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2024-25



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Symphony Orchestra

Festivals!

Gary Lewis, conductor

Renee Gilliland, conductor

7:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 26, 2024

Macky Auditorium

PROGRAM

Starburst

Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)

Renee Gilliland, conductor

Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

I. Allegro moderato

II. Adagio di molto

III. Allegro, ma non tanto

Rinat Erlichman, violin

Winner, Graduate Division, Honors Competition

— Intermission —

Feste Romane

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

I. Circenses (Circus Maximus)

II. Il giubileo (The Jubilee)

III. L'ottobrata (The October Festival)

IV. La Befana (The Epiphany)

PROGRAM NOTES

Starburst

Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)

This brief one-movement work for string orchestra is a play on imagery of rapidly changing musical colors. Exploding gestures are juxtaposed with gentle fleeting melodies in an attempt to create a multidimensional soundscape. A common definition of a starburst: “the rapid formation of large numbers of new stars in a galaxy at a rate high enough to alter the structure of the galaxy significantly” lends itself almost literally to the nature of the performing ensemble who premieres the work, The Sphinx Virtuosi, and I wrote the piece with their dynamic in mind.

—Program note by Jessie Montgomery

Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Sibelius aspired to become a violin virtuoso but fixed on that goal too late for it to be feasible. Still, he became accomplished enough to play in the Vienna Conservatory’s orchestra when he was a student there, in 1890-91, and he even unsuccessfully auditioned for a chair in the Vienna Philharmonic.

He enriched his instrument’s repertoire by a quite a few works apart from his famous violin concerto. He worked on a second violin concerto in 1915 but abandoned it, recycling his sketches into his sixth symphony. He composed numerous works for violin and piano, including a sonata (1889) and a sonatina (1915), as well as many items grouped into collections of short movements. Apart from two short pieces for men’s choir and some revisions of earlier pieces, Sibelius composed not a single work after 1931 — which is to say in the last 26 years of his life. Shortly before he gave up composing, he was engaged one last time with the violin, although a projected suite for violin and orchestra remained a fragmented draft.

None of these works rivals the violin concerto in combining Sibelius's unique musical language with the capabilities of the solo instrument. His characteristic sound—dark and sober—would not meld easily with the extroverted personality of most violin concertos of the 19th century. Still, a concerto needed to have a certain degree of flashiness or else a soloist could hardly be expected to perform it. Sibelius solved this problem by creating what some historians have viewed as “a deepening of the tradition.” The musicologist James Hepokoski finds in this work “a virtuoso concerto simultaneously affirmed and transcended by a thoroughgoing seriousness of purpose and ‘surplus’ density of compositional pondering.”

The section of a traditional concerto most at odds with Sibelius' predilection for profundity would be the first-movement cadenza, in which soloists are given the greatest opportunities to demonstrate their technical prowess. Sibelius meets the challenge head on: he provides a solo cadenza, but instead of presenting it as a sort of pendant to the proceedings, he moves it to the middle of the movement and essentially makes it fill the role of a development section. Also non-traditional is the downplaying of the back-and-forth conversation between soloist and orchestra that we are accustomed to hearing in the concertos of, say, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Brahms.

The vast breadth of the opening movement is mirrored in the still beauty of the melancholy slow movement. Although this concerto is not a prime example of Sibelius's occasional penchant for folk inspiration, the finale does seem to be a dance of some sort. The musical commentator Donald Francis Tovey called it “a polonaise for polar bears,” a description so perfect that few program annotators can resist quoting it. But one might consider what Tovey had to say apart from that:

As with all Sibelius's more important works, its outlines are huge and simple; and if a timely glance at an atlas had not reminded me that Finland is mostly flat and water-logged with lakes, I should doubtless have said that "his forms are hewn out of the rocks of his native and Nordic mountains." The composer to whose style the word "lapidary" (*lapidarisch*) was first applied by the orthodoxy of the [eighteen] 'nineties is Bruckner; and if the best work of Sibelius suggests anything else in music, it suggests a Bruckner gifted with an easy mastery and the spirit of a Polar explorer.
—Program note by James M. Keller

Feste Romane

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Roman Festivals fits squarely into the category of "program music." With *The Fountains of Rome* and *The Pines of Rome*, it comprises Respighi's *Roman Triptych*, a cycle that, along with his three suites of *Ancient Airs and Dances*, keeps his name before the public, although recent recordings have delved into less familiar corners of his output with frequently rewarding results.

Respighi settled in Rome in 1913 when he took up an appointment as professor of composition at the Santa Cecilia academy, the city's famous conservatory. He met and married his wife there—she was one of his students—and the vibrant concert life in Rome spurred Respighi to action.

Unlike *The Fountains of Rome*, the opening of *Roman Festivals* is anything but gentle. Respighi hurls us into the bloody world of an imperial Roman circus with a massive brass fanfare. The condemned martyrs enter to a somber march and intone their dolorous hymn as the beasts about to devour them growl hungrily. The crowd erupts, the fanfare returns, and the movement ends with the clangorous din of Nero's Circus Maximus.

In *The Jubilee*, medieval pilgrims make the long journey to Rome. The opening motif, marked *doloroso e stanco* (sad and tired), captures the mood of the travelers. As the pilgrims see Rome in the distance, they sing a hymn of praise, played emphatically by the brass. Respighi uses the brass, the winds, and chimes and bells to capture the peals of church bells resounding through the city.

