Sunday, July 15, 2018 | 3:00 PM

Franco American Fête

Dr. Robert G. Hasty, Music Director
North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie

Hungarian March from The Damnation of Faust ..................Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

Ballet Music from Faust ..................................................Charles Gounod (1818-1893)
  Les nubiennes (Allegretto, Mouvement de valse)
  Adagio
  Danse antique (Allegretto)
  Variations de Cléopâtre (Moderato maestoso)
  Les troyens (Moderato con moto)
  Variations du miroir (Allegretto)
  Danse de Phryné (Allegro vivo)

Suite #1 from Carmen .........................................................Georges Bizet (1838-1875)
  Prelude. Allegro giocoso
  Aragonaise (Prelude to Act 4). Andante moderato
  Intermezzo (Prelude to Act 3). Andantino quasi allegretto
  Séguedille
  Les Dragons d’Alcala (The Soldiers of Alcala) (Prelude to Act 2)
  Les Toréadors (March of the Toreadors)

INTERMISSION

American Salute ...............................................................Morton Gould (1913-1996)
  Jack Shankman, Guest Conductor

Lullaby .............................................................................George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Overture to Candide ..........................................................Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

Incidental Music from Our Town ........................................Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Selections from West Side Story ........................................Leonard Bernstein

Stars and Stripes Forever ..................................................John Philip Sousa (1854-1932)

This concert is supported in part by
The Village of Skokie, Niles Township, and the Illinois Arts Council
Berlioz – “Hungarian March” from La damnation de Faust
The specific origins of the Faust legend, one of the most durable in Western folklore and literature, are unknown. It is speculated that it is based loosely upon the life of Johann Georg Faust, a German alchemist and magician. In most versions of the story, Faust, an erudite, educated astrologer, sells his soul to the devil in exchange for unlimited knowledge, power, and earthly pleasures. Since its first appearance in the 16th century, the tale has been reinterpreted and reimagined in numerous artistic, literary, dramatic, and musical works.

One such work was Hector Berlioz’s massive dramatic cantata, La damnation de Faust. Berlioz first encountered the Faust legend in 1828 through a French translation of Goethe's famous adaptation. He was immediately captivated: “This marvelous book fascinated me from the first. I could not put it down”, he recalled in his Memoirs.

Part I of this imposing composition ends with the now-famous “Hungarian March.” During the composition of La damnation, Berlioz was engaged to present a concert of his music in Hungary. Shortly before his departure, he was visited by a friend who suggested that to please Hungarian audiences, he should write a piece based on one of their national tunes. “I followed the advice and chose the Rákóczy theme, on which I wrote the grand march which you know.” Berlioz goes on to describe the reaction:

The audience stayed quiet and silent at the unexpected opening. But when, over a long crescendo, fragments of the Rákóczy theme reappeared in a fugato, punctuated by muffled notes on the bass drum simulating distant cannon-fire, the hall began to seethe with an indescribable sound, and when the orchestra erupted in a furious mêlée and hurled forth the long-contained fortissimo, shouts and stamping such as I had never heard shook the hall.

Gounod – Ballet Music from Faust
Several years after the premier of La damnation de Faust, Berlioz’s fellow Frenchman, Charles Gounod, composed his own version of the Faust story in the form of a five-act grand opera. Gounod chose a play, Faust et Marguerite, by Michel Carré as the structural framework for his opera but included elements from Goethe's version to flesh out the libretto. The 1859 premiere was given at the Théâtre-Lyrique instead of the more prestigious Paris Opera because it was not thought sufficiently showy for the city’s premier venue. The work was finally performed at the Opera in 1869, but not before considerable revisions had been made, including the mandatory insertion of a ballet into Act V to provide the necessary “spectacle” expected from that house. Gounod was reluctant to compose the requisite ballet music and seems to have considered passing the task to a young Saint-Saëns who, however, “…never wrote a note and never heard anything else about it.”

