

PENINSULA *symphony*

Symphony Sounds

February 2015

48th Season, Number 2

Editor: Terri Zinkiewicz

Concert II

Sunday, February 22, 2015 at 7:00 PM

Redondo Union High School Auditorium
222 North Pacific Coast Highway
Redondo Beach, CA 90277

Czech-Mate
Andrew Sords, violin

PROGRAM

Smetana	"The Moldau" from <i>Má Vlast</i>
Mozart	Symphony No. 38 in D major, K. 504 ("Prague")
Dvořák	Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in A minor, Opus 53

CONCERT DETAILS

Doors open at 6:00 PM. Center-section seating is reserved for members at the Patron level and above.

Pre-concert lecture by **Maestro Berkson** at 6:15 PM for Symphony Association members and those with guest passes issued at the November 23, 2014 concert.

General public admitted at approx. 6:50 PM.

POST-CONCERT MEET THE PERFORMERS

After the concert, the audience is invited to remain in the auditorium and meet informally with our conductor, Gary Berkson, and with our soloist. The artists may make a few remarks about the performance, and then the audience will have an opportunity to ask questions. Please call our office at 544-0320 if you have any questions about this event.

Catching up on Peninsula Symphony News

The Peninsula Symphony's 48th season is well underway, including a group of intimate musical salons for both entertainment and fund-raising, our first concert (free of charge), a post-concert reception for higher-level Symphony Association members, and the preliminaries of the Edith Knox Young Artists Performance Competition.

The November 23, 2014 concert at Redondo Union High School auditorium was a crowd-pleaser, judging from the enthusiastic response of the concert-goers. The next concert, named "Czech-Mate," featuring violinist Andrew Sords, is on Sunday, February 22, 2015 at 7:00 PM at Redondo Union High School auditorium.

This edition of ***Symphony Sounds*** covers most of these events; a special edition of ***Symphony Sounds*** will feature the Knox competition just prior to the finals performance in April.

If you are still receiving ***Symphony Sounds*** via the regular mail, why not use email and save us the expense and trees? Regular mail has become very expensive, as has the printing. Please call the office at 544-0320 and leave a message including your email address.



Maestro Gary Berkson is currently in his sixth season as Music Director and Conductor of the Peninsula Symphony.

Music Preview (Please see the 2014-2015 Program Book that is distributed at all concerts for more detailed program notes.)

**“The Moldau” from *Má Vlast*
Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884)**

“The Moldau” is the second movement of the six-movement symphonic cycle called *Má Vlast* (“My Country” or “My Fatherland”). It is program music, in that it is intended to tell a story. The Moldau describes the flow of the Vltava River (The Moldau, in German), beginning simply from two mountain springs in Austria, through the city of Prague, and onto where it joins with the Elbe River. “The Moldau” was written in late 1874 and was first performed in 1875.

Bedřich Smetana is considered by many to be the father of Czech music. The opera *The Bartered Bride* and the symphonic cycle *Má Vlast*, are two of the composer’s most popular works. A piano prodigy, he studied music in Prague but moved to Gothenburg, Sweden, where he was a teacher and choirmaster, and where he wrote several orchestral works. After returning to Prague in the early 1860s he championed Czech opera. Although completely deaf by the end of 1874, he continued composing for the next several years.

**Symphony No. 38 in D major, K. 504
 (“Prague”)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)**

People of Prague were intrigued with Mozart in the 1780s due to the opera *The Marriage of Figaro*. This success led to a commission for the opera *Don Giovanni*. Mozart traveled to Prague for the first time in 1786, where he and his family were wined and dined. He had two public concerts and the “Prague” Symphony was premiered.

The “Prague” Symphony consists of three movements rather than Mozart’s more common form that includes a minuet as the third of four movements. It also makes more abundant use of wind instruments than most of his earlier symphonies. The wind instrumentalists in Bohemia at the time of the premiere were particularly skilled.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is one of the most loved Classical composers, and his work exerted a strong influence on contemporaries and those who followed. He was a child prodigy on keyboard and violin who left his home base of Salzburg and performed extensively throughout Europe as a child. He also composed from a very young age.

Mozart’s first employment was as a court musician in Salzburg. He later moved to Vienna as a freelance pianist and composer. Although he lived only thirty-six years, he composed over 600 works. He often wrote three or four piano concertos for a single concert season.

**Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in A
minor, Opus 53
Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)**

Dvořák’s only violin concerto, written during the composer’s Slavic period, was begun in 1879 and extensively revised in both 1880 and 1882 prior to its 1883 premiere in Prague.

