



Moxley Carmichael

MASTERWORKS

KNOXVILLE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
2015-2016 - Eightieth Season

**American Masters:
Gershwin & Bernstein**

Thursday & Friday evening
September 17 & 18 ~ 7:30 p.m.
Tennessee Theatre

James Fellenbaum, conductor
Sean Chen, piano

Sponsored by



Chadwick

Jubilee from Symphonic Sketches

Gershwin

Concerto in F Major for Piano & Orchestra

- I. *Allegro*
- II. *Adagio; Andante con moto*
- III. *Allegro agitato*

Sean Chen, piano

Intermission

Barber

Adagio for Strings

Bernstein

Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*

- I. *Prologue. Allegro moderato*
- II. *Somewhere. Adagio*
- III. *Scherzo. Vivace leggiero*
- IV. *Mambo. Presto*
- V. *Cha-Cha. Andantino con grazia*
- VI. *Meeting Scene. Meno mosso.*
- VII. *Cool, Fugue. Allegretto.*
- VIII. *Rumble. Molto allegro*
- IX. *Finale. Adagio*

*This concert will air on WUOT 91.9 FM on Tuesday, October 6, 2015 at 8:00 p.m.
This concert will be rebroadcast on Monday, July 4, 2016 at 8:00 p.m.*

Performances of the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra are made possible in part by grants from the City of Knoxville, the Knox County Government and by contributions to the Knoxville Symphony Society's Annual Support Drive. This project is funded under an agreement with the TENNESSEE ARTS COMMISSION. Latecomers will be seated during the first convenient pause in the performance. The use of recording devices and/or cameras is strictly forbidden. Please remember to turn off all electronic devices and refrain from text messaging during the concert. Programs and artists subject to change.

Program Notes: American Masters

Notes on the Program by Ken Meltzer

***Jubilee* from *Symphonic Sketches* (1895-1904)**

George Whitefield Chadwick was born in Lowell, Massachusetts, on November 13, 1854, and died in Boston, Massachusetts, on April 4, 1931. The first performance of the *Symphonic Sketches* took place at Symphony Hall in Boston on February 7, 1908, with Karl Muck conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Instrumentation: The *Symphonic Sketches* are scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, drum, military drum, xylophone, harp, and strings.

Duration: 8 minutes

After studies in Europe, Massachusetts-born American composer George Whitefield Chadwick returned to the United States. Chadwick became a member of the faculty of the New England Conservatory of Music. In 1897 he was named the institution's Director, and continued in that capacity until his death.

Jubilee is the first of four orchestral movements Chadwick named collectively as his *Symphonic Sketches*. In the score, each movement is preceded by a descriptive text. For *Jubilee*, Chadwick included the following verse:

*No cool gray tones for me!
Give me the warmest red and green,
A cornet and a tambourine,
To paint MY Jubilee!*

*For when pale flutes and oboes play,
To sadness I become a prey;
Give me the violets and the May,
But no gray skies for me!
(D.R.)*

Both the poem and the initials for its supposed author (D.R.) were Chadwick's own creation. As the movement's title and introductory poem suggest, *Jubilee* is a brilliant, festive piece. It is also very much in the spirit of the folk-inspired works of the great Czech composer, Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904).

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Concerto in F Major for Piano and Orchestra (1925)

George Gershwin was born in Brooklyn, New York, on September 26, 1898, and died in Hollywood, California, on July 11, 1937. The first performance of the Piano Concerto in F took place at Carnegie Hall in New York on December 3, 1925, with the composer as soloist and Walter Damrosch conducting the New York Symphony Orchestra.

Instrumentation: In addition to the solo piano, the Concerto in F is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, gong, orchestra bells, snare drum, wood block, slapstick, suspended cymbal, xylophone, and strings.

Duration: 31 minutes

On February 12, 1924, at New York's Aeolian Hall, pianist and composer George Gershwin triumphed as the soloist in the world premiere of his *Rhapsody in Blue*. In the audience was Walter Damrosch, conductor of the New York Symphony. Damrosch was thrilled with Gershwin's new work, and vowed to convince the New York Symphony to commission a Piano Concerto by George Gershwin.

On April 17, 1925, Gershwin signed an agreement to write the Concerto and to appear as soloist. Gershwin began composition of the new Concerto that summer. All told, by Gershwin's account: "It took me three months to compose it and one month to orchestrate it." Gershwin originally intended to entitle the piece *New York Concerto*, but decided upon the more generic Concerto in F. Gershwin completed the score on November 10, 1925. Prior to rehearsals with the New York Symphony, Gershwin hired sixty New York musicians to participate in a private "run-through" of the work at the Globe Theater. This resulted in some cuts in the score that tightened the Concerto's structure.

When Gershwin rehearsed the Concerto with the New York Symphony, a pipe remained in his mouth at all times. According to a newspaper reporter in attendance, the pipe "wandered in and out of his mouth all through the rehearsal. In particular, he used it to point accusingly at members of the orchestra who were not solving their jazz problems successfully."

