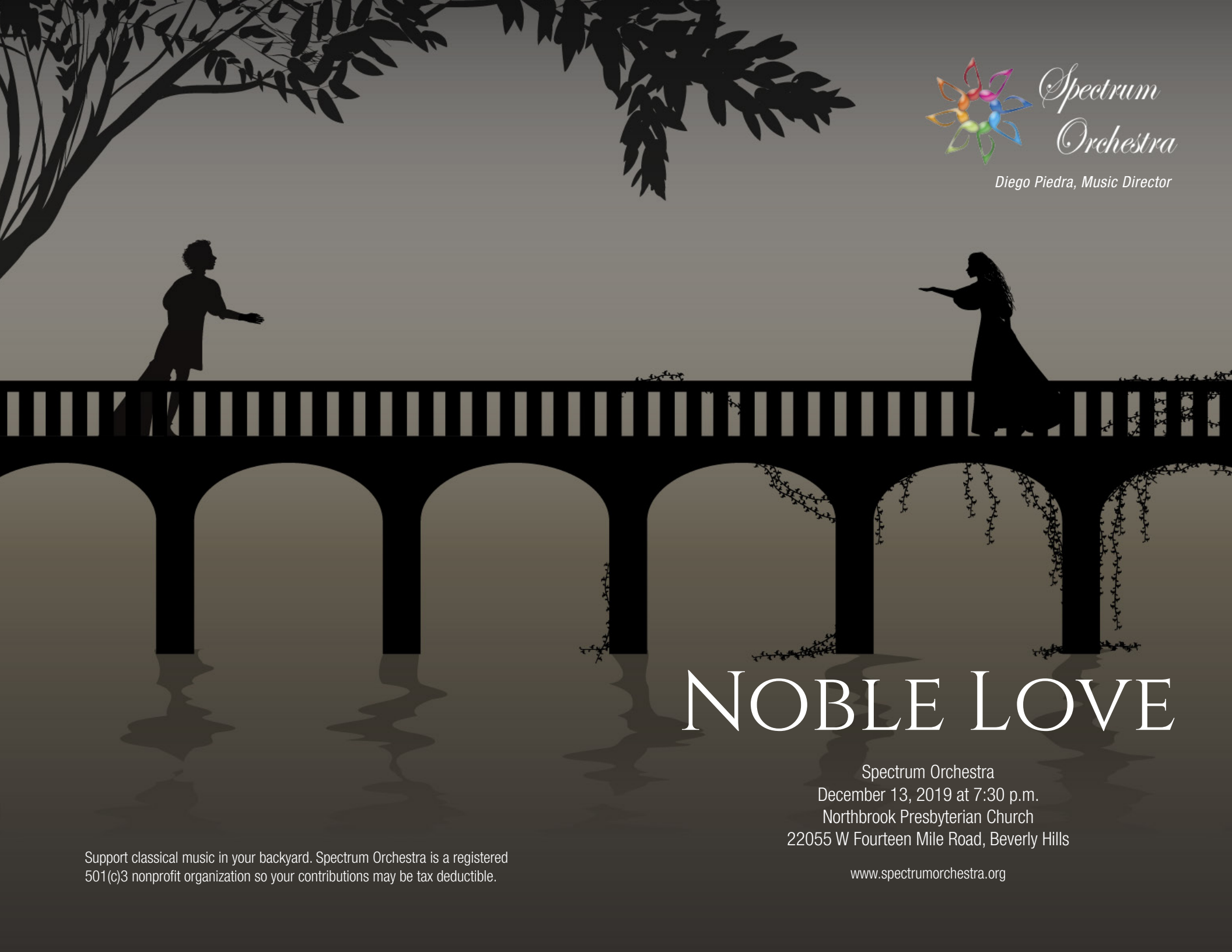




*Spectrum
Orchestra*

Diego Piedra, Music Director



NOBLE LOVE

Spectrum Orchestra
December 13, 2019 at 7:30 p.m.
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Music Director

