

Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

Concert Program

Sunday, January 29, 2012

3:00 P.M.

Maplewood Municipal Building
Maplewood, NJ



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Stephen Culbertson

Conductor

Stephen Culbertson, currently 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's most recent activities include leading the New Jersey Reading Orchestra and a third stint as interim Music/choir 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. 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).

Society of Musical Arts

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Sunday, January 29, 2012

3:00 pm

Three English Masterpieces

St. Paul's Suite, Opus 29, No. 2 Gustav Holst

Serenade to Music Ralph Vaughn Williams

(version for 16 Solo Voices & Orchestra)

words by William Shakespeare

Intermission

Cello Concerto in E Minor, Opus 85 Edward Elgar

[Adagio](#) — Moderato Lento —

Allegro molto

Adagio

Allegro — Moderato — Allegro, ma non troppo —

Poco più lento — Adagio.

Jameson Platte, Cello

Encore to be announced from stage

Words of Appreciation

Peggy Reynolds thanks her husband Al Klase for all his support— technical, practical, physical, emotional — in helping put together our program and our web site: www.SOMA.ar88.net.

Peggy also thanks the orchestra, whose spirit of cooperativeness and good will can only be matched by their superb musicianship.

And thank you to Maestro Steve Culbertson for his guidance, expertise and good humor. Thank you also to Bernie Friedland for putting together and printing this program.

And thank you our president Laura Papparatto and to the board members, past and present for their continuing support. And thank you to our supporting sponsors and members, who are keeping us going.

And most of all, thank you to our audience, for whom it is our pleasure to present today's concert.

PROGRAM NOTES

by Stephen Culbertson and Jameson Platte

Gustav Holst (1874 - 1934) was a little-known figure in London music circles until he wrote his masterpiece *The Planets*, which was premiered in 1918. He earned his living first as a trombonist, then as a music teacher at several schools, including the St. Paul's Girls' School. He wrote many pieces for his students, the most famous being *St. Paul's Suite*, written in 1912 in gratitude to the school for building him a soundproof studio. Originally for strings only (the version being performed today), he later added winds, brass and percussion so that more students could participate.

The music is energetic and straightforward, divided into four movements. The opening Jig: Vivace (very fast) alternates between 6/8 (2 beats to the bar) and 9/8 (3 beats to the bar) time. The Ostinato: Presto (even faster) follows with the second violins playing a repeating, almost trill-like passage, under the other instruments that provide the melody and bass line. Then the Intermezzo: Andante con moto ("walking" tempo, with movement, labeled "Dance" in the manuscript) and reminds us that Holst was interested in Hindu mysticism; the middle theme sounds very Eastern. The concluding movement Finale (The Dargason) may be familiar to band/wind ensemble fans, as it is an arrangement of a movement from his Second Suite for Military Band. It combines two folk songs — *The Dargason* and *Greensleeves* — into a rousing and fun conclusion. This is Holst at his best: expertly written for the strings, accessible to the players and audience, with plenty of musical substance and challenge to keep us interested.

—SC

Vaughan Williams *Serenade to Music* was composed in 1938. The text is an adaptation of the discussion about music in Act IV, Scene 1 of *The Merchant of Venice*. The original version (being performed today) was composed for the voices of 16 eminent British singers (chosen by Sir Henry Wood, who conducted the premiere, and the composer). Each soloist has a short solo and all sing together as a "choir" in the climatic passages. Vaughan Williams realized the difficulty of assembling so many soloists and made arrangements for 4 soloists, choir and orchestra as well as orchestra alone. The latter version really doesn't work at all; this is a case where the words are at least as important as the music. The sheer beauty of the words, combined with the lush harmonies of Vaughan Williams, make this short work a memorable one. The first time I heard this work "live" (mid-70s) was also done with solo voices: a sound I'll never forget and I hope we can recreate today.

—SC

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night

Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb that thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.
Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn!
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music.
I am never merry when I hear sweet music.
The reason is, your spirits are attentive –
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted. Music! hark!
It is your music of the house.
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.
Silence bestows that virtue on it
How many things by season season'd are
To their right praise and true perfection!
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion
And would not be awak'd. Soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

from Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice

Elgar's beloved **Concerto for Cello in E Minor** was not an immediate success. Written against the backdrop of the end of World War I, the concerto's elegiac nature reveals Elgar's view of the loss of the world he knew. Given the piece's disastrous premiere in 1919, it did not achieve world wide popularity until the 1960's when it was recorded by Jacqueline du Pre'. It was Elgar's final work of note.

This concerto holds a special place in my life. When, at the age of 8, it was decided that I would study cello, my father gave me a cassette recording of Yo-Yo Ma playing the Elgar Concerto. For four years I listened to this recording as I went to sleep. It was my favorite time of the day, and it has remained my favorite piece of music throughout my career.

The cello is the instrument that best matches the range of human expression in its ability to speak, sing, wail and cry. I believe that no other work captures the voice of the cello or its ability to grieve with such poignancy. This piece has always been and remains my inspiration to be a musician.

Jameson D. Platte

Cello

Jameson Platte maintains an active career both as a performer and a teacher. He is currently a member of the critically acclaimed Axis quintet, the Conservatory Quartet, Duo 92 with pianist/composer Matthew Quayle, principal cellist of the Glens Falls Symphony, principal of the Orchestra of Northern New York and assistant principal of the Allentown Symphony. Mr. Platte works extensively as a clinician, guest conductor and cello coach, performs as a soloist and maintains a large private studio. He is in constant demand as a guest principal cellist throughout the north east. A frequent recitalist in New York City, he has been featured in Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Lincoln Center and the 92nd St. Y, among others. His recitals have been heard throughout North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Mr. Platte is Artist/Faculty at New England Music Camp.

Mr. Platte has attended the Brevard Music Festival as a teaching assistant where he won the concerto contest. He also attended the Blossom Chamber Music Festival where he played principal cello under Leonard Slatkin. Mr. Platte has been a member of the Tuscaloosa Symphony (under Louis Lane), the Alabama Symphony and the Huntsville Symphony. Mr. Platte also served as Professor of Cello at the Montclair State University Preparatory Division and the Stokes Forest Music Festival. He has been a featured soloist with the Jacksonville Symphony, Allentown Symphony, Glens Falls Symphony, The Orchestra of Northern New York and the Stokes Forest Festival Orchestra, among others. Mr. Platte's recordings of contemporary music may be heard under the Koch International and Seedmusic labels. Mr. Platte's principal teacher was Carlton McCreery; he has also pursued studies with such teachers as Yo-Yo Ma, Lynn Harrell, Mstislav Rostropovich, Harvey Shapiro and Carter Brey.

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 County.

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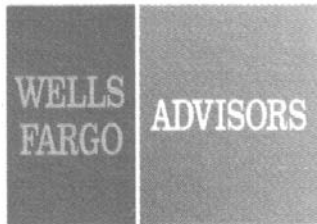
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Laura Papparatto, President

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**We welcome Maplewood's Deputy Mayor Kathleen
M. Leventhal to today's concert.**

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