Though often omitted in modern productions of the opera, the ballet music which Gounod grudgingly provided for his opera has proven to be of enormous charm. For the fanciful ballet scene Gounod and his librettist reached beyond the primary love story of Faust and Marguerite into the second part of Goethe's drama. Here Faust meets the courtesans of antiquity -- Lais, Cléopatra, Helen of Troy, and Phryne – each one represented by a dance: “Les Nubiennes,” “Cleopatra et la Coupe d’Or” (Cleopatra and the
Goblet of Gold), “Les Troyennes” (The Trojan Women), “Variation,” and “Dance de Phryine.” Though beautiful in its own right, and filled with lovely music, the ballet scene had little to do with the drama at hand; it simply provided an excuse for the elaborate visual display that captivated contemporary Parisian audiences.

**Bizet – Carmen Suite No.1**

A slightly younger contemporary of Berlioz and Gounod, Georges Bizet achieved only moderate success as a composer before his life was cut short at the age of 36. However, his final work, the opera Carmen (premiered only months before his death), went on to become one of the most beloved and frequently performed works in the entire opera repertoire. So popular was this musical tale of the fatal love between a gypsy woman and a renegade soldier, that Bizet’s friend and collaborator, Ernest Guiraud, compiled two orchestral suites based upon its most prominent themes. Guiraud’s arrangements adhere closely to the original orchestrations, and demonstrate Bizet’s gifts for melody, spontaneity, and drama.

The Suite No. 1 is comprised of five movements, each one drawn from a different portion of the opera. Three movements are adapted from orchestral introductions or entr’actes, and two are instrumental versions of arias from Acts I and II. A brief Prelude opens the work and introduces the ominous theme associated with Carmen and her fate at the hands of her lover, Don Jose. The Prelude leads without pause into Argonaise, a lively dance from the Spanish region of Aragon. This festive music, featuring castanets and tambourine, is drawn from the opening of Act IV, where it accompanies a crowd arriving at a bullfight. A slow, lyrical Intermezzo (the Prelude to Act III), featuring woodwinds and strings, follows. The Seguedille (a Castilian folksong) that follows is an orchestral arrangement of Carmen’s Act I aria in which she seduces her jailer, Don José. Les dragons d’Alcala is a jaunty military march that forms the opera’s Prelude to Act II; later in the act José is heard singing it offstage as he makes his way to meet Carmen. Les Toréadors is adapted from the matador Escamillo’s aria in Act II, wherein he attempts to woo Carmen away from Don José. The extremely memorable melody is combined with bold orchestrations to bring the suite to a rousing close.

**Gould – American Salute**

The early years of the 20th century saw the emergence of an extraordinary school of American composers, including George Gershwin, Richard Rodgers, Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland, and Leonard Bernstein. Less well known, though equally important, was the talented and versatile Morton Gould. Born in New York City, Gould was hailed as a child prodigy, publishing his first composition at the age of seven. He went on to achieve success as a conductor, while his compositions were rewarded with numerous accolades, including a Pulitzer Prize. Gould wrote music of an extraordinarily broad range, from ballet scores, symphonies, and concertos, to a Broadway musical, and brilliant orchestral versions of American spirituals, folk songs, and patriotic tunes. This last category gave rise to what is, arguably, his most popular composition, American Salute, a brilliant set of orchestral variations on the Civil War tune “When Johnny Comes Marching Home.”
Written in 1942 in the early days of World War II, *American Salute* was conceived at the request of a radio producer who persuaded Gould to compose a “salute to America.” By Gould’s own account, he wrote and scored the piece in less than eight hours, starting at 6 p.m. the evening before it was due and finishing at 2 a.m. Parts were quickly copied, a rehearsal took place the following morning, and a broadcast performance given several hours later. It became an instant classic, much to the composer’s astonishment: “What amazes me is that critics say it is a minor masterpiece, a gem. To me, it was just a setting. I was doing a million of those things.”

