

THE OREGON SINFONIETTA

OUR 39TH YEAR

Dr. Donald Appert, Music Director/Conductor

Guy Snyder, President

NEWSLETTER FOR NOVEMBER 2011

Next concert: Sunday, November 6th at 3:00 p.m.

Sunnyside Seventh-day Adventist Church, 10501 SE Market Street just east of I-205

Berlioz – Overture to King Lear
Barber – Knoxville: Summer of 1915
Linda Appert, soprano
Stanford – Symphony No. 3 “Irish”

Program notes are on page 4

Linda Appert studied at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music and earned her Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance at the Boston Conservatory of Music. Graduate study at the University of Kansas included work with Norman Paige of the Chicago Lyric Opera, and subsequent studies include work with Susan McBerry, Ellen Faull (formerly of Juilliard and the New York City Opera) and Gwen Leonard. Ms. Appert has appeared widely in recital, oratorio and opera throughout the United States, Central America and Europe. Locally she has appeared as soloist with the Vancouver Symphony, the Vancouver Children’s Opera, Bravo Vancouver, the Clark College Orchestra, the Oregon Sinfonietta, and Mid-Columbia Sinfonietta. She performed the role of the Queen of the Night in the Vancouver Children’s Opera production of “*The Magic Flute*” in 2005 and again in 2007. A member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing and the Music Teachers National Association, Ms. Appert maintains an active voice studio in Vancouver, WA. Her students have won many local and state awards for their singing and a number are currently pursuing degrees in voice at leading schools of music throughout the country. She dedicates this performance to her very supportive mother, who took Linda to her first lesson with Dr. David Blair McClosky of Syracuse University when she was ten. Ms. Appert’s mother, who would now be 93, passed away several months ago.



UPCOMING CONCERTS

**CONCERTO COMPETITION WINNERS*

SUNDAY, January 22nd, 2012

Wagner – Siegfried Idyll
Weber – Clarinet Concerto No. 1, Op. 73
Anirudd “Andy” Sharma*, clarinet
Schumann – Symphony No. 3 in Eb, Op. 97
(Rhenish)

SUNDAY, March 18th, 2012

Beethoven – Egmont Overture, Op. 84
Bruch – Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor,
Op.26 Jason Liu*, Violin
Dvorak – Symphony No. 7, Op. 70
SUNDAY, May 13th, 2012
Beethoven – Piano Concerto No. 4, Op. 58
Melissa Terrall*, piano
Brahms – Symphony No. 2, Op. 73

MEET THE MUSICIANS



Carl Clemons, trombone, grew up with music ranging from opera to blues and jazz. His parents and sisters all played instruments. Carl took up trombone in high school and played in the band, orchestra, and in a big band headed by drummer Bill Elmer. Early teachers included Jack Dalby and Dr. John Richards. He joined the Navy as a musician in 1957 and while stationed in Rhode Island studied with Kauka Kahila (Boston Symphony). Perks included free admission to Boston Symphony concerts, meeting orchestra members and also Walter Piston. After the Navy Carl joined the PSU night orchestra and in 1964 the Portland Opera, leaving the Opera later to major in physics at PSU. When the PSU night orchestra moved en masse to Marylhurst Carl played principal trombone there. He subsequently joined the Vancouver Symphonette (later Symphony), first as bass trombonist, then as principal. Carl joined the Oregon Sinfonietta in about 1991. He has played with the Willamette Falls and Mittleman Jewish Community Orchestras and others, brass ensembles and big bands (including the Walter Bridges Band, where Doc Severinsen cut his teeth). A sports car racing accident in 1989 smashed Carl's collar bone; he used pliers, wire cutters and microphone stands to hold his trombone while operating the slide with his right arm, but took a sabbatical from his groups. In 1991 Carl returned to PSU for a degree in biology after which he began working seasonally as a field biologist, leading him to resign from the Vancouver Symphony. More recently graduate school has limited his playing to the Oregon Sinfonietta, the Encore Brass (a 14 piece brass ensemble), a trombone quartet, and the Jazz Express big band.



