

Bloomsburg University Community Orchestra

Saturday, March 5, at 7:30 pm

Tonight's concert is bookended by two composers that are depicted as bitter rivals through the lens of Hollywood and includes some of opera's greatest composers in between! Additionally, it features two student soloists performing arias from two of history's greatest operas, *Carmen* and *La bohème*. We will also be performing a rare strings-only piece, originally written for string quartet, by Giacomo Puccini!

About the Soloists

Lydia Barton

Hi! I am a freshman Music Education Major with a concentration in voice. I am a member of two amazing vocal ensembles here on campus! I am a proud member of the Women's choir and the Concert choir, where I sing soprano 1, which I have been singing since high school. I couldn't have made it this far without the help of some amazing people. First, I would love to thank my high school choir director, Mrs. Sweeney, for pushing me to challenge myself and grow as a musician. I would also love to thank my parents and best friend for supporting me every step of the way. Lastly, I have a great amount of respect and admiration for all my professors who helped me put together and perfect the aria you will hear tonight. Thank you so very much Dr. Baker and Dr. Garbisch for the long hours of hard work put into lessons and choreography. Lastly, thank you Dr. Tedford and the orchestra for rehearsals and for this once in a lifetime opportunity to perform with you tonight.

Dylan Garbrick

Dylan Garbrick is a senior music major with a focus in Audio/Video recording. He has been a vocalist at Bloomsburg University for four years, studying under Dr. Alan Baker. Dylan has plans of continuing his education after earning his bachelor's degree; although uncertain in what to pursue after college, he hopes to return to the collegiate level to teach. Dylan would like to thank his friends and family for being supportive throughout the years, and to Dr. Baker, who has shown him how to truly find his voice.

About the Music

Antonio Salieri

The supposed rivalry between Salieri and Mozart is farfetched. In actuality, they were close colleagues. The main reason for a suspected rivalry came about because of Mozart's sudden death (he was only 35). His death quickly spurred talk of "foul play" and, considering his mention of poison and blaming Italian factions at the Viennese court (something that his father would often say about Italians, would be calling them Rascals, so no love lost there), one can see why. People put two and two together, and Salieri is to blame. The rumor persisted so well that mentions of the conflict were witnessed in Beethoven's conversation books, Weber (Mozart's father-in-law) heard it in 1803, and even Rossini joked about it when he met Salieri in 1822. Additionally, Alexander Pushkin, the Russian author, wrote "Little Tragedy" five years after Salieri's death and made him the murderer.

Salieri, being the elder by just a few years, was invited by Emperor Joseph II to be a member of nightly chamber music gatherings at age 15. By the age of 20, he had his first opera, in collaboration with Giovanni Boccherini (Luigi's son), which was a success, and marked the end of his training. Not only was he a success by an early age, but he was also a trailblazer. In his fourth opera, *Armida*, he stripped

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away the sub-plots to keep the action moving forward, and in his overture, he used it to set the stage by musically describing action prior to the first scene, which was a new compositional device. Further, he became the new opera Kapellmeister at 24 after death of Gassman, his teacher, and then was commissioned to compose the opening piece for the new theater in Milan: La Scala! Salieri went on to live until 1825, teaching Beethoven, Schubert, Liszt, and Franz Xaver Mozart (Wolfgang's son).

Antonio Salieri's opera *Les Danaïdes* is the perfect opener for tonight's concert. It epitomizes everything an opera overture should be: dramatic with ups and downs, full of emotion, and it ends mysteriously. Premiered in 1784, *Les Danaïdes* was an opera that came to Salieri at the recommendation of Christoph Willibald Gluck (an older and very famous opera composer) who had passed on the commission due to recovery from a stroke and a recent flop at the theater. There was some confusion on who wrote the music at first, as Emperor Joseph II declared that Salieri had been dictated to by Gluck. Gluck, upon hearing this, wanted to distance himself from the production due to his uncertainty on how it would be received. Salieri, on the other hand, acknowledged Gluck's influence.

Les Danaïdes

Danaus, the Greek mythological king of Libya and founder of Argos, is the father to 50 daughters, called the Danaïdes. His mortal enemy, Aegyptus, is his brother. As Aegyptus draws close to death, Danaus makes his daughters swear loyalty to Aegyptus. After Aegyptus dies, his son Lynceus takes the throne and agrees, along with his brothers, to marry the Danaïdes. Danaus, wanting revenge on his brother's family, convinces his daughters to kill their new husbands on their wedding night. He is successful except for one daughter, Hypermnestra, who is married to Lynceus. They escape the murderous plot, only to return and set fire to the city and kill Danaus and his daughters. The Danaïdes are sent to Hades where they watch their father being tortured for eternity.

