

Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

Concert Program



Sunday, October 30, 2016

4:00 P.M.

**Maplewood Middle School
7 Burnet Street
Maplewood, New Jersey**





This program is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts and administered by the Essex County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs.



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Orchestra October 2016

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

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Eugene Ehrlich
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Shirley Li
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Luba Schnable
Michael Schneider
Emilie Schwartz

VIOLA

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Peggy LaVake
Janet Poland
Peggy Reynolds
Loise Stine-Thomas

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Arnie Feldman
Megan Doherty
Helen Kong
Beth Platte
Jameson Platte
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James Buchanan
Matthew Hintz
Robert Whiteley

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Gail Berkshire

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Ashlen Udell*

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Alice Marcus

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John Cannizzaro*

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Theresa Hartman

BASS CLARINET

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David Olson*

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Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

Sunday, October 30, 2016
4:00 pm

PLEASE TURN OFF ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

“To Liberty and Justice”

Festival Overture on the American National Air

“The Star Spangled Banner”

Dudley Buck

Finlandia

Andante sostenuto
Alegretto moderato

Jean Sibelius

Lincoln Portrait

Aaron Copland

The Honorable Vic DeLuca, narrator

Intermission

Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67

Allegro con brio
Andante con moto
Allegro
Allegro

Ludwig van Beethoven

Next concert dates :

March 19, 2017 June 4, 2017

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Program Notes

by Stephen Culbertson

Dudley Buck (1839-1909): Festival Overture on the American National Air *The Star-Spangled Banner*

This work began as Concert Variations for Organ, then was orchestrated in 1879 and performed that year to celebrate Independence Day. Note the word “Air” in the title; The Star-Spangled Banner would not become our National Anthem until 1931.

Buck was an important figure in America in the late 19th Century (some obituaries called him *the most important*). He was a leader in developing our choral tradition as well as being a concert organist and faculty member of New England Conservatory.

On cue from the stage, please stand and sing!

O say can you see, by the dawn’s early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight’s last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
O’er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets’ red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;
O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957): Finlandia, Op. 26, No. 7

From 1809-1917, Finland was an “autonomous” Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire. And during this time, Finland’s autonomy allowed a nationalist movement, resulting in the exclusively spoken Finnish language being developed into a modern written language. The 1835 national epic *Kalevala* (which has striking structural similarities to our *Song of Hiawatha*) was the first written work in Finnish. Sibelius was one of the leaders of the Finnish nationalist movement, which also included a poet, a painter and other cultural figures. By 1899, the relationship with Russia had soured to the point where *Päivälehti* (Today’s Paper) was banned for three months. Under the cover of a raising money to fund the newspaper-men’s pension fund, Sibelius wrote

music for a set of historical tableaus that were first presented at the Swedish Theater in Helsinki on November 4. The last of these, *Finland Awakes!* didn't cause much of a stir at the time. Still, the title was deemed too inciting for the Russian censors; so a month later the music was performed in a symphony concert with the title simply *Finale* (of the set of tableaus). Though it is not based on specific folk melodies, it immediately captured the essence and character of Finnish nationalism. The Helsinki Philharmonic performed it (with a new title, *Finlandia*, suggested by a patron of Sibelius) at the Paris World Exhibition in early 1900. Ever since, the music has been a source of inspiration for Finns and others throughout the world.

Aaron Copland (1900-1991): Lincoln Portrait

Aaron Copland writes:

It was in January, 1942, that Andre Kostelanetz suggested the idea of my writing a musical portrait of a great American. He put teeth into the proposal by offering to commission such a piece, and to play it extensively. My first thought was to do a portrait of Walt Whitman, the patron poet of all American composers. But when Mr. Kostelanetz explained that the series of portraits he was planning already included a literary figure, I was persuaded to change it to a statesman. From that moment on the choice of Lincoln as my subject seemed inevitable.

