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Illinois State University Symphony Orchestra: Valentine's Eve Concert, February 13, 2024

Glenn Block
Illinois State University

Javier Mas
Illinois State University

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Illinois State University
Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts
School of Music

Illinois State University Symphony Orchestra
Valentine's Eve Concert

Glenn Block, *Music Director*

Javier Mas, *Guest Conductor*

Tuesday Evening

February 13, 2024

8:00 p.m.

Center for Performing Arts Concert Hall

This is the one hundred and fourth program of the 2023-2024 season.

Program

Please silence all electronic devices for the duration of the concert. Thank you.

Suite from *Romeo and Juliet* (1946)

Sergei Prokofiev
(1891-1953)

Montagues and Capulets
Romeo and Juliet
Death of Tybalt
Romeo at the Grave of Juliet

Javier Mas, *conductor*

Selections from *West Side Story* (1957)

Leonard Bernstein
(1918-1990)
arranged by Jack Mason

Glenn Block, *conductor*

Por Una Cabeza (1935)

Carlos Gardel
(1890-1935)
arranged by Alex Herrera

Javier Mas, *conductor*

Selections from *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986)

Andrew L. Webber
(born 1948)
arranged by Calvin Custer

Glenn Block, *conductor*

Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture, ČW 39 (1869)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840-1893)

Javier Mas, *conductor*

Next ISU Symphony Concert:

Sunday, March 24 – 3:00 PM

Music by Rimsky-Korsakov, Steven Allen Fox and Claudio Alsuyet

Program Notes

Romeo and Juliet Sergei Prokofiev

“Never was a story of more woe than this of Prokofieff’s music for Romeo”

A toast to the composer from the ballerina, Galina Ulanova after the first premiere of Prokofieff’s *Romeo and Juliet* on January 11, 1940.

The seventh of Prokofiev’s nine ballets is his setting of *Romeo and Juliet*, which has become a treasured classic. Early traumas stalking the ballet could have derailed its ultimate popularity, not only in the dance format but in the three orchestral suites as well. “In the latter part of 1934, there was talk of the Kirov Theatre of Leningrad staging a ballet of mine,” the composer recounted. “I was interested in a lyrical subject. Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* was suggested. But the Kirov Theatre backed out, and I signed a contract with the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre instead. In the spring of 1935, I worked out a scenario, consulting with the choreographer on questions of ballet technique. The music was written in the course of the summer, but the Bolshoi theatre declared it impossible to dance to and the contract was broken.” The dance company complained that the ballet was too short, that they could not hear the music which was “too soft” and that the rhythms were unpredictable. A later version, completed in 1938 and produced by the Kirov ballet in 1940, also resulted in complaints. At that time, Prokofiev declared, “Take it or leave it...You want drums not music!” Persuaded then to sit on the stage and listen, Prokofiev did acknowledge that the soft parts were hard to hear, and he relented a bit. “Very well, I shall rewrite the music here and there and add something,” he promised. By 1946, the music was rewritten, and the ballet performed with the Bolshoi on December 22, 1946, to great acclaim and considered “one of the finest productions ever presented at the Bolshoi.”

Besides early complaints about the music, Prokofiev’s first version of the story also came in for trouble because the composer toyed with the bard’s plot and supplied a happy ending. “The reason for taking such barbarous liberty with Shakespeare’s play was purely choreographic—live people can dance, but the dying can hardly be expected to dance in bed...” the composer explained. The ensuing uproar was furious, and ultimately Prokofiev rewrote the story to conform to the Shakespeare play.

What is interesting is the way that Prokofiev describes the circumstances, the characters and the emotions with his own musical style. In the *Chicago Tribune* in 1937, the composer explained “[My] *Romeo and Juliet* features a “new melodic line. “Which would have immediate appeal yet sound like nothing written before.” In his own way, Prokofiev succeeded in telling one of the greatest love stories of all time. And he succeeded in communicating the tragedy therein.

