Western Music
Don Wright Faculty of Music

WESTERN UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: II. MAPS AND GUIDES FOR TIME AND SPACE

3 p.m., November 28, 2026
Paul Davenport Theatre
Simone Luti, *conductor*

Egmont Overture, Op. 84	Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Serenade No. 2 in A major, Op. 16	Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)
Russian Easter Festival Overture, Op. 36	Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)

PROGRAM NOTES

Beethoven composed his Egmont Overture, Op. 84 in 1809–1810 as part of the incidental music for Goethe's play Egmont, which tells the story of a sixteenth-century Flemish nobleman who resists political oppression and ultimately faces execution. The overture transforms this dramatic conflict into a powerful musical journey, moving from an atmosphere of darkness and tension toward a triumphant conclusion. Yet victory comes only through the sacrifice of a single individual. The final transformation, often described as a Symphony of Victory, suggests that while Egmont's life comes to an end, the ideals for which he fought survive him. Beethoven gives musical expression to the passage from suffering to freedom, from darkness to light.

Brahms composed his Serenade No. 2 in A major, Op. 16 between 1858 and 1859, later revising it in 1875. Written for an unusual ensemble of winds and lower strings, without violins, the work explores a particularly intimate and mysterious orchestral sound. Across its five movements, Brahms creates a world of shifting colours, gentle shadows, and moments of quiet contemplation. Rather than presenting a dramatic struggle, the music seems to inhabit the night itself, embracing its mystery, tenderness, and uncertainty. The darker sonorities and delicate exchanges between instruments evoke a landscape in which light is never entirely absent, but remains distant and elusive. In the final movement, the music gradually acquires a renewed vitality, as though the first light of a new day were emerging from the stillness of the night.

Rimsky-Korsakov composed his Russian Easter Festival Overture, Op. 36 in 1888, drawing on traditional melodies and the rich orchestral colours that characterize his musical language. The work unfolds as a vivid confrontation between opposing forces: darkness and illumination, uncertainty and affirmation, obscurity and the promise of light. Its opening passages establish an atmosphere of mystery, while brilliant instrumental gestures and increasingly animated rhythms propel the music toward an exuberant conclusion. Particularly striking are the chorale-like passages and antiphonal exchanges between instrumental groups, which create the impression of a collective voice responding to the unfolding drama. We become witnesses to a struggle that extends beyond any single individual, a recurring human experience in which darkness is confronted by the enduring possibility of light.

WESTERN UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Flutes
Grace Zhu
Yiping Zhang
Josie Li

Oboes
Leona Wei
Pauline Dizon

Clarinets
Gavin Warren
Ruoyun Wang

Bassoons
Yaron Felter-Gonen
Siodhachan Morehead

Horns
Ryan Duffy
Jeffrey Vezina-Goodwin

Trumpets
Colin Spencer
Nayli Deleon Kantule

Trombones
Selena Oksanichenko
Jacob Reddin
Alex Allsopp

Tuba
Daniel Montaseri

Percussions
Dylan Lillie
Ethan Fong
Max Ying
Ziyun Peng

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
Lucien Laufer
Yining Yang
Olivia Cardillo

Celli
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*

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