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## COLUMBUS SYMPHONY INFORMATION

Venue: RiverCenter for the Performing Arts | 900 Broadway, Columbus GA

Ticket Sales: RiverCenter Box Office, Monday - Friday, 10:00 AM - 5:30 PM

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# A NOTE FROM THE CONDUCTOR

---

Greetings, and welcome to this performance by the Columbus Symphony Orchestra.

Let me ask you a question: Why are you here?

There are many answers to this question, some better than others. (I love music. Good. I was trapped into it by my significant other. Not quite as good, but okay.)

Here are some reasons why we respond to music and, therefore, seek to hear it:

1. Listening to music releases “pleasure chemicals” like dopamine, among others, into a key part of our brain’s reward system. (Why go on? Okay, we will.)
2. Music transcends walls and boundaries with its universal language.
3. Music can help reduce anxiety and depression.
4. Music allows you to experience the full range of human emotions.
5. Music can lighten the mood.
6. Music can stave off fatigue and improve our response to pain.
7. Music can bring back memories.
8. All that and much, much more.

Whatever the reason for your presence at this concert, we are most happy to see you, to play for you, and to help make live orchestral music a meaningful part of your life. Come back soon.

George Del Gobbo,  
Music Director & Conductor



Young George was always interested in music. From his earliest years he preferred musical toys. This proclivity remained undefined until the seventh grade when he decided he wanted to play the violin in the school orchestra. This turn down the dark path was sealed when he began studying the violin privately. It was a short step from there to the decision to make music his life, and his fate was sealed when he made the irrevocable choice to become an orchestra conductor. He was fortunate to attend the Eastman School of Music for five years on a four-year scholarship. (To date no statues of him have been erected outside that school.) From there it was on to a stint with the U.S. Army Band in Washington, D.C and simultaneously the graduate school at Catholic University. After leaving the army , it was on to Rome, Italy and the tutelage of Maestro Franco Ferrara at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. After a dozen years working with the Fort Worth Symphony and Ballet, he came to Columbus and discovered the orchestra, the people, and the city that would enrich his life forever.

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THE COLUMBUSITE



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# ABOUT THE CONCERTMASTER



---

Kerren Berz's talents span the musical spectrum. She has performed, recorded, and toured with the Atlanta Symphony, the Harlem Festival Orchestra, and the Nashville Chamber Orchestra, whose "music without boundaries" mission produced critically acclaimed performances and recordings of music by Aaron Copland, Conni Ellisor, and John Jorgenson.

Her ensemble Sonic Essence regularly performs multi genre music and interactive performances for concert series and corporate events. Other performances include a national tour with Amy Grant and Vince Gill, and shows with Stevie Wonder, Joni Mitchell, The Eagles, Earth Wind and Fire, and many other iconic artists.

As a music arranger and performer, Kerren Berz has worked with Kristian Bush (Sugarland), and is featured on albums by Outkast, Goodie Mob, Pink, Sinead O'Connor, and on the hit single "Survivor," by Destiny's Child. Ms. Berz is a voting member of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences and has participated on nominating committees for the annual Grammy Awards.

She has degrees from Florida State University, where she studied with Eliot Chapo, and the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, with additional studies at Boston University and with Israeli violinist Yair Kless. She credits her public school music program with giving her the opportunity to play the violin.

As a music educator, Ms. Berz has worked with the Columbus Urban League, TORCH Academy, the Youth Orchestra of Greater Columbus, and strings students throughout the Atlanta area. She is currently on faculty at Georgia Perimeter College, The Atlanta Music Project, and The Lovett School.



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**Ushers** are available to take your tickets, provide you with a program, and direct you to and from your seat.

**Restrooms** are located in the RiverCenter lobby. Ushers can help direct you to the closest restroom.

**Smoking and vaping** are not allowed inside the building.

**Lost and Found:** If you lose an item in the theatre, please notify an usher. Items may be turned in to the RiverCenter Security.

**Arrive Early:** Although there are occasions when arriving later is considered stylish, a concert isn't one of them. Once the music has begun, latecomers will be asked to remain in the lobby until the first performance break.

