

Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

Concert Program



Sunday, June 3, 2012

3:00 P.M.

**Maplewood Middle School
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Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

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SECOND VIOLIN

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Jim Jordan
Kenneth Kalmanson
Ellen Lipkind
Joel Miller
Anna Sayanagi
Len Tobias

VIOLA

Roland Hutchinson*
Harry Berkshire
Hallie Borstel
Ellen Hill

CELLO

Keith Hardy*
Innes Borstel
James Celestino
Helen Kong
Sheryl Reed-Herrera
Bryce Tempest

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Kenneth Bannerman
Margaret Blewett
James Buchanan
Robert Whiteley

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Laura Paparatto*
Kent Weisert

PICCOLO

Gail Berkshire*

OBOE

Jeff Ladolcetta*
Lynn Grice
Alice Marcus

ENGLISH HORN

Alice Marcus*

CLARINET

Julie Upton*
Jonathan Lautman

BASSOON

Dr. David Tiersten*
Sherry Stafford Loibl

FRENCH HORN

Libby Schwartz*
Paul Erickson
Herb Foster
Brian Hill

TRUMPET

John Wilder*
Anthony Fenicchia
George Sabel

TROMBONE

Jay Shanman*
Kate Yogis
Henry Heyzer

TUBA

James Buchanan*

TIMPANI & PERCUSSION

Jonathan Ward*
Joseph Whitfield

* Principal

Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

Sunday, June 3, 2012

3:00 pm

National Monuments: Sibelius & Beethoven

Karelia Suite, Op. 11

Jean Sibelius

I. Intermezzo

II. Ballade

III. Alla marcia

Violin Concerto, Op. 47

Jean Sibelius

Allegro Moderato

Adagio di molto

Allegro ma on tanto

Brennan Sweet, violin

<http://www.youtube.com/brennansweet>

~~ Intermission ~~

Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67

L. Van Beethoven

Allegro con brio

Andante con moto

Scherzo: Allegro

Allegr

Program Notes

by Stephen Culbertson

Sibelius: Karelia Suite, Op. 11

Johan Julius Christian Sibelius (1865-1957) visited Karelia in 1892 on his honeymoon. In the southeast part of Finland (on the way to St. Petersburg), with a distinctive population and culture, it had long been fought-over, and was eventually annexed by the Soviet Union in 1939. The music was originally written in 1893 for a patriotic historical tableau (pageant) presented by students at the University of Helsinki in the Karelian town of Viipuri (many of Sibelius' early works were written for such occasions, including *Finlandia*). Later, the 10 original sections were made into the concert suite heard today. The rather rough, folk-like character was retained on purpose, with three movements "depicting" various aspects or scenes from life in Karelia.

1. *Intermezzo*: a march-like theme, a procession of marching contingents, approaching and then receding in the distance (several composers have used this device, notably Mussorgsky and Ives).

2. *Ballade*: the Swedish King (Finland was part of Sweden at various times in history) Karl Knutsson is reminiscing in his castle, being entertained by a passing minstrel (in this case, the English Horn).

3. *Alla Marcia*: originally used in a scene depicting a castle siege (!). This movement has become the most famous, and is heard often in Finland on national holidays and celebrations. I would call it the equivalent of our *Stars and Stripes Forever*.

Sibelius: Concerto for Violin & Orchestra, Op. 47

Sibelius' original plan to become a violin virtuoso did not work out, but he wrote his concerto for the soloist he dreamt of being. Unlike Mendelssohn, Brahms, Tchaikovsky and others, he did not need to call on expert technical advice. It may also explain something of the concerto's nostalgia and romantic intensity. However, Sibelius' personal ambition led to another problem: balancing his virtuoso mentality with that of the Sibelius symphonic perspective.

He succeeded in creating one of the great works in the repertoire, and one of the most demanding for the soloist and orchestra in terms of virtuosity, endurance, musical intensity and integration of the solo with the orchestral fabric. The usual give-and-take of similar material between the orchestra and soloist is transformed: the soloist generally either stands out against an orchestra background or plays more decorative passage-work while the orchestra carries the melodic and dramatic burden.

