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The St. George Chamber Orchestra Fourth Anniversary Concert

James Kazik, Conductor

Program

“Classical” Overture

James Kazik (b. 1974)

Serenade in E-flat op. 7

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Impromptu in B minor op. 5/5 for string orchestra
Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Symphony no. 25 in G minor
K183/173dB
W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Allegro con brio
Andante
Menuetto
Allegro

Program notes

What do an overture, a serenade, an impromptu, and a symphony have in common? From an analytical standpoint, not much, besides notes and rhythms that is. This afternoon, however, each one of the pieces that we will hear is connected in unlikely ways. Each piece was written while the composer was young. Each piece demonstrates the effects of youthful influences on each composer. Finally, each piece demonstrates each composer's ability to use the musical forces at hand.

"Classical" Overture

James Kazik (b. 1974)

From humble beginnings, James Kazik found his way to music at an early age. The son of a Master Welder and Primary School Teacher, James' mother was determined to see her child enrolled in piano lessons after observing her toddler son weeping during a performance of Kermit the Frog's *It's Not Easy Being Green*. James' mother did enroll the boy with a local piano teacher, however, she was unequipped to handle James' raw gifts and declared him "unteachable".

Fortunately Kazik found his way to the trombone and to composition where it was discovered that he was indeed "teachable." James studied undergraduate composition at the University of Minnesota with Judith Lang Zamont and Alex Lubet and orchestration with Dominic Argento. Kazik did his graduate composition work at the University of North Texas with Cindy McTee.

Kazik began composing in earnest during graduate school. His earliest works centered around the trombone and won him early recognition. By the time he had graduated from North Texas, he was already published with Andel and Kagarice Brass Editions, and his trombone quartet "2002" was the required piece for the ITF quartet competition.

After completing his studies at UNT, James became an Arranger with The United States Army Band "Pershing's Own" in Washington D.C. Since then his works have been played around the world and he has

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completed several commissions. Kazik's work, *Eviler Elves* was commissioned by the University of Oklahoma Trombone Studio under Paul Compton and was featured at the 2009 Texas Band Master's Association's Convention. The work was selected by publishers Boosey and Haweks for inclusion in its' Windependence Series. Kazik's *Concerto for Tenor Trombone* was commissioned by Paul Compton and has been performed by Joseph Alessi, Principal Trombone of the New York Philharmonic and is currently in the traveling repertoire of Jeremy Wilson, Assistant Principal Trombone of the Vienna Philharmonic.

The "Classical" Overture was written in early 2004 and first performed by The Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic under Ulysses James, while Kazik was serving as composer-in-residence. The word "Classical" in the title refers to the use of winds in pairs-a common practice during the Classical Era. The piece is constructed in a simple ABA form. The opening A section features an eighth-note based rhythmic ostinato that continues almost unbroken throughout the section. Harmonies feature stacks of 4ths suggesting the influence of Hindemith. The B section is introduced by a broad sweeping melody in the horn. The melody reflects the influence of film and TV scores. The A section returns briefly and is joined by the sweeping melody found the B section. The work ends with a short burst of energy often found in Kazik's works.

Serenade in E-flat op. 7

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Richard Strauss, the son of the famous horn player Franz Strauss, was almost destined to be a prodigy. Raised in a musical environment from birth, Richard studied music first with his father. Later he studied theory and composition from the Associate Conductor of the Munich Civic Orchestra, the same orchestra of which his father was principal horn.

Volumes have been written about Franz' influence on the young Richard and certainly those influences can be heard in the Serenade. The *Serenade op. 7* was written in 1882 when Richard was 17 years old.

Strauss has already written several sonatas, a symphony, and a concerto prior to the Serenade. So, why did he write a serenade? Why work with this form?


By definition a serenade is an homage written in someone's honor, and the connection to Richard's father seems clear. First, the *Serenade* op. 7 is written in Sonata form, complete with an Exposition, Development and Recapitulation. The form recalls the most highly developed form of Classical Era composers, such as Mozart and Haydn. Second, the *Serenade* focuses on tonal harmony. Richard had grown up hearing the works of Wagner and Wagner's ideas on harmony, yet Richard chose to follow the harmonic procedures of Mozart- again, his Father's favorite- for the *Serenade*. Last, the instrumentation of the *Serenade* features four horns, his father's instrument, and winds in pairs. Despite the limitations of an all wind group, Strauss uses the ensemble to produce rich and balanced textures demonstrating that he was a master orchestrator by the age of 17.

