

PROGRAM NOTES

Polka and Fugue from the opera “Schwanda the Bagpiper”

Jaromír Weinberger was born in Prague but spent his boyhood years on the farm of his grandparents, where he first heard the folk songs and dances of his native land. Later, his most successful works were patterned after the folk music of his childhood. In 1927 his second opera, “Svanda dudák – Schwanda the Bagpiper,” received an uninspired reaction at its Prague premiere but a few months later was presented in Breslau, Germany, to an enthusiastic audience, and it “swept across musical Europe like a typhoon.”

Over 2000 performances of the opera were given in Europe between 1927 and 1931. In the next few years it was performed in cities around the world, including the New York premiere at the Metropolitan Opera House on November 7, 1931. For a time, Weinberger found himself both rich and famous. “Polka and Fugue” was introduced to American orchestra audiences in 1928 by the eminent Austrian-German conductor Erich Kleiber. The score for band was transcribed by Glenn Cliffe Bainum in 1928.

The opera libretto is a delightful mixture of humor, fantasy, satire, and realism. The story involves Schwanda, the master bagpiper, and Babinský, a robber who leads Schwanda on a series of adventures. The polka is taken from a scene in which Schwanda plays for Queen Iceheart, who is waiting for someone who can melt her heart. His irresistible playing does the trick, and the queen and Schwanda decide to get married – sealing their vow with a kiss. However, Schwanda is already married to Dorota, so the marriage to the queen is canceled. In response to his wife’s questions of his fidelity, he cries, “If I have given the queen a single kiss, may the devil take me” – and the devil does. He is rescued from hell, however, by Babinský, who plays cards with the devil and wins everything he owns. He returns it all in exchange for Schwanda, who plays the fugue on his bagpipe before he leaves, so that the servants of hell may hear the playing of a master bagpiper.

Hall and Oates Tribute **Kevin: note – this is the correct name (it was previously incorrect in the program file I originally sent)**

Can you believe that Daryl Hall, of Hall & Oates fame, turned 70 years old on October 11? Millennials and members of The Greatest Generation may not recognize their names, but Baby Boomers know much about their music. Hall & Oates had six number 1 hits on the Billboard Hot 100, and were inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2003. Billboard Magazine’s list of the 100 greatest artists of all time pegged them at number 15 and the number 1 duo. They were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in April 2014, and received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame last month.

Solano Winds member Delbert Bump captured the excitement of several of their top hits in this tribute: “I Can’t Go For That”, “Kiss on My List”, “One on One”, and “Maneater”.

Symphonic Highlights from “The King and I”

The fifth musical of the blockbuster team of Rodgers and Hammerstein is based on the 1944 novel “Anna and the King of Siam” by Margaret Landon, which was derived from the memoirs of Anna Leonowens, the governess to the children of King Mongkut of Siam in the early 1860’s. The musical relates the experiences of Anna, a British schoolteacher hired as a part of the King’s program to modernize his country. The relationship between Anna and the King is fraught with conflict and a love that neither can admit.

The musical opened on Broadway on March 29, 1951 and ran for nearly three years, and has had many tours and revivals. In 1950, Gertrude Lawrence’s attorney and business agent, Fanny Holtzmann, wanted Cole Porter to write the score to accompany Landon’s novel. When Porter declined, Holtzmann was introduced to Oscar Hammerstein’s wife Dorothy, and the team of Rodgers and Hammerstein eventually agreed to create the show. They, in turn, originally wanted Rex Harrison to play the lead role, but eventually settled on the young actor and director, Yul Brynner. Brynner enjoyed a long stage run with the show, and won an Academy Award for Best Actor in the 1956 film. Brynner later appeared in many revivals of the show.

Stephen Bulla’s medley combines some of the most delightful music from the musical, including “Something Wonderful”, “I Whistle A Happy Tune”, “I Have Dreamed”, “The March of the Siamese Children”, “Getting to Know You”, and “Shall We Dance?”.

Catharsis: Symphony for Winds and Percussion

COMPOSER’S NOTES:

I remember years ago reading a newspaper article of a “musician discovering catharsis within his melodies.”

Ever since then, I’ve always been intrigued by the word “catharsis.” Some dictionaries define the word as a release of emotional tension, as after an overwhelming experience, that restores or refreshes the spirit. Looking back, this definition rings true, in which the musician utilizes music as his way of self expression and having gone through a tumultuous childhood.

In January of 2016, I decided to challenge myself by beginning a new piece of work. My largest work to date, Symphony for Winds and Percussion is based on the word “catharsis.” From January through April, I composed feverishly and managed to complete two pieces. However, I felt the pieces, both slow in tempo, sounded more as an underscore for an opera or film rather than a standalone concert work. It was overly dramatic and dark. I decided to abandon those pieces completely and start a new one loosely following the standard form of a symphony which traditionally contains of four movements with a fast-slow-fast-fast sequence and a clear beginning and ending to each movement.

My work flow on this piece was rather interesting. In reality, I had no idea as to how the piece was to evolve or how it was supposed to sound. However, I knew how it needed to end. I

worked on the 4th movement in May and completed it by June. While working on the movement, I focused on the concept of recurring dreams. As in any recurring dreams, the themes, visions or actions, are relentlessly repeating and are often mysterious and an endless cycle. Nonetheless, I wanted to overcome the cycle and bring forth A *cathartic* moment we can only hope played out in real life.

By August, the four movement symphony was completed. The 1st movement is energetic and sometimes overly confident; reminiscent of a battle between a bull and a Toreador. It displays all of the motifs from the rest of the symphony. The 2nd movement, contemplative in nature, depicts the inner conflicts and overwhelming emotions that we all experience at some point in our lives. Lighthearted and sometimes quirky, the 3rd movement derives its themes and ideas from the 1st movement while hinting at the main theme from the final movement. The 4th movement, subtitled "Recurring Dreams" is very aggressive and driving. Its themes are repeated, passed around from sections to sections, augmented, shortened and sometimes stacked on one another. Though it may seem like it's a race against time to get to the end, we are often pulled back to the same "recurring" themes and endless musical tunnels.

As you listen to the piece, I'd like for you to consider these two questions; Will you be able to distance yourself from the conflicts and overwhelming emotions? Will you be angered, saddened, joyful or relieved because of the musical character(s), or rather about YOU?

Finale from Symphony No. 3 in C (Opus 78 – Organ Symphony)

Camille Saint-Saëns' Symphony No. 3 in C Major, generally referred to as the "Organ Symphony," was his last major effort in the symphonic form. The work, bearing a dedication to Franz Liszt, was composed for the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and had its initial performance in the British Capitol under the direction of Saint-Saëns on May 19, 1886. The Symphony was indeed modern for its day and was orchestrated with the sure hand of an expert. The organ, which gives the symphony its name, is frequently and effectively employed.

The Finale (Maestoso) begins with a sustained C Major chord for organ followed by contrapuntal treatment of material vaguely reminiscent of the principal theme of the first movement. Then the initial theme, wholly transformed, is presented by the woodwinds and repeated by the organ with the full strength of the band. There follows a development (Allegro) built on a rhythm of three measures. An episode of a tranquil and pastoral character is twice repeated. A brilliant coda, in which the initial theme by a last transformation ends the work; the rhythm of three measures becomes naturally and logically a huge measure of three beats; each beat is represented by a whole note, and twelve quarters from the complete measure. After a fanfare by the trumpets, the movement finishes, as it began, with a chord in C Major for organ and band.