

FANFARES FOR UNCOMMON TIMES

CENTURY II CONCERT HALL

SATURDAY | **NOVEMBER 14, 2020** | 7:30 PM

Ending approximately 8:30pm

MARK LAYCOCK

Guest Conductor

TIMOTHY SHADE

Guest Conductor

PROGRAM

PRESENTED WITHOUT INTERMISSION

Movement timings are approximate and provided for the listener's information.

MICHAEL ABELS (1962 -)

"Dances" from Delights and Dances (5')

AARON COPLAND (1900 - 1990)

"Hoe-Down" from Rodeo (3')

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865 - 1957)

Romance (5')

JOAN TOWER (1938 -)

Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman (3')

BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913 - 1976)

Simple Symphony

Boisterous Bourrée (3')

Playful Pizzicato (3')

Sentimental Serenade (9')

Frolicsome Finale (3')

JOAN TOWER (1938 -)

Second Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman (5')

HENRI TOMASI (1901 - 1971)

Fanfares Liturgiques

Annunciation (3')

Gospel (4')

Apocalypse (Scherzo) (4')

Good Friday Procession (9')

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Musicians in the Violin, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass sections rotate seating for each concert.



Michael Abels

"DANCES" FROM DELIGHTS AND DANCES

Born October 8, 1962 in Phoenix, Arizona.

First performance by the Wichita Symphony.

Delights and Dances (2007) was commissioned by the Sphinx Organization to celebrate their 10th year supporting diversity in concert music. Originally for orchestra with a large number of soloists, the work was revised into its current instrumentation for string quartet and string orchestra. The piece begins with a slow, graceful introduction, which reveals a blues section. Soloists take turns playing virtuosic cadenzas over the orchestra's gentle, rhythmic pizzicato. The final section is a raucous hoedown, with more technically dazzling solos by the quartet. *Delights & Delights* was recorded on the Cedille label by the Harlem Quartet with the Chicago Sinfonietta under the direction of Music Director Mei-Ann Chen.

- Michael Abels

Jean Sibelius

ROMANCE FOR STRING ORCHESTRA, OP. 42

Born December 8, 1865 at Tavastehus,

Grand Duchy of Finland.

Died September 20, 1957 at Järvenpää, Finland.

First performance by the Wichita Symphony.

Let's start with some perspective. Sibelius was born in 1865, the year the American Civil War ended and when Finland as an independent nation was not yet born and still under the control of the Russian Empire. He died in September 1957 when rock and roll and Elvis Presley were all the rage in America and just two weeks before the launch of the Russian Sputnik satellite. His life spans two World Wars and the independence of Finland in 1917.

The music of Jean Sibelius is associated with Finnish nationalism much in the way that Copland's music on this concert is linked to Americana. What we have of Sibelius's music comes almost entirely from about a thirty-year period between 1897 and 1927. Much has been written about the 30-year musical silence

at the end of Sibelius's life, but even composers and musicians sometimes enter retirement. At a time when musical styles were changing, Sibelius had no more to say in his musical language rooted in the late-19th and early-20th centuries. And yet, in a poll of patrons by the New York Philharmonic in 1935, Sibelius was named the most popular composer of the day!

The **Romance for String Orchestra, Op. 42** was composed in 1903 and premiered in March 1904. It lies during a period between the 2nd and 3rd Symphonies when Sibelius composed his Violin Concerto and another brief orchestral work, *Valse triste* (Sad Waltz) that gained popularity with audiences. To you, our listener, the Romance will recollect the influence of Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings heard last month at the Wichita Symphony.

Originally titled simply "Andante" after its tempo marking, the Romance is a jewel for string orchestra. Just 67 measures long and about five minutes in duration, the piece is divided into three clearly defined sections. The opening is a declarative and chromatic statement followed by a series of brooding melodic sighs. The music starts to become more agitated, but suddenly breaks off. A contrasting lyrical melody appears that demonstrates Sibelius's gift for melody. The melody is played by the first violins and violas accompanied by string pizzicato in the rest of the orchestra. In the third section, the music reaches an impassioned climax before subsiding in a recall of the sighs heard in the opening section.