Program Notes by Marianne Williams Tobias, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

West Side Story Leonard Bernstein

In 1949 choreographer Jerome Robbins approached Leonard Bernstein with a plan to adapt Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. In his diary, Bernstein called it "a noble idea: a modern version of *Romeo and Juliet* set in slums at the coincidence of Easter–Passover celebrations. Feelings run high between Jews and Catholics. Former: Capulets; latter: Montagues. Juliet is Jewish. Friar Lawrence is a neighborhood druggist. Street brawls, double death—it all fits. But it's all much less important than the bigger idea of making a musical that tells a tragic story in musical-comedy terms, using only musical-comedy techniques, never falling into the 'operatic' trap. Can it succeed? It hasn't yet in our country. I'm excited. If it can work—it's the first. Jerry suggests Arthur Laurents for the book." Working titles for the project were *East Side Story*, "the Romeo show," or even *Gangway!*

A month later, Bernstein noted that "prejudice will be the theme of the new work. It will not be a feud of aristocrats that keeps the lovers apart, but rather the prejudice of their Jewish and Italian families. The music will be serious music. Serious yet simple enough for all people to understand."

East Side Story lay dormant for seven years, when Stephen Sondheim was hired to do the lyrics. After a meeting with Laurents in 1955, Bernstein reported: "We're fired again by the Romeo notion; only now we have abandoned the whole Jewish-Catholic premise as not very fresh and have come up with what I think is going to be it: two teenage gangs as the warring factions, one of them newly-arrived Puerto Ricans, the other self-styled 'Americans.' Suddenly it all springs to life. I hear rhythms and pulses, and—most of all—I can sort of feel the forms." The title was changed to *West Side Story*.

After a try-out at the National Theatre in Washington, D.C., the Broadway opening took place on September 26, 1957 at the Winter Garden Theatre in New York. Max Goberman conducted, with a cast that included Carol Lawrence, Larry Kert, Mickey Calin, Ken Le Roy and Chita Rivera.

The reviews were mostly positive. Brooks Atkinson of the *Times* called it "a profoundly moving show...as ugly as the city jungles and also pathetic, tender and forgiving.... Everything contributes to the total impression of wildness, ecstasy and anguish. This is one of those occasions when theater people, engrossed in an original project, are all in top form.... Leonard Bernstein has composed another one of his nervous, flaring scores that capture the shrill beat of life in the streets." Walter Kerr, in the *Herald Tribune*, quibbled with parts of the production, but praised it overall: "The radioactive fallout from *West Side Story* must still be descending on Broadway this morning. Director, choreographer, and idea-man Jerome Robbins has put together, and then blasted apart, the most savage, restless, electrifying dance patterns we've been exposed to in a dozen seasons."

After 772 performances in New York, the show went on the road, returning to New York for another 253 performances. The film version, with Natalie Wood, Richard Beymer, Russ Tamblyn, George Chakiris and Rita Moreno, appeared in 1961. It was voted Best Picture of the Year and earned ten Oscars.

Program Notes by Charley Samson.

Por Una Cabeza Carlos Gardel

Though he was apparently born in the south of France, Carlos Gardel insisted that he was a child of Uruguay. In any case, his unmarried mother moved to Argentina when he was an infant, and he grew up to become the most enduring voice of the Argentine tango. He started out as a bar singer and party entertainer, but in 1917 he catapulted to fame in South America and beyond with his song “*Mi noche triste*,” which sold more than 100,000 copies. Soon he became a recording star as well, and in the course of his brief life he recorded 770 pieces, of which 514 were tangos. His suave demeanor was captured in eleven films; the first of them was silent, but the rest show that his dramatic, seductive musical stylings were fully supported by his personal bearing, which had something in common with that of Humphrey Bogart.

