NORTHWEST IOWA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
2013-2014 CONCERT SERIES

Verdi vs. Wagner

Tuesday, November 12, 2013
7:30 pm in the Bj Haan Auditorium
on the campus of Dordt College

The Year of the Composer

Shannon Salyards
Russell Svenningsen
Welcome,

We begin “The Year of the Composer” -- our opening night! The orchestra is back, the Friends’ truffles are back, and conductor Christopher Stanichar is back! On behalf of the Board of Directors, I welcome you and thank you for attending.

The season will be filled with wonderful music in diverse styles and sizes. We will also ask your help in fundraising with two events planned. First will be a repeat of the Celebrity Conductor Contest with the winner directing the orchestra for one number at the February Pops Concert. Secondly, we have planned a Visual Arts Auction for the Spring Concert. Featured will be string instruments and furniture painted by area artists with an emphasis on musical motifs. Details will follow; watch NISO NOTES and publicity announcements.

Enjoy an evening of wonderful music and the Friends’ truffles at intermission.

Musically yours,
Norma Snyder Jones
NISO Board Chairperson
PROGRAM

THE NORTHWEST IOWA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Christopher Stanichar, Conductor
Shannon Salyards, Soprano
Russell Svenningsen, Tenor

12 November 2013

VERDI

Triumphal March from Aïda

Prelude to La Traviata

Anvil Chorus from Il Trovatore

“Sempre Libera” from La Traviata
(see text in program notes)

“La Donna e mobile” from Rigoletto
(see text in program notes)

Overture to La Forza del Destino

Intermission

WAGNER

Overture to Act III from Lohengrin

“Prize Song” from Die Meistersinger
(see text in program notes)

Festmarsch from Tannhauser

Prelude and Liebestod from Tristan und Isolde
(see text in program notes)

Ride of the Valkyries

Please Note:
Flash photography and the use of recording devices is prohibited during NISO concerts.
Please disable all cell phones and pagers.
The year 2013 marks bicentennials for two of the greatest composers of opera: Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner. Both were born in the same year and both faced savage criticism during their careers. Both produced their first major operas (Nabucco and Rienzi, respectively) before age thirty. But the similarities stop there: Verdi, born to a poor, rural family near Busseto, showed early talent and moved to Milan for formal study. Wagner hailed from a large family in Leipzig but drifted for years, picking up ad hoc lessons here and there.

Verdi was largely content to work and succeed within the framework of opera as entertainment. His operas all but define bel canto, a melodic style dominated by singers and singable tunes backed up by an orchestra. Wagner, however, wrote for more than entertainment. He sought radical transformation of opera into gesamtkunstwerk--a “total art” that possesses the listener’s soul. Wagner’s orchestra is no mere accompaniment to the singers, but an equal partner in the telling of a story.

Verdi chose for his operas stories based on historical figures or Shakespearean drama: Macbeth, Otello, and Falstaff. His operas tell stories that are international in scope; exactly 100 years after Handel’s Judas Maccabæus, Verdi’s Nabucco served to link the fate of the Jews to that of all oppressed people. Wagner took up stories of legends and mythology as a vehicle for his notorious nationalism. To this day, his music is still considered taboo in Israel.

Their legacies likewise diverge. Verdi, a competent businessman, bequeathed his estate to the Casa di Reposo per Musicisti in Milan, a charity dedicated to helping poor and retired musicians. Wagner’s brick-and-mortar legacy is the Bayreuth Festspielhaus, a hall specially built by patron Ludwig II for the sole purpose of staging Wagner’s operas.

At Verdi’s death, biographer Richard Osbourne recounts “Two hundred thousand people lined the black-draped streets of Milan to say farewell to the greatest and most popular Italian of the nineteenth century.” Wagner, however, “…ended his stormy course with hardly a single friend. Followers he had in the last days, parasites he had in plenty, but no friends whose names rang through Europe as the old names had done. One by one he had used them all for his own purposes; one by one he had lost them by his unreasonableness and his egoism.” (Biographer Ernest Newman)

Triumphal March from Aïda - Egyptian Khedive Ismail the Magnificent (1830-1895) stated in 1879, “My country is no longer in Africa; we are now part of Europe. It is therefore natural for us to abandon our former ways and to adopt a new system adapted to our social conditions.” As one part of his grand drive to “Europify” Egypt, he commissioned Verdi to compose an opera on Egyptian themes. Verdi’s long-time partner Antonio Ghislanzoni penned the libretto and Aïda was premiered with success in Cairo in 1871.

