

# Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

## *Concert Program*



**Sunday, June 1, 2014**

**4:00 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 June 2014

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

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# **Society of Musical Arts**

**Stephen Culbertson, Conductor**

**Sunday, June 1, 2014  
4:00 pm**

## ***Brand New Day***

*Meet the composer.*

*Pre-concert Q&A with Robert Livingston Aldridge*

**Brand New Day** *an overture for orchestra*

**Robert Livingston Aldridge**

**Organ Concerto in G Minor  
for Organ, Strings & Timpani**

**Francis Poulenc**

Eugene Lavery, Organ

~~~ Intermission ~~~

**Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 43**

**Jean Sibelius**

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# Program Notes

## **Brand New Day *an overture for orchestra***

*Brand New Day* was commissioned by Boston Classical Orchestra in 2004 and was premiered in Boston in April, 2005 at historic Faneuil Hall, with Steven Lipsitt conducting. The eight-minute piece is designed to be an concert-opening overture. It is somewhat programmatic and the title suggests the course of a day: the traditional slow introduction of an overture, and of waking up, followed by a fast, busy, mostly ecstatic, roller coaster-ride of a day. On this day, almost everything will go right! My thanks to Maestro Culbertson and the orchestra for their commitment to my overture this weekend.

—RLA

## **Concerto in G Minor for Organ, Strings and Timpani**

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) composed his organ concerto in 1934-8. It is, astonishingly, the first (and maybe, only) work of this genre since Handel to become part of the standard concert repertoire. The diversity of style and mood within its seven sections take us from the pseudo-baroque opening, to the romantic and nostalgic slow sections, to the almost calliope-like romps, leading to the spiritual and hushed processional, then to a final baroque gesture.

Poulenc acknowledged that he was “wildly eclectic”. He once said, “I certainly know that I am not among the musicians who have been harmonic innovators, like Stravinsky, Ravel or Debussy, but I think there is a place for new music which is happy to use other people’s chords”. Although the concerto has echoes (in addition to the composers already named) of Bach, Mozart and Tchaikovsky, the combination results in Poulenc’s unique language. And listen for various themes that might be familiar to horror movie and cartoon fans!

—SC

# Program Notes

## Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 43

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) literally put Finland on the map in terms of developing its national identity (musically and otherwise) apart from Sweden and Russia. His nine “symphonies” (counting the early *Kullervo* Symphony and *Lemminkäinen Suite* in addition to the seven numbered symphonies) can be compared to Beethoven’s in the sense that each one in the succession is a development of his compositional style.

But, unlike the early tone poems and symphonies that were based or titled on folklore, Sibelius, beginning with this work, came to have a different view of the symphony. He wrote that he “admired [the symphony’s] severity of style and the profound logic that created an inner connection between all the motifs...” That connection is one of the main features of this symphony and what makes it sound so “organic”: each section seems to flow seamlessly out of the previous section. Many grow out of the rising three-note motif heard at the very beginning of the first movement.

The second movement is the most formally and emotionally complex. The bassoon theme (heard after the opening bass and cello passage) was originally sketched by Sibelius during his stay in Italy in 1901. He wrote in his diary, “Don Juan. I was sitting in the dark in my castle when a stranger entered. I asked who he could be again and again—but there was no answer. I tried to make him laugh but he remained silent. At last the stranger began to sing—then Don Juan knew who it was. It was death.”

Over the years since its premiere in 1902 (the composer conducting), much has been debated about whether the symphony (at one time even called “the symphony of independence”) had a “nationalistic program.” Sibelius’ friend and champion Robert Kajanus (who made the first recording of this and other works in the 1920s) wrote: “the [second movement] strikes one as the most broken-hearted protest against all the injustices that threaten at the present time...The [third movement] scherzo gives a picture of frenetic preparation...the [fourth movement] finale develops toward a triumphant conclusion intended to arouse in the listener a picture of lighter and confident prospects for the future.”

The last movement could certainly lead to that conclusion. Sibelius vigorously denied any programmatic implications to his music. Nonetheless, Twenty-first Century audiences can continue to be inspired by this great work.

—SC



## **Eugene Lavery** - Organist

New Zealand born organist Eugene Lavery is an exciting and versatile musician, highly sought after as a keyboard artist, conductor and teacher. Recent and upcoming engagements include solo recitals at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, United Kingdom; Holy Cross Cathedral, Lagos, Nigeria; Cathedral of the Assumption, Louisville; and The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York.

As Organist and Director of Music at historic Calvary Episcopal Church in Louisville, Kentucky, Lavery directs the semi-professional adult choir and oversees the annual Sacred Arts series which offers a diverse range of liturgical and concert performances. Mr. Lavery previously served as Artistic Director of the award-winning Cathedral Choir School of Delaware; one of the most prominent Episcopal chorister programs in the United States.

Lavery received his Bachelor of Music with First Class Honors from the University of Auckland while also serving as Organ Scholar and then Assistant Organist at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Auckland, New Zealand. In 2007 Mr. Lavery relocated to New York after gaining entry to the prestigious Master of Music program at The Juilliard School under the tutelage of Paul Jacobs.

Pursuing a multi-faceted career, Lavery has appeared as an organist for live broadcasts for Television New Zealand and Radio New Zealand; recorded a solo CD 'Joie' on the Harrison & Harrison organ of Holy Trinity Cathedral in Auckland; served as conductor and organist for Royal School of Church Music courses in the United States, New Zealand, and Nigeria; and performed with the American Symphony Orchestra and Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra.

## **Robert Livingston Aldridge** - Composer

Robert Livingston Aldridge has written over sixty works for orchestra, opera, musical theater, dance, string quartet, soloists, and chamber ensembles. His music has been performed throughout the United States, Europe and Japan. He has received numerous fellowships and awards for his music from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Massachusetts Artist's Foundation, the Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Fund, Meet the Composer, the American Symphony Orchestra League, the New Jersey Council on the Arts and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. His opera *Elmer Gantry*, based on the novel by Sinclair Lewis, with a libretto by Herschel Garfein, was given its fully staged world première by Nashville Opera in November 2007. He was commissioned by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra to compose a clarinet concerto for David Singer, and his symphonic oratorio *Parables* (also written with librettist Herschel Garfein) was first performed in May 2010.

Robert Livingston Aldridge has been Composer-in-Residence at the Brevard Music Festival since 2006. He has been a fellow at the MacDowell Colony on five occasions since 1987. In 1989, he was chosen to represent the New York Foundation for the Arts in a solo concert of his music at Lincoln Center. He was a founder of the Composers in Red Sneakers, a composer consortium which achieved international recognition in the 1980s. His compositions are exclusively published by Edition Peters. He received a Doctorate in Composition from the Yale School of Music, a Masters in Composition from the New England Conservatory of Music, and a Bachelors in English Literature from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He is a Professor of Music Composition and Theory at Montclair State University.

More information about the composer can be found at  
[www.robertlivingstonaldridge.com](http://www.robertlivingstonaldridge.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 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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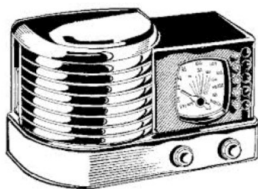
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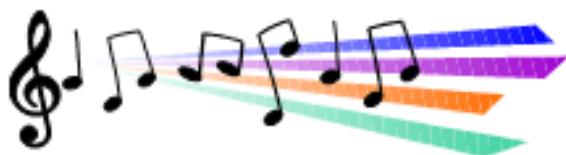


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*Laura Papparatto*, President



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