The premiere of Gershwin's Concerto in F took place at New York's Carnegie Hall on December 3, 1925. Gershwin was the piano soloist and Damrosch the conductor of the New York Symphony. The audience response was ecstatic, "attested (as one reporter observed) in long and vehement applause, so that Mr. Gershwin was kept bowing for some minutes from the stage."

The Concerto in F is in three movements.

Gershwin provided the following musical analysis, which appeared in the New York *Tribune* the Sunday before the premiere:

I. *Allegro*—The first movement employs the Charleston rhythm. It is quick and pulsating, representing the young enthusiastic spirit of American life. It begins with a rhythmic motif given out by the kettledrums, supported by other percussion instruments, and with a Charleston motif introduced by horns, clarinets and violas. The principal theme is introduced by the bassoon. Later, a second theme is introduced by the piano.

II. *Adagio; Andante con moto*—The second movement has a poetic nocturnal atmosphere which has come to be referred to as the American blues, but

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in a purer form than that in which they are usually treated.

III. *Allegro agitato*—The final movement reverts to the style of the first. It is an orgy of rhythms, starting violently and keeping the same pace throughout.

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Adagio for Strings, Opus 11 (1937)

Samuel Barber was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, on March 9, 1910, and died in New York on January 23, 1981. The first performance of the *Adagio for Strings* took place in New York on November 5, 1938, with Arturo Toscanini conducting the N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra.

Duration: 8 minutes

Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* originated as the second movement of the composer's 1936 *Quartet for Strings*. The following year, Barber transcribed the work for string orchestra. In 1967, Samuel Barber once again made an arrangement of the *Adagio*, this time as an *Agnus Dei*, for a *cappella* mixed chorus.

Barber made his famous string orchestra transcription in response to a request from Arturo Toscanini. The legendary Italian maestro was seeking to perform new American orchestral works with his N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra. Since the time of its premiere, the hauntingly beautiful *Adagio for Strings* has become not only a concert favorite, but also part of our cultural landscape, often serving to commemorate a somber event. It has earned the affection of audiences and musicians alike, including Aaron Copland, who remarked: "The sense of continuity, the steadiness of the flow, the satisfaction of the arch that it creates from beginning to end... makes you believe in the sincerity which he obviously put into it."

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Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story* (1960)

Leonard Bernstein was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, on August 25, 1918, and died in New York on October 14, 1990. The first performance of the *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story* took place at Carnegie Hall in New York on February 13, 1961, with Lukas Foss conducting the New York Philharmonic.

Instrumentation: The *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story* are scored for piccolo, three flutes, two oboes, English horn, E-flat clarinet, two clarinets, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, tuba, timpani, vibraphone, xylophone, chimes, orchestra bells, guiro, suspended cymbal, bongo drums, triangle, snare drum, finger cymbals, bass drum,

police whistle, tam-tam, timbales, conga drum, tambourine, small maracas, wood block, cowbells, drum set, harp, piano/celeste, and strings.

Duration: 23 minutes

West Side Story, a contemporary adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, is one of the landmarks of the American musical theater. *West Side Story* premiered on August 19, 1957, at the National Theater in Washington, DC. After performances in Washington, DC, and Philadelphia, *West Side Story* opened at the Winter Garden in New York City on September 26, 1957. The production featured one of the most remarkable collaborative teams in musical theater history—a book by Arthur Laurents, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, music by Leonard Bernstein, with the entire production directed and choreographed by Jerome Robbins. *West Side Story* finally closed on Broadway on June 27, 1959, after 734 performances. A tour followed, as well as a Hollywood movie in 1961. *West Side Story* has remained in the repertoire ever since.

West Side Story is a remarkable fusion of drama, music, and dance, all placed at the service of a powerful and timeless story. It also represents an amazing synthesis of popular and classical elements, a sublime marriage of the Broadway stage with the opera and ballet houses. As Bernstein wrote after the premiere:

I am now convinced that what we dreamed all these years is possible; because there stands that tragic story, with a theme as profound as love versus hate, with all the theatrical risks of death and racial issues and young performers and "serious" music and complicated balletics—and it all added up for the audiences and critics.

In *West Side Story*, the setting of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* shifts from Verona to New York City. The Capulets are now the Puerto Rican gang, the Sharks. The Montagues become the Jets, the gang of "self-styled 'Americans'". Tony, a member of the Jets and Maria, the sister of the leader of the Sharks, are the modern-day "star-crossed lovers." In 1960, Bernstein fashioned an orchestral work from the original Broadway score. Sid Ramin and Irwin Kostal assisted Bernstein in the orchestration. The premiere of the *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story* took place at New York's Carnegie Hall on February 13, 1961, with Lukas Foss conducting the New York Philharmonic.

The *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story* comprise the following sections, played without pause:

I. Prologue. Allegro moderato II. Somewhere. Adagio III. Scherzo. Vivace leggiero IV. Mambo. Presto V. Cha-Cha. Andantino con grazia VI. Meeting Scene. Meno mosso VII. Cool, Fugue. Allegretto VIII. Rumble. Molto allegro IX. Finale. Adagio