

Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

Concert Program



Sunday, March 1, 2020

4:00 P.M.

**Prospect Presbyterian Church
646 Prospect Street
Maplewood, NJ 07040**

Orchestra October 2020

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

FIRST VIOLIN

Susan Heerema*
Concert Master
Dan Daniels
Faye Darack
Heather Fitzpatrick
Mira Franke
Deirdre Pasquarelli
Emily Reinhard
Lubova Schnable-Ungar
Len Tobias
Rich Waldmann

SECOND VIOLIN

Lillian Kessler*
Barbara Bivin
Barbara Brandyberry
Eugene Ehrlich
Kelly Estrada
Kelley Fahey
Ken Kalmanson
Shirley Li
Michael Schneider
Emilie Schwartz
Marge Solomon

VIOLA

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Harry Berkshire
Ellen Hill
Katherine Kolibas
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Lily Platte
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Ken Bannerman
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Lynn Grice*

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HARP

Patricia Turse*

TIMPANI

Joe Whitfield*

PERCUSSION

Brian McKinley

* Principal

Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

Sunday, March 1, 2020

4:00 pm

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A Vocal Sandwich

Coriolan Overture

Ludwig van Beethoven
1770-1827

Seven Biblical Songs, from Op. 99

Nos. 1,3,4,5,6,8,10

Antonin Dvořák
1841-1904

John-Andrew Fernandez, Baritone

~~~ Intermission ~~~

Knoxville: Summer of 1915

Samuel Barber
1910-1981

Stacia Thiel, Soprano

Symphony No. 8

Allegro vivace e con brio

Allegretto scherzando

Tempo de Menuetto

Allegro vivace

Ludwig van Beethoven
1770-1827

Please join us for our next concert

Sunday June 7, 2020 at 4 pm

Prospect Presbyterian Church

646 Prospect Street

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Mark your calendars, and see you there!

Program Notes

by Stephen Culbertson

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) Overture to Collin's Tragedy *Coriolan*, Op. 62 Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93

SOMA joins virtually every orchestra in the world in 2020, celebrating the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth. We hope to celebrate some of his lesser-known masterpieces this year as well as your favorites.

One might assume that the *Coriolan* Overture was drawn from Shakespeare's play. On the contrary, as the full title above states, Beethoven's overture was based on a tragedy about the semi-legendary figure by the Viennese author Heinrich Joseph von Collin (1771-1811). The two main themes represent (1) Coriolanus' the victorious general, and (2) his mother's entreaties to make peace. In Shakespeare, Coriolanus is murdered by a fellow soldier for his betrayal of Rome. In von Collin's story, he commits suicide at the gates of the city he has betrayed. We do not know the fate of the actual Coriolanus — although at the risk of a revisionist version — Beethoven's ending does leave the matter somewhat in doubt, doesn't it?

After Beethoven's "monumental" power and length of symphonies 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, audiences found the 8th something of a letdown. It was misunderstood from the beginning, and history has often shown that contemporary audiences don't "get" new works or ideas. We now can see that its modest dimensions are its genius. The two opening phrases (which we would now characterize as "call and response") only take up only four measures, but they are in exact proportion to the overall structure of the movement. The lyrical second theme seems to come out of nowhere. The buildup to the recapitulation of the opening theme(s) is one of Beethoven's best. This is followed by a coda that tells us we're way beyond Mozart and Haydn, in spite of the aforementioned modest classical dimensions.

Just after we got used to Beethoven's long and profound slow movements, next is a whimsical interlude. As if he is saying "not so fast, I can be fun, too."

This feeling continues throughout the remainder of the symphony. The predictable "scherzo movement" found in the previous symphonies is not a scherzo at all, but a faster version of the old-world minuet, albeit with Beethovenian offbeats/syncopations.

