

Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

Concert Program

Sunday, October 16, 2011

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).

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3:00 pm

Looking Backwards and Forwards

Ancient Airs and Dances, Suite No. 1 Ottorino Respighi

- I. Ballet from *Il Conte Orlando* (Molinaro, 1599)
- II. Galliard (Galilei, 1550s)
- IV. Passo mezzo e mascherada (Dance and Masquerade, Anon.)

Guitar Concerto in D major, RV 93 Antonio Vivaldi

- I. Allegro
- II. Largo
- II. Allegro

Concierto Barroco for Guitar and Orchestra Roberto Sierra

- I. Solemne; Allegro
- II. Grave
- III. Allegro

Rupert Boyd, guitar

Intermission

Symphony No. 2, Op. 30 *Romantic* Howard Hanson

- I. Adagio; Allegro
- II. Andante con tenerezza
- III. Allegro con brio

PROGRAM NOTES

by Stephen Culbertson

Today's program is an interesting (I hope!) *potpourri* of music from the 20th and 21st Centuries that looks back at – and indeed – reflects on, music from the 16th, 18th and 19th Centuries. We also include one of the more famous works “from the source,” the 18th Century master, Vivaldi.

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936): *Ancient Airs and Dances, Suite 1* (excerpts)

Respighi is best-known for his three orchestral showpieces (*Fountains of Rome*, *Pines of Rome* and *Roman Festivals*). He also wrote several works based on earlier Italian music and art, of which this suite is probably the most famous. It is not a mere transcription or arrangement of the pieces, which were originally written for lute. Rather, it is a complete reworking (or interpretation) of 16th Century music; the same melodies and modal character or the originals, but with touches by a great 20th Century orchestrator that the original composers could only dream about! The first movement is based on a balletto by Simone Molinaro (1599). It is very formal in style, with a contrasting, lyrical 2nd theme using similar material as the opening theme. The second movement is a Galliard written by Vincenzo Galilei (1550s), father of the rather-more-famous scientist Galileo Galilei. It is an athletic dance characterized by jumps, hops and leaps. The last movement was long considered to be by the famous “anonymous”, but there is some thought it's also by Galilei. It depicts the mystery, romance, and flirtatious nature of the Venetian Carnival, complete with surprise entrances by the trumpets (gotcha!).

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741): *Concerto in D Major, RV 93*

A delight from beginning to end, this concerto typifies why audiences still love Baroque music: sprightly rhythms, memorable themes, and a tonal “grounding” that has appeal 300 years later. Originally written for lute, 2 violins and continuo, we present here the standard modern version for small string orchestra and harpsichord.

Roberto Sierra (b. 1953): *Concierto Barroco* for Guitar & Orchestra

The composer writes:

The inspiration for *Concierto Barroco* was the Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier's story *Concierto Barroco*. In Carpentier's narrative, Vivaldi, Handel, and a man from the West Indies with his African servant meet in a fantastic jam session that becomes a vertiginous speculation about time that brings the past and the present together. In a similar fashion, in this guitar concerto, the music of

Corelli, Lully and Scarlatti are recreated through the prism of modern harmonies, melodies and rhythms.

I haven't come across the word "vertiginous" (causing vertigo by being extremely high or steep) too many times before, but think "prism" is the operative word here. To those of us who think more in terms of visual arts, it's Picasso. The familiar themes and rhythms of the Baroque period are melded and distorted into a contemporary language. I find it fascinating and beautiful in its own right.

Howard Hanson (1896-1981): Symphony No. 2, Op. 30 *Romantic*

Let's just come right out with it: this is the most unabashedly "romantic" symphony – in all the good senses of that word – from an American composer. **Romantic= passionate, expressive, powerful, lyrical.**

Beethoven is considered the first "romantic" composer, although we don't think of him in those terms nowadays.

Hanson was born in Nebraska, of Scandinavian parents. He cited Grieg and Sibelius as inspiration. His first real job was as theory/composition teacher at College (now University) of the Pacific in California (my alma mater) where he became dean in 1919. He was winner of the first Prix de Rome in 1921-1924 and may or may not have studied with Respighi (Nice story for the purposes of this program if he did).

Of course, he's much more famous as director of the Eastman School of Music from 1924-1964, where he shaped many generations of musicians and music educators and commissioned literally hundreds of works by American composers.

Hanson wrote this, his most widely-known work, which he titled "Romantic" in 1930, as a reaction to Stravinsky's neo-classicism and the Second Viennese School's (for example, Schoenberg's) serialism. He wrote at the time, "romanticism will find in this country rich soil for a new, young, and vigorous growth." The famous melody (which has become known as the "Interlochen" theme), heard in all three movements, has been used not only at the music camp, but also in film and other places. It's a great pleasure to present the whole work this afternoon.

Rupert Boyd Guitar

Australian born guitarist **Rupert Boyd** is acclaimed as one of the most talented guitarists of his generation. He has performed throughout the United States, Canada, Spain, Italy, France, England and Australia, and has been described by The Washington Post as “truly evocative”, and by Classical Guitar Magazine as “a player who deserves to be heard.”

Rupert Boyd has performed at New York’s Carnegie Hall, the 92nd Street Y, Merkin Concert Hall, Bargemusic, the New York City Classical Guitar Society and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine (the world’s largest Gothic cathedral). He has given performances with New York Festival of Song and Moving Theater Dance Company, in addition to solo recitals for the Boston Guitar Society, the Marlow Guitar Series in Washington D.C. and the Newport Music Festival in Rhode Island.

Rupert Boyd’s debut recording *Valses Poéticos* received the following review in the UK magazine *Classical Guitar*: “The performances that Boyd gives here are first-rate . . . Even the Bach is one of the best of its kind.” *Soundboard*, the Guitar Foundation of America’s quarterly publication, gave the CD the following review: “Boyd’s playing is beautifully refined, with gorgeous tone . . . musically and technically flawless . . . the album is first-rate.” *Soundboard* also described the eponymous work by Granados as “one of the best recorded performances of this work on guitar.”

In addition to winning the Andrés Segovia award from the Manhattan School of Music, Rupert Boyd was a winner of the Lillian Fuchs Chamber Music Competition and winner of the Eisenberg-Fried Concerto Competition, the latter of which resulted in a performance of Rodrigo’s *Concierto de Aranjuez* with orchestra, conducted by Lawrence Leighton Smith.

Rupert Boyd holds a Bachelor of Music (First Class Honours) degree from the Australian National University School of Music, a Master of Music degree from the Manhattan School of Music and an Artist Diploma degree from the Yale University School of Music. His major teachers have been Timothy Kain, David Leisner and Ben Verdery.

Rupert Boyd currently resides in New York City.

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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Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

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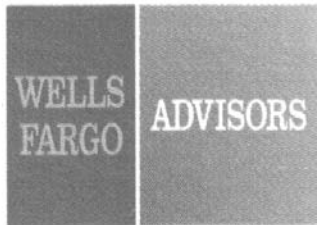
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For more information, contact

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Laura Papparatto, President

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The Youth Orchestras of Essex County for the use of their timpani.