



**Saturday**

**May 4, 2024**

**7:30 pm**

**Dvořák** Symphony No. 8

**Kodály** Háry János Suite

**Bartók** Romanian Folk Dances

**Conductor: John Kraus**

**PARKDALE ORCHESTRA**

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**John Kraus**  
Music Director

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Denise Deschênes  
Heather Dudzinski  
Marguerite Gollish  
Anne-Marie Legault  
Ruth Marrocco  
Joshua Ramisch  
Nathalie van Galen  
Don Weber

## Second Violins

Doug Brierley ❄️  
Rebecca Kennedy  
Marjorie Lacy  
Anne McRuer  
Sophie Olberg  
Dhenuka Radhakrishnan  
Laurence Richard  
Mirjana Simic

## Violas

Ann Frederking ❄️  
Vanessa Kraus  
Ann McNamee  
Katherine Muldoon  
Lucas Olsen-Willford †  
Katie Pitts

## Cellos

Carole Semichon ❄️  
Don Greenway □  
Jodie Inglis  
Edwin de Jong  
Eddie Kim  
Rachel Kraus  
Matthews †  
Julie Mailloux  
Louise Mortimer  
Ruth Peron

## Double Basses

Tony Jarrett ❄️  
Arjanit Balca  
Richard Lacy  
Patrick Rourke

## Flutes

Lani Sommers ❄️  
Laura Griffin  
Heidi Lagacé †

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Laura Griffin  
Heidi Lagacé †

## Oboes

Yvo de Jong ❄️  
Thomas Forsey

## English Horn

Yvo de Jong

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Paul Caron ❄️  
Diana Winninger

## Bassoons

Sophie Reussner-  
Pazur ❄️  
Matthew Antoine †

## French Horns

Brad Booth ❄️  
Kathryn Gauthier  
Ruth Taylor  
David Yensen †

## Alto Saxophone

Andrew Gesing ❄️

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Anne Shea ❄️  
David Creasey  
Gregory Renaud †

## Cornets

Sid Arnold †  
Véronique Dupuis †  
Michel Renaud †

## Trombones

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Murray Cuthbert

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Javor Frajkor

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Owen Stanton-Kennedy ❄️

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Owen Stanton-Kennedy ❄️  
Natalie Browne †

## Keyboards

Janina Kraus †

- ❄️❄️ Concertmaster
- ❄️ Section Principal
- † Guest Player
- Librarian

## Program

### **B. Bartók**

#### Romanian Folk Dances

- I. Jo Cu Bătă (Stick Dance)
- II. Brâul (Sash Dance)
- III. Pe Loc (In One Spot)
- IV. Buciumeana (Dance from Bucsum)
- V. Poarga Românească (Romanian Polka)
- VI. Mărunțel (Fast Dance)
- VII. Mărunțel (Fast Dance)

### **Z. Kodály**

#### Háry János Suite

- I. Prelude – The Fairy Tale Begins
- II. Viennese Musical Clock
- III. Song
- IV. The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon
- V. Intermezzo
- VI. Entrance of the Emperor and his Court

## INTERMISSION

### **A. Dvořák**

#### Symphony No. 8 in G Major

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegretto grazioso – Molto vivace
- IV. Allegro non troppo

# Music from Eastern Europe

The term “Eastern Europe” is a broad one, the meaning of which has evolved as national borders were drawn and redrawn and political powers shifted. The United Nations currently defines this region as the countries of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, and Slovakia, as well as the republics of Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine. While the exact composition of Eastern Europe may be ambiguous, what cannot be denied is that the region has produced some of the most unique and iconic art in the entire Western canon, especially when it comes to classical music. And while the contributions of Russian composers may be the first to spring to mind, tonight, the Parkdale Orchestra invites you on a musical tour of Hungary, Romania, and the Czech Republic through the works of some of their best-known composers, discovering these nations’ history, geography, traditions, and sheer beauty along the way.



Charles bridge and Prague city skyline.

