Minnesota Orchestra
Ilyich Rivas, conductor
Stefan Jackiw, violin

Friday, April 12, 2019, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall
Sunday, April 14, 2019, 2 pm | Orchestra Hall

Alberto Ginastera
Ballet Suite from *Estancia*
  The Land Workers
  Wheat Dance
  The Cattlemen
  Final Dance (Malambo)
  ca. 12'

Felix Mendelssohn
Concerto in E minor for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 64
  Allegro molto appassionato
  Andante
  Allegretto non troppo – Allegro molto vivace
  Stefan Jackiw, violin
  ca. 27'

INTERMISSION
ca. 20'

Antonín Dvořák
Symphony No. 8 in G major, Opus 88
  Allegro con brio
  Adagio
  Allegretto grazioso
  Allegro ma non troppo
  ca. 36'

OH+ Concert Preview and Wine Tasting with hosts Anthony Ross and Valerie Little
Friday, April 12, 7-7:30 pm, N. Bud Grossman Mezzanine

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live on Friday evenings on stations of Classical Minnesota Public Radio, including KSJN 99.5 FM in the Twin Cities.
Violinist Stefan Jackiw has appeared as soloist with the orchestras of Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Philadelphia and San Francisco, among numerous other ensembles. This week’s concerts mark his Minnesota Orchestra debut. Highlights of the current season include debut performances with the Dallas Symphony and returns to the Utah Symphony, Omaha Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Residentie Orkest, Copenhagen Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, Singapore Symphony, Tasmanian Symphony and KBS Symphony Orchestra. As a chamber musician, he has collaborated with such artists as Jeremy Denk, Steven Isserlis, Yo-Yo Ma and Gil Shaham, and he performs in a trio with Jay Campbell and Conrad Tao. This season he completes a performance series of Ives’ violin sonatas with Jeremy Denk at the Tanglewood Festival, ahead of their upcoming recording of the works for Nonesuch Records. The recipient of an Avery Fischer Career Grant, he also recorded all of Brahms’ violin sonatas at the Aspen Festival for Sony Records, as well as Beethoven’s Triple Concerto with Inon Barnatan, Alisa Weilerstein, Alan Gilbert and the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields. More: stefanjackiw.com.

Ginastera: Ballet Suite from *Estancia*

Ginastera’s colorful suite brings to life four scenes on an Argentine *estancia*, or cattle ranch. Pungent harmonies, jagged rhythms and dancelike impulses prevail, with percussion adding vigor to an exhilarating final dance.

Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto

Mendelssohn’s exquisite concerto maintains the transparent textures of a Mozart-Haydn orchestra, but it rings out with a splendor the earlier composers never dreamed possible. The solo violinist’s soaring lines, both graceful and impassioned, conclude in an exultant three-octave leap.

Dvořák: Symphony No. 8

Dvořák’s Eighth is full of luminous melodies and unexpected harmonic shifts. The second movement alludes to the funeral march of Beethoven’s *Eroica* Symphony, but lighter elements prevail in a whirlwind finale that is delightfully Czech.
Alberto Ginastera, Argentina’s most renowned classical composer, was heavily involved with promoting Argentine music and in developing the musical life of his country. Many of his early works, such as *Panambi* and *Estancia*, are representative of what he called his “objective nationalism” style—music that deliberately and overtly employed the rhythms and melodies of native Argentine folksongs and dances.

*Estancia* was commissioned in 1941 by Lincoln Kirstein for his American Ballet Caravan, which was touring South America at the time. But before the score could be premiered, Kirstein’s company disbanded. A staging of *Estancia* had to wait until 1952, when it was given at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. As many composers have done with their ballet scores, Ginastera extracted a suite for orchestral concerts. It was in this form that the world first heard *Estancia*, as the suite was performed by the Teatro Colón Orchestra on May 12, 1943.

**Ballet Suite from Estancia**
Premiered: May 12, 1943

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*Estancia* was almost two years in the making. Ginastera wrote the suite, which consists of four dances, with a high level of technical skill, and the score is both original and colorful in its sonority. It is scored for winds, brass, percussion, and strings.

The half-hour ballet score is rarely heard in its entirety, unaccountably so in view of its consistently fine music. But the suite of four dances we hear tonight has become almost a repertory staple. Pungent harmonies, jagged rhythms and dancelike impulses prevail. The orchestration is especially colorful, particularly in the prominent use of percussion, including piano, xylophone and castanets, which contribute to one of the most exhilarating conclusions in all music.

The following note (slightly edited) is found as a preface to the score: “The deep and bare beauty of the land, its richness and natural strength, constitute the basis of Argentine life. This ballet presents various aspects of the activities on an ‘estancia’ [cattle ranch] in the course of a day, from dawn to dawn, with a symbolic sense of continuity. The plot shows a country girl who despises the man of the city. She finally admires him when he proves that he can perform the roughest and most difficult tasks in the land.”

**Instrumentation:** flute, piccolo (1 flute also doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, military drum, tenor drum, bass drum, cymbals, castanets, tambourine, tam-tam, triangle, xylophone, piano and strings

Program note by Robert Markow.

