

Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

Concert Program



Sunday, October 20, 2019

3:00 P.M.

**JCC MetroWest's Maurice Levin Theater
760 Northfield Ave
West Orange, NJ 07052**

Orchestra October 2019

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

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Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

Sunday, October 20, 2019

3:00 pm

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Three Centuries of Great Music

For the Love of Brahms

**Johannes Brahms
arr. Don Sebesky**

1. Intermezzo in A Major, Op. 118, No 2

2. Ballade in G Minor, Op. 118, No 3

Cello Concerto No. 1 in C

Franz Joseph Haydn

Jameson Platte, Cello

~~~ Intermission ~~~

Cello Concerto (NJ premiere)

Stephen Albert

Jameson Platte, Cello

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Program Notes

by Stephen Culbertson

Brahms, arr. Sebesky: For the Love of Brahms

Brahms, of course, needs no introduction. One of the all-time immortals, his works have been loved by audiences for over a century. Along with the major symphonies and concertos, among our favorites are the short piano pieces. There are several sets (Op. 76, 116, 117, 118, 119) that contain some of the most sublime music I've ever heard or studied.

We're happy to have the world-renowned composer and arranger Don Sebesky (not incidentally a Maplewood resident) with us today as we present his tribute to Brahms. His settings remain true to the melody and harmony of the originals and (as he has said), are how Brahms himself would have orchestrated them. A remarkable truth that I've learned over the last 40+ years in the "music biz" is that the best and most successful composers in all genres including "non-classical" are often classically trained and have a great love of the classics.

Don Sebesky is one of the most respected composer-arrangers in music today. His sensitivity and versatility have enabled him to produce an enormous body of work wide in scope, that ranges from jazz to symphonic and pop, as well as film, television and the theatre. Through his collaborations with numerous artists including Chet Baker, Paul Desmond, Wes Montgomery, Freddie Hubbard, Milt Jackson, George Benson, Barbra Streisand, Tony Bennett, Christina Aguilera and Britney Spears, he has received 31 GRAMMY nominations (3-time winner), 3 Tony nominations (winner 2000), 2 Drama Desk Awards, 3 Emmy nominations and 4 Clio Awards.

As a composer, arranger and conductor, Sebesky has worked with such orchestras as the London Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Boston Pops, the New York Philharmonic, the Royal Philharmonic of London and the Toronto Symphony. His Broadway theatre credits include Porgy and Bess (London production by Trevor Nunn), Sinatra At the Palladium, Sweet Charity, Kiss Me Kate (2000 Tony Award), Bells Are Ringing, Flower Drum Song, Parade, The Life, Cyrano, The Goodbye Girl, Will Rogers Follies and Sinatra At Radio City.

Among his film credits are The Rosary Murders (starring Donald Sutherland), Hollow Image (starring Morgan Freeman), The Last of the Belles (starring Susan Sarandon), Let's Get Lost (starring Chet Baker, Best Documentary at the Cannes Film Festival), The People Next Door (starring Eli Wallach and Julie Harris) and Time Piece (Jim Henson Productions, Academy Award nomination for Best Short Subject). For television, Sebesky's

work has included Allegra's Window on Nickelodeon (Emmy nomination), The Edge of Night on ABC (Emmy nomination) and Guiding Light on CBS (Emmy nomination).

As a recording artist, Sebesky's work includes nine recordings under his own name, all of which were GRAMMY-nominated. Included are Giant Box, Rape of El Morro, Full Cycle, Moving Lines, Symphonic Sondheim, I Remember Bill (1999 GRAMMY Award), and Joyful Noise (winner of two GRAMMY Awards in 2000).

Sebesky has also created the music for many well-known commercials. Among the companies he has represented are: Corning (Clio Award), Hanes, Hallmark, Dodge Trucks, General Electric (Clio Award), Hershey's, Cheerios, Calvin Klein (Clio Award), Nike, Oil of Olay, Pepsi and Kodak.

Don Sebesky is the author of the best-selling orchestration text book, "The Contemporary Arranger."

Haydn (1732-1809): Cello Concerto No. 1 in C

Amazingly, this work was presumed lost from about 1765 until 1961. It has since become a staple of the cello concert repertoire. It is a very early work (contemporaneous with Symphonies 6, 7, 8 of his 100+). The most amazing thing about it is that the young Haydn wrote a totally idiomatic work (meaning: natural) for virtuoso cellists that was way beyond anything previously written, both in terms of form (classical sonata for emerging from the baroque concerto form) and technique for the cellist.

Stephen Albert (1941-1992): Cello Concerto (NJ premiere)

It was my great privilege to work with Stephen Albert as his editor and champion from the early 1980s until his untimely death in a car accident in 1992. Stephen was a leader of the "new-Romantic" movement of American composers, who broke from what they called the "academic" music of the 1940s-1970s to write music that is accessible to audiences (and orchestra players!). In past seasons, SOMA has played other works in this movement from Paul Moravec, Dan Locklair, Roberto Sierra, Robert Aldridge, Michael Abels, Nancy Galbraith and others.