*Source: Wasin Pummarin, Free Stock photos by Vecteezy.*

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# Romanian Folk Dances

## Béla Bartók

We begin in Romania, with a collection of traditional music transcribed and arranged by composer Béla Bartók (1881-1945). Ironically enough, while Bartók proudly identified as a Hungarian composer all his life, the city in which he was born is now part of Romania. Bartók began his musical career in a very traditional sense, as a pianist and a composer of fairly typical works for the time; however, in his early 20s, he undertook a fascinating anthropological exercise. In collaboration with his countryman Zoltán Kodály (more on him later), Bartók trekked into the countryside with a backpack full of recording equipment (a feat made much more impressive when you recall that he operated in the age of phonographs and wax cylinders) and traveled through remote Hungarian and Romanian villages in search of folk songs. He recorded rural musicians' performances of their villages' and cultures' traditional music, then returned home and transcribed them. These six dances are a prime example of this exercise. Originally written for piano and later reworked for full orchestra, these short pieces would traditionally have been performed on a fiddle or flute to accompany dancers.

In his guide to Bartók's work, musicologist György Kroó describes the dances that would accompany each movement as follows:

1. Jo Cu Bătă (Stick Dance): "The opening movement is a stick dance. A young lad dances it solo with great gusto and at its conclusion, he jumps up high so as to be able to kick the low ceiling of his intended!"
2. Brâul (Sash Dance): "The second piece is a circle dance, the very well known Brâul; Bartók notated it from a 30 year old flute player. In the orchestral version, this melody is allotted to the clarinet." Sash dances represent a whole category of Romanian traditional dance, where a sash or waistband accentuates the dancer's movements.

3. Pe Loc ("In One Spot"): "The title Pe Loc refers to the choreography. It is danced on the spot by a pair, with the boy placing his hand on his own hip, while the girl places her hand on his shoulder." The character of this dance reflects the region's proximity to the Middle East, with the dark and moody melody performed over a drone.
4. Buciumeana (Dance from Bucsum): This slow movement is also nicknamed the Horn Dance, as the title may refer both to the player of a traditional Romanian horn (a bucium) and to a folk song from the people of Bucsony (known today as Bucium).
5. Poarga Românească (Romanian Polka): This traditional polka is made interesting by its alternating metres and intricate rhythms. Kroó calls it "the most rhythmically interesting piece of the set".
6. Mărunţel: "The Mărunţel is a dance melody with words, and those looking on would accompany the performance rhythmically singing and shouting. It would be danced by a group of couples, but only the men move, performing solos with one kind of step, and the task of the women in the dance is not to heed them and stand motionless as if they had not noticed their partner's display."

Bursting with life and character, it is not hard to see why these dances captivated both young Bartók and audiences around the world.

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## Háry János Suite

Zoltán Kodály

Bartók's countryman Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967) shared his interest in ethnomusicology and composing, even studying with the same teachers, but his talent as a composer was largely overshadowed by his contributions to music education (if yours included learning rhythms by singing ta-ti-ti, using hand signs, and taking group lessons, you can thank Kodály!). One of the founding principles of Kodály's pedagogical method was that music teachers must use the music of a student's country of origin, in their own tongue, to create a visceral and personal connection to music from a very young age. Kodály himself definitely felt such a connection to the music of his homeland, spending years conducting field research alongside Bartók and writing multiple theses on the subject, and this connection left an indelible impression on his own compositions. The Háry János suite is no exception; drawn from the composer's opera of the same name, the suite is steeped in Hungarian tradition. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the opening of the first movement, where the orchestra launches into a bombastic musical "sneeze". In Hungary, if someone sneezes before telling a story, it is guaranteed to be true. What follows the orchestral sneeze, though, is better categorized as a tall tale than gospel truth.