The Music

The overture starts very dramatically with syncopated rhythm between the lower and upper strings. The short, yet dark introduction, leads to a bright and quick opening theme. Salieri uses fermatas and pauses to transition between themes and utilizes a minor key to provide a contrasting second theme. The overture ends with a fast-paced coda section that finishes quietly and mysteriously.

Georges Bizet

Georges Bizet (1838–1875) was a French composer whose talent was apparent from childhood. Born to musical parents, Bizet studied at the Paris Conservatoire from the age of ten, where he developed his extraordinary gifts as a pianist. As a composer, he came under the influence of Charles Gounod, then the leading French opera composer, and in the 1850s began writing piano pieces and completed a Symphony; the latter was lost and not rediscovered until the 20th century.

Even before he came under the influence of Italian composers such as Donizetti and Rossini, he had begun writing his first operas, which include the still occasionally performed one-act operetta *Le Docteur Miracle* (1857). He scraped together a living as a pianist, yet as late as the five years immediately preceding *Carmen*, Bizet had yet to find a settled means of support. *Carmen* was his final work, and its

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success was still uncertain at the time of his premature death (although the opera was not quite the total failure in its initial run that it has sometimes been called). Bizet died just months after the premiere from a heart attack, never knowing how successful the opera would turn out to be.

Carmen

The opera *Carmen* is considered an Opéra Comique for its brief sections of dialogue. Set in southern Spain, the opera tells the story of the downfall of Don José, a naïve soldier who is seduced by the wiles of the fiery gypsy, Carmen. José abandons his childhood sweetheart and deserts from his military duties, yet loses Carmen's love to the glamorous toreador Escamillo, after which José kills her in a jealous rage. The depictions of proletarian life, immorality and lawlessness, and the tragic death of the main character on stage, broke new ground in French opera and were highly controversial.

"La Fleur Que Tu M'Avais Jetée"

Translated to "The Flower Song", takes place in Act II and is set in a local tavern after hours. Carmen and her friends are joined by a group of smugglers. Carmen is waiting for Don José to arrive. He is heard singing in the street as he approaches. He enters. Outside, a bugle call announces the return to barracks sounds, but Don José disregards it. Carmen dances for him.

From his tunic, he pulls out the flower that Carmen threw to him in Act I just after singing her Habañera. As he confesses his love to her, the English horn quietly sounds the "fate motive," beneath shimmering *tremolando* strings, as a signal that he has taken a fatal step (we could think of it as his conscience speaking to him, and as if the others are unaware of it).

His Flower Song is one of the most lyrical moments in the entire opera. It is through-composed; i.e. none of its melodic material returns in any literal sense. Part of the aria's magic comes from the sudden shifts to remote keys between one strain and the next, which seem to transport us wonderfully from one realm of feeling to another.

French Lyrics	English translation
Introduction	Introduction
<i>Don José draws flower from his tunic): "fate motive" in English horn.</i>	<i>Don José draws flower from his tunic): "fate motive" in English horn.</i>
Strain 1	Strain 1
Don José	Don José
La fleur que tu m'avais jetée dans ma prison m'était restée, flétrie et sèche, cette fleur gardait toujours sa douce odeur;	Here is the flower that you threw me, While in the jail it never left me, Though dry and faded, yet the flower Has kept its scent, its magic power;
Strain 2	Strain 2
et pendant des heures entières, sur mes yeux, fermant mes paupières, de cette odeur je m'enivrais et dans la nuit je te voyais!	In my cell for whole hours together, I would close my eyes and remember, Until the scent set me on fire, And in that night I'd see you there!
Strain 3	Strain 3
Je me prenais à te maudire, à te détester, à me dire:	Then I would curse the hour I met you, And, trying to hate and forget you