His career ended in a plane crash in Medellín, Colombia in 1935. Seated next to him was his friend Alfredo Le Pera, who had written the lyrics for “*Por una cabeza*.” He was mourned throughout the world. Indeed, his funeral cortège traveled from Colombia to New York, and from there to Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo, and finally Buenos Aires, where he was buried to the sounds of his tango “*Silencioso*.” In Buenos Aires, everyone still seems to be on a first-name basis with “Carlitos” more than three-quarters of a century after his death. “*Por una cabeza*” may well be Gardel’s most acclaimed composition, along with “*Mi Buenos Aires querido*.” Its title would be translated as “By a Head,” and the lyrics are the sentiment of a horse-race gambler who compares his compulsion for the track to his addiction to women.

Gardel himself sang it stunningly in his final film, *Tango Bar*, but it has also been heard in many other films, including Martin Brest’s 1992 film drama *Scent of a Woman*. There it accompanies Al Pacino (as a blind, alcoholic retired Army officer) as he leads Gabrielle Anwar in a sultry tango in a New York restaurant.

Program Notes by James M. Keller.

Selections from *The Phantom of the Opera* Andrew L. Webber

Directed by Harold Prince, with sets and costumes by Maria Björnson and starring Michael Crawford and Sarah Brightman, *Phantom* opened at Her Majesty’s Theatre on October 9, 1986, where it continued to captivate audiences after 30 years and more than 12,000 performances. The Broadway transfer officially opened at the Majestic Theatre on January 26, 1988, where it closed in April, 2023 after 13,981 performances.

Phantom won the 1986 Olivier and 1988 Tony Awards for Best Musical, with Michael Crawford taking home Best Actor in a Musical at both ceremonies. The show has played to over 140 million people in 35 countries in 166 cities around the world, winning over 70 major theatre awards, grossing an estimated \$6 billion.

The original cast recording was the first in British musical history to enter the charts at number one and worldwide album sales now exceed 40 million. A 2004 film adaptation, helmed by Joel Schumacher and starring Gerard Butler in the title role, Emmy Rossum as Christine Daaé and Patrick Wilson as Raoul, grossed \$154 million worldwide.

Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

In the winter of 1868–69, Tchaikovsky was, for the only time in his life, intensely smitten with a woman, Désirée Artôt, a Belgian soprano. Tchaikovsky's intentions were serious, but Artôt suddenly brought their relationship to an end by marrying a baritone colleague of hers. When Tchaikovsky next saw her on the stage he wept all evening. Tchaikovsky was ready to have the composer Mily Alexeievich Balakirev tell him to write a work based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, which is indeed what Balakirev did, going so far as to tell Tchaikovsky how to do it, proposing a key scheme and even writing out four measures of music to show how he would begin such a piece. Balakirev was not always pleased with the way Tchaikovsky worked out "his" ideas. At first, only the broad love theme aroused his enthusiasm. It is "simply delightful," he wrote. "There's just one thing I'll say against this theme, and that is that there's little in it of inner, spiritual love, only a passionate physical languor (with even a slightly Italian hue), whereas *Romeo and Juliet* are decidedly not Persian lovers but European." Balakirev continued to comment, suggest, blame, and praise, and Tchaikovsky continued to compose—buoyed by the praise, stimulated by the blame, and becoming more confident in his themes and more imaginative in his reading of the play.

He listened carefully at the premiere, which was an indifferent success. That summer he subjected his overture to drastic revisions, finding the present evocative beginning, devising a stronger close, articulating more vividly what came between. Ten years later he returned to *Romeo and Juliet*, and it was then that he found the superb coda. Again, he put strong ideas in place of weak, he integrated, he refined. And he produced a masterpiece.

Program Notes by Michael Steinberg, San Francisco Symphony.

