Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

Concert Program



Sunday, June 5, 2016 4:00 P.M.

Maplewood Middle School 7 Burnet Street 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 June 2016 Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

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VIOLA

Roland Hutchinson* Harry Berkshire Mitsuaki Ishikawa Katherine Kolibas Peggy LaVake Richard Lyon

CELLO

James Celestino* Innes Borstel Arnie Feldman Megan Doherty Diana Hessinger Helen Kong Joseph Orchard Florin Sutton

Bass

Kenneth Bannerman Margaret Blewett Gary Hersh Robert Whiteley FLUTE Laura Paparatto* Gail Berkshire

PICCOLO Emily Jones*

Овое Richard Franke* Alice Marcus

ENGLISH HORN John Cannizzarro*

CLARINET Jonathan Lautman* Theresa Hartman

Bass CLARINET John Centenaro*

BASSOON

Karen Kelland* Abby Bennett William Schryba

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TRUMPET Anthony Fenicchia* Darrell Frydlewicz Robert Ventimiglia

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HARP Patricia Turse*

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* Principal

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Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

Sunday, June 5, 2016 4:00 pm

PLEASE TURN OFF ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Tragic Lovers

Pelléas et Mélisande Op. 80

1. Prelude, Andante molto moderato

2. Fileuse. Andantino guasi Allegretto

3. Sicilienne, Alegretto molto moderato

4. Mort de Melisande, Molto Adagio

Infelice Op. 94

Natalie Polito, soprano

(1809 - 1847)

Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy - Overture

(1840 - 1893)

Intermission

Two Arias from Susannah

Ain't it a Pretty Night The Trees on the Mountains

Natalie Polito, soprano

Tristan and Isolde WWV 90: Prelude & Liebestod

Next season's concert dates will be announced this summer by email, snailmail, web site: www.soma.ar88.net and Facebook

Carlisle Floyd

(1924 -)

Richard Wagner (1813 - 1883)

Gabriel Fauré (1845 - 1924)

Felix Mendelssohn

Pyor Ilych Tchaikovsky

Program Notes

by Stephen Culbertson

Fauré: Pelléas et Mélisande, Op. 80

Although Fauré is mostly known for his *mélodies* (art songs) and chamber music, he contributed at least two orchestral and choral works to the standard repertoire: his great *Requiem* and the work we perform today. It was originally written for the English premiere of Maeterlinck's play and orchestrated by Fauré's student Charles Koechlin. Fauré himself reworked that material into the published Suite. The opening *Prelude* sets the scene by representing both the naivety of Mélisande as well as her passion. A *Fileuse* follows. It was originally the introduction to Act 3 where Mélisande is at her spinning wheel. The *Sicilienne* (introduction to the fountain scene in Act 2) was composed some years earlier by Fauré for a sextet. It has become a famous, stand-alone piece. The last movement, The Death of Mélisande, is from Act 5, an intense parallel to her music in the *Prelude*.

Mendelssohn: Infelice, Op. 94

Mendelssohn wrote two different concert arias with somewhat similar texts. The first was in 1834 and the present one was composed in 1843. Mendelssohn performed it three time and considered it a new piece, but it was not published in his lifetime. It adds the last sentence (And also the memory of days of love...), a very Romantic notion!

Tchaikovsky: Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy - Overture

Like many great musical works, Romeo and Juliet had many growing pains on its way to becoming part of the popular culture. The first version (1870) was not successful in Russia or Europe. It was hissed in Vienna and the influential critic Hanslick excoriated it. A few Russian composers saw some merit, including Balakirev, who had suggested an outline to Tchaikovsky in the first place. Balakirev went as far as to suggest tempos and keys. After the lukewarm reception, Tchaikovsky went back to work, incorporating his colleague's suggestions, in a second version, premiered in 1872. Tchaikovsky (as well as Balakirev) still was not happy with it, so he recomposed the ending in 1880. This version, which we know today, was premiered in 1886. The work is laid out to represent three strands of the Shakespeare play. First, Friar Laurence has a "devout" chorale-like opening. Then we hear the warring Capulets and Montagues (the cymbals depict the sword fight), leading to the love theme in various permutations. Starting with the tenderness of the balcony scene. This theme has come to epitomize romance. It is not only incredibly beautiful but at times passionate and yearning while also anxious and melancholic. After more agitation, there is a soaring statement of the love theme in D Major (the consummated marriage), then up one step to E Major, which leads to the suicide (more cymbal crashes). The coda is a homage to the lovers followed by a final allusion to the love theme and a climatic ending.