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pourquoi faut-il que le destin l'ait mise là sur mon chemin?	I'd even say: oh why did fate Ever decree we two should meet!
<i>Strain 4</i>	<i>Strain 4</i>
Puis je m'accusais de blasphème, et je ne sentais en moi-même, Je ne sentais qu'un seul désir, un seul désir, un seul espoir: Te revoir, ô Carmen, oui, te revoir! ...	Then I stood accused of blasphemy, And to myself if thought only, I thought only of one desire, Only one desire, only one hope. Let me find you, Carmen, see you again!
<i>Strain 5</i>	<i>Strain 5</i>
Car tu n'avais eu qu'à paraître, qu'à jeter un regard sur moi, pour t'emparer de tout mon être, O ma Carmen! Et j'étais une chose à toi! Carmen, je t'aime!	For you had only to appear there, Your dark eyes but to glance my way, And you possessed me then forever, O my Carmen! And I meant only thing to you! Carmen, I love you!

Giacomo Puccini

Puccini was born into a Tuscan family of church musicians, and it was expected that young Giacomo would succeed his father, Michele Puccini, as ‘maestro di cappella’ at the San Martino cathedral in the small town of Lucca—a position that had been held by a Puccini for four generations. Sadly, Michele died when Giacomo was only six years old, and the chain of succession was broken. These circumstances did, however, free the young man to pursue other musical avenues and after seeing a performance of Verdi's *Aida* at the age of 15, he became inspired to write opera. In 1883, while attending the Milan Conservatory, Puccini composed a one-act opera for a competition; he did not win, but *Le Villi* was successful enough to put the young Puccini on a very different career path, leading to him becoming one of the most successful and famous opera composers of all time. *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Turandot* are among the most frequently performed in the standard repertoire.

La bohème

The opera, premiered in 1896, follows the lives of a group of bohemians in Paris during the 1830s. The group struggle to survive. The opening scene shows Marcello and Rodolfo burning a copy of Rodolfo's manuscript to keep warm, all while scheming a way to avoid paying their rent. Rodolfo, a playwright, falls in love with Mimi, his neighbor after helping her light a match after her candle is extinguished from a gust of air. Mimi suffers from tuberculosis, which produces a tell-tale cough. Rodolfo's friend Marcello, a painter, is drawn to Musetta, who is in a relationship with wealthy government administrator, Alcindoro. While not an immediate success, it soon became one of the most popular and frequently performed operas in the world.

Quando m'en vo

Also known as “Musetta's Waltz”, is an aria in Act II of Puccini's *La bohème*. The scene takes place at the Café Momus. Shortly after her friends take their seats for a drink, Musetta arrives with an elderly Alcindoro, to make her occasional boyfriend, Marcello, jealous. The two argue, but then Musetta steals the spotlight in her attempt to reclaim the attention of Marcello. During the aria, she complains of her

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tight shoe. To satisfy Musetta, Alcindoro runs off to find a shoemaker, leaving Musetta and Marcello together, only to end up in each other's arms.

Italian Lyrics	English Translation
Quando m'en vo soletta per la via, La gente sosta e mira E la bellezza mia tutta ricerca in me Da capo a pie'... Ed assaporo allor la bramosia Sottile, che da gli occhi traspira E dai palesi vezzi intender sa Alle occulte beltà. Così l'effluvio del desio tutta m'aggira, Felice mi fa! E tu che sai, che memori e ti struggi Da me tanto rifuggi? So ben: le angoscie tue non le vuoi dir, Ma ti senti morir!	When walking alone on the streets, People stop and stare And examine my beauty From head to toe... And then I savor the cravings Which from their eyes transpires And from the obvious charms they perceive The hidden beauties. So, the scent of desire is all around me, It makes me happy! And you who know, who remembers and yearns, You shrink from me? I know why this is: You do not want to tell me of your anguish, But you feel like dying!

I Crisantemi

Puccini himself acknowledged that his true talent lay "only in the theatre," and so his non-operatic works are relatively few. However, the string quartet was a medium for which he had a certain affinity – as a conservatory student he composed a set of three short minuets and an unrelated scherzo for string quartet. In 1890 he composed *I Crisantemi* (The Chrysanthemums) in response to the sudden death of a friend. The man in question was Amadeo di Savoia, Duke of Aosta, a young and ambitious Italian prince who was selected to assume the throne of the King of Spain after the Glorious Revolution of 1868. The task of unifying a violent nation and restoring constitutional order under constant threat of assassination and civil war proved too great, and Amadeo abdicated in 1873 whereupon a Republic was declared. Amadeo returned to Turin, humiliated, and lived quietly until his death at the age of 44. It is not known how the friendship between Puccini and the Duke came about but it was of sufficient significance to inspire this elegiac piece, named after the flower of mourning and heroism in Italian tradition.

