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LYNN

Conservatory of Music

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Lynn Philharmonia No. 5

Dr. Jon Robertson, conductor
Guillermo Figueroa, violin

Saturday, April 22 – 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 23– 4 p.m.
Keith C. and Elaine Johnson Wold
Performing Arts Center

Prelude from Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg Richard Wagner
(1813-1883)

Violin Concerto No. 2 Béla Bartók
(1881-1945)

Guillermo Figueroa, violin

INTERMISSION

Variations on an Original Theme Edward Elgar
(1857-1934)

Theme (Andante)
Variation I. L'istesso tempo "C.A.E."
Variation II. Allegro "H.D.S-P."
Variation III. Allegretto "R.B.T."
Variation IV. Allegro di molto "W.M.B."
Variation V. Moderato "R.P.A."
Variation VI. Andantino "Ysobel"
Variation VII. Presto "Troyte"
Variation VIII. Allegretto "W.N."
Variation IX. Adagio "Nimrod"
Variation X. Intermezzo: Allegretto "Dorabella"
Variation XI. Allegro di molto "G.R.S."
Variation XII. Andante "B.G.N."
Variation XIII. Romanza: Moderato " * *"*
Variation XIV. Finale: Allegro Presto "E.D.U."

A Message from the Dean

Welcome to the 2016-2017 season. The talented students and extraordinary faculty of the Lynn University Conservatory of Music take this opportunity to share with you the beautiful world of music. This is our 24th anniversary of the Lynn Philharmonia and our 7th season performing in the Keith C. and Elaine Johnson Wold Performing Arts Center, a world-class concert hall that greatly enhances the musical offerings of our performing artists.

As the conservatory continues to expand and excel, your ongoing support, sponsorship and direct contributions ensure our place among the premier conservatories of the world and a staple of our community.

Please enjoy a magnificent season of great music.

Jon Robertson
Dean

Artist Biographies



Dr. Jon Robertson

Maestro Jon Robertson enjoys a distinguished career as a pianist, conductor and academician. His career as a concert pianist began at age nine with his debut in Town Hall, New York. As a child prodigy and student of the renowned pianist and teacher Ethel Leginska, he continued to concertize throughout the United States, the Caribbean and Europe. Already established as a brilliant concert pianist, he was awarded full scholarship six consecutive years to the Juilliard School, where he earned his B.M., M.S. and D.M.A. degrees in piano performance as a student of Beveridge Webster. Although his degrees were in piano performance, he also studied choral conducting with Abraham Kaplan and orchestral conducting with Richard Pittman of the New England Conservatory of Music.

After completing a master's degree at the Juilliard School, he was appointed chair of the Department of Music at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama. Among the many accomplishments realized during his tenure, the highlight was the tour of the college choir and Huntsville Symphony to Los Angeles, California, performing Verdi's Requiem to a rave review by the Los Angeles Times. In 1970, Robertson returned to the Juilliard as a Ford Foundation Scholar to complete his Doctorate of Musical Arts. At the conclusion of his degree, he once again performed with the Oakwood College choir and the American Symphony, performing Verdi's Requiem at Carnegie Hall to critical acclaim in the New York Times.

In 1972, Robertson became Chair of the Thayer Conservatory of Music at Atlantic Union College, in Massachusetts, where he instituted the highly successful Thayer Preparatory Division; began the Thayer Conservatory Orchestra; tripled enrollment, renovated and refurbished the historical Thayer Mansion, home of the Thayer Conservatory; and led the New England Sinfonia on their successful national tour in 1975. He later traveled to Sweden and East Germany to become the first and only private student of Maestro Herbert Blomstedt, currently conductor and music director of the Gewandhaus Orchestra, Leipzig. After a well-received guest conducting

appearance with the Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra in Norway, he was immediately engaged as conductor and music director in 1979 and served until 1987. Under his dynamic leadership, the orchestra enjoyed critical acclaim, along with consecutive sold-out seasons. While director of the symphony, he was also invited to conduct the National Norwegian Opera Company in six performances of *La Boheme*, as well as yearly productions with the Kristiansand Opera Company.