Note by Don Reinhold, Wichita Symphony CEO

Benjamin Britten

SIMPLE SYMPHONY, OP. 4

Born November 22, 1913 in Lowestoft, Suffolk, England.

Died December 4, 1976 in Aldeburgh, Suffolk, England.

Believed to be the first performance by the Wichita Symphony.

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Based on his two unequivocal masterpieces, the *War Requiem*, which was performed here in Wichita two years ago, and the opera *Peter Grimes*, Benjamin Britten would be remembered as one of major composers of the 20th century. But beyond those two great works are a host of others that capture the listener's attention. Among them are the *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* and the work heard this weekend, the *Simple Symphony*.

The description of the work as "simple" probably is a reference to how Britten obtained the material for his work and not to the level of skill required to perform it. Having completed his studies at the Royal College of Music, Britten returned to his life-long home in Suffolk and confronted the realities of trying to earn a living as a 20-year-old freelance composer. Confronting a dry spell of inspiration did not help matters.

Composing music was nothing new for Britten. In fact, he had composed around a hundred works filling "reams and reams" of paper by the time he was thirteen. Recalling these efforts in 1955, Britten wrote, "Of course, they weren't very good...and for the sake of neatness, every piece had to end precisely at the bottom of the right-hand page, which doesn't always lead to a satisfying conclusion." However, he saved this music for no other reason than he thought it might prove useful one day. (The music is still preserved today in the Britten archives).

In December 1933, Britten pulled a box of his juvenilia off the closet shelf and sifted through it discovering that some of his early melodic ideas weren't so bad. He selected eight ideas and set about to create his little symphony, using two of the ideas in each movement and repurposing music that was written as early as when he was nine years old. He re-worked his music to make it "fit for general consumption." It was a "simple" enough solution to give his creativity a jolt of inspiration. By February 10, 1934, he completed his work describing his effort as an "off chance of making some money by dishing up some very old stuff...as a dear little school suite for strings." It was premiered on March 6, 1934 at Stuart

Hall in Norwich with Britten conducting an amateur orchestra.

The "dear little school suite" has become one of Britten's most endearing works and lies squarely in the tradition of the short string works and light classics, which were popular in Great Britain during the first half of the 20th century. The work has enjoyed a second life of sorts in popular media including Wes Anderson's film *Moonrise Kingdom* (2012) and the first two seasons of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* (2017-2018).

Like Prokofiev's brief "Classical Symphony," Britten drew upon classical forms and Baroque dances, which would label this a neo-classical work. The alliterative titles for each movement indicate that Britten wrote with tongue in cheek and deliberate intent to create a work of whimsy and popularity.

The **opening movement**, Boisterous Bourée, begins with a rhythmic thrust of an upbeat landing on a strong downbeat creating a "ta-DUM" motive that is used throughout the movement. The first theme is marked by imitative writing and is contrasted by a soaring and beautiful melody for the second theme. The structure is like a condensed first movement of a classical symphony. The bourrée in the movement's title is a reference to a lively 17th-century French dance in duple time.

The **second movement**, *Playful Pizzicato*, is marked to be played as "fast as possible" and it's performed completely with pizzicato where the strings are plucked. It's a fast dancer's jig and the opening section is fleetfooted. A middle section is marked by strummed chords in the lower strings suggestive of mandolin techniques.

The **third movement** is a "sentimental" Sarabande, a slow, stately dance of the 17th and 18th centuries characterized by three beats to the bar, often with a slight agogic accent on the second beat. This accent will be noticeable in the second theme of the movement derived from a waltz for piano Britten composed when he was nine years old. A contrasting

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middle section is more agitated before the music returns to the tranquil music of the Sarabande.

The **fourth movement**, *Frolicsome Finale*, opens with a vigorous, athletic quality. This music originates from a Piano Sonata #9 (!) composed in 1926 as a thirteen-year old. More pizzicato, lots of rhythmic syncopation, and string tremolos energize the music as it races to its conclusion.

Note by Don Reinhold, Wichita Symphony CEO

Aaron Copland

"HOE-DOWN" FROM RODEO

Born November 14, 1900 in Brooklyn, New York.
Died December 2, 1990 in North Tarrytown, New York.

