

# **Society of Musical Arts**

**Stephen Culbertson, Music Director**

## ***Concert Program***



**Sunday, March 6, 2022**

**4:00 P.M.**

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
414 East Broad Street  
Westfield, NJ 07090**

# Orchestra March 2022

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

## FIRST VIOLIN

Susan Heerema\*  
Concert Master  
Barbara Brandyberry  
Faye Darack  
Kelly Estrada  
Kelley Fahey  
Deirdre Pasquarelli  
Emily Reinhard

## SECOND VIOLIN

Lillian Kessler\*  
Eugene Ehrlich  
Shirley Li  
David Martin  
David Rimelis  
Michael Schneider  
Luba Schnable-Ungar

## VIOLA

Roland Hutchinson\*  
Lily Platte  
Janet Poland  
Peggy Reynolds  
Paul Washington

## CELLO

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James Celestino  
Arnie Feldman  
Helen Kong  
Jameson Platte  
Ben Rabunski

## BASS

Maria Ogorek\*  
Matthew Hintz  
Claire Lisanti

## FLUTE

Laura Papparatto\*  
Gail Berkshire

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Gail Berkshire\*

## OBOE

Richard Franke\*  
Alice Marcus

## ENGLISH HORN

Molly Raum\*

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Jonathan Lautman\*  
Theresa Hartman

## BASS CLARINET

Casey Raynis

## BASSOON

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Robert Ciocco

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Dana Bassett  
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Darrell Frydlewicz  
Bob Ventimiglia

## TROMBONE

Jay Shanman\*  
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Adam Smith\*

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Helen Felts\*

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David Rimelis\*

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Evan Chertok\*

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Kevin Grzybek\*

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Rich Silverstein\*

\* Principal

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# **Society of Musical Arts**

**Stephen Culbertson, Conductor**

**Sunday, March 6, 2022**

**4:00 pm**

**PLEASE TURN OFF ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

## ***New Beginnings***

**Serenade to Music**

**Ralph Vaughan Williams**

**1872-1958**

Susan Heerema, Violin  
Sixteen solo singers (see page 5)

**Suite from *The River***

**Virgil Thomson**

**1896-1989**

**~~~ Intermission ~~~**

**Federal Overture**

**Benjamin Carr**

**1768-1831**

**Rhapsody in Blue**

**George Gershwin**

Score by Ferde Grofé

**1898-1937**

Matthew Culbertson, Piano

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# Meet our Soloists

## SOPRANO

Samantha Blosssey  
Julia Fernandez  
Karen Merchant  
Stacia Thiel

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Jeremy Blosssey  
Jameson Platte  
Cameron Smith  
Craig Vandenberg

## ALTO

Caroline Hackett  
Nancy Murray  
Julie Platte  
Denise Silecchia

## BASS

Stephen Bryant  
Kevin Moore  
David Murray  
Carl Santiago

## Serenade to Music

from *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!  
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music  
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.  
Look, how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:  
There's not the smallest orb that thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.  
Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn:  
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,  
And draw her home with music.  
I am never merry when I hear sweet music.  
The reason is, your spirits are attentive:  
The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;  
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,  
And his affections dark as Erebus:  
Let no such man be trusted... Music! hark!  
It is your music of the house.  
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.  
Silence bestows that virtue on it.  
How many things by season season'd are.  
To their right praise and true perfection!  
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion,  
And would not be awak'd.  
(Soft stillness and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.)

# Meet our Soloists

## Susan Heerema, violin

Ms. Susan Heerema, performing as violin soloist since age 9 and Concertmaster since age 11, graduated the Juilliard School of Music in 1992 (BM) under the tutelage of Dorothy DeLay, Hyo Kang, and Richard Simon. She maintains an active career as Soloist and Concertmaster for the Spectrum Symphony of NY, Society of Musical Arts, Long Island Concert, Amor Artis, and the MidAtlantic Opera. She has performed all the various opera repertoire with conductors Brian Garman, Joel Revzen, Anton Coppola, Kathy Kelly, and Alfredo Silipigni. She has been the personnel manager of numerous orchestras and for nine years, Ms. Heerema was Berkshire Opera's Personnel Manager, music librarian, and housing and hiring all musicians.



