



GLOW & GRACE

NADYA POTEMKINA,
MUSIC DIRECTOR

SATURDAY
MAY 9th
2026

4:00^{PM}

BATTELL CHAPEL
400 COLLEGE ST
NEW HAVEN

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PROGRAM

GLOW & GRACE

NADYA POTEKINA,
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Gioachino Rossini
1792 – 1868

Overture to *The Barber of Seville*

Quinn Mason
b. 1996

Sonorous *

- I. Rhapsodic
- II. Mysterious
- III. Awaken

Matthew Russo, trombone

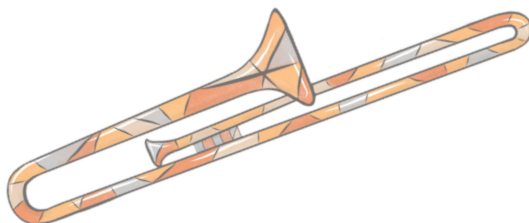
* *New England Premiere*

Intermission

César Franck
1822 – 1890

Symphony in D minor

- I. Lento; Allegro ma non troppo
- II. Allegretto
- III. Finale: Allegro non troppo



NOTES FROM THE CONDUCTOR

Spring breathes hope through ultramarine skies, shimmers with giddy anticipation of renewal, rings with joy through birdsong. The power of spring is all-encompassing and undeniable - yet gentle, unassuming, and quietly transformative.

At this point in my life, I tend to think of myself more as a fall person, and yet, spring never fails to amaze me with its resilient optimism and the aptitude to infuse every form of animate and inanimate life with the sense of boundless capability.



That spirit lies at the heart of this program.

Gioachino Rossini's Overture to The Barber of Seville, a prankster's handbook, fits the bill as a perfect mood setter for our springtime adventure.

Quinn Mason's trombone concerto Sonorous guides us through the free-flowing, emotional contemplation that season changes often provoke. It takes a moment to admire the profound mystery of the eternal cycles of life, death, and renewal, and finally celebrates the awakening - be it literal, metaphorical, or spiritual - with the boldness and abandon that reminds me, appropriately, of Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring.

Cesar Franck's monumental Symphony in D minor begins in the dead of winter with a dark, somber introduction that struggles to climb out of its heavy restraints. The second movement, which starts off as an enchanting lullaby, manages to generate enough energy to lift its face up to sunlight in the closing segment with the most genuine and infectious gratitude. The finale bursts onto the stage in undeniable D major, the key historically associated with celebration, joy, and triumph. Light over darkness, hope springs eternal.

Thank you for being here to share this exhilarating journey with us.

Nadya Potemkina, Music Director

PROGRAM NOTES

Overture to *The Barber of Seville*

Gioachino Rossini's Overture to *The Barber of Seville* (1816) bursts to life with a "jack-in-the-box" flair, darting and tiptoeing its way through a world of musical mischief. From the very first moments, the orchestra seems to be in on a joke - playful, unpredictable, and full of theatrical charm.

The lively Allegro introduces two instantly recognizable themes: a slightly uneasy, almost sheepish melody in the violins, followed by a more confident and lyrical idea in the oboe. These tunes have taken on lives of their own far beyond the concert hall, appearing everywhere from commercials to *Seinfeld*, *The Simpsons*, and *Tom & Jerry*. If they sound familiar, you're not imagining it.

Even in Rossini's own time, audiences may have felt a sense of familiarity. At just 24, the composer reused this overture from two earlier operas - *Aureliano in Palmira* (1813) and *Elizabeth, Queen of England* (1815) - a reminder that a brilliant idea is always worth revisiting.

Listen for the sparkle of the wind solos, each stepping briefly into the spotlight, and for Rossini's signature "rocket" - a steadily building crescendo that stretches tension to its limit before releasing it in a burst of energy.

Sonorous

Praised by *Texas Monthly* as "one of the most sought-after young composers in the country," Quinn Mason (b. 1996) is a composer and conductor whose music has quickly gained national attention. A recipient of the 2025 ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award, Mason wrote his Trombone Concerto, *Sonorous*, on commission from the Utah Symphony for their principal trombonist, Mark Davidson. Of the work, Mason writes:

"The concerto is set in three movements. The first, Rhapsodic, is primarily focused on this singing quality that Mr. Davidson requested. In it, a pastoral theme is introduced by the trombone which is played in dialogue with the orchestra. The middle theme is slower and more of flowing, sustained and expressive. Throughout this movement one will hear the orchestra and trombone in conversation, sometimes lively and spirited, other times serious or innocent.

The second movement, Mysterious, is intended to show off the mystical side of the trombone's tone. As a result, I employ the use of mutes to alter the trombone's sound. In this middle of this movement, the solo trombone and 3 trombones in orchestra perform a 4 voice chorale to signify Mr. Davidson's never ending connection with his colleagues.

The finale, *Awaken*, finally gives us the virtuoso fire. Mr. Davidson is an artisan of the trombone and can literally do anything, so in this movement, the super cool technical side of the instrument's capabilities is shown. A technique featured throughout this movement is double tonguing, in which the trombonist plays multiple fast notes in a row. In this sense, the trombonist is not really a trombone in this movement but more like a heavy metal guitarist."

Listen for the trombone's remarkable range of expression - from a warm, almost vocal lyricism to moments of bold, orchestral power - and for the shifting dialogue between soloist and orchestra that gives the concerto its dynamic, evolving character.