Hannah Heath, principal cello, was raised in Anchorage and moved here to attend the University of Portland in 2000, graduating with a degree in nursing and a minor in music. She has worked as an ICU nurse at St. Vincent's for six years and just started the master's program at PSU for a degree in cello performance. Hannah began cello at age nine, having begun on piano at age three. She admired a girl in her sister's chamber group, a cellist, and wanted to be just like her. Hannah almost quit twice, once when she broke her knee and couldn't play for six weeks, and again when starting college: she almost didn't bring the cello, but says she now couldn't be happier that she did and can't imagine life without it. For Hannah, her studies at PSU with Hamilton Cheifetz have been great. Hannah was also a competitive Irish Dancer for 15 years and auditioned for Lord of the Dance, but wasn't tall enough. She and her violist husband Zach have been married for a little over a year; they have played in a string quartet ("The River City Strings") for eleven years with Sinfonietta violinists Ashley Simonson and Christina Schulz. In her spare time Hannah plays the harp, which she took up after college, and enjoys the shows *Star Trek*, *Jeopardy* and *The Big Bang Theory*. Her most unusual ambition, she says, is to be a contestant on the game show *Minute to Win It*. Hannah loves Oregon but still believes Alaska is the most beautiful place on Earth.

CONDUCTOR'S CORNER

It came as a bit of a shock to discover in August that I was the 2011 Winner of The American Prize in Orchestral Programming - Vytautas Marijosius Memorial Award for my work with the Oregon Sinfonietta! The orchestra has been extremely cooperative in their willingness to follow me on our musical explorations of some of the composers of the 19th century whose music has been overshadowed. Names like Butterworth, Gade, Parry, Krommer, and Stanford have been on our programs throughout the years and this award reflects that commitment to exploration. I have discovered that it is better to program lesser known works when I guest conduct and normally schedule my own works as well as those of other American composers. Our opening concert is a fine example of some of our more unusual repertoire with music that I am excited to share with our audience.



The music of Samuel Barber has long been some of my favorite. One of the first neo-romantic composers, most people know his *Adagio for strings*. *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* has a small chamber orchestra and an exquisite text of great poignancy. My wife Linda performed it with the Filharmonica “Mihail Jora” Bacau in Romania this past March. The performance was memorable both for its quality and the fact that I was sick as a dog. I had picked up a bacteria from the water and traveler’s disease hit me very hard that day of the concert (it lasted for 3 weeks). So I am especially looking forward to performing it again. The work is extremely challenging for the orchestra.

Hector Berlioz was a pioneer both as an orchestrator and a conductor. He was the subject of my 1985 DMA dissertation (available on microfilm at the University of Michigan) as he was one of the first conductors using a baton. He even wrote a small book on the technique of conducting. We performed this overture in 2002 and I wanted to do it again as the orchestra is much stronger now. As our excellent program notes by Bill Dameron will tell you, Berlioz had a great fondness for Shakespeare as his inspiration and wrote many works such as this one to musically reflect his plays.

We have performed Symphony No. 7 by Stanford, a work from the end of his career and considered old-fashioned at the time in the 1920s. The “Irish,” No. 3, dates from 1887 and reflects a strong influence of Brahms. The first movement is rather melancholy in nature, even to the point of being considered tragic. Movement two is clearly a jig that we would associate with the music of Ireland and the middle section is quite a lyrical contrast. In the third movement you can hear a motive that the composer says is a fragment from the Lament of Usnach but is strikingly the exact same four notes of the opening of the second movement of Brahms’ Fourth Symphony! The harp has several important solos in this beautiful slow movement. The finale has a rousing march-like theme and then ends with a marvelous chorale theme heard first in the trumpets (Stanford adds an additional trumpet just for this movement) which brings the symphony to a triumphant conclusion.

Welcome to our new season – as you can see there is the usual wealth of wonderful music to look forward to (and all at the right price for our times ☺).

