

*SHEPHERD SCHOOL
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA*

LARRY RACHLEFF, music director

MICHAEL WEBSTER, clarinet

Thursday, April 21, 2011

8:00 p.m.

Stude Concert Hall

Celebrating 1975-2010

35 Years

THE SHEPHERD SCHOOL OF MUSIC RICE UNIVERSITY

PROGRAM

Skitter (2010, Premiere)

Nicolai Jacobsen
(b. 1979)

Cristian Măcelaru, conductor

Clarinet Concerto

Paul Hindemith
(1895-1963)

Rather fast

Ostinato, fast

Quiet

Gay

Michael Webster, soloist

INTERMISSION

Appalachian Spring (Ballet for Martha)
Suite for Thirteen Players

Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)

The reverberative acoustics of Stude Concert Hall magnify the slightest sound made by the audience. Your care and courtesy will be appreciated. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

SHEPHERD SCHOOL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Violin I

**Chloé Trevor*,
concertmaster
**Heather Kufchak*
**Ying Fu*
Hannah Dremann
Jiyeon Min
Creston Herron
Alyssa Yank
Genevieve Micheletti

Violin II

**Katrina Bobbs*,
principal
**Mark Kagan*
**Sol Jin*
Andy Liang
Brooke Bennett
Jacqueline Murchie

Viola

**Roberto Papi*,
principal
**Timothy Rowland*
**Kathleen Magill*
Dawson White
Lynsey Anderson

Cello

**Lachezar Kostov*,
principal
**Matthew Kufchak*
**Clara Yang*
Annamarie Reader
Emma Bobbs

Double Bass

**Nicholas Browne*,
principal
**Emily Honeyman*
Daniel Smith

Flute

Kayla Burggraf
Kathryn Ladner
**Aaron Perdue*
Henry Williford

Piccolo

Kayla Burggraf
Kathryn Ladner

Oboe

David Barford
Erica Overmyer
Michelle Pan
Emily Snyder

English Horn

Emily Snyder

Clarinet

Nicolas Chona
**Natalie Parker*
LeTriel White

Bassoon

Kevin Judge
Briana Lehman
Michael Matushek
**Maxwell Pipinich*

Horn

Kolio Plachkov
John Turman

Trumpet

Jeffrey Northman
Douglas Surber

Trombone

Joshua Becker
Kurt Ferguson
Berk Schneider
Travis Sheaffer

Harp

Emily Klein

Piano and Celeste

**Aya Yamamoto*

Timpani

Robert Garza
Robert McCullagh

Percussion

Ethan Ahmad
Robert Frisk
Robert Garza
Aaron Guillory
Robert McCullagh

Orchestra Manager and Librarian

Kaaren Fleisher

Production Manager

Mandy Billings

Assistant Production Manager

Ryan Retartha
Francis Schmidt

**Denotes performers on Appalachian Spring*

STRING SEATING CHANGES WITH EACH CONCERT.

WINDS AND BRASS LISTED ALPHABETICALLY.

PROGRAM NOTES

Skitter Nicolai Jacobsen

Skitter is a modern take on the classic concert overture, and is modeled on Rossini's *La scala di seta* and Berlioz's *Le carnaval romain*. This short piece is in four parts: an energetic fanfare, a melodic pastoral, a frenetic development of the previous materials, and an exuberant coda. The fanfare introduces much of the melodic material used throughout the work, primarily focusing on an energetic theme with a subtly shifting background. The pastoral section offers a complete contrast: the English horn and violas develop an aria-like melody in a hazy, Impressionistic setting. The third section, marked "skittering," develops the various motives from the first two sections while pushing toward a climactic set of fanfares. The final section mimics the light codas usually found in classical overtures. Here the music bubbles with energy, driving toward its explosive end.

— Note by the composer

Clarinet Concerto Paul Hindemith

Hindemith had lived in America for a year and would become a U.S. citizen five years later when famed big-band leader and classical clarinetist Benny Goodman approached him in 1941 about writing a clarinet concerto. That same year, Goodman was to commission solo clarinet works, all in a classical idiom, from a number of other composers, including Aaron Copland, Béla Bartók, and Darius Milhaud. Hindemith did not complete the work until six years after the commission, but evidence from the composer's diary suggests that it was just beginning the work that proved most complicated. Between Goodman's busy performance schedule and Germany's 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union, Hindemith and Goodman did not hold an initial meeting to discuss musical specifications, and instead postponed their collaboration until later that decade. The work was probably conceived in Switzerland during Hindemith's first post-war trip to Europe (August of 1947), and the orchestration finalized just one month later in New Haven. Goodman premiered the concerto on December 11, 1950 with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy, apparently at a children's concert.

Hindemith composed twenty concertos during his lifetime, but only two, the *Clarinet Concerto* and the 1949 *Horn Concerto*, feature solo wind instruments. The *Clarinet Concerto* was written at a time when Hindemith's music was generally complex and chromatic, yet despite Goodman's jazz background, the piece contains few jazz elements in its chromaticism and motivic material. Rather, it evokes a more classical style through its form and concertante dialogue. Hindemith himself commented on his choice of nearly-neoclassical idiom for the concerto, saying that "Mozart's *Concerto for the clarinet* will always be the ideal model, and having achieved only a few of his charming tonal formulations would be more than satisfactory to a composer in our time." Still, the forms of the movements are not completely clearly defined. The orchestral accompaniment is phenomenally challenging, and the solo part is perhaps not as overtly dazzling as competing works in the clarinet repertoire. It could be for one of these reasons that the piece is so underperformed and not well known.

