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Symphony Orchestra

Fountains!

Gary Lewis, director

Thursday, Sept. 25, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Macky Auditorium

PROGRAM

Serenade for Strings in One Movement

Quinn Mason (b. 1996)

Fontane di Roma (Fountains of Rome)

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

La fontana di Valle Giulia all'alba

(The Fountain of Valle Giulia at Dawn)

La fontana del Tritone al mattino

(The Triton Fountain in the Morning)

La fontana di Trevi al meriggio (The Trevi Fountain at Midday)

La fontana di Villa Medici al tramonto

(The Villa Medici Fountain at Sunset)

Intermission

Der Rosenkavalier Suite, Op. 59

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

PROGRAM NOTES

Serenade for Strings in One Movement

Quinn Mason (b. 1996)

This *Serenade for Strings* is a project many years in the making. The present composition is the result of musical ideas composed as far back as 2007 and 2013. In a sense, the piece has had multiple early lives and finally takes shape in its final life as this piece. In composing a *Serenade for Strings*, one mustn't forget the masterworks that the genre boasts, such as those by Tchaikovsky, Elgar, Dvořák and others. Therefore, I sought to use the groundwork they laid, but speak in my own voice (and use only one movement) in a mostly post-romantic style. From a slow-burn introduction, I write several contrasting fast sections that are melody focused, and build upon previous themes. However, despite these fast sections, the piece retains a dark, reflective and somewhat nostalgic color. While the piece glances back lovingly, it also looks forward dynamically and lyrically.

***Fontane di Roma* (Fountains of Rome)**

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Ottorino Respighi's *Fontane di Roma* (1916) is a lush, symphonic tone-poem in four continuous movements, each vividly depicting one of Rome's iconic fountains at a specific time of day: Valle Giulia at dawn, Triton in the morning, Trevi at midday, and Villa Medici at sunset. The piece premiered at the Teatro Augusteo on March 11, 1917, conducted by Antonio Guarnieri, though it gained its lasting acclaim when Arturo Toscanini programmed it in Milan in February 1918, propelling Respighi to international fame.

Respighi describes the dawn scene with “droves of cattle pass and disappear in the fresh, damp mists of the Roman dawn,” invoking a pastoral reverie. The second movement bursts forth as a “joyous call, summoning troops of naiads and tritons, who come running up ... in a frenzied dance between the jets of water.” The third movement adopts a more solemn tone—“a solemn theme, passing from the woodwind to the brass instruments, assumes a triumphal character”—culminating in a majestic, Neptune-driven procession. The final movement casts a wistful sunset, “the air is full of the sound of tolling bells, the twittering of birds, the rustling of leaves,” before yielding to peaceful silence.

Through masterful orchestration and imagery, Respighi takes the listener on a sensory voyage: from serene dawn to exuberant morning, into regal midday, and finally a nostalgic twilight. This work marks the first of his celebrated Roman Trilogy (followed by *Pines of Rome* and *Roman Festivals*), and remains a cornerstone of early 20th-century orchestral color and atmosphere.

***Der Rosenkavalier* Suite, Op. 59**

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

This orchestral suite extracts the most beloved themes from Strauss’s opera *Der Rosenkavalier* (composed 1909-1910), offering a richly woven tapestry of its highlights in roughly 22-25 minutes of vivid, expressive music. Though Richard Strauss authorized its publication post–World War II, he does not appear to have arranged it himself; the arrangement is conventionally attributed to conductor Artur Rodziński, who led the suite’s first performance with the New York Philharmonic on Oct. 5, 1944. Strauss’s publication of the suite in 1945 perhaps reflected both artistic

approval and practical financial need in the difficult postwar era.

The suite opens with the opera's famed *Prelude*—full of expressive, whooping horns and glowing strings—that evokes Marschallin's nocturnal encounter with young Octavian. It then transitions into the tender “Presentation of the Silver Rose,” rendered with shimmering flutes, solo violin, harp and celesta, capturing the rose's delicate significance. A contrasting discordant burst marks Baron Ochs's boorish arrival, followed by a sequence of elegant Viennese waltzes introduced by strings and solo violin before the full orchestra joins. A nostalgic *Trio* and *Duet* reveals Marschallin's poignant resignation, which gives way to a robust, boisterous waltz depicting Ochs's pompous character—capped by a newly composed coda that provides a celebratory and spirited conclusion.

Though compact, the suite encapsulates the emotional breadth and charm of the full opera—from romantic passion and gentle heartbreak to playful comedy and nostalgic elegance. It presents a musical panorama of Strauss's imaginative orchestration, his enchanting waltz style, and the gilded, graceful world of Vienna's “golden age.”

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*The Drowsy Chaperone (2023).
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