DePaul University
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Thursday, November 13 2025 • 8:00 PM

DePaul Concert Orchestra

Michael Lewanski, conductor

Mary Patricia Gannon Concert Hall
2330 North Halsted Street • Chicago

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Gannon Concert Hall

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Program

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)
Ballade (1898)

Arturo Márquez (b. 1950)
Danzón No. 4 (2012)

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
Symphony No. 5 in D Minor, "Reformation" (1830)

I. Andante–Allegro con fuoco
II. Allegro vivace
III. Andante
IV. Andante con moto – Allegro vivace – Allegro maestoso

As a courtesy to those around you, please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. Flash photography is not permitted.

Biographies

Conductor, curator, educator, and writer **Michael Lewanski** is a champion of new and old musics. He seeks to create engaged connections between audiences, musicians, composers, and the music that is part of their culture, society, and history. His work hopes to be part of collective, systemic change in the classical music industry. He is conductor of Ensemble Dal Niente and Associate Professor of instrumental ensembles at the DePaul University School of Music, where his work focuses on helping the next generation of musicians become thoughtful artistic citizens.

Michael was Curatorial Director of Ear Taxi Festival 2021, a festival of 21st century Chicago music. He was resident conductor of the 2017 and 2019 SoundSCAPE Festivals in Italy. His guest conducting engagements have been wide-ranging and stylistically diverse, working with organizations such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNOW Series, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the Toledo Symphony Orchestra, the State Symphony Orchestra of Turkmenistan, Ensamble CEPROMUSIC (Mexico City), the Seattle Modern Orchestra, and many others. He has led hundreds of world premieres. He was the Conducting Assistant for the Civic Orchestra of Chicago from 2010 to 2014. At the 2012 Darmstadt Summer Courses, Ensemble Dal Niente won the prestigious Kranichstein Music Prize under his direction. Michael has an extensive discography as both a conductor and a producer on US- and Europe-based labels.

A native of Savannah, Georgia, he studied piano and violin in his youth; he made his conducting debut at age 13, leading his own composition. At 16, he was the youngest student ever accepted into the conducting class of the legendary Ilya Musin at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Michael attended Yale University. His post-Yale education included conducting study with Cliff Colnot and Lucas Vis. He is based in Chicago, and respectfully acknowledges the Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Odawa, Ho-Chunk, Myaaamia, Menominee, Peoria, and Illinois Confederacy among other tribal nations as custodians of the traditional Native land on which he lives and works.

Program Notes

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)
Ballade (1898)
Duration: 13 minutes
"I want to be nothing in the world except what I am: a musician." – Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

In April 1898, on being offered a commission from the Three Choirs Festival, Edward Elgar replied: "I am sorry I am too busy to do so. I wish, wish, wish you would ask Coleridge-Taylor to do it. He still wants recognition, and he is far and away the cleverest fellow going amongst the young men." The recommendation resulted in the young composer writing his *Ballade in A minor* for full orchestra.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was born in 1875 to a Sierra Leonean father, who had come to London to study medicine, and a British mother, and his musical gifts soon became apparent. After learning to play the piano and violin, he entered the Royal College of Music in London, where he studied composition under Charles Villiers Stanford. He began conducting orchestras in the capital and environs in 1895 and soon became a teacher at Trinity College and the Guildhall School of Music. His fame as a composer was ensured with his orchestral *Ballade in A minor* and his large cantata *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast,* the first part of his *The Song of Hiawatha* trilogy, which enjoyed enormous success in all English-speaking countries.

Coleridge-Taylor had to deal with the racism of his era. In some places, he was not even allowed to conduct his own works. He soon began standing up for the rights of Afro-British and Afro-Americans, who welcomed him as a hero during his visits to the United States. In 1904, he was invited by a choral society that bore his name and had assembled a chorus of more than 200 voices of African descendants. He was also received at the White House by President Theodore Roosevelt. Shortly after two other American tours, he succumbed to pneumonia in 1912 at the age of 37.

