

SIXTEENTH ANNIVERSARY SEASON



PRESENTS

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA
of
LYNN UNIVERSITY

DR. ALBERT-GEORGE SCHRAM
Conductor

Thursday, March 30, 2006

8:00 P.M.

~HUNTINGTON POINTE THEATRE~

PROGRAM

Charles Ives (1874-1954)

Variations on America

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

West Side Story: Symphonic Dances

Intermission

Howard Hanson (1896-1981)

Merry Mount: Suite

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

Symphony no. 1 in one movement, op. 9

ABOUT LYNN UNIVERSITY PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

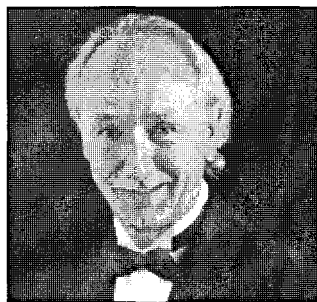
The Lynn University Philharmonia sets the standard for university level symphonic training. The Lynn University Philharmonia is directed by Albert-George Schram, former resident conductor of the Florida Philharmonic and resident conductor of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra. The philharmonia was first formed in 1991 as the Harid String Orchestra with the founding of the conservatory. It became a full symphony orchestra in 1993. As an integral part of the training of both graduate and undergraduate music students of Lynn University, the philharmonia offers excellent orchestral training through the preparation and performance of orchestral repertoire and a minimum of six public performances per year. It has presented several new works throughout its history and has always been enthusiastically received by the public and the press. Music directors of the Philharmonia have included such conductors as Mark and Thakar and Arthur Weisberg, and many guest conductors such as David Lockington, Zeev Dorman, Joseph Silverstein, Claudio Jaffe, Sergiu Schwartz and others. It has performed in such venues as the Lincoln Theater in Miami Beach, the Coral Springs City Center, the Spanish River Church in Boca Raton, and the Broward Center for the Performing Arts. Now in its 11th season as a full symphony orchestra, the Lynn University Philharmonia Orchestra continues to present high-quality concerts with a wide repertoire.

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CONDUCTOR

ALBERT-GEORGE SCHRAM

A native of the Netherlands, Dr. Schram is resident staff conductor of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, a principal guest conductor of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, and resident conductor of the Lynn University Conservatory of Music Philharmonia Orchestra. He was the resident conductor of the Florida Philharmonic. His longest tenure has been with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, where he has worked in a variety of capacities since 1979.



Concurrently, Dr. Schram was music director and conductor of the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra from 1994-2000. During his tenure, the orchestra blossomed into the premier arts organization in West Texas. From 1990 to 1996, Dr. Schram served as resident conductor of the Louisville Symphony Orchestra. Three of the orchestra's subscription series enjoyed exceptional growth under his artistic guidance.

Dr. Schram's recent foreign conducting engagements have included the KBS Symphony Orchestra (live, televised concerts), the Taegu Symphony Orchestra in Korea, and the Orchester der Allgemeinen Musikgesellschaft Luzern in Switzerland. He has made return appearances to his native Holland to conduct the Netherland Radio Orchestra and the Netherland Broadcast Orchestra.

In the United States, his recent and upcoming guest conducting appearances include the Florida Philharmonic, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Tucson Symphony, Oklahoma City Philharmonic, Spokane Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Dayton Philharmonic, Charlotte Symphony, Nashville Symphony, Shreveport Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, Ballet Metropolitan, and the Akron University Opera.

Dr. Schram's studies have been largely in the European tradition under the tutelage of Franco Ferrara, Rafael Kubelik, Abraham Kaplan, and Neeme Jarvi. He has studied at the Conservatory of the Hague in the Netherlands, the universities of Calgary and Victoria, and the University of Washington where he received the Doctor of Musical Arts in conducting.

PROGRAM NOTES

A Tribute to American Music

American Music has, in the words of George Gershwin, “an irreducible vitality and optimism.” With enormous contrasts between wide-open spaces and urban congestion, the music of America celebrates varied ethnic roots and pride of nationhood. It crosses boundaries with jazz and popular music and establishes its unique contributions to orchestral repertory.