The six movements of this piece relate the adventures of Háy János, as told by the man himself. Per Kodály's preface to the score, "Háy is a peasant, a veteran soldier who day after day sits at the tavern spinning yarns about his heroic exploits... the stories released by his imagination are an inextricable mixture of realism and naivety, of comic humour and pathos." After setting the scene, Háy describes how Napoleon's wife, the empress Marie Louise, fell in love with him and whisked him from the battlefield to Vienna, where he sees wonders including the palace clock with its procession of wooden soldiers. In the third movement, Háy and his village sweetheart Orzse, who followed him to Vienna, hear the music of a cimbalom (a traditional Hungarian instrument similar to a dulcimer) and yearn for their simple lives back home, echoed by a melancholy solo on the viola. In the fourth movement, Napoleon's jealous minister declares war on Austria to claim Marie Louise for himself, leading Háy to single-handedly defeat the French army (here, Kodály cheekily converts the triumphant opening theme of Napoleon's army to a mournful saxophone tune at the movement's close). After a brief intermezzo in the form of a csárdás (a traditional Hungarian dance), Háy stands before Napoleon and his imperial court and proclaims he can only find happiness back home with Orzse, and leaves the empress and her glamorous world behind.

While audiences may scoff at his larger-than-life exploits, Kodály asserts that "Háy's stories are not true, but that is unimportant. They are expressions of the beauty of his fantasy, which builds for himself and for others an artistic and absorbing world of the imagination. We all dream of impossible deeds of glory and grandeur, only we lack the naïve courage of Háy, and dare not reveal them. A deeper significance is given to the story by regarding Háy as symbolic of the Hungarian nation, whose strivings and ambitions can be fulfilled only in dreams." Through his incorrigible dreamer, Kodály sketches a vision of his country - perhaps not yet able to realize its own dreams, but still dreaming, grounded in its roots and values, and always accompanied by its traditions, and its music.



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# Symphony No. 8 in G Major

Antonín Dvořák

While it may be overshadowed by his Ninth symphony, Dvořák's (1841-1904) Eighth symphony is a masterpiece in its own right, and where the Ninth celebrates the American New World, the Eighth is a love letter to the composer's homeland. Much of the piece was written in the summer of 1889 as Dvořák summered in Vysoka (a mountain range in part of modern-day Slovakia), where he complained that ideas came so quickly he could barely write them fast enough. While it follows the traditional four-movement symphonic structure, the work is characterized by "a cantabile style whose clear-cut contours and largely diatonic progressions are more typical of a vocal, rather than instrumental, type of melody", and is filled with innovations and unique features that reflect the traditional folk music of the land where it was composed.



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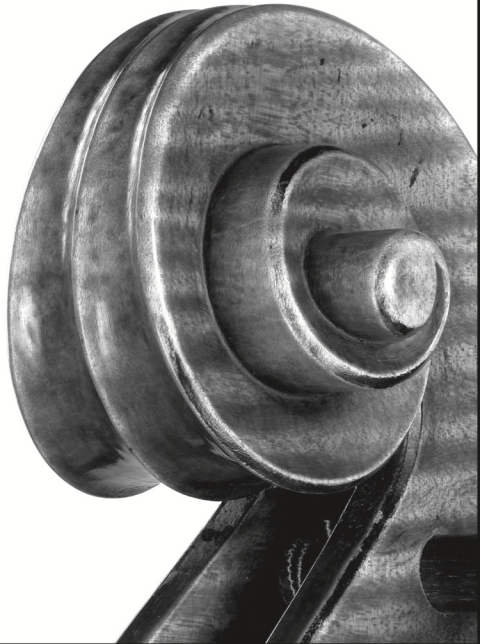
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In the first movement, rather than introducing and developing one main theme, Dvořák explores a huge variety of melodies, beginning with a cello theme that fades into a flute line evoking birdcalls and bringing the piece from G minor into the symphony's home key of G major. The second movement, while still technically a classic "slow" movement, moves at a relatively quick pace. The call and response between the strings and winds throughout the piece is inspired by the pastoral landscapes of the Czech Republic, and even has echoes of another "mood picture" by Dvořák, a musical sketch called *At the Old Castle*. Rather than a traditional scherzo, though, the symphony's third movement is a waltz, and highly reminiscent of a Czech folk dance called the *furiant*. The final movement is announced by a trumpet fanfare, and per Czech conductor Rafael Kubelík, "in our homeland, the trumpets never call to battle - they always call to the dance!". Using a theme and variations format, the fourth movement steadily builds in both pace and excitement, leading to a triumphant and joyful conclusion.