Last performed by the Wichita Symphony with Daniel Hege on January 28 and 29, 2012.

Ask nearly any symphony attendee to name the most familiar American symphonic works and that list would invariably include Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, Bernstein's *West Side Story Symphonic Dances*, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, and Aaron Copland's *Hoe-Down*. Even those who are not symphonic regulars would recognize Hoe-Down from its ubiquitous assimilation into American popular culture. It has been covered by popular artists such as Emerson, Lake, and Palmer; Béla Fleck and the Flecktones; and the American Beef Producers with their slogan, "Beef, It's What's for Dinner."

On the 120th anniversary of Copland's birth on November 14, 1900, it is appropriate that our concert this evening includes one of his most famous works. Copland's piece is the final movement of the almost equally familiar ballet, *Rodeo* (pronounced *roe-Day-o*), composed in 1942 for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, who were waiting out World War II in New York City. The director of the ballet company, Sergei Denham, reached out to the still unknown dancer Agnes de Mille, daughter and niece of two Hollywood moguls, to create the choreography for a work that would encompass the atmosphere

of American ranch life in the Southwest. It was De Mille who then recommended Aaron Copland, who accepted the \$1,000 commission that was offered for composing the music.

A hoe-down is a quick dance similar to a jig, reel, or clog dance with roots in rural American and particularly Appalachia. It is often a required piece for fiddle contests. Hoe-downs emerged in popularity once again during the Western square dance revival of the 1940's and was often used to refer to an evening of dances sponsored by various dance clubs. Copland acknowledges the traditions by quoting two fiddle tunes in his music: "Bonaparte's Retreat" and "Tip-Toe, Pretty Betty Martin."

Copland's frequent use of vernacular American folk music contributed to his signature style which is recognized as quintessentially American in a way that evokes a sense of place. Arthur Berger describes "Hoe-down" as "virtually photographic" and we leave it to you, the listener, to imagine those images in your mind as you listen to the music.

Normally performed as a full orchestra composition, the version of "Hoe-down" we hear tonight is arranged for string orchestra.

Note by Don Reinhold, Wichita Symphony CEO

Joan Tower

FANFARE FOR THE UNCOMMON WOMAN

Born September 6, 1938 in New Rochelle, New York.

First performance by the Wichita Symphony.

Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman, No. 1 was inspired by Copland's Fanfare for the Common Man and employs, in fact, the same instrumentation. In addition, the original theme resembles the first theme in the Copland. It is dedicated to women who take risks and who are adventurous. Written under the Fanfare Project and commissioned by the Houston Symphony, the premiere performance was

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on January 10, 1987, with the Houston Symphony, Hans Vonk, conductor. This work is dedicated to the conductor Marin Alsop.

- Joan Tower

Joan Tower

SECOND FANFARE FOR THE UNCOMMON WOMAN

First performance by the Wichita Symphony.

Second Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman, commissioned by Absolut Vodka, is the second composition in what will be a trilogy of fanfares. Scored for brass and percussion (3 trumpets, 4 horns, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, and 3 percussion), it is 4 ½ minutes in length. The first fanfare was composed for the Houston Symphony (for the sesquicentennial of the state of Texas) in 1986. At that time, Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* inspired both the music (theme and instrumentation) and the title. The second fanfare is a tribute not only to Aaron Copland but also to women who are adventurous and take risks. This work is dedicated with love and admiration to Joan Briccetti, general manager of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra.

- Joan Tower

Henri Tomasi

FANFARES LITURGIQUES

Born August 17, 1901 in Marseille, France.

Died on January 13, 1971 in Paris, France.

First Performance by the Wichita Symphony.

A work composed for brass and percussion isn't normally programmed by a symphony orchestra but in this re-imagined season during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have an opportunity to explore repertory not commonly heard when we use smaller ensembles and separate the strings from the wind instruments.

