

# **Society of Musical Arts**

**Stephen Culbertson, Music Director**

## ***Concert Program***



**Sunday, February 25, 2024**

**4:00 P.M.**

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

# Orchestra February 2024

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

## FIRST VIOLIN

Susan Heerema\*  
Concert Master  
Mira Franke  
David Martin  
Jessica Mennella  
Eugene Park  
Deirdre Pasquarelli  
Jilda Sidebottom  
Len Tobias  
Rich Waldman  
Dustin Weinstein

## SECOND VIOLIN

Lillian Kessler\*  
Barbara Brandyberry  
Barbara Bivin  
Eugene Ehrlich  
Kelly Estrada  
Kelley Fahey  
Anoushka Karnad  
Michael Schneider  
Luba Schnable-Ungar

## VIOLA

Roland Hutchinson\*  
Ashley Budish  
Ellen Hill  
Cynthia Killian  
Katherine Kolibas  
Janet Poland

## CELLO

Joe Orchard\*  
James Celestino  
Megan Doherty  
Colleen Helmacy

## BASS

Bob Whiteley\*  
Adam Austerlitz  
Matthew Hintz

## FLUTE/PICCOLO

Laura Paparatto\*  
Gail Berkshire

## OBOE

Molly Raum\*  
Arlene Moskowicz

## ENGLISH HORN

Arlene Moskowicz\*

## CLARINET

Anne Simon\*  
Theresa Hartmann

## BASS CLARINET

Theresa Hartmann\*

## BASSOON

Dominic DellAntonia\*  
Marissa Raczynski

## FRENCH HORN

Paul Erickson\*  
Libby Schwartz  
Linda Lovstad  
Dana Bassett

## TRUMPET

Ivan Miller\*  
Darrell Frydlewicz  
John Zdanewicz

## TROMBONE

Henry Heyzer\*  
Tom Mesevage  
David Sullivan

## HARP

Patricia Turse\*

## TIMPANI

Joe Whitfield\*

\* Principal

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# **Society of Musical Arts**

**Stephen Culbertson, Conductor**

**Sunday, February 25, 2024**

**4:00 pm**

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## ***Spotlight on Viola!***

### **Pelleas and Melisande, suite**

**Gabriel Fauré  
(1845 – 1924)**

- 1. Prélude*
- 2. Entr'acte: Fileuse (The Spinner)*
- 3. Sicilienne*
- 4. Death of Melisande*

### **Viola Concerto**

**William Walton  
(1902 – 1983)**

- 1. Andante comodo*
- 2. Vivo; con molto preciso*
- 3. Allegro moderato*

Lillian Platte, viola

**~~~ Intermission ~~~**

### **Creatures of Prometheus Overture, Op. 43**

**L. Van Beethoven  
(1770 – 1827)**

### **Symphony No. 7 in one movement, Op. 105**

**Jean Sibelius  
(1865 – 1957)**

## Meet today's featured Artist

### Lillian Platte

Violist Lillian Platte is a first year undergraduate violist at Lynn Conservatory. Originally from Belleville, New Jersey, Lily pursued studies at Manhattan School of Music in New York City and built a close relationship with the regional orchestras in her area. An avid chamber musician, Lillian has studied at Atlantic Music Festival, Blue Mountain Music Festival, Luzerne Music Center and New England Music Camp. This year her Piano Quartet 'Marcando' won first prize in the Lyric Chamber Music Competition. A former student of Harold Levine, Lillian played the New York premier of his duo for cello and viola on her senior recital at Manhattan School of Music. Lillian has performed in masterclasses with world class musicians such as Michelle LaCourse, Atar Arad, Lauren Hodges, and Gary Hoffman. The child of professional musicians, Lily's love of music has been the center of her life. In her free time, Lillian enjoys studying anatomy and taking care of her animals. Today marks her concerto solo debut.



