

Dear Honors Symphony Orchestra Finalists,

Congratulations on being selected to the 2020 Honors Performance Series! As a highly accomplished and recognized musician, you bring great distinction to your teachers, your school, and your community. I'm very excited to meet all of you, and to share an incredible experience together performing in one of the most revered and famous concert venues in the world, Carnegie Hall!

As you begin to familiarize yourself with our repertoire, I would like to offer a few introductory thoughts.

First and foremost, bind the pages of each piece...you don't want to lose (or mix up) any pages!

The Damnation of Faust, Op. 24: Rákóczy March – Hector Berlioz

We open our program with a famous Hungarian march which was favored by Francis Rákóczy, a Hungarian nobleman. The trumpet fanfare at the very beginning is majestic and brilliant which then gives way to very regal folk themes – an exciting way to begin our concert!

Dusk – Steven Bryant

The technical definition of “dusk” is the period of time between sunset and nightfall. For many people, dusk is seen as a mysterious, almost magical time, serving as the bridge between the brightness of day and the darkness of night.

Composer Steven Bryant wrote the following about his composition, *Dusk*:

This simple, chorale-like work captures the reflective calm of dusk, paradoxically illuminated by the fiery hues of sunset. I'm always stuck by the dual nature of this experience, as if witnessing an event of epic proportions silently occurring in slow motion. “Dusk” is intended as a short, passionate evocation of this moment of dramatic stillness.

When we meet in January, I would love to exchange reflections about what dusk means to you, and what it looks/feels like in your part of the world. I live in Southern California, a few miles from the Pacific Ocean, and at dusk, the colors in the sky will often melt into the water with magnificent and unparalleled beauty.

Symphony No. 5 in e minor, Op. 64, IV. Finale (Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace) – Peter Tchaikovsky

Just imagine - you will be performing on the very stage where some of the most legendary figures in music history have also performed: Gustav Mahler, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Igor Stravinsky, and Leonard Bernstein, just to name a few. However, I wanted to include Peter Tchaikovsky in our program because of his connection to Carnegie Hall – he conducted his own *Festive Coronation March* on the opening night of Carnegie Hall on May 5, 1891 with the New York Symphony Orchestra.

Tchaikovsky composed Symphony No. 5 in 1888, and at the time, he had great self-doubt about how the work would be received – he even considered the ending of the Finale as a failure. And yet, this symphony has become one of Tchaikovsky's most popular works.

***The Comedians, II. Galop* – Dmitri Kabalevsky**

After the grandeur of the Tchaikovsky, I thought we would treat ourselves to a musical “amusement” with one of Dmitri Kabalevsky's most famous works, *The Comedians*, and in particular, the second movement, *Galop*. There is a prominent solo for xylophone, and although the piece is short in duration, it is packed with humor and excitement. We are going to have a blast!

Feel free to listen to the recordings of all four of our pieces by visiting this Dropbox link:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/dfsxvxtofngt1ws/AABA3VLMU2g ITEWgLGa_kcma?dl=0

(Please note that some of the tempos in the recordings might not reflect what our “comfort” level will be...!)

You are welcome to contact me with any questions about the music. I look forward to meeting you at our first rehearsal on Friday, January 31st!

Sincerely,



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