Dr. Diego Piedra



Diego Piedra is the Music Director and Conductor of Spectrum Orchestra. A strongly driven performer and educator, professional conducting engagements have included the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica, the Municipal Orchestra of Cartago, Luther College, the University of Costa Rica Symphony Orchestra and University of Toledo Symphony Orchestra. In Costa Rica Dr. Piedra was on high demand as the orchestral conducting professor at the University of Costa Rica as well as a guest teacher and performer in Venezuela, Honduras and Guatemala. He founded the national youth orchestra called Manuel María Gutiérrez at SINEM (the Costa Rican version of Venezuela's El Sistema), and was its Music Director and Conductor from 2009-2011. Since 2014, Dr. Piedra has been the featured guest artist at the Dubuque Symphony Orchestra's Summer String Camp, working as a conductor, violinist and composer. As a professional violinist he has been a member of the prestigious New World Symphony in Miami, South Bend Symphony Orchestra, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, Oakland Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica and Concertmaster of the Orquesta de Cámara de Costa Rica. At Michigan Dr. Piedra participated as violinist and assistant conductor in the tour and recording of the University Symphony Orchestra of the University of Michigan (winner of four Grammy awards in 2006), which culminated at Carnegie Hall, New York. He was the Music Director of The Campus Symphony Orchestra and the Campus Philharmonia Orchestra, and he conducted two full opera productions and numerous symphonic concerts. In the summer of 2017 Dr. Piedra was awarded an honorary mention at a conducting competition in London, England. Dr. Piedra holds a DMA in Orchestral Conducting and two Master's degrees from the University of Michigan. He lives in Ann Arbor with his wife Maria and daughter Clara.

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March 13th: The Romantics

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June 5th: Bruckner

Bruckner: Symphony No.4 Romantic

Program Notes

Sigurd Jorsalfar Op. 56 Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

Edward Grieg is considered today a prominent Norwegian composer. He infused his music with Norwegian folk music to the point that according to his own words “it tastes like cod.” Grieg, a romantic, wrote beautiful music. Some of his best known works are the incidental music *Peer Gynt*, the Piano Concerto in A minor and *Holberg Suite*.

Sigurd Jorsalfar -written by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832-1910)- tells the tale of the rivalries and reconciliation of two brother kings. Øjstejn and Sigurd ruled jointly during the 12th century. The first one remained in Norway and ruled with wisdom and justice, built roads, harbors and churches, while the other went on crusades. Grieg’s Op. 56 is divided in three movements:

- I. Prelude: “In the King’s Hall” represents the scene in which the kings enumerate their achievements and compare their personal merits as men and rulers. It was originally titled as “At the Matching Game” and it was intended as the introduction of the of Act II of the drama.
- II. Intermezzo: “Borghild’s Dream” is the music for the scene in Act I where Borghild awakes from troubled dreams in her father’s house. She is friends with Øjstejn and this gives rise to gossip as Sigurd also loves her, which contributes to the brothers ill-feelings between them. Grieg depicts her waking up, then walking over red-hot iron (something she agreed to do in order to prove her innocence).
- III. “Homage March:” This is the most well known part of the suite. It depicts the scene in which the Kings are reconciled, and this occurs in Act III in the play. The music begins with a trumpet fanfare sounding as the two brothers walk hand in hand after they have made peace with each other. Then, the march begins and during this music they announce their reconciliation.

Tristan & Isolde Prelude and Liebestod Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

Richard Wagner was a remarkable man. A gifted composer, theater director, conductor and writer, his influence across music, literature, philosophy, cinema and visual arts marked history in the nineteenth century forever. Contemporary composers such as Mahler, Bruckner, Debussy, Schoenberg, Richard Strauss (the list continues...) were typically perplexed and awed about his music language, harmonies and overall progressive thinking. In fact, it was common for composers to either be declared “Wagnerian” or “anti Wagnerian” by virtue of recognizing or rejecting his revolutionary approach to music writing.