The last movement is probably the funniest piece that Beethoven ever wrote (to musicians who have studied common-practice form and harmony). Without going into the technical details, I think everyone can appreciate its unexpected weirdness. Like, where did that chord come from? Now we're off to the races! Beethoven (thanks to the trumpets, who couldn't play in those weird keys in the 1800s) eventually gets us back to F Major and hammers it home. On to the 9th Symphony!

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) **Seven Biblical Songs, Op. 99**

Dvořák composed 10 Biblical Songs while he was living in New York in 1894. He selected passages from the Psalms as found in the 16th Century Czech Bible of Kralice. He also carefully went through the English and German translations to make sure they fit his vocal lines. That explains why some of the passages are not exactly what one would find in any English version of the Bible. Originally for low voice and piano, Dvořák orchestrated the first five songs and conducted the premiere in 1896 with the Czech Philharmonic. Later that year he performed the set in London.

I. Psalm 97: 2-6, Andantino.

Darkness and thunder clouds are round about Him.

Judgment is His abode. Righteousness His throne.

Fire and flame He doth send,

His enemies destroyeth in lightning and thunder.

And through the world His stormy lightning flashed

Earth saw and trembled. Tremblingly replete on His word.

Mountains melt like wax when they behold the Lord,
Who is God of earth and heaven, when the Mighty One cometh.
The heav'ns declare His righteousness and the earth his glory.

III. Psalm 55:1-2, 4-8, Andante

Hear oh hear my prayer, Lord my God
And hide not Thyself from my entreaty.
Hear my prayer, oh hear my prayer.
To the voice of my mourning give ear.
Oh Lord, hear my prayer. Pained and sore is my heart,
The fear of death lies heavy upon me and terror has overtaken me.
And thus I spoke: Oh, had I wings like a silver dove,
I would fly far away and be at rest. Ah, far would I fly and rest me.
The wilderness my home would I make.
I would escape far from the stormwinds, tempest or the fear of death.

IV. Psalm 23:1-4, Andante

Oh my shepherd is the Lord,
I shall not want, shall want for nothing.
In the soft pastures green, and beside waters clear He leadeth me.
He restoreth my soul, leadeth me in the paths
Where I shall glorify His name.
Even though I must walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear, shall fear no evil, for Thou art with me.
And Thy rod and Thy staff, they shall comfort me.

V. Psalm 144:9, Psalm 145:1-3, 5-6, Risoluto, maestoso

Songs of gladness will I sing Thee,
Telling Thy praises on a psaltery.
Oh, let my song find favor in Thine eyes.
I will delight in exalting Thee.
Every day will I bless Thy name, and I shall sing to my Savior.
Lord my God, Thou art all my delight, And great is Thy mercy.
And who shall declare all Thy greatness and Thy Glory?
Oh, glory and honor to Thee and to Thy works.
Thy judgment my song shall extol, and praise Thy mercy.
Yea, men shall tell of Thy great power and love
and Thy wondrous insight.

And I shall loudly sing of Thy glory and Thy deeds.

VI. Psalm 61:1, 3-4, Psalm 63:1, 4-5, Andante

Hear, O Lord, my bitter cry, Lend Thine ear unto my prayer.

For Thou hast ever been my fort and shield.

And Thou shalt trample upon the dread enemy.

Let me dwell with Thee, Lord, for evermore with Thee.

Hide me, oh Lord, within Thy wings.

Lord! Thou art my tower of strength, Lord, I will seek Thee early

My soul thirsteth after Thee and my flesh longeth after Thee

in a dry and thirsty barren land. Where is no water.

And thus I will glorify and bless Thee and lift my hands in prayer

and in adoration, singing Thy praises ever.

VIII. Psalm 25:16-18, 20, Andante

Oh, Lord, have mercy and turn Thou Thy face to me

for my soul is desolate and sore distressed.

The troubles of my heart lie heavy upon me.

From my distress save me, Lord. From my distress save me, Lord.

Have mercy on me. Look on my distress and my pain

And forgive me my heavy sins.

Oh Lord, my soul deliver, let me not be ashamed, not be ashamed,

For I trust in Thee, for I trust in Thee, Lord!

X. Psalm 98:1, 4-5, 7-8, Psalm 96:11-12, Allegro moderato

Oh, sing unto the Lord a joyful song.

He with His right hand bringeth victory.

Make a joyful noise to greet Him. Oh earth rejoice and give praise,

Roar, sea, and the fullness of thee.

The swelling earth and they that dwell there.

Flood shall clap their hands, hills be joyful,

Praising the Lord and all His wonders!

Dance, ye fields of golden corn.

Let the woods and forests sing the praises of the Lord!

