

Leonard Slatkin, Music Director Neeme Järvi, Music Director Emeritus

Jeff Tyzik, *Principal Pops Conductor* Terence Blanchard, *Jazz Creative Director* Gabriela Lena Frank, *Music Alive Composer-in-Residence* 

Friday, November 28, 2014 at 8 p.m. Saturday, November 29, 2014 at 8 p.m. Sunday, November 30, 2014 at 3 p.m. an in Orchestra Hall

#### LEONARD SLATKIN, conductor ELINA VÄHÄLÄ, violin

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) Three Dance Episodes from *On the Town* The Great Lover Lonely Town (Pas de deux) Times Square

John Corigliano (b. 1938) Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, "The Red Violin" ♥★ Chaconne Pianissimo Scherzo Andante Flautando Accelerando Finale *Elina Vähälä, violin* 

#### **INTERMISSION**

Aaron Copland Grohg, ballet in one act\* (1900-1990)

This piece will be captured for inclusion on a Naxos compilation of Copland's complete ballets.

George Gershwin Porgy and Bess, A Symphonic Picture (1898-1937) arr. Robert Russell Bennett

\*denotes DSO premiere

Part of the 2014-15 Concerto in America celebration

This performance will be webcast at dso.org/live

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The DSO can be heard on the Live From Orchestra Hall, Chandos, London, Mercury Records, Naxos and RCA labels.

# PROFILES

# LEONARD SLATKIN

Leonard Slatkin is Music Director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestre National de Lyon, France. During the 2013-14 season, he conducted at Krzysztof Penderecki's 80th birthday celebration in Warsaw, recorded with Anne Akiko Meyers and the London Symphony, and appeared with the Chicago Symphony, the Pittsburgh Symphony and the St. Louis Symphony. He also toured China and Japan with the Orchestre National de Lyon and led the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in concerts across southern Florida.

Highlights of the 2014-15 season include a collaborative celebration of his 70th birthday on both sides of the Atlantic, a three-week Tchaikovsky festival in Detroit, a Brahms symphony cycle in Lyon, and engagements with the New York Philharmonic, Tokyo's NHK Symphony Orchestra and the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin.

Slatkin's more than 100 recordings have won seven Grammy awards and earned 64 nominations. With the Orchestre National de Lyon, he has embarked on recording cycles of the Rachmaninoff piano concerti featuring Olga Kern and the symphonic works of Maurice Ravel and Hector Berlioz. With the Detroit Symphony, he has released a digital box set of the Beethoven symphonies and plans to offer the concerti and symphonies of Tchaikovsky in the future.

Slatkin has received the USA's prestigious National Medal of Arts, the League of American Orchestra's Gold Baton Award and several ASCAP awards. He has earned France's Chevalier of the Legion of Honor,



Austria's Declaration of Honor in Silver, and honorary doctorates from The Juilliard School, Indiana University, Michigan State

University and Washington University in St. Louis. He is also the recipient of a 2013 ASCAP Deems Taylor Special Recognition Award for his book, *Conducting Business.* 

Slatkin has served as Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C., and as Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra in London. He has held Principal Guest Conductor positions with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Philharmonia Orchestra of London and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

Founder and director of the National Conducting Institute and the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra, Slatkin continues his conducting and teaching activities at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, the Manhattan School of Music and The Juilliard School.

Born in Los Angeles to a distinguished musical family, he is the son of conductor-violinist Felix Slatkin and cellist Eleanor Aller, founding members of the famed Hollywood String Quartet. He began his musical studies on the violin and studied conducting with his father, followed by Walter Susskind at Aspen and Jean Morel at The Juilliard School.

# <u>PROFILES</u>

# ELINA VÄHÄLÄ

Born in the US and raised in Finland, Elina Vähälä made her orchestral debut with Sinfonia Lahti at the age of 12 and was later chosen by Osmo Vänskä as the orchestra's "young master soloist." Since then, her career continues to expand, winning praise from audiences and musicians alike as "a fluent, stylish and gifted musician whose brilliant technique is matched by an abundant spirit, sensitivity and imagination" (*Chicago Tribune*).

Vähälä has appeared with orchestras including Helsinki Philharmonic, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia Lahti, Turku Philharmonic as well as Oregon Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra and Nashville Symphony Orchestra. She has worked with conductors Leonard Slatkin, Carlos Kalmar, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Okko Kamu, Jakub Hrůša, Thierry Fischer and Leif Sergerstam and toured throughout the UK, Germany, China, Korea and South America; in 2008 she was chosen to perform at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony which was televised to a worldwide audience.