Coleridge-Taylor left behind a large number of works in every genre. In all of them, "this musician who greatly admired Dvořák has a spontaneous spirit sustained by subtle invention and a supple, natural lyricism" (Henry de Rouville). Colourfully orchestrated, his *Ballade* opens with an energetic and intriguing motif that returns in various sound combinations to unify the melodic flow before drawing to an end after a beautiful lyric episode, clearly demonstrating that

Coleridge-Taylor deserves a prominent place among the British masters of his era.

Note by François Filiatrault

Arturo Márquez (b. 1950)
Danzón No. 4 (2012)
Duration: 11 minutes
A Mexico native and son of a mariachi musician, Arturo Márquez (b. 1950) was educated in Mexico City, Los Angeles and Paris before resettling in Mexico. Even though Márquez was educated in a modernist classical style, he chose to focus his output on the traditional music of his home country.

Márquez has composed nine *Danzones*, a couple's dance originating in Cuba and popular in certain regions of Mexico. The danzón contrasts sensual passages for the dancers with virtuosic interludes by the musicians. Though not as intense as the composer's famous Danzón No. 2, Danzón No. 4 incorporates many of the same rhythmic and melodic touches while more closely capturing the intimacy of the chamber-like ensemble that historically accompanied this dance.

The Danzon No. 4 is based upon constant, syncopated rhythms that are featured along with varying moods and tempos, ranging from slow and formal to quick and nearly raucous in their energy. Great emphasis is placed on solos in various woodwind instruments. With the piano entrance things start to heat up, moving forward the idea of a festive feeling. Latin rhythms in the percussion keep the work constantly exciting and engaging, all the way to its loud and festive climax. The music fades away with the signature rhythm of the piece on the piano and in the major mode of the initial key of the work. The chamber orchestra version of the Danzón No. 4 is scored for flute, oboe, clarinet, soprano saxophone, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, percussion, piano and strings.

Note by Patricio Gutiérrez

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
Symphony No. 5 in D Minor, "Reformation" (1830)
Duration: 30 minutes
Mendelssohn's "Reformation" Symphony was conceived of for the June 1830 tercentenary of the Augsburg Confession. While this may

sound like a removed, distant, rarified historical event of a completely bygone epoch, it is important for us as a key moment in the identity of what would become modern-day Germany (the unification of which has far-reaching, eventually tragic consequences in the 20th century). Not only was the anniversary a celebration of the Augsburg Confession (the key tenets of the Lutheran faith) itself; it was an attempt by King Wilhelm Friedrich III of Prussia to unify Calvinists and Lutherans into a single Protestant liturgy, thereby strengthening its political influence against the Catholic church. While the symphony was not performed during the celebrations for accidental reasons related to Mendelssohn's schedule and health (he had the measles and stopped working for a month and a half), its meaning is deeply bound up in the most important socio-politico-religious issues of the day and reflects on them in myriad and complex ways. Thus, while we are not capable of fully grasping its context, we can allow the multifaceted nature of its generation and intended meaning to guide our listening.

The first movement, a slow introduction followed by a sonata-form Allegro, is based almost entirely on the so-called "Dresden Amen," a musical fragment of arresting beauty first played *pianissimo* by the strings after a series of bold, chant-like calls in the brass. A word about the Dresden Amen: musically, it is a series of notes that ascend, stepwise, by a fifth, outlining the dominant chord of the key; containing, thus, both close and wide intervals, it can be deployed by the composer for multiple purposes; he can use its parts to construct many different themes. Strikingly, its popularity was such that it was used in both Protestant *and* Catholic churches during the 18th and 19th century. Regardless, we're destined to hear the Dresden Amen differently than Mendelssohn did; it's used in later music as well, most notably Wagner's *Parsifal* and the *Finale* of Mahler's 1st symphony. Surely the Dresden Amen's appearance in the works of an anti-semitic composer, Wagner (both Mendelssohn and Mahler were of Jewish ancestry), and in that of one of the last figures (Mahler) to cling to the Romantic style that Mendelssohn helped create, gives its use here a poignancy that the symphony's composer could not have anticipated.

