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THE LETHBRIDGE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Programme Order

King Lear Act I sc.1

Directed by Sharon Peat

King Lear - John Poulsen
Cordelia - Ashley Thomson
Regan - Victoria Nestorowicz
Goneril - Jessica Ens

Overture to King Lear, Op. 4

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

Hamlet, Act 3 sc.1

Directed by Shelley Scott

Hamlet - Jesse Thibert
Ophelia - Jess Syratt

Hamlet Concert Overture, Op. 37

Niels Gade (1817-1890)

The Taming of the Shrew Act 2 sc.1

Directed by Jesse Thibert

Petruchio - Ben McLuskey
Katherina - Maddie McKee

Kiss Me, Kate Selection for Orchestra

Cole Porter (1891-1964) arr. Robert Russell Bennett

INTERMISSION

Othello, Act 4 sc.2

Directed by Kate Connolly

Desdemona - Emily Laidlaw
Emilia - Jessica Nguyen
Iago - Lucas Kramps

Othello Overture, Op. 93

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Macbeth Act I Sc 3

Directed by Sharon Peat

Macbeth - Trevor Loman
Banquo - Eli Dueck
Witches - David Barrus, Jeff Carlson, David Mikuliak

Macbeth

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

Prelude to Act I

Ballet Music from Act III

I. Allegro Vivacissimo

II. Allegro – Andante – Allegro

III. Waltz: Allegro vivacissimo

Romeo and Juliet, Act 2 sc.2

Directed by Kate Connolly

Juliet - Megan Fennell
Romeo - Ben McLuskey

West Side Story Selection for Orchestra

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) arr. Jack Mason

Lethbridge Shakespeare Performance Society

Lethbridge Shakespeare Performance Society was established in 2012 with the aim of bringing high quality Shakespeare performances to Southern Alberta. Our actors and creative teams are drawn from University of Lethbridge theatre students and alumni, and from local community theatre. We present shows every summer in Galt Gardens, Legacy Park, Nikka Yuko - and also at the Empress Theatre, Fort Macleod, The Venue, High River and the Coutts Centre, Nanton.



Costumes for all Shakespeare scenes by Amanda Epp

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The Lethbridge Symphony Association acknowledges that we are gathered on the lands of the Blackfoot, Stoney, and Tsuut'ina people of the Canadian Plains. We pay respect to the Blackfoot, Stoney, and Tsuut'ina peoples' past, present, and future while recognizing and respecting their cultural heritage, beliefs, and relationship to the land. The City of Lethbridge is also home to the Metis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

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Lethbridge Symphony Orchestra

VIOLIN I

Norbert Boehm ‡
Wai Nieuwenhuis^
Alina Khvatova
Val Lazzaretto
Alayna McNeil
Connor Clark
Eva Muranyi+
Maria Geppert principal 2nd
Peter Visentin

VIOLIN II

Airdrie Ignas *
John Gilliat ^
Jessica Groeneveld
Kelsey Jespersen
Isla Strong
Elizabeth Wilde
Stephanie Soltice+
Allison Metzler

VIOLA

Gabe Kastelic *
Mark Kadijk^
Marja Mijsbergh
Sophie Strong
Shee Ling+

CELLO

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Sarabeth Baldry^
Lynn Gilliat
Julie Amundsen
George Fowler
Bonnie Wilde
Brenna Le May
Ava Baldry

BASS

Catherine McLaughlin *
Keely Evanoff ^
Jon Yeoh+
Ross Lemon+

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Myla Krippel*
Kaylee Woods

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Jennifer Dosso *
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‡ concertmaster

† associate concertmaster

§ assistant concertmaster

* principal

^ assistant principal

+ non-resident musician

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Programme Notes

The Music on tonight's program reflects the powerful influence William Shakespeare's work has had on European and North American culture over the centuries since his death in 1616. It is almost a commonplace to say that his plays, along with the King James version of the Bible, established the very foundation of modern English as a literary language. Tonight, though, we will explore other cultures who benefitted from exposure to his genius, all united through the language of Western art music.

We begin with a revolution in the literature of the German-speaking states in Europe in the latter half of the eighteenth century, when the discovery of Shakespeare was welcomed as a strong antidote to what was seen as the stifling influence of French Neoclassicism, a style of literature inspired by ancient Greek drama. Many of the younger generation of writers of this period found Shakespeare's plays to be dynamic, organic, true-to-life and unburdened by the then thread-bare rules that governed Neoclassicism. As the great playwright and poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe declared in 1771, "Once I had read an entire play, I stood there like a blind man given the gift of sight by some miraculous healing touch. I realized and I felt intensely that my life was infinitely expanded."

At end of the 18th century there erupted a whole spate of German translations of Shakespeare culminating in the magnificent collected edition translated in large part by August Wilhelm von Schlegel and edited by Ludwig Tieck, the two pioneers of German Romanticism. In music, the love of Shakespeare can be seen above all in Felix Mendelssohn, who at the tender age of seventeen produced his magical Overture to a Midsummer Night's Dream, one of the greatest orchestral works of any age. And this love also found its way into other nations under German influence, such as Denmark and the provinces of Moravia and Bohemia in what is now the Czech Republic.

