



**MENOMONEE FALLS
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**
ALEXANDER MANDL - MUSIC DIRECTOR

HAUNTING CLASSICS

CONCERT PROGRAM

October 26, 2024
Hamilton Fine Arts Center
Sussex, WI

ALEXANDER MANDL - MUSIC DIRECTOR

Menomonee Falls Symphony Orchestra Music Director, Dr. Alexander Mandl maintains an active and multifaceted career as conductor, violinist, soloist, educator, chamber and orchestra musician. A versatile artist, Mandl appeared internationally at renowned halls, including Alice Tully, Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall, Carnegie Music Hall, Sprague Hall, the Mellon Institute, the Memorial of Latin America and Auditorio Manuel de Falla in Granada, Spain, and Alsion in Denmark.

Commended for his energetic and charismatic performances, detailed score knowledge, and natural inspiring musical leadership, Dr. Mandl has conducted ensembles from small chamber and vocal, to the large operatic and symphonic. He has directed musicians from the New York Philharmonic, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, New Haven Symphony, South Denmark Symphony and the Ljubljana Symphony, to name a few.

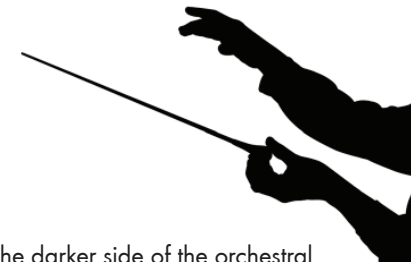
In addition to his Menomonee Falls Symphony Orchestra duties, Mandl holds conducting posts as Conductor of the Milwaukee Chamber Orchestra (Milwaukee Musaik), Conductor of the Medical College of Wisconsin Orchestra, Conductor of the Elm City ChamberFest Chamber Orchestra, guest conductor with the Paraiba Symphony Orchestra, Brazil, and the South Denmark Symphony Orchestra, among others. Prior engagements include the Kenosha Symphony, Timothy Dwight Chamber Orchestra, UFPB Chamber Orchestra and the Eleazar de Carvalho Festival Faculty Orchestra.

In 2004, Mandl conducted the South American premiere of Ezra Laderman's *Nonete*. In addition, he has recently conducted opera productions of Hans Krása "Brundibar" and Pergolesi's "La Serva Padrona". Former conducting posts include the Carroll University Chamber Orchestra, Cardinal Stritch University Chamber Orchestra, the Hopkins Chamber Ensemble, Timothy Dwight Chamber Orchestra at Yale, the Lakeshore Youth Symphony Orchestra (2006-2016), and the New Haven Youth Symphony.

Dr. Mandl holds degrees from Yale, Carnegie-Mellon and UW-Madison. Among his conducting mentors are Eleazar de Carvalho, David Becker, James Smith, and Jorge Mester. He is the recipient of the Yale Alumni Award, the Carnegie Tradition Award, the Miles Prize, and the Ivan Galamian Award.



FROM THE PODIUM



We begin this year's musical journey by exploring the darker side of the orchestral repertoire, in keeping with our Halloween celebrations. Each piece in tonight's performance highlights the many talents of our players to create a varied and memorable performance.

Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain* recreates the terror of being exposed to worst of the wilderness. Antonín Dvořák is back this fall (We performed his famous *New World Symphony* last spring) with a delightful example of program music, a style he developed in later life.

Offenbach helps us laugh at fearful topics with *Orpheus in the Underworld*, his fantasy from Greek mythology. Holst's *Mars* reminds of the awe and terror inspired by the legions of Rome. In *Ride of the Valkyries*, Wagner takes us to the world of Norse gods for an unforgettable tour.

With our selections from Edward MacDowell's *Orchestral Suite No. 1*, we showcase one of the early master American composers, to the delight of all. Finally, Leopold Stakowsky's take on Bach's famous *Toccata and Fugue in d minor* transforms this masterpiece of the organ into a showpiece of symphonic excitement.

It all makes for a evening to delight the audience even as it challenges the talents of our players.

Look more great performances to come this season. For our Christmas concert we are partnering up with other local arts groups to create a truly memorable holiday experience. Our Valentine's evening dinner concert will surely fire up romance with two terrific voices bringing us the delights of Italian opera.

