



Sound of resilience

PHOTO BY SESAR SANCHEZ

Symphony celebrates Beethoven's 250th with eclectic and uplifting program

The North State Symphony opened its 2019-20 season last weekend (Sept. 28-29) with a program titled *Beethoven Triple*, a play on its lead-off piece, the great composer's remarkable but rarely performed *Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Piano in C Major*, popularly known as the *Triple Concerto*.

Speaking to the concert audience before the Sunday performance at Laxson Auditorium, the symphony's music director, Scott Seaton, noted that, because the past year has been such a rough one for North State residents, the symphony's season has a new theme: resilience. In fact, the second concert of the season—which will take place at Laxson on Nov. 9, the day after the one-year anniversary of the start of the Camp Fire—is titled *Rising Above*.

And who, among the world's great composers, embodied resilience more than Beethoven, who began losing his hearing early in his creative life but still managed to write many of his greatest works even when completely deaf?

Beethoven figured prominently in the concert not only because of his resilience, but also because the 2019-20 season marks his 250th birthday, in December 1770. It's fitting, then, that the season opened with the *Triple Concerto* and will end, in May, with a performance of his majestic *Ninth Symphony*, complete with four soloists and a 100-person chorus.

The soloists for the *Triple Concerto* were old friends of Seaton's. In fact, two of them, the married couple Erik and Dianna Anderson (cellist and pianist, respectively), live in Minot, N.D., where Seaton led the Minot Symphony Orchestra for three years before taking the NSS job.

The third member of the ad-hoc trio was violinist Andrew Sords, who has worked with Seaton and the Andersons on other occasions.

Much of the pleasure of a triple concert is found in the way the soloists take turns in speaking to each other. Two will drop out momentarily while the third plays, but sometimes they function as a traditional trio, though one with an orchestra behind them, as in any concerto.

According to Theodore Bell's program notes, Beethoven wrote the *Triple Concerto* for his only student, Archduke Rudolph, the 16-year-old son of the Holy Roman emperor, Leopold II. Seaton noted, however, that the youth was a pianist and only his part was simplified, and not by much.

In any event, this was a delightful concerto, thanks to the three soloists—who clearly were enjoying themselves—and the uniqueness of the format.

Following intermission, Seaton and crew returned to play American composer Michael Torke's modernist *Ash* (1988). Torke (born 1961) has synesthesia—the phenomenon of experiencing one sense when a different one is stimulated—which manifests in his ability to translate sounds into colors when listening to music. *Ash* is part of his series *Color Music*. As Seaton noted in his remarks, the heavily rhythmic piece defies the listener's expectations by refusing to embrace classical forms, opting instead for a melodic insistence that led one reviewer to call it “a gallop in search of a bolero.”

The final work of the evening, Franz Schubert's *Symphony No. 3 in D Major*, was written in 1815, when the composer was just 18 years old. He had a prodigious ability to compose, and by the time he died, in 1828 at the age of 31, he'd written some 600 songs, seven complete symphonies (and one famously “unfinished”), operas, sacred music and a large volume of piano and chamber music.

Like much of Schubert's early work, *Symphony No. 3* is rich in melody. “Schubert was a natural tune-smith,” writes Bell, “and his brilliant sense of melody is manifest throughout the *Third Symphony*.”

It was also manifest that evening in Laxson Auditorium, as the large audience gave the orchestra a standing ovation. □

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10/9



JULIAN LAGE TRIO

MASTER CLASS 5:00 PM, BIG ROOM DOORS 6:00 PM, MUSIC 7:30 PM

10/11



THE MOTHER HIPPS

BIG ROOM DOORS 7:00 PM, MUSIC 8:00 PM | SOLD OUT!

10/12



SPOTLIGHT FILM SERIES: TGR - ROADLESS

BIG ROOM DOORS 6:00 PM, FILM 7:00 PM

10/19



HOP HARVEST FESTIVAL

EVENT 3:00 - 7:00 PM

10/19



THE EXPENDABLES

BIG ROOM DOORS 7:00 PM, MUSIC 8:00 PM

10/24



ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW

BIG ROOM DOORS 9:00 PM, SHOW 10:00 PM

10/26



WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL

BIG ROOM DOORS 6:00 PM, FILM 7:00 PM

10/28



SPOTLIGHT FILM SERIES: TGR - WINTERLAND

BIG ROOM DOORS 6:00 PM, FILM 7:00 PM

10/30



WHITNEY W/ LALA LALA

BIG ROOM DOORS 7:00 PM, MUSIC 8:00 PM

10/31



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