**Gershwin – Lullaby**

George Gershwin’s career began rather inauspiciously as a “song plugger” in New York’s Tin Pan Alley. By the age of 16 he had begun to publish his own songs and was well on his way to becoming one of America’s favorite composers. With his reputation for popular songs and musicals, some find it surprising to learn that Gershwin pursued a rigorous education in the music of the European classical tradition. To that end, he studied piano with Charles Hambitzer, composition with Rubin Goldmark, and harmony and orchestration with the renowned conductor, pianist, and teacher, Edward Kilienyi. As one of his first exercises for Maestro Kilenyi, Gershwin composed a short piece for string quartet entitled *Lullaby*. Completed in 1919, the work was not performed in its original version until 1968. Though sometimes heard in this form today, it has enjoyed equal success as a version for string orchestra.

*Lullaby* beautifully demonstrates Gershwin’s ability to blend popular and serious idioms to cross over between jazz/popular and art music. The colorful harmonies and syncopated rhythms are somewhat bluesy and suggestive of ragtime, while the intricate part-writing and thematic development exhibit Gershwin’s classical training. True to its name, the piece moves slowly and softly with almost hypnotic repetition. Upon hearing *Lullaby*, Paul Whiteman commissioned Gershwin to create a concerto-like piece for an upcoming concert he was organizing. That commission became *Rhapsody in Blue*.

**Bernstein – Candide and Selections from West Side Story**

Leonard Bernstein enjoyed a career that moved effortlessly between the worlds of serious and popular music, winning accolades in both the concert hall and the Broadway theater. He was one of the first native born American conductors to achieve worldwide fame and, according to one writer, was “one of the most prodigiously talented and successful musicians in American history.” Though he wrote in several genres, encompassing symphonic and orchestral music, choral works, chamber pieces, lighthearted songs, and musical comedy, Bernstein himself always said he wanted to write “the great American opera.” He probably came closest with *Candide*.

*Candide*, which opened in 1956, was the result of collaboration between Bernstein and the writer Lillian Helman. It is based on Voltaire’s satirical novella of 1759 and tells of the misadventures of Candide, a naive, simple, and pure-hearted young man, and his sweetheart, Cunégonde. Though its initial Broadway run was short (it was, perhaps, too intellectual for its audience), subsequent revisions/revivals have been frequent, and the work enjoys a solid reputation today. The overture was well received from the start and has become a very popular curtain-raiser. Heralded by some as Bernstein’s greatest
purely orchestral work, it is filled with energy, humor, and a wonderfully memorable melody. The scoring, which features a host of percussion instruments, contributes to the dazzling soundscape.

While preparing *Candide*, Bernstein was also at work on *West Side Story*, however, the genesis for the latter goes back to 1949 when choreographer Jerome Robbins toyed with the idea of transporting *Romeo and Juliet* to modern-day America. He pitched the idea to a receptive Bernstein and, along with playwright Arthur Laurents, the trio envisioned turning the warring Capulets and Montagues into New York Jews and Catholics under the title *East Side Story*. Six years would pass before work was truly underway, by which time Los Angeles was in the throes of racial unrest at the hands of feuding gangs. The relevance of the situation was apparent to Bernstein, who realized that a racially-fueled gang war between white New Yorkers and Puerto Ricans would be a topical adaptation for their modern take on Shakespeare's classic. The resulting *West Side Story*—brimming with Bernstein's instant-classic songs, with lyrics by a young Stephen Sondheim, and electrified by Robbins's street-ballet choreography—conquered Broadway and then the globe, earning six Tony nominations and a place in the pantheon of American musical theater.