The concerto begins with a very short orchestral introduction before the violin presents the folk-like main theme. The first movement flows straight into the second movement, without pause. The second movement, with its beautiful melodies, is sometimes presented as an independent concert piece. The third movement was inspired by a Czech folk dance, although the material is original.

Dvořák was born in 1841 outside of Prague and was the oldest of fourteen children. He studied organ, violin and piano, and when he began composing he supplemented his income by teaching piano and then as a church organist. He incorporated many rhythms from Bohemian folk music and is well known for his Slavonic Dances. Dvořák made several visits to England where he was very popular. The lure of big money at the National Conservatory of Music brought him to New York. During his time in the United States he wrote his cello concerto (performed by 2014 Knox winner Erick Chong and the Peninsula Symphony last season) and his famous Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Opus 95 (“From the New World”) that will be performed at the June 21, 2015 concert.

Soloist – Andrew Sords, violin

Andrew Sords was born in Delaware and studied both piano and violin as a young child, eventually studying at the Cleveland Institute of Music and Southern Methodist University. He performs a large repertoire of violin works. In this season alone he has scheduled Sibelius, Brahms, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, and Bruch concertos with orchestra, in addition to the piece that we will hear, the Dvořák Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in A minor, Opus 53. Sords has soloed with almost 150 orchestras and has performed on four continents. He lives in Shaker Heights, Ohio and is represented by EMC Artists, Ltd.



Past Events

First Concert on November 23, 2014

The first regular concert of the 2014-2015 season, entitled “Shall We Dance,” was an audience favorite. Maestro Berkson began with the pre-concert lecture for Symphony Association members. He described a few of his experiences conducting full-length, staged

ballets and indicated that he would also be conducting this concert “as if we have the dancers with us. It is a lot harder”. That means he would select tempos with specific dancers and their required steps in mind and maintain the proper character of the dance. Berkson is so comfortable with this genre that he spoke without notes, performed several excerpts on the piano without music, and conducted the full concert from memory.

The concert began with a character piece, the Mazurka, from *Coppélia*. The orchestra then played three selections from *Swan Lake* that were both beautiful and familiar to most of the audience. Next was ballet music from *Faust* that illustrated a key difference between the Tchaikovsky Russian ballet music and the French ballet music of Gounod. The latter is much lighter, and the orchestra was challenged to both perform in character and to keep the appropriate tempos for the imaginary dancers.

Following intermission, the orchestra performed a pas de deux from *Don Quixote*, and those who attended the pre-concert lecture were challenged to imagine when the male dancer was initiating and landing his leaps, and when the female soloist was doing delicate, complex footwork on pointe.

The final selection for the evening was *Le boeuf sur le toit* by 20th century composer Darius Milhaud. Berkson gave a short tutorial from the podium, using the orchestra to demonstrate a few things that the audience should listen for. They then closed out the concert by performing this approximately twenty-minute work.



Post-Concert Reception at Ws China Bistro

Symphony Association members at the Sponsor level and above were invited to a reception immediately following the concert at Ws China Bistro in Redondo Beach. Attendees enjoyed delicious appetizers and desserts while sharing interesting conversation regarding the concert they just attended and future plans for the orchestra. Thanks to Mona Gifford and Inga Liden and their team for coordinating this fun event.

Musical Salon

Carolyn and Julian Elliott's beautiful home in Palos Verdes Estates was the setting for an exciting evening salon featuring Brett Deubner on viola, and Maestro Gary Berkson at the piano. The October 11 event featured several compositions from the viola repertoire, including three selections from Album Leaves, Opus 39 by Hans Sitt; two selections from Small Pieces, Opus 213 by Carl Reinecke; Suite for Unaccompanied Viola by Frank Levy; and Sonata No. 1 in F minor, Opus 120, No.1 by Johannes Brahms.

Deubner is familiar to Peninsula Symphony audiences, having performed twice with the orchestra, most recently playing alongside violinist Elizabeth Pitcairn in Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for Violin, Viola and Orchestra in February, 2014. Deubner and Berkson generously donated their services to this Peninsula Symphony fundraiser.



Brett Deubner, viola and Gary Berkson, piano

An Extraordinary Evening

Approximately fifty Symphony Association members and friends gathered at Marion Ruth's Rolling Hills home in late October for a fundraiser called An Extraordinary Evening. The featured speaker was Annika Löf Berkson, former professional dancer with the Royal Swedish Ballet. In addition to being a long-time member of one of the finest and oldest ballet companies in the world, Ms. Berkson has choreographed performances with the Royal Swedish Opera and the National Theatre Touring Company. She has taught at the Royal Swedish Ballet, using methods that she developed herself. Ms. Berkson had recently returned from an extended trip to her native Sweden. She did an excellent job relating the history of ballet from its beginning to today. She also showed videos of staged excerpts danced to the ballet music programmed for the Peninsula Symphony's opening concert. Annika currently resides in La Quinta with her husband, Maestro Gary Berkson.



