

# The Force of Destiny

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2020

7:30 PM

Vance Brand Civic Auditorium

Elliot Moore, conductor

Andrew Sords, violin

Longmont Youth Symphony,

Keynes Chen, director



*La forza del destino*: Overture

GIUSEPPE VERDI

*The Red Violin*: Chaconne for Violin and Orchestra

JOHN CORIGLIANO

**Mr. Sords**

~ INTERMISSION ~

"La Campanella" from Violin Concerto No. 2

NICOLO PAGANINI

**Mr. Sords**

*Pini di Roma* (*Pines of Rome*)

OTTORINO RESPIGHI

*I pini de Villa Borghese* (*The Pines of the Villa Borghese*)

*Pini presso una catacomba* (*Pines Near a Catacomb*)

*I pini del Gianicolo* (*The Pines of the Janiculum*)

*I pini della via Appia* (*The Pines of the Appian Way*)

**Side-by-side with the Longmont Youth Symphony**

## LSO Afterglow Party

Please join us directly following the concert

at **Longmont Public House**

(1111 Francis Street)

for happy hour food & drink specials.

# ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

## About Andrew Sords

American violinist Andrew Sords has a celebrated career as a soloist on four continents and in performances with his trio. Having collaborated with 300 orchestras, Sords has been cited for combining visceral virtuosity with a ravishing tone, while international critics endorse Sords as “a fully formed artist” (*Kalisz-Poland News*), “utterly radiant” (*Canada’s Arts Forum*), and “exceptionally heartfelt and soulful” (*St. Maarten’s Daily Herald*). Sords has received numerous awards and distinctions reflecting his career trajectory, including the 2012 Pittsburgh Concert Society Career Grant and the 2005 National Shirley Valentin Award.

Born in Newark, Delaware, Sords was raised in Shaker Heights, Ohio, and asked for piano lessons at age five. A year later, he began studying violin with Liza Grossman, and continued studies with Linda Cerone, David Russell, and Chee-Yun Kim at the ENCORE School for Strings, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and Southern Methodist University. As a teenager, Sords garnered prizes from concerto competitions, signed with management, and cultivated a media and audience following from hundreds of interviews, profiles, and appearances.

In the 2019-20 and 2020-21 seasons, Andrew Sords will tour extensively with the Beethoven sonata and piano trio cycles, the Triple Concerto, and the Violin Concerto in celebration of the composer’s 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. These appearances will include far-flung venues such as Australia, Mexico, Quebec, the Caribbean, the Canary Islands, and across the United States. Sords returns to the Peninsula Symphony (Sords/Walz/Durkovic) and North State Symphony (Sords/Anderson/Anderson) with Beethoven; appears with the Mississippi Valley Orchestra (Tchaikovsky); visits the Juneau Symphony (Bruch); trots out

Saint-Saëns with the Carson City Symphony; and continues touring with baritone Daniel Singer and pianist Elizabeth DeMio featuring the obscure “6 Gesänge” by Louis Spohr. Uniting with John Walz (cello) and Timothy Durkovic (piano), Sords will appear in several all-Beethoven programs throughout the Los Angeles area, including return appearances at Pasadena’s Boston Court Concert Series and the St. Cross Music Guild. Following a tradition of annual tours in Canada, Sords will make his British Columbia debut with a tour visiting the North Okanagan Concert Association, the Kelowna Concert Association, and the Evergreen Concert Series (Vancouver), and in 2020, travels north to Whitehorse Concerts (Yukon Territory). Also in 2020, Sords makes debuts on the Barrie Concert Series (Ontario), Lakeshore Chamber Music (Montreal), and the Caledon Series (Toronto)—all with pianist Cheryl Duvall.

In recent seasons, Sords has appeared with the El Paso Symphony, Flagstaff Symphony, Brevard Symphony, Pueblo Symphony, Spartanburg Philharmonic, Southeastern Ohio Symphony, Des Moines Orchestra, Grand Junction Symphony, Durham Chamber Orchestra, Longmont Symphony, Guatemala’s “Festival Bravissimo,” Oakland Symphony, Windsor Symphony, Motor City Symphony, Kalisz Philharmonic (Poland), North State Symphony, Chattanooga Symphony, Cleveland Philharmonic, Boulder Chamber Orchestra, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, Toronto Philharmonia, Gulf Coast Symphony, Melbourne Chamber Symphony, and both the Elgar and Dvořák concerti at Toronto’s famed Glenn Gould Studio.