Much like his mentor, Copland, Bernstein moved easily between musical styles. For the racially motivated tunes of “Jet Song,” the jazzy “Cool,” and the sarcastic “Gee Officer Krupke,” the anger which boils beneath the surface is translated by Bernstein into angular melodies, lightning syncopation, and unresolved motion. He surrounded the raw testosterone in these melodies with snarling muted brass, rumbling percussion, finger snaps, and restless, herky-jerky rhythms. However, for the tender love duet “Tonight,” the lovely “Somewhere,” “One Hand, One Heart,” and Tony’s love ballad, “Maria,” Bernstein drew from a different well, demonstrating his gift for melody, lush harmonies, and an emotional immediacy that rivals the finest of Broadway composers. “Mambo” and the energetic “America” demonstrate the composer’s intricate rhythmic structures as well as a mastery of the Latin idiom.

Since Bernstein worked on *West Side Story* concurrently with *Candide*, there was almost inevitably some switching of material between the two works. Tony and Maria’s duet, “One Hand, One Heart” was originally intended for Cunégonde, while the music for “Gee Officer Krupke” was also pulled from *Candide*.

**Copland – Suite from Our Town**

Often regarded as the “Dean of American Composers,” Aaron Copland is known to a large audience as the composer of such quintessentially American pieces as *Rodeo, Billy the Kid* and *A Lincoln Portrait*. His aspirations were not always bent in this direction. Early in his career Copland travelled to Paris to study with the esteemed pedagogue, Nadia Boulanger, and there pursued a rather avant-garde musical path in the footsteps of Stravinsky, Schoenberg and other modernists whose ground-breaking compositions were currently the rage among Parisian intellectuals. Returning to the United States, Copland continued in this modernist vein and produced works that were received favorably by critics but failed to resonate with a larger public. It was at this point, in the 1930s, that Copland made a conscious decision to change directions; to create music of the highest standards and artistic merit that was, at the same time, accessible to the average listener. Thus, was born his unique American voice.
One of Copland’s first attempts in this new direction was the film score *Of Mice and Men*. Following its success, he was enticed back to Hollywood to compose music for the movie version of Thornton Wilder’s play *Our Town*. Copland knew the play and was well acquainted with Peterborough, New Hampshire – the “real” Grover’s Corners – having spent time at the McDowell Artist Colony just outside that charming town. (Wilder had even written the play during a stay at the Colony.) The play depicts the everyday lives of ordinary people in such a town and was, therefore, a fitting vehicle for Copland to attempt to create music for a wider audience.

According to critic Michael Steinberg, *Our Town*, “with its lovely sense of quiet and its beautiful evocation of New England hymn tunes, is a wonderfully achieved film score; not least, one admires Copland’s discretion even in the scenes when the need to go for the hankies is most irresistible.” The brief suite, which Copland fashioned from the full score, draws on the title music, the churchyard scene, and several passages showing daily life in Grover’s Corners.

Program notes by Dr. Michael Vaughn

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Jack Shankman is an avid music lover and enthusiast. He has a Music Degree from Roosevelt University in conducting and has conducted local orchestras, bands and theater musicals. He was an active member and advocate of the Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra where he played French horn from 1988 – 2008. He served as Board President of the SVSO from 1993 – 2010. During his tenure as President, the orchestra performed with many notable musicians including Daniel Barenboim and Gil Shaham. Jack was honored with a SVSO chair in 2010. In addition to his passion for music, Jack enjoyed a fulfilling career as an attorney for the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Chicago.

Jack lives in Chicago with his wife Leslie and has three sons, Zack, Noah and Mason.
Dr. Robert G. Hasty is the Music Director of the Kenosha Symphony Orchestra, Principal Conductor of the Highland Park Strings, and the conductor of the Chamber Orchestra and the Philharmonia at the Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University where he also serves as the Associate Director of Orchestras. He is also Artistic Director of the International Schools Choral Music Society.

Dr. Hasty began his career teaching music in the public schools in Southern California. This included a position as District Music Coordinator of the Capistrano Unified School District where he supervised the K-12 music education program and its staff of 39 teachers. He also served an elected term as Vice President in charge of String Education for the Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association.

