeply. Sibelius himself never found, perhaps never sought such a melody again: this, too, is farewell. Very lovely, later in the movement, is the sonorous fantasy that accompanies the melody (now in clarinet and bassoon) with scales, all pianissimo, broken octaves moving up in the violin, and the soft rain of slow scales in flutes and plucked strings.
It was not until the late 1930s that Sibelius' Violin Concerto began to be accepted into concert repertoire, largely championed by the late Jascha Heifitz. Earlier the distinguished scholar Sir Donald Tovey had described this movement, rather unkindly, as a “Polonaise for Polar bears,” which tended to reflect reactionary opinion current some eighty years ago. True also that Sibelius is one of the really smashing virtuoso concertos. It would be a mistake, though, to associate it with the merely virtuosic tradition. The concerto has highly diverse ideas and the unity that bond them into one. Its daring substitute for a conventional development, its recapitulation that continues to explore, rearrange, and develop, its wedding of violinistic brilliance to compositional purposes of uncommon originality, is one in which the breath of the symphonist — one who was to become perhaps the greatest symphonist since Brahms — is not to be mistaken.

– Youyang Qu

Hummel, Bassoon Concerto in F Major

Johann Nepomuk Hummel was an Austrian pianist, composer, and conductor. Hummel was a child prodigy and when Mozart noticed his superb skills, he taught the young boy without compensation. During a concert tour to England, Hummel met Franz Joseph Haydn, with whom he later studied. Hummel went on to become the Konzertmeister at the court of Prince Nikolaus Esterhazy (he was Haydn’s successor), and was Kappelmeister in Stuttgart and Weimar. In his lifetime, Hummel was widely recognized as an exceptional soloist, teacher, conductor, and composer. His most celebrated student was Carl Czerny, but he also influenced Chopin, Schumann, and Liszt. Although he wrote ballets, operas, several piano concertos and solo keyboard works, these remain largely forgotten. His most famous work is the Trumpet Concerto, which is still widely performed.

The Bassoon Concerto in F Major was probably premiered in 1805, although there is no record of the first performance. According to the title page, the piece is dedicated to Signor Griesbacher of Vienna, who clearly was a virtuoso bassoonist. The piece is reminiscent of concertos written by Mozart and Haydn, adhering to classical forms, but as indicated by the title, elevated to almost symphonic dimensions. The first movement is comprised of exacting runs and demanding leaps, and is considered by many to be the most difficult work for bassoon from the Classical era.

– Mingyuan Yang

Mendelssohn, Symphony Number 5 in D major

The late opus number 107 and the title Symphony Number 5 imply that this was Mendelssohn’s last symphony. Indeed, “The Reformation Symphony” was not performed until 1868 after his more popular “Scottish” and “Italian” symphonies. In reality, this was Mendelssohn’s first large scale and full orchestral symphony. He began composing it in 1829, intending to finish it in time for the 300th year celebration of Martin Luther’s Augsburg Confession in 1830. Through a string of unfortunate events, the “Reformation” Symphony was not completed and performed until many years later. It is played much more today than it was in Mendelssohn’s lifetime.

Felix Mendelssohn was of Jewish heritage but was raised a Lutheran. The “Reformation” Symphony was clearly a tribute to his Lutheran faith and his deep respect for Johann Sebastian Bach and the Baroque era of music. Mendelssohn was largely responsible for the revival of Bach’s music, which had been dormant until this time.

The first movement begins with an Andante that presents the “Dresden Amen” theme in the strings and sets a prayerful mood. This is contrasted by a more declamatory motive for the woodwinds and brass. The following Allegro con fuoco is a contrapuntal battle between these two presentations in various rhythmic guises.

The second movement is a scherzo and trio with less apparent musical struggle then in the outer movements. The woodwinds present a folk-like theme attached to a charming and danceable rhythm. The oboes play a waltz-like melody in the contrasting trio section. It is a joyful respite to the inextinguishable musical battle of the first movement.

The religious sounding and reflective third movement is brief and acts as a bridge to the Finale. The violins dominate this “musical prayer” with an expressive and beautiful musical line that resembles an operatic recitative.

