

Balcones Community Orchestra

Dr. Robert Radmer, Conductor

Concert Program

“Samson” Overture (1741)

Sinfonia (Andante)

Allegro

Menuetto

George Frideric Handel

(1685 - 1759)

Symphony No. 50 in C Major (1773)

Adagio e maestoso - Allegro di molto

Andante moderato

Menuet

Finale (Presto)

Joseph Haydn

(1732 - 1809)

Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93 (1812)

Allegro vivace con brio

Allegretto scherzando

Molto vivace

Allegro vivace

Ludwig von Beethoven

(1770 - 1827)

Jan 21, 2024 4:00 p.m.

Episcopal Church of the Resurrection

2200 Justin Lane

Austin, TX 78757

*Happy
New Year*

Thank you for 25 years!

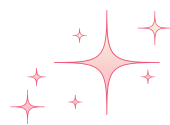
Program Notes

by Robert Radmer

George Frideric Handel had enjoyed great success in London writing operas in the Italian style, but in the 1730s he began composing “oratorios,” essentially operas without any staged dramatic action. These works proved immensely popular, and he abandoned the writing of opera and devoted himself to the new form. Immediately after his completion of “Messiah,” “Samson” was written in October of 1741 to great acclaim. The opening of the Overture revolves around a short-long, short-long rhythmic motive suggestive of majestic nobility. The Allegro is built upon an energetic galloping figure, with non-stop contrapuntal activity. A contrasting gentle, melodic Menuetto calmly and sweetly prepares for the telling of the terrible tale.

Joseph Haydn created an astonishing amount of music over his 77-year life: approximately 40 full-length works such as operas and masses, 67 string quartets, 55 string trios, and some 400 song accompaniments along with a myriad of other compositions in a wide variety of musical frameworks. Symphony No. 50 in C Major is an approximate midpoint of his 104 works in this genre, and it is typical of Haydn’s compositional style. It opens in a majestic feeling which turns to a triple-time tune of youthful excitement. The second movement continues in the almost child-like mood, while the Menuet has an atmosphere of adult, playful humor. The Finale builds on a simple, joyous melody first given out by the violins in a bouncing conversation with muscular figures in the lower strings.

Ludwig von Beethoven had grown the complexity and nuance of his first seven symphonies from 1800 to 1812, but in that year he crafted his 8th Symphony in an older, 18th century style, almost as a fond farewell to Classical thinking. The work opens with a triple-time down-and-up figure that comes across more as a question than a statement, answered by the woodwinds with yet another question. Beethoven plays with rhythmic jokes and playful interjections from the various sections of the orchestra, and closes the movement quietly. The second movement employs a jaunty whistling tune over simple repeated chords in the woodwinds. Surprises abound as the different sections of the orchestra participate in a civil-yet-animated discussion. The Minuet appears next, but in the Classical, more stolid style rather than the wild triple-time movements of Beethoven’s earlier symphonies. The Finale revolves around a quiet and nervous “trembling” motive followed by a thrice-repeated three-note figure. The movement builds on these ill-at-ease ideas with explosions of raucous affirmation, and the work continues in a rollicking, breathless fashion through the 15 repetitions of the closing chord.



Our Next Concert Featuring

SungEun Park, Piano

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major

Sunday, February 18, 2024 - 4:00 pm

St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church

Balcones Community Orchestra Players



Violin I

Melissa Ruof,
Concertmaster
Walter Romanko
Elizabeth Jackson
Catherine van Zanten
Ellie Hunt
Kristen Roberts

Violin II

Andrea Gore
Nancy Hoagland
Kay Mueller
Laurie Peckins
Susan Versluys
Olive Forbes

Viola

Mike Domjan
Jen Moon
Charles Stolze
Deb Weltzer
Lucia Woodruff

Cello

Karen Foster Cason
John Cox
Mary Beth Widhalm
Johannes Brinkmann
Steve DuPrez

Bass

Ann Smith

Flute

Kyndra Cullen
Sally Grant

Oboe

Herson de la Garza
Steve Peckham

Clarinet

John Parr-Culver
Candace Kimbrough

Bassoon

Lori Willoughby
Chuck Hazelwood

Horn

Noah Ruhl
Joanne Delk

Trumpet

Eric Bittner
Jose Yznaga

Tympani

Tony Gilliam

Dr. Robert Radmer

Music Director/Conductor

Robert Alan Radmer is the founder and Music Director of the Balcones Community Orchestra, now in its twenty-fifth season. He has worked with youth orchestras and adult ensembles in six states, and for ten years was on the faculty of St. Edward's University conducting the orchestra and teaching strings. In addition he serves on the faculty of the Austin Chamber Music Center. He is the Music Director and Conductor for the Central Texas Medical Orchestra working closely with Executive Director Walter Laich to raise funds for Austin area medical non-profit groups.

Radmer has appeared as a violist with chamber ensembles and orchestras in over two thousand performances since 1981 in 21 states and ten countries. He was awarded the Doctorate in Viola Performance from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1993, and has served on the music faculties of Texas State University, the College of Saint Scholastica, Eastern New Mexico University, and Southwest Texas State University. Radmer was honored by being named Teacher of the Year in 1996 by the American String Teachers Association (New Mexico Chapter).

