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presents



Rockbridge Symphony

Mark Taylor, Artistic Director

Fall Concert

Saturday, October 25, 2014

7:30 p.m.

Lexington Presbyterian Church

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PROGRAM

Horn Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op. 11

Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)

Christy Schucker, horn

En Saga, Op. 9

Jean Sibelius
(1865-1957)

INTERMISSION

El Salón México¹

Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)

Sheep May Safely Graze

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Arr. Lucien Caillet

Suite from The Magnificent Seven²

Elmer Bernstein
(1922-2004)

¹By arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes

²By arrangement with Bernstein Concerts

UPCOMING CONCERTS

Saturday, February 28, 2015

7:30 p.m.

Wilson Hall, Washington & Lee

Saturday, May 9, 2015

7:30 p.m.

Trinity United Methodist Church

PERSONNEL

Violin I

Stephen Taylor,
Concertmaster
Deb Klein
Paula Zimmerman

Violin II

Laura Brodie, *Principal*
Sophie Brown
Linda Krantz
James Pannabecker

Viola

Dorothy Perkins,
Principal
Nancy Qubain
Michael R. Taylor

Cello

Barbara Walsh,
Principal
Emilie Davis
Julia Goudimova
Beth Wimer

Bass

Joe Bunts, *Principal*
John Leake

Piccolo

Courtney Diette
Christina Seegmiller

Flute

Launa Whitehead,
Principal
Courtney Diette
Christina Seegmiller

Oboe

Alissa Forbes, *Principal*
Brigid Donahue

Clarinet

John McClenon,
Principal
Roxey Bria

Bassoon

Robert Youngblood,
Principal
Jamie Rothe

French Horn

Christy Schucker,
Principal
Connie Bissett
Fred Rickett

Trumpet

Ashleigh Spice,
Principal
Carmen Bria
Warren Ramp

Trombone

Matthew Schucker,
Principal
Bob Conger
David Krantz

Tuba

Mark Swortzel

Percussion

Jack Bissett, *Principal*
Tim Harrison

ARTISTIC STAFF

Artistic Director Mark Taylor, a native of Southern California, began studying the piano at age five and violin at age seven. He started playing in orchestras at age eleven and began teaching the violin at age fifteen. He holds degrees from Brigham Young University and the University of Michigan. Mark has taught at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and Viterbo College and spent three years teaching orchestra classes in secondary public education. He is in his fifteenth year of directing the orchestra and teaching music theory, conducting, violin and viola at Southern Virginia University. This is his tenth year of directing the Rockbridge Symphony. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in orchestral conducting through James Madison University.

Christy Schucker, horn, is an active performer in the Shenandoah Valley and Central Virginia. A 2005 graduate of James Madison University, she participated in the Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Wind Symphony, Symphonic Band, Concert Band and the Marching Royal Dukes while earning her Bachelor's Degree in Music Education. She also received her Master's Degree in Arts and Curriculum from Virginia Tech. Christy currently participates in the Lynchburg Symphony, Rockbridge Symphony, University-Shenandoah Symphony Orchestra, Randolph College Chamber Orchestra and the Lexington Brass Quintet. She is also the high brass instructor at Washington and Lee University, and she teaches horn at Southern Virginia University. Christy studied under Wallace Easter of Virginia Tech and Abigail Pack at JMU. She was a middle school band teacher in Stafford County for two years and in Rockbridge County for six. Currently, she is a stay at home mom. In her free time, Christy enjoys exercising, cooking and spending time with her husband Matthew and their daughter, Ella.



PROGRAM NOTES

Horn Concerto No. 1, Op. 11

The son of a professional horn player, Richard Strauss composed the first of his two concertos for horn and orchestra in 1882, when he was only 18. His Horn Concerto No. 1, Op. 11, reportedly impressed and pleased his horn-playing father. Small wonder, for it features a virtuoso solo part that highlights both the heroic and lyrical aspects of the instrument. Strauss prefaces his concerto with a four-measure horn call, a solo that conjures up age-old associations between the instrument and hunting, the woods, and nature generally. This figure also provides the basis for the opening movement's initial theme, which soon blazes forth in the orchestra. The ensuing Andante provides a contemplative interlude, while the finale stands in the tradition of "hunting rondo" music cultivated by Haydn, Mozart (particularly in his horn concertos), and other Classical-period composers.