Above, the guests gather in Marion Ruth's living room to get ready for Annika Berkson's lecture and video presentation.

Left, Annika Löf Berkson responds to comments and questions during her presentation.

A Winter Salon

Continuing its tradition of intimate, fund-raising salon performances in private homes, Symphony Association members gathered at David and Lenita Witherspoon's Rolling Hills Estates home on January 10 and enjoyed a delicious, light brunch and the violin talents of Jorge Avila. El Camino College's Kenner Bailey accompanied on piano.

Jorge Avila, a Honduran native, was granted resident status in the United States under the "Extraordinary Talent" category. He received his Bachelor of Music and Professional Studies diploma from the Mannes College of Music in New York City.

Avila was awarded first prize at the 2001 Mu Phi Epsilon International Music Competition. He is in town to attend the Palos Verdes/South Bay Alumni chapter's 50th anniversary Celebration Banquet. Avila is represented by Price Rubin & Partners.

**Meet a Community Player**

Symphony Sounds continues its new column called "Meet a Community Player." Approximately half of the Symphony musicians are community players who attend weekly rehearsals for the joy of making music with their colleagues. Many were music majors who moved to careers in other fields. All have interesting stories to tell. The last issue highlighted Paul Wehrman, a violinist. This issue features Sophia Momand, a cellist.

Sophia Momand resides in Torrance. She has been a member of the cello section since 2008. In addition to cello, she also plays classical guitar, harmonica, and banjo. She loves discovering all of the different kinds of musical expressions in classical music and equates it to reading a book with your ears. She also loves the people in the symphony and considers us "very lucky to have the best conductor west of the Mississippi."

Momand is a Board Certified family doctor who works at the Cal State University – Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) Student Health Center. She is also an inmate jail physician for the Long Beach police department. She was a finalist for the 2013 Presidential Citizens Medal for medically helping the homeless population of Los Angeles and Long Beach. She started the H.O.P.E. (Homeless Outreach Promoting Empathy) club at CSUDH, and she often takes students with her to treat the homeless and give out hygiene kits.

Sophia loves to play baroque music, and she started a baroque chamber group called The Corelli Ensemble that performs free concerts for the general public. Future plans call for a baroque children's program to expose kids to this type of music. Sophia's other hobbies include tap dancing, hiking, and bicycle riding. She also loves to organize special treats and events for the orchestra members and is one of the Symphony's key cheerleaders.



Sophia Momand and her cello, in a photo taken by Chris Stillians for the 2013-2014 Program Book cover.

Future Events

General Meeting of the Peninsula Symphony Association

The Symphony Association's annual meeting is scheduled for **Monday, March 23, 2015**. The Board meeting begins at 7:30 PM and the annual membership meeting will follow, at approximately **9:00 PM**. All Symphony Association members are eligible to attend either or both meetings.

The primary item of business at the annual meeting is the election of new Board members for the 2015-2016 term. The Nominating Committee will present a list of candidates. Association members attending this meeting may nominate additional candidates and may also vote. Please call the Symphony Association office (310-544-0320) if you plan to attend, so that we have sufficient capacity for all attendees. You will receive additional details about the meeting location when you call.

2015 Edith Knox Young Artists Performance Competition News

The application deadline for the 2015 competition was January 15. The 17 entrants ranged in age from 12 to 24. Preliminaries were held Saturday, February 7 at Harbor College. Each contestant performed, from memory, a work for solo instrument and orchestra in its entirety from the standard repertoire. For the first time, Symphony Association members at the level of Benefactor and above were invited to attend the preliminary competition. Parents and teachers were also allowed to hear their children and students but not the other competitors. The panel of three judges selected five individuals to perform in the competition finals in Redondo Beach on Sunday, April 19. All finalists will receive cash prizes following their Redondo Beach performances. Symphony Association members and the general public are invited to this Young Artists' Showcase. The names of the finalists and more information on the competition and prior winners can be found on our website at www.pensym.org and in an upcoming edition of **Symphony Sounds**.

Edith Knox Young Artists Performance Competition Finals April 19, 2015 at 2:00 PM

The five finalists in the 2015 Edith Knox Young Artists Performance Competition will perform in full concert dress with their accompanists for professional judging. The first-prize winner will be announced at the end of the program and will perform as soloist with the Peninsula Symphony at the June 21, 2015 concert. These events are free and are open to the public.