While many other European composers sampled from the folk music of their nations, including Beethoven, Brahms, and Schubert, Dvořák found himself irrevocably branded as a "nationalist" composer for doing so in his own works. At the same time, author Peter Laki commented on the Eighth symphony that "Dvořák's handling of form is indebted to Beethoven and Brahms, but he filled out the form with melodies of an unmistakably Czech flavor and a joviality few composers at the time possessed". Nationalist or not, Dvořák's pride in his homeland is evident in every note of his works, proving Kodály's pedagogical point to marvelous effect - a powerful connection to the music of your homeland leads to unmistakably incredible results.

On behalf of the Parkdale United Church Orchestra, we thank you for joining us on this European tour, and for your attendance throughout this season. We wish you a safe and happy summer, and hope to see you in the fall for another exciting season!

*Program notes by Vanessa Kraus*

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## John Kraus

### Music Director

John is an alumnus of the Western University, where he studied Music Education. He studied clarinet with Jerome Summers, Robert Riesling and Robert Sheffield and conducting with Jerome Summers, Morihiro Okabe and William Gordon.

As the founding director of the Durham Chamber Orchestra, the Lakeridge Philharmonic Youth

Orchestra, the former Music Director of the Clarington Concert Band, the current music director and conductor of the Northumberland Orchestra & Choir, and the new Music Director of the Parkdale Symphony Orchestra, Ottawa, John has worked in many different genres and with many local and international talents, including Mary Elizabeth Brown, Anastasia Rizikov, Adam Nelson, Quartetto Gelato, Molly Johnson and the Sultans of String. As a clarinetist John performs with the Lavender Chamber Ensemble and as a saxophonist John is a member of the Electric City Swing Band.

He has dedicated more than 30 years as an educator working with high school students from around the world, sharing his passion for music. He continues to work with students, professionals, and amateur adult musicians who may have entered the arena for the first time or who have returned to something that they began as youngsters, working with the Liftlock New Horizons organization, Peterborough and as an instructor at the Lakefield Summer Music Camp.

John is a member of the Ontario Music Educators Association and has led workshops on 'best practices', creativity and composition, and technology in the Music classroom across the province. He was a coach with the woodwind section and sectional conductor of the La Jeunesse Youth Orchestra, Port Hope. He regularly works with ensembles preparing for festivals and is a member of the Canadian Music Festival Adjudicators Association.

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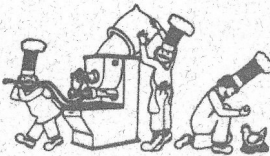


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## About the Parkdale Orchestra

The Parkdale United Church Orchestra is composed of music educators, and amateur and professional musicians with a wide range of experience. The roots of the orchestra date back to 1945 when Cliff Templer, Parkdale United Church organist and choir director, formed a small ensemble consisting of three violinists and a pianist to play at church services once a month. From this small group the orchestra has grown to its present size of about sixty musicians. Although the orchestra performs most frequently at Parkdale United Church, it has also performed at the Plant Recreation Centre, in Ottawa's Little Italy for Italian Week, in Wakefield, Quebec, and on Wellington St West for the 2022 WelliWOW Pop-Up Arts Performance Series. The Orchestra owes a great debt to Parkdale United Church for providing a venue for rehearsals and concerts. In return, the orchestra enjoys performing at occasional church services.

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## Acknowledgements

The Parkdale Orchestra thanks the Parkdale United Church for generously providing rehearsal and performance space, the Ontario Trillium Foundation for past financial aid, and Orchestras Canada for its support and guidance. We would like to express sincere appreciation to our sponsor Shelley Cecchetto of Strategic Real Estate Group. As well, we thank our Board members, numerous orchestra members and the front of house volunteers for helping to organize this concert.

*Program cover and concert poster by Don Monet*

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