**Phones:** Flash photography and noise disturbances are strictly prohibited. We love engaging with our audience on social media so feel free to check-in on Facebook and take selfies and photos PRIOR to the performance. Before the concert starts, be sure to silence your phone and turn down those brightness settings.

**Quiet Company:** Unless the concert is deemed a "sing-a-long", you will want to leave the music making to the ensemble... even if you really do know the whole first movement of Beethoven's Seventh. The people around you probably know it too and would rather hear the orchestra's rendition. Silence all cell phones, alarms, or other audible devices before the concert begins.

**Applause:** Don't know when to clap and cheer? We can make it easy! In classical music concerts, applause is usually held until the conductor faces the audience. Some pieces contain several movements and there will be a brief applause-less pause between them. If you ever feel the overwhelming need to clap and cheer between movements... the orchestra won't mind the appreciation!

**Enjoy Each Note:** You may simply want to avoid the crowd by leaving five minutes early, but the musicians may mistake that as a sign of disapproval. Sit back, relax, and enjoy every last note!

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The Columbus Symphony Orchestra would like to dedicate the 2023-2024 Season to the memory of

## Mr. & Mrs. Ray Crowley

Ray and Evelyn Crowley and their family were patrons of the arts in the truest sense of the word. Their loyal support of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra was unwavering over many decades.

As representative members of a unique generation which did so much to transform and define present-day Columbus, their presence among us will be sorely missed but their legacy will live on.

It is with gratitude and humility that we dedicate the 2023-2024 symphony season to their memory.

*George Del Gobbo*



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Musicians employed in this production are represented by the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada.

The CSO uses the revolving seating method for section string players who are listed alphabetically in the roster.

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# FROM ATLANTA TO LONDON

COLUMBUS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
George Del Gobbo, Music Director & Conductor  
The Dr. & Mrs. Steven Leichter Chair

Saturday, October 7, 2023 | 7:30 PM

Alex Amsel, Guest Conductor

## PROGRAM

Carlos Simon

Fate Now Conquers

Jean Sibelius

Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47

I. Allegro moderato

II. Adagio di molto

III. Allegro, ma non tanto

**SooBeen Lee, violin**

### **-Intermission-**

Antonín Dvořák

Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88

I. Allegro con brio

II. Adagio

III. Allegretto grazioso - Molto vivace

IV. Allegro ma non troppo

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Unauthorized cameras and recording devices are not permitted.



## SooBeen Lee, violin

Praised by The Washington Post for her “poised presence, a luxurious sound, spot-on intonation, and a bow arm that surely will be the envy of her peers”. She has already appeared as soloist with every major Korean orchestra, including the Seoul and Busan Philharmonics and KBS (Korean Broadcasting System) Symphony Orchestra. Other distinctions include performances for former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, at the Blue House for the King and Queen of Malaysia, with China’s Wuhan Philharmonic at the Seoul Arts Center, and for many state guests in Korea.

As First Prize Winner of the 2014 YCA Susan Wadsworth International Auditions, SooBeen was also honored with The Slomovic Soloist Prize for support for her Washington, DC recital debut at the Kennedy Center, the Michaels Award, which provided support for her New York recital debut, and three performance prizes including the Korean Concert Society Prize. SooBeen made her New York concerto debut performing the Chausson Poème with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s at Alice Tully Hall.

SooBeen has appeared as concerto soloist with the Detroit Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Gulf Coast Symphony, Rockford Symphony, Plymouth Philharmonic, Longwood Symphony (Boston), Palm Beach Symphony, and the Aiken Symphony. She has presented recitals for the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Southern Adventist University, Buffalo Chamber Music Society, Abbey Church Events, and the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC.

During the 23-24 season SooBeen will join the Columbus Symphony (GA) as soloist in the Sibelius concerto and will make recital appearances with the Bowlus Fine Arts Center (KS), Pepperdine University (Malibu), Merkin Hall at the Kaufman Music Center (NYC), and will also participate in the inaugural chamber music ensemble of YCA on Tour in performances at the University of Florida Performing Arts and BIG ARTS Sanibel Island (FL).

