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## Ensemble Concerts: Symphony Orchestra, May 8, 1975

Arthur Corra Conductor

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# Illinois State University SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

ARTHUR CORRA, Conductor

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Opus 36

Beethoven

Adagio molto—Allegro con brio

Larghetto

Scherzo: Allegro

Allegro molto

\*New England Triptych

William Schuman

(Three Pieces for Orchestra after William Billings)

Be Glad Then, America

When Jesus Wept

Chester

## INTERMISSION

Six Mobiles for Orchestra (first performance)

Roque Cordero

Adagio—Andante

Allegro

Presto e misterioso

Andante quasi moderato

Allegro vigoroso

Largo e dolente—Allegro

Roque Cordero, conductor

Capriccio Espagnole, Opus 34

Rimsky-Korsakoff

Alborada: Vivo e strepitoso

Variazioni: Andante con moto

Alborada: Vivo e strepitoso

Scena e canto gitano: Allegretto

Fandango asturiano

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University Auditorium

Thursday Evening

May 8, 1975

8:00 p.m.

\*As part of the celebration of our country's bicentennial the Illinois State University Symphony Orchestra will include at least one work by an American Composer on each concert of the 1974-75, 1975-76, and 1976-77 seasons.

It was in 1802 that Beethoven realized the loss of his hearing would soon be a reality. Although he loved congenial company, Beethoven withdrew from his circles and spent many lonely hours, overcome by desperation, brooding over his fate. In those dark days he drew up the lengthy, moving document that has become known as the "Heiligenstadt testament," after the Viennese suburb of Heiligenstadt where Beethoven spent the summer of 1802. In spite of the tragic circumstances the artistic yield of that year is astonishing. It includes the three violin sonatas of Opus 30, the three piano sonatas of Opus 31, the "Eroica" variations for piano, the Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Opus 37, the oratorio Christ on the Mount of Olives, and the Symphony No. 2.

The Symphony was completed during Beethoven's stay in Heiligenstadt. He was determined to bring it before the public at the earliest opportunity and included it in a concert which he gave on April 5, 1803 in the Theater an der Wien. The rich program included the oratorio, the first and second symphonies, the Piano Concerto No. 3, with Beethoven himself as soloist, and several vocal numbers. Beethoven considered the oratorio the main attraction and had the usual ticket prices doubled and tripled. He counted on the curiosity of the Viennese and the magnetism of his name and his reputation as performing and creative artist to attract a large audience.

The last rehearsal for the concert was held on the day preceding the performance, began at 8:00 am and lasted for six and a half hours. To bolster the energy of the exhausted participants, Prince Lichnowsky, one of Beethoven's most enthusiastic supporters, ordered cold cuts and wine delivered in large baskets. Spirits were revived, and it was agreed to run through the entire oratorio again. Beethoven's expectations were fulfilled and the house was well-attended; the financial success was gratifying. The musical result was something considerably less than a success, however. Most of the critics concentrated on the oratorio; but all of the new works were received coolly. The Second Symphony fared the best; indeed, it soon made enough headway with the public that Beethoven transcribed it for piano, violin, and cello. (One critic characterized the Symphony as "a gross monstrosity, an immense wounded snake bleeding to death but unwilling to die.")

Viewed in context of Beethoven's entire symphonic work, and also in that of his stylistic development, the Symphony No. 2 occupies a particular position: it stands between two worlds. Beethoven's first symphony symbolizes, with Mozart's and Haydn's last symphonies, the peak of the eighteenth-century "classical" symphonies. Beethoven's second stands between the eighteenth-century type and the nineteenth-century "romantic" symphony as created in the third ("Eroica", 1804). Although it shows many new traits, it is basically oriented to the concepts of the eighteenth century.

In the extended slow introduction to the first movement, Beethoven followed models by Haydn and Mozart. It does not present ideas that are worked out later on. The purpose of the opening *Adagio molto* is to create an air of expectancy and tension that is dispelled with the entry of the *Allegro*. This is mainly a play of contrasts: the announcement of the principal theme in the bass and the continuation of it by the oboe, the gentle presentation (soft) of the second theme and the forceful answer (very loud), and the sudden change from a fortissimo produced by the entire wind section and kettledrums to a pianissimo unison of the strings.