Our symphony is also about developing the next generation of performers. At our April concert, we are introducing our Honors Side-by-Side program that pairs up the cream of the local high school performers with members of the orchestra. Topping off the evening will be a performance of Beethoven's *Triple Concert* by three young rising stars in the area's musical community.

I am grateful for the opportunity to bring this to our community. Enjoy!

Dr. Alexander Mandl



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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the MFSO 2024-2025 Season. Beyond the great performances led by Dr. Alexander Mandl in his second season, the MFSO Board of Directors is committed to enhance our visibility in our communities through improved outreach, our growing number of small ensembles, and enhancing our connections with schools and arts organizations. This year we are introducing our Honors Side-by-Side program, in which exceptional students will join the symphony on stage at our April concert.

The MFSO is committed to:

- Entertain our communities with great orchestral performances.
- Educate our communities on the value of our repertoire.
- Inspire our communities, young and old, to join with us to create great music.

Menomonee Falls, Sussex, Germantown you have a wonderful community orchestra in your backyard. Come hear us! We look forward to seeing you at each concert. Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully,

Denise Piche'
President, MFSO Board of Directors



MFSO PRESENTS
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Saturday 7:30 pm
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MFSO PRESENTS

Amore

Celebrate Love, Italian Style
Valentine's Day Dinner Concert
Alexander Mandl, Conductor

Fire up your romance on Valentine's day with an evening of great food and music. Soprano Kathy Pyeatt and tenor Nathan Wesselowski will stir our hearts with repertoire from Italy.

Friday - February 14, 2025
Doors open - 6:00 p.m.
Dinner/Concert - 7:00 p.m.
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MENOMONEE FALLS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Noah Robinson
Jamie Schroeter
Hannah Sternberg

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Anja Freigang
Holly June
Denise Piche'
Anna Rasmussen*
Richard Schwinn

VIOLA

Mary Jagusch
Liz Jorgensen
Pam Kirk*
Kasey Paulos

CELLO

Jen Becker
Clare Schaeffer
Eric Slotty
Brian Smith**

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Kevin Becker*
Jacob Beltz
Adam Quiballo

HARP

Talia Morris

FLUTE

Liz Awe
Sarah Marman*
Holly Whitehead

PICCOLO

Holly Whitehead

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BEETHOVEN
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April 26, 2025
Saturday 7:30 p.m.
Hamilton Fine Arts Center
Sussex, WI

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Located on the corner of County Line Road and Pilgrim Road, Menomonee Falls

MENOMONEE FALLS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONCERT PROGRAM Alexander Mandl, Conductor

Saturday, October 26, 2024 at 7:30 pm

Modest Mussorgsky Arr. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Night on Bald Mountain

Antonín Dvořák

The Noonday Witch

Jacques Offenbach

Orpheus in The Underworld - Overture

INTERMISSION

Gustav Holst

The Planets: Mars "Bringer of War"

Richard Wagner

Ride of the Valkyries

Edward MacDowell

From "Orchestral Suite No. 1":

I. In a Haunted Forest

III. October

V. Forest Spirits

J.S. Bach Transcription Leopold Stokowski

Toccatina and Fugue in d minor, BWV 565

Please turn off all cell phones and smart devices.

We appreciate your cooperation in making our concerts as enjoyable as possible for everyone. Enjoy the concert!

PROGRAM NOTES BY DR. ALEXANDER MANDL



MODEST MUSSORGSKY

Born 21 March, 1839, Karevo, Russia
Died 28 March, 1881, St. Petersburg, Russia

Night on Bald Mountain

Composed: 1867

Posthumous arrangement by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Premiered: 1886, St. Petersburg, Russia

Approximate duration: 12 minutes

Modest Mussorgsky was a Russian composer, known as an innovator of Russian music in the Romantic period. He strove to achieve a uniquely Russian musical identity, often in deliberate defiance of the established conventions of Western music. Though taught piano at an early age, Mussorgsky entered the military and then government service, where he met up with Alexander Borodin, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and others who became known as “the Five” - each recognized composers and performers. His alcoholism and resistance to Russia’s rigid establishment led to an early and peniless death. Many of his works, including this one, *Pictures at an Exhibition* and the opera *Boris Godunov* were made popular thanks to arrangements by other composers.