SooBeen’s festival engagements have included appearances at the Heifetz Music Festival, Chopin Music Festival in Poland, City of London Festival, Busan International Music Festival, Great Mountains International Music Festival, Seoul Spring Festival, and Japan’s Ishikawa Summer Music Academy, where she worked with YCA alumnus Koichiro Harada.

SooBeen began studying the violin at the age of four. At eight years old she won the National Competition of the Korean Chamber Orchestra, she won First Prize at the Russia International Youth Violin Competition the following year, and she captured First Prize at the 2013 Moscow International David Oistrakh Violin Competition. At the 2022 Indianapolis Competition SooBeen was awarded the Special Prize “Best Performance of a Work by Paganini, Ernst or Milstein” for her performance of Milstein's 'Paganiniana Variations'. Following this success, SooBeen was a 3rd place laureate in the Concours musical international de Montréal. SooBeen currently studies with Miriam Fried at the New England Conservatory, where she performed the Sibelius Violin Concerto as winner of their Concerto Competition.

SooBeen plays a Giuseppe Guadagnini Cremona 1794 on loan from Kumho Cultural Foundation.



### **Alex Amsel, guest conductor**

Argentinian-Mexican conductor Alex Amsel has quickly established himself as a conductor equally at home with orchestral and operatic repertoire, as well as a music educator for students of all ages. Amsel's hope is to integrate music into the fabric of every community he works with to reshape how we think about society and our place in it. Amsel is currently a Music Director Finalist for the Elgin Symphony in Illinois. He joined the Houston Grand Opera as Resident Conductor for the 2022-2023 season where he led performances of Verdi's *La traviata* and world-premiere of *Another City* by

Jeremy Howard Beck and Stephanie Fleischmann. Amsel spent 3 successful seasons with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra where he was appointed Assistant Conductor by Robert Spano and led the orchestra in a variety of concerts including Symphonic, Chamber and Education/Outreach concerts. Amsel was also selected for the prestigious Aspen Conducting Academy for the 2020 and 2021 summers where he worked closely with Robert Spano and Patrick Summers.

In high demand for summer seasons as both performer and educator, Amsel has led orchestras at Aspen Music Festival, National Repertory Orchestra, Round Top Music Festival, and Philadelphia International Music Festival. For the summer of 2019, Amsel was selected as the Assistant Conductor for the National Repertory Orchestra in Breckenridge, Colorado, where he led the orchestra in multiple subscription concerts.

An avid educator, Amsel is continually trying to advance what classical music can do for audiences. Recently, he has completely reshaped the education programs at the Fort Worth Symphony in order to let music be the aid for societal growth and respect by creating programs that emphasize the inclusion of minority and underrepresented composers and artists, as well as centering the concerts around the themes of teamwork, inclusivity, and learning about different cultures. His approach of creating programs that unify the students' school curriculum while exposing them to the magic and wondrous world of music has been highly regarded by arts organizations and school educators alike. His desire to aid students through music sees him as a frequent clinician at schools of all levels.

During his time in Peabody, he served the Baltimore community in several ways through the Creative Leadership Immersion and Implementing Social Development programs. These programs helped connect the conservatory to the greater Baltimore community by helping emerging music programs at low-income schools. Amsel supported students in creating original compositions that reflect their daily lives while discussing the importance of music and how it can supplement a young person's life through communication, open discussions, and vocal leadership. He has been a

featured performer and taught masterclasses through these organizations, as well as having had an active private bassoon studio of 30 weekly students in Austin and Houston, Texas.

Contemporary music is at the forefront in Amsel's musical journey and has premiered works both as conductor and instrumentalist. He has led recording sessions of world premieres at Peabody Conservatory as well as Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. He continues to be an advocate for living composers, with an emphasis on underrepresented composers that represent each community that he works in, and has continuously programmed works by Carlos Simon, Jessie Montgomery, Eleanor Alberga, Victor Agudelo, and Carlos Zamora among others. Amsel was selected to work as an Associate at the Cabrillo Music Festival with Cristian Macelaru, and was subsequently invited to return as the Assistant Conductor of the festival for the 2019 season.