The work did not get off to a great start. Sibelius made and reneged on promises to several prominent soloists for the premiere. Then he was late delivering it and wound up giving it to lesser violinists who were not up to the difficulties. The version we know today came after over two years of revisions, and is a rather extensive re-write of the original, which made even more (appallingly so, according to one potential soloist) technical demands!

Beethoven: Symphony No. 5, Op. 67

Although perhaps not as “radical” as his Third Symphony (*Eroica*), Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, along with the Third and Ninth, remains a pillar of Western music

The premiere took place at what we would call a marathon concert at Theater an der Wien in Vienna, directed by Beethoven. Composers at the time made much of their living putting on such concerts, hiring (or begging) musicians and charging admission to the audiences, who couldn’t wait to hear what this crazy guy was going to come up with next. The concert lasted over 4 hours, was presented after one rehearsal, and the Fifth didn’t even get top billing or a prominent spot in the program, which consisted of:

1. Symphony No. 6
 2. *Ah, Perfido*, aria for soprano and orchestra
 3. *Gloria* from Mass in C
 4. Piano Concerto No. 4 (pianist and conductor: Beethoven)
- intermission
5. Symphony No. 5
 6. *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* from Mass in C
 7. Piano improvisation by Beethoven (no doubt on themes suggested by the audience)
 8. *Choral Fantasy*

After the first publication in 1810, the Fifth almost immediately became a “standard”. Only two years after the less-than-ideal premiere, the poet and critic E.T.A. Hoffmann described the symphony as “one of the most important works of the time.” The New York Philharmonic played it at its first concert in 1842, as did the National Symphony in 1931.

It’s always interesting (if nearly impossible) to attempt to listen with “fresh” ears, trying to block out of our minds anything written *after* what we’re experiencing. It’s especially difficult with such a ubiquitous work as this that has become a part of our culture. But try to imagine that our favorite composers are Haydn, Hummel and Mozart and we have been totally shocked by the epic and heroic Symphony No. 3 by Beethoven that we heard just a few years ago (*way over the top!*). Now we hear a new piece that is even louder (it adds trombones and piccolo) and the whole thing is based on **one four-note theme!** No wonder people couldn’t wait to hear the next one.

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).



Brennan Sweet

*Associate Concertmaster
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra*

Born in New York City, Brennan Sweet began violin studies at two years of age in Edmonton, Alberta. In 1977 he studied violin at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, Hungary. Beginning his college education as an engineering student at Washington University in St. Louis, Brennan transferred and earned a Bachelor of Music degree from Indiana University, eventually serving for three years as teaching assistant to Josef Gingold before joining the faculty for another two years as Lecturer. Concertmaster of several orchestras including the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra and Owensboro Symphony Orchestra, Brennan was also a founding member of the Evansville String Quartet. He performed two seasons as Assistant Concertmaster of the Colorado Music Festival in Boulder. He joined the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra in 1994 as Associate Concertmaster and subsequently led the orchestra for three seasons as Acting Concertmaster under Maestro Zdenek Macal. Sweet is a founding member of the Mostly Mozart at Monteux Festival in Hancock, Maine, and has served as coach and performer at the Raphael Trio Chamber Music workshop in New Hampshire. In 2007 he joined the faculty of Kean University as a Concert Artist, teaching students and performing chamber music concerts regularly throughout the year. Mr. Sweet also performs recitals with acclaimed pianist Jenny Lin in the New York metropolitan area.

Brennan Sweet plays on the 1713 Antonio Stradivarius ex “Prince Ferdinand of Bavaria” violin from the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra Golden Age Collection.

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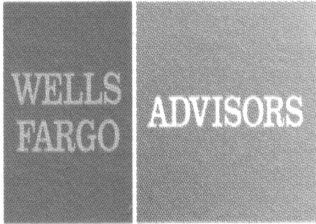
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The Society of Musical Arts (SOMA) was founded in 1981 by Dr. Samuel Applebaum, New Jersey's world famous master teacher of the violin. We are continuing Dr. Applebaum's objectives to provide an opportunity for both amateur and professional string musicians to play orchestral masterworks in a chamber orchestra and to present free public concerts with multi-generational appeal to the residents of Essex County.

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Thanks for helping us keep alive Dr. Applebaum's dream of live classical music by and for New Jersey residents!

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