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SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Friday, October 9, 2026 • 7:30 PM

DePaul Concert Orchestra

Michael Lewanski, conductor

Mary Patricia Gannon Concert Hall
2330 North Halsted Street • Chicago

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Program

Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)
Overture to *Don Pasquale* (1843)

Léo Delibes (1836-1891)
Selections from *Coppelia* (1870)
Prelude et Mazurka
Valse de la Poupée et Csardas

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
***Leonore* Overture No. 1 (1807)**

- Intermission -

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
Symphony No. 8 in B minor, "Unfinished" (1822)
I. Allegro moderato
II. Andante con moto

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Biographies

Conductor, curator, educator, and writer **Michael Lewanski** is a champion of new and old musics. He seeks to facilitate 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. Based in Chicago, he is Conductor of Ensemble Dal Niente, Artistic Director of Lakeview Orchestra, and Associate Professor and Chair of the Performance Studies Department at the DePaul University School of Music, where he works to help 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. His wide-ranging guest-conducting has included work with Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNOW Series, the Toledo Symphony Orchestra, Composers Conference, the National Symphony Orchestra of Turkmenistan, Ensamble CEPROMUSIC (Centro de Experimentación y Producción de Música Contemporánea, Mexico City), and the Seattle Modern Orchestra, among many others. He was resident conductor of the SoundSCAPE Festival in Italy in 2017 and 2019. Michael has an extensive discography on major European and US labels as both conductor and producer with Ensemble Dal Niente, Spektral Quartet, Third Coast Percussion, Grossman Ensemble, and others.

A native of Savannah, Georgia, Michael 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-ever student in the legendary Ilya Musin's class at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He attended Yale University; he subsequently studied with Cliff Colnot (with whom he worked as conducting assistant at the Civic Orchestra of Chicago from 2010 to 2014)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

Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)
Overture to *Don Pasquale* (1843)
Duration: 6 minutes
Donizetti wrote nearly 70 operas in his 25-year career as a composer. Of these few were comedies, the most notable being *L 'elisir d'amore* and *Don Pasquale*, which is considered his comic masterpiece. It was premiered January 3, 1843, at the *Theatre Italien* in Paris, and is in three acts to a text by Giovanni Ruffini and Donizetti after Anello's libretto for Stefano Pavesi's *Ser Marc' Antonio*. It is recorded that Donizetti rewrote so much of the text that the librettist (presumably Ruffini although the name Salvatore Cammarano has been mentioned in some sources) refused to acknowledge it.

Of the foreign operatic commissions Donizetti completed, *Don Pasquale* is only one of three which have full length overtures thematically related to the operas they precede. In typical Donizettian style, the overture includes obbligato instruments which embellish a theme and broad melodies such as the aria *Com' e genti!* (Soft beams the light), a serenade by Ernesto (tenor) to his beloved Norina (soprano) in the garden by moonlight.

The story of *Don Pasquale* is as follows: Don Pasquale da Corneto (bass), a rich old bachelor, decides to marry so his nephew Ernesto (tenor) will not Inherit his fortune since he disapproves of Ernesto's choice of a bride, the attractive young widow Norina (soprano). The young couple is aided by Dr. Malatesta (baritone), a mutual friend of theirs and Pasquale's. They arrange for Pasquale to go through a mock marriage with "Sofronia" (Norina in disguise), supposedly Malwwatesta's sister who just arrived from a convent. As soon as the "wedding'" is over, "Sofronia," reveals herself and does everything possible to make Pasquale's life miserable. Malatesta suggests that the marriage be annulled. Pasquale agrees, admits that he has been fooled, and forgives everyone.

Note from liner notes of Marine Band CD Overtures: Volume Two

Léo Delibes (1836-1891)
Selections from *Coppelia* (1870)
George Balanchine wrote that he regarded Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky, Igor Stravinsky, and Léo Delibes as the three greatest ballet composers. One of these is obviously not like the others: Delibes is, generally speaking, much less known or appreciated than

Tschaikovsky or Stravinsky, even within Balanchine's own oeuvre. And yet, we cannot deny what Delibes accomplished: making ballet music itself an art form. Prior to Delibes's work, there were well-written moments within ballets, but never a score that was through-composed and used musical elements to tie everything seen and heard together. After hearing Delibes's *Sylvia* (1876), for one, Tschaikovsky described it as "the first ballet in which music constitutes not just the main, but the sole interest. What charm, what grace, what melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic richness." Tschaikovsky went so far as to claim that if he had known music like that of *Sylvia* could be written for the ballet, he wouldn't have attempted *Swan Lake*. This begins to indicate just how important Delibes was with his small but significant contribution to the history of music.