Stephen Albert stunned the music world by winning the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1985 for his Symphony No. 1, and posthumously won a Grammy Award in 1995 for "Best Classical Contemporary Composition" for the cello concerto we present today in its New Jersey premiere.

Yo-Yo Ma (who premiered it) was helpful in turning the original commission (concept) for the work from a 15-minute orchestra piece to a 30-minute cello concerto. Several composers, including Aaron Kernis and Christopher Rouse have since dedicated works to their friend and colleague's memory.

The composer wrote:

Originally, with the fifteen-minute frame in mind, I thought to compose a piece for cello and orchestra in a single movement. But the music seemed to take its own shape: the four sections I had outlined began to break apart, and the concept grew from a single movement to four, with the second and third directly connected. Also, the concerto's duration expanded to approximately 30 minutes.

The first movement serves as an exposition of three themes, all three of which are introduced by the cello. The cello alone opens the concerto with an angular theme that embraces major, minor, and chromatic elements at once; it is the 'mother theme' for the two that follow. After a sudden outburst of sound in the brass and woodwinds, broken by sweeping scales in the strings, the orchestra settles down to drone-like underpinnings for the second theme, a quieter one in minor, characterized by small-spaced intervals. It is interrupted by the appearance of the third theme, which is also quiet but has a major-key character and is more triadic and spread-out. The third theme is then taken up by the flutes, and finally by the horns and the entire orchestra, until the second theme suddenly returns in the cello to complete the movement.

The second movement is basically a scherzo development of the first, very fast, with a slower middle section. The third movement, which follows without pause, is the second development of the opening movement, in ABA form. It is in moderate tempo, more lyrical in character, building to a cadenza which is followed by a quiet close on the movement's opening material.

The final movement is in the nature of a continuation of the second, as if the second movement had been merely interrupted by the third. For about the first two-thirds, this movement is a modified rondo; then a very brief recapitulation reverts to the character of the first movement, whose themes are brought together before the work ends in a brief, fast finale.

Meet our Soloist

Jameson Platte, Cellist

Cellist Jameson Platte maintains an active career both as a performer and a teacher. He is currently a member of the critically acclaimed Duo 92 with pianist/composer Matthew Quayle, the Omega Trio, principal cellist of the The Orchestra of Northern New York, The Plainfield Symphony, Bachanalia Virtuosi, Chelsea Opera, Garden State Philharmonic and assistant principal of the Allentown Symphony. As faculty at Skidmore College, he teaches cello and chamber music. Mr. Platte works extensively as a clinician, guest conductor and cello coach, performs as a soloist and maintains a large private studio. He is in constant demand as a guest principal cellist throughout the northeast. A frequent recitalist in New York City, he has been featured in Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Lincoln Center and the 92nd St. Y, among others. His recitals have been heard throughout North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Mr. Platte is Artist/Faculty at the Atlantic Music Festival.



Mr. Platte attended the Brevard Music Festival as a teaching assistant where he won the concerto contest. He also attended the Blossom Chamber Music Festival where he played principal cello under Leonard Slatkin. Mr. Platte has been a member of the Tuscaloosa Symphony (under Louis Lane), the Alabama Symphony and the Huntsville Symphony. He has recently been a featured soloist with the Allentown Symphony, Glens Falls Symphony, Maplewood Society of Musical Arts Orchestra, Central Jersey Symphony, Monmouth Symphony, Plainfield Symphony, Bachanalia Virtuosi and the Stokes Forest Festival Orchestra, among others. Recent international residencies have included performances in China, Korea, Germany, Italy and the United Arab Emirates. His recordings of contemporary music may be heard under the Koch International, Seedmusic, Naxos and Albany labels. Mr. Platte's principal teacher was Carlton McCreery; he has also pursued studies with such teachers as Lynn Harrell, Mstislav Rostropovich, Harvey Shapiro and Anner Bylsma.

Mr. Platte plays on cellos by Hannibal Fagnola (1925) and Andrea Amati (1572) as well as bows by François Xavier Tourte and Dominique Peccatte.

SOMA has made a special donation to the Maplewood Library Foundation in honor of the late Carol Buchanan, who has been a long-time Maplewood resident and advocate, and whose husband James is a dedicated and long time multitasking musician (bassist, cellist, tubist) with SOMA.

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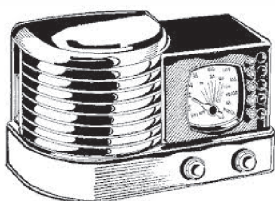
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Conductor



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 was recently named Artistic Director and Conductor of the Ridgewood Symphony.

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 Papparatto, President



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