As a prolific recitalist, Sords has appeared in La Jolla, Washington, D.C., Maui, New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, and at St. Augustine’s (FL) EMMA Series at Flagler College. **andrewsords.com**

# THE FORCE OF DESTINY PROGRAM

## **Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901): Overture to *La Forza del Destino* (*The Force of Destiny*)**

In June of 1861, Verdi signed a contract to provide an opera for the next season of the Imperial Opera in St. Petersburg. He chose Don Alvaro, or the Force of Destiny, a play by Angel de Saavedra, the Duke of Rivas. Francesco Maria Piave, who provided the librettos for *Ernani*, *Macbeth*, *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata*, was asked to convert the Duke's play into an opera libretto titled *La Forza del Destino*.

"It is an opera of huge dimensions, and it needs special care," said Verdi upon arrival in St. Petersburg in November. But the leading soprano fell ill and the production was postponed until the following year. After the first performance on November 10, 1862, Verdi's wife reported "excellent success...a good performance by all, singers, chorus and orchestra."

Verdi made a number of changes in the opera for the La Scala production in 1869, most notably in the overture. The Russian version had begun with a short orchestral prelude. For Milan he provided a real overture, containing themes from the opera. It begins with the six unison brass chords representing the tragic fate of the principal characters. Then allusions are made to the tenor-baritone duet from Act IV and Leonora's second act aria and duet with the abbot.

Robert Boas writes: "The overture makes no attempt to provide a microcosm of the drama, like such pieces as Beethoven's *Leonore No. 3* and Wagner's *Meistersinger Prelude*, but forms an exciting orchestral movement which puts the listener in the right frame of mind for what is to follow."

## **John Corigliano (b. 1938): *The Red Violin: Chaconne for Violin and Orchestra***

Corigliano has been surrounded by music all his life. His father was the concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic for 23 years. His mother was an accomplished pianist. Young John worked at WQXR and Columbia Records, and studied with Otto Luening, Paul Creston and Victor Giannini. Corigliano holds the position of Distinguished Professor of Music at Lehman College, City University of New York, and serves on the faculty at the Juilliard School of Music. He was composer-in-residence with the Chicago Symphony from 1987 to 1990. His works include concertos for piano, flute, clarinet and oboe; three symphonies; the opera *The Ghost of Versailles*, based on the third of Beaumarchais' "Figaro" trilogy; and *Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan*. He won an Academy Award for his score to the film *The Red Violin*. The Chaconne was first played by Joshua Bell, who was the violinist on the movie soundtrack, on November 25, 1997, with Robert Spano conducting the San Francisco Symphony.

Corigliano says the Chaconne "draws upon music I composed for the film of the same name. The film spans three centuries in the life of a magnificent but haunted violin in its travels through space and time. A story this episodic needed to be tied together with a single musical idea. For this purpose I used the Baroque device of a chaconne: a repeated pattern of chords upon which the music is built.

"Against the chaconne chords I juxtaposed Anna's theme, a lyrical yet intense melody representing the violin builder's doomed

wife. From these elements I wove a series of virtuosic études for the solo violin, which followed the instrument from country to country, century to century.

"I composed these elements before the actual filming, because the actors needed to imitate actual performance of the music. Then, while the film itself was shot, I made—from Anna's theme, the chaconne, and the études—this concert work. While I scored the film just for the soloist and string orchestra (to emphasize the 'stringness' of the picture), I composed this 17-minute concert work for violin and full orchestra."