Coppélia premiered in 1870 at the Paris Opéra and was Delibes's first full-length ballet. A success from its first performance, the work has become an established favorite within repertories worldwide. Among *Coppélia's* innovations, Delibes uses a system of leitmotifs, or musical devices, connected to the ballet's characters; though Richard Wagner had established the use of leitmotifs in his operas and the practice had become widespread in that genre, the same had not been done for ballet prior to Delibes. Each character in *Coppélia* has their own unique musical signature corresponding with their onstage appearances. Most famously, Dr. Coppélius and the doll Coppélia are represented by the same dry, mechanical music; essentially chromatic counterpoint, their shared theme sounds as though it were written much earlier. Franz has two leitmotifs. And when we first meet Swanilda, her entrance is accompanied by a gorgeous waltz. At the time of the ballet's premiere, audiences were pleasantly surprised—here was a ballet written much as operas had been for nearly half a century. In a sense, with this unique approach, Delibes opened the door to the rest of ballet music as we've known it for the 150 years that followed.

The score for *Coppélia* also introduced the incorporation of national dance vernaculars into ballets, like that of the mazurka and the csárdás—folk dances of Poland and Hungary, respectively. *Coppélia* includes a Spanish-style bolero when Swanilda dances for Dr. Coppélius, and even a French gigue which, while not from a different nation, is a dance form from the Renaissance or Baroque period. Whether non-French or older forms, Delibes uses his deft touch and amazing gift of melody to bring them into this remarkable score. In a way, Delibes internationalized the base of his music, and in doing

so, influenced other composers to include wonderful moments from places and times other than those in which their narratives are set.

The mazurka in *Coppélia* is one of the best-known pieces of music from the ballet. Not only does the orchestra play it during the overture, but it's repeated shortly after in Act I; and when the audience returns for Act II after the intermission, the orchestra plays Swanilda's entrance waltz again. These melodies, already memorable upon their first appearances in the score, repeat just often enough that audiences are inevitably humming them as they leave the theater. Back when Broadway shows were written by Gershwin, Rodgers, and Porter, this same trick was used to plant showtunes firmly in the listener's mind long after the curtain closed, and for days and weeks to come. It's an idea that Broadway inherited in part from Delibes.

Note by Andrew Litton, excerpt of writing for New York City Ballet

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
***Leonore* Overture No. 1 (1807)**
Duration: 10 minutes
The most famous version of the overture [to Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*], the *Leonore* Overture No. 3, is more a symphonic poem than an overture and is frequently performed alone. The *Leonore* Overture No. 1, written in 1807 for a production in Prague that never took place (so say current scholars), was uncovered after Beethoven's death and was initially thought to be his first effort. Now it is believed that he wrote it later—his third attempt at an overture—having felt that the more overtly dramatic versions stole the show and gave away too much of the opera. While commentators continue to squabble over the relative merits of the other three, the *Leonore* Overture No. 1 goes relatively unperformed and unexamined. Author and critic Romain Rolland (when the chronology was assumed to be different than is believed today) dismissed it as "an uncertain essay that failed to satisfy Beethoven, but led him to the splendid discoveries of the two later overtures."

The *Leonore* Overture No. 1 was played in 1836 in a performance conducted by Felix Mendelssohn, and it had an early admirer in Fanny, Felix's sister, who wryly commented that Beethoven "must have lacked taste" if he was unhappy with it, as it was "a finely felt work, interesting, charming, as are few other things that I know." Indeed, from the first unison chord—which, unlike in the other two versions,

is not spiked with timpani—the Overture No. 1 is lighter and more understated. Instead of the supercharged take-off into the Allegro section, this version delivers a more discreet, typically Classical fast section, with different thematic material: The famous lyrical theme, which is worked with suspense into the build-up of the other overtures, is here allowed to sing expansively, the second time with horn sonorities over shimmering strings. This is not a rough draft of the other *Leonore* overtures, but a different work altogether, more refined and self-contained, with fewer spoilers.