Don Appert

Program Notes, Sunday, November 6, 2011

Overture to King Lear, Op. 4

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

The ultimate romantic composer, Berlioz actually handed out program notes to his famous *Symphonie Fantastique*, unheard of in 1830. He coined the term "idée fixe" for a recurrent representational theme in music, but it is also the heart of his famous *Symphonie*, in its meaning of obsession. It vividly describes Berlioz' own unfulfilled fixation on a woman (in his case the English actress Harriet Smithson whom he had seen performing Shakespeare), leading to opium addiction, mental breakdown and a dream of being guillotined. And Berlioz had not even met Simpson! After the performance of another similar work (about another woman), which Harriet attended, they met and married (they separated seven years later). Shakespeare was very popular on the continent at the time. Lear descends into madness after dividing up his estate based on his daughters' flattery, and some believe the lyrical oboe solos represent his loving Cordelia. Berlioz wrote Lear in Nice after leaving Rome for Paris to murder his recent fiancée, who had left him, and her mother, subsequently changing his mind. Or so he says. He wrote no program notes but agreed with some of the interpretations of others, noting Lear's madness was depicted in the midst of the allegro in the lower strings, and that "To perform this overture you need a first rate orchestra."

Knoxville: Summer of 1915

Samuel Barber (1910–1981)

A prodigy at Curtis, Barber there met his partner in both life and music for 40 years, Gian Carlo Menotti. His graduation "ode" to the school, *The School for Scandal* overture (ostensibly for the 1777 English Sheridan play) was performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra and an instant success. When Barber was 28 Toscanini premiered his orchestral arrangement of the slow movement of his string quartet (*Adagio for Strings*), assuring Barber lasting fame. He subsequently won two Pulitzers, for his opera *Vanessa* and his *Piano Concerto*; his 1939 *Violin Concerto*, with its lyrical slow movement and extremely difficult finale, is now an orchestral staple. Barber's dismay over reviews of his opera *Anthony and Cleopatra*, commissioned for the opening of the "new" Met in 1966, led to depression and alcoholism. The text (see next page in Newsletter) of *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, premiered in 1948, is drawn from the essay which begins James Agee's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *A Death in the Family*. Agee reflects on growing up and the death of his father (1916), speaking from many perspectives (son, father, wife, etc.). While composing Knoxville ("In memory of my father") Barber was coping with his own father's final illness. The music reflects dreams, rocking chairs, streetcar noise and fear of death, but ends in dreams.

Symphony No. 3 in F minor, Op. 28, "The Irish"

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

Stanford was raised in a Protestant household in Dublin when original Irish music was being "rediscovered" and it was often his inspiration later. After studies in England and Germany he became a leading teacher (of such students as Vaughan Williams, Ireland, Holst and Bridge), conductor (programming works by his contemporaries) and composer of many songs, operas and symphonic pieces. He has been remembered in England primarily for his religious choral works, but recently his six Irish rhapsodies for orchestra and this symphony, an immediate success in 1887, are increasingly performed.

Throughout his third symphony Stanford used Irish tunes, weaving them together with superb technique. His integration of thematic seeds into a whole reflects his German classical training and Brahms' influence. This is evident in the first movement. The listener appears to hear a common thread throughout. The scherzo movement could be danced as an Irish jig, and its trio (middle section) emphasizes Stanford's metric changes. In the andante what sounds like a direct quote from Brahms' fourth symphony (the slow movement horn calls) prompted Stanford in his biography to say it was a coincidence, based on an obscure Irish tune, and that they had been composed at the same time. But since Stanford was most certainly at the English premiere of Brahms' Fourth Symphony only six months before composing this work that is not entirely correct. In any event, the Brahmsian finale incorporates several well-known Irish tunes, including "The Red Fox," which is still played today at Celtic festivals and in appropriate watering holes. A beautiful and joyful work, the symphony deserves its popular revival.

Program notes by Bill Dameron

“Knoxville: Summer of 1915”— from James Agee’s essay "Knoxville" and the introduction to his Pulitzer Prize-winning posthumous novel, *A Death in the Family*

We are talking now of summer evenings in Knoxville Tennessee in the time that I lived there so successfully disguised to myself as a child.