**Impromptu in B minor op. 5/5
for string orchestra**


Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Jean Sibelius was the son of a doctor, though he wanted to be a violinist. Jean's early education was heavily influenced by the rise of Nationalism popular during the latter half of the 19th century. It is interesting to note that Jean learned to speak Finnish at school, but spoke Swedish at home. It is unclear why Jean wanted to study violin, but he apparently reached a fairly high standard of performance during his adolescence.

Jean graduated high school in 1885 and immediately went on to study law. The law did not hold enough fascination for the young Sibelius so he transferred to the Helsinki Music School with the intention of studying violin. Jean studied with Martin Wegelius and Albert Becker but eventually gave up the violin in 1891 stating, "It was a very painful awakening when I had to admit that I had begun my training for the exacting career of a virtuoso too late". In 1882, Sibelius married Aino



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Järnefelt and shortly after, began composing.

The *Impromptu in B minor op. 5/5 for string orchestra* was arranged by the composer from a group of piano *Impromptus*. The piano *Impromptus* were written in 1882 and it is thought that the string version was arranged as early as 1883, however, Sibelius seems to have reworked the piece at several points throughout his life leading some to believe that the work was arranged during the 20th century.

For the arrangement, Sibelius drew on material from the 5th and 6th piano *impromptu*. The opening section of the *Impromptu for string orchestra* is a reduction of the arpeggios found in the 5th piano *Impromptu*. The second section is almost verbatim from the 6th piano *Impromptu*. The final section of the work again draws from the 5th piano *Impromptu*.

Sibelius was criticized through out his career for using tonal harmonies. In response, Sibelius stated that he found harmonies of Wagner and later the Second Viennese School to be vulgar. He claimed that his primary inspiration was nature; birds, flowers, and the change of seasons.

**Symphony no. 25 in G minor
K183/173dB**

W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)

W.A. Mozart was the son of violinist, composer, and master teacher Leopold Mozart. Like Richard Strauss, Mozart was raised in a musical environment and had access to the best teacher of his day, his father. Unlike Strauss, Mozart did not appear to be a sentimental child, but rather was progressive and absorbed the contemporary sounds he encountered.

In 1773, at the age of 17, Mozart earned employment as court musician to Prince-Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo of Salzburg. During Mozart's time in Salzburg, he was able to write in a number of genres and had a good number of friends and admirers in the court. Still, it is difficult to know how the *Symphony no. 25* was received.

Symphony no. 25 is a four-movement work, typical of the period. The first movement is in Sonata-allegro form. The second movement is a lyric andante. The third movement features a minuet and trio, and the final movement is in Sonata form.

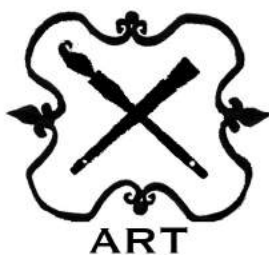
Aside from a conventional structure, several features suggest the inspiration for the piece came from a contemporary source. *Symphony no. 25* is only one of two symphonies that Mozart cast in a minor key, the other being *Symphony no. 41*. For some, the key of G minor suggests an influence from *Haydn's Symphony no. 39*, also in the same key. Throughout *Symphony no. 25* Mozart uses a large number of wide leaps in his melodic material which seem to suggest the use of the "sturm und drang" (Storm and Stress) aesthetic, which was popular at the time. The use of "sturm und drang" elements again draws a comparison between *Symphony no. 25* and *Haydn's Symphony no. 39*.

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Kelly Kazik holds a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Maryland and serves as staff program writer for the St. George Chamber Orchestra.

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The St. George Chamber Orchestra played its first concert in May of 2010, under the direction of Artistic Directors Tina Christie and John Vreeland. Since then, the orchestra has become a major part of St. George's Chamber Music Series, performing three concerts per year.

Past concerts have included works by Bach, Mozart, Dvorak and Copland, including works for choir and orchestra.

The orchestra welcomes James Kazik in his debut as principal orchestra conductor for the 2014-2015 season.