Floyd: Two Arias from Susannah

Ain't it a Pretty Night

The Trees on the Mountains

Carlisle Floyd celebrates his 90th birthday next week. Susannah was written in 1955 (his third opera) and must be considered as a finalist for the title of "The Great American Opera". The music for the opera, set in rural Tennessee, is sometimes reminiscent of Appalachian folk melodies. However, the melodies are all original to Floyd.

Wagner: Tristan and Isolde, Prelude & Liebestod

It's impossible to underestimate the influence of Wagner on the composers that have come after him. Many say that this opera was the start of the move away from common practice harmony (i.e., Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, et. al.). The list of those influenced by Wagner (Mahler, Strauss, Schoenberg, Britten) is matched by the list of composers who reacted against Wagner's influence (Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky). Of course, both lists are much longer! Not to mention the effect, both positive and negative, of generations of non-musicians (e.g., Nietzsche, Proust, Twain and many more).

In any case, what we are left with is a pinnacle in Western music. The famous opening sequence of the prelude was totally radical at the time: a dissonant chord "resolving" to another dissonant chord. In fact, the whole 3+ hour opera doesn't really resolve the dissonance of the opening bars until the very last chord of the Liebestod!

At the risk of becoming overly technical, this idea of not resolving a chord with a traditional *cadence* (consonance), then going to another chord without a resolution is called *harmonic suspension*, and it's a device used by composers to create tension. The listener expects a resolution, which creates tension when it doesn't happen as expected.

Beethoven used a form of harmonic suspension to great effect in, for example, the funeral march of the Eroica Symphony. One could say that Wagner "opened the floodgates" for composers to delay releasing tension (consonance/cadence), which led to the hyper-romanticism of Mahler and Bruckner and eventually to atonalism (no resolution, ever) of the early- to mid- 20th Century (and later) composers. As much as we'd like to blame Wagner for atonalism (among other things), he has to rank as one of the handful of greatest innovators in music!



Infelice, Op. 94

Text: Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782) First performance: January 15, 1843. Sophie Schloß, Leipzig Gewanthous The Composer conducting

Recitative

Infelice! già dal mio sguardo si dileguò La mia presenza l'iniquo non sostenne, e pur odiar, e pur odiar nol posso ancor! Rammenta al fine i falli, i torti suoi, Risveglia la tua virtù! Scordati l'empio traditor! Amante sventurata! E l'amo pur? Così fallace amore le tue promesse attendi? Tu non mai rendi la rapita quiete? Queste son le speranze e l'ore liete?

Aria

Ah, ritorna, età felice, quando accanto del mio bene non conosci questo pene, quando a me fù fido ancor.

Ah, se volgo gli occhi intorno, mi rammento sempre il giorno, che ricevi la sua fè. Quel tenero arboscello, quel limpido ruscello parla mi del suo amor.

Invan, invano! Non v' è contento senza tormento nell' amor! E pur la memoria dei giorni d'amore l'amaro dolore può sol consolar! The scoundrel! He has already fled my sight. The wicked man could not bear my presence. And I can still not hate him! Remember now his faults, his wrongdoing. Revive your virtue! Forget the wicked traitor! Unhappy lover! And yet I love him still! Thus false love, do you keep your promises? Do you never restore peace to your victims? Are these the hopes and happy hours?

Ah return, happy time, When you were still good to me, and did not know this pain, when you were still faithful.

Ah, if I turn my eyes, and always remember the days, that you receive his trust. That temder sapling, that clear brook speaks to me of his love.

In vain! There is no happiness without the torment of love. And also the memory of the days of love can console the bitter pain!

Ain't it a pretty night!

Ain't it a pretty night! The sky's so dark and velvet-like and it's all lit up with stars. It's like a great big mirror reflectin' fireflies over a pond. Look at all them stars, Little Bat. The longer y' look the more y' see. The sky seems so heavy with stars that it might fall right down out of heaven and cover us all up in one big blanket of velvet all stitched with diamond's. Ain't it a pretty night. Just think, those stars can all peep down an' see way beyond where we can: They can see way beyond them mountains to Nashville and Asheville an' Knoxville. I wonder what it's like out there, out there beyond them mountains where the folks talk nice. an' the folks dress nice like y' see in the mail-order-catalogs.

I aim to leave this valley some day an' find out fer myself: to see all the tall buildin's and all the street lights an' to be one o' them folks myself.