En Saga

One might think that music titled "A Saga", to translate Sibelius's title, would tell a particular story. Yet *En Saga* carries no specific narrative program; rather, it imparts merely the atmosphere of Nordic legend. Sibelius indicated that the music held personal meaning for him, but he declined to specify what this might be. Late in his life, the composer declared: "En saga is the expression of a state of mind. I had undergone a number of painful experiences at the time, and in no other work have I revealed myself so completely. It is for this reason that I find all literary explanations quite alien." The piece begins with an introductory passage in moderate tempo. Shimmering string sonorities, sustained horn tones, and a phrase in the woodwinds sounding like a primitive folk melody all contribute to a mythic impression. So, too, does a bardic theme, which sounds in the rich voice of the bassoons and, moments later, again in the horns. With its acceleration to a faster tempo, the music assumes a more dramatic character, though the rich orchestral fantasy that develops concludes, much as it began, in a quietly poetic manner.

El Salón México

El Salón México marks Copland's entrance into his populist phase, when he wanted to find a broader audience for contemporary music by using simpler harmonic melodies, often based on folk tunes, in a more accessible but still sophisticated manner. The work's genesis was a visit to Mexico in 1932, when composer Carlos Chávez brought Copland to a popular dance club called El Salón México. In creating this potpourri, Copland borrowed at least nine Mexican folk tunes from two collections he received during his trip. Most of the tunes use meters of 6/8 or 3/4 time, sometimes in alternation. Copland applied standard folk music practices throughout the work, such as harmonizations in parallel thirds and sixths, slides in pitch, clarinet cadenzas, string glissandos, and some call-and-response constructions.

PROGRAM NOTES

The work consists of an introduction and four major segments, alternating slow-fast-slow-fast. A trumpet solo, based on a tune called *El Mosco* follows the introduction. A slow "Mexican hat dance" segues into a lyrical, broad melody that ends with a repeated trumpet call, announcing the second, faster segment. This builds to a crashing close, followed by the so-called "siesta" section, introduced by a solo clarinet and violin. Lyrical, "sleepy" melodies alternate, followed by an insistent, rocking melody that gradually increases in tempo. The finale builds in rhythmic intensity and melodic complexity, when, as Copland writes, "I present the folk tunes simultaneously in their original keys and rhythms. The result is a kind of polytonality that achieves the frenetic whirl I had in mind before the end, when all is resolved with a plain unadorned triad."

Sheep May Safely Graze

This famous pastoral aria comes from Bach's secular cantata, *Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd* (The lively hunt is all my heart's desire), BWV #208 written in 1713. Bach was commissioned to write this cantata by his employer in Weimar, Duke Ernst, as a birthday present for his neighboring ruler, Duke Christian—hence it is also known as the "birthday cantata". The text of the aria praises Duke Christian's benevolent rule and characterizes him as a good shepherd; his protection of the people creates peace and harmony under his reign as personified by the lilting melody, even paced rhythm and triadic harmony. Later this shepherd-sheep relationship in the aria comes to take on the original Christian meaning of Jesus as a good shepherd taking care of His people.

Suite from The Magnificent Seven

The 1969 film *The Magnificent Seven* involves a complicated web of personal interactions occurring in the American west. Elmer Bernstein, one of the most successful of film score composers, was awarded one Oscar, one Emmy, and two Golden Globe awards. His effort for *The Magnificent Seven* underlines and gives energy to the story with a combination of restless, galloping rhythms surmounted by the memorable melody. So successful was the score that excerpts were used for the iconic Marlboro Man commercials. The suite sets out with the aggressive, syncopated opening that reminds one of Mexican musical rhythms. Then one finds oneself riding through the wide-open spaces evoked by the arching melodic curves that repeat up a step and return at the end to frame the suite. Throughout, the accompanying rhythms create an agitation that underlies the variety of memorable tunes.

—Compiled by Launa Whitehead

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