Night on Bald Mountain (originally titled *St. John’s Night on Bald Mountain*) is a piece of music based on a short story by Russian author Nikolai Gogol. In the story, St. John sees witches gathering on Bald Mountain. The story takes place on Bald Mountain near Kiev, Ukraine; though it used to be in Russia. The music evokes the pagan festivities of the midsummer Slavic holiday associated with the summer solstice, involving fire, water, and fertility rituals as well as the gathering of witches and spirits. The witches dance, play tricks and party all night long, until the sun rise makes them disappear.

After Mussorgsky’s death, his composer friend Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov took up *Night on Bald Mountain*, rearranging and reorchestrating it (1887) in a more conservative manner, retaining Mussorgsky’s ferocious energy while somewhat lessening the piece’s demonic sound. Rejecting his friend’s original conclusion of crashing dissonances and savagery, Rimsky-Korsakov substituted an ending in which dawn and church bells disperse the gathered demons.



ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

Born: September 8, 1841, Nelahozeves, Czech Republic
Died: May 1, 1904, Prague, Czech Republic

The Noonday Witch

Composed: 1893

Premiered: 1893, New York City, United States

Approximate duration: 15 minutes

We don’t often associate Dvořák with program music, but he turned to it with particular enthusiasm toward the end of his life. He composed a trilogy of concert overtures on nature, life, and love in 1891-92, and in 1896 he wrote a group of four tone poems inspired by ballads from *Kytice*, a collection of eerie Czech folk tales in verse by Karel Jaromír Erben. These were the last orchestral pieces Dvořák wrote, other than one more tone poem (*A Hero’s Song*) the following year.

Most of Erben’s ballads are in the dark mood of the Brothers Grimm at their grimmest, and *The Noonday Witch*, the second of Dvořák’s set, is no exception. A harassed mother preoccupied with getting lunch ready for the family threatens her naughty young son with a visit from the Noonday Witch if he does not behave; and is appalled when the hobbling witch actually appears. The mother clasps her son tightly and collapses as the witch reaches out for him. When the father returns for his noon meal, he finds mother and son on the floor. He revives the mother, but his son has been smothered in her protective embrace.

Dvořák depicts the poem vividly, with motives for each character that he transforms to show the physical and psychological developments. The music opens with an idyllic pastoral scene – with the witch’s motive lurking surreptitiously – of a woman preparing the noonday meal for her husband, soon interrupted by the strident cries (flute and oboe) of her child. As the mother becomes increasingly flustered, the music grows in agitation, until she makes the fateful summons. Dvořák evokes the creeping witch with slithering strings and bass clarinet, and her chilling triumph in a macabre witches’ dance. This ends with the chiming of the noon hour. The final part, with the return of the unsuspecting father, is pure guilty horror, with a chattering reference to the witch and a whiplash sneer to end.



JACQUES OFFENBACH

Born: June 30, 1819, Cologne, Kingdom of Prussia
Died: October 5, 1880, Paris, France

Orpheus in The Underworld – Overture

Composed: 1858
Premiered: 1858, Paris, France
Approximate duration: 10 minutes

Jacques Offenbach was a Jewish German-born French composer, violinist, cellist, and impresario of the romantic period who is remembered for his nearly 100 operettas (light comic short operas) of the 1850s–1870s and his uncompleted opera *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

Premiered in 1858 in Paris, *Orpheus in the Underworld* was an immediate hit in the 19th century and remains Offenbach's most successful operetta. Much gossip and controversy about Offenbach's distortions of the story, characters, and plot had stirred Paris long before its opening performance. Parisians were divided into two camps, the "serious opera" vs. "the comic opera" and the two rarely mixed. The more controversy went around, the more interested the public became. Interest yields public, and the operetta remains a favorite to this day.

In a topsy-turvy plot worthy of Gilbert and Sullivan, Offenbach satirizes the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. In Offenbach's comic version, Orpheus is a put-upon violin teacher who's glad to be rid of Eurydice - a beautiful but poor music student - and he must be coerced into rescuing her. The operetta ends with a party on the banks of the Styx, and when "head god" Jupiter insists everyone dance an old-fashioned minuet (boring!), there is general rebellion and gods and goddesses take to the floor to show off their legs in that "most immoral" of cabaret dances, the Can-Can. ("Oh, what a simply splendid, way the story's ended, even though it's not as Homer once intended. We, reckoned that we'd get a better operetta, making up our own mythology.").