With a repertoire that ranges from baroque to contemporary, Vähälä has given world premieres of Aulis Sallinen's Chamber Concerto and Curtis Curtis-Smith's Double Concerto, both written for her and pianist-conductor Ralf Gothóni. In addition, Vähälä gave the Nordic first performance of John Corigliano's Violin Concerto, The Red Violin, and commissioned a new violin concerto from composer Jaakko Kuusisto. Both the Corigliano and Kuusisto concertos were recorded for BIS in 2013.



Educational activities play an important role in her commitment to music; in 2009 Vähälä launched the Violin Academy. Funded by

the Finnish Cultural Foundation, the academy is a master class based educational project for selected, highly talented young Finnish violinists.

As a devoted chamber musician Vähälä performs with Andras Adorjan, Yuri Bashmet, Ana Chumachenco, Chee-Yun, Peter Csaba, Itamar Golan, Ralf Gothóni, Ivry Gitlis, Bruno Giuranna, Gary Hoffman, Steven Isserlis, Frans Helmerson, Cho-Liang Lin, Adam Neiman, Arto Noras, Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Alisa Weilerstein.



## Concerto in America

The DSO and Slatkin's seventh season of partnership celebrates the Concerto in America. Look for the above symbol denoting concerti written by American composers and those that received their World Premiere within American borders.

## Three Dance Episodes from On the Town

LEONARD BERNSTEIN

B. August 25, 1918 in Lawrence, Massachusetts D. October 14, 1990 in New York

SCORED FOR 2 FLUTES. PICCOLO, 2 OBOES, ENGLISH HORN. 2 CLARINETS. E-FLAT CLARINET, BASS CLARINET, ALTO SAXOPHONE, 2 HORNS, 3 TRUMPETS, 3 TROMBONES, TIMPANI, PERCUSSION, PIANO



AND STRINGS. (APPROX. 10 MINUTES)

Then On the Town premiered V on Broadway in December of 1944, it quickly became an icon of American musical theater, and five years later formed the basis of a great Hollywood musical film. The show basically grew out of an idea by choreographer Jerome Robbins, who in the early 1940s was thinking of ways to make ballet vital and more appealing to audiences of all sorts. This initially found its outlet as the ballet Fancy Free, also with music by Leonard Bernstein, about three rowdy sailors on shore leave in New York City and the adventures they have. It was staged by the American Ballet Theatre in April of 1944, and was such a hit that the suggestion was made to Robbins and Bernstein that they develop the ballet into a full-scale Broadway musical. They agreed, but only on the premise that their colleagues Betty Comden and Adolph Green write the book and lyrics. The final piece of the puzzle fell into place when the celebrated director George Abbott became part of the project, and with him on board, financial backing was secured along with funding from MGM in return for the film rights. The result was On the Town, which opened just after Christmas in 1944, and closed in February of

1946 after a highly successful run of 462 performances. It made instant stars out of Comden and Green along with actress Nancy Walker, and was another step in Bernstein's meteoric rise as a force to be reckoned with on the American musical scene. This had been started by Bernstein's nowlegendary last-minute debut with the New York Philharmonic in November of the preceding year. The musical, like its ballet predecessor, concerns the adventures of three sailors on a 24-hour shore leave in New York during wartime 1944, during which each of the sailors falls in love with not only a particular woman, but also with New York itself. In 1949, On the Town was made into what still stands as one of the all-time great movie musicals, which won the Oscar for Best Music, Best Scoring of a Musical Picture, and was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for Best Color Cinematography.

In preparing for performances of the Three Dance Episodes with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra in 1946, Bernstein wrote as follows:

"It seems only natural that dance should play a leading role in On the Town, since the idea of writing it arose from the success of the ballet Fancy Free. I believe this is the first Broadway show to have seven or eight dance episodes in the space of two acts; and, as a result, the essence of the whole production is contained in these dances. I have selected three of them for use as a concert suite. The story is concerned with three sailors on a 24-hour leave in New York City, and their adventures with the monstrous city which its inhabitants take so much for granted. In The Dance of the Great Lover, Gaby, the romantic sailor in search of the glamorous Miss Turnstiles, falls asleep in the

subway and dreams of his prowess in sweeping Miss Turnstiles off her feet. In the *Pas de Deux*, Gaby watches a scene, both tender and sinister, in which a sensitive high-school girl in Central Park is lured and then cast off by a worldly sailor. The *Times Square Ballet* is a more panoramic sequence in which all the sailors in New York congregate in Times Square for their night of fun. There is communal dancing, a scene in a souvenir arcade, and a scene in the Roseland Dance Palace."