The title role of Aïda portrays an Ethiopian princess secretly living as a slave in Egypt. Her loyalties are torn when her Ethiopian father attacks Thebes and her Egyptian lover Radamès is placed in command and tasked with repelling the invasion. Act II opens with Radamès’s army marching triumphant from their victory with trumpets and dance.
Overture to La Forza del Destino - A classic tale of star-crossed lovers set in 18th century Spain: The Marquis of Calatrava forbids his daughter, Leonora, to marry Alvaro, an Incan in a society not given to racial tolerance. Alvaro kills the marquis and escapes into the military, where he conceals his identity and befriends Leonora’s brother Carlo. Carlo eventually discovers Alvaro’s secret and confronts him. The overture introduces the dreadful “Fate” motive: three ominous E-flats played in unison by the brass, as if the orchestra itself were intoning the word Des-ti-no! Throughout the opera and at the final moment when a vengeful Carlo finally stabs his own sister, these three notes announce that the lovers’ fate is inescapable.

Prelude to La Traviata - Working with librettist Francesco Piave, Verdi adapted Alexandre Dumas’s La Dame aux Camelias, a tale of a courtesan who finds love with a nobleman but denies herself to avoid bringing scandal to his good name. Verdi’s brief and borderline schizophrenic prelude juxtaposes the glib, party life of a courtesan and the profound sadness Violetta will endure. For all its popularity today, the opera was a flop at its premiere in Milan. The soprano starring as Violetta sang well but was far too old (aged 38!) and overweight to be convincing as a “strayed woman.” Verdi famously wrote to a friend, “La traviata last night a failure. Was the fault mine or the singers? Time will tell.”

“Anvil Chorus” from Il Trovatore - Verdi began working with Salvadore Cammarano in 1850 to adapt El trovador by Antonio García Gutiérrez. Set in Zaragoza during the 15th century, it chronicles the gypsy Azucena, who is sworn to avenge the wrongful death of her mother. Act II opens as dawns breaks over the gypsy camp. Men swing hammers onto anvils (whence the English nickname), singing the praises of hard work, strong drink and gypsy women.

“Sempre Libera” from La Traviata - In Act I, surrounded by all the heartless men that claim her in one way or another, Violetta is momentarily struck by the thought that she might settle down with the charming Don Alfredo. He is clearly smitten by her and invites her to leave the city and live with him in the countryside. She toys with the idea, but even as Alfredo sings his love for her, she resigns herself to the reality that it will never be.

**Sempre libera degg’io folleggiare di gioia in gioia, vo’che scorra il viver mio per sentieri del piacer. Nasce il giorno, o il giorno muoia, sempre lieta ne’ ritiroi, a diletto sempre nuovi dee volare il mio pensier.**

Oh! Amore! Follie! Gior!

Free and aimless I frolic from joy to joy, flowing along the surface of life’s path as I please. As the day is born, or as the day dies, happily I turn to the new delights that make my spirit soar.

Oh, Love! Madness! Euphoria!
La Donna e mobile from Rigoletto - Rigoletto serves as jester for the philandering Duke of Mantua, blithely assisting in the conquest of every woman in sight...until the Duke sets his sights on Rigoletto’s own daughter, Gilda. After the Duke’s initial advances, Rigoletto and Gilda secretly plot to assassinate the Duke. The Duke is confused by Gilda’s change of demeanor towards him and he sings of women’s fickleness.

La donna è mobile qual piuma al vento,  
muta d’accento e di pensiero.  
Sempre un amabile, leggiadro viso,  
in pianto o in riso, è menzognero.  
La donna è mobile’. Qual piuma al vento, muta d’accento e di pensier’!

È sempre misero chi a lei s’affida,  
chi le confida mai cauto il core! Pur mai non sentesi felice appieno chi su quel seno non liba amore!

A woman is flighty. Like a feather in the wind, she changes in voice and in thought. Always a lovely, pretty face, in tears or in laughter, it’s untrue. A woman is flighty. Like a feather in the wind, she changes in voice and in thought!

Always miserable is he who trusts her, he who confides in her his unwary heart! Yet one never feels fully happy who from that bosom does not drink love!

The melody is so infectious that Verdi made his lead tenor swear not to sing it in public before the opera’s premiere. Since then, it has been sung everywhere from the gondolas of Venice to the mess hall of Star Trek’s starship Voyager.

Overture to Act III from Lohengrin - Wolfgang von Eschenbach’s 12th century romance “Parzifal” (Percival, son of King Arthur) includes a spinoff character, “Lohengrin.” Son of Parzifal and knight of the Holy Grail, Lohengrin is a mythic knight in shining armor who appears (riding a boat pulled by swans, no less) to rescue a lady in distress. Wagner developed this into his own dramatic poem in 1850. Lohengrin was seen by many as embodying Wagner’s patron, Ludwig II, the mildly insane “fairy tale king” of Bavaria who commissioned a new castle to be called “New Swan Stone” (Neuschwanstein) after the legend of the swan knight.