The beginning of the Finale quotes the famous Lutheran chorale “Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott” (A mighty fortress is our God) played by woodwinds and brass instruments. This gives way to an energetic Allegro maestoso that also quotes a fugue theme from one of Bach’s Solo Violin Sonatas and other familiar motives. The movement ends triumphantly and optimistically with a regal statement of the opening chorale.

– Bruce Uchimura
Soprano D. Giles Simmer is a graduate student majoring in performance; she studies with Dr. Karen Kness. She received a Bachelor of Arts in music from Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan, where she was a Howard Music Scholar and an L.A. Weichselfelder Scholar. A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Simmer won second place at the 2013 National Association of Teachers Singing (NATS) regional competition and was a semi-finalist at the 2012 Harold Haugh Light Opera Competition. Simmer has performed with the Arbor Opera Theatre, Opera Grand Rapids, Rackham Symphony Chorus, Comic Opera Guild, and the Michigan Opera Theatre. Her performances have included Le Nozze di Tutte, The Red Mill, Don Giovanni, Lucia di Lammermoor, The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein, Die Fledermaus, La Bohème, Carmen, and The Mikado. Simmer was recently accepted into two summer vocal programs, OperaMaya in Tulum, Mexico and the American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS), in Graz, Austria. She has been a staff singer at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Detroit since 2009, and was previously a staff singer at both Christ Church Cransbrook at West Bloomfield and All Saints Episcopal Church in Atlanta. Simmer is also an active member of Sigma Alpha Iota, the international music fraternity for women, serving as the Vice President of Membership for the Detroit Alumnae Chapter from 2008–10. When she is not in Kalamazoo, Simmer lives in Detroit with her husband, Dean, and dog, Bear.

Violinist Youyang Qu is a senior majoring in performance; she studies with Professor Renata Artman Knific. She is a member of WMU’s Lee Honors College and is a Nancy Monsour-Michael Shubeck College of Fine Arts Distinguished Scholar and a Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra/ Western Michigan University Artist Scholar. Qu, from Changchun, Jilin, China, is a graduate of the China Conservatory of Music. Accepted to WMU on a full scholarship in 2009, she won the School of Music’s concerto competition as a freshman and performed with the University Orchestra as a soloist. A highly skilled and prize-winning violinist, Qu has attended music festivals in China, Italy, Korea, Russia, and the United States. In Italy she won the concerto competition prize at the Orfeo Music Festival. In Russia, she was awarded the “best performance” prize and won first place in the concerto competition at the New Star International Music Festival. In 2011 she won Best Classical Soloist by DownBeat magazine as part of the publication’s student music awards competition. Qu serves as concertmaster of the University Symphony Orchestra, plays regularly as a chamber musician, and has performed with various ensembles, including WMU’s Collegium Musicum and Opera Workshop.

Bassoonist Mingyuan Yang is a freshman majoring in performance; he studies with Dr. Wendy Rose. He is a WMU Diether H. Haenicke Scholar. Yang graduated from The Affiliated High School of Wuhan Conservatory of Music in Wuhan, China. As a student at Wuhan, Yang presented a solo bassoon concert, the first of its kind since the Conservatory’s founding in 1920. Yang has been invited to perform for master classes at the International Bassoon Festival in Beijing, China in 2009 and 2012.
**UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**
Bruce Uchimura, Conductor
Jeffrey Spener, Graduate Assistant Conductor

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<th>Violin I</th>
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| 2 | Melissa Taddie, Concertmaster, Strongsville OH  
| 1 | Sophie Petroski, Boise ID  
| 3 | Liang Dong, Beijing, CHINA  
| 2 | Audrey Jansma, Fremont  
| 2 | Arielle Macadangdang, Kalamazoo  
| 1 | Shu Wang, Beijing, CHINA  
| 1 | Rachel Mostek, LaGrange Park IL  
| 1 | Erin Zuchniewicz, Novi  

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<th>Violin II</th>
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| 5 | Charlotte Munn-Wood, Principal, South Bend IN  
| 2 | Michelle Bessemer, Port St. Lucie FL  
| 3 | Lindsey Mrozcek, Mattawan  
| 2 | Veronica Cioci, Dearborn  
| 3 | Nick Voyt, Newaygo  
| 2 | Thomas Hanawalt, Grass Lake  
| 2 | Brandon Pacheco, Mount Morris  
| 1 | Anne Rhode, Farmington Hills  
| 1 | Nathan Bagby, Tecumseh  