Ms. Heerema has played under the baton of Rostropovich, Rampal, and Menuhin in France; toured Norway, Iceland and Scotland; performed with the Spoleto and Sarasota Opera Festivals, and with every major Baroque festival in the U.S. She has been both choral and orchestral director and on orchestral tours such as Concertmaster for the Phantom of the Opera national tour. Ms. Heerema has also performed on various TV shows including soap operas, David Letterman, Conan O'Brien with celebrities such as U2, Doc Severnson, Matchbox Twenty VH1, and Blackstreet MTV Unplugged.

She has recorded on labels for artists such as Vanessa Williams, Aretha Franklin, Tony Bennet and Brian Stokes Mitchell. Susan served as contractor and Concertmaster for "Prayers for America," the memorial services for the victims of September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks held at both the Yankee Stadium and St. Patrick's Cathedral. Most recently, Ms. Heerema performed Vivaldi's Solo Violin "Winter" Concerto with the Tagkhanic Orchestra and Chorus on December 11 and 12, 2021.

Ms. Heerema will perform the Mendelssohn *Violin Concerto* at SOMA's fall opening concert in 2022.

She plays on a 1906 Romeo Antoniazzi violin. For the last 19 years, Ms. Heerema teaches AP Music Theory, and is Director of Music for both the Indian Hills Chamber Choir and Concert Choir and the String Orchestra of Indian Hills Regional High School in Oakland, NJ.

## Meet our Soloists

### Matthew Culbertson, piano

Whether drawing from works of classical literature, harmonic innovations of jazz, or the intricacies of contemporary music, Matthew Culbertson aims to take his listeners, students, and colleagues on a compelling musical journey. Mr. Culbertson's overarching goal is to bring beautiful and exciting works, both old and new, to students and wider audiences. Growing up surrounded by prominent musicians, teachers, composers/arrangers, and publishers, Matthew recognized the versatility and discipline that it takes to become a successful musician at a young age. He was privileged to study with wonderful teachers, conductors, and incredible musicians from the age of 8. Ms. Karen Merchant was Matthew's first teacher and continues to be an important mentor. She encouraged him to express emotions and add his own interpretations. Mr. Culbertson accompanied bands, musicals, and choirs, church services, and learned other instruments for ensembles and orchestras. He was fortunate to spend summers in intensive study at Camp Encore/Coda in Maine, where he worked with distinguished pianists Andrei Baumann (Rivers School Conservatory), Cole Burger (Bowling Green State University), Jamie Saltman (Brookline, MA, Camp Director), as well as other notable musicians Paul Jones, and Kevin Norton.



Mr. Culbertson received his Bachelors' Degree in Music from the John J. Cali School at Montclair State University where he studied primarily from Dr. Lisa Yui. He participated in Masterclasses and Workshops with the late Walter Hautzig, and Dorothy Taubman, as well as Olegna Fuchsi, Vadim Monastyrski, Steven Ryan, Wu Han, and David Witten. While at Montclair, Matthew also had the privilege of attending the Juilliard Evening Division and performing regularly under the supervision of David Dubal. At Montclair, Matthew took his skills and artistry to a new level. While learning aspects of "body-mapping," through the Alexander technique and the Franklin method, Matthew improved his personal awareness and learned to perceive himself as an artist and creator, rather than an "interpreter" or "portrayer of other peoples' music."

Mr. Culbertson had the chance to work in the publishing industry as a librarian, engraver and editor, primarily as an employee of Subito Music Corporation. Mr. Culbertson has learned the legal and professional standards of the music industry, especially in terms of modern music, which has derived an inspiration for contemporary works, as evident in his world premiere of Roberto Sierra's *Piezas Seltas No. 6* in December of 2017.

Matthew has just completed his Masters in Music and is returning to complete a Professional Studies Certificate at the Boyer School of Music at Temple University studying under Dr. Charles Abramovic. While maintaining a studio of 20 students, Matthew exposes his students and peers to a wide variety of styles in different settings throughout the Philadelphia area.

## Program Notes

by Stephen Culbertson and Matthew Culbertson

Vaughan Williams *Serenade to Music* was composed in 1938. The text is an adaptation of the discussion about music in Act IV, Scene 1 of *The Merchant of Venice*. The original version (being performed today) was composed for the voices of 16 eminent British singers (chosen by Sir Henry Wood, who conducted the premiere, and the composer). Each soloist has a short solo and all sing together as a “choir” in the climactic passages.

