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Concert: Ithaca College Wind Ensemble, "American Visionaries"

Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Stephen G. Peterson

Cynthia Johnston Turner

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ITHACA COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

"AMERICAN VISIONARIES"

ITHACA COLLEGE WIND ENSEMBLE
Stephen Peterson, conductor
Cynthia Johnston Turner, guest conductor

Bailey Hall, Cornell University
Sunday, February 24, 2008
3:00 p.m.

ITHACA

PROGRAM

Emblems

Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)

The Alcotts

Charles Ives
(1874-1954)
Arr. Richard Thurston

Lollapalooza

John Adams
(b. 1947)
Trans. James Spinazzola

Cynthia Johnston Turner, guest conductor

INTERMISSION

Circus Maximus

John Corigliano
(b. 1938)

- I. *Introitus*
- II. *Screen/Siren*
- III. *Channel Surfing*
- IV. *Night Music I*
- V. *Night Music II*
- VI. *Circus Maximus*
- VII. *Prayer*
- VIII. *Coda: Veritus*

Please note that a shotgun will be discharged at the end of the *Circus Maximus* piece.

PROGRAM NOTES

Aaron Copland has been called the "dean of American music . . . a giant of American culture." He wrote memorable scores, encouraged younger composers, and helped to create and maintain approving audiences. In addition, according to Richard Franko Goldman, Copland was regarded by all with "admiration, respect, and above all, true affection." Aaron Copland was an excellent pianist, conductor, writer, teacher, and composer. He was originally thought of as a kind of American Stravinsky during the 1920's. His music was tonal but boldly so, emphasizing complex and often harsh sonorities, and influenced in rhythmic language by jazz and Stravinsky's works. In the late 1930's, however, he gradually switched to almost exclusively diatonic melodic writing and simpler counterpoint. The rhythmic vitality, widely spaced textures, and hints of bitonality of his earlier style remained, but his music became more accessible. Copland wrote theater scores, operas, ballet scores, orchestral symphonies, eight film scores, and considerable choral and instrumental concert literature. Copland's original and transcribed band scores, which he conducted at times, are an important part of his contributions.

About *Emblems*, the composer writes: "In May, 1963, I received a letter from Keith Wilson, President of the COLLEGE BAND DIRECTOR'S NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, asking me to accept a commission from that organization to compose a work for band. He wrote: 'The purpose of this commission is to enrich the band repertory with music that is representative of the composer's best work, and not one written with all sorts of technical or practical limitations.' That was the origin of *Emblems*."

Keeping Mr. Wilson's injunction in mind, I wanted to write a work that was challenging to young players without overstraining their technical abilities. The work is tripartite in form: slow-fast-slow, with the return of the first part varied. Embedded in the quiet, slow music the listener may hear a brief quotation of a well-known hymn tune, 'Amazing Grace,' published by William Walker in *The Southern Harmony* in 1835. Curiously enough, the accompanying harmonies had been conceived first, without reference to any tune. It was only a chance perusal of a recent anthology of old 'Music in America' that made me realize a connection existed between my harmonies and the old hymn tune.

An emblem stands for something – it is a symbol. I called the work *Emblems* because it seemed to me to suggest musical states of being: noble or aspiring feelings, playful or spirited feelings. The exact nature of these emblematic sounds must be determined for himself by each listener."

Shortly before his death in Los Angeles in 1951, the Austrian-American composer Arnold Schoenberg wrote of Charles Ives, "There is a great man living in this country – a composer. He has solved the problem of how to preserve one's self and to learn. He responds to negligence by contempt. He is not forced to accept praise or blame. His name is Ives." Ives wrote in *Essays* that "beauty in music is too often confused with something that lets the ears lie back in an easy chair." During convalescence from his coronary in 1918, he had the *Concord Sonata* and 114 of his songs printed and made available at no cost. By 1926, Ives stopped composing new works; in 1930, he retired

from the insurance business. He lived long enough to know that his music was beginning to be performed, but he rarely attended concerts or heard recordings. Since his death in 1954, his music has achieved a popularity that would have amazed the gifted composer. Many of Ives's works were lost, partially completed, or changed from one medium into another.

The *Piano Sonata No. 2: Concord, Mass.*, commonly known as the *Concord Sonata*, was completed about 1915. It consists of four movements, each bearing the name of a famous mid-19th-century resident of Concord: (1) *Emerson*, (2) *Hawthorne*, (3) *The Alcotts*, and (4) *Thoreau*. Each movement is a musical impression of the personality and philosophical attitudes of its subject. While movements I, II, and IV are lengthy, musically complex, and pianistically difficult, *The Alcotts*, is a section of simple and serene beauty – a touching and lovingly etched remembrance of the Alcott's Orchard House "under the elms."

John Adams is one of America's most admired and respected composers. A musician of enormous range and technical command, he has produced works, both operatic and symphonic, that stand out among all contemporary classical music for the depth of their expression, the brilliance of their sound and the profoundly humanist nature of their themes. His music has played a decisive role in turning the tide of musical aesthetics away from the theoretical principles of European modernism toward a more expansive and expressive language, so characteristic of his New World surroundings.