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<th>Viola</th>
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| 6 | Josh Holcomb, Principal, Kalamazoo  
| 2 | Amanda Smith, Wyom  
| 2 | Laura Boekeloo, Portage  
| 2 | Kristin Benes, Downers Grove IL  
| 2 | Jane Hughes, Oak Park  
| 1 | Jonathan Boyd, Farmington Hills  
| 2 | Rebecca Dube, Ray Township  
| 2 | Lukas Stanley, Midland  
| 1 | Katelyn Herring, Shelbyville  

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<th>Cello</th>
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| 3 | Willis Koa, Principal, West Bloomfield  
| 3 | Wren O'ja, Royal Oak  
| 2 | Carrie Brannen, Wyoming  
| 2 | Allyson Perez, Santo Domingo, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
| 2 | Katie Nicholls, Beverly Hills  
| 2 | Brittany Harris, Rochester  
| 2 | Taylor Crow, Saint Joseph  
| 2 | Samantha Hickey, Clarkston  
| 2 | Matthew Heyboer, Holland  

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<th>Double Bass</th>
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| 7 | Brett Armstrong, Co-Principal, Grand Rapids  
| 2 | Steven Fernandez, Co-Principal, Farmington Hills  
| 2 | Andrew Rose, Kalamazoo  
| 2 | Craig Kowalsky, Commerce  
| 2 | Kyle Pitcher, Dorr  
| 2 | Mike Horrigan, Grand Rapids  

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<th>Clarinet</th>
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| 5 | Margaret Albrecht, Beverly HIlls  
| 5 | Elisabeth Waldburger, Granger IN  
| 3 | Stephanie Torok, Plymouth  
| 2 | Ruth Daley, Kalamazoo (assisting)  

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<th>Bassoon</th>
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| 3 | Josh Hart, Principal, Mattawan  
| 2 | Whitney Miller, Assistant Principal, Dumfries VA  
| 2 | Mingyuan Yang, Zhengzhou, CHINA  
| 2 | Joseph Swift, Howell (assisting)  

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<th>Trumpet</th>
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| 2 | Adam Phillips, Co-Principal, Kalamazoo  
| 2 | Adam Stowe, Co-Principal, Clarklake  
| 2 | Mitchell Curry, West Chester OH  

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| 2 | Luke Walton, Palmyra NY  
| 2 | Elizabeth Gasser, Kalamazoo  
| 2 | Mackenzie Harris, Portage  
| 1 | Molly Zebell, St. Joseph  

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<th>Trombone</th>
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| 3 | Anibal Hernandez, Principal, Hatillo, PUERTO RICO  
| 2 | Luke Marlowe, Byron Center  
| 2 | Evan Clifton, Bass Trombone, Howell  

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<th>Tuba</th>
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| 2 | Travis Netzer, Kalamazoo  

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| 2 | Christopher Guthrie, Principal, Portage  

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<th>Percussion</th>
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| 2 | Andrew Maxbauer, Principal, Traverse City  
| 2 | Skye Hookham, Ann Arbor  
| 2 | Amber Feltrin, White Lake  

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<th>Harp</th>
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| 2 | Alison Reese (assisting)  

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| 5 | Evan Clifton, Manager  
| 5 | Paul Clifton, Librarian  

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<th>Flute</th>
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| 6 | Sandra Fernandez, Principal, Guayaquil, ECUADOR  
| 5 | Jory King, Westland  
| 3 | Maria Eugenia Vallejo, Quito, ECUADOR  

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| 2 | Kayla Pingel, Farmington  
| 2 | Michael Wessels, English Horn, Wayland  

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| 1 | Julius & Esther Stulberg Scholar  
| 1 | William & Fiona Denny Scholar  
| 1 | Herbert Butler Scholar  
| 1 | Carroll Haas Scholar  
| 1 | Tucky & Charles Elliott Scholar  
| 1 | Beulah & Harold McKee Scholar  
| 1 | Russell Brown Scholar  
| 1 | Harper C. Maybee Scholar  

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