The concerto is in four movements: a loosely-organized sonata-allegro first movement; a brief scherzo second movement featuring an eleven-beat

ostinato figure (and actually the last movement to be added to the piece); a slower, more lyrical theme-and-variation third movement; and a vigorous and athletic rondo finale.

— Note by Amalia Bandy

Appalachian Spring (Ballet for Martha) Aaron Copland
Suite for Thirteen Players

Near the end of the Second World War, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, then one of America's greatest patrons of the arts, went to see a dance recital by Martha Graham. Mrs. Coolidge was so enchanted by the dancer-choreographer that she offered to commission three ballets especially for her, all by composers of Graham's choosing. They included Darius Milhaud, Paul Hindemith, and Aaron Copland—an American whose work Graham had particularly admired for more than a decade. The Copland-Graham partnership proved most unusual: not only were the two collaborators on opposite coasts, Copland in Los Angeles and Graham in New York City, but they were conceiving a production that for much of its early life existed only in loose outline form, without story line or title. In fact, it was actually Graham herself who served as Copland's muse. He writes, "I was thinking primarily about Martha and her unique choreographic style, which I knew well. Nobody else seems quite like Martha: she's so proud, so very much herself. And she's unquestionably very American: there's something prim and restrained, simple yet strong about her which one tends to think of as American."

When the time came to create a storyline, Graham crafted a scenario set during the early twentieth century, at a Pennsylvania farmhouse that has just been built as a young couple's wedding present. In Copland's words: "The bride-to-be and the young farmer-husband enact the emotions, joyful and apprehensive, which their new domestic partnership invites. An old neighbor suggests, now and then, the rocky confidence of experience. A revivalist and his followers remind the new householders of the strange and terrible aspects of human fate. At the end the couple are left quiet and strong in their new house." During the entire creative process, Copland's working title for the piece was simply "Ballet for Martha," which remains the ballet's subtitle. Graham announced very shortly before the debut, however, that she wished to call the piece **Appalachian Spring**, from a line in Hart Crane's 1930 poem **The Dance**. The title "Appalachian Spring," then, actually bears no connection to the ballet's storyline or setting; and contrary to popular belief, the "spring" in the poem refers to water, not the season. Nevertheless, audiences have invented connections between the title and the music since its premiere, and this irony was not lost on Copland. "Over and over again," he said in 1981, "people come up to me after seeing the ballet on stage and say, 'Mr. Copland, when I see that ballet and when I hear your music I can just see the Appalachians and I just feel spring.' Well, I'm willing if they are!" The critics liked it, too, and they showed their appreciation by honoring Copland in 1945 with both the New York Music Critics' Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize.

Appalachian Spring premiered in 1944 in an intimate theater at the Library of Congress, with only enough space for an ensemble of thirteen (flute, clarinet, bassoon, piano, and nine string players). For subsequent performances, though, Copland himself advocated the use of an enlarged string section, as will be used in tonight's concert. The most famous part of the score comes at the climax of the work, in a set of variations on a hymn tune known

as "Simple Gifts," originally written by Joseph Brackett in 1848 and associated with the Shaker tradition of New England. The hymn and the five beautiful variations found in this final section of Copland's work have become a kind of national expression of American simplicity, humility, community, and unbounded optimism—ideals that Graham's dance images were surely intended to convey.

— Note by Amalia Bandy

BIOGRAPHIES

Composer **NICOLAI JACOBSEN** recently finished a Doctoral degree at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, where he studied with Arthur Gottschalk, Pierre Jalbert, and Kurt Stallmann. He holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music Composition from the University of Missouri – Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance, where he studied with Chen Yi, James Mobberley, Paul Rudy, and Zhou Long. His compositions draw from many diverse musical cultures, ranging from American culture to Chinese and Japanese traditional music, and have been performed throughout the United States as well as in Switzerland.

As an instructor, Nicolai has taught music theory and composition at Rice University and Houston Community College. He is presently on staff at the Art Institute of Houston as a Professor of Audio Production.

MICHAEL WEBSTER is Professor of Clarinet at Rice University and Artistic Director of the Houston Youth Symphony. Formerly principal clarinetist with the Rochester Philharmonic and the San Francisco Symphony, he has appeared as soloist with many orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Boston Pops. He has performed in all of New York City's major halls, with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the 92nd Street Y, Da Camera of Houston, Context, the Tokyo, Cleveland, Muir, and Ying Quartets and the festivals of Marlboro, Santa Fe, Chamber Music West and Northwest, Norfolk, Angel Fire, Sitka, and Orcas Island, among others. Webster has directed chamber music societies in Rochester and Ann Arbor and taught at the New England Conservatory, Boston University, and the Eastman School, from which he holds three degrees. He has also served as Music Director of the Wellesley Symphony Orchestra and Adjunct Professor of conducting at the University of Michigan. As a composer and arranger, he has been published by G. Schirmer, International, and Schott, and recorded by C.R.I., Crystal, Camerata, and Nami (Japan). Highly regarded as a teacher, he is a member of the editorial staff of *The Clarinet* magazine, contributing a regular column entitled "Teaching Clarinet."

UPCOMING ORCHESTRA CONCERT

Monday, Apr. 25, 8:00 p.m. – SHEPHERD SCHOOL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, WOMEN OF THE RICE CHORALE and HOUSTON CHILDREN'S CHORUS
Larry Rachleff, conductor PROGRAM: Gustav Mahler - *Symphony No. 3*
Stude Concert Hall. Admission: \$10; students and senior citizens \$7.
For tickets call 713-348-8000.



RICE