The second movement is also in sonata form, but it is as abundant in thematic ideas as the first is economical. It is a piece of gentle lyricism in which stronger accents occur only sporadically. Clarinets and bassoons play a particularly prominent role in answering phrases announced initially by the strings. The third movement, a Scherzo, derives its humor from the ancient and honorable comic device of rapid, persistent juxtaposition of extremes—in this case loud versus soft, treble versus bass, solo instruments versus full orchestra; a kind of musical Mutt and Jeff. Humor and merriment are also prevalent in the fourth movement, which is also in sonata form. Again, Beethoven springs many surprises, including sforzandi, rapid juxtaposition of extremes in dynamics, fermatas, and tonal shifts that wrench the tonality up or down a third.

Although the symphony as a whole keeps to the Haydn-Mozart tradition (even the fact of having three of the four movements in sonata form), it went beyond the eighteenth-century technique in the orchestral treatment. The alternation between wind and stringed instruments sometimes applied from measure to measure and distribution of one melody among several instruments anticipate the technique used in the "Eroica". These, and other "innovations", may have confused the performers and audiences around 1804 and even later. As Berlioz records, even in the 1820s incredible cuts were inflicted on the score of the Second Symphony to make it performable in Paris.

## SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

### Violin I

Taik Ju Lee  
Frank Schwarzwaldner  
Terryl Jares  
Gregg Oakley  
Hwei Ming Tuw  
Debra Selin  
Elizabeth Westerlund

### Violin II

Deborah Perry  
Deborah Koehn  
Pamela Combs  
Debra Pederson  
Cecelia Roth  
Marilee Appleby  
Carol Waldvogel  
Huu Pham  
Wanita Smith

### Viola

Chris Reichert  
Linda Langellier  
Helen Zamie  
Forrest Crocker  
Larry Spence

### Cello

Tom Wang  
Daniel Bunce  
Janice Gedney  
Sharon Kahn  
Lyssa Myhre  
Susan Allen

### Bass

Debra Buchanan  
Philip Murphy  
Carol Jansen  
Thomas Fatten  
Peter Guy  
Ken Haebich  
Steven Hayes  
Craig Jones  
George Gilham

### Flute

\*Judith Ross  
\*Carol Neuleib  
\*Kathleen Townsend  
Nancy Widmer  
Rebecca Meyer  
Diane Meader

\*Co-principals

### Piccolo

Nancy Widmer  
Diane Meader

### Oboe

\*Jan Lohs  
\*Beth Christensen  
\*Patricia Seino

### English Horn

Patricia Seino

### Clarinet

\*Barry Kolman  
\*Wayne Montag  
Ricardo Mariani

### E-Flat Clarinet

Barry Kolman

### Bass Clarinet

Kathleen Hoerner

### Bassoon

\*Mary Dalziel  
\*Joyce Hitchcock  
Patricia Bills  
\*Suzanne Howe  
Grant Gillett

### Contrabassoon

Joyce Hitchcock  
Grant Gillett

### Horn

\*Rodger Burnett  
\*Tim Swenson  
Mary Riley  
Peter Holm

### Trumpet

\*David Golden  
\*James Cassens  
George Marion  
Rob Fund  
James DeFranco

### Trombone

\*David Kotowski  
\*Michael Haynes  
James Bermann

### Tuba

Edward Firth

### Timpani

Philip Henry

### Percussion

Tom Hensold  
Jose Alecia  
Ron Engel  
Darryl One  
Ted Parge  
Thomas Long

### Harp

Steven Hartman

### Librarian

Peter Guy

### State Managers

David Kotowski  
Frank Schwarzwaldner

William Schuman composed *New England Triptych* (Three Pieces for Orchestra after William Billings) in 1956. William Billings (1746-1800), a contemporary of George Washington and a neighbor of the Adams and Otis Hancock families) is a major figure in the history of American music. The works of this dynamic composer capture the spirit of sinewy ruggedness, deep religiosity and patriotic fervor that we associate with the Revolutionary period. Despite the undeniable crudities and technical shortcomings of his music, its appeal, even today, is forceful and moving. Schuman is not alone among American composers who feel an identity with Billings and it is this sense of identity which accounts for his use of Billings' music as a point of departure. These pieces do not constitute a "fantasy" on themes of Billings, nor "variations" on his themes, but rather a fusion of styles and musical language.

*I Be Glad Then, America:* Billings' text for this anthem includes the following lines:

"Yea, the Lord will answer  
And say unto his people—behold!  
I will send you corn and wine and oil  
And ye shall be satisfied therewith.

