Welcome to the Metropolitan Symphony’s 2014-2015 season. This will be my fifteenth year as the MSO’s Music Director, and I have never been more excited about our lineup of programs, soloists and venues. Every concert includes a work by a living Minnesota composer. We begin and end the season with music by Dominick Argento, opening with the world premiere of his very first orchestral piece, *Ode to the West Wind*, spotlighting soprano Maria Jette, and finishing with mezzo soprano Clara Osowski performing *Casa Guidi*, Argento’s Grammy-winning song cycle. Kevin Kling will narrate his own humorous story of *The Burning Wisdom of Finn McCool*, set to music by Children’s Theater Company’s Victor Zupanc and featuring Tom Klein on the Irish bagpipe. Libby Larsen’s *A Child’s Garden of Monsters* is a setting of Pamela Hill Nettleton’s whimsical tale of a young boy’s encounter with Count Dracula, and Jake Endres brings his prodigious acting skills back to the MSO to recount the story, as well as to perform Nettleton’s new narration for Benjamin Britten’s *Youthful Guide to the Orchestra*. Composer Daniel Erdmann, a member of the MSO, performs as soloist in the world premiere of his own Concerto for Viola. Other notable first performances include the Twin Cities premieres of Polina Nazaykinskaya’s *Reading the Wind* and Alexandre Guilmant’s Organ Symphony No. 2, with soloist Kathrine Handford playing the fantastic organ at St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church in Mahtomedi.

The MSO and I are primed to explore some of the greatest works of the symphonic repertoire, including Rachmaninoff’s *Symphonic Dances*, Mahler’s Fourth Symphony, Stravinsky’s *Firebird*, Barber’s First Essay and Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. You won’t want to miss a note. See you there!

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Acknowledgments: Karen Anderson, King Elder, Jon Lewis, Tim Rummelhoff, William Schrickel

These concerts are supported, in part, by Target.
Dominick Argento World Premiere
Sunday, October 19 at 4pm
Central Lutheran Church, 333 South 12th Street, Minneapolis, MN
William Schrickel, conductor
Maria Jette, soprano

Dominick Argento – Ode to the West Wind (1956) for Soprano & Orchestra
Sergei Rachmaninoff – Symphonic Dances, op. 45

The Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra and Music Director William Schrickel celebrate the start of the MSO’s 33rd season with the world premiere of Dominick Argento’s Ode to the West Wind. Subtitled Concerto for Soprano and Orchestra, the Ode is the Pulitzer Prize-winning Minneapolis setting of Shelley’s 1819 poem. Maria Jette is the soloist in this premiere of Argento’s first orchestral work, written in 1956 when he was completing his doctoral studies at The Eastman School of Music. Argento’s first symphonic work is followed by a performance of Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninoff’s final composition, his brilliantly intense Symphonic Dances, first performed in 1941.

Humorous Kevin Kling, Heavenly Mahler
Sunday, November 23 at 4pm
St. Philip the Deacon Lutheran Church, 17205 County Road 6, Plymouth, MN
William Schrickel, conductor
Kevin Kling, narrator; Tom Klein, Uilleann pipes; Linh Kauffman, soprano

Percy Grainger – Londonderry Air
Victor Zupanc – The Burning Wisdom of Finn McCool
Gustav Mahler – Symphony No. 4

The MSO’s first appearance at St. Philip the Deacon will feature playwright Kevin Kling telling his story of The Burning Wisdom of Finn McCool, with music written by Victor Zupanc, Music Director / Composer of the Children’s Theatre of Minneapolis. Zupanc’s score spotlights the sweet sound of the Irish uilleann pipes, played by Tom Klein. As a prelude, William Schrickel will lead the strings in Percy Grainger’s arrangement of Danny Boy. The concert finishes with Mahler’s Symphony No. 4, a work whose musical journey begins with the charming sound of shrill bells, moves to a macabre portrait of Death fiddling on a mis-tuned violin, progresses through variations on heartbreakingly beautiful themes, and concludes with soprano Linh Kauffman singing Mahler’s beguiling setting of a child’s view of Heaven.

Count Dracula & The Firebird Meet the MSO
Special 1-Hour Family-Friendly Concerts
Sunday, February 1 at 3pm
St. Joseph campus of St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church, 1310 Mainstreet, Hopkins, MN
William Schrickel, conductor
Jake Endres, narrator

Igor Stravinsky – The Firebird: Suite (1919 version)
Libby Larsen/Pamela Hill Nettleton – A Child’s Garden of Monsters: Dracula’s Blues
Benjamin Britten/Pamela Hill Nettleton – The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra

Igor Stravinsky’s suite from his ballet The Firebird opens these special 1-hour concerts. The enchanting music tells the Russian tale of heroic Prince Ivan, who rescues thirteen princesses imprisoned by Kaschei, an evil ogre. Jake Endres narrates Minneapolis composer Libby Larsen’s A Child’s Garden of Monsters, a setting for wind octet of Pamela Hill Nettleton’s charming story of a young boy’s encounter with Count Dracula. William Schrickel and the MSO complete the program with Benjamin Britten’s brilliant Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra, a symphonic showpiece featuring Jake Endres performing Pamela Hill Nettleton’s sparkling new narration.

Beethoven’s Fifth!
Sunday, March 29 at 4pm
Roseville Lutheran Church
1215 Roselawn Avenue West, Roseville, MN
William Schrickel, conductor
Daniel Erdmann, viola
Samuel Barber – Essay No. 1 for Orchestra, op. 12
Daniel Erdmann – Concerto for Viola and Orchestra
Ludwig van Beethoven – Symphony No. 5 in C minor, op. 67

Samuel Barber composed his mellifluous and ruminative First Essay for Orchestra at the request of Arturo Toscanini, who premiered the work in 1938 with the NBC Symphony Orchestra. Composer Daniel Erdmann, violist in the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra and the winner of the MSOs 2014 concerto competition, performs the world premiere of his Concerto for Viola and Orchestra. William Schrickel and the MSO close the concert with a performance of Ludwig van Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5, a work that opens with the four most recognizable notes in all of music and concludes with a finale that triumphantly completes the symphony’s epic journey from darkness to light.

21st Century Classics & Organ Fireworks
Sunday, May 17 at 4pm
Saint Andrew’s Lutheran Church, 900 Stillwater Road, Mahtomedi, MN
William Schrickel, conductor
Claire Osowski, mezzo soprano; Katherine Handford, organ
Polina Nazaykinskaya – Reading the Wind
Dominick Argento – Casa Guidi
Alexandre Guilmant – Symphony No. 2 for Organ & Orchestra, op. 91

Polina Nazaykinskaya, the young Russian composer championed by the MSO over the past three seasons, composed her Reading the Wind in 2013 for a concert exploring the influence of Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring. Minneapolis composer Dominick Argento won a Grammy Award in 2004 for Casa Guidi, his 5-movement song cycle setting texts from letters written by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Mezzo soprano Claire Osowski is the soloist in Argento’s touching, poignant work. Schrickel and the MSO bring down the curtain on the 2014-2015 season in spectacular fashion with the Twin Cities premiere of Alexandre Guilmant’s Organ Symphony No. 2, featuring Katherine Handford as organ soloist.