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Carter Simmons, Music Director
presents

“COPLAND AND LEVY: AMERICAN MASTERS”

Sunday, March 31, 2019
2:00 PM
The Pabst Theater
144 E Wells St

FREDERICK DELIUS
(1862–1924)
Brigg Fair; An English Rhapsody

AARON COPLAND
(1900–1990)
Concerto for Clarinet
Todd Levy, Clarinet

INTERMISSION

JESSIE MONTGOMERY
(b. 1981)
Starburst

AARON COPLAND
(1900–1990)
Appalachian Spring
CARTER SIMMONS, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Festival City Symphony Music Director, Carter Simmons, is a long-time member of Milwaukee’s close-knit arts community. The well-known Artistic Director of the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra (MYSO) has served for 25 years with the organization that has nurtured, challenged, and inspired young people since 1956. During his association with MYSO, the organization has grown to serve 6,000 students and received recognition as an awardee of the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, the nation’s highest honor for out-of-school arts and humanities programs.

Mr. Simmons has been invited to work with the Milwaukee Ballet, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the Starry Nights Orchestra featuring artists of Milwaukee’s Florentine Opera, and the Wisconsin Philharmonic among other orchestras. He has conducted the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra throughout China, most notably in Beijing’s Forbidden City Concert Hall, and also in Orchestra Hall in Chicago’s Symphony Center. He has also accompanied the orchestra for its performances in New York’s Carnegie Hall, Valencia’s Palau de la Música, Prague’s Dvořák Hall, Budapest’s Béla Bartók National Concert Hall, in Argentina and Uruguay, and the Musikverein, home of the Vienna Philharmonic.

TODD LEVY, CLARINET

Principal Clarinet of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra and participant in the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, four-time Grammy Award-winner Todd Levy has performed as a soloist at Carnegie Hall, the Mostly Mozart Festival, with the Israel Philharmonic, and at the White House; as chamber musician with members of the Guarneri, Juilliard, Orion, Miro, and Miami quartets, Christoph Eschenbach and Mitsuko Uchida; as a participant at the Marlboro Music Festival for four summers; as a member of the Naumburg Award-winning Aspen Wind Quintet; as Guest Principal Clarinet with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera, and as a frequent Principal Clarinet for Seiji Ozawa, Riccardo Muti, and Alan Gilbert at the Tokyo Opera Nomori, Mito Chamber Orchestra, and Saito Kinen festivals in Japan.

He has performed World Premiere concerti or chamber works by composers such as John Harbison, Joan Tower, Peter Schickele, Paquito D’Rivera, Morton Subotnick, Marc Neikrug, and performs on the new release of Marc Neikrug’s Through Roses chamber work with violinist Pinchas Zuckerman, actor John Rubenstein, and the composer conducting.

Highlights of the 2018 season include the release of his latest CD for Avie entitled Rhapsodie, and four CD’s as Guest Principal Clarinet of the Buffalo Philharmonic in tone poems of Kodaly, Respighi, Strauss and Wagner for Naxos. He has recorded the Brahms Clarinet Sonatas and Schumann pieces for Avie, and three educational book/CDs of clarinet competition works entitled The Clarinet Collection for G. Schirmer. In addition, Mr. Levy has recorded and edited the new exclusive editions/CDs of the Bernstein Clarinet Sonata and the Finzi Five Bagatelles for Boosey and Hawkes, and over
20 other orchestral and chamber music CDs on the Deutsche Grammophon, Sony, and Decca labels. He performs on Vandoren reeds, mouthpieces, and ligatures, and Selmer Signature clarinets. He is also on the faculty of UW-Milwaukee, and is an alumnus of the New World Symphony, Marlboro Music Festival, and the Juilliard School.

For a more complete biography, visit toddlevy.org.
THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

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Pamela Simmons  
_Ass’t Concertmaster_
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Jessie Petrides
Kristian Brusubardis
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Laurie Asch
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BASS CLARINET
Orlando Pimentel

BASSOON
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FESTIVAL CITY SYMPHONY CONT.

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Matthew Walker

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Daniel Neesley

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Robert Koszewski

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Carl Storniolo  
Ken Marchand

**HARP**  
Ann Lobotzke  
Principal

**PIANO**  
Joanna Schilling

PROGRAM NOTES BY ROGER RUGGERI © 2019

Frederick Delius  
b. January 29, 1862; Brandford, England  
d. June 10, 1924; Grez-sur-Loing, France

**Brigg Fair; An English Rhapsody**

The dreamy tranquility of Delius’s unique and highly personal expression was only achieved in the composer’s fourth decade. Generally cast in a Wagnerian mold, his music gained much of its lightness and transparency through the influence of his friend, the Norwegian composer, Edvard Grieg.