In Wagner’s telling, the lady Elsa has been accused of killing her own brother, and the king resolves that she is to be judged by combat. Elsa’s accuser, Telramund waits with sword in hand while nobody steps forward to be her champion. When all seems lost, Lohengrin appears, wins the contest on her behalf and takes her hand in marriage on one condition: She may never ask who he is or where he came from. (Spoiler alert: She does.) And so, the curtain opens on Act III with an ecstatic klaxon of seventh chords that lead into the popular “Bridal Chorus” as the citizens of Brabant welcome Elsa and the mysterious new “Protector of Brabant”.
“Walter’s Prize Song” from Die Meistersinger - Starting in the 14th century and continuing for some two hundred years, German poets organized themselves into guilds of “master singers.” The guilds developed elaborate rules for everything from what topics could be sung to how syllables would be organized. Wagner wove these guilds along with a real-life master singer Hans Sachs (1494-1576) into The Meistersingers of Nuremberg.

The young knight Walther wishes to win the lady Eva’s hand but must prove himself by winning a village singing competition on Saint John’s Day. Walther has no particular talent for music but works with master singer Hans Sachs to compose a new song about love. By the day of the contest, only two of the required three verses are ready, yet Walther finishes the song *ex tempore* and greatly impresses the assembled crowds.

Gleaming at morning in dawn’s rosy light, with flowers fair and perfumed air, in beauty beaming, past all dreaming, I saw a garden bright. Wherein, beneath a wondrous tree with many a fruit adorning, in happy love-dream I could see what, in my ardent longing, I dared to hope my prize: a lovely maid, Eva, in paradise.

Gleaming at morning in dawn’s rosy light, with flowers fair and perfumed air, in beauty beaming, past all dreaming, I saw a garden bright. Wherein, beneath a wondrous tree with many a fruit adorning, in happy love-dream I could see what, in my ardent longing, I dared to hope my prize: a lovely maid, Eva, in paradise.

"Abendlich dämmersd umschloss mich die Nacht; auf steilem Pfad war ich genaht zu einer Quelle reiner Welle, die lockend mir gelacht: dort unter einem Lorbeerbaum, von Sternen hell durchschienen, ich schaut im wachen Dichtertraum, von heilig holden Mienen, mich netzend mit dem edlen Nass, das hehrste Weib, die Muse des Parnass!"

"Huldreichster Tag, dem ich aus Dichters Traum erwacht! Das ich erträumt, das Paradies, in himmlisch neu verklärter Pracht hell vor mir lag, dahin lachend nun der Quell den Pfad mir wies; die, dort geboren, den Ruhm erkoren, der Erde lieblichstes Bild, als Muse mir geweiht, so heilig ernst als mild, ward kühn von mir gefreit, am lichten Tag der Sonnen, durch Sanges Sieg gewonnen Parnass und Paradies!"

Thrice happy day, on which I woke from poet-dreaming! For still I dreamed her Paradise with heavenly radiance illumined seeming, transplendent lay; Wherein, laughing still, the spring my footsteps led. She, mine created, with my heart mated, the fairest sight that earth can find, as muse to guide my life, inspired yet so kind, I dared to make her wife; At radiant day’s beginning, by might of music winning Parnassus and Paradise!

(tr. Frederick Field Bullard)
Festmarsch from Tannhäuser - Following Rienzi and Der fliegende Holländer, Wagner began work on an opera depicting the Wartburg Sängerkrieg (minstrels contest) of 1207 A.D. The young singer Tannhäuser lives in spiritual captivity to the cult of Venus. Awakened by the sound of church bells, he declares that his salvation rests in Mary, the mother of God. Magically, he is freed from Venus’s mythic realm and transported to the gates of the Wartburg castle, from which he had fled several years prior. He is found by a procession leading up to the castle where there is to be a singing competition. Entering the castle in a joyous spectacle, Tannhäuser resolves to enter the contest and win the love of Elisabeth.

Prelude and Liebestod from Tristan und Isolde - In 1854, Wagner began to follow the writings of Arthur Schopenhauer who posited that man’s life is marked by unfulfilled desires. Wagner’s telling of the classic star-crossed romance pushes this sense of unfulfillment to agonizing levels, torturing the listener from the beginning with the single most infamous dissonance in all Western music:

Indeed, the dissonance of the prelude isn’t truly “resolved” until some four hours later in the final measures of the Liebestod when Isolde deliriously beholds her lover’s corpse and sees him rising transcendent.