Naming movements or writing titles for pieces was something that made Tchaikovsky uncomfortable, to say the least. He hated the idea of associating extra musical thoughts to his music. He regretted pieces like *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture*, *Francesca da Rimini* and *Manfred Symphony* because they had names that revealed what the music was about rather than allowing the listener to come up with his/her idea about the music. However, there is no denying that *Romeo and Juliet* is exceedingly beautiful and passionate. Right from the beginning we hear a dark theme played by the clarinets, symbolizing Friar Lawrence, and we know that what he thinks won’t end well. Tchaikovsky’s romantic nature, his extroverted personality and facility for writing melodies allowed him to write perhaps one of the most beloved and recognized melodies in music history, that of the love theme of *Romeo and Juliet*, heard first with the English Horn along with the violas.

Romeo and Juliet is a fantastic representation of Shakespeare’s drama. It includes fighting, love, tenderness, innocence, passion, death, and even beyond what’s left after that. The music concludes triumphantly sending love upward, as if saying that not even death can hinder it or finish it. Love conquers all.

What we hear today is what is known as the third version of this piece, revised in 1880, which is ten years after the first reworking of the piece.

Message From Our President

Dear Friends of Spectrum Orchestra,

Amore!!! Love!!! Our concert tonight shares with you the sounds of love from wonderful composers. As you listen tonight, seek out the beautiful melodies that represent love! Notice the musicians emote passion, through their instruments, to communicate the stories of love. This holiday season, let’s all give more time than usual to love. Love your neighbors and co-workers with a bigger smile. Love your patients, students, and clients with a laugh or two, and most of all, love your families and friends with a greater sense of kindness and sensitivity.

Have a blessed holiday season with lots of LOVE!

Warm Regards,
Lynne Gillespie, President

Program Notes Continued

Intermezzo Sinfonico from *Cavalleria Rusticana* Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945)

Mascagni was an Italian opera composer and conductor. His masterpiece *Cavalleria Rusticana* produced one of the greatest successes in opera history while ushering the coming of Verismo (Italian for realism, a movement which sought to portray the world with greater realism, meaning stories not of gods, mythological creatures, kings or queens, but of regular human beings and their day to day problems: sexual, romantic or violent in nature) to Italian drama.

The opera was composed in a rush (only two months) to be entered into a competition in 1888. 73 operas were submitted, including this one, on the last day in which it would be accepted. The judges selected it as one of the final three. In the end, Mascagni took the first place, and at the opening it was a sensation where Mascagni took about 40 curtain calls.

The intermezzo is in this case a short piece of music which connects but separates between acts of operas. In *Cavalleria Rusticana* the intermezzo happens as a square is being emptied on stage because a duel to death is about to happen. It concerns the love of a woman, Lola, who has married Alfio while her fiancée Turiddu was away on military service. Turiddu, in revenge, seduces another woman, Santuzza, and Lola, overcome with jealousy begins an adulterous affair with Turiddu. The intermezzo connects the religious activities as the villagers are in Mass while the music sounds, and it reflects Santuzza's inner struggle and passionate love.

Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture Piotr Illytch Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Russian culture and education demanded that art music had to be of the highest caliber, and fundamentally different from western music in terms of content and form. It needed to reflect the strength of Russia, its intellect, philosophy, politics, heritage and beauty. Tchaikovsky managed to study at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, where he learned in a western-oriented style. This set him apart from his Russian contemporaries, as they tended to find other ways of creating music. Be that as it may, Tchaikovsky himself recognized that he struggled with western methods of composition. He admired deeply composers like Beethoven, but he loved Mozart. For him, Mozart was "the Christ" of music. Mozart was a master of many things, one of which was formal composition and development. Tchaikovsky tried to imitate that, but it was futile. Tchaikovsky's mind worked differently. For him, the music always came complete. He heard it in his head, then he wrote it down. This created no room for creative development of ideas, because all of Tchaikovsky's ideas were already formed and thought of even with what instruments they would be played with.