One of eleven children of a wealthy ex-patriot German wool merchant, Delius worked for a few years in the family business before managing, in 1884, to convince his father that he really wanted to grow oranges in Florida. Set up with his own plantation near Jacksonville, Delius neglected his orange grove while devoting himself to a concentrated six months of musical study with Thomas Ward, a gifted local musician. Soon thereafter, Delius left the plantation in his brother’s care and went off to teach music in Florida and Virginia. Relieved upon finally locating his errant son, Frederick’s father agreed to support him during an eighteen-month course at the Leipzig Conservatory. Going there in August of 1886, Delius studied with Sitt, Reinecke, Jadassohn and established his friendship with Grieg.

Another associate of Delius and Grieg was the Australian/American composer/pianist Percy Grainger (1882–1961). In the early 20th-century, Grainger traveled around England, making wax cylinder recordings of folk music. In 1907, he recorded folk singer Joseph Taylor performing *Brigg Fair* at a music festival in Brigg, North Lincolnshire. Grainger made a choral setting of the song which Delius admired, then, with permission, made the present orchestral setting. First performed in 1908, *Brigg Fair* uses oboe to initially reveal the folk theme.

Writing around the time of that first performance, British annotator Rosa Newmarch finds: “The Rhapsody is a happy expression of human emotion shown in pastoral surroundings that are poetically suggested, but never allowed to intrude upon the eternally old, and eternally new, presentment of ‘the lover and his lass.’"
Aaron Copland  
b. November 14, 1900; Brooklyn, NY  
d. December 2, 1990; New York City

**Concerto for Clarinet**

Among the finest post-World War II works of its genre, Copland's *Concerto for Clarinet* was commissioned by the famed jazz clarinetist, Benny Goodman. Begun in 1947, its lyric first movement was written while Copland was in Rio de Janeiro. Returning to America, he composed an energetic second movement in New York State, completing the whole concerto early in 1948. Goodman premiered the work in New York on November 6, 1950; Fritz Reiner led the NBC Symphony. The following year, Jerome Robbins choreographed the concerto as a ballet entitled *The Pied Piper*; and aided in its first production by the New York City Ballet on December 4, 1951.

Recalling the creation of this concerto, Copland said that Goodman “assumed that since I was writing a work for him, I'd know more or less what he'd like to play. The decision to use jazz materials was mine, inspired, of course, by Goodman's playing. Although I didn’t mention this to him, I was certain that he would approve. But, contrary to certain commentators, the jazz elements in the *Clarinet Concerto* have nothing to do with the ‘hot jazz’ improvisation for which Benny Goodman and his sextet were noted.”

The melodic first movement (*Slowly and Expressively*) is joined to the second by a *Cadenza* anticipating some of the materials in the last movement (*Rather Fast*). Describing his work, Copland wrote: “The first movement is simple in structure, based upon the usual A-B-A song form. The general character of this movement is lyric and expressive. The cadenza that follows provides the soloist with considerable opportunity to demonstrate his prowess, at the same time introducing fragments of the melodic material heard in the second movement. Some of this material represents an unconscious fusion of elements obviously related to North and South American popular music. (For example, a phrase from a currently popular Brazilian tune, heard by the composer in Rio, becomes embedded in the secondary material in F major.) The overall form of the final movement is that of a free rondo, with several side issues developed at some length. It ends with a fairly elaborate coda in C major.”

Jessie Montgomery  
b. December 8, 1981; New York City

**Starburst, for Strings**

Born and raised in Manhattan’s Lower East Side, Montgomery began violin lessons at the age of four. “I feel very connected to European classical music because of the way I have learned how the play the violin. The actual physical resonance of the instrument speaks to that language beautifully, and I think that tradition is so rich.” Encouraged to improvise, she soon blossomed into compositional avenues. She majored in violin performance at Juilliard School, then performed with the Providence String Quartet and the Catalyst Quartet. During these early years Montgomery was also a contest-winner, performer and teacher with The Sphinx Organization, a non-profit nurturer of Black and Latino classical musicians.

In 2012, Montgomery gained a graduate degree in Composition for Film and Multimedia at New York University, at which point composing became the prime focus of her efforts. She has gained commissions from the Albany Symphony, the Joyce Foundation, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the Young People's Chorus of New York.