Biographical Notes

Javier Mas is an Argentine conductor, pianist and trumpeter. He was principal conductor of the Mar del Plata Symphony Orchestra. He is currently director of the Rosario Provincial Symphony Orchestra. He has guest-conducted in various auditoriums, such as the Faculty of Law of the UBA, Legislature of the City of Buenos Aires, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Kirchner Cultural Center (Symphony Hall and Argentine Hall), Usina del Arte Teatro Colón de Mar del Plata, Nave Universitaria de Mendoza, Teatro Coliseo, Teatro Gran Rex, the Academic Orchestra of the Teatro Colón, the Buenos Aires Philharmonic Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Municipal Symphony Orchestra of Mar del Plata, Salta Symphony Orchestra, Rosario Symphony Orchestra, National University of Cuyo Symphony Orchestra, Mendoza Philharmonic Orchestra, Academic Orchestra of the Instituto Superior de Arte del Teatro Colon, Municipal Symphony Orchestra of General San Martín, Municipal Symphony Orchestra of February 3, Youth Symphony Orchestra of General San Martín, Youth Symphony Orchestra of General San Martín, and the Bicentennial National and Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Maestro Mas made his debut in opera in 2017 with a new production of “The Barber of Seville” for the Orchestral Lyric Ensemble. He conducted the 2022 production of “Viva la Mamma” by the Chamber Opera of the Teatro Colón. As an instrumentalist, he has performed with the Buenos Aires Philharmonic Orchestra and the National Symphony of Argentina. He performs regularly as a pianist in chamber music, performing in various rooms such as Teatro del Globo, Salón Dorado del Teatro Colon, CCK, Usina del Arte, Biblioteca Nacional, Teatro Argentino de La Plata (Sala Piazzolla), Teatro Independencia (Mendoza), Camping Musical Bariloche, Centro de Experimentación del Teatro Colón, and abroad, most notably the Stern Hall, in Carnegie Hall (New York), together with musicians Jorge Caldelari (with whom he has been in a duo since 2016) Alex Klein, Haydee Seibert, Haydée Schvartz, José Luis Urquieta, Teresa Fainstein Day, Fernando Ciancio, Raúl Becerra, Amalia del Giudice, Elizabeth Ridolfi, Eugenia Fuente, David Haroutuian, Cuauhtémoc Rivera, among others. He also acts as an accompanist in master classes for outstanding solo artists such as Emmanuel Pahud, Ilya Kaller, Thomas Indermhüle, Eduardo Vasallo, Vadim Gluzman, Shlomo Mintz, Luis Rossi, and others. He has performed as a solo artist with the symphony orchestras of the Posadas Knowledge Center, Mar del Plata, General San Martin, Tres de Febrero, the Federal Police Symphony Orchestra and the Rio Negro Provincial Symphony Orchestra.

Born in Buenos Aires, he graduated from the General San Martín Conservatory of Music, the Instituto Superior de Arte del Teatro Colón, and the National University of Art. He trained in orchestral conducting with Guillermo Zalzman and in choral conducting with Carlos Vilo, in addition to participating in courses and seminars given by teachers Pedro Ignacio Calderón, Glenn Block, Yoav Talmi, Thüring Bräm, Arturo Diemecke and Jooyong Ahn. He trained as a pianist with Anton Soler Biljensky. Professor Mónica Cosachov and later with Maestra Costanza Davila at the École National de Musique de Pantin (Paris), and in Buenos Aires with Maria Eugenia Maracchioni.

He is currently working with concert pianist Bruno Gelber. He has participated in masterclasses given by Beatrice Rana, Alessio Bax and Mario Montore in Rome and conducted courses with Professor Cristiano Burato at the “Claudio Monteverdi” Conservatory in Bolzano. As a trumpeter, he trained under Fernando Ciancio. He has been a fellow at Camping Musical Bariloche on several occasions to participate in chamber music seminars given by Mónica Cosachov; the San Martín Music Association (2003); Gestarte/07 project within the framework of the Llao Llao Festival and National Fund for the Arts (2009). In 2015, he won the First Prize in the First “Tilo Rajneri” Interpreter Competition organized by the Patagonia Cultural Foundation. In 2017, he won third prize in the Second Federal Biennial Solo Competition organized by the Federal Investment Council. Finally, in 2022, together with Eugenia Fuente, he won the second prize with special mention from the jury in the First Piano and Chamber Music Competition of the Buenos Aires International Piano and Chamber Music Festival. He currently teaches at the Instituto Superior de Arte del Teatro Colón, and the Conservatory of Music of the City of Buenos Aires “Astor Piazzolla”.

