Faculty Recital Series

Monday
November 13, 2017
8:00 p.m.

conductor Jaclyn Hartenberger
soprano Amy Petrongelli

PROGRAM

   I. Tempo giusto
   II. Allegretto
   III. Con moto

Amy Petrongelli, Soprano

Aaron Copland (1900-1990) Appalachian Spring Suite (Ballet for Martha) (1943-1944)

Program Notes

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)
Concerto in E-flat Major, Dumbarton Oaks (1937)

“My Concerto in E-flat . . . was begun almost immediately upon my return to Europe after jeux de cartes, in the spring of 1937. I had moved from Paris to Annemasse in the Haute Savoie to be near my daughter Mika [Ludmila] who, mortally ill with tuberculosis, was confined to a sanatorium there. Annemasse is near Geneva, and [conductor] Ernest Ansermet was therefore a neighbor and also a helpful friend at this, perhaps the most difficult time of my life. [Ludmila died in 1938.] I played Bach regularly during the composition of the Concerto, and was greatly attracted to the Brandenburg Concertos. Whether or not the first theme of my [first] movement is a conscious borrowing from the third Brandenburg, however, I do not know.” – Igor Stravinsky

Stravinsky’s close association with the United States began in 1936, when he wrote jeux de cartes (Card Game) for the new American Ballet (later American Ballet Theatre) and choreographer George Balanchine. After completing the score the composer arrived in New York early in the following year to assist in supervising rehearsals, whereupon he was immediately commissioned to write this very different – intimate, but no less witty – score for Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary.

Robert Woods Bliss held various diplomatic positions, including being ambassador to Sweden and to Argentina. His wife, Mildred, was a knowledgeable art collector, most notably of pre-Columbian sculpture, and their treasures were housed in their early 19th-century mansion, Dumbarton Oaks, in the Georgetown section of Washington, DC. The house, its contents, and the gardens were left by the Blisses in 1940 to Harvard University. In 1944, Dumbarton Oaks hosted the conference that would lay the groundwork for the United Nations; today, the mansion is a research center for the study of Byzantine and pre-Columbian art.

Stravinsky was to have conducted the premiere of the Concerto, but his own bout of tuberculosis kept him from traveling from Paris.
It was thus under his friend Nadia Bou- langer that the premiere took place at Dumbarton Oaks on May 8, 1938.

The three movements are played without pause. The first is a bubbly affair, mostly in 16th notes, with the solo winds (all the instrumentalists are in essence soloists) bounding and bouncing everywhere. The opening theme of Bach’s Third Brandenburg is concealed – in plain sight, so to speak – in the viola part of the opening measure but becomes more obvious as the movement progresses. Eight measures of quiet chords join the first movement to the second, a lyrical Allegretto “of an intense purity of line where the different instrumental strands . . . stand out with startling three-dimensional clarity in their atmosphere of enveloping silence,” in the words of Stravinsky biographer Eric Walter White. The Italian composer Alfredo Casella was convinced that Stravinsky had been inspired in this movement by a phrase from the first act of Verdi’s Falstaff. Stravin-sky’s response was, presumably, a shrug of the shoulders. This movement is joined to its successor by slow, quiet chords, leading into the finale, launched by the marching horns, cellos, and basses as prelude to some zesty counterpoint for the entire ensemble, with a smart fugato climax.

Program Note by Herbert Glass

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)


Barber composed *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* in 1947 for soprano Eleanor Steber. She sang the premiere with the Boston Symphony Or-chestra, directed by Serge Koussevitsky, on April 9, 1948.

In 1947, when conductor Serge Koussevitsky asked Barber for a work for soprano and or-chestra, Barber turned to a James Agee prose poem, *Knoxville: Summer of 1915,* written in 1935. The poem was a sketch of a summer night from Agee’s childhood, a time shortly before the death of his father. (It would later appear as the preface to his posthumously published novel *A Death in the Family.* ) Bar-ber’s choice of text seems to have been deeply personal – both his father and his aunt were gravely ill as he was composing it, and both died within a few months.

The poem’s nostalgia, wistfulness, and underlying sadness resonated strongly – as Barber later recalled: “Agee’s poem was vivid and moved me deeply, and my musical response that summer of 1947 was immedi-ate and intense. I think I must have com-posed *Knoxville* within a few days. . . . You see, it expresses a child’s feelings of loneli-ness, wonder and lack of identity in that marginal world between twilight and sleep.”

The style of Agee’s writing in *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* was deliberately spontane-ous. In the program note to the premiere, he described his process: “I was greatly in-terested in improvisatory writing, as against carefully composed, multiple-draft writing: i.e., with a kind of parallelism between recitation in jazz, to a certain kind of ‘genuine’ lyric which I thought should be purely impro-vised.” The free-flowing style Barber adopt-ed in setting this text, which he described as “lyric rhapsody,” fits it perfectly.

Barber’s version is laid out in several inter-connected sections, tied together with a re-curring refrain. After a brief introduction, the soprano enters above a softly rocking background, painting a dreamy and gentle portrait of a warm southern night. Barber does a bit of musical word painting, as in the mechanical music that introduces Agee’s description of a passing streetcar. At “Now is the night one blue dew” the style changes again, to luminous quiet background to the soprano. An echo of the introduction leads into the next panel, a calm picture of the family, lying quietly on quilts “on the rough wet grass of the back yard.” Barber gradu-ally interjects a note of darkness as the text hints of the “sorrow of being on this earth.” He accompanies the climactic prayer “May God bless my people, my uncle, my aunt, my mother, my good father, oh, remember them kindly in their time of trouble; and in the hour of their taking away,” with subtly agitated music. The music of the introduc-tion reappears once more for the final sec-tion – the sleepy child is put to bed, but the text ends with the uneasy “but will not ever tell me who I am” before a hushed ending.