First appearing in Redlands, California, as guest conductor in the spring of 1982, Maestro Robertson became the conductor and music director of the Redlands Symphony Orchestra in the fall of that year. He retired from the orchestra in 2016 after leading the ensemble for thirty-three years. During his tenure, ticket sales increased to capacity houses. In addition, the Redlands Symphony has enjoyed the distinction of receiving the highest ranking possible from the California Arts Council, as well as top ranking with the National Endowment for the Arts. As guest conductor, Maestro Robertson has conducted orchestras nationally and internationally, including: the San Francisco Symphony at Stern Grove, later returning for their subscription series in Davies Hall; American Symphony, New York; Fairbanks Symphony, Fairbanks, Alaska; Long Beach Symphony, Long Beach, California; Oakland East Bay Symphony, Oakland, California; Walla Walla Symphony Orchestra, Walla, Walla, Washington; Gavel Symphony Orchestra, Gavel, Sweden; Trondheim Symphony Orchestra, Trondheim, Norway; and the Beijing Central Philharmonic, China. He is a regular guest conductor of the Cairo Symphony Orchestra in Egypt and was the principal guest conductor of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra in Yerevan from 1995-98. Maestro Robertson has also conducted the Bratislava Chamber Orchestra, at the Pianofest Austria at Bad Aussee, Austria and most recently in Cape Town, South Africa and at the University of Stellenbosch International Festival.

From 1992-2004, Robertson served as Chair of the Department of Music at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). During his tenure, the department gained national and international recognition, attracting world-renowned faculty and highly gifted students, thus creating a world class department of music. Robertson was recognized at the Presidents Recognition Dinner for being instrumental in raising more than two million dollars for scholarships, as well as the expansion of the Opera department and Music Theater through the Gluck Foundation and other donors.

Robertson also created the Music Outreach Program targeting inner city African-American and Latino students at designated high schools and junior high schools. On a weekly basis, music students from UCLA gave private lessons to students who were enrolled in music programs at selected inner city schools in Los Angeles. Funding for this program was raised through interested donors, therefore this exceptional program was created at no cost to the institution. Furthermore, following the reception of a grant from the Toyota Foundation, these students were also tutored in math and reading in preparation for the SAT exams. In order to complement the work accomplished at their respective schools, students were bused to UCLA for practice SAT tests. Thanks to the Music Outreach Program, a number of students were admitted to UCLA, and 98 percent of the students in the program went on to colleges in the United States. As a result of this program's success, Robertson was the recipient of the President's Award for Outreach Programs.

Adding to the numerous awards received throughout his illustrious career, Robertson was the recipient of an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Loma Linda University, California for the cultural development of the Greater Inland Empire of San Bernardino, California.

Presently, Robertson is the dean of the Lynn University Conservatory of Music in Boca Raton, Florida. Under his visionary leadership, the conservatory has joined the ranks of major conservatories and institutions of music, boasting a world-renowned faculty of performers and scholars. The conservatory is both highly selective and international, accepting students from fourteen foreign countries. With an intentional enrollment of just over 100 students, only the most talented applicants are accepted and mentored by the extraordinary faculty.

Jon Robertson continues his guest conducting and chamber music appearances both nationally and internationally. Along with performing and academia, Robertson enjoys writing, the study of Theology, and is sought after as a consultant, lecturer and motivational speaker.



Guillermo Figueroa

Guillermo Figueroa is the recently appointed Principal Conductor of the Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra. He is also the Music Director of the Music in the Mountains Festival in Colorado and Music Director of the Lynn Philharmonia in Florida. Additionally, he was the Music Director of both the New Mexico Symphony and the Puerto Rico Symphony. With this last orchestra he performed to critical acclaim at Carnegie Hall in 2003, the Kennedy Center in 2004 and Spain in 2005.

