

## PROGRAM NOTES

Quincy Symphony Orchestra  
February 8, 2025 Quincy, Illinois

**Danza Del Sol for Orchestra** (2018) by Kevin Day, is performed today side-by-side with the Quincy Area Youth Orchestra. The composer writes: “The piece is an energetic work that features elements of romantic and Latin music. There is a woodwind chamber music section and a very cinematic slow section. All of the earlier motifs tie together for the triumphant and climactic conclusion. The inspiration for this piece came very quickly to me just sitting at the table at home. With this "out-of-the-blue" inspiration, I composed the work in three days and then went back later to make edits. I had a lot of fun writing this and chose to dedicate the work to my friend and mentor Dr. Germán Gutiérrez, Director of Orchestras at Texas Christian University.”

*~Dr. Kevin Day, composer*

**La Cueva del Milodón** (2024) by John Mindeman, is premiered today by the QSO. The composer writes: “La Cueva del Milodón (Engl. The Mylodon Cave) is a natural monument in the Chilean Patagonia, just northwest of the town of Puerto Natales. The monument actually consists of three caves, the largest one being over 80 meters wide at the opening. There scientists have discovered remains of Ice Age mammals, including the giant ground sloth (Mylodon) for which the cave is named. Human remains and artifacts from that epoch have also been found in the caves. This musical work was inspired by images of the cave and surrounding area, and by the stories of those who have been there. The music, though not specifically programmatic, is meant to evoke the feelings of grandeur and mystery that inhabit this ancient site.”

*~Dr. John Mindeman, composer, QSO Principal Trombone*

**Concertino for Clarinet in E-flat major, Op. 26** (1811) by Carl Maria von Weber, was composed in just three days. Clarinetist Heinrich Bärmann learned the work over the next three days for the command performance, for which King Maximilian I of Bavaria purchased 50 tickets. The work has since become one of the most familiar of the clarinet repertoire.

The Concertino unfolds in one movement. The form is theme and variations, beginning with a slow introduction in C minor, followed by the 16-bar E-flat major theme. The next section is marked *poco più vivo* (a little more lively) followed by Variation I which presents variations of the theme in triplets. Variation II, also marked *poco più vivo*, presents sixteenth notes. The following variation is slow and in the parallel minor. The next variation is in 6/8 time. The piece concludes with a thrilling final section marked *con fuoco* (with fire and passion).

*~Dr. John Warrack*

**Orchestral Suite from “Háry János”** (1927) by Zoltán Kodály, was extracted from music Kodály wrote for the 1926 folk opera. The title character (there is a bit of historical evidence that

he may actually have existed) became a hero of Hungarian legend by regaling listeners with extremely tall tales of his always winning exploits against the enemy during the Napoleonic wars. The opera was first performed in Budapest, Hungary in 1926 at the Royal Opera House.

In Kodály's words:

"Day after day Háy sits in the tavern and recounts his incredible heroic feats. He is a true peasant, and his grotesque inventions are a touching mixture of realism and naivete, of comedy and pathos. All the same, he is not just a Hungarian Baron Munchausen. On the surface, he may appear to be no more than an armchair hero, but in essence he is a poet, carried away by his dreams and feelings. His tales are not true, but that is not the point. They are the fruits of his lively fantasy, which creates for himself and for others a beautiful world of dreams... We all dream of the great and impossible. Few of us master, like Háy, the courage to utter our dreams."

***Prelude: The Fairytale Begins:*** The first notes are an "orchestral sneeze" which indicates, by Hungarian tradition, that one is to take the ridiculous tale that follows with a grain of salt. Napoleon's wife has fallen in love with Háy, and along with Háy's fiancée, Orsze, they go off in a carriage to visit the court. At the Schonbrunn Palace, a ***Viennese musical clock*** strikes the hour with a parade of lead soldiers. The ***Song*** is an authentic Hungarian melody, stated first by unaccompanied viola, then in further strophes for solo woodwinds over improvisatory figurations: Háy and Orsze are longing for their distant home.

***The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon:*** Napoleon has heard of his wife's infidelity and sets out with all his troops to avenge his honor. Háy engages the French in battle singlehandedly, vanquishing all to the last man - Napoleon himself. Háy agrees, just this once, not to decapitate the defeated leader: "Just sign a pledge that you'll never annoy our emperor and terrorize our world again, so help you God." The music is a comic quickstep for brass and percussion with violently shrill piccolos and a plaintive saxophone. After the very obvious moment of defeat comes a funeral march, where the quickstep melody turns into a dirge for saxophone.

The ***Intermezzo*** that reflects on Háy's military victory is, like the *Song*, strongly Hungarian in character. Both movements call for busy passage work from the cimbalom, a type of hammered dulcimer. Here, there is also the influence of the *verbunkos*, a kind of ceremonial dance descended from music the Austrians used to lure army recruits; a broad, heavy windup which eventually springs out into a faster, merrier dance.

***Entry of the Emperor and His Court:*** The Austrian emperor and court celebrate with a triumphant march.

~Dr. D. Kern Holoman