October Festivals captures the kind of celebrations that would have followed a successful harvest, including dancing, serenading, and hunting.

In the finale, Respighi portrays the teeming throng of people packed into the Piazza Navona, one of Rome's central squares, on the night before Epiphany. The effect is cinematic, with Respighi giving us close-ups of the goings-on—raucous dancing, entertaining street performers, drunken revelry, an organ grinder, and so on. Gradually, the camera pulls back from the crowd as they unite in song before the final heady peroration. The work is like a soundtrack without a film—Respighi composed it during the first golden age of film (Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* came out in 1926, the first “talkie” in 1927, and Carl Theodore Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* in 1928)—and, like all great program music, it lets the mind create the imagery.

—Program note by John Mangum

PERSONNEL

Hyperlinks are bold and underlined; click or tap for more information.

Gary Lewis, conductor

Renee Gilliland, conductor

Rinat Erlichman, role

Rinat Erlichman began her violin studies in Israel at the age of 6 with Irina Miskov. Erlichman continued her studies with Michael Gaisler at the Hassadna Conservatory in Jerusalem, and later on at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. She received a Bachelor of Music degree from The Juilliard School as a student of Itzhak Perlman and Li Lin, and a Master of Music degree from Rice University as a student of Paul Kantor. Erlichman is currently pursuing an Artist Diploma at the University of Colorado Boulder, studying with Harumi Rhodes and Edward Dusingberre. She is the recipient of the 2023-2025 Dorothy Richard Starling Foundation Violin Scholarship and is the winner of the 2023-2024 Bruce Ekstrand Memorial Graduate Competition and the CU Boulder School of Music Concerto Competition.

Erlichman is a graduate of the Perlman Music Program, Music Academy of the West, Aspen Music Festival, Heifetz International Music Institute, Orchestra of the Americas and David Goldman program in the Jerusalem Music Center.

Since 2005, she has received support from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation, and from the Ronen Foundation since 2021. Erlichman played in The Juilliard School Honors Quartet Program and served as a principal player for the Young Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra. She has played for musicians including Ivry Gitlis, Gil Shaham, Miriam Fried, Gyorgy Pauk, Shmuel Ashkenasi, Yehonatan Berick, Michaela Martin and Catherine Cho.

Erlichman performed recitals in Paris, London, San Francisco, and performed at the Israeli President House. She played at the Neue Galerie in New York as part of the Perlman Music Program, and with the Haifa Symphony Orchestra as a soloist. She currently serves as a section violinist with the Boulder Philharmonic orchestra.

When in Israel, Erlichman volunteers to play at the Mental Health Center in Be'er Sheva City. She also played for the NYC based CiM, "Concerts in Motion," which gives the opportunity to play for audiences that cannot attend the standard concert halls.

Erlichman plays a violin made by Goffredo Cappa, on loan courtesy of Yehuda Zisapel Foundation.

Symphony Orchestra

Violin

Greg Abrell
Ryannah Blackman
Alyssa Byrne
Anna Cummings
Alex Earle
Jordan Grantonic
Michael Han
Samuel Hardman
Logan Indge
Elizabeth Kaszycki
Lauren Lier
Principal
Sarah Payton
Laura Pérez Rangel
Concertmaster
Eli Pouliot
David Schwartz
Bebe Seidenberg
Andrew Storey
Emilie Tupper
Adam Weller
Nelio Zamorano

Viola

Shelley Armer
Walt Conte
Devin Cowan
Principal
Finn Cruit
Becky Donoho
Len Eppich

Zoe Fernandez
Alejandro Gallagher
Bryce Kayser
Aaron Lockhart
Taylor Sapanara

Cello

Mackenzie Baca
Julian Bennett
Elise Cole
Amy Delavoryas
Julia Emery
Marti Flickinger
Kate Fornshell
Lance Johnson
Logan Kuhlman
Nia Lepore
Peyton Magalhaes
Principal
Erik Okel
Everlin Roark
Caleb Seifert
Cole Sutherland

Bass

Joey Aigner
Ella Bajcsi
Gabriel Brownlowe
John St. Cyr
Principal
Cooper Elliott
Claire Koch

Monet Markle
Sasha Mackoff
Willem Rohwer
Jack Turner

Flute

Corvina Graham
Nova Rognerud
Natalie Trejo
Mallory Wood
Natalie Zeles

Oboe

Lauren Breen
Laura Lambrech
Grace Stringfellow
Luka Vezmar

Clarinet

Harold Gomez-Montoya
Nikhila Narayana
Ben Rathje
Juan Tovar

Bassoon

Larissa Harrison
Ben Mangonon
Laynie Metsker
Madison Triplett

Horn

Nathan Bonin
Max Braun

Jaila Carr
Stacey DeGarmo
Jordan Spivack
Danielle York

Trumpet

Michael Brotherton
Lucca Cidale
Elise Ehlert
Sydney Hoehl
Anna Kallinikos
Leilani Spurlock
Adam Warnke

Trombone

Mark Bennett
Ben Garcia
Wesley Shores

Tuba

Jesse Factor

Timpani/Percussion

Lily Manzanares
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