Symphony in D Minor

César Franck (1822–1890) - composer, pianist, organist, and a man of notably gentle and humble character - maintained a relatively modest public profile throughout his life. Devoted students, known as *La bande à Franck* ("Franck's gang"), took it upon themselves to champion his music and reputation, convinced that their beloved teacher deserved far greater public recognition.

Following the success of Camille Saint-Saëns's Third "Organ" Symphony, they intensified their efforts, encouraging Franck toward a symphonic work of his own. At the age of sixty-six, he responded - completing his first and only Symphony in 1888.

The premiere was met with sharp criticism. Reviewers called the work "too thick and unimaginative" and even objected to Franck's use of the English horn, then considered unconventional in a symphony. Yet time proved far kinder: the piece soon became one of the most widely performed French symphonies in Europe. Franck did not live to witness this success, dying in 1890 after a tragic accident, but the work has remained central to his legacy.

What makes this symphony distinctive is its cyclical design - themes introduced early return later, transformed and reimagined across movements. Rather than following the traditional four-movement structure, Franck shapes the work in three, with the central Allegretto blending the roles of both a slow movement and a scherzo.

Listen for the opening motif as it returns transformed throughout the symphony. Notice the expressive English horn, the warmth of the bass clarinet, and the journey from a dark opening to a radiant, triumphant close.

MATTHEW RUSSO, *TROMBONE*

Trombonist Matthew Russo enjoys a dynamic career throughout the Northeast as an educator and performer. Since 2015, he has served on the faculty at UConn, where he teaches applied trombone lessons and leads the UConn Trombone Choir. Dr. Russo is principal trombonist of the Norwalk Symphony Orchestra and appears regularly with orchestras from New Haven, Hartford, Waterbury, Wallingford, Bridgeport, and with the Orchestra New England. He has been the resident trombonist at Goodspeed Musicals since 2017 and has played hundreds of shows over dozens of productions at Goodspeed.



A frequent recitalist and advocate of new music, Dr. Russo strives to bring unknown works to new audiences through innovative programs and themes and has premiered more than a dozen solo works written expressly for him. His recording of Robert Carl's Updraft for ten multitracked trombones was released on Neuma Records in April 2024. He is a proud S. E. Shires Artist.

NADYA POTEKINA, *MUSIC DIRECTOR*

Nadya Potemkina is known for her dynamic leadership and expressive approach to music-making, inspiring musicians and audiences through performances that are both powerful and deeply connected. Her artistic vision embraces the richness of the classical tradition while championing the voices shaping its future.

She serves as Adjunct Associate Professor of Music at Wesleyan University, where she leads the University Orchestra and Concert Choir and teaches instrumental conducting, music theory, and orchestral literature. A versatile and highly sought-after musician, she is active as a conductor, violist, educator, and collaborator, and is regularly engaged for guest conducting, adjudicating, and workshops.

She is also a dedicated board member and Music Director of Connecticut FluteFest and is deeply committed to fostering meaningful connections through music across the communities she serves. Widely respected for her insight, energy, and artistic vision, Potemkina brings an inspiring presence to every ensemble she leads - and her leadership continues to shape the artistic identity of the Civic Orchestra of New Haven.

ABOUT THE ORCHESTRA

Civic Orchestra of New Haven has been part of the region's cultural life for more than 80 years, bringing together dedicated musicians who share a genuine love of making music together. Rooted in the classical tradition, the orchestra also embraces music of our time, presenting works by living composers alongside well-known repertoire. Shaped by curiosity, collaboration, and a strong sense of community, the ensemble brings energy, clarity, and purpose to each performance - inviting audiences to experience both the power of great music and the excitement of discovery.

VIOLIN I

Yi Yun Wu,
 Concertmaster
Marika Basagoitia
Jan Boughton
Reina Maruyama
Will Platt
Abby Reed
Elisabeth Strayer
Geneva Zucconi

VIOLIN II

Sarah Roman * ≠
Jerry Anne Dickel
Stephen Grodzinsky ≠
Yoshiko Maruyama
Catherine Miller
Lawrence Zukof ≠

VIOLA

Molly Zahn *
Margaret Liddell ≠
Ron Moore
Emily Muller
Laurie Ongley
Emma Tennant

CELLO

Fiona Burdette * ≠
Sarah Alloy
Hoon Cho

CELLO (con't)

Hannah Ferguson
Susan Solomon
Karyn Watts

BASS

Andrew Martin *
Amy Baker
Linda Peragine

FLUTE

Pam Allen Hunter ≠
Judith Kramer Koret ≠

OBOE

Anthony Marra *
Karen Devonshuk

ENGLISH HORN

Ling-Fei Kang

CLARINET

Amanda Hetric * ≠
Amy Plapp

BASS CLARINET

Rob Breem

BASSOON

Thomas Heilman *
Sam Bergstrom

HORN

Mitch Dvoracek *
Dani Heller Zero ≠
Jean Webb
Cathy Zack

TRUMPET

Sander Cohen-Janes * ≠
Christian Venturella
Kei Kohmoto
Bjorn Larsen

TROMBONE

Isaiah Cooper *
Don Harvey
Fritz Heilbron

TUBA

Art Hovey

TIMPANI

David Liskov

PERCUSSION

Daryl Belcher
Hannah Sternberg

HARP

Mae Cooke

* *Principal*
≠ *Board of Directors*

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