

PRESS RELEASE
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FROM: BELOIT JANESVILLE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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BJSO CONCERT ANNOUNCEMENT

Music of America: Dvorak's New World Symphony & Beyond

WHAT: The Beloit Janesville Symphony Orchestra concert:

Music of America: Dvorak's New World Symphony & Beyond

ABOUT DVORAK & THE NEW WORLD SYMPHONY: The Symphony No. 9 in E minor, "From the New World", popularly known as the *New World Symphony*, was composed by Antonín Dvořák in 1893 while he was the director of the National Conservatory of Music of America from 1892 to 1895. It is by far his most popular symphony, and one of the most popular of all symphonies. Besides teaching, Dvorak was hired to help American composers find an "American musical voice" and shake off the trappings of the classical European sound. Dvorak was influenced by Native American music and especially by African-American music and spirituals.

Dvorak stated: *I am convinced that the future music of this country must be founded on what are called Negro melodies. These can be the foundation of a serious and original school of composition, to be developed in the United States. These beautiful and varied themes are the product of the soil. They are the folk songs of America and your composers must turn to them.*

One of the best-known melodies in the symphony is *Goin' Home*, which was played as President Franklin D. Roosevelt's body was transported by train back to Washington D.C

Astronaut Neil Armstrong took a tape recording of the *New World Symphony* along during the Apollo 11 mission, the first Moon landing, in 1969.

THE REST OF THE CONCERT REPERTOIRE & FEATURED SOLOIST: In keeping with a purely American theme of music representing the late 19th Century and early to mid- 20th, Joseph Ketchum, the BJSO Concertmaster will play solo violin on Ervin Rouse's *The Orange Blossom Special* and Charlie Daniels' *The Devil Went Down to Georgia*. Both pieces are arranged by Milwaukee composer Glenn Asch.

Besides being the Concertmaster for the Beloit Janesville Symphony Orchestra, Joe is the founder, principal composer, arranger, and bandleader for "JOE 2.0" a rock sextet comprised of an electrified string quartet, drums, and vocals, which recently opened for *Chicago* at Summerfest.

Joe was born and raised in Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin. He developed a love for the violin almost immediately and began his studies at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music at age 4 with Ronald Melby. And he's never stopped playing!

He is active as a soloist, chamber musician, and pedagogue in both the classical and pop realms. He served as the String Department Chair at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music for 4 years before leaving the Conservatory to start a private studio in 2012. He performs regularly as Concertmaster of the Skylight Opera Theatre Orchestra and the Beloit Janesville Symphony. He performs on a 1927 Carl Becker violin "The Red Baron", which he has played since 1985.

WILLIAM GRANT STILL (May 11, 1895 – Dec. 3, 1978) was an American composer of more than 150 works, including five symphonies and eight operas.

Often referred to as "the Dean" of African-American composers, Still was the first American composer to have an opera produced by the New York City Opera. Still is known most for his first symphony, the "Afro-American", which was until the 1950s the most widely performed symphony composed by an American.

Born in Mississippi, he grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas, attended Wilberforce University and Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and was a student of George Whitefield Chadwick and later Edgard Varèse.

Of note, Still was the first African American to conduct a major American symphony orchestra, the first to have a symphony performed by a leading orchestra, the first to have an opera performed by a major opera company, and the first to have an opera performed on national television.

Due to his close association and collaboration with prominent African-American literary and cultural figures such as Alain Locke and Langston Hughes, William Grant Still is considered to be part of the Harlem Renaissance movement.

The BJSO is honored to perform Still's 1957 composition: *The American Scene, Suite 5*—
"A Mountain, A Memorial, and a Song" (The Southwest)
Grand Teton
Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
Song of the Rivermen

WHEN & WHERE: Sunday, October 6, 2019 at 2:00pm at the Janesville Performing Arts Center 408 S. Main St. A free "Pre-concert Chat with the Maestro" begins at 1:15pm in the JPAC Gallery.

POST-CONCERT RECEPTION HONORING DR. ROB TOMARO: This season, we are also honoring Dr. Rob Tomaro's 20th year as the Artistic Director and Conductor of the BJSO. Join us in the

JPAC gallery for a post-concert reception honoring Dr. Rob Tomaro. Complimentary light hors d'oeuvres will be served; a cash bar will be available.

TICKETS: Adults: \$20; children ages 15 and younger FREE; all students ages 16 and older: \$5. Tickets are available through JPAC: www.janesvillepac.org, or by calling 608-758-0297. Tickets are available at the door. Reservations are recommended.

DRESS REHEARSAL PREVIEW: Thursday, Oct. 3, 2019 at 7:00pm at Eaton Chapel on the Beloit College Campus. FREE final dress rehearsal, open to the public: A Pay What You Can Night (donations accepted).

FOR MORE INFORMATION: go to www.beloitjanesvillesymphony.org; call 608-313-1200; or email: info@beloitjanesvillesymphony.org

ABOUT BJSO: The Beloit Janesville Symphony Orchestra, now in its sixty-sixth year, is the professional symphony orchestra of Rock County. In addition to its series of classical and pops concerts, each year it performs Independence Day concerts in Janesville and Beloit, which are offered free to our audience. Beginning as a volunteer community orchestra in 1953 at Beloit College, it has grown into a respected regional orchestra in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

The mission of the BJSO is to serve as a major cultural and educational resource to southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois by providing a rich variety of symphonic music and related cultural activities to the citizens, schools and other institutions in the area.

This season, we are also honoring Dr. Rob Tomaro's 20th year as the Artistic Director and Conductor of the BJSO.

Maestro Tomaro is also active in our school systems, bringing his original educational program *Conducting Kids* to our area middle schools.

Founded by Lewis Dalvit in 1953, the BJSO baton was passed on to Dr. Crawford Gates in 1963 and, in 1999, to Dr. Robert Tomaro.

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