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Felix Mendelssohn
Born: February 3, 1809, Hamburg, Germany
Died: November 4, 1847, Leipzig, Germany

**Concerto in E minor for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 64**
Premiered: March 13, 1845

“...I would like to write you a violin concerto for next winter. One in E minor keeps running through my head, and the opening gives me no peace.” So wrote Felix Mendelssohn to his lifelong friend, violinist Ferdinand David, in 1838, and that opening has given millions of music lovers no peace ever since, for it is one of the most perfect violin melodies ever written.

Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto seems so polished, so effortless in its easy flow, that this music feels as if it must have appeared in one sustained stroke of his pen. Yet it took seven years to write. Normally a fast worker, Mendelssohn proceeded very carefully on this concerto, revising, polishing and consulting with David, his concertmaster at the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, at every step of its composition. He completed the score while on vacation in Soden, near Frankfurt, during the summer of 1844, and David gave the premiere in Leipzig on March 13, 1845. Mendelssohn was ill at the time and could not conduct, so his assistant, the Danish composer Niels Gade, led the first performance.

**Originality and endless beauty**

We do not normally think of Mendelssohn as an innovator, but his Violin Concerto is as remarkable for its originality as for its endless beauty. It is deftly scored: he writes for what is essentially the Mozart-Haydn orchestra, and he keeps textures transparent and the soloist audible throughout. But he can also make that orchestra ring out with a splendor that Mozart and Haydn never dreamed of.

**Allegro molto appassionato**. The innovations begin in the first instant. Mendelssohn does away with the standard orchestral exposition and has the violin enter in the second bar with its famous theme, marked *Allegro molto appassionato* and played entirely on the violin’s E-string; this soaring idea immediately establishes the movement’s singing yet impassioned character. Other themes follow in turn: a transitional figure for the orchestra and the true second subject, a chorale-like tune first given out by the woodwinds.

The quiet timpani strokes in the first few seconds, which subtly energize the orchestra’s swirling textures, show the hand of a master. Another innovation: Mendelssohn sets the cadenza where we do not expect it, at the end of the development rather than just...
before the coda. That cadenza—a terrific compilation of trills, harmonics and arpeggios—appears to have been largely the creation of David, who fashioned it from Mendelssohn’s themes. The return of the orchestra is a masterstroke: it is the orchestra that brings back the movement’s main theme as the violinist accompanies the orchestra with dancing arpeggios.

**andante.** Mendelssohn hated applause between movements, and he tried to guard against it here by tying the first two movements together with a single bassoon note. The two themes of the *Andante* might by themselves define the term “romanticism.” There is a sweetness about this music that could, in other hands, turn cloying, but Mendelssohn skirts that danger gracefully. The soloist has the arching and falling opening melody, while the orchestra gives out the darker, more insistent second subject. The writing for violin in this movement, full of double-stopping and fingered octaves, is a great deal more difficult than it sounds.

**allegretto non troppo—allegro molto vivace.** Mendelssohn joins the second and third movements with an anticipatory bridge passage that subtly takes its shape from the concerto’s opening theme. Resounding fanfares from the orchestra lead directly to the soloist’s entrance on an effervescent, dancing melody so full of easy grace that we seem suddenly in the fairyland atmosphere of Mendelssohn’s own incidental music to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Several other themes appear along the way, some combined in ingenious ways. But it is the sprightly opening melody that dominates as the music seems to fly through the sparkling coda to the violin’s exultant three-octave leap at the very end.

**Instrumentation:** solo violin with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings

Program note by Eric Bromberger.
**Program Notes**

adagio. The two middle movements are just as free. The Adagio is apparently in C minor, but it begins in E-flat major with dark and halting string phrases; the middle section flows easily on a relaxed woodwind tune in C major in which some have heard the sound of cimbalom and a village band. A violin solo leads to a surprisingly violent climax before the movement falls away to its quiet close.

allegretto grazioso. The third movement opens with a soaring waltz in G minor that dances nimbly along its 3/8 meter; the charming center section also swirls in 3/8 time, but here its dotted rhythms produce a distinctive lilt. The movement concludes with nice surprises: a blistering coda, Molto vivace, whips along a variant of the lilting center section tune, but Dvořák has now transformed its triple meter into a propulsive 2/4. The movement rushes on chattering woodwinds right up to its close, where it concludes suddenly with a hushed string chord.

allegro ma non troppo. The finale is a variation movement—sort of. It opens with a stinging trumpet fanfare, an afterthought on Dvořák’s part, added after the rest of the movement was complete. Cellos announce the noble central theme (itself derived from the flute theme of the first movement), and a series of variations follows, including a spirited episode for solo flute. But suddenly the variations vanish: Dvořák throws in an exotic Turkish march full of rhythmic energy, a completely separate episode that rises to a great climax based on the ringing trumpet fanfare from the opening. Gradually things calm down, and the variations resume as if this turbulent storm had never blown through. Near the end comes lovely writing for strings, and a raucous, joyous coda—a final variation of the main theme—propels this symphony to its rousing close.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani and strings

Program note by Eric Bromberger.