The original production of On the Town was notable for a number of things, among them the racial diversity of its cast, its intentional avoidance of racial stereotypes, the feminist themes of its story, and - for its day — some amazingly risqué, even raunchy lyrics. In this regard it was certainly ahead of its time, even as it looked back to some of the classic musicals of an earlier era. Leonard Bernstein is one of just a few individuals who are an indelible part of New York culture and history, and this, his first score for Broadway, coupled with Jerome Robbins' first choreography for a musical comedy, brought together for the first time two now-legendary figures who were to make extraordinary contributions to the medium in the years ahead.

These performances of Three Dance Episodes from *On The Town* were performed by the DSO in 1994 with Neeme Järvi conducting.

### Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, "The Red Violin"

#### JOHN CORIGLIANO

B. February 16, 1938 in New York

SCORED FOR SOLO VIOLIN, 2 FLUTES, 2 PICCOLOS, ALTO FLUTE, 2 OBOES, 2 CLARINETS, BASS CLARINET, 2 BASSOONS, CONTRABASSOON, 4 HORNS, 2 TRUMPETS, 3 TROMBONES,



TUBA, TIMPANI, PERCUSSION, HARP, PIANO, CELESTA AND STRINGS. (APPROX. 34 MINUTES)

John Corigliano continues to add to one of the richest, most unusual, and most widely-celebrated bodies of work any composer has created over the past 40 years. His scores, now numbering over 100, have won him the Pulitzer Prize, the Grawemeyer Award, four Grammy Awards and an Academy Award, and have been performed and recorded by many of the world's most prominent orchestras, soloists and chamber ensembles.

He was born into a musical family, his father, John Sr., having been concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic for over 20 years. Before achieving success as a composer, Corigliano worked as a production assistant for Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts, and as a recording producer for important classical artists such as Andre Watts. He currently is on the composition faculty at the Juilliard School of Music, and holds the position of Distinguished Professor of Music at Lehmann College, City University of New York, which has established a scholarship in his name.

Corigliano wrote the score for Francois Giraud's 1998 film *The Red Violin*, about the 300-year history of an accursed violin from 17th-century Italy to late 20th-century Montreal and the lives of the people who encounter it. The score won a richlydeserved Academy Award in 1999 as Best Original Film Score. From that music he developed The Red Violin Chaconne, and then used that work as the first movement of this full concerto. About his work on the movie score Corigliano has said, "... writing The Red Violin was rather unusual because there were a lot of shots of fingers plaving the violin. A lot of the music had to be written before the film was shot. With the other two films I did (Altered States and Revolution), we did the music at the end of the shooting. But in Red Violin, between the recorded music we had to do before the film was shot and the recording of the entire score. [it was] arranged for Joshua Bell to play a piece based on The Red Violin with the San Francisco Symphony. What I did was write the Chaconne. the first movement of the concerto, as a truly symphonic work...so Josh actually played the Chaconne in concert before the film was released." Good though it was, Corigliano didn't feel it was a complete work, so a full four-movement concert piece was commissioned by the Baltimore, Atlanta and Dallas symphonies and the San Francisco Ballet Association. Bell gave the premiere of the newlyformed concerto with Marin Alsop and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra in 2007. The development of the concerto from its film music origins is best told by the composer: "A story this episodic needed to be tied together with a single musical idea. For this purpose I used the Baroque device of a chaconne, a repeated pattern of chords upon which the music is built. Against the chaconne chords I juxtaposed Anna's theme, a

lyrical yet intense melody representing the violin maker's doomed wife. Then, from these elements I wove a series of virtuosic etudes for the violin, which followed the instrument from country to country and century to century. The other movements are connected to the first (and to the film) in different ways. The second is a fleet "Pianissimo Scherzo" in which the dynamics are soft, but the action wild and colorful. I wanted to break the romantic mood of the first movement with sonoric and timbral effects that create a sparkling, effervescent energy. A central trio [a contrasting section] is distantly related to Anna's theme, but here heard in knuckle-breaking double harmonics by the soloist: high, ethereal and dance-like. The third movement. "Andante flautando." starts with an intense recitative that is more closely related to the film's main theme, but soon gives way to a gentle, rocking melody played by the soloist in an unusual manner that results in his sound changing to that of a flute, or "flautando." He and the alto flute pair up as a complementary duo in this theme. The final movement. "Accelerando Finale." is. as the title suggests, a rollicking race in which the opposed forces of soloist and orchestra vie with each other. They each accelerate at different times and speeds, providing a virtuoso climate befitting a last movement. Some other unusual techniques are used here: the violin and orchestral strings are asked to press so hard on their strings that there is no pitch at all, just a crunch. This percussive and unusual sound provides energy, especially during the races. Near the end of the work the original Chaconne from the first movement comes back to complete the journey of this violin concerto."