Note by Jack Sullivan

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
Symphony No. 8 in B minor, "Unfinished" (1822)
Duration: 25 minutes
Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony, variously known as #7 or #8, was begun in 1822 and, as the title by which we now know it suggests, never finished. Though the sentimental notion that Schubert intentionally left it unfinished because it was so utterly perfect as a two movement work is certainly not true (there are extensive sketches for a third movement, including an orchestrated first page and 119 measures in short score), the piece nevertheless holds together with a remarkable coherence in its extant, incomplete form.

The opening movement, in an ostensibly standard sonata form, features striking modulations and unusual key relations that give it an unsettled, searching character. While the details that follow are technical, a listener will need no expertise to appreciate the work's expressive qualities. After a sinister introduction in the cellos and basses the aimless, serpentine main thematic section eventually settles in the home key of B minor. The second theme—a vague and dream-like waltz in the cellos, accompanied half-heartedly by the clarinets and violas, never quite on the beat—sinks down into G major. So lackadaisical is this theme that it cannot complete its cadence; while G major is eventually confirmed as the key of the exposition, it is immediately negated by a harmonically ambiguous unison B (is in third of a G major chord? V of vi? the tonic?), a surprising outburst from the entire orchestra. The exposition is repeated from the beginning with no variation. The development section—rising from the depths of the orchestra—seems on the verge of achieving a cadence in the home key of B minor but is derailed at the last moment. Musical uncertainty and strife ensues, climaxing on the menacing return of the introductory theme, now played imperiously by the trombones.

The recapitulation, though starting in the aforementioned home key of B minor, is still unable to maintain it. It veers off to a different tonal area for the second theme, and slips, unenergized, downward. It is a surprise, therefore, that the recapitulation confirms B major as its tonic. Once again, however, the tonal progress is negated by the rest of the ensemble playing the very same uncertain B (it is minor or major?) from the exposition. The despairing coda languishes in the minor mode. Even the conventional closing gesture can't bring itself to maintain any energy and dwindles away.

The second movement opens radiantly after such a first. It begins in E major with chorale-like chords in the bassoons and horns, which are elaborated upon by the whole wind section. The secondary section features a clarinet solo that starts plaintively and, after winding chromatically, achieves momentary transfiguration on a major triad. The peace is revealed to be an illusion by the interruption of the entire orchestra. After short retransitionary development, the procedure is repeated in the recapitulation (with a solo oboe replacing the clarinet), and E major is eventually attained again. The coda of the work moves towards a peaceful slumber, momentarily sidetracked by an otherworldly, visionary A-flat major that relaxes back in a motionless, unperturbed E major.

Note by Michael Lewanski

Personnel

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Ume Hashimoto
Sho Roash
Emma Tomita

OBOE
Jose Alvarez
Margeaux Berner

CLARINET
Aiden Griffin
James Garcia Lopez
Megan Rideout Redeker

BASSOON
Alejandro de Jesus
Lukas Jaskunas
Ryan Zych

HORN
Henry Dix
Finn Moore
Eily Polenzani
Liam Weber
Kathryn Wolfgram

TRUMPET
Ethan Dunk
Pablo Lopez Ruiz
Jack Polacek
Julian Ramcharan

TROMBONE
Aidan Klapperich
Augustin Martinez
Ashley Rands

TUBA
Caden Morton

PERCUSSION
Daniel Cesar Carey

VIOLIN
Chelsea Lind, *concertmaster*
Cecilia McIntyre
Jui-Yu Chang
Sofia Concha Pinto
Chien Chien Wu
Connor Pruett
Kay Lyn Ham
Ileana Nicholson, *principal 2nd*
Angela Rojas
To Wang
Brian Shih
Ender Miranda-Estrada
An Ching Yang

VIOLA
Julia Seabron, *principal*
Alyssa Dzien
Rose Skidmore
Catherine Wicker
Abigail Huss
Peter Dudek

CELLO
Audrey Chen, *principal*
Jesus Avila
Eyal Kalev Guetzkow
Clara Dodge
Yejeong Lee
Reese Melton
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BASS
Daniel Mokelke, *principal*
Adam Blendermann
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