

Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

Concert Program



Sunday, November 2, 2014:00 P.M.

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





This program is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts and administered by the Essex County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs.



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Orchestra November 2014

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

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Marie Ihnen
Lea Karpman
Narelle Myke
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Diane Wade

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Jim Jordan
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Matthew Hintz
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Laura Papatatto*
Kent Weisert

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Jeffrey Lacolcetta*
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CLARINET

Donna Dixon*
Theresa Hartman

BASSOON

Laura Carnibucci*
Karen Kelland

FRENCH HORN

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Paul Erickson
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Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

Sunday, November 2, 2014

4:00 pm

Raising the Bar

Romanian Folk Dances

Béla Bartók

I Joc cu bâță (Stick Dance)

II Brâul (Sash Dance)

III Pe loc (In One Spot)

IV Buciumeana (Dance from Bucsum — Hornpipe Dance)

V Poargă Românească (Romanian Polka)

VI Mărunțel (Fast Dance)

VII Mărunțel

Concerto for Violin & Orchestra, Op. 14

Samuel Barber

Allegro Moderato

Andante

Presto in moto perpetuo

Ashley Horne, Violin

Q&A with Ashley Horne

~~~ Intermission ~~~

### **Symphony No. 3 in E<sup>b</sup> Major, Op. 97 (*Rhenish*)**

**Schumann**

*Lebhaft (Lively)*

*Scherzo*

*Nicht schnell (Not fast)*

*Feierlich (Solemn)*

*Lebhaft (Lively)*



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# Program Notes

by Stephen Culbertson

## **Béla Bartók (1881-1945)**

### **Romanian Folk Dances**

Bartók was well-known as a musicologist in addition to being one of the best composers of the early 20th Century. He made many trips to various parts of Eastern Europe with his rather primitive recording device to collect folk music, which was the basis for many of his compositions. These particular dances were originally called *Romanian Folk Dances from Hungary*; but they are really from Transylvania, which joined Romania in 1918, prompting Bartók to change the title. Many of us know these dances in their original 1915 version for piano solo. The composer orchestrated them in 1917.

According to Bartók, the melody of the first movement came from the Maros-Torda section of Transylvania, and he first heard it from two gypsy violinists. The second movement is a typical dance called Brâul, which uses a sash (waistband). This melody came from the Banat region. The third dance comes from the same region, but its theme is much darker. It is also called a “stomping” dance, in which the participants stand in place, and its melody was first heard on a Middle Eastern instrument much like the flute. The fourth dance came from the district of Torda-Aranyos, and it’s not difficult to imagine the gypsy violinist(s) while listening. The fifth dance is an old Romanian dance similar to the Polka and comes from Bihor county near the Hungarian/Romanian border. The sixth and seventh dances (played without pause), formed by two different melodies, are filled with liveliness and lead to the frenzied conclusion.

## **Samuel Barber (1910-1981)**

### **Concerto for Violin & Orchestra, Op. 14**

While music critic Donal Henahan stated that “Probably no other American composer has ever enjoyed such early, such persistent and such long-lasting acclaim,” the Violin Concerto was *not* one of the pieces responsible for this acclaim. In fact the violinist, Iso Briselli, for whom it was originally written rejected it! Now that the letters back-and-forth between all the parties have been published, it appears that Briselli’s violin coach, Albert Meiff, thought that the work’s first two movements weren’t “violinistic” enough. Meiff proposed to “fix” it by collaborating with Barber on the solo part; by himself playing the same role for Barber that Joaquim played for Brahms’ Violin Concerto (Never mind that Joaquim’s role with

Brahms was much more limited than Meiff was proposing to Barber). Meiff was more than a little miffed (sorry) when Barber not only rejected the offer of “help” but also turned wrote a third movement without any input from Meiff or Briselli. The two violinists found this movement insubstantial and not fitting with the first two movements.

Despite what one might read in several sources, the concerto did not enter the repertoire all that rapidly. Issac Stern and Leonard Bernstein recorded it in 1964, but the work did not enter the repertoire of most major violinists until the late 1980s (I know this from personal experience as Director of the Rental Department at G. Schirmer, Barber’s sole publisher).

That said, Barber’s Concerto is certainly now firmly entrenched and one of the most often-performed works of the mid-20th Century. Here are Barber’s program notes for the premiere performance:

The first movement — *allegro molto moderato* — begins with a lyrical first subject announced at once by the solo violin, without any orchestral introduction. This movement as a whole has perhaps more the character of a sonata than concerto form. The second movement — *andante sostenuto* — is introduced by an extended oboe solo. The violin enters with a contrasting and rhapsodic theme, after which it repeats the oboe melody of the beginning. The last movement, a *perpetuum mobile*, exploits the more brilliant and virtuosic character of the violin.