Glenn Block has served as the Director of Orchestras and Opera and Professor of Conducting at Illinois State University since 1990. In addition, he served as Music Director of the Youth Symphony of Kansas City from 1983-2007. Prior to his appointment at Illinois State in the fall of 1990, Dr. Block served for 15 years as Director of Orchestras and Professor of Conducting at the Conservatory of Music of the University of Missouri - Kansas City and Music Director of the Kansas City Civic Orchestra. Born in Brooklyn, Dr. Block was educated at the Eastman School of Music. He received his Ph.D. from the University of California at San Diego.

A frequent guest conductor, he has appeared in over 42 states with all-state and professional orchestras. Foreign guest-conducting have included concerts and master classes at the Fontainebleau Conservatoire in France, and concerts in Spain, Canada, Colombia, Estonia, Russia, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Czech Republic and throughout South America since 2012. He has served on the Boards of Directors for both the Conductors Guild and the Youth Orchestra Division of the American Symphony Orchestra League. The Youth Symphony of Kansas City and Dr. Block made their Carnegie Hall debut in June 1997. Dr. Block has served on the faculty of the National Music Camp at Interlochen as Resident Conductor of the World Youth Symphony Orchestra, and at the Interlochen Arts Academy as Visiting Conductor. In addition, he has served as Music Director of the Summer Festival Orchestra at the Rocky Ridge Music Center in Estes Park, Colorado.

This year, he has been invited to serve as Adjunct Professor of Conducting at Illinois Wesleyan University and Interim Music Director of the Illinois Wesleyan Symphony. He will return in the summer of 2023 to guest-conduct orchestras in Argentina (Misiones/Posadas, Salta); Asunción, Paraguay (Orquesta of the Universidad de Norte (UniNorte), Orquesta de la Policia Nacional; and in Italy.

He has conducted many of the major orchestras of Argentina: Teatro Colón, Chascomus, Posadas, Salta, Mar del Plata, Mendoza, Iguazu International Music Festival; Paraguay: Orquesta Nacional de Paraguay, Camerata Miranda, Orquesta de la Policia Nacional, Orquesta Camera de la Ciudad de Asunción (OCMA); Londrina, Brazil International Music Festival (2019); Guadiagrele, Italy Opera Festival (2019, 2020, 2022); Wuhan, China (2019); Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam National Orchestra of Vietnam (2018). He has led international conducting seminars throughout South America, Asia, and Europe.

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Matthew Tutterow

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Chloe Horn
Joshua Mobley

Trombone

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Grant Cermak
Nick Sisson, *bass trombone*

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*Creative Technologies Program (CTK)

Upcoming Events

Friday, February 16

Symphonic Winds Concert

8:00 p.m.

CPA

Saturday, February 17

Illinois Symphony Orchestra Concert: Captivating Contrasts

Tania Miller, *conductor* and Timothy Chooi, *violin*

(comments at 6:30 pm)

7:30 pm

Center for the Performing Arts, Normal

Tuesday, February 20

Performance Convocation

11:00 p.m.

CPA

Free

Wednesday, February 21

Wind Symphony Concert with Morton High School

8:00 p.m.

CPA

Thursday, February 22

Guest Artist Recital Series: Eunmil Ko, *piano*

7:30 p.m.

Kemp

Friday, February 23

Jazz Ensemble I & II

8:00 p.m.

CPA

Sunday, February 25

Trombone Studio Recital

2:30 pm

Kemp

Men's Glee, Treble Choir and Belle Voix

3:00 p.m.

CPA

Concert Choir Concert with Normal Community High School

6:00 p.m.

CPA

Tuesday, February 27

Guest Artist Recital Series: Nick Beltchev, *tuba*

7:30 p.m.

Kemp

Wednesday, February 28

Philharmonia Orchestra Concert

7:30 p.m.

Kemp