On discussing my choice with Virgil Thomson [who wrote a whole series of "musical portraits," where the subject would sit in front of him and he would compose a piece of music, as if he was a painter], he amiably pointed out that no composer could possibly hope to match in musical terms the stature of so eminent a figure as that of Lincoln. Of course, he was quite right. But secretly I was hoping to avoid the difficulty by doing a portrait in which the sitter himself might speak. With the voice of Lincoln to help me I was ready to risk the impossible.

The letters and speeches of Lincoln supplied the text. It was a comparatively simple matter to choose a few excerpts that seemed particularly apposite to our own situation today. [a month after Pearl Harbor] I avoided the temptation to use only well-known passages, permitting myself the luxury of quoting only once from a world-famous speech. The order and arrangement of the selections are my own.

The first sketches were made in February, and the portrait finished on April 16th. The orchestra [sic] was completed a few weeks later. I worked with musical materials of my own, with the exception of two songs of the period: the famous *Camptown Races*, and a ballad that was first published in 1840 under the title *The Pesky Serpent*, but is better known today as *Springfield Mountain*. In neither case is the treatment a literal one. The tunes are used freely, in the manner of my use of cowboy sings in *Billy the Kid*.

The composition is roughly divided into three main sections. In the opening section I wanted to suggest something of the mysterious sense of fatality that surrounds Lincoln's personality. Also, near the end of that section, somethings of his gentleness and simplicity of spirit. The quick middle section briefly sketches in the background of the times he lived in. This merges into the concluding section where my sole purpose was to draw a simple but impressive frame about the words of Lincoln himself.

A Lincoln Portrait is dedicated to Andre Kostelanetz.

*An explanatory note by Andre Kostelanetz
(from the first performance of the set):*

This Gallery of Musical Portraits is a direct result of the momentous events of December, 1941. In the weeks that followed our entrance into the war, I gave a great deal of thought to the manner in which music could be employed to mirror the magnificent spirit of our country.

The greatness of a nation is expressed through its people, and those people who have achieved greatness are the logical subjects for a series of musical portraits.

I discussed the idea with three of our leading composers, and the result was A Lincoln Portrait by Aaron Copland, the Portrait for Orchestra of Mark Twain, by Jerome Kern, and the portrait of Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia, the fiery battler for honest civic government, by Virgil Thomson.

The qualities of courage, dignity, strength, simplicity, and humor, which are so characteristic of the American people are well represented in these three outstanding Americans.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1756-1827): Symphony No. 5, Op. 67

Although perhaps not as “radical” as his *Eroica* Symphony, Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, along with the *Eroica* and Ninth, remains a pillar of Western music. As early as 1810 (only 2 years after a less-than-ideal premiere; more about that below), the poet and critic E.T.A. Hoffmann described the symphony as “one of the most important works of the time.”

Getting back to the premiere, it took place at what we would call a marathon concert at Theater an der Wien in Vienna, directed by Beethoven. Composers at the time made much of their living putting on such concerts, hiring (or begging) musicians and charging admission to the audiences, who couldn’t wait to hear what this crazy guy was going to come up with next. The concert lasted over 4 hours, was presented after one rehearsal, and the Fifth didn’t even get top billing or a prominent spot in the program, which consisted of:

1. Symphony No. 6
2. *Ah, Perfido*, aria for soprano and orchestra
3. *Gloria* from Mass in C
4. Piano Concerto No. 4 (pianist and conductor: Beethoven)
intermission
5. Symphony No. 5
6. *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* from Mass in C
7. Piano improvisation by Beethoven (no doubt on themes suggested by the audience)
8. *Choral Fantasy*

Almost immediately after the first publication in 1810, the Fifth became a “standard”. The New York Philharmonic played it at its first concert in 1842, as did the National Symphony in 1931.

This symphony (or at least the opening motive) is arguably the most iconic piece of Western classical music in our culture. Volumes have been written about it, ranging from an alleged description by Beethoven’s student calling the opening “Fate knocking at the door” to the “V for Victory” symbol used during WWII. In the context of our program today, the central message of the work is struggle and triumph. The British musicologist John Eliot Gardiner has discovered that many of the themes Beethoven adapted for the symphony were originally songs from the French Revolution. Indeed, in the last movement, the whole orchestra is singing a hymn to liberty.