Even among early American composers like Partch and Cowell, Charles Ives (1874- 1954) stands out as a rugged individualist. A successful life insurance salesman by day, at which he made a lot of money, Ives composed at night and weekends. His father was a cornet player and bandleader as well as his son’s first piano teacher. Ives, though, soon gravitated to the organ, and at 14, was the youngest paid church organist in Connecticut. He started composing at 13, and the “Variations on ‘America’” was written when he was only 17.

In William Schuman’s bright-edged orchestration, a flourish of brass introduces the “America” theme, which enters softly and remotely, like a church chorale heard from a distance. A series of variations follow, one semi-serious, one dissonant in Ives’ forward-looking style, one a fairground take-off and another a Latino fiesta replete with castanets. Ives’ piece is like a microcosm of American music itself - diversity of style spanning both tradition and innovation.

Bernstein’s “West Side Story” (1957) blazed across the American musical and became even more popular in the film version, which won the 1961 Academy Award for Best Picture and a host of other awards. Taking the “Romeo and Juliet” theme of star-crossed lovers from opposing sides of warring families, Bernstein boldly set “West Side Story” as rival white

and Hispanic teenage street gangs in a tough neighborhood in New York. Bernstein worked together with choreographer Jerome Robbins and scene designer Oliver Smith to create a hard-edged setting for the love-story and a high-energy urban style of dance. The Symphonic Dances are characterized by a range of moods: dance- inflected syncopated rhythms for the opposed groups of the Jets and Sharks, lyrical writing for the lovers Tony and Maria, ironic numbers and the tense build-up for the fight at the dance, which sparks vendetta between the two gangs and leads to Tony's death.

Howard Hanson's life spans most of the 20th century (1896-1981). A well-rounded musician, he was a composer, theorist, teacher and administrator. During his early years as a theory and composition teacher at the College of the Pacific in California, he won the Prix de Rome in 1920. During his three years in Italy, he studied with Respighi and was influenced by Respighi's colorful orchestration and neo-Romantic harmony.

Just as Bernstein was committed to communicating music to young people and wider audiences, so Hanson was equally committed, in a different way, to promoting American music. In 1964, at the end of his 40-year tenure as director of the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, Hanson founded the Institute of American Music at the school, and was active in other organizations to advocate for the publication and performance of 20th century American music.

His "Merry Mount Suite" (1938) derives from his opera of the same name based on Nathaniel Hawthorne's story about 17th century witchcraft in the town of Quincy, Mass. Hanson compared the opera to Mussorsky's "Boris Gudonov," both works being centered on the protagonist. Hanson's style is also reminiscent of Mussorsky's in the modal writing, while his lush orchestration recalls Puccini and Richard Strauss. In

its large-scale orchestral textures, “Merry Mount” contrasts with Bernstein’s sharply incisive rhythms and wide-arching lyrical melodies.

Samuel Barber’s 1st symphony, op. 9, was written in 1936 when the composer was 26. The four movements are played without a break. It is a work which contributes to the central symphonic repertory, having strongly defined melodic lines inflected with dissonance - a characteristic he shares with another 20th century symphonic composer, Shostakovich. A brusque gesture and trill at the end of the first movement leads directly into the fleet, spiky scherzo with its off-beat accents. After a crescendo build-up ending in a brass fanfare, the soft opening figure returns, only to break off in midstream.

The slow movement, “Andante tranquillo” is a beautifully scored movement, with the melody shared between wind instruments. Through increasing dynamics and lyricism, the individual components of melody and accompaniment coalesce with dramatic intensity to the end-point of the movement. The finale is a passacaglia, a form favored in the Baroque period as a recurrent bass pattern. Barber’s reinterpretation starts as an inward meditation and shows his contrapuntal skill of simultaneously stacked lines. Like the preceding movements, the focus is a powerful cohesion at the end of the movement, bringing this impressive work to a close.

By Barbara Barry, Head of Musicology

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