A noted researcher in music cognition, Dr. Hasty has been an author for two publications delivered at the 7th International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition in Sydney, Australia. A book on his research on conducting has recently been published: “Critical Listening While Conducting”. The European Society for Cognitive Sciences of Music invited him to speak at their conference in Portugal on these studies.

As a conductor, Dr. Hasty has appeared with the All-American College Orchestra at Walt Disney World, Beijing Youth Orchestra, Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra, Grant Park Symphony Orchestra, Irvine Youth Symphony, La Primavera Orchestra, Merit Symphony Orchestra, Metropolitan Youth Symphony, National High School Music Institute Orchestra, Northwestern University Symphony Orchestra, NU Opera Theater, NU Contemporary Music Ensemble, and the Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra. His performances have been broadcast on WFMT radio in Chicago and on the Big Ten Network. Dr. Hasty’s international engagements include performances at the National Concert Hall of Taipei, Taiwan, the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing, China, the Shanghai Oriental Arts Center Concert Hall in Shanghai, China, the Busan Cultural Center Main Theater in Busan, South Korea, and the Suzhou Culture and Arts Center Grand Theater in Suzhou, China. He is sought-after as an honor orchestra conductor, conducting honor groups across the United States. He is a member of the conducting and music education faculties at the Bienen School of Music.

Dr. Hasty has also spent his career as a freelance violinist and violist, having been a student of Alice Schoenfeld at the USC Thornton School of Music. Dr. Hasty was the violist on the world premiere of Kathy Henkel’s Moorland Sketches, which was broadcast on KUSC-FM Los Angeles. These days, you will find him fiddling in several Chicago clubs and venues with various local bands, most notably performing and recording with singer-songwriter Christina Trulio (ASCAP).
WE REMEMBER AND HONOR MARY STOLTZ

Long standing SVSO violinist Mary Stoltz passed away on May 2nd, 2018 at the age of 79. She is survived by her two sons, Ben (Karey) and Rich, and two grandsons, Nathan and Nicholas. In addition to her sisters, brother, cousins, in-laws, and their families, there are many who have come to call her “Aunt Mary” for no other reason than they love her, and she them. Many have come to know Mary as a musician, artist, or advocate and have valued her as a friend and colleague.

Mary earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at Augustana College and was a dedicated musician. She was coached in chamber music at Northeastern and Northwestern Universities as well as at the Interlochen College of Arts. Mary played the violin in the Quad City Symphony and the Lincolnwood Chamber Orchestra. Until the summer of 2017, she also played in the Skokie Symphony and the Highland Park Strings, as well as in a number of professional and informal chamber music groups.

Mary was a prolific painter. She studied at Augustana College, where she received her BA in fine arts with a minor in French, and later at Northwestern University and Oakton Community College. Her works, which famously adorned the walls of her home, encompass a diverse range of styles and portray a broad array of subjects—from still life to wildlife, and pastoral scenes to family portraits.

Mary also maintained a rich intellectual and civic life and she advocated for what she believed. She served as President of the Skokie-Lincolnwood League of Women Voters and was a League member for many years. Mary was a strong advocate for the mentally ill, chairing her League’s studies of Illinois mental health services. She also served on the State Board of the Illinois League of Women Voters, testifying before and lobbying members of the Illinois State Legislature to improve services for the mentally ill in Illinois. Mary’s advocacy on behalf of the mentally ill was a sustained and lifelong commitment. She was an advocate for Thresholds, and served for many years on the advisory board for Trilogy. Both organizations provide services for the mentally ill.

Mary’s family thanks the orchestra for their tribute to Mary. In the end, it was ALS that took away Mary’s ability to play the violin and made her give up her seat. Thank you for bringing her back into the hall and seeing her out properly.

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To Maestro Hasty, the 2018 Young Artist Competition Winners Masha Lakisova and Matthew Dardick, and our orchestra musicians. Together, the SVSO is the recipient of the 2018 Skokie Award for Artistic Excellence given by the Skokie Fine Arts Commission for outstanding talent, visibility, and positive impact on the community.
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