Program notes, however, are really unnecessary for this work. It speaks so directly and simply that the audience “gets it” right away. No wonder it is one of the most-loved concertos in history.

### **Robert Schumann (1810-1856)**

#### **Symphony No. 3 in E<sup>b</sup> Major, Op. 97 “Rhenish”**

Schumann is known to every beginning piano student (*e.g.*, *Album for the Young*), but in his relatively short life, he wrote some of the greatest large-scale and advanced piano music of the early Romantic period, as well as songs, symphonies, concertos, unsuccessful operas and choral works. He was also quite influential as a music critic, writer and mentor to composers like Brahms.

Perhaps his best symphony (and his last in order of composition), the *Rhenish*, was composed and premiered in Düsseldorf (on the Rhine River), where Schumann had been appointed Music Direc-



tor, and where he found the people more outgoing and prosperous than in his previous posts in Leipzig and Dresden. The orchestra in Düsseldorf was about 40 players; somewhat smaller than SOMA.

Keeping in mind that this symphony was written in 1850, only 25 years after Beethoven's death and still under his influence, we can see strong influences from the *Eroica* and *Pastorale* symphonies. Most obvious is the key (E<sup>b</sup>, same as *Eroica*) and the nature of the first movement. The glorious theme is repeated in more-and-more heroic treatments. Homages to the *Pastorale* can be found in the number of movements (5) and the programmatic subtitles of the movements. Schumann later deleted the subtitles, but they are interesting and give us an idea of what he was trying to "say" in each movement. For example, the second movement (scherzo) was entitled *Morning on the Rhine*, and the fourth *In the character of an accompaniment to a solemn occasion*. Schumann had witnessed the elevation of a cardinal at Cologne cathedral, the largest Gothic building in northern Europe. In this movement, one of the greatest and most original slow movements ever written, Schumann adds trombones to the brass section to accentuate the dark, solemn feeling of the music. As usual for symphonies of this period, the final movement, reminiscent of the opening, moves to a brilliant and triumphal close.

Several things strike me about this symphony:

- the beauty and inventiveness of the melodies. This is Romantic music at its best!
- the third movement, not really slow or fast, but a medium tempo *intermezzo*, a genre invented by Schumann.
- the techniques and even passages that later composers, (most notably, Mahler) lifted almost verbatim in their works.

Technical note: Many of us who suffered through Music History 101 in college were taught that Schumann was a bad (thick) orchestrator; there are plenty of examples of conductors (notably Toscanini and Szell) who re-orchestrated his symphonies. This subject is widely debated, and now the pendulum seems to be swinging towards going back to the original. In our performance, we are attempting to perform Schumann's music as written. After all, he did conduct several performances of this work with his own orchestra and was able to make any revisions he wanted. We have made some alterations of dynamics that are implied, if not specified, in the score, as well as some adjustments to suit our particular ensemble and acoustic. My special thanks to Michael Charry (professor emeritus of Mannes School of Music and Szell's biographer) for his insight on this subject).

# Ashley Horne

## *Violin*

Ashley Horne is Associate Director, Violin, My Music Garden, which presents his Bio:

Ashley Horne, a native of Los Angeles, has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician around the world. A graduate of the Juilliard School, he is known for his “bright tone and fine overall sense of style” (Dennis Rooney of *Strad Magazine*). He performs regularly with American Symphony Orchestra, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Bard Festival Orchestra, Westchester Symphony, West-Park Chamber Society, Gateways Music Festival, Dance Theater of Harlem Orchestra and New York City Opera, as well as on Broadway’s *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *The Wild Party*, *Carousel*, the smash hit *The Producers*, and *Young Frankenstein*.

He has been the featured soloist and concertmaster of numerous ensembles, including The New Black Repertory Ensemble, The Antara Ensemble of NY, Cascade Festival Orchestra, and Aspen Young Artists Orchestra. His recording of Henry Cowell’s *Fiddler’s Jig* with the Manhattan Chamber Orchestra can be heard on Koch International.

Mr. Horne has been a recitalist at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall. Solo and chamber music performances have taken him to many interesting parts of the globe, such as Spain, Portugal, the Azores Islands, Odessa and Istanbul. Filmgoers can see Mr. Horne in *Le Mozart Noir*, the PBS documentary of violinist and composer *Chevalier de Saint George*, as well as in Eddie Murphy’s *Coming to America*. Mr. Horne is serving as concert master in the current Broadway production of *On the Town*.

# 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).

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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 baroque and classical music in a chamber orchestra and to present free public concerts with multi-generational appeal to the residents of Essex and surrounding counties.

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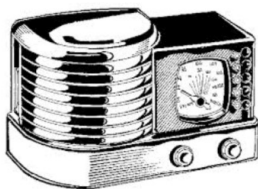
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