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BLOOMINGTON
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

2024–2025

*Sixty-second
concert season*

photo by Leslie Plesser

Exuberance!

Sunday, February 9, 2025
2:00 p.m.

Gideon Ives Auditorium
Minnesota Masonic Heritage Center
11411 Masonic Home Drive
Bloomington

Manny Laureano
Music Director & Conductor

Lorelei Schoenhard
Violin

Concert Benefactors

*Dr. Leonard & Karen Nordstrom
Allan & Deborah Schneider*

The Program

Li Huanzhi

Spring Festival Overture

Erich Wolfgang Korngold

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

I. Moderato nobile

Lorelei Schoenhard, Violin

— *INTERMISSION* —

Felix Mendelssohn

Symphony No. 4 in A Major, Op. 90, "Italian"

I. Allegro vivace

II. Andante con moto

III. Con moto moderato

IV. Presto and Finale: Saltarello

Lights will be kept on during the concert to facilitate the reading of programs.

Out of consideration for the musicians and audience members, please turn off your cell phone and refrain from using flash photography.

Program Notes

by Manny Laureano

Spring Festival Overture

by Li Huanzhi (1919-2000)

In my primary role as a member of the Minnesota Orchestra, I often have the pleasure of playing and learning the music of composers from many different countries and backgrounds. On one such occasion, I was delighted to play the *Spring Festival Overture*. Thus, I became acquainted with the music of Li Huanzhi (in much of China the family name is listed first).

Li's early musical education was in Hong Kong, the city of his birth, and continued in other towns and provinces until he gained entrance to the illustrious National Music College in Shanghai in 1935, and the Lux Un Arts College in 1938, where he was able to express himself through musical composition. He became a celebrated composer in China and wrote in what was considered a "Western" style in terms of tonality but with a traditional Chinese melodic style. That style served him well and was embraced by the Chinese populace in the 1940s through the 1970s until the Cultural Revolution saw him being sent to a "re-education" camp even though he had joined the Party. He is also the composer of the National Anthem of the People's Republic of China.

Li Huanzhi's *Spring Festival Overture* is pulled out of a four-movement suite that celebrates the return to life of the earth as it recedes from winter's darkness and cold. It is the first movement of this work in which the Lunar New Year is feted and depicts celebrations in the Shanbei region of the northwestern Shaanxi Province, where Li lived for years. It is also generally considered the birthplace of the Communist Revolution.

The overture begins unapologetically exuberant, painting parades and fireworks. It is followed by a gentle, lyrical middle section built on a centuries-old melody. That melody, which expresses New Year greetings and prayers for good luck and peace, was sometimes sung during a traditional Shanbei folk dance called the *Yangge*. The Overture gained such popularity that it was chosen in 2007 as one of thirty selections to be launched into space on China's first lunar probe satellite, with its melodies broadcast to all of China.

Violin Concerto in D Major

Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897-1957)

The son of prominent Viennese music critic Julius Korngold, young Erich was already attracting attention by age five, and then at ten as a prodigious talent on the piano and by virtue of his composing! Little wonder that more than a few Viennese were comfortable with the idea of speaking his name with those such as Mozart. By sixteen he had composed a ballet and two one-act operas and his notoriety rose meteorically. He may have been only slightly surprised when he was approached by noted Hollywood director and producer Max Reinhardt, who invited him to write the score for *A Midsummer's Night Dream*. He traveled back and forth to Hollywood from Vienna until it became clear that political winds changed the more Adolph Hitler gained power. He learned to ignore the accusations that he had "sold out" by writing for films, even though said music was magnificent and worthy of Academy Awards for *The Sea Hawk* and *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex*.

It was immediately after the war years that he went back exclusively to writing "serious" music, as some might have said. Indeed, 1945 marked the year in which Korngold began to write the ravishing Concerto in D Major for Violin and Orchestra. Dedicated to the widow of Gustav Mahler, Alma Mahler-Werfel, he originally had in mind to have Bronisław Huberman play the work's premiere, but it was not to be so, as Huberman was not in the best of playing shape and somewhat busy helping to create the fledgling Israel Philharmonic.

As far as that premiere, this is what Korngold said: "In spite of the demand for virtuosity in the finale, the work with its many melodic and lyric episodes was contemplated rather for a Caruso than for a Paganini. It is needless to say how delighted I am to have my concerto performed by Caruso and Paganini in one person: Jascha Heifetz."

Program Notes

continued

Symphony No. 4 in A Major, Op. 90, "Italian"

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was another of that ilk of composers who fascinate us all with a talent that was revealed at early age when most of us were still contemplating the difficulties of writing in cursive. Despite admonitions from his mother's brother, Jakob, to turn him away from the becoming a professional musician ("no kind of career, no life, no goal"), young Felix gave his first full-length piano recital at age ten. His beloved sister Fanny had already amazed the family by playing J. S. Bach's entire *Well-Tempered Klavier* from memory. No shortage of brilliance in this family, apparently.

In addition to his musical gifts, Mendelssohn was a linguist and able to draw beautifully accurate renditions of drawings which were all over his journals. He is also said to have lead a revival of sorts for the music of Bach. While not entirely forgotten, Mendelssohn's performance of the *St. Matthew Passion* (as a conductor/arranger) helped to curry enthusiasm for Bach's music.