Amsel completed his studies under the tutelage of Marin Alsop at the Peabody Conservatory as her Graduate Assistant while working towards his Masters in Music in Orchestral Conducting. While at Peabody, he was appointed Choir Master and Assistant Conductor of both the Opera Theatre and Choruses, where he led performances of Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* and Massenet's *Cherubin*. Amsel has also worked closely with Larry Rachleff, Cristian Macelaru, Hugh Wolff and Miguel Harth-Bedoya as well as having appeared in masterclasses with David Zinman, David Effron, Nicholas McGeegan, and Hannu Lintu. He also holds degrees from New England Conservatory and The University of Texas in Austin.

During his free time, Amsel is a biking, architecture, wine, and Golden Retriever aficionado.

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Fate Now Conquers

Carlos Simon (b. 1986)

Premiered on March 26-29, 2020 by the Philadelphia Orchestra

Hailing from Atlanta, Carlos Simon is one of today's rising composers and is in demand by major orchestras across the world. His long family line of preachers led Simon to lean on gospel music with a mix of jazz and classical for his compositional style. Currently the Composer-In-Residence at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, Simon has written for a wide range of ensembles and was named a Sundance/Time Warner Composer Fellow in 2018. Simon has also toured with Grammy artist Jennifer Holliday, performing in orchestras such as the Boston Pops Symphony and St. Louis Symphony.

Described by NPR as a "young composer on the rise, with an ear for social justice," Simon was nominated for a 2023 Grammy award for his recent composition, *Requiem for the Enslaved*, a piece commemorating the lives of 272 people sold into slavery by Georgetown University in 1838. In 2021, he was awarded the Sphinx Medal of Excellence, a distinguished award given in recognition of extraordinary classical Black and Latinx musicians. Simon was

also named a Sundance/Time Warner Composer Fellow in 2018 for his work in film. Previously a faculty member at Spelman College and Morehouse College in Atlanta, Simon is currently an associate professor at Georgetown University.

Simon's inspiration for his piece, *Fate Now Conquers*, comes from a journal entry written by Ludwig van Beethoven in 1815. The entry contains a quote from Homer's *Iliad*:

"But Fate now conquers; I am hers; and yet not she shall share  
In my renown; that life is left to every noble spirit  
And that some great deed shall beget that all lives shall inherit."

In his work, Simon borrows from Beethoven, wielding his own compositional tools to grapple with the topic of fate. In his personal program notes, Simon writes,

"Using the beautifully fluid harmonic structure of the 2nd movement of Beethoven's 7th symphony, I have composed musical gestures that are representative of the unpredictable ways of fate. Jolting stabs, coupled with an agitated groove with every persona. Frenzied arpeggios in the strings that morph into an ambiguous cloud of free-flowing running passages depicts the uncertainty of life that hovers over us.

We know that Beethoven strived to overcome many obstacles in his life and documented his aspirations to prevail, despite his ailments. Whatever the specific reason for including this particularly profound passage from the *Iliad*, in the end, it seems that Beethoven relinquished to fate. Fate now conquers."

## **Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47**

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Premiered on February 8, 1904 by the Helsinki Philharmonic with soloist  
Victor Nováček

Born in Finland, Jean Sibelius started playing the violin at age fifteen and went on to study violin and composition at the Helsinki Music Institute. Passionate about the violin, he once wrote:

"When I play, I am filled with a strange feeling; it is as though the insides of the music opened up to me."

Sibelius' focus shifted to composition, however, after he auditioned for the Vienna Philharmonic but was denied out of concern for his performance anxiety. He studied abroad in Berlin and Vienna and was greatly influenced by the music of his contemporaries such as Bruckner, Wagner, Debussy, Grieg, and Tchaikovsky. Drawing inspiration from Finnish folklore in the epic *Kalevala*, many of Sibelius' works embody the essence of Finland - its traditions, history, and heart. As a result, Sibelius became a national figure.



The tone piece *Finlandia* (1900) became his most popular work and was used as a symbol of Finnish pride in the face of Russian dominance. In 1915, Sibelius' birthday, December 8, became a national holiday later known as "Finnish Music Day." In addition to over 60 works for the violin, he wrote prolifically for piano, strings, and voice and completed seven symphonies.