Robert teaches violin, viola and guitar in his private studio, and in his spare time he is a composer of concert music and is also an active member of the popular music scene in Austin. He performs and records as a guitarist, singer, songwriter and improvising violist with Jack Jensen in their band, Reel Sheboygan, and in 2022 he accompanied the Eagles with 37 of Austin's finest in concert at the Moody Center. He has started a new orchestra at Austin Community College and is excited about making music with the Northridge String Orchestra.

Our Orchestra

An Interview with Robert Radmer

2015

Sunday afternoon, and you're looking for a serene and inspirational way to top off an exciting Austin weekend without donning heels or a tie. You find it listed in the Austin Chronicle—a free classical concert at the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection. When you enter the sanctuary, folks are filing in dressed in their everyday clothes with smiles on their faces. There is no ticket taker or formal usher showing you to your seat. This audience gets to choose where they want to sit based on the sound, or the instrument, or the player, and in some cases to watch the lively Conductor. If they have small children, they tend to sit near the exit. On stage, the orchestra is seemingly happy to be there and warming up for their beloved leader. When he gambols across the room and greets the audience with his genuinely lit-up face, they know that they are about to experience an hour of fine classical music, especially chosen for them by the Music Director and Conductor, Dr. Robert Radmer. The BCO is his baby and is now a grown up in its twenty-fifth year – he is a proud father.

The Balcones Community Orchestra is a non-profit, all-volunteer group of 40+ players that presents free concerts to our city in the sweetest of venues – our local churches. “The BCO began in 1998,” Radmer began, and judging by that distant dreamy look on his face, he is about to share a fond memory. “A group of public school educators asked me to form an orchestra that would let them just play and not have to teach or talk about music; not showing fundamentals to kids, but so that they could use the skills that they learned as players in their relatively advanced education through college. So the first and only rule we had was that there would be no talking, just play, play, play and then go back home. We began getting more and more formal, adding more players and over time developing a stronger and more elaborate structure.”

Since that humble beginning, the annual eight-concert series has showcased Austin solo artists such as Jessica Mathaes, Violin – Concertmaster of the Austin Symphony; Stanislav Pronin, Violin – Concertmaster of the Austin Lyric Opera. Amy Levine-Tsang, Cellist, Pasha Sabouri, Iranian Violinist, and soloists from across the world, as far as Japan, (Frank Weber, Piano) and North Dakota (Dr. Gerald Gaul, Viola). Many more have shared the stage with the BCO.

Peter Bay, Music Director for the Austin Symphony has had an informal connection with the BCO since 1998. He stated, “The BCO plays to packed houses and are led by their energetic leader, Robert Radmer. Through their hard work they bring great joy to all who attend their performances, reinforcing what I have believed all along about their value to the city of Austin.” This is one of many praises Radmer has received from his audience.

Robert Radmer's music education started very early in Sheboygan, Wisconsin where he spent all of his childhood. "My father was a music teacher, and my two older brothers were forced to study violin. I followed in that pattern when my dad started me playing at age three, against my better judgment at the time. We fought about violin playing every day until I was thirteen, when I was finally allowed to retire from the violin and switch to the viola. It was presumed to be an easier instrument because the music was less challenging, and one didn't have to practice in order to keep up with one's junior high school peers." He laughs, remembering the following, "As quickly as possible I went on to playing rock n' roll guitar and abandoning for a period of time the whole classical idea. As a rock n' roll player I began composing, and realizing that I liked the idea, I entered college to become a student of composition; there they demanded that I had to play an instrument (and back then, guitar didn't count) – so there I was with the viola back in my hands.

After many trials and tribulations, various universities, programs that didn't fit my needs (and certainly my particular skills didn't fit many programs) it took me awhile to find a college that would finally graduate me. The University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, lovingly known as UW-Zero, was the college that admitted that even I could get over their bar. I had little success at graduate school where I was eventually tossed out over a dispute over my abilities and scholarly suitability. Later I was invited back, and I finished my terminal degree with a Doctor of Musical Arts in Viola Performance. I've studied with world class conductors on and off over the years to become a conductor. I really didn't quit studying with people until I was about fifty." Aman that truly has no problem laughing at himself, he adds, "I did learn some things in that period of time, some of which are still usable."

When asked what he would like to see the BCO do in the future, he answered, "My primary thing is to continue doing what we're doing. We want to do it better and for more people. "Each year," Rob cheerfully boasts, "our players get stronger, are more experienced and are more used to dealing with me so they get more efficient at rehearsing and more effective at performing. We try to give our audiences something different and don't generally do music that other people in town are doing." The BCO has performed several world premieres in the past.

Radmer ends our interview with these passionate words: "My orchestra, I love in a certain kind of way. What I do largely is allow them to play. Not all conductors think this way; they think they have to mold the musicians into something. I see my job is to encourage them and simply let them play, not to re-make them, force them, or inhibit them. I consider that to be my chief function. It gives me a lot of pleasure and satisfaction and it makes me feel whole. My father ran an orchestra like this for fun and for whatever artistic experience was possible. Like him, I embrace it and want to be a part of it for as long as they'll let me."

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and classical music enthusiasts.**

Tax-deductible gifts can be
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Or by mailing a check to:
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Thank you!

**The BCO thanks Episcopal Church of
the Resurrection and staff for the
opportunity to perform in their lovely
facility**

**Promotion: Libby Bryer
Recording Engineer: Mike Koetting**