



Alton Symphony Orchestra Starts Season with "Musical Landscapes of European Minds" Concert

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON/GODFREY - The Alton Symphony Orchestra will kick off their season with a performance titled "The Musical Landscapes of European Minds." Brett Klaus, a Marquette Catholic High School teacher, will solo.

The concert is scheduled to start at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 28, 2023, at Hatheway Hall at Lewis and Clark Community College. Maestro Shane Williams explained the power of sharing music with the community through the Alton Symphony Orchestra (ASO).

"In my heart, it's about the people," Williams said. "My mission when I came onboard here at the orchestra was to make the music come alive for all. It starts with the players, and then it becomes the sections and then it moves to the audience so that everybody can enjoy it, from young to old, from violin to French horn. It comes alive for everybody."

To prepare for the concert, Williams asked the musicians to share what pieces they wanted to play that fit the European theme. The music committee considered the musicians' suggestions, the practicality of each piece and what the audience would most likely want to hear.

The concert will begin with "English Folk Song Suite" by English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, written in the 1920s. Klaus will then take the stage for Piano Concerto No. 2 by Dmitri Shostakovich. The concerto was written for Shostakovich's son and has three movements for a total of approximately 20 minutes, during which Klaus will perform as the solo pianist.

Klaus serves as the music and theater director at Marquette Catholic High School, and the programs have received a lot of recognition under his direction. He noted that it “feels like new territory” to return to the stage as a performer, but he has a long history of performance with ASO and has “grown up” with Shostakovich’s music.



“It means so much to share the stage with such a great group of people as well as an orchestra that has been such a cultural cornerstone for the City of Alton,” Klaus said. “I’m excited now to return to a stage I’ve known my entire life but now as a soloist with the symphony I love...My goal Saturday night is to transport the audience to Shostakovich's sound world — and this piece in particular is a rare moment for the composer's life where we hear him in a good mood.”

After intermission, the orchestra will perform “Night on Bald Mountain” by 1800s composer Modest Mussorgsky. This composition pulls from Russian legends and literature. The next piece — The Moldau, written by composer Bedrich Smetana — was banned by the Nazis in the 1930s after Czech symphonies played it as a protest song during the German invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The orchestra will also be [selling raffle tickets](#) for \$10, which you can buy for the chance to win a \$300 gift card to Hansen Meat Co. They will announce the winner during intermission, and all proceeds from the raffle go back to the orchestra and their scholarship program. Williams explained that the [Music for All scholarship](#) provides financial assistance for young musicians to receive private lessons.

“It’s just an investment,” he added. “We just want to invest in their lives because we believe music is so important.”

This love for music guides ASO members, who will begin rehearsing for their Dec. 9, 2023 Christmas concert immediately after Saturday’s show. You can view the [full ASO concert season](#) online.

Tickets for the Oct. 28, 2023, “The Musical Landscapes of European Minds” concert cost \$10 for adults and \$5 for those under 18. Purchase tickets and learn more about the Alton Symphony Orchestra at their [official website at AltonSymphonyOrchestra.org](https://www.altonsymphonyorchestra.org).

“We’re going to knock them all out of the park. I think that’s how the orchestra feels about it,” Williams laughed. “It’s a beautiful time to come out and hear beautiful music with the Alton Symphony Orchestra this weekend.”

ALTON SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA PRESENTS

"THE MUSICAL LANDSCAPES OF EUROPEAN MINDS"

October 28, 2023

7 p.m.

Featuring work from English Folk
Song Suite, Moldau, Night on Bald
Mountain and Shostakovich no.2
with Brett Klaus