Among her most widely-performed works is *Starburst*, written for string orchestra in 2012.
It was first performed at the New World Center in Miami, by The Sphinx Virtuosi in September of 2012. Commenting on *Starburst*'s driving rhythm and iridescent sonorities, Jessie Montgomery writes: 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 premiered the work, The Sphinx Virtuosi, and I wrote the piece with their dynamic in mind.”

Aaron Copland  
b. November 14, 1900  
d. December 2, 1990; New York City  

**Orchestral Suite from the ballet, *Appalachian Spring (Ballet for Martha)***

Although Copland has been widely celebrated for the use of American folk music in his scores, it was only in his famed ballet for Martha Graham that he actually employed an unadorned or unaltered folk melody. That tune, a Shaker melody called *A Gift to Be Simple*, reentered American life through Copland’s use and is undoubtedly the first theme associated with the composer’s name.

Copland’s celebrated ballet was composed in 1943–44 for Martha Graham and her company through a commission from the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation. A famous example of modern music being generated through the use of old American materials, Copland’s music continues to display the sense of youth and vigor that bloomed forth at the first performance in the Library of Congress on October 30, 1944. That original music was scored for a chamber orchestra of thirteen players; in 1945, Copland excerpted the present suite and expanded it into a full orchestra setting. For his efforts, Copland won the Pulitzer Prize for music in 1945.

During the period of composition, this music was known simply as Ballet for Martha; it was only later that Miss Graham suggested the title *Appalachian Spring*. Copland explained: “The title *Appalachian Spring* was chosen by Miss Graham. She borrowed it from the heading of one of Hart Crane’s poems, though the ballet bears no relation to the text of the poem itself.”

The score of the suite contains Copland’s description of this music dealing with a young rural couple’s life in the Pennsylvania hills:

The Suite arranged from the ballet contains the following sections, played without interruption:

1. **Very slowly.** Introduction of the characters, one by one in a suffused light.
2. **Fast.** Sudden burst of unison strings starts the action. A sentiment both elated and religious gives the keynote to this scene.
3. **Moderate.** Duo for the Bride and her Intended scenes of tenderness and passion.
4. **Quite fast.** The Revivalist and his flock. Folksy feelings suggestions of square dances and country fiddlers.
5. **Still faster.** Solo dance of the Bride presentiment of motherhood. Extremes of joy and fear and wonder.
6. **Very slowly.** Transition scene to music reminiscent of the introduction.
7. **Calm and flowing.** Scenes of daily activity for the Bride and her Farmer-husband. There are five variations on a Shaker theme. The theme, sung by a solo clarinet, was taken from a collection of Shaker melodies, the melody I borrowed and used almost literally, is called *Simple Gifts.*

8. **Moderate. Coda.** The Bride takes her place among her neighbors. At the end the couple are left quiet and strong in their new house. Muted strings intone a hushed, prayer-like passage. The close is reminiscent of the opening music.

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**PROGRAM NOTES BY ROGER RUGGERI © 2019 CONT.**

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**UPCOMING PROGRAMS**

**“Rhapsody and Romance: Legends of the Piano”**

*Carter Simmons, Music Director | Featuring Jeannie Yu, Piano*

*Sunday, May 5, 2019 2:00 PM | The Pabst Theater | 144 E Wells St*

Among the greatest concertos ever penned, Chopin’s First Piano Concerto will round out Festival City Symphony's powerful season finale, “Rhapsody and Romance: Legends of the Piano.” Join Music Director Carter Simmons and guest pianist, Jeannie Yu, for a performance of this majestic music and be transported by her superb command of the instrument. The music of another piano virtuoso, Franz Liszt, will provide a fiery and brilliant opening to Festival City Symphony’s final incredible Symphony Sunday performance of the season.

- **Franz Liszt** *Hungarian Rhapsody no. 2, S. 359*
- **Franz Liszt** *Les Preludes, S. 97*
- **Frederic Chopin** *Piano Concerto no. 1, op. 11*

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**“Songs With and Without Words” Spring Pajama Jamboree**

*Monte Perkins, Conductor | Jayne Perkins, Host*

*Wednesday, May 8, 2019 7:00 PM | Marcus Center for the Performing Arts in the Bradley Pavilion | *Use 929 N. Water Street entrance* | FREE ADMISSION*

Festival City Symphony will conclude its season with a free “Spring Pajama Jamboree” concert titled “Songs With and Without Words” on Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at 7:00pm in the Bradley Pavilion of the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts. In a program including children’s songs, patriotic tunes, and other well-known favorites, area guest vocalists will teach the audience members how to sing the songs the orchestra will be performing. As always, FCS will close its season with children from the audience conducting the orchestral finale “Stars and Stripes Forever.”

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