Sibelius' stand-alone Violin Concerto (1903) has since become one of the most standard and well-loved pieces of violin repertoire. The work is not only lyrical and virtuosic, but deeply imaginative and progressive for its time. Though not a direct inspiration from the Kalevala, the piece still holds many Scandinavian flavors and nuances.

Sibelius began writing the concerto after visiting former Helsinki concertmaster, Willy Burmester in 1902. Although Burmester was the original dedicatee, he was overlooked and never given the chance to premiere the concerto even when the piece was re-premiered in 1905 after major revisions. Burmester's inevitable embitterment led Sibelius to change the dedicatee to twelve year-old violin virtuoso Franz Von Vecsey, who was an early promoter of the piece.

The first movement opens with placid eighth notes in the orchestra, setting the atmosphere for the violin's entrance. The listener can almost imagine the cold, wintery landscape of Finland. Throughout the movement, the solo violin is interrupted by long orchestral interludes, establishing the orchestra as an entity in itself. The violin responds with its own lengthy cadenza, revisiting the main theme. A fast and furious *Allegro molto vivace* section has the solo violin racing to the end of the movement.

The second movement features a somber and elegant solo that explores moments of glorious splendor to those of the tenderest delicacy. The third movement starts at a rapid pace with virtuosic displays from the soloist. The excitement picks up pace until it relaxes to a march-like second theme. Dramatic octaves in the solo violin usher in the ending.

## **Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88**

**Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)**

Premiered on February 2, 1890 in Prague's Rudolfinum and conducted by Antonín Dvořák

Czech composer Antonín Dvořák was born near Prague in 1841 to a family of butchers. Having shown proficiency in music from a young age, Dvořák moved to Prague at sixteen years old where he attended organ school and later earned a job playing viola in what became the Provisional Theatre Orchestra. There he had the opportunity to play the music of Verdi, Donizetti, and others under the baton of Smetana and Wagner. Resigning from the orchestra in 1871 to focus on composing, Dvořák wrote prolifically in all genres including operas, symphonies, chamber music, and concertos.

Low on income, Dvořák submitted and won the Austrian State Stipend in 1875; this served as a turning point for the distribution of his music.

On the stipend jury was Johannes Brahms, who became a lifelong friend of Dvořák's and connected him to his publisher Fritz Simrock. Dvořák continued to win the award five years in a row and his popularity spread throughout Europe, becoming known for the use of Czech influences in his music. In 1891, Dvořák accepted the position of director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York City where he served for three years. He died in 1904 and was honored with a funeral of political scale.

Dvořák's Eighth Symphony was written in 1889 at a family vacation home in Vysoká where the Dvořáks spent every summer for twenty years. Containing flavors of Slavonic and Czech folk music, the symphony overflows with pastoral lyricism that reflects the beauty and nature surrounding the summer home. The work was met with tremendous success and was performed many times including at "Czech Day" during the 1893 World Fair in Chicago.

The Eighth Symphony earned the name "English" because of Dvořák's decision to employ a new publisher in London rather than his usual publisher in Germany due to a disagreement. After a London performance, Dvořák wrote to a friend, "after the finale, the applause was tempestuous – from the audience in the auditorium, in the galleries, from the orchestra itself, and from the people sitting behind it by the organ – they all clapped so hard, it was almost unbearable."

The first movement opens with a slow introduction showcased in the cellos. Listeners can hear a bird call in the flute reminiscent of Dvořák's surroundings when writing the piece. The orchestra gradually gains energy and motion, journeying through endless lyricism from moments of reflective introversion to those of boisterous extroversion.

The second movement Adagio contains two themes that appear in different orchestrations throughout the movement. The first theme is a stirring scalar melody introduced by the low strings. The second theme, lighter and brighter, is introduced by the woodwinds followed by a violin solo.

The third movement is a melancholy waltz with a flowing, descending melody serving as the first theme. The second theme is introduced beautifully by the flute and oboe and then passed back and forth between the strings and woodwinds. This melody is borrowed from an aria in Dvořák's one-act comic opera, *The Stubborn Lovers*; the words expressing "Such youth in a girl, such dotage in a man." The first theme returns at a quickened pace in the coda to finish the movement.