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# Program Notes

by Stephen Culbertson

## **Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)**

### ***Pelléas et Mélisande*, Op. 80 (1898)**

Although Fauré is mostly known for his *mélodies* (art songs) and chamber music, he contributed at least two major works to the standard repertoire: his great *Requiem* and the suite we perform today. The latter was originally written for the English premiere of Maeterlinck's play and orchestrated by Fauré's student Charles Koechlin. Fauré himself reworked that material into the published Suite. The opening *Prélude* sets the scene by representing both the naivety of Mélisande as well as her passion. A *Fileuse* follows. It was originally the introduction to Act 3 where Mélisande is at her spinning wheel. The *Sicilienne* (introduction to the fountain scene in Act 2) was composed some years earlier for a chamber work. It has become a famous, stand-alone piece. The last movement, *The Death of Mélisande*, is from Act 5, an intense parallel to her music in the prelude.

## **William Walton (1902-1983)**

### ***Concerto for Viola and Orchestra* (1929, rev. 1962)**

Sir Thomas Beecham suggested, in 1928, that Walton should write a Viola Concerto. Walton was somewhat perplexed and wondered why Sir Thomas thought he should be able to write such a work. At the time Walton confessed that he knew little about the viola except that it made a rather awful sound! The only piece of viola music he admired and knew was Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*, which he thought quite beautiful. The initial proposed performer (Tertis) immediately returned the new work to the composer, declaring it "too modern," and refused the premiere. Paul Hindemith accepted to play the Concerto, over the objections of his manager, who thought the composer and proposed venue lacked significance. Tertis was at that performance and later he sent a letter to Walton apologizing for having turned the work down and promising to play it, which he did.

In any case, the concerto established Walton at the top of contemporary English music. It contains emotional depth, richness, a profusion of ideas and technical brilliance that are perhaps only matched by Elgar's Cello Concerto. Although Walton gives prominence to the solo, one of the striking things about the work is the amount of material for the orchestra alone; even more than *Harold in Italy*, which is categorized as a symphony!

## **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

### ***The Creatures of Prometheus*, Op. 43: Overture**

Beethoven's works are generally divided into three periods (early, middle and late) so his only ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus* written in 1801, would fall at the end of the "early" period. While still part of the classical tradition (influence) of Haydn and Mozart, Beethoven was finding his own voice. Just as his symphonies (intended for a wide audience) are more accessible than the chamber music and solo sonatas, the theater music was intended for an even wider audience. That was certainly the case of the ballet that was initially much more successful than his only opera *Fidelio*. *Prometheus* was repeated over 20 times in its initial run and was, in fact, one of the first full works of Beethoven performed in America in 1808.

The overture has very little to do with the story of the ballet, which is of course the mythological story of Prometheus molding humans out of clay. I suppose one could say that the opening chords represent Zeus' thunderbolts being hurled down the mountain as Prometheus is running away...

One interesting factoid about Beethoven that most people are unaware: despite outward appearances, he was not a pauper like Mozart. He had yearly stipends from several princes to stay in Vienna and compose. Having a work dedicated to a person was not *gratis*. Although there was no system of royalties for composers, Beethoven managed to make better deals with publishers as well as concert presenters than many other composers at the time.

## Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

### Symphony No. 7 in one movement, Op. 105 (1924)

Later in life, Sibelius maintained he actually wrote nine symphonies like Beethoven. In addition to the seven numbered symphonies, we have the early *Kullervo* Symphony, Op. 7, as well as the Lemminkäinen Suite, Op. 22. The latter is a four-movement work following the traditional structure of a symphony.

We're told two titans of early 20th Century, Sibelius and Mahler, had very different views of what a symphony should be (Shostakovich and others that might weigh in on this discussion were the next generation; we'll leave them for now). The basis for this "debate" is based on Karl Eckman's 1935 (Sibelius was still alive) biographical account of Sibelius' recollection of their one meeting in 1907

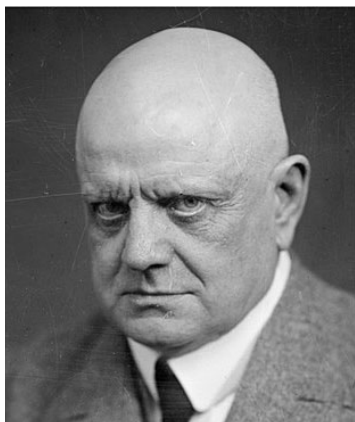
Mahler and I spent much time in each other's company. Contact was established between us in some walks, during which we discussed all the great questions of music thoroughly. When our conversation touched the essence of symphony, I said that I admired its severity and style and the profound logic that created an inner connection between all the motifs. This was the experience I had come to in composing. Mahler's opinion was just the reverse. 'Nein, die Symphonie muss sein wie die Welt, Sie muss alles umfassen.' ['No, symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything.']