International appearances include the Toronto Symphony, Iceland Symphony, the Baltic Philharmonic in Poland, Orquesta del Teatro Argentino in La Plata, Xalapa (Mexico), the Orquesta de Cordoba in Spain and the Orquesta Sinfonica de Chile. In the US he has appeared with the symphony orchestras of Detroit, New Jersey, Memphis, Phoenix, Colorado, Tucson, Santa Fe, Fairfax, San Jose, Juilliard Orchestra and the New York City Ballet at Lincoln Center.

Mr. Figueroa has collaborated with many of the leading artists of our time, including Itzhak Perlman, YoYo Ma, Hilary Hahn, Placido Domingo, Joshua Bell, Olga Kern, Janos Starker, James Galway, Midori, Horacio Gutierrez, the Emerson and Fine Arts String Quartets, Ben Hepner, Rachel Barton Pine, Pepe and Angel Romero, Elmar Oliveira, Vadim Gluzman and Philippe Quint.

Mr. Figueroa has conducted the premieres of works by important composers, such as Roberto Sierra, Ernesto Cordero and Miguel del Águila. An advocate for new music, Mr. Figueroa and the NMSO won an Award for Adventurous Programming from the League of American Orchestras in 2007.

A renowned violinist as well, his recording of Ernesto Cordero's violin concertos for the Naxos label received a Latin Grammy nomination in 2012. Figueroa was Concertmaster of the New York City Ballet, and a Founding Member and Concertmaster of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, making over fifty recordings for Deutsche Grammophon. Also accomplished on the viola, Figueroa performs frequently as guest of the Fine Arts, American, Amernet and Orion string quartets.

Figueroa has given the world premieres of four violin concertos written for him: in 1995 the Concertino by Mario Davidovsky, at Carnegie Hall with Orpheus; in 2007 the Double Concerto by Harold Farberman, with the American Symphony at Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center; in 2008 the

Violin Concerto by Miguel del Aguila, commissioned by Figueroa and the NMSO and in 2009 Insula, Suite Concertante, by Ernesto Cordero with the Solisti di Zagreb in Zagreb.

He has appeared at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Music in the Vineyards in California, Festival Groba in Spain and Music from Angel Fire. Figueroa has recorded the Three Violin Sonatas by Bartok for the Eroica Classical label, with pianist Robert Koenig, and an album of virtuoso violin music by for the NMSO label, with pianist Ivonne Figueroa.

Mr. Figueroa studied with his father and uncle at the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico. At the Juilliard School his teachers were Oscar Shumsky and Felix Galimir. His conducting studies were with Harold Farberman in New York.

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Program Notes

Violin Concerto No. 2 – Béla Bartók

Notes by Guillermo Figueroa

Along with those of Beethoven and Brahms, the 2nd Violin Concerto by Bartók has assumed its rightful status as one of the three greatest works for that instrument. Like those two other masterpieces, it is a grand, quasi-symphonic work, in which the violin and orchestra are equal partners, not merely a vehicle for virtuoso display, although there is plenty of that! With its nobility of style, breathtaking beauty, and extraordinarily innovative structure, it is one of the iconic works of the 20th century.

The concerto originated as a commission from the noted violinist and friend of Bartók, Zoltán Székely, and was written in 1937-38. Although the composer wanted to write a single movement in variation style, Székely insisted on a traditional three-movement concerto, and Bartók complied. Nevertheless, Bartók got his wish as the second movement is a set of variations, and the third movement is itself a variation of the first. The result is an astonishing 'arch form structure', a form that Bartók had developed throughout his career.

The way Bartók constructs the work, and his virtuosity in manipulating the many compositional techniques is simply miraculous. Abstract devices are deployed without the listener being aware, and with sensationally beautiful results. One is reminded of Bach, who wrote complex four and five part fugues, retrograde canons, mathematically intricate music that somehow manages to sound heavenly and glorious.

The most important device used is the idea of 'opposite symmetry'. Imagine taking some bars of music and looking at them in the mirror, so everything is the same but in reverse. Bartók employs this technique in myriad ways. A theme might be repeated backwards, or softly where it first was forte, or in a high register where we first heard it in a low instrument, always symmetrically opposed.