Vaughan Williams realized the difficulty of assembling so many soloists and made arrangements for 4 soloists, choir and orchestra as well as orchestra alone. The latter version really doesn't work at all; this is a case where the words are at least as important as the music. The sheer beauty of the words, combined with the lush harmonies of Vaughan Williams, make this short work a memorable one. The first time I heard this work “live” (mid-70s) with all solo voices: the sound was unforgettable. I hope we can recreate it today.

—SC

It's difficult to pigeon-hole Virgil Thomson (1896-1989). In his early years (1925-1940) he was a fixture of “Paris in the Twenties”, including the obligatory study with Nadia Boulanger and hanging out with French composers (Milhaud, Poulenc, et al.), Gertrude Stein, Pare Lorentz and many other personalities.

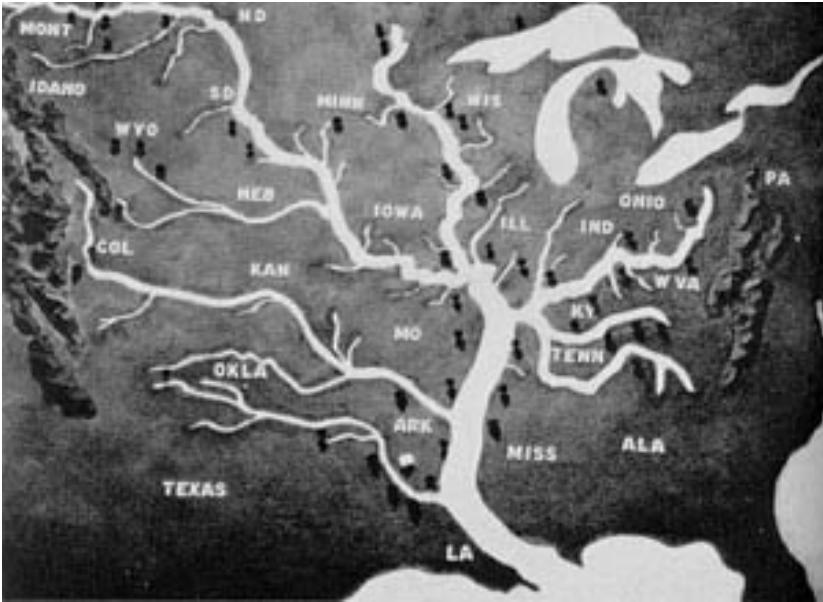
Lorentz and Thomson collaborated on two documentaries made to raise awareness about the New Deal: *The Plow That Broke the Plains* for the US Resettlement Administration in 1936, and *The River* for the US Farm Security Administration in 1938. He wrote music for a 3<sup>rd</sup> docufiction film, *Louisiana Story*, directed by Robert J. Flaherty, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1949 (the first Pulitzer given to a film score).

After returning to New York in 1940, Thomson wrote an influential book, *The State of Music*, and was also a music critic for the New York Herald-Tribune. He was something of a rival of Aaron Copland, although they remained on good terms.

# Program Notes

Thomson's music has been described, at various times, as modernist, neoromantic, and neoclassical. Many of his works incorporate hymn-tunes, popular- and folk-melodies and other devices to make it sound "folksy", as well as "wrong-note harmony" to make it sound "modern". Both are in evidence in *The River*.

Getting back to the suite from the film score (although pretty much all of the music he wrote for the film made its way into the suite): it follows the progression of the film's narration closely. It is in four movements and was inspired by a map that hung in the office of the Secretary of Agriculture tracing the path of the tributaries that merge together to form the Mississippi River.



1. The Old South—describes the importance of the river in the development of the US expansion westward. Includes a “roll call” of all the tributaries.
2. Industrial Expansion in the Mississippi—shows the overuse of the river in logging and other operations as well as the downside to urban sprawl along the banks.



## Program Notes

3. Soil Erosion and Floods—vast amounts of soil eroded the river basin and were deposited in the Gulf of Mexico, causing famine, dust storms and eventual abandonment, leading to further migration westward.

4. Finale—More modern management techniques (such as the Tennessee Valley Authority) demonstrate that the river and land around it can be revived and maintained. This was a somewhat controversial viewpoint at the time.

Aaron Copland called Thomson's score "a lesson in how to treat Americana". Others called the film a "landmark" work, breaking new ground in marrying the imagery, music and poetic free verse (i.e., the narration). One nearly-unique (and rather quaint) feature of the score is the use of the banjo in the first movement.