Composed in just one night, as alleged by Puccini in a letter written to his brother, *I Crisantemi* is a single-movement elegy based on two plaintive melodies in C sharp minor. The first is restless, building its power from chromatic figures moving in contrary motion. In the middle, a mournful theme for the first violin sounds over pulsations in the viola; the first violin and cello then repeat the melody. A brief return of the opening music closes the lament. Puccini thought enough of this music to reuse some of it in his opera *Manon Lescaut*, composed three years later in 1893. The main theme that opens the quartet serves as the orchestral backdrop for much of the action of Act IV, when Manon and her lover des Grieux are

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wandering to their deaths in the desert wasteland, and the soloistic second theme underscores the Act III prison duet between the ill-fated lovers.

I Crisantemi is a single, continuous movement. Sometimes performed in its original form as a string quartet version, it frequents the music stands of the world's orchestras in an arrangement for string orchestra.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Born in 1756, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is considered to be one of the most prolific composers of all time. Known for his quartets, concerti, and symphonies, his operas are performed consistently throughout the world as well. Unfortunately, his financial status didn't reflect his popularity. Constantly in debt due to drinking, gambling, and just living beyond his means, he ended up taking on multiple commissions at the same time.

These commissions took a toll on his health. Eventually, his lifestyle caught up with him. His health had been declining and as he was working on his Requiem, his final composition, his doctors confined him to bed rest. He seemed to improve slightly in the first few days of December of 1791, but on the evening of December 3rd, his health declined drastically. His doctors were called, but to no avail. He died around 1 a.m. on December 5th of, what was diagnosed as, rheumatic inflammatory fever.

Surprisingly, considering his fame, his funeral was poorly attended. He was buried in a common grave at the St. Marx cemetery on December 7th. Only a few musicians showed their respect: Salieri, Süßmayr (finisher of the *Requiem*), van Swieten, and two other musicians.

Der Schauspieldirektor (The Impresario)

Mozart wrote *Der Schauspieldirektor* as a comic opera in 1786. It was written in the same year as *Le nozze di Figaro*, piano concerto no. 23 in A, piano concerto No. 24 in C minor, concerto No. 25 for piano in C, symphony No. 38 *Prague*, and numerous other chamber works. It was written as an entry to a competition for a private performance by Joseph II. The contest put a German *singspiel* against an Italian *opera buffa*, Salieri's *Prima la musica e poi le parole (First the Music, then the Words)*. The operas were produced at opposite ends of the same room, one after the other. The premiere was followed by three public performances. Mozart described it as a comedy with music and as a parody on the arrogance of singers and their arguments over status and salary.

The Plot

There are only a total of four vocal numbers in the score. Along with the overture, the musical content adds up to about thirty minutes.

Frank, the impresario, auditions and hires two actresses to be part of his new theater company. During the audition process and afterwards, as they are both hired, the two divas argue about who gets the major role and who will get paid the most. To demonstrate their abilities, each sings an aria (*Da schlägt die Abschiedsstunde (There tolls the hour of departure)* and *Bester Jüngling (Dearest Youth)*). Each aria is about the nobility of her art, but also tries to outdo her competitor by singing higher and higher notes. An

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agreement is reached when the tenor suggests a compromise, in which both receive large salaries and major advertisement. The composition ends with the quartet *Jeder Künstler strebt nach Ehre* (*Every artist strives for glory*).

The opera was premiered in the United Kingdom in 1857 at the St. James's Theatre in London. It was given its US premiere in 1870 at the Stadt Theatre. Contemporary performances usually have the text rewritten so that is more relevant to newer audiences.

The Music

The overture, in an exuberant introduction to the short opera, imitates the competition that takes place in the opera. It begins with the main idea of the entire overture. This theme of two whole notes followed by a frenetic, descending pattern, is later used to create the illusion of competition between the strings and the woodwinds. Mozart also uses it in “competition” between the first and second violins. Using his knowledge of polyphonic (layering of multiple melodic lines) music, Mozart also uses the theme to create a section of imitation between the families. This can be thought of as illustrating what is to come in the actual opera. The overture ends with a statement of the main theme by the whole orchestra that creates a final push of energy to lead into the opera.