The fourth, and final, movement is announced by a trumpet fanfare followed by an elegant melody in the cellos reminiscent of the opening of the symphony. The orchestra then launches into a robust dance melody, exemplifying Dvořák's Bohemian influences. A slow middle section provides a time of calm before a sudden racing revisitation of the dance theme ushers in the ending.

Program Notes Compiled and Written by Leah Eckstrom



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# GLOSSARY OF MUSICAL TERMS

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**Cadenza** (It. Cadenza): an improvised or written-out decorative passage performed by a soloist, with accompaniment, usually near the end of a concerto movement.

**Concerto** (fr. Lat. Concertare, to contend): a composition for featured instrument(s) and orchestra often cast in three movements marked fast-slow-fast. The contrast in sound between the soloist(s) and the large ensemble is the principal characteristic of the genre.

**Concerto grosso** (It. large concerto): a type of concerto common to the Baroque era in which a small group of solo instruments (concertino) is contrasted to the large ensemble (ripieno)

**Finale** (Lat. Finalis, to end): the name sometimes given to the last movement of a longer composition.

**Minuet**: a stately court dance in three-four time which is often used as the third movement of the classical symphony. It was replaced in the nineteenth century by the scherzo and other dance-like movements.

**Movement**: an independent section of a larger work, usually separated by a brief pause.

**Opus** (Lat. Opus, work): a number assigned to a musical composition either by the composer or by the work's publisher (abbreviated as Op.)

**Orchestra**: the generic name for an ensemble of diverse instruments. The modern orchestra includes instruments from the four major groups: strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion.

**Rondo**: a musical form in which a theme recurs three or more times with each occurrence separated by a contrasting episode.

**Scherzo** (It. Scherzo, joke): a fast moving piece, usually in triple meter. Scherzos became common with the symphonies of Beethoven and eventually replaced the Minuet.

**Suite**: a succession of related movements, often dance inspired, sometimes extracted from larger works.

**Symphony** (Gr. Symphonia, sounding together): an elaborate musical composition for full orchestra, typically in four movements

**Tempo**: Many words are used to designate the speed and/or character of a piece of music. Here are some of the most commonly encountered terms for tempo and style modifiers:

**Adagio**: on the slow side

**Allegretto**: a fairly brisk tempo

**Allegro**: "lively," the most common indication for a fast tempo

**Andante**: "to walk or go," interpreted as moderately slow.

**Andantino**: a bit faster than Andante

**Cantabile**: in a singing fashion

**con brio**: with spirit and vivacity

**con fuoco**: with fire

**con moto**: with movement

**Grave**: more a style than speed, but often interpreted as slow and serious

**Grazioso**: graceful

**Largo**: broad or large, usually taken in a slow and dignified style

**Lento**: slow

**Maestoso**: majestically

**meno**: less

**molto**: much

**mosso**: moved

**non troppo**: not too much

**piu**: more

**poco**: little

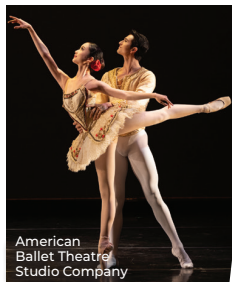
**Presto**: very fast, sometimes modified as Prestissimo, meaning as fast as possible.

**Scherzando**: lightheartedly

**Sostenuto**: in a sustained manner

**Vivace**: "vivacious," a lively and brisk manner

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November 25

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*Metropolis*  
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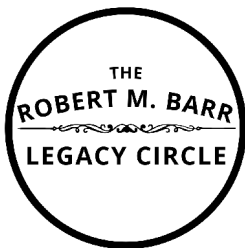
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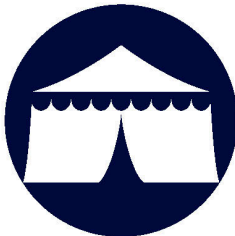
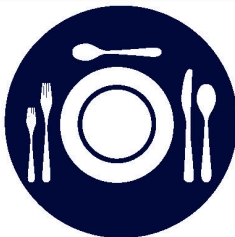
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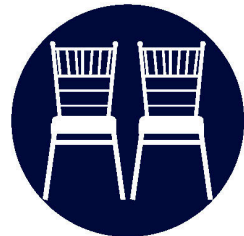
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