These performances of "The Red Violin" are a DSO premiere.

# *Grohg*, ballet in one act

#### AARON COPLAND

B. November 14, 1900 in Brooklyn, New York

D. December 2, 1990 in North Tarrytown, New York

SCORED FOR 2 PICCOLOS, 2 ENGLISH HORNS, 2 BASS CLARINETS, E-FLAT CLARINET, 2 CONTRABASSOONS, 4 HORNS, 3 TRUMPETS, 2 CORNETS, 3 TROMBONES, TUBA, TIMPANI, PERCUSSION, 2 HARPS, PIANO, CELESTA AND STRINGS (APPROX. 30 MINUTES)



s much as anyone, Copland established American concert music through his works and his tireless efforts on its behalf. He and his contemporaries not only raised this music to a very high standard of professional excellence, but put it on an equal footing with contemporary developments in Europe. Igor Stravinsky put it in perspective when he said, "Why call Copland a great American composer? He is a great composer, period." In Paris in the early 1920s Copland studied with the renowned teacher Nadia Boulanger. who in the summer of 1922 thought it was time for Copland to attempt an orchestral work. One of Copland's close friends in those days was the American writer and critic Harold Clurman, and the two of them were fond of the cinema, at that time still a silent medium. In Copland's own words, "One evening in the fall of 1922 we went to see the popular German horror film Nosferatu. It was about a vampire magician with the power to make corpses come to life...by the time we reached home that night I decided that this bizarre tale would be the basis for my ballet. Harold had never written a scenario, but he was eager to try. At first we called it Le Necromancien (The Necromancer);

the title Grohg was chosen later. This ballet became the most ambitious undertaking of my Paris years: I had no choreographer, commission or contact with a major ballet company. Nevertheless, I wrote this for the big time: a one-act, 35-minute ballet for full pit orchestra plus piano. There was a taste for the bizarre at the time, and if Grohg sounds morbid and excessive, the music was meant to be fantastic rather than ghastly. Also, the need for gruesome effects gave me an excuse for 'modern' rhythms and dissonances. Until Grohg, I had written only short piano pieces using jazz-derived rhythms. Now I was translating those techniques into a larger framework. Soon after returning to the U.S., Copland submitted the Cortege macabre to Howard Hanson for possible use on the first of the American Composers Concerts. Out of almost 50 pieces submitted, Copland's score became one of six selected for performance by the Eastman Philharmonia in May of 1925, a concert which received national attention.

Friedrich Murnau's brilliantly eerie and imaginative silent expressionist masterpiece Nosferatu is a verv free adaptation of Bram Stoker's famous novel Dracula. This cinematic revision of the Stoker original had to be done mainly due to copyright considerations, and one of its plot devices is an explanation for the outbreak of bubonic plague which occurred in Bremen, Germany in 1838. Copland and Clurman further adapted the film to their own ends, making the central character "...a sorcerer who loves the dead and tries in vain to have their affection. He can make them dance as long as he does not touch them." They described Grohg as having large, piercing eyes and a hooked nose, who was "...tragic and

pitiable in his ugliness." In spite of Copland's having withdrawn the ballet, the English composer and conductor Oliver Knussen came across the 1932 revision which he championed in the 1990s, giving it its first performance in 1992 with the London Sinfonietta, and then recording it with the Cleveland Orchestra the following year. When finally exposed to this more-orless original version, critics were unanimous in their praise of what they regarded as a truly remarkable find.

The ballet is divided into six sections which are played without a pause:

Introduction: Cortege and Entrance of Grohg. There is a slow, moody introduction, followed by the bearers of coffins. The dance of the coffin-bearers reaches a climax as Grohg the Sorcerer enters, and the dancers pay homage to him.

Dance of the Adolescent: Grohg revives the corpse of an adolescent who becomes terrified by the sorcerer after dancing with him. Grohg then violently strikes down the adolescent.

Dance of the Opium Eater: Grohg next revives the corpse of an opium addict. The addict dances to a jazzy tune, but then Grohg takes pity on the addict and removes the magic which brought him back to life. The opium eater is then returned to his coffin.

**Dance of the Streetwalker:** The corpse of a streetwalker is then revived, and she does a dance which arouses Grohg's passions. He tries to embrace the woman, but there is a struggle and she, too is struck down.