Wagner is mostly known from his operas. Unlike most composers, Wagner also wrote his own librettos, and his vision was so beyond anything which had been conceived before that he came up with the concept of "Gesamtkunstwerk" (total work of art), meaning that he worked to conciliate poetic, visual, musical and drama together in his operas, which were considered musical dramas. Wagner was very extravagant, and he even had his own opera house built to perform his music, and that is the Bayreuth Festspielhaus in Germany.

Tristan & Isolde is an exquisite example of the intricacies and complexity of leitmotifs (musical cells infused with a specific event, person, or meaning), harmonic ambiguity and sense of longing, death and transfiguration. The first chord of the piece is so famous because of its different quality that it has come known as the Tristan chord. An ambiguous sonority, it sets in motion all the beautiful music to follow. The Prelude and Liebestod (Love-Death) are respectively the beginning and the end of the opera. It was composed between 1858-1859 and premiered on June 10, 1865 with Hans von Bülow conducting.

Méditation, from *Thaïs* Jules Massenet (1842-1912)

Massenet, a French composer, is known as an opera composer, though he composed for many different genres such as oratorios, ballets, incidental music, orchestral music, piano pieces and songs. He wrote more than thirty operas, among them *Manon* (1884), and *Thaïs* (1894). He enjoyed successes and endured failures as a composer, and he worked as composition teacher at the Paris Conservatoire for a long time.

Méditation is an instrumental entr'acte performed between scenes of Act II in the opera. It is a beautiful violin solo. Thaïs is a courtesan and priestess of Venus. She has been approached by Cenobite monk Athanaël, whose self-assigned mission is to rid Thaïs of her beliefs and convert her to Christianity and persuade her to enter a convent. This music happens after these two characters meet; Thaïs realizes she has an empty life and her beauty will be destroyed eventually by old age, and Athanaël prays to God to conceal Thaïs' beauty so he can accomplish his mission. He nearly succumbs to her physical charm, she nearly succumbs to his eloquence, but she drives him away. Then, she meditates...

In the end, Athanaël does accomplish his mission, but after leaving her in the convent, he realized that he fell in love and he has a vision of her dying. He goes back to see her, longing for her, and he confesses that what he did and his beliefs were useless and untrue and that instead life and love between human beings was true, and he tells her that he loves her. Alas, she is on her deathbed, and blissfully unaware of Athanaël, she "sees" heavens opening and the angels welcoming her. She dies, and Athanaël is left alone in despair.

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Olivia Zang
Jennifer Boutin
Ben Ratner
Tammy Croxall

Violin II

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Larry Rapp
Nicola Raistrick
Sandra Toms
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Susan Bonucchi

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Tom Yates
Lynne Gillespie
Jessica Suer
Bridget Balint
Aaron Lytle

Piccolo

Evan Bushman

Flute

Kathy Oliphant
Alexandra Serafino
Evan Bushman

Oboe

Kim Pollack
Brian Ansette
Shari Morgan

English Horn

Kim Pollack

Clarinet

Michael Cher
Mary Cupery

Bass Clarinet

Nick Boyd

Bassoon

Nina Flanigan
Johanna Bermann
Amanda Kawucha

Horn

Megan Barrus
Arleigh Helfer
Ray Landes
Erin Taylor-Czerniak

Trumpet

Christina Castellana
Jeff Kumpula
Paul Lederman

Trombone

Jeff Whitbey
Mike Boutin
Dave Drake

Tuba

Michael Ebie

Percussion

Ari Hajek
Peyton Miller

Timpany

Pam McGowan

Harp

Ruth Brown Meyers

Program

Sigurd Jorsalfar Op. 56

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

I. Prelude

II. Intermezzo

III. Homage March

Tristan & Isolde Prelude and Liebestod

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Méditation, from Thaïs

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Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945)

Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture

Piotr Illytch Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

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