Concert III Sunday, May 3, 2015 at 7:00 PM *From Russia With Love* Robert Thies, piano

Britten	<i>Russian Funeral</i>
Prokofiev	Concerto No. 3 for Piano and Orchestra in C major, Opus 26
Tchaikovsky	Symphony No. 2 in C minor, Opus 17 ("Little Russian")

Concert IV The Norris Foundation Concert June 21, 2015 at 7:00 PM *Brave New World* 2015 Edith Knox Young Artists Competition Winner Soloist

Sousa	<i>The Dwellers in the Western World</i>
TBA	Concerto performed by the Knox Competition winner
Dvořák	Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Opus 95 ("From the New World")

New Programs for Contributions That Cost You Nothing

Ralphs Community Contributions Program

The Peninsula Symphony is now a participant in Ralphs Community Contributions Program. Participants pay nothing; Ralphs will donate between 1% and 4% of your eligible purchases, based on a sliding scale. Simply register your Ralphs rewards card online at www.ralphs.com in order to link it to the Peninsula Symphony Association. Then every time you shop for groceries at Ralphs and swipe your card, the Peninsula Symphony will automatically receive a donation. You should see the following note at the bottom of your Ralphs receipt, "At your request, Ralphs is donating to the Peninsula Symphony Association". Ralphs will not share your personal information with anyone.

Some of you may already be signed up for this program with other charitable organizations. Ralphs only allows its rewards card to be linked to one organization at a time. You may, however, switch your linkage periodically to benefit another organization.

eScrip Program

The Peninsula Symphony is also a new participant in the eScrip program. This is a well-established program in use across the country. As with the Ralphs program, participants pay nothing; merchants such as Vons, Pavilions, Bristol Farms, and Hof's Hut will donate a percentage of your eligible purchases. Register your cards online at www.eScrip.com in order to link them to the Peninsula Symphony Association. Some of you may already be signed up for this program with other charitable organizations. EScrip allows your card(s) to be linked to up to three organizations at a time, so please consider adding the Peninsula Symphony Association. Vons and Pavilions purchases need to be paid via cash, gift cards or debit cards to generate the donations.

Peninsula Symphony – A Short History

The mission of the Peninsula Symphony is to perform free orchestral concerts of music chosen for the mutual pleasure of audience and

musicians, to enrich the lives of the diverse population of Palos Verdes and the South Bay, to cultivate a love of music by providing community education and family entertainment, and to achieve recognized artistic excellence in the performance of the highest quality music.

The Peninsula Symphony was founded by Maestro Joseph Valenti in March, 1967. It grew from twelve to fifty musicians by the first concert on December 1, 1967 at Rolling Hills High School. Later venues included Palos Verdes High School, Redondo Union High School, and Rolling Hills Covenant Church. Summer concerts have been held in various outdoor locations in addition to the regular venues. Last season we returned to Redondo Union High School and are performing all of our concerts and the Knox Competition finals in their renovated auditorium.

Most concerts involve sixty to eighty musicians, but that number went as high as 120 in February, 1981.

Maestro Valenti led the orchestra from its inception through the 2007-2008 season, when he was named Founding Conductor Emeritus. The following season, each of four conductor finalists conducted one of the regular concerts. Based on evaluations by the Search Committee, the orchestra and audience members, Maestro Gary Berkson was named Music Director and Conductor, the post he holds today.

This is the Peninsula Symphony's 48th season and the 43rd year for the Edith Knox Young Artists Performance Competition.

Enjoy the Next Concert

**Czech-Mate
Andrew Sords, violin**

**Sunday, February 22, 2015 at 7:00 PM
Redondo Union High School
Auditorium**



Post Office Box 2602
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Contact Information

Any questions or requests about the Peninsula Symphony, the Peninsula Symphony Association or ***Symphony Sounds*** should be sent to the Peninsula Symphony Association office. We will route your message to the appropriate person.

The Peninsula Symphony Association
Post Office Box 2602
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

The office is normally staffed from 9:00 AM to noon on Monday and Friday. You may call at any time (310-544-0320) and leave a message on our answering machine, but phone replies will usually be made only during normal staffing hours. You can also e-mail us at music.pensym@verizon.net. General information about the Symphony (current season schedule, maps and directions, etc.) can be found on our website (www.pensym.org).

Other contacts are:

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Music Director/Conductor, Gary Berkson conductor.pensym@verizon.net