*"As The Red Violin: Chaconne for Violin and Orchestra begins, diaphanous ascending string lines unveil the chaconne chords, voiced in incantatory dotted rhythms, in low winds and brass. Then solo violin and orchestra utter, and expand on, Anna's theme. Virtuosic études quicken the pace, leading to a rushing climax; these yield to a stratospherically high, gravely slow melody, which remembers, against slowly shifting string sonorities, Anna's romantic theme. The string chords louden, strengthen with winds and brass: then the soloist reclaims, in determined accents this time, the diaphanous string line that opened the score. The orchestra halts to launch the soloist's cadenza, impetuous and songful by turns: then the chaconne, in strings chords rendered brittle by sharp attacks with the wood of the bow, gradually climax in a grand tutti restatement of the incantatory opening and a whirlwind coda for all."*

## **Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840): Violin Concerto No. 2 in B minor, Op. 7 (La Campanella)**

"I have wept but three times in my life," Rossini once said, "the first, on the failure of my earliest opera; the second, in a boat when a turkey stuffed with truffles fell overboard; and the third, the first time I heard Paganini play." The great violinist's prodigious technique and showmanship inspired all sorts of rumors, including the notion that he had sold his soul to the devil.

Paganini's first two violin concertos were written for his first international tour. "After Christmas I'm going to give a concert at the Teatro San Carlo and I will play my first concerto, which I haven't played in Naples," he wrote to a friend late in 1826. "I will play my second (with a bell obbligato) if I give another...I want to play these concertos for my countrymen before performing them in Vienna, London, and Paris." True to his word, the Second Concerto was introduced in Naples on January 30, 1827.

When he played the Concerto in Vienna, the critics and audiences were ecstatic. "To analyze his performance is utterly impossible, and numerous rehearsals avail but little," wrote one. "When we say that he performs incredible difficulties with as clear and pure an intonation as another, when we say that in his hands the violin sounds more beautiful and more moving than any human voice, that his ardent soul pours a quickening glow into every heart; when we say that every singer can learn from him, this is still inadequate to give

# THE FORCE OF DESTINY PROGRAM (continued)

an impression of a single feature of his playing. He must be heard, and heard again, to be believed."

The subtitle *La Campanella* (*The Little Bell*) derives from the tune in the last movement, in which the triangle and solo violin imitate each other. Franz Liszt wrote a piano fantasy on the melody.

## **Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936): *Pini di Roma* (*The Pines of Rome*)**

Elsa Respighi records that in 1920 her husband "asked me to sing for him the songs I sang as a child at play...The request surprised me and I was most amused to see Ottorino taking down the simple tunes that Italian children have sung for centuries." Four years later, those same melodies would surface in the opening section of *The Pines of Rome*. It is the second of the "Roman trilogy" of symphonic poems, the others being *The Fountains of Rome* and *Roman Festivals*.

Bernardino Molinari conducted the first performance of *The Pines of Rome* on December 14, 1924 in Rome. Despite some isolated booing, the work was a success. "Let them boo," said Respighi, "what do I care?"

For performances in the United States, Respighi provided his own program note: "While in *The Fountains of Rome* the composer sought to reproduce by means of tone an impression of nature, in *The Pines of Rome* he uses nature as a point of departure, to recall memories and visions. The century-old trees which dominate so characteristically the Roman landscape become testimony for the principal events in Roman life."

Respighi and Claudio Guastalla developed a program for the work, which is printed in the score:

"1. 'The Pines of the Villa Borghese:' Children are at play in the pine grove of the Villa Borghese, dancing the Italian equivalent of 'Ring around the Rosy'; mimicking marching soldiers and battles; twittering and shrieking like swallows at evening; and they disappear. Suddenly the scene changes to...

"2. 'The Pines near a Catacomb:' We see the shadows of the pines, which overhang the entrance of a catacomb. From the depths rises a chant which reechoes solemnly, like a hymn, and is then mysteriously silenced.

"3. 'The Pines of the Janiculum:' There is a thrill in the air. The full moon reveals the profile of the pines of Janiculum Hill. A nightingale sings.

"4. 'The Pines of the Appian Way:' Misty dawn on the Appian Way. The tragic country is guarded by solitary pines. Indistinctly, incessantly, the rhythm of innumerable steps. To the poet's fantasy appears a vision of past glories; trumpets blare, and the army of the Consul advances brilliantly in the grandeur of a newly risen sun toward the Sacred Way, mounting the Capitoline Hill."

A recording of a real nightingale is used in the third section because Respighi "simply realized that no combination of wind instruments could quite counterfeit the real bird's song. Not even a coloratura soprano could have produced an effect other than artificial."

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