—SC

Benjamin Carr (1768-1831, making him a near-contemporary of Beethoven), was an American composer, singer, teacher and music publisher. He was born in London and studied organ with Charles Wesley (author of thousands of hymn and leader of the Methodist movement).

He emigrated to Philadelphia in 1793, and eventually was known as "the father of Philadelphia Music". His best-known work is **Federal Overture** (1794), composed for the theater. It is a *Medley Overture*, a form he had used before emigrating to America. Not much development of material; just familiar tunes of the day pieced together with sometimes-interesting bridge material.

Interestingly, these works were often patriotic in nature, and we see by the date of the composition that America was in the midst of a power struggle between the Federalists (Adams and Hamilton) and the Republicans (Jefferson and Madison). This would explain the inclusion of songs that crossed party lines. Anyway, the audience would have immediately recognized the tunes: Yankee Doodle, Marseilles March, Ça ira, Oh dear what can the matter be, Irish Washerwoman, Rose Tree, La Carmagnole, President's March and a return to Yanke Doodle.

## Program Notes

The only surviving material for Federal Overture is a piano reduction, although contemporary accounts describe a rather large classical orchestra. This reconstruction (he calls it a “paraphrase”) is by Romulus Franceschini.

—SC

George Gershwin’s *Rhapsody In Blue* is objectively a legendary work in the canon. Since its inception, *Rhapsody in Blue* is one of the most marketable and presentable works in American history, perhaps in music history. As surprising as it was to Gershwin, the commission and his association with Paul Whiteman and his band drew quite a bit of excitement in New York prior to its premiere, and in the American musical scene for quite some time thereafter. “The story of the actual construction of the Rhapsody grew in the telling and retelling,” and the 5+ published versions, as well as the eventual acceptance of jazz *academically*, and in mainstream music culture, give way to a variety of interpretations. *Rhapsody in Blue* was the first and most lucrative commercially licensed works in music history (e.g., United Airlines).

The reach and influence of the Rhapsody is evident in how much the work has changed and evolved since its inception. Part of a 1924 program titled *An Experiment in Modern Music*, the composers and musicians of this concert had extraordinary versatility and ability to adapt to different styles. At its premiere, *Rhapsody in Blue* was programmed alongside works by Victor Herbert and Ferde Grofé, and performances by Dick Hyman and Zez Confrey. Within the range of these artists, along with the social inequality and diversity in the US during the 1920s, came the question, *what is American music?*

At this time, the United States was not only becoming more diverse, but society was beginning to accept the characteristics of diversity and inclusion as strengths rather than weaknesses. *Rhapsody in Blue* incorporates styles of early jazz and popular

## Program Notes

music rarely seen in concert halls at the time and includes sounds of the American Industrial Revolution, as many scholars have portrayed the isorhythms (repeated rhythmic patterns) as reminiscent of a moving train or the bustling sounds of a busy New York City.

Throughout his career, Gershwin was seen in different lights by different artists. Gershwin's wide range of styles and genres made his contemporaries wonder whether he wanted to be a concert composer, a popular songwriter, or both. They concluded there was a lack of form in Gershwin's composing. Gershwin however, wrote of his own intentions, possibly justifying any lack of structure:

There had been so much chatter about the limitations of jazz, not to speak of the manifest misunderstanding of its function. Jazz, they said, has to be in strict time... I resolved, if possible, to kill that misconception with one sturdy blow. Inspired by this aim I set to work composing with unwonted rapidity. No set plan was in my mind – no structure to which my music would conform. The rhapsody, as you see, began as a purpose, not a plan.

Nevertheless, composing “the famed *Rhapsody in Blue*, a jazz concerto constructed after Liszt,” earned Gershwin the front page title of *Time* magazine. Gershwin soon became America's premiere composer and one of the most sought after composers and pianists in the world. Although the work was met with both enthusiastic praise and harsh criticism, Gershwin's career exploded.

—MC

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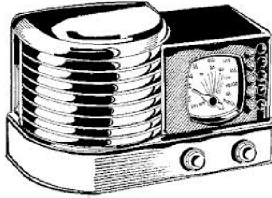
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## Stephen Culbertson

### *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 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**

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*Laura Papparatto*, President



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