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)
Knoxville: Summer of 1915

The author, James Agee, wrote:

We are talking now of summer evenings in Knoxville, Tennessee in the time that I lived there so successfully disguised to myself as a child.

Barber later discovered that he and Agee were the same age (~5 years old in 1915) after reading Agee's prose-poem (likely an improvisation for *A Death in the Family*. Agee is also famous for *The African Queen*, *Night of the Hunter*, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*).

Barber wrote:

I had always admired Mr. Agee's writing and this prose-poem particularly struck me because the summer evening he describes in his native southern town reminded me so much of similar evenings when I was a child at home [West Chester, PA].

Barber took the prose text, divided it into poetic lines, and set his "poem" into music. That explains how the musical setting sounds like a poem, although the text below is clearly prose.

The work was originally intended for the great American soprano Eleanor Steber (who Barber first thought had a voice "too small"). And in fact, she did the premiere in 1948. Barber could not attend the premiere (he was busy at the American Academy in Rome in the post-WWII era). Steber eventually created the role of Barber's opera *Vanessa* at the Metropolitan Opera in the 1950s. Since then, *Knoxville* has become one of the great American vocal works, performed by a variety of singers.

The text:

...It has become that time of evening when people sit on their porches, rocking gently and talking gently and watching the street and the standing up into their sphere of possession of the trees, of birds' hung havens, hangars. People go by; things go by. A horse, drawing a buggy, breaking his hollow iron music on the asphalt: a loud auto: a quiet auto: people in pairs, not in a hurry, scuffling, switching their weight of aestival body, talking casually, the taste hovering over them of vanilla, strawberry, pasteboard and starched milk, the image upon them of lovers and horsemen, squared with clowns in hueless amber.

A streetcar raising its iron moan; stopping, belling and starting; stertorous; rousing and raising again its iron increasing moan and swimming its gold windows and straw seats on past and past and past, the bleak spark crackling and cursing above it like a small malignant spirit set to dog its tracks; the iron whine rises on rising speed; still risen, faints; halts; the faint stinging bell; rises again, still fainter, fainting, lifting, lifts, faints foregone: forgotten. Now is the night one blue dew

Now is the night one blue dew, my father has drained, he has coiled the hose.

Low on the length of lawns, a frailing of fire who breathes...

Parents on porches: rock and rock. From damp strings morning glories hang their ancient faces.

The dry and exalted noise of the locusts from all the air at once enchants my eardrums.

On the rough wet grass of the back yard my father and mother have spread quilts. We all lie there, my mother, my father, my uncle, my aunt, and I too am lying there... They are not talking much, and the talk is quiet, of nothing in particular, of nothing at all. The stars are wide and alive, they seem each like a smile of great sweetness, and they seem very near. All my people are larger bodies than mine,... with voices gentle and meaningless like the voices of sleeping birds.

One is an artist, he is living at home. One is a musician, she is living at home. One is my mother who is good to me. One is my father who is good to me... By some chance, here they are, all on this earth; and who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth, lying, on quilts, on the grass, in a summer evening, among the sounds of the night... May God bless my people, my uncle, my aunt, my mother, my good father, oh, remember them kindly in their time of trouble; and in the hour of their taking away

After a little I am taken in and put to bed. Sleep, soft smiling, draws me unto her: and those receive me, who quietly treat me, as one familiar and well-beloved in that home: but will not, oh, will not, not now, not ever; but will not ever tell me who I am.

Meet our Soloists

John-Andrew Fernandez, Baritone