The "overture" was added to the 1860 production in Vienna, cobbled together by a local composer and arranger, Carl Binder. Opening with a dramatic fanfare, the overture soon moves to a virtuoso cadenza for the solo clarinet, other attractive solos ensue, gleaned from the show. Contrasting sections appear leading to an especially winsome and famous solo for the concertmaster "Orpheus" in slow waltz time. Finally, the tune we've all been waiting for arrives—the Can-Can! (titled "Infernal Galop").

Offenbach, in many ways, was the model for today's famously scandalous and widely admired pop musicians. One has to remember the essential differences between the nature of the nineteenth-century (and earlier) musical public and what it heard, on the one hand, and today's fragmented, vivid, and incredibly diverse musical tastes.



GUSTAV HOLST

Born: September, 1874, Cheltenham, England
Died: May 25, 1934, London, England

The Planets: Mars "Bringer of War"

Composed: 1914-17 Premier 1918, London, England
Approximate duration: 8 minutes

Gustav Holst was an English composer, arranger and teacher. He composed music in a variety of genres through the years, from late romantic era to experimental music based on Hindu spiritualism. Though he had hoped to focus on composition, he couldn't make enough to make a living, so he took on teaching positions at various institutions. He was known for revolutionizing music education for young women, especially at St. Paul's Girls' School, which which he maintained a relationship to the end of his life.

The Planets, his most widely known work, is an orchestral suite - what composer Holst called, "a series of mood pictures" - where each movement depicts one planet. The suite contains seven movements: although eight planets were known to exist (Pluto had not yet been discovered, much less demoted), Earth is at the center in the astrological scheme.

Mars, *The Bringer of War*, emphasizes brass and a driven in 5/4 rhythm. Blatant dissonance and the unconventional meter suggest the influence of Stravinsky. "The most ferocious piece of music in existence" evokes a battle scene of immense proportion. The dark and sinister feeling the music evokes is infectious throughout. Holst's orchestrations have been of dramatic influence on twentieth century composers. One cannot deny this work's tones percolating in the now famous "Darth Vader" march by John Williams.



RICHARD WAGNER

Born: May 22, 1813, Leipzig, Prussia
Died: February 18, 1883, Venice, Italy

RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES

Composed: 1851-56 Premier 1870, Munich, Bavaria
Approximate duration: 4 minutes

The "Ride of the Valkyries" refers to the beginning of act 3 of Die Walküre, the second of the four operas (The Rheingold, The Valkyries, Siegfried, and Twilight of the Gods) constituting

Richard Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen (1848-1874). Wotan, King of the Gods has 9 daughters – the Valkyries. These are the Valkyries whose task it is to recover heroes fallen in battle and bring them back to Valhalla where they will protect Wotan's fortress. Wotan hopes for a hero who will take a ring from the dragon.

The third act opens with a rocky mountaintop flanked by storm-driven clouds. All of Valkyrie sisters wait there in full armor, ready to perform their noble duty; the transportation of fallen heroes to Valhalla on their winged steeds – 'the ride'. What follows for the next several minutes is perhaps the most popular music Wagner ever wrote and is certainly still among the most beloved orchestral opera excerpts ever written by anyone. The Ride of the Valkyries is most often heard today in its shorter instrumental iteration and has infiltrated pop culture from video games to advertising to television shows, this music is everywhere. The most memorable quotation, by far, is the helicopter assault scene of the 1979 film Apocalypse Now, where the cinematic similarities between Brünnhilde's kin and the Vietnam-era war machines is both stunning and troubling. Sadly, the Nazis used this excerpt to announce air raid victories.



EDWARD MACDOWELL

Born: December 18, 1860, New York City, USA
Died: January 23, 1908, New York City, USA

Selections from "Orchestral Suite No. 1"

Composed: 1893

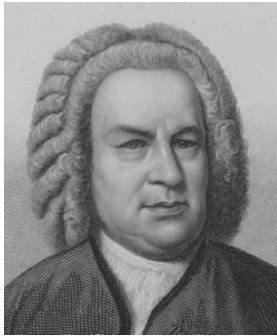
Premiered: 1895, Boston, United States

Approximate duration: 16 minutes

Edward MacDowell was an American composer and pianist of the late Romantic period. He studied at the Paris Conservatory and Dr. Hoch's Conservatory in Frankfurt, Germany. After beginning his career as a composer in Germany, he moved to Boston as both pianist and composer, where he lived until 1896, when he was appointed professor of music at Columbia University, the first music professor in the university's history. He was personally invited to Columbia University by its president Seth Low to create a music department. He stayed at Columbia until 1904. MacDowell and his Philanthropist wife and pianist Marian Established the MacDowell Colony on their farm in Petersborough, New Hampshire, which hosted numerous important American composers and artists, including Leonard Bernstein, James Baldwin, Willa Cather, Aaron Copland and Thornton Wilder.