After dignified B Major chords in the harp, the main theme of the first movement is given by the violin. Noble and expansive, and built on fourths and fifths, it gives rise to everything that will happen in the rest of the concerto. A great contrast is presented by the nervous and very chromatic secondary idea. This is followed by one of the most curious moments in the work; orchestra and soloist alternate phrases of three bars in which all twelve tones of the scale are used. This seems to be a nod or homage to the dodecaphonic technique of Schoenberg. An important feature is the use of major/minor chords, which gives the harmony an intense poignancy. Also note the imaginative use of the harp and celesta. After a recapitulation where the themes are given again, but backwards (symmetrically opposite) the violin is given a brilliant cadenza. This leads to an exciting coda, the final note being a fortissimo B natural, still undecided as to whether it is major or minor.

The second movement is an astonishing set of variations. The ravishingly beautiful theme is serene, with hints of folk music, almost a lullaby. Towards the end of the theme we hear the

most delicious and romantic moment of the work, the last phrase of the theme harmonized by an old-fashioned circle of fifths. The variations are wildly varied; everything from eerie to brutally forceful, then light and flighty and once again serene and peaceful. Just about every possible violin technique is employed, a veritable tour de force for the soloist.

The third movement is Bartók's wildest, most original creation, as far as structure, as it is essentially a repeat of the first movement, but with all the material altered in rhythm and meter (he had done a similar thing in the Fourth String Quartet). The main difference is that he inserts a new idea; fast, running triplets in the violin which are interpolated in between the sections from the first movement, and which give the whole structure the shape of sonata/rondo, a form used widely by Mozart, particularly in the last movements of his concertos. The equivalency with the first movement eventually ends, and Bartók builds an impressive finale. The whole concerto can be interpreted as a battle between orchestra and soloist, as to who will be the main protagonist. In the final section the orchestra seemingly seems to threaten the violin and overwhelm it, and the soloist recurs to every possible technique in its arsenal. This leads to the controversial closing of the work.

There are two versions of the ending; the original one, Bartók's first conception, where the soloist stops playing a few dozen bars before the end, and the work ends with the orchestra triumphant. In the other version, the soloist plays to the end, and this is the version which is played most often, unfortunately, in my opinion. Székely asked Bartók to rewrite the ending, and in what I believe was a moment of weakness, Bartók complied. But there is no doubt that the original version (without the soloist) is far superior. To be clear, both versions are the same music, but with very different orchestrations and emphasis, one monumental and symphonic in terms of sonority and the other weaker in sound but highlighting the violin. Why would the composer abandon the rigorous and beautiful logic that had dictated the construction of the finale and create what I believe is a much weaker ending? Perhaps his gratefulness for Székely's commission, in a moment of great need, and his respect for him as an artist. But it is very suggestive that he keeps the original version in the score, as an 'alternate' ending. If he was so convinced of the new version (with the soloist), why not discard it altogether? I believe the only possible and acceptable ending for this concerto, one of the essential musical works of all time, is the original, and the one you will hear at these concerts.

**Donors to the Keith C. and Elaine Johnson Wold
Performing Arts Center at Lynn University**

The Keith C. and Elaine Johnson Wold Performing Arts Center, designed by noted architect Herbert S. Newman, is a state-of-the-art performance facility. The elegant lobby is graciously lit with chandeliers replicating those in New York City's Lincoln Center. The 750-seat theatre, designed in paneling reminiscent of the inside of a violin, features superb acoustics, a modern lighting system and comfortable seating. The Wold Center opened in March 2010.

Lynn University gratefully acknowledges the donors who have generously contributed to the construction of this center:

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For some students, meeting the costs associated with a world-class conservatory education can be highly challenging. This dedicated group provides financial support for many annual and endowed scholarships. Since its establishment in 2003, the Friends have raised significant funds through annual gifts and special events. The Gingerbread Holiday Concert is chief among them.

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