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La Porte County Symphony Orchestra music director finalist leads Beethoven's 250th birthday salute

By JESSI VIRTUSIO
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The next installment of the Bravo Maestro! The Search Continues series features guest conductor Wilbur Lin for La Porte County Symphony Orchestra's Beethoven's 250th Birthday concert on March 15 at Holdcraft Performing Arts Center in Michigan City. (Orquesta Sinfonica Juvenil de El Salvador)

One of the composers who made his mark on classical music is Ludwig van Beethoven, who was born in 1770.

La Porte County Symphony Orchestra celebrates the musical genius with Beethoven's 250th Birthday, the next installment in the Bravo, Maestro! The Search Continues series, on March 15 at the Holdcraft Performing Arts Center in Michigan City.

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“A great composer is a composer who knows how to transform things and then put them into good use.”

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Beethoven's 250th Birthday features Beethoven's Symphony No. 7.

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“No. 7 is probably the most exciting symphony of Beethoven. This piece is very celebratory,” said Lin, who is among the six finalists to replace former La Porte County Symphony Orchestra music director Philip J. Bauman, who stepped down in May 2018.

“This is a very cool piece to demonstrate what Beethoven is all about. There's all kinds of styles in all four movements. It also shows Beethoven's interesting position in his approach to classical music in that he chose very traditional forms but then used them in a very romantic and nontraditional way.

“Showing off the orchestra and showing off what Beethoven is all about is exciting.”

The concert also includes Felix Mendelssohn's Hebrides overture and George Gershwin's “Rhapsody in Blue” featuring guest piano soloist Carey Scheck, a La Porte resident, music teacher for La Porte Community School Corporation and graduate of Valparaiso University.

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“Although these are very different pieces, I find this connection in the atmospheric soundscape that both of these pieces produce,” Lin said.

“From the Hebrides overture is this beautiful melody and chords that are not dissimilar from the jazziness of what Gershwin has with clarinet, saxophone and the same kind of string progression underneath.”

Lin, who recently was named an assistant conductor of Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestras

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Philharmonic, said he would like to work with La Porte County Symphony Orchestra full time to help the group grow.

“This is an orchestra that is willing to explore and experiment,” he said.

“There’s the Hoosier Star singing contest they have every year and they have a pretty adventurous pops performance every year. Because of this orchestra being small, there are a lot of things that a conductor can do to be part of their future development.”

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“I’ve worked with tiny orchestras, community orchestras, youth orchestras and all kinds of levels. I believe I can bring the complete spectrum of what an orchestra can do to this orchestra. I am really passionate about building up an orchestra where I can have the most positive impact.”

Lin earned his doctor of music in orchestral conducting from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music in Bloomington and recently graduated from the Riccardo Muti Italian Opera Academy.

He also works as artistic director of the summer seasons of Chamber Philharmonic Taipei, which he founded in 2008; is a freelance vocal coach and is a pianist.

Beethoven’s 250th Birthday

When: 3 p.m. March 15

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