



# March Classical Concert





The LCSO presents their March Classical concert on March 10th. This concert features four incredible pieces: a piece by our composer-in-residence, one of the most famous flute concertos, a major symphony, and an overture based on German pub songs.

*Academic Festival Overture* by Johannes Brahms

*City Beautiful* by Ingrid Stölzel

*Concertino for Flute* by Cécile Chaminade

*Symphony No. 8* by Antonín Dvořák



Johannes Brahms was a German composer who lived from 1833–1897. Brahms started studying piano at the age of 8 and quickly excelled at piano performance and composition. At 11, he improvised his first piano sonata. He began studying music composition and theory at 13 and made his public concert debut conducting a choir at 14 years old. In 1850, Brahms met and toured with Hungarian violinist Eduard Remenyi, which sparked his interest in gypsy music. Through their tours, Brahms met Joseph Joachim, who helped Brahms write his Academic Festival Overture. Brahms held a close relationship with Robert and Clara Schumann, even helping the family when Robert had his nervous breakdown. Brahms was a very successful composer and musician during his life, which was cut short in 1897 by cancer.

Although Brahms never had the chance to attend college, he was given the chance to spend several weeks at a university in Göttingen when he was 20. When Brahms was fired from touring with Remenyi, Joachim invited Brahms to stay with him as Joachim took summer courses at the university. Here, Brahms was introduced to several beer-hall tunes. 26 years later, the University of Breslau conferred upon Brahms the Doctor of Philosophy degree. After sending a postcard of thanks, the Director of Music wrote back stating that the university expected a musical form of gratitude. In the summer of 1880, Brahms recalled the beer-hall tunes he learned with Joachim and wrote Academic Festival Overture as his music “thank you” to the University of Breslau.

Academic Festival Overture uses four of these German tunes: We Have Built a Stately House, Father of Our Country, What Comes from Afar?, and Let Us Rejoice, Therefore.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJeZhBjbCmQ>



Ingrid Stölzel is the La Porte County Symphony's composer-in-residence for our 51st season. Stölzel was born and raised in Germany and moved to the United States in 1991. She holds a Doctorate in music composition from the University of Missouri and a Master's in music composition from the Hartt School of Music. Stölzel's music has been performed in some of the largest concert halls and festivals worldwide. Her music has also been recognized in numerous international competitions. Her album "The Gorgeous Nothings" was selected as AllMusic 2018 Favorite Classical Vocal Album and Apple's Classical Music - A list. Stölzel's full biography can be found here: <https://ingridstolzel.com/biography>

Here is what Ingrid Stölzel says about her work City Beautiful:

"A city is not beautiful by accident" writes historian William H. Wilson. "City Beautiful" takes its title and inspiration from the architectural movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that gave us the boulevard and parks system in Kansas City. The movement had an impact on many other US cities as well, including Chicago, Detroit, and Washington, D.C. to name a few. One of the principal philosophies underlying the movement and one that inspired me to write this composition, was the belief in the "shaping influence of beauty" on society. Advocates believed that beautification of our physical surroundings would promote a sense of community and increase the quality of life in cities around the country. In many ways, I feel music has a similar power to influence and shape a community. This composition was commissioned as a celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Youth Symphony of Kansas City and I cannot help but ponder the wonderful shaping influence of this organization over sixty years of music-making in our community. Commissioned by the Symphony Orchestra and conductor Steven D. Davis of the Youth Symphony of Kansas City, in celebration of its 60th Anniversary Season.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttvbdLGiByQ>



Cécile Chaminade was an accomplished French composer and pianist. She was born in 1857 to a musical family, where she began studying piano and composition at the age of seven. Although her father believed it was improper for a woman to study formally in school, she was able to take lessons with faculty members of the Conservatoire de Paris. As a performer, she played solo piano recitals and toured across Europe, becoming a favorite of Queen Victoria in Britain. In addition to Europe, she toured across the United States, performing at Carnegie Hall and Symphony Hall. Her performances across the Midwest inspired hundreds of women to form musical societies called "Chaminade Clubs". In 1913, she was the first woman to receive the title of Chevalier in the Legion of Honor. Her health began to deteriorate in the 1920s, ending her touring career. She died in 1944 in solitude.

Despite her success as a performer, her compositions were often dismissed due to sexism. Because she did not formally attend the conservatory, she did make the same connections as her male counterparts, and her tonal language remained stuck in the 1860s and 1870s, while others were moving towards more contemporary compositions. Because Chaminade's compositions were often light and lyrical, they were criticized as being "feminine" and defined as "salon music".

The Concertino for Flute was written by Chaminade in 1902. There is record that the piece was commissioned by the Paris Conservatoire, possibly as an examination piece for their flute students. However, there is another story that the piece was written as a wedding present for her ex-lover, who left her for another woman. She wanted to write a piece so difficult that he would be unable to play it and embarrass himself. Fortunately for Chaminade, the piece was performed without a hitch and was well received. Concertino for Flute remains one of Chaminade's most well-known compositions and is still performed frequently.

[https://youtu.be/Lnr5XD5dj\\_0?si=nKfFDZxSfikcQVj9](https://youtu.be/Lnr5XD5dj_0?si=nKfFDZxSfikcQVj9)



Antonín Dvořák was born in 1841 in Bohemia (now Czech Republic) and died in 1904 in Prague. He was the first Bohemian composer to receive world recognition as a composer, utilizing folk tunes into Romantic music. Dvořák's father was an innkeeper and musician, introducing him to folk music at a young age and allowing him to accompany folk tunes on violin. At 16, Dvořák enrolled in the Institute of Church Music in Prague. Through his studies, he was trained in how to compose music and trained to become a church musician. After graduating, he applied for a position as a church organist, but was rejected. He went on to play viola in an entertainment orchestra, gave private piano lessons, and began composing his first secular works.

Dvořák didn't have a lot of success until 1877, when Brahms recommended him to write Slavic dances for piano duet for a publisher. After completing the work, he became popular almost overnight. In 1891, he was invited to move to New York and become the Director of the New Conservatory of Music. He moved in 1892 and in America saw some of his most famous compositions. Dvořák decided not to return to American in 1895 and stayed in Prague until his death.

Symphony No. 8 was written in 1889, with the premiere of the work in 1890. This symphony is very different from his two other well-known symphonies, Symphony No. 7 and Symphony No. 9 (New World Symphony). His eighth symphony is very lyrical and lighthearted, drawing more inspiration from the Bohemian folk tunes he grew up with. Each movement is formatted differently than what was typical at the time, and he develops the themes almost in an improvisational way, again lending from his folk background.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXAv-NGppFw>