Victor De Luca
Mayor, Township of Maplewood

Mayor De Luca is serving his sixth, three-year term on the Maplewood Township Committee. For eleven of his 17 years in office, he has been elected as Mayor by his Township Committee colleagues.

He is a founding board member of NJ Citizen Action and has served on the board since 1982. He also is on the boards of the Springfield Avenue Partnership and Downtown New Jersey.

De Luca is the former President of the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation, which supports organizations working to change environmental, social, economic and political conditions to bring about a more just, equitable and sustainable world. He served on the boards of the Environmental Grantmakers Association, Philanthropy New York, and the Funders Network for Population, Reproductive Health and Rights.

A former VISTA Volunteer, De Luca was the director of the Ironbound Community Corporation, a Newark community-based organization.

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Stephen Culbertson

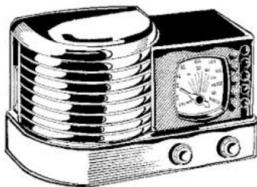
Conductor

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director for the Society of Musical Arts, has conducted over 35 orchestras, opera productions, and ballet companies, ranging from major to community level, in Europe and the United States. Major engagements include a Spoleto USA debut on the 20th-Century Perspective Series and a new production of Prokofiev's Cinderella for the San Joaquin Ballet in California. In recent seasons, Culbertson has appeared with the Montclair Chamber Orchestra and Orchestra Society of Philadelphia. He has served as Music Director of the Sussex County (New Jersey) Community Orchestra and Associate Conductor of the Bergen (New Jersey) Philharmonic Orchestra. With the latter two orchestras, he conceived and conducted a series of family concerts for the community to great acclaim. He served on the board of Unity Concerts of NJ and was its Artistic Director for the 2002-3 season. Culbertson's most recent activities include leading the New Jersey Reading Orchestra and serving as interim Music Director at the Presbyterian Church of Upper Montclair.

After graduating from University of the Pacific in his native California, Culbertson was awarded a scholarship to study at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki (Finland) with famed conducting teacher Jorma Panula. During his five-year stay, he studied the works of Sibelius with the composer's son-in-law, Jussi Jalas, and conducted most of Finland's major ensembles: The Finnish National Opera, the Helsinki Philharmonic, The Finnish Radio Orchestra, The Vaasa and Tampere Operas, and the Oulu Philharmonic. In addition to conducting, he gained valuable experience (not to mention much-needed income) by singing in a number of professional choruses, including the Finnish Radio Choir, Savonlinna Opera Chorus and the Helsinki Festival production of Britten's Church Parables.

Culbertson introduced Finnish audiences to works by Copland, S.R. Beckler, John Forsman and many others. He introduced local listeners to American music by writing a six-hour series of radio programs entitled A History of American Music for the Finnish Broadcast Corporation. As a guest conductor, Culbertson has worked for the Netherlands Opera and appeared in Czechoslovakia (with the Košice State Philharmonic), Italy, Hungary, and England. Culbertson has been a strong advocate of American music as both a conductor and a publisher. In 1993, he co-founded Subito Music Publishing and became its President in 1997. From 1987 to 1992, he was director of the rental and publications departments for G. Schirmer, Inc., where he supervised the music preparation of, among others, John Corigliano's opera The Ghosts of Versailles (for the Metropolitan Opera) and Symphony No. 1 (for the Chicago Symphony).

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Society of Musical Arts

who we are

The Society of Musical Arts (SOMA) was founded in 1981 by Dr. Samuel Applebaum, New Jersey's world famous master teacher of the violin. We are continuing Dr. Applebaum's objectives to provide an opportunity for both amateur and professional string musicians to play baroque and classical music in a chamber orchestra and to present free public concerts with multi-generational appeal to the residents of Essex and surrounding counties.

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Laura Paparatto, President



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