...It has become that time of evening when people sit on their porches, rocking gently and talking gently and watching the street and the standing up into their sphere of possession of the trees, of birds' hung havens, hangars. People go by; things go by. A horse, drawing a buggy, breaking his hollow iron music on the asphalt: a loud auto: a quiet auto: people in pairs, not in a hurry, scuffling, switching their weight of aestival body, talking casually, the taste hovering over them of vanilla, strawberry, pasteboard, and starched milk, the image upon them of lovers and horsemen, squaring with clowns in hueless amber. A streetcar raising its iron moan; stopping; belling and starting, stertorous; rousing and raising again its iron increasing moan and swimming its gold windows and straw seats on past and past and past, the bleak spark crackling and cursing above it like a small malignant spirit set to dog its tracks; the iron whine rises on rising speed; still risen, faints; halts; the faint stinging bell; rises again, still fainter; fainting, lifting, lifts, faints foregone: forgotten. Now is the night one blue dew.

Now is the night one blue dew, my father has drained, he has coiled the hose.

Low in the length of lawns, a frailing of fire who breathes...

Parents on porches: rock and rock. From damp strings morning glories hang their ancient faces.

The dry and exalted noise of the locusts from all the air at once enchants my eardrums.

On the rough wet grass of the back yard my father and mother have spread quilts. We all lie there, my mother, my father, my uncle, my aunt, and I too am lying there. ...They are not talking much, and the talk is quiet, of nothing in particular, of nothing at all in particular, of nothing at all. The stars are wide and alive, they seem each like a smile of great sweetness, and they seem very near. All my people are larger bodies than mine,...with voices gentle and meaningless like the voices of sleeping birds. One is an artist, he is living at home. One is a musician, she is living at home. One is my mother who is good to me. One is my father who is good to me. By some chance, here they are, all on this earth; and who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth, lying, on quilts, on the grass, in a summer evening, among the sounds of the night. May God bless my people, my uncle, my aunt, my mother, my good father, oh, remember them kindly in their time of trouble; and in the hour of their taking away.

After a little I am taken in and put to bed. Sleep, soft smiling, draws me unto her: and those receive me, who quietly treat me, as one familiar and well-beloved in that home: but will not, oh, will not, not now, not ever; but will not ever tell me who I am.

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James Agee’s novel, [A Death in the Family](#), which carries this memoir section as part of its introduction, was published by Grosset & Dunlap in 1967. Portions of the book had appeared earlier in [The Partisan Review](#), [The Cambridge Review](#), [The New Yorker Magazine](#), and [Harper’s Bazaar](#).

Thanks to Virginia Euwer Wolff for providing the above text

OREGON SINFONIETTA WEBSITE

Please visit <http://www.cmsomus.org> to learn more about the orchestra, our concerto competition, upcoming concerts and contact information.

DR. APPERT WINS NATIONAL AWARD FOR ORCHESTRAL PROGRAMMING

In July the American Prize in Orchestral Programming (The Vytautas Marijosius Memorial Award) was bestowed on Dr. Appert for his work with The Oregon Sinfonietta. The description:

Among a field of very strong contenders that included many who program new music on a regular basis (especially within college and university music departments), the focus fell to conductors who take courageous chances, giving over large portions of their programs to unusual (but not necessarily new) repertoire, while balancing it with standard works or composers in ways that appear natural on the page, or who include less common names or pieces on their concerts as a matter of course, or who seem to make "adventure" part of the regular experience for their orchestras and audiences. All these approaches honor the memory of Maestro Vytautas Marijosius, for whom the prize is awarded.

Congratulations to Dr. Appert, and thanks to our audience for making this possible!

WELCOME FROM NEW BOARD PRESIDENT GUY SNYDER

The Oregon Sinfonietta opens its 2011-2012 season with the musical duo of Appert and Appert. Linda sings the lovely soprano solo part of Barber's "Knoxville: summer of 1915," while Dr. Don conducts the first concert of what should prove to be another great year. The naming of a percussionist as president is a first for this excellent organization, with which I have had the privilege to play for seventeen years. Larry Greep is a hard act to follow, but I feel ably supported by the continuing involvement of him and other veterans of the Board of Directors. We only ask that you, all of our supporters, continue to provide generously so we can keep on rewarding the Portland area's top young musicians with the opportunity to play an entire concerto AND bringing you more award winning music. The form is below!

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