

Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

Concert Program



Sunday, October 20, 2013

4:00 P.M.

**St. George's Episcopal Church
550 Ridgewood Road
Maplewood, New Jersey**

Dedicated to the Memory of Zita Friedland



In memoriam



Zita Friedland
April 10, 1937—April 10, 2013

**Beloved piano teacher,
performing artist and board
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Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

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Matthew Culbertson*

HARP

Patricia Turse*

* Principal

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**Our next concert is
Sunday, January 26, 2014**

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Meet the Composers!**

Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

Sunday, October 20, 2013

4:00 pm

Invitation to Dance

Montuno (*World Premiere, written for SOMA*) **Roberto Sierra**

Danse Macabre, Op. 40 **Camille Saint-Saëns**
Kriszcendra Jones, violin

Dance Intermezzo, Op. 45, No. 2 **Jean Sibelius**

Waltzes from Der Rosenkavalier **Richard Strauss**

~~ Intermission ~~

Remembering Zita

Montuno (*encore performance*) **Roberto Sierra**

Norwegian Dances, Op. 35 **Edvard Grieg**

Dances from Galánta **Zoltán Kodály**

Meet the composer. Post-concert Q&A with Roberto Sierra.

This program is dedicated to the memory of Zita Friedland.

Program Notes

by Stephen Culbertson

Roberto Sierra (b. 1953)

Montuno

It is a great honor to present the premiere and encore performances of *Montuno*. Roberto Sierra is a composer I've admired and worked with for over 25 years. He describes the work:

The main musical elements of this orchestral montuno are the rhythms of the Latin clave and its corollary two-measure chord sequence. This frames this work in the fashion of a chaconne, a series of variations built on a repeating harmonic sequence. *Montuno* quickly builds by increasing the number of players that join the Latin dance. A sudden change of meter toward the central point provides another variant of the established rhythmic/harmonic pattern that brings the montuno to an exhilarating close.

Much like (to name only a few) Kodály, Bartók and Stravinsky did with folk and native music from their cultures, Sierra takes latin themes, rhythms, dances and other elements and transforms them through a prism of 21st Century sensibilities. The result is fascinating: there is always something to “grab onto” (the native elements and rhythms), yet the transformation is interesting and compelling. Combined with a rich orchestral palate, Sierra's music has been described as the “tropicalization” of Western music. Written specifically for our community orchestra, it is accessible to the audience, musicians and space. We hope these are the first 2 of many more performances!

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

Danse macabre, Op. 40

According to a French legend as told by the poet Henri Cazalis, “Death” appears at midnight every year on Halloween. He wakes up the dead from their graves and the skeletons dance while he plays his fiddle. Saint-Saëns originally set the poem as an art song, then later worked it into this tone poem. Death's fiddle is represented by the solo violin. He uses the xylophone to depict the skeleton's bones rattling, something he also did in the Fossils movement of *Carnival of the Animals*.

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Dance Intermezzo, Op. 45, No. 2

Light-hearted dance music is not the first quality that comes to mind when thinking about the music of the Finnish symphonist. There are a few exceptions, and this is one of them. Sibelius conducted the first performance in 1904, then shortened and revised it for publication in 1907. The introduction (harp, then oboes) leads to a relaxed and sunny waltz featuring (rather amusingly) two cornets.

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Der Rosenkavalier Waltzes

Although the waltzes are not the most glorious part of *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911), they have become one of the most well-loved features of the opera. The segment starts echt-Viennese, eventually moving to a rather pompous and bombastic depiction of one of the main characters, Baron Ochs. As always with Strauss, the full orchestra is complete with soaring strings and blazing horns.

Edward Grieg (1843-1907)

Norwegian Dances, Op. 35

Originally written for piano 4-hands (1881) and later orchestrated by Hans Sitt, the first dance is based on a Scottish theme. The other three dances (called hallings from the Hallingdal region of Norway) are related to Scottish reels (Scotland and Norway are actually very near and their languages/dialects share many words). The dances share many characteristics of Grieg's most famous work *Peer Gynt*, written as incidental music to the play by Ibsen. In a production mounted in 1885, these four dances were included and provided the music for an entertainment put on by the Mountain King.

Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967)

Dances of Galánta

Kodály lived in Galánta (now part of Slovakia) for several years during his youth and remembered "a famous gypsy band." Their sound in his ears, he later studied a publication from the early 1800s of several books of Hungarian dances from the Galánta gypsy tradition. This background provided the composer with the elements for a concert piece to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Budapest Philharmonic in 1933. The themes of the gypsies were reconstructed by Kodály in the Verbunkos style, originally used by the military to entice young males to enlist in the army! This style became an important "standard" for Hungarian-inspired music by composers such as Brahms and Kodály's compatriot Béla Bartók.

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Kriscendra Jones - Violin

Featured in today's concert is Young Artist Competition winner Kriscendra Jones of Belleville, NJ. Ms. Jones will play the violin solo in *Danse Macabre*. Ms. Jones currently studies violin under Brennan Sweet of the NJSO, as well as attending Kean University's Conservatory of Music as a music education major with an emphasis in violin and minor in piano. She has been featured violinist with the Newark Young Writers Arts Festival at NJPAC and NJSO's Greater Newark Youth Orchestra, and currently plays with the Summit Symphony Orchestra in Summit, NJ.

Roberto Sierra - Composer

For more than three decades the works of American composer Roberto Sierra have been part of the repertoire of many of the leading orchestras, ensembles and festivals in the USA and Europe. At the inaugural concert of the 2002 world renowned Proms in London, his *FANDANGOS* was performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra in a concert that was broadcast by both the BBC Radio and Television throughout the UK and Europe. Many of the major American and European orchestras and international ensembles have commissioned and performed his works. Among those institutions are the orchestras of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, New Mexico, Houston, Minnesota, Dallas, Detroit, San Antonio and Phoenix, as well as the American Composers Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Tonhalle Orchestra of Zurich, the Spanish orchestras of Madrid, Galicia, Castilla y León, Barcelona, and others.

Commissioned works include: *CONCERTO FOR ORCHESTRA* for the centennial celebrations of the Philadelphia Orchestra commissioned by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation and the Philadelphia Orchestra; *CONCERTO FOR SAXOPHONES AND ORCHESTRA* commissioned by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra for James Carter; *FANDANGOS* and *MISSA LATINA* commissioned by the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington DC; *SINFONÍA No. 3 "La Salsa"*, commissioned by the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra; *DANZAS CONCERTANTES* for guitar and orchestra commissioned by the Orquesta de Castilla y León.

In 2003 he was awarded the Academy Award in Music by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The award states: "*Roberto Sierra writes brilliant music, mixing fresh and personal melodic lines with sparkling harmonies and striking rhythms...*" Roberto Sierra has served as Composer-in-Residence with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra and New Mexico Symphony. In 2010 he was elected to the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Roberto Sierra's Music may be heard on CD's by Naxos, EMI, UMG's EMARCY, New World Records, Albany Records, Koch, New Albion, Koss Classics, BMG, Fleur de Son and other labels.

Roberto Sierra was born in 1953 in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, and studied composition both in Puerto Rico and Europe, where one his teachers was György Ligeti at the Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg, Germany. The works of Roberto Sierra are published principally by Subito Music Publishing (ASCAP).

MONTUNO, the work we hear today, was written especially for the SOMA orchestra.

Stephen Culbertson

Conductor

Stephen Culbertson, 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 serving 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. 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).

{Gefken}

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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 orchestral master-works in a chamber orchestra and to present free public concerts with multi-generational appeal to the residents of Essex County.

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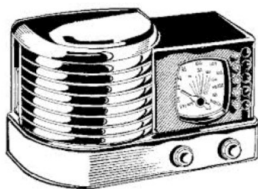
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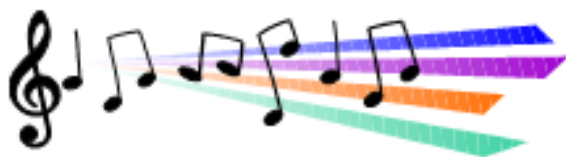


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Laura Papparatto, President



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