Musicologist Michael Steinberg notes in his book, *The Symphony*, the following: "When he died, he was burnt out by his non-stop composing, traveling, conducting, playing. Being charming all the time must have been draining, too. Fanny's death was a blow his fragile ecology could not take." Thus, we lost a luminary of the first half of the nineteenth century, whose amazing work we still celebrate today and onward.

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge our concert benefactors, Dr. Leonard & Karen Nordstrom, and Allan & Deborah Schneider. These friends have been supporting the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra and the arts in Bloomington for decades. We are grateful for their impact and encouragement.

The Bloomington Symphony would like to recognize the late Mr. & Mrs. Bernard M. Granum for the donation of the Adams timpani set, given in 2003. Their gift is an enduring legacy to the BSO.

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Featured Performers



Manny Laureano
Music Director & Conductor

Photo by Dawn Anderson

The Bloomington Symphony appointed **Manny Laureano** the Artistic Director and Conductor in April 2013. Laureano has worked with a variety of ensembles, ranging in roles from the Music Director of the Calhoun-Isles Community Band in Minneapolis, and Music Director of the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, to several appearances in Young People's Concerts with the Minnesota Orchestra. He has been in demand as a clinician for youth orchestras and bands throughout the state of Minnesota.

In 2002, Manny and his wife Claudette were invited to guest conduct the National Suzuki Youth Orchestra Festival Orchestra and were invited to serve again in 2004. Manny served as Co-Artistic Director of the Minnesota Youth Symphonies (MYS) from 1988-2020. Laureano served as Assistant Conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra during the 2005-06 season and served as conductor of the 2008-09 Minnesota All-State Orchestra.

Manny was the conductor for concerts given by Musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra at Lake Harriet and various Twin Cities high schools, as well as for a Young Person's Concert for inner city youth in North Minneapolis under the auspices of the ACME/El Sistema program. He is also in demand as a guest conductor of community orchestras and clinician for school ensembles all over the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Manny and Claudette live in Plymouth, Minnesota.

Lorelei Schoenhard is a ninth grader at Saint John's Prep in Collegeville, Minnesota. Since third grade, she has studied violin with Marion Judish, professor emeritus of Saint Cloud State University. On most Monday nights, Lorelei can be found at Orchestra Hall, where she is a concertmaster of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphony (GTCYS).

In 2023 and 2024, she performed with the Saint Cloud Symphony and Minnetonka Symphony, after winning their concerto competitions. In recent years, she has won her age divisions in solo competitions sponsored by the Schubert Club, Minnesota String & Orchestra Teachers Association, and Music Teachers National Association. She has been a finalist in the Minnesota Orchestra's YPSCA concerto competition. She has been featured on NPR's From the Top.

As a chamber musician, Lorelei has performed in the Saint Paul Chamber Music Institute and Stringwood Chamber Music Festival. She continues at the Artaria Chamber Music School. With her string quartet, she has played benefits for GTCYS, Classical MPR, and the Minnesota Orchestra.

Last summer, she toured France and Spain with GTCYS, then attended the Boston University Tanglewood Institute, where she was a soloist for children's concerts, a participant in masterclasses, and a concertmaster of the Young Artists' Orchestra. When she isn't playing her violin, Lorelei like to practice her piano, build LEGO, and downhill ski.



Lorelei Schoenhard
Violin

Personnel

Violin I

Michael Sutton
Concertmaster
John Wiggins Memorial Chair
Jennifer Volby
Associate Principal
Kelly Carter
Assistant Principal
Deonne Gray
Erik Lange
Lori Pommer
Renee Rasmussen
Karen Thomas
Jon West
Theresa Wise

Violin II

John Holm
Principal
Kiana Welsch
Assistant Principal
Emily Anderson
Karen Bottge
Jenna Carr
Akiko Durbin
Thomas O'Keefe+
Kristin Parker
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Barbara Whiteman-Brown

Viola

Chris Chelgren
Principal
Violin Guild Chair
Sarah Oxendale
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Will Schatz
Julia Wells

Cello

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Associate Principal
Sylvia Pickett Memorial Chair
Greg Marget
Assistant Principal
Jane Amundson
Katherine Canon
Matthew Cummins
Matthew Maxam
Tom Niemisto
Alex Steil

Bass

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Principal
John Bulger
Associate Principal
Gary Hede
Thomas Pieper
Rahn Yanes+

Harp

Elisa Schiller

Keyboard

Franco Holder+

Flute

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Principal
Ruth Giles Chair
Jeeyoun Kang
Bianca Najera

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Bianca Najera

Oboe

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Principal
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Clarinet

Karen Hansen Gurstelle
Principal
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Peregrine Hartmark+
Karen Hansen Gurstelle Chair

Bass Clarinet

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Bassoon

Ford Campbell+
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Nancy Jacobson

Horn

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Principal
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Brian Wistrom+

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Ben Bussey+

Tuba

Michael Werner
Principal

Timpani

Trevor Haining

Percussion

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Julie Henry+
Nathan Orcutt
Greg Wood

+ substitute player

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Manny Laureano
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String section players are listed in alphabetical order. String section personnel, with the exception of titled players, rotate on a per-concert basis.

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Contact our office with any corrections.

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- Collaboration
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The Bloomington Symphony Orchestra believes that music is something that all people - regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, mental or physical abilities, or economic status - can and should be able to enjoy. As an equal-opportunity organization, we welcome the unique contributions and perspectives brought by our musicians, staff, board members, audience members, community leaders, and the general public. We strive to treat all people with the respect we know they deserve.

Bloomington Symphony Orchestra

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