The composer Henri Tomasi (pronounced toe-Ma-zi) will be unfamiliar to most Wichita Symphony

patrons. Born in 1901 to parents from Corsica, Tomasi is overshadowed by composers with modernist tendencies of the 20th century but ranks among a group of leading composers that includes Henri Dutilleux and Olivier Messiaen who often turned to spiritual inspiration of Catholicism for their music. A student of Vincent D'Indy at the Paris Conservatory during the years after World War One, Tomasi inherited the French traditions passed on from his teacher and Camille Saint-Saëns that continued through Debussy and Ravel. Tomasi's music reflects the rich orchestral sonorities of his predecessors and was also inspired by the music of North Africa and East Asia.

During the 1930s, Tomasi was associated with a contemporary music group, Triton, that included among its followers leading composers such as Prokofiev, Poulenc, Milhaud, and Honegger. Also trained and distinguished as a conductor, Tomasi was one of the first to be associated with a symphony orchestra linked to a radio station. Tomasi composed over 120 works and is mostly remembered today for concertos composed for winds and brass. His Trumpet Concerto (1948) is a standard work studied and performed by all advanced trumpeters. His musical style is a little difficult to pin down as he applied different techniques to individual works but his reputation for sonorous sounds stands out and is particularly distinguished in the work heard this evening. Tomasi described his compositional style as a melodist at heart who wrote for the public. He is quoted as saying, "Music that doesn't come from the heart isn't music."

The Fanfares Liturgiques (Liturgical Fanfares) were written between 1942 and 1944 during World War II when France was under Nazi occupation. Despite those conditions, the work communicates a sense of hope for humankind. The music is scored for three trumpets, four horns, three trombones and bass trombone, tuba, timpani, and percussion. The work was premiered in 1947 at Monte Carlo and subsequently was included in Tomasi's opera, *Don Juan de Mañera*, about a mystical Don Juan who

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renounces debauchery. This opera premiered at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich in 1956.

A fanfare is a brief musical flourish often played by trumpets to announce something or someone important. In Tomasi's music, the fanfares are shared by the entire brass choir. The **first movement** represents the Annunciation where trumpets herald the announcement by the Archangel Gabriel that the Virgin Mary will become the Mother of the Son of God. The music begins with a blaze of trumpets imitating and calling to each other. The music settles into a more somber and hymn-like texture with the horns before the fanfares return with a festive ending to the brief, opening movement.

The **second movement** represents the reading of a Gospel. The music is stately with a prominent timpani fanfare pattern. A solo trombone representing the orator of the Gospel enters over a murmuring tremolo in the horns. The extended trombone solo gives way to a solemn closing by the horn quartet accompanied by the trombones.

The **third movement** is a whirlwind of action representing the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. The music is menacing and aggressive compared to the movements that precede it. Listen to the interplay between trumpets, horns, and trombones as the galloping rhythms propel us forward.

The **fourth movement** represents the Good Friday procession. Distant trumpets approach from afar. An underlying ostinato in the bass trombone and tuba intones the *Dies Irae*, or the Day of Wrath, from the Latin Requiem as the fanfares approach. The music climaxes in a Hymn of Thanksgiving achieving spiritual ecstasy.

Note by Don Reinhold, Wichita Symphony CEO

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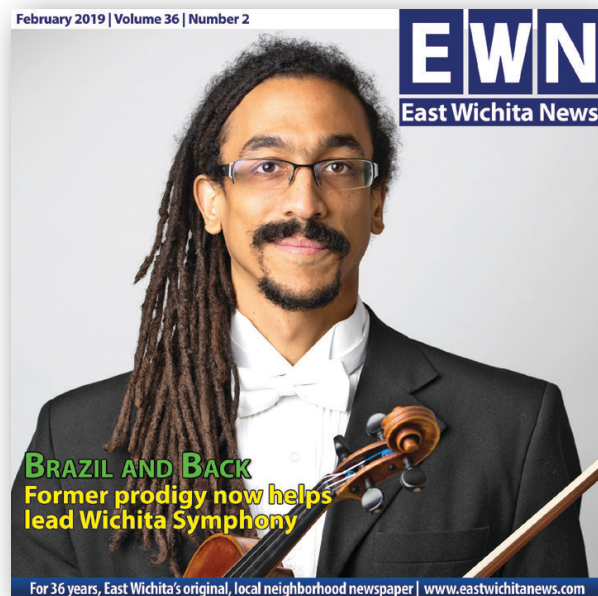
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