Born and raised in New England, Adams learned the clarinet from his father and played in marching bands and community orchestras during his formative years. He began composing at the age of ten and heard his first orchestral pieces performed while still a teenager. The intellectual and artistic traditions of New England, especially the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Harvard University, helped shape him as an artist and thinker. After earning two degrees from Harvard University, he moved to Northern California in 1971 and has ever since lived in the San Francisco Bay area.

John Adams maintains an active life as a conductor, appearing with the world's greatest orchestras and with programs combining his own works with composers as diverse as Debussy, Strauss, Stravinsky and Ravel to Zappa, Ives, Reich, Glass and Ellington. As a guest conductor and as a director of music festivals in the United States and Europe he has appeared with orchestras that include the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the Concertgebouw Orchestra and the London Symphony. In 2006 Adams curated the hugely popular "Minimalist Jukebox" for the Los Angeles Philharmonic. As Artist in Association with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, he regularly appears with that orchestra as conductor in concerts in London's Barbican and at the annual Albert Hall Proms concerts.

About *Lollapalooza*, the composer writes: *Lollapalooza* was written as a fortieth birthday present for Simon Rattle who has been a friend and collaborator for many years. The term "lollapalooza" has an uncertain etymology, and just that vagueness may account for its popularity as an archetypical American word. It suggests something large, outlandish,

oversized, not unduly refined. H.L. Mencken suggests it may have originally meant a knockout punch in a boxing match. I was attracted to it because of its internal rhythm: da-da-da-DAAH-da. Hence, in my piece, the word is spelled out in the trombones and tubas, C-C-C-Eb-C (emphasis on the Eb) as a kind of *idé fixe*. The "lollapalooza" motive is only one of a profusion of other motives, all appearing and evolving in a repetitive chain of events that moves this dancing behemoth along until it ends in a final shout by the horns and trombones and a terminal thwack on timpani and bass drum.

John Corigliano grew up in a musical environment, where his mother was a gifted pianist, and his father, the late John Corigliano Sr., was concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic for 23 years. According to Harold Schonberg of *The New York Times*, Corigliano has become "one of America's most important composers." He is considered a communicator with a fine grasp of melody and rhythm. Eleanor Caldwell describes his music as "accessible, unstrained, and with few of the pseudo-romantic agonies associated with self-conscious avant-gardism . . . He makes no hard and fast distinctions between serious and popular music . . ." His earliest published works (for voice and piano) were composed while he was a student at Columbia. Corigliano has written instrument/orchestral features for flute, oboe, clarinet, piano, voice, narrator, dancers, and chorus; various pieces for smaller instrumental and vocal combinations; a cappella and accompanied choral works; *Gazebo Dances* and *Circus Maximus* for band; and scores for films.

About *Circus Maximus*, the composer writes: "For the past three decades, I have started the compositional process by building a shape, or architecture, before coming up with any musical material. In this case, the shape was influenced by a desire to write a piece in which the entire work is conceived spatially. But I started simply wondering what dramatic premise would justify the encirclement of the audience by musicians, so that they were in the center of the arena. This started my imagination going, and quite suddenly a title appeared in my mind: Circus Maximus.

The Latin words, understandable in English, convey an energy and power by themselves. But the Circus Maximus of ancient Rome was a real place – the largest arena in the world. 300,000 spectators were entertained by chariot races, hunts, and battles. The Roman need for grander and wilder amusement grew as its empire declined.

The parallels between the high decadence of Rome and our present time are obvious. Entertainment dominates our reality, and ever-more-extreme 'reality' shows dominate our entertainment. Many of us have become as bemused by the violence and humiliation that flood the 500-plus channels of our television screens as the mobs of imperial Rome, who considered the devouring of human beings by starving lions just another Sunday show.

The shape of my *Circus Maximus* was built both to embody and to comment on this massive and glamorous barbarity. It utilizes a large concert band, and lasts approximately 35 minutes. The work is in eight sections that are played without pause.

- I. Introitus: Trumpets and percussion surrounding the audience play fanfares, signaling the opening of the work. The full band enters with a primitive call from the clarinets. A short central section features the lowest winds and brass followed by the joining of the offstage and onstage ensemble playing together this time, and reaching the first climax of the work.
- II. Screen/Siren: A saxophone quartet and string bass call from the 2nd tier boxes in seductive inflections. Other instruments scattered around the hall (clarinet, piccolo, horns, trumpets) echo the calls, which are suddenly interrupted by:
- III. Channel Surfing: Sensory overload and infinite variety dilute concentration. Our need for constant change echoes the desires of the ancient mob, only now we can access it all by pressing a button. Music in this section is constantly interrupted by other music and comes from all sections of the hall.
- IV. Night Music I: Tranquility in nature. Away from cities, forest sounds suspend time. Animals call to each other.
- V. Night Music II: The hyper night-music of the cities pulse with hidden energy and sudden flashes. Sirens and distant battles onstage build the tension to:
- VI. Circus Maximus: The peak of the work incorporates all the other movements and is a carnival of sonic activity. A band marching down the aisles counterpoints the onstage performers and the surrounding fanfares. Exuberant voices merge into chaos and a frenzy of overstatement.
- VII. Prayer: In answer to this, a long-lined serene melody is set against a set of plagal (IV-I) cadences that circle through all the keys. The rising line grows in intensity against the constantly changing harmonies as the chords overlap from stage to surround trumpets and back.
- VIII. Coda: Veritas: Music from the Introitus enters almost inaudibly, but grows in intensity until it dominates the 'prayer' music, and the surrounding trumpet calls reach an even higher peak. A gunshot ends the work.

