

Utah Symphony concludes its Tchaikovsky celebration

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Utah Symphony and music director Thierry Fischer are closing a two-week celebration of Tchaikovsky today and Saturday at 8 p.m. at Abravanel Hall. For those wondering why students should listen to classical music in the modern age of dubstep, the answer is they would gain a great experience from attending.

"There is no experience that compares to hearing music by these great composers performed live by a world-renowned orchestra," said Jon Miles, vice president of marketing and public relations with Utah Symphony. "Every concert is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that will never be repeated."

Tchaikovsky's robust ballet "The Sleeping Beauty" was first performed in 1890. It has since become one of the most loved and recognized ballet scores in his repertoire besides "Swan Lake." Tchaikovsky called "The Sleeping Beauty" a "dancing symphony." "The Sleeping Beauty Suite" includes the well-known Lilac Fairy introduction, the Adagio Pas d'action, Puss-in-Boots and the White Cat, the beautiful Panorama and the famous Sleeping Beauty waltz.

Piano soloist Conrad Tao will perform Tchaikovsky's "Piano Concerto No. 1" — a popular concerto with its vigorous and identifiable theme. Tao, age 18, is a talented, young musician. Tao gave his first piano recital at age four, and at age eight he made his concerto debut performing Mozart's "Piano Concerto in A Major, K 414."

Although he is young, Tao is no newcomer to performing with world-class symphonies and orchestras. He has appeared as a soloist worldwide with the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Russian National Orchestra. Tao has also given solo recitals in Paris, London and Berlin.

Arnold Schoenberg's piece, "Accompaniment to a Cinematographic Scene," provides a musical foil to Tchaikovsky. The piece was chosen to highlight the variances between the two composers. While Tchaikovsky's pieces are bursting, full-bodied streams of musical thought that highlight stringed instruments, Schoenberg's piece contrasts by using more brass and drums. The music seems cacophonous at first, and then mellows to a quieter, slower finish.

Following Schoenberg's piece is Tchaikovsky's "Capriccio Italien" — a lighter, slower and more delicate piece that will delight the ears and evoke images of an era long since past.

One of the U's music professors, violinist David Park, performs with the Utah Symphony. Playing the violin since age 5, Park was fortunate enough to study with the legendary Jascha Heifetz, who is considered by many musicians to be one of the most influential performing artists of the 20th century. This gives one an idea of the caliber of musicians playing with the Utah Symphony.

Park encourages students to attend classical concerts.

"Going to the symphony or any classical concert is vital to one's life," Park said. "Classical music brings culture to one's being."

For students who find the price tag for a classical concert a bit too high, there are several affordable options available to enjoy a night of classical music.

“Being accessible to students is very important to the Utah Symphony, and we have a variety of programs to help students attend the symphony on a student budget,” Miles said.

If you are under 30 years old, the Utah Symphony has its “Upbeat” program, which offers \$10 tickets for most performances and volunteers are given complimentary ticket vouchers to see performances.

“We hope that the audience will leave inspired by the live performances of Tchaikovsky and Schoenberg’s compositions performed by one of America’s top orchestras,” Miles said.

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