The fast portion of the first movement is grim and determined, almost Beethovenian in its minor-key insistence. Its first theme is severe and chiseled, based on the 5th from the Dresden Amen; its second theme is based on the same interval, now adorned with a subjectivized

passion. The development section charts a direct course to a crisis and out-pouring. A shocking but subdued interruption of the Dresden Amen causes a recapitulation that calmly and chastely reconsiders the exposition. The coda, though, returns to a stormy mode, ending with an plagal cadence (of the sort found in the "amen" of present day hymns) of utmost determination.

The brief *Scherzo*, placed second rather than third, is a stark contrast to the first movement's seriousness. Light and carefree, its middle section involves two oboes playing a long, pastoral theme that is carol-like in nature. A repeat of the opening section becomes passionate then evaporates in a way that could only be the work of Mendelssohn.

The even shorter slow movement is, again, very different from what has preceded it. If the *Scherzo* was faith at its easiest, this *arioso* is the opposite. Hopeless, languishing, indecisive, the first violins sing a heartfelt song of deep and conflicting emotions. The movement's close is benedictory in nature, comforting only in the coldest sense, dying away to a major triad caused by a Picardy third that feels more official than honest, more required that consolatory.

This paves the way for an assertive flute soloist to enter with a direct quotation of the well known chorale by Martin Luther (a flute player himself) "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" (known in English as "A Mighty Fortress is our God"), as if to suggest that not only faith, but the power of music as an expression thereof, is a savior from the despair of the previous movement.

The *Finale* of the "Reformation" Symphony is formally ambitious and unique in the symphonic repertoire. After two introductory sections, both elaborations of the chorale tune, a sonata-form is launched. It is striking because it includes a new main theme (a skyrocketing ascending arpeggio), and a second theme (a further transformation, now triumphant, of the Dresden Amen), but also because Luther's chorale fluidly and unpredictably appears and disappears, weaving itself in and out of the texture. The subdued development section, for instance—surprising after such a celebratory exposition—concerns itself only with cello and woodwind fragments of "Ein feste Burg" rather than any of the movement's thematic materials proper. A coda that begins with a surprising and sublime calm gradually hurtles towards a full-throated chorus of the entire orchestra declaiming

the hymn at first in unison, then in a traditional harmonization. It is a striking claim; rather than music as an agent of transcendence, here it seeks to affirm and unify the social order with the religious in way that only a composer like Mendelssohn, born and raised a member of the only recently emerged bourgeoisie, was in a unique position to have imagined.

Note by Michael Lewanski

Personnel

FLUTE
Xander Day
Ume Hashimoto-Jorgensen
Sho Roash

OBOE
Charlie Janka
Lauren Patton

CLARINET
Alainna Pack
Danny Sanders

BASSOON
Peter Breyer
Anya Johnson
Finn McCune
Chet Rhodes

SAXOPHONE
Nickoli Kumm

HORN
Tyler Goldsmith
Nolan Henckel
Eli Hoffmann
John Perez
Eily Polenzani
Leah Robin
Brooks Wallace

TRUMPET
Jesse Hamilton
Julian Ramcharan

TROMBONE
Nick Laramee
Charlie Olson
Amanda Pinos-Fernandez

TUBA
Caden Morton

PIANO
Hwei Shin Chang

PERCUSSION
Leonardo Chiappetti
Adriana Harrison
O'dell Jackson
Amy Lee
Kevin Reyes

VIOLIN
Airi Ito, *concertmaster*
Ashley Gomez
Juan Angulo
Carlysta Tran
Alirio Chacin-Guerra
Cecilia McIntyre
Ella Dodge
Yu-Chia Chiu, *principal 2nd violin*
Iwona Augustyn
Zachary Green
Sofia Concha Pinto
Ender Miranda-Estrada
Corinne McLeod
Chien Chien Wu

VIOLA
Elina Kim, *principal*
Catherine Wicker
Ulzhan Ydyryssova
Rose Skidmore

CELLO
Xavier Ip, *principal*
Grace Raper
Emma Foreman
Jesus Avila
Brendan Stock
Addison Swan
Daniel Hotchkiss
Audrey Chen
Yejeong Lee

BASS
Yuyan Wang, *principal*
Adam Blendermann
Jaxen Wilson
Sebastian Sanchez

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