Western Music
Don Wright Faculty of Music

WESTERN UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: I. TOWARD THE UNKNOWN REGION

7:30 p.m., November 6, 2026
Paul Davenport Theatre
Simone Luti, *conductor*

Finlandia, Op. 26 — Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

Cello Concerto in B minor, Op. 104 — Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)
Allegro

Soloist: Abigail Greenland, cello
Maritsa Brookes Concerto Competition Finalist 2025-26

L'Arlésienne Suites No. 1 — Georges Bizet (1838–1875)
Overture

L'Arlésienne Suites No. 2
Pastorale
Farondole

Toward the Unknown Region — Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

with Western University Singers

PROGRAM NOTES

Composed in 1899, *Finlandia* op.26 emerged during a period of growing tension between Finland and Russia. Although Finland had its own institutions and a degree of autonomy, Russian imperial policies increasingly threatened its independence. Sibelius wrote the music originally as part of a series of tableaux presented at the Press Celebrations in Helsinki, an event supporting freedom of the press in response to Russian censorship. The final tableau, initially titled Finland Awakes, was later revised into the independent orchestral work known as Finlandia. Because of its political associations, the piece sometimes had to be performed under alternative titles to evade censorship. It soon became an emblem of Finnish national identity and a musical expression of the country's aspirations for freedom.

Dvořák composed his Cello Concerto in B minor, Op. 104 between 1894 and 1895 while serving as director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York City. He wrote the work with the Czech cellist Hanuš Wihan in mind, drawing on his experience in America while maintaining a strong connection to his Bohemian roots. The concerto was completed shortly before Dvořák returned to Europe and received its premiere in London in 1896, performed by cellist Leo Stern under the composer's direction. The first movement, Allegro, establishes the concerto's symphonic scale and introduces the principal musical themes that shape its dramatic narrative.

Bizet composed the incidental music for Alphonse Daudet's play *L'Arlésienne* in 1872. Set in Provence, southern France, the play tells the tragic story of Frédéri, a young farmer who falls deeply in love with a woman from Arles whom he never actually sees onstage. When he discovers that she has had a relationship with another man, his jealousy and despair threaten his relationship with Vivette, a devoted young woman who loves him. Unable to reconcile his feelings, Frédéri ultimately meets a tragic end. Although the play was initially unsuccessful, Bizet's music endured, and he arranged selections into an orchestral suite. A second suite was compiled after his death by Ernest Guiraud. Drawing on Provençal folk melodies and dance rhythms, the music captures the region's rustic charm, festive energy, and underlying emotional drama, showcasing Bizet's remarkable gift for melody and orchestral color.

Composed in 1906, *Toward the Unknown Region* is a work for chorus and orchestra that sets a poem by American poet Walt Whitman. The poem celebrates the courage to move beyond familiar boundaries and embrace the possibilities of the unknown. Vaughan Williams reflects this spirit through expansive harmonies, sweeping orchestral writing, and choral passages that grow in intensity and grandeur. The music seems to gather momentum toward a distant horizon, conveying both the uncertainty and exhilaration of embarking on a new journey. An important early work in Vaughan Williams's career, it reveals his emerging musical voice and his ability to transform poetry into a powerful expression of hope, discovery, and human aspiration.

Program notes by Tasman Tantasawat

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WESTERN UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Flutes
Grace Zhu
Yiping Zhang
Josie Li

Oboes
Leona Wei
Pauline Dizon

Clarinets
Gavin Warren
Ruoyun Wang
Justin Woong (bass clarinet)

Bassoons
Yaron Felter-Gonen
Siodhachan Morehead

Horns
Ryan Duffy
Jeffrey Vezina-Goodwin

Trumpets
Colin Spencer
Nayli Deleon Kantule
Toshi Kawabe

Trombones
Jacob Reddin
Alex Allsopp
Selena Oksanichenko

Tuba
Daniel Montaseri

Percussions
Dylan Lillie
Ethan Fong
Max Ling

Keyboard
Hao Li

1st Violins
Helen Faucher**
Cordelia Poon**
Erin Van Dyke
Clara Anne Mackenzie Martin
Charlotte Usprich
Jayden So
Nicole Ma
Maren Snow Peddle
Jenny Yang
Laura Nyburg

2nd Violins
Bret Trampleasure*
Zisen Zhou*
Dylan Jeffrey
Abena Baah-Frimpong
Cyr Cyr
Mary-Jane Chuyue Xia
Xochitl Guerrero
Katherine Lee
Ashley Lo
Kwan Pok Iam
Lerissa Mowatt
Deion Liu
Erin Fang

Violas
Ludmilla Kraneck*
Tasman Tantasawat*
Cian Diamond*
Lincoln St John*
Yifan Evanka Liu
Grace wright
Cyrus Chang
Maia Forsyth
Salem Shin

Celli
Deverson Santos de Sousa*
Isaac Lee*
Tuuli Olo*
Francis Scarth-Lella
Kara Lim
Justin Choi
Felicity Ngo
Charlotte Montgomery-Seto
Felice Hermanto

Basses
Manuel Marquez*
Adela Montgomery*
Ayden Cameron
Thomas Locke
Joshua Guttormson

** Concert Master
* Principal player

WESTERN UNIVERSITY SINGERS

Dr. Mark Ramsay, *conductor*
Sing Yuan Liew, *pianist*
Kai Melconian, *assistant pianist*

Ian Nathaniel Balana
Evelyn Barber
Roland Beach
Braylon Belanger
Hayden Belcher
Denzel Benitez-Ortega
Clara Bertoldi
Angelo Billanti
Pauline Boers
Riley Borden
Sydney Brouillard-Coyle
Ellery Butler
Emma Butler
Olivia Calbeck
Ignacio Corral

Griffon Fehr
Callista Foti
Tamryn Furger
Owen Gariepy
Erika Golder
Tessa Harvey
Christopher Homsi
Yuanzhi Huang
Manishya Jayasundera
Kayvon Kasravi
Vedha Katta
Dominik Kawa
Benjamin Louwerse
Liam Lynch
Gavin MacKenzie

Sara McCardle
Maggie Ng
Cecilia Pollock
Deanna Pritchett
Victoria Robinson
Luciana Sabogal Maz
Leo Sigut
Nicholas Skene
Gianluca Villella
Eden Volpe-Rule
John Waterfield
Cameron Cayley Wong
James Wright
Carissa Yuen