Baritone John-Andrew Fernandez has appeared on opera and concert stages across the USA, Europe and Asia. Recent engagements include the role of Padre Damaso in *Noli Me Tangere* at the Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C., and at the National Theater of the Philippines, Marcello in *La Bohème* with the Missouri Symphony, excerpts from *Die tote Stadt* with the Philadelphia Orchestra, appearances at the Martina Arroyo Gala NYC, and on national television for the Kennedy Center Awards and concert performances in Dornstetten, Germany. Other highlights include Prospero in *La Tempesta* and Leonte in *Il racconto d'inverno* at the Teatro Avvaloranti, Italy, Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* with the Newtown Orchestra, Tonio in *I Pagliacci* for Eastern Opera, and *Die schöne Müllerin* for the Harrisburg Chamber Series, Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore* with Swarthmore Opera, Silvio in *I Pagliacci* with Knoxville Opera, Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Schanard in *La Bohème* for Winter Opera St. Louis, Falke in *Die Fledermaus* for Geneva Opera, Figaro (cr) and Fiorello in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for Bel Canto at Caramoor, Dancairo in *Carmen* and Schlemihl in *Les Contes d'Hoffman* for St. Petersbrug Opera, Giuseppe in *The Gondoliers* for Light Opera of New Jersey, Schicchi, in *Gianni Schicchi* for the Martina Arroyo Foundation, Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas* for Pineda Lyric Opera, Faiz in *Thumbprint* for Opera Ithaca and the Swordsman Tajomaru in *In a Grove* for the ArtYard Theater. As an oratorio singer Fernandez is regularly featured in Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Händel's *Messiah*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and particularly Fauré's *Requiem*, with over 40 performances of the work to date. An accomplished recitalist, he is widely sought after for concert series around the country and internationally, including the Delaware Chamber Music Festival, The QuietSide Chamber Music Series, Golden Age Recitals, Canal Walk Series, and in concert performances in St. Louis, Philadelphia, New York City, St. Petersburg, Siena, Florence, and Rome. An active participant in the development of new music, Fernandez has debuted leading roles in seven operatic world premieres, notably for International Opera, Italy.




Meet our Soloists

Stacia Thiel, Soprano

Born into a family of musicians in rural Wisconsin, Stacia Thiel spent her life immersed in a rich array of musical sounds and styles among the backdrop of fields and farmland. Dixieland Jazz, Gospel, Barber-shop harmonies and 60's singles filled her childhood home. The one constant in Stacia's eclectic world of music has been her unwavering love for and commitment to vocal performance and songwriting. At age 16 she picked up her father's acoustic guitar and began to write what would be the first in an extensive catalog of original songs spanning decades. Stacia earned her masters degree in opera performance from Washington University in St. Louis while frequently making the five hour trek to Nashville to record demos of original songs with session players and bandmates. A move to New York City to study voice with a well known opera teacher led to countless adventures creatively and personally. Marriage, motherhood, and ultimately a move to the burbs followed. All along the way Stacia has continued to perform, write and explore her world and the world around her through singing and songwriting. Depending on the eve, Stacia can be found performing the soprano solo in Fauré's Requiem with chamber orchestra or kicking off her record release with a live concert at the Montclair Social Club in New Jersey. "If a piece of music moves me I've never been concerned with what box it fits in or what genre it is," explains Stacia. Stacia also holds a masters degree in social work and is grateful to be able to put her love of music to work for organizations and causes she feels passionate about. Most recently she was the featured musical artist at a fundraiser for FSL: SAVE (Sexual Assault and Violence Education) of Montclair, NJ and was the guest performer for Unitas (united to fight against human trafficking) in NYC.



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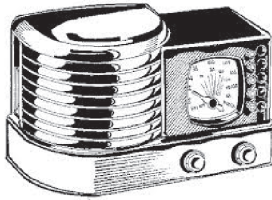
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Stephen Culbertson

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

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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