"Be glad then, America,  
Shout and rejoice.  
Fear not O land,  
Be glad and rejoice.  
Hallelujah!"

A timpani solo begins the short introduction which is developed predominantly in the strings. This music is suggestive of the "Hallelujah" heard at the end of the piece. Trombones and trumpets begin the main section, a free and varied setting of the words "Be Glad then, America, Shout and Rejoice." The timpani, again solo, leads to a middle fugal section stemming from the words "And Ye Shall Be Satisfied." The music gains momentum and combined themes lead to a climax. There follows a free adaptation of the "Hallelujah" music with which Billings concludes his original choral piece and a final reference to the "Shout and Rejoice" music.

*II When Jesus Wept*

"When Jesus wept the falling tear  
In mercy flowed beyond all bound;  
When Jesus groaned, a trembling fear  
Seized all the guilty world around."

The setting of the above text is in the form of a round. Here, Billings' music is used in its original form, as well as in new settings with contrapuntal embellishments and melodic extensions. The central section for the string orchestra is framed by opening and closing sections featuring a duet for solo oboe and solo bassoon accompanied by the death knell of the tenor drum.

*III Chester*

This music, composed as a church hymn, was subsequently adopted by the Continental Army as a marching song and enjoyed great popularity. The orchestral piece derives from the spirit both of the hymn and the marching song. The original words, with one of the verses especially written for its use by the Continental Army, are:

"Let tyrants shake their iron rods,  
And slavery clank her galling chains,  
We fear them not, we trust in God,  
New England's God forever reigns.

"The foe comes on with haughty stride,  
Our troops advance with martial noise,  
Their vet'rans flee before our youth,  
And gen'ral's yeild to beardless boys."

You may remember that the ISU Symphony Orchestra performed another piece about New England, *Three Places in New England* by Charles Ives, at the opening concert of this academic year, thereby celebrating the American bicentennial as well as Ives' 100th birthday. It seems particularly fitting to conclude the year with a performance of *New England Triptych*: it gives another view of that historically important area of our country, this time through the eyes of a composer who was active during the Revolution but filtered, so to speak, through the vocabulary and techniques of a composer who is still active today.

*Six Mobiles* was written for the ISU Symphony Orchestra through a Summer Research Grant from Illinois State University. The six movements are played without interruption and each develops the same six motives but, as in a mobile sculpture, they do not appear twice in the same order, and each appearance of a motive brings new and subtle changes. The work, true to Dr. Cordero's aesthetics, has many rhythmic and melodic elements akin to Panamanian folk music but without using specific quotations. However, in this work, the Allegros of the second and sixth movements do use the rhythm of one of the folk dances Dr. Cordero orchestrated in the summer of 1974 for the National Folkloric Ballet of Panama, and the trumpets and trombones quote the three initial measures of that folk song just before the close of the composition. *Six Mobiles*, begun in the summer of 1974 and completed in January, 1975, is written for full orchestra with an enlarged percussion section. Two of the percussionists are separated from the main body of players and placed at the front, and on either side, of the orchestra.

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakoff was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1844. At the age of eighteen he entered the Imperial Naval School, and upon graduation he was assigned to a cruise ship. Some eleven years later he resigned from the Navy to teach composition and orchestration at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Several years later, while still retaining his teaching post as well as conducting in Russia, France, and Belgium, he was appointed inspector of bands and orchestras in the Navy. On one of his trips as inspector, he spent some time in Spain and was intrigued by the melodies and rhythms and timbres of Spanish folk music. His sketches of a virtuoso violin fantasy on Spanish themes, which he intended to "glitter with dazzling orchestra color" developed into the *Capriccio Espagnol*. In this work the composer sought to express a new idea in music: brilliant orchestral sound becomes the very essence of the composition rather than simply a garb for the themes. The five movements of the piece (of which the third movement is simply a note-for-note transposition and reorchestration of the first) are filled with cadenzas for various instruments, lively rhythms, and a variety of lyric melodies. It is a virtuoso piece, rising to sonorous climaxes and exploiting the color possibilities of the orchestra in brilliant fashion. During its course, it explores virtually every special technique (pizzicato, left-hand pizzicato, saltando, jeté, multiple stops, spiccato, etc.) possible on stringed instruments: indeed, it could serve as a textbook of the coloristic devices available.