Guest Conductor, **Cynthia Johnston Turner** is an active conductor, festival adjudicator, and clinician, in both the United States and Canada. Before joining the Cornell faculty in the fall of 2004, she taught at the University of Rochester, where she directed the Wind Symphony and served as Director of Music at Parkside High School, Dundas, Canada. Earlier in her career Cynthia taught middle school beginning instrumental music in Toronto and choral music in Switzerland. She currently serves as a faculty member with the summer Performing Arts Institute at Pennsylvania's Wyoming Seminary and as a guest conductor with the Syracuse Society of New Music. A Canadian, Cynthia completed her Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Education degrees at Queens University and her Master of Music in music education and conducting at the University of Victoria. She was nominated for the Canadian Prime Minister's Leadership in Teaching Award and received the National Leadership in Education Award (Readers Digest Foundation), the Excellence in Education Award (Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation), and the Marion Drysdale Leadership Among Women Teachers Award (also from OSSTF). At Cornell, Cynthia is the Director of Wind Ensembles, overseeing the Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Chamber Winds, and other chamber ensembles. She also serves as faculty

advisor to CU Winds, a student-governed organization devoted to the promotion and performance of wind music. She has commissioned numerous new works for wind band, many of which incorporate other artistic media, and continues to actively promote commissions by today's leading composers.

A Word Of Thanks

We wish to express our special thanks to many people who made the Corigliano performance possible. First and foremost, thanks to all of the extra players who gave so freely of their time. Special thanks goes to Cornell University for allowing us to use this beautiful hall. Otherwise, this performance would not have been possible. Special thanks to Cynthia Johnston Turner, Bill Esty, Loralyn Light, Dan Maas, and Jeff Montesano.

ITHACA COLLEGE WIND ENSEMBLE

Stephen Peterson, conductor

Flute/Piccolo

Jacqueline Christen*
Siobhan Correnty
Emily James
Lisa Meyerhofer
Aimée Shorten

Oboe/English Horn

Corinne Landrey
Alicia Rockenhauser*
Rachel Seiden

Bassoon

Josh Malison*
Jeff Ward
Noah Wolfinger

E♭ Clarinet

Sarah Koop

B♭ Clarinet

Spencer Blumenfeld
Adam Butalewicz
Erik Johnson
Allegra Smith
Colleen White
Robert Yaple

Alto Clarinet

Laura Caruthers

Bass Clarinet

Marcus Christian

Alto Saxophone

Robin Jackson*
Andrew Lawrence

Tenor Saxophone

Hart Linker

Baritone Saxophone

Ryan Salisbury

Trumpet

Cyril Bodnar
Joe Brown*
Michael DeWeaver
Gregory Harris
Ethan Urtz
Janelle Varin

Horn

Mike Drennan*
Rachel Haselbauer
Tom Peters
Andrea Silvestrini
Rose Valby

Trombone

Francis Cook
Hank Currey*
Rick McGrath

Bass Trombone

E.J. Swider

Euphonium

Justin Falvo
Mike Vecchio*

Tuba

Alfred Hadinger
Kevin Madden*

Percussion

Benjamin Berry
Nathaniel Dominy
Christopher Ganey
Lauretta Noller
Evan Peltier*

Timpani

Kaye Sevier

String Bass

Kevin Gobetz

Piano

Robert Keiser

Harp

Myra Kovary**

Surround Band

B♭ Clarinet

Allegra Smith

Saxophone

Robin Jackson
Andrew Lawrence
Hart Linker
Ryan Salisbury

Trumpet

Michael Conerty
James Covington
Sean Elligers
Jason Graf
Kevin Guest
Gregory Harris
Carol Jumper
Beverly Stokes
Janelle Varin
Emily Waltz
Omar Williams

Horn

Rachel Haselbauer
Lori Roy

Percussion

Daniel Cathey
Alan Dust
Edith Resnik

String Bass

Kevin Gobetz

Marching Band

Flute/Piccolo

Emily James

E♭ Clarinet

Sarah Koop

Trumpet

Janelle Varin
Omar Williams

Trombone

Francis Cook
Phillip Truex

Percussion

Alan Dust

Additional Stage Band Members

Oboe

Justine Popik

B♭ Clarinet

Laura Caruthers
Amanda Jenne
Brianna Remaley
Mark Wolocki

Bass Clarinet

Michael Colletti

Contrabass Clarinet

Alicia McMahon

Bassoon

Jessica Tortorici

Graduate Assistants

Susan DeVore
Christopher Dresko

* denotes section leader

** guest artist