Grohg Imagines the Corpses Are Mocking Him: Grohg begins to hallucinate and imagines that corpses are making fun of him and violently striking him. Nevertheless, he joins in their dances. Chaos ensues, then Grohg raises the streetwalker over his head and throws her into the crowd.

Illumination and Disappearance of Grohg: The stage turns dark except for a light focused on Grohg's head, and he slowly disappears to music which echoes the gloomy music at the beginning of the ballet.

These performances of *Grohg* are a DSO premiere.

## Porgy and Bess, A Symphonic Picture

GEORGE GERSHWIN B. September 26, 1898 in Brooklyn, New York D. July 11, 1937 in Hollywood, California

#### **ROBERT RUSSELL BENNETT**

B. June 15, 1894 in Kansas City, Missouri D. August 18, 1981 in New York

SCORED FOR 2 FLUTES, PICCOLO, 2 OBOES, ENGLISH HORN, 2 CLARINETS, BASS CLARINET, 2 BASSOONS, 2 ALTO SAXOPHONES, 1 TENOR SAXOPHONE, 4 HORNS, 3 TRUMPETS, 3 TROMBONES.



TUBA, TIMPANI, PERCUSSION, BANJO, 2 HARPS AND STRINGS (APPROX. 24 MINUTES)

orgy and Bess is an opera by the great George Gershwin which had its first performance in New York in the fall of 1935. The libretto was by the American writer DuBose Heyward, based on his 1925 novel Porgy and the subsequent 1927 play of the same name, and the song lyrics were by Heyward and Ira Gershwin, the composer's brother. Those first performances featured an entire cast of classically-trained African-American singers, something which had never been seen before. Initially, the work was called either a musical or a folk opera, and in Gershwin's words, "[It] is a folk tale. Its people naturally would sing folk music. When I first began work on the music I decided against the use of original folk material because I wanted the music to be all

of one piece. Therefore I wrote my own spirituals and folk songs. But they are still folk music - and therefore, being in operatic form, Porgy and Bess becomes a folk opera." After a very checkered and controversial history both here and abroad - and for a time having been performed more frequently in Europe than here it was not until the Houston Grand Opera's celebrated production of the complete score of the work in 1976 that it was finally accepted as a legitimate opera. Nine years after the Houston production it received its first performances at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and by the end of the 20th century it had become part of the standard operatic repertoire and is now performed regularly all over the world. One of the more curious events in the long history of the opera was its European premiere in Copenhagen in March of 1943, in which an all-white cast performed in blackface during the Nazi occupation. After 22 highly successful and sold-out performances, the production was closed down by the Nazis. The opera tells the story of Porgy, a crippled African-American beggar living in the slums of Charleston, South Carolina, and his attempts to rescue Bess from the clutches of Crown, her sadistic and possessive lover, and the drug dealer known as Sportin' Life. In the end, after finding out that Bess has been spirited away to New York by Sportin' Life. Porav sets out on an epic quest to find her and rescue her.

Arranger, orchestrator, composer and conductor, Robert Russell Bennett was one of the most remarkable musicians to work on Broadway in the period from the mid-1920s to the early 1960s. It would be no exaggeration to say that Bennett almost single-handedly created the sound of the classic Broadway show.

Among his most famous creations were Rose Marie, Of Thee I Sing, Anything Goes, Annie Get Your Gun, Kiss Me, Kate, South Pacific, The King and I. The Sound of Music. Camelot and My Fair Lady — to name just a few. Although best known for his brilliant arrangements, Bennett always considered his main work to be as a composer, and in addition to the hundreds of Broadway shows and movies he worked on, he wrote operas, symphonies and concertos among numerous original works. Bennett was born into a highly musical family, his father having played violin in the Kansas City Symphony and trumpet in the Grand Opera House. His mother was a pianist and teacher who gave the young lad his first piano lessons, while the father gave him early instruction on violin and various band instruments.

This Symphonic Picture was created in 1942 at the request of the celebrated conductor Fritz Reiner, then Music Director of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and one of Gershwin's favorite conductors. It includes most of the well-known songs from the opera, though not always in the order of their appearance, the idea being to present an independent musical portrait rather than any attempt to follow the opera's story. Reiner also intended that the work last no more than 24 minutes, the time being designed to fit onto three 78rpm records. The work was premiered by Reiner and the Pittsburgh Symphony in February of 1943, and the orchestration which Bennett used most of the time adheres quite closely to Gershwin's original scoring.

The DSO last performed Porgy and Bess, A Symphonic Picture in July of 2009 at Meadow Brook with Leonard Slatkin conducting.