Program Note by J. Michael Allen

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Appalachian Spring Suite (Ballet for Martha) (1943-1944)

Some of Copland’s most populist “American” music was produced during the De-presion and war years, including the overtly patriotic morale boosters *Lincoln Portrait* and *Fanfare for the Common Man.* Appalachian Spring capped a trilogy of dance interpretations of the American frontier spirit, beginning with *Billy the Kid* (1938) and continuing with *Rodeo* (1942). This was music that created the concert and theater equivalent of the poignant “high lonesome” bluegrass sound emerging at the same time, music of open chords and sparse textures that often drew on traditional sources. Appalachian Spring was commis-sioned by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge for Martha Graham. Copland began work on Graham’s then-untitled scenario in Holly-wood in June, 1943, and compiled the ballet a year later in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

“After Martha gave me this bare outline, I knew certain crucial things – that it had to do with the pioneer American spirit, with youth and spring, with optimism and hope,” Copland later wrote.

Graham took the eventual title from a poem by Hart Crane, though not the narrative of an Appalachian housewarming for pioneer and his bride. Copland originally scored the bal-let for an ensemble of thirteen instruments, since the premiere was in the small Eliza-beth Sprague Coolidge Auditorium at the Library of Congress (with Graham herself as the Bride, Erick Hawkins as the Husbandman, and Merce Cunningham as the Revivalist). In the spring of 1945, he ar- ranged a suite from the ballet for full or-chestra, which won the Pulitzer Prize for music that year.

The *Suite* is cast in eight uninterrupted sec-tions. It opens with a slowly blooming in-troduction, after which, unison strings burst into in an elated Allegro. The scenes that fol-low move from a warm, gentle duet for the pioneering couple, through fleetly fiddling dances for a revivalist preacher and his fol-lowers, to an animated dance of anticipation for the bride. A transitional interlude recalls the opening, before the Suite’s climax, a set of variations on the Shaker hymn “Simple Gifts,” which supports scenes of rustic do-mesticity in the choreography. In the Coda, the married couple is left alone in their new home, with tender music that bookends and fulfills the opening expectations.

Graham told Copland that she wanted the dance to be “a legend of American living, like a bone structure, the inner frame that holds together a people,” and the ballet and its music were immediately understood as reflections of a national identity, of hope, and fulfillment in a difficult time. “The Spring that is being celebrated is not just any Spring, but the Spring of America; and the celebrants are not just half a dozen in-dividuals, but ourselves in different phas-es,” John Martin wrote in his *New York Times* review.

Program Note by John Henken
About the Artists

Jaclyn Hartenberger

Jaclyn Hartenberger’s reputation bespeaks a rising regional, national, and international presence. Her artistry has attracted significant invitations throughout the world. Under her leadership, ensembles consistently perform at a high level, and her programs are enthusiastically received. Performances have been described as “superb,” “praiseworthy,” “terrific,” “impressive,” and displaying “artistry.”

An advocate for new music, Hartenberger spearheaded and recently completed a commissioning of a major symphony by Dan Welcher. Welcher’s Symphony No. 6 – Three Places in the East, captures the essence of the Everglades, Smoky Mountains, and Acadia. She led the UGA Wind Symphony in the premiere of the work this past September. In addition to her appearances with the UGA Wind Symphony, she has collaborated with UGA’s faculty for performances of Milhaud’s La Creation du Monde, Stravinsky’s Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments, and a variety of new pieces by UGA composers. She has appeared with other professional ensembles including the West Point Band in New York, the Concordia Santa Fe Wind Ensemble in New Mexico, the Festival Internacional de Inverno da USFM in Brazil, the Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic in the Czech Republic, and the Salta Symphony Orchestra in Argentina.

Hartenberger serves as the Associate Director of Bands and Assistant Professor of Music at the UGA. In addition to serving as the conductor for the Wind Symphony, she teaches undergraduate and graduate conducting. She received the Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in conducting from The University of Texas at Austin. Her Bachelor of Music Education degree is from the University of North Texas, where she performed and recorded with the UNT Wind Symphony.

Amy Petrongelli

Lauded in the New York Times for her “admirable fluidity,” soprano Amy Petrongelli revels in singing music of different periods and styles. Most recently, she premiered the role of Margie in Laura Kaminsky’s opera, Some Light Emerges, with the Houston Grand Opera. Other recent solo performances include an art song recital for the University of Michigan’s inaugural “En Español” Latin American Music Festival, Despina in Così fan tutte, and Haydn’s Creation at Carnegie Hall.

In 2014, Petrongelli helped to found the contemporary music ensemble Khemia that has toured North and South America to help promote cultural exchange through contemporary music. Also an active recitalist, she has appeared in recital for organizations such as the Casement Fund Recital Series in Brooklyn, NY; The Block in Muskegon, MI; the Contemporary Undercurrent of Song Project in Princeton, NJ; and AEPEX Contemporary Performance in Ann Arbor, MI.

Petrongelli is an alumna of the Tanglewood Music Center, New Music on the Point, and the Fall Island Vocal Arts Seminar. She has worked with renowned musicians such as Martin Katz, Lucy Shelton, Tony Arnold, Dawn Upshaw, Kathleen Kelly, Samuel Ramey, Kayo Iwama, Alan Smith, Howard Watkins, and John Harbison.

A passionate educator, she has maintained a successful private studio since 2005, and she has taught at the University of Michigan, the University of Akron, Eastern Michigan University, and Saginaw Valley State University. She is currently an instructor of voice and diction at the Pennsylvania State University.

The Orchestra

Jaclyn Hartenberger

Conductor

*Hugh Hodgson School of Music faculty members

**Hugh Hodgson School of Music faculty members