Mild und leise wie er lächelt, wie das Auge hold er öffnet—seht ihr’s, Freunde? Seht ihr’s nicht? Immer leichter wie er leuchtet, sternumstrahlet hoch sich hebt?, Seht ihr’s nicht? Ertrinken, versinken,—unbewusst,—höchste Lust!

Ride of the Valkyries - According to Norse legend, the Valkyries are mythic creatures whose task it is to carry the fallen heroes from the field of battle to Valhalla. Though the present work is titled Walkürenritt (plural), the second opera in Wagner’s Ring tetralogy is titled Die Walküre (feminine singular) and traces the tale of one specific Valkyrie: Brunnhilde.

When Wotan’s illegitimate demigod children Siegmund and Sieglinde commit incest, Brunnhilde is drawn into her father’s web of scandal. As the curtain rises on Act III, Wotan’s eight daughters arrive at the summit of a mountain. Seven bear the souls of fallen warriors, yet the gods are furious to see Brunnhilde arrive with Sieglinde who is now carrying Siegmund’s child. In rage, Wotan strips Brunnhilde of her powers, reducing her to a mortal and causing her to fall into a deep sleep, not to be awakened until the next opera.
SHANNON SALYARDS, soprano, has been featured as a soloist with Opera Omaha, the Omaha Symphony Chamber Orchestra, Sioux City Symphony Orchestra, Hastings Symphony Orchestra, Heartland Philharmonic Orchestra, Nebraska Choral Arts Society, Sioux County Oratorio Chorus, Analog Arts Ensemble, and Nebraska Wind Symphony; in recital for The Joslyn Art Museum, Sioux City Chamber Music Association, Doane College, Hastings College, and the University of Nebraska at Omaha; and on both the Abendmusik and Arts for the Soul concert series in Lincoln, Nebraska. Of her performance of Haydn’s Creation for Abendmusik: Lincoln, John Cutler of the Lincoln Journal Star praised her for “the purity and clarity of her vocal instrument,” further stating: “Salyards has excellent diction and was able to vary her voice from strong and convincing...to soft and seductive.” While living in Boston, she was engaged as a soloist with the Arden String Quartet, Back Bay Chorale and Orchestra of Emmanuel Music, Boston Orpheus Ensemble, Boston University Choral Society, Brookline Chorus, Marsh Chapel Choir and Collegium, New Music Ensemble of Boston, and at the White Mountain Bach Festival in New Hampshire. Her repertoire as oratorio soloist includes works by Bach, Barber, Brahms, Dubois, Fauré, Handel, Hasse, Haydn, Howells, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Orff, Schoenberg, Schubert, Schumann, Schütz, and Vaughan Williams. Her operatic repertoire includes Candide, Dido and Aeneas, Don Giovanni, Elixir of Love, Faust, Gianni Schicchi, Giulio Cesare, La Sonnambula, Lucia Silla, Nixon in China, The Mother of Us All, and The Tragedy of Carmen.

Ms. Salyards is a member of the National Association of Teachers in Singing and currently holds adjunct faculty appointments at Briar Cliff University and Morningside College in addition to maintaining an extensive private voice studio. Her prior teaching experiences include the Boston University Tanglewood Institute, Doane College, Hastings College, and the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She earned the BM in Voice Performance, magna cum laude, from St. Olaf College, where she appeared as a soloist with the world-renowned St. Olaf Choir many times, and the MM in Voice Performance from Boston University.

RUSSELL SVENNINGSEN is Assistant Professor of Music at Augustana College where he conducts the Collegiate Chorale and teaches both voice and music theory. An active performer, Russell has appeared as featured soloist with orchestras and opera companies both locally and around the world. Recently he has been engaged to present Schubert’s epochal song cycle Winterreise in concerts throughout the Midwest. Upcoming engagements include a recital featuring the music of Verdi, Massenet and Wagner and separate presentations of Schumann’s Dichterliebe.

Russell holds a D.M.A., Mus. Ed. from Boston University where he studied with Roger Mantle, Ph. D. His dissertation “This singing The Norwegian Singers through a Gramscian lens” presents ethnographic research on the (Pacific Coast) Norwegian Singers Association of America grounded in the philosophy of Italian neo-Marxist, writer and activist, Antonio Gramsci. Russell endeavors through his research to contribute to discourses that act upon and within the development of philosophical, pedagogical and curricular practices where issues of difference are concerned. He holds an M.M., Choral Conducting degree from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and a B.M.E. from Concordia College, Moorhead, MN.

