

What's the spring show
for Wisconsin Philharmonic?

'Classics in Bloom,' naturally

Work by
Oconomowoc's
Jacob Beranek
featured

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Special to TimeOut

The Wisconsin Philharmonic, Waukesha's premier orchestra since 1947, along with pianist Andrew Russo, presents its spring concert "Classics in Bloom," a showcase of patriotic symphonic pieces by renowned composers of yesteryear and contemporary Oconomowoc composer Jacob Beranek.

"Classics in Bloom," which will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday at Brookfield's Sharon Lynne Wilson center, will feature performances of Dmitri Shostakovich's "Festive Overture," Franz Liszt's "Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-Flat Major," and the main concert piece, Jean Sibelius' "Symphony No. 2 in D Major."

"The whole concert, musically, is a celebration of a mode of composition we call 'festive nationalism,' said Alexander Platt, musical director of the Wisconsin Philharmonic for the last 20 years.

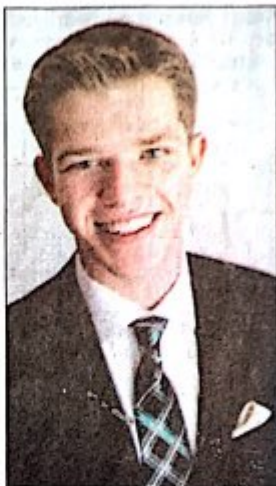
For the first time under Platt's direction, the orchestra will perform Sibelius' stirring symphony, which the musical director feels has many modern elements, like rhythm and phrasing.

The composer is one of Platt's favorites. "I just worship his music. He is one of the greatest composers to walk the earth," the director said.

Beranek, 19, wrote "Pamatnik" to commemorate 100 years of independence of the country that is now the Czech Republic. "This piece is my way of celebrating my heritage as a Czech-American, an homage to the resilient spirit of the Czech people and a symbol of their enduring connection with the American nation," the composer said.

"Pamatnik" was performed at Prague Castle by the Czech Republic's national band and was later commissioned by the Wisconsin Philharmonic.

"This is a substantial work he (Beranek) has written for a large orchestra. It's very evocative and exciting. We are more than happy to celebrate this gifted young composer," Platt said.



Submitted photo

Oconomowoc's Jacob Beranek's "Pamatnik" in celebration of his Czech-American heritage will be among the works featured at the Wisconsin Philharmonic's spring concert Sunday.

The Liszt composition, which will be performed by Russo, is very challenging to play. "It's one of the most technically demanding pieces in repertoire," Platt added. "Andy is just a stellar musician."

The Wisconsin Philharmonic typically performs approximately seven concerts a year, including Christmas, Flag Day, and the quite popular St. Patrick's Day concert. Platt said that concert ticket sales have increased in the past few years. "This season has been a real revival for us," he noted.

The orchestra consists of 50-60 musicians from diverse backgrounds, among them elementary school teachers and members of the Milwaukee and Madison Symphony Orchestras.

Now celebrating 72 years, the Wisconsin Philharmonic remains an integral element of the Waukesha County performing arts community.

"It's a vital part of the musical ecosystem, and the cultural life of this region," Platt said.

Platt feels that a primary aim of the concerts is to celebrate Waukesha-area communities by highlighting young composers like Beranek.

"It's truly an honor to work with Maestro Platt and the Philharmonic, and I'm grateful for their faith in my music. As a sixth-generation Waukeshan, this is a dream come true," Beranek said.