The Orchestral Suite No. 1 in D minor was begun in 1890, shortly after the MacDowells had returned from a concert tour of Germany, although the In October movement was not written until 1893. The premiere of the complete work was given by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Emil Pauer two years later. The suite is designated for grosses orchester (large orchestra) in its title, but the forces required are by no means Mahlerian in scale - double wind with piccolo, four horns and brass, timpani, cymbals, bass drum and strings. Even then, the brass and extra percussion are not required in the second and fourth movements.

As in so much of his music, MacDowell relies heavily on literary and natural influences for the five sections of the piece. In a Haunted Forest could have come straight from the pages of a children's storybook, a wild orchestral ride full of chromatic swoops, its mysterious beginning giving way to pulsating energy. In October are contrasted nature studies, the latter jaunty with hunting-horns. The final movement, Forest Spirits, is a Mendelssohnian scherzo full of typically filigree woodwind instrumentation. It depicts spirits flying and dancing through a ghostly forest laid over a gathering accelerando.

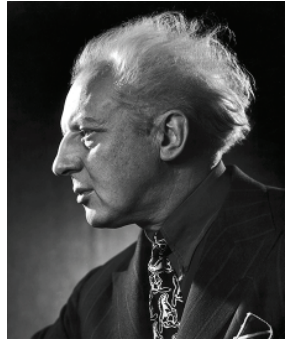


JOHANN SEBASTION BACH

Born: March 31, 1685, Eisenbach, Prussia
Died: July 28, 1750, Leipzig, Prussia

Toccata and Fugue in D Minor

Composed for organ: unknown estimated date around 1735



Orchestral Transcription by: LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI

Born: April 18, 1882, London, England
Died: September 13, 1977, Nether Wallop, England
Transcription arranged: 1927
Approximate duration: 12 minutes

Bach's venerable Toccata and Fugue in d minor written for the organ ('the king of instruments') is a powerhouse of sound and inventiveness that was transformed into a twentieth-century orchestral essay designed to underscore powerful sonorities and distinct orchestral sound effects. We have become so accustomed to the idea that music from the past must be played in a manner somehow reflective of the performance practices in vogue in the era from which the music dates, that the notions of recasting a work in performance, adapting it to new conditions, or transcribing it for different forces all seem like sacrilege. Stokowski's transcription is, in this sense, an affront to history.

At the same time, however, Stokowski remained faithful to history and tradition. Mozart made his own orchestration of Handel's Messiah. Bach himself tinkered with and appropriated the work of others like Vivaldi, using different instrumental combinations. Ravel took a work for piano, Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition, and made it a standard repertory piece for orchestra. Schoenberg and Stravinsky both transcribed Baroque music for modern orchestral forces.

The dark and powerful work begins with a free-form toccata—an improvisatory-style piece used as prelude. After a grand conclusion, the fugue begins with a complex and spiky subject. This is developed in intense counterpoint until the end, where there is a dramatic return to the texture of the toccata.

The "Toccata" was used as film music well before the sound film era, becoming a cliché to illustrate horror and villainy. Its first uses in sound film included the 1931 film Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and the 1934 film The Black Cat. Stokowski's transcription was completed in 1927 and was premiered in Philadelphia. It was used later in the film Fantasia.

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The Menomonee Falls Symphony Orchestra (MFSO) is a community of musicians and supporters who bring great orchestral music and support for music education to the greater Milwaukee, Waukesha, Washington and Ozaukee suburban areas. Many of our musicians are music teachers, semi-professional musicians and musicians who have other career paths.

The arts unify us all, and benefits extend beyond the individual to the community.

The objective of the orchestra is to promote appreciation of classical symphonic and all styles of music for audiences and playing musicians. The orchestra also provides an opportunity for young artists and professional soloists to appear in concert with symphonic accompaniment.

The orchestra strongly supports the enhancement of music education for all: the disciplines, the opportunity for aspiration and personal satisfaction for people of all ages.

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