Russell resides in Sioux Falls, South Dakota with his wife Sarah, and their two children, Anders and Annika.
CHRISTOPHER STANICHAR is the Principal Conductor of the Northwest Iowa Symphony, an ensemble of some of the finest musicians in northwest Iowa and southeast South Dakota. Stanichar was appointed to this position in 2011, following a number of guest appearances. Stanichar has continued NISO’s tradition of artistic excellence, innovative programming, and collaborations with guest artists from the region and beyond. Stanichar leads NISO in three concerts per season, in addition to the annual Concert for Children given each November for over 800 area 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students. He has been praised for “his obvious energy, great joy directing, and outright enthusiasm.” (Peter Wagner, Northwest Iowa Review).

In addition to his position with Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra, Stanichar is Associate Professor and Director of Orchestras at Augusta College (Sioux Falls, SD), where he conducts the Augustana Orchestra and the Augustana College and Community Orchestra. He also conducts the South Dakota Symphony Youth Orchestra and the Worthington Area Symphony Orchestra in Minnesota.

Stanichar has conducted professional orchestras in Europe, Russia, Mexico, and the United States, including the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra (Russia), Sochi Symphony Orchestra (Russia), Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil del Estado de Veracruze (Mexico), and many orchestras in the United States.

Stanichar earned his Doctorate of Musical Arts in conducting at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music where he was a student of Gerard Samuel. In 1966 he was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to study conducting in Slovakia, where he appeared as a guest conductor of many top orchestras in that country. In 1997 he was appointed Conducting Assistant for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, where he was mentored by maestros Jesús López-Cobos and Erich Kunzel.

Stanichar is an active composer; his works have been commissioned and performed throughout the world. His Trisagion was used in the Ric Burns’ PBS documentary, Andy Warhol. More recent projects include a full-length cantata, St. Mark Passion, written as part of a Granskou grant for the 150th anniversary of Augustana College. His Variations on a Theme by Handel for string orchestra is featured in the independent film, Dust of War. TrevCo-Varner Music has published several of his works for English horn.

Stanichar enjoys making music with his wife, Kristi; they are blessed with four children, all of whom are active in music.

THE NORTHWEST IOWA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA comprises the finest musicians in the tri-state area. The orchestra’s 80 members include adults of all ages as well as gifted music students ranging in age from high school through college. Nine of these students are recipients of scholarships from Friends of the Symphony for the purpose of continuing their private music instruction. NISO presents three concerts each season in addition to the annual Concert for Children, which is given each November for 900 area 5th and 6th grade students.
FIRST VIOLIN
- Sarah De Smith, Dordt College
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- David Mortenson, MOC-FV HS
- Kirbie Nykamp, Sioux Center
- Tim Rylaarsdam, Sioux Center
- Nancy Shih, Boyden-Hull HS
- Kyle Van Wyhe, Unity Christian HS

SECOND VIOLIN
- Jacilee Andringa, Trinity Christian HS
- Matt Augustine, Dordt College
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- Danielle Burgers, Sioux Center
- Maria Koemen, Netherlands Ref. Chr. HS
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CLARINET/BASS CLARINET
- Beverly Gibson, Sioux Falls
- Susan LeMahieu, Orange City
- Shirley Van Engen, Boyden

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- Lois Estell, Orange City
- Chris Haak, Sioux Falls
- Janna Mulder, Dordt College

FRENCH HORN
- Emma Jensen, MOC-FV HS
- Sharon McGarvey, Alton
- Tim McGarvey, Alton
- Gary Reeves, Vermillion
- Rebekah Stofor, NorthWestern College
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Tonight’s Intermission Feature: Gourmet coffee and truffles.

Consider joining Friends and helping with ushering, serving coffee, and selling tickets to benefit the orchestra.
THANK YOU TO:
- DORDT COLLEGE for its generous provision of rehearsal and performance space, support staff, and office accommodations.
- CITY OF SIOUX CENTER (Recreation and Arts Council) for generous support of guest artists, guest concerts, and the educational mission of the Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra.
- CONTRIBUTORS for their sustaining appreciation for fine music and their continuing support of the Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra.
- FRIENDS OF THE SYMPHONY for ushering, ticket sales, and refreshments at our rehearsals.

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Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra Concerts
Christopher Stanichar, Conductor

WINTER POPS CONCERT - Saturday, February 1, 2014

GUEST CONCERT - Saturday, March 1, 2014

SPRING CONCERT - Tuesday, April 15, 2014

Northwest Iowa Symphony Youth Orchestra Concerts
Yurii Henriquez, Conductor

Saturday, December 7, 3:00 PM
Saturday, April 12, 3:00 PM

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