Mahler's Fourth Symphony — which SOMA performed last fall — may not be the best example of his "all-embracing" philosophy, but Sibelius' Seventh is certainly (along with his final orchestra work *Tapiola*), the epitome of "severity and profound logic". Virtually all the thematic material is stated in the first half-dozen pages of the score, then developed in myriad ways to form the various episodes (movements, if you will) that lead to the climatic moments, all based based on the opening material. The result is a succinct intensity at the opposite spectrum of Mahler's expansiveness to achieve climax and release.

Sibelius uses an essentially classical orchestra (no doubling woodwinds, harp, tuba, percussion batterie, et. al.) which contrib-



utes to the concentration on the essential musical elements. While there are many examples one-movement symphonies dating to the pre-classical era (think: [slow intro]/fast/slow/fast), what Sibelius manages to do is integrate the elements of introduction, slow movement, scherzo, rondo, sonata-form and extended coda(s) into one stretch of music that spans the moods and emotions of a multi-movement symphony.



A lot has been written about the ending of the symphony. Many commentators have the opinion that Sibelius had a problem with endings. And it is true that they can be problematic in their abruptness and absence of the traditional coda/V-I cadence. In the case of the Seventh, here is Sir Simon Rattle's take. It's almost like a scream. It's the most depressed C major in all of musical literature. There's no other piece that ends in C major where you feel it's the end of the world. Look at how carefully he orchestrates it so that it doesn't sound like a victory, but as something you reach on the edge of death. You finally reach C major – and it's over. It should be a struggle for the strings to achieve this last note with their last bit of energy.

Even more has been written about a potential Eighth Symphony. After all, Sibelius was less than 60 years old when he completed the Seventh and he lived another 30+ years. He wrote (after Tapiola) some arrangements, incidental music and short characteristic pieces for family and friends. Nothing major. He was a widely-performed international composer and a national hero in Finland (his birthday is a national holiday). As they say, the world was his oyster and he could have written anything he wanted. The stories going around were that (1) he had/was working on an 8th symphony, to be published posthumously, (2) he had lost confidence in composing (3) he said all he had to say in the 7th. My favorite story, however, was told to me by a classmate at the Sibelius Academy in the 1970s, "Yeah, my uncle and Sibelius had too much to drink one night and they threw the manuscript in the fire."

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## Stephen Culbertson - *Conductor*



Stephen Culbertson, in his 14th (and counting!) season as Music Director for the Society of Musical Arts, has conducted 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.

Culbertson has appeared with the Montclair Chamber Orchestra and Orchestra Society of Philadelphia and has served as Music Director of the Ridgewood (NJ), Sussex County (NJ) Community Orchestra and Associate Conductor of the Bergen (NJ) 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 more recent activities include leading the Livingston (NJ) Symphony and many stints as interim Music Director at the Presbyterian Church of Upper Montclair.

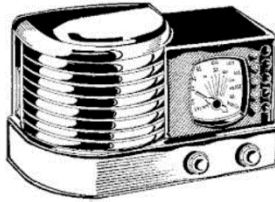
After graduating from University of the Pacific in his native California, Culbertson was awarded a scholarship to study at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki (Finland) with famed conducting teacher Jorma Panula. During his five-year stay, he studied the works of Sibelius with the composer's son-in-law, 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. During that time, Subito has shepherded many new works in the repertoire including two Pulitzer Prize-winners. Rarely a night goes by in the concert music world without a work prepared by Subito on the music stands! 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).

Steve enjoys his summers preparing for the next season on a lake in Maine with his family, friends and granddog; listening to the loons and enjoying the lobsters!

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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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