Niels Gade's Hamlet Concert Overture, Op. 37 provides a good example of the fascination for Shakespeare among the Danes. Gade was the most important figure in Danish music of the nineteenth century. He was born into a musical family in Copenhagen in 1817 and exhibited a precocious musical talent at an early age, turning to music seriously at the age of fifteen. When his First Symphony was refused in Copenhagen, he sent it to Mendelssohn in Leipzig, who gave it its triumphant premiere in 1843, then employed Gade as the assistant conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra and a teacher at the Leipzig Conservatory. After

Mendelssohn's premature death in 1847, Gade returned to Copenhagen where he raised the level of the city's concert music to an unprecedented level of excellence and produced a series of important musical works. His Hamlet Concert Overture, written in 1861, is an impressive interpretation of the tragedy. It begins as a dark funeral march, which rises in intensity then subsides. This is followed by a driven main movement, which relaxes only momentarily for what seems like a passing glimpse of Ophelia. After a powerful climax, a distant drumroll ushers in the opening funeral march to bring the Overture to its subdued, haunting conclusion.

For the Czech lands of 19th century Europe, tonight's program presents Antonin Dvořák's Overture to Othello, opus 91. This intensely dramatic work was composed in 1891 when the composer was at the height of his creative power and fame. It was originally conceived as part of a trio of overtures, (the other two being In Nature's Realm and Carnival) dedicated to the force of nature in human life. Here the Overture to Othello provides a portrait of the destructive side of nature in human jealousy. The opening slow introduction sets out all of the main material of the drama, beginning with hushed music that returns as Othello's prayer over the body of Desdemona towards the end of the Overture. This is interrupted by the jealousy motive that will eventually overwhelm everything in its course and the nature motive, a unifying element of the whole overture cycle first heard in In Nature's Realm. The main movement erupts with the jealousy motive, which battles continuously with the opposite impulse of love until the great final climax of the music, representing, according to Dvořák, the murder of Desdemona. The music then subsides into the hushed prayer heard at its opening only to end in a sudden paroxysm of violence as Othello commits suicide.

For France one date marked the definitive moment that Shakespeare entered the nation's cultural consciousness. This was September 11, 1827, when an English theatre troupe presented Hamlet at the Odéon theatre in Paris, with Charles Kemble, the younger brother of the great Shakespearean actor John Philip Kemble, in the title role. Virtually all of the intellectual and cultural elite were present including the young composer; Hector Berlioz. The play's effect on him was overwhelming: "The lightning-flash of [Shakespeare's] genius revealed the whole heaven of art to me, illuminating

Programme Notes

its remotest depths in a single flash. I recognized the meaning of real grandeur, real beauty and real dramatic truth.”

Among the masterpieces resulting from this revelation was the Overture to King Lear. It was written in 1831 while Berlioz was taking a rest-cure in Nice. In fact, much of it was composed during the long walks he took along the seashore. The initial introduction presents the central conflict of the drama: Lear’s reckless division of his kingdom among his daughters, depicted by the solemn recitative in the lower strings, and Cordelia’s noble refusal, which begins as a beautiful oboe solo that grows through the full orchestra to be answered by an even more imposing royal decree from the lower strings. These dramatic elements are then taken up in the ensuing Allegro, marked “desperate and agitated.”

In Italy, one of the greatest admirers of Shakespeare was also one of the greatest composers of opera in the history of Western art music—Giuseppe Verdi. Three of Verdi’s finest operas, *Macbeth*, *Otello* and *Falstaff* are based on Shakespeare and throughout his career he planned to set *King Lear* but unfortunately never found the opportunity to do so. During the composition of *Macbeth* in 1847, Verdi was extremely exacting of his librettist Francesco Piave, constantly demanding conciseness and eloquence to match the original. His remarks show how highly he regarded the play (and how little he regarded Piave’s poetry): “This tragedy is one of the greatest creations of man... If we can’t make something great out of it let us at least try to do something out of the ordinary...” The resulting opera went far beyond Verdi’s wish, as can be seen in its Prelude. Here the listener is immediately thrown into the midst of the drama with the eerie music of the weird sisters, which leads through the threat of damnation in the brass to the spine-chilling music of *Lady Macbeth’s* sleep-walking scene.

The American portion of tonight’s concert brings us to the influence of Shakespeare on musical theatre in the United States with two important works, one featuring the light and the other the tragic side of Shakespeare’s genius. Cole Porter’s *Kiss Me Kate* from 1948, based on Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*, is considered his masterpiece. In fact, it won the Tony Award for Best Musical in 1949. The plot follows the strained marital relationship on- and off-stage of a couple involved in a musical production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, ending in their final reconciliation

mirroring the reconciliation in the play. Much darker is Leonard Bernstein’s *West-Side Story* from 1957, with lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, which sets Romeo and Juliet in the midst of gang-torn New York in the mid twentieth century. Here the numbers for the star-crossed lovers such as “Tonight” and “Maria” have become beloved twentieth-century classics.

Dr. Brian Black

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To be an integral part of our community's identity, through:

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- A welcoming and inclusive environment for musicians, board members, staff, patrons, and the broader community.
- Collaborate partnerships with educational institutions, designed to support and promote music appreciation and education.
- Financial stewardship and sound business management practices

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