I wonder if I'd get lonesome fer the valley though, fer the sound of crickets an' the smell of pine straw, fer soft little rabbits an' bloomin' things an' the mountains turnin' to gold in the fall. But I could always come back if I got homesick fer the valley So I'll leave it someday an' see fer myself. Someday I'll leave an' then I'll come back when I've seen what's beyond them mountains.

Ain't it a pretty night.

The sky's so heavy with stars tonight that it could fall right down out of heaven an' cover us up, and cover us up, in one big blanket of velvet an' diamon's.

The Trees on the Mountains

The trees on the mountains are cold and bare. The summer jes' vanished an' left them there like a false hearted lover jes' like my own who made me love him, then left me alone.

The coals on the hearth have turned gray and sere. The blue flame jes' vanished an' left them there, like a false hearted lover jes' like my own who made me love him, the left me alone. Come back, O summer, come back blue flame. My heart wants warmin' my baby a name, Come back, O lover, if jes' fer a day. Turn bleak December once more into May. The road up a head lies lonely an' far. There's darkness around me an' not even a star to show me the way or lighten my heart. Come back my lover, I fain would start.

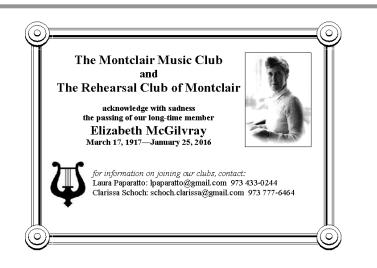
The pore baby fox lies all cold in his lair. His mama jes' vanished an' left him there, like a false-hearted lover, jes' like my own, who made me love him, then left me alone. Come back, O summer, come back blue flame! My heart wants warmin', my baby a name. Come back, O lover, if jes' fer a day. Turn bleak December once more into May.





Natalie Polito - Soprano

Praised for her "note perfect and thrilling" performances (Times Union) as the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* at Opera Saratoga, rising star soprano Natalie Polito is enjoying a busy career on the country's finest opera and concert stages. Following her recent performance as Countess Almaviva with the State Repertory Opera of New Jersey and Society of Musical Arts, Ms. Polito traveled to Delaware to sing the Queen of the Night in The Magic Flute under the baton of Martin Katz with the Master Players Concert Series. This June, she makes her New York City debut as Alice in Le Comte Ory with LoftOpera. Ms. Polito's other recent performance highlights include her highly acclaimed Opera Columbus debut as Countess Almaviva in The Marriage of Figaro, Violetta in La Traviata at both Opera Providence and First Coast Opera in St. Augustine, FL, Queen of the Night in The Magic Flute with both Opera Saratoga and the Erie Chamber Orchestra, a concert of Mozart opera favorites with the Colorado Symphony, First Lady in The Magic Flute and Gretel in Hansel and Gretel with Virginia Opera, the world premiere of Joseph Summer's The Tempest with The Shakespeare Concerts in Boston, Musetta in La Bohème at the Green Mountain Opera Festival, and her international debut in concert at the National Academy of Music in Hanoi, Vietnam. She has been heard in past performances with the Santa Fe Opera, Sarasota Opera, Cape Cod Opera, Opera New Jersey, Santa Fe Symphony, Stamford Symphony, Lake Placid Sinfonietta, and the Berklee Performance Center. She is the 2015 winner of the Mario Lanza and Elaine Malbin Vocal Competition, and the recipient of the Santa Fe Opera's Lillian Caroff Mayer Award. Ms. Polito holds an M.M. in Vocal Performance from The Boston Conservatory and a B.M. in Vocal Performance with Honors from Northwestern University. A Chicago native, she currently resides in New York City. For more information, please visit: www.nataliepolito.com.



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 sonin-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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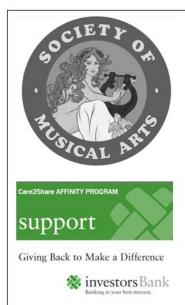
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Society of Musical Arts who we are

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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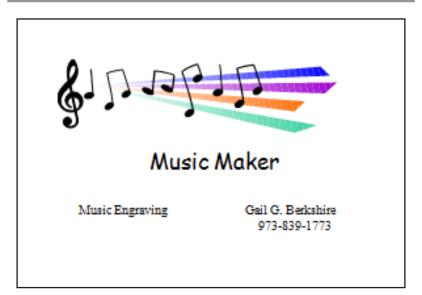
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Laura Paparatto, President

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