

CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
& UM SCHOOL OF MUSIC
PRESENT

UM Symphony Orchestra

SPIRIT NIGHTS

JAMES ROSS, MUSIC DIRECTOR



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2009 • 8PM
ELSIE & MARVIN DEKELBOUM CONCERT HALL

PHOTO BY STAN BAROUH

UM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA SPIRIT NIGHTS

James Ross, Music Director

RICHARD WAGNER (1813-1883)

Prelude to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865-1957)

Symphony No. 4 in A Minor, Op. 63

Tempo molto moderato, quasi adagio

Allegro molto vivace

Il tempo largo

Allegro

INTERMISSION

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

Excerpts from the ballet *Ma Mere L'Oye*

Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant

Petit Poucet

Les entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête

Laideronnette, Impératrice des pagodes

Le jardin féerique

ARTURO MÁRQUEZ (b. 1950)

Danzón No. 2

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JAMES ROSS

JAMES ROSS is a musician of international repute. His musical activities cover three fields: conducting, horn playing and teaching. Born in Boston, he grew up studying the horn and earned his Bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1981. His first conducting experience came as an undergraduate when he was chosen by his peers to lead the Bach Society Orchestra. Upon graduation, he began his conducting studies in earnest with Kurt Masur in Leipzig while simultaneously serving as Solo-Horn of the prestigious Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, becoming the first American member in the orchestra's 250-year history. Presently, he is the Director of the University of Maryland Symphony Orchestra, Associate Professor at the University of Maryland and Artistic Director of the National Orchestral Institute (NOI).

After two summers of study at the Tanglewood Music Center (1984-85) Ross was offered the position of interim Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. In June of 1994 he completed a four-year tenure as Music Director of the Yale Symphony Orchestra. He has also served a three-year term collaborating with William Christie as the Assistant Conductor of the Paris-based period instrument ensemble Les Arts Florissants. During the last two decades, he has guest conducted such diverse orchestras as the Leipzig Gewandhaus, the Utah Symphony, the Orquesta Ciudad Granada, the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra, the Orquesta Sinfonica of Galicia, the Neubrandenburger Philharmonie, the Binghamton Philharmonic and the National Symphony Orchestra in a side-by-side concert with UMSO.

He has worked both joyously and often with youth orchestras, among which are included the Mendelssohn Conservatory Orchestra of Leipzig, the Curtis Institute Orchestra of Philadelphia, the Orchestra of the Conservatorio Superior of Salamanca, the McGill Symphony Orchestra, the National Youth Orchestra of Spain, and the Youth Orchestra of Acarigua-Araure in Venezuela, part of the famed "El Sistema." His principal conducting teachers are Kurt Masur, Otto-Werner Mueller, Seiji Ozawa and Leonard Bernstein.

As a horn soloist, he has performed with such orchestras as the Boston Symphony, the Boston Pops, the Bavarian Radio Orchestra, the Leipzig Radio Orchestra and the Leipzig Gewandhaus. When he was awarded Third Prize in the Munich International Horn Competition in 1978, he became the first American and one of the youngest competitors ever to do so. His performances and recordings as principal horn of the Gewandhaus, including the Strauss *Four Last Songs* with Jessye Norman, have helped him gain international recognition as an artist.

In the field of opera, he has conducted productions of Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* at the Theatre du Rhin in Strasburg, *Le Nozze di Figaro* in the Theatre

Champs-Élysées in Paris, and Handel's *Rodelinda* at the Glyndebourne Festival, as well as the recent Maryland Opera Studio production of *Eugene Onegin*. He has prepared concert presentations of Torstensson's *The Expedition* and Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* with the Stockholm Philharmonic.

As a teacher, prior to his appointment at the University of Maryland, Ross served on the faculties of Yale University, the Curtis Institute of Music, Haverford and Bryn Mawr colleges, and as a guest artist at the Toho School of Music in Tokyo, Japan. He is a founding director of the Music Masters Course in Kazusa, an international chamber music festival dedicated to the concept of artistic cross-cultural exchange which takes place yearly in Chiba, Japan. In his work as Artistic Advisor to the Escuela de Práctica Orquestal of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia and conductor at the International Festival of Lucena, he has played a vital role in the formation and education of the next generation of Spanish musicians.

RICHARD WAGNER (1813-1882)

Prelude to Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Wagner conceived his only mature comic opera, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, during a period of upheaval in his life. He was forced to flee Dresden, where he was court conductor, after his involvement in the failed uprisings of 1848, and embarked on a 12-year period of exile. At this time, he worked on *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and the text for *Die Meistersinger*, though he composed the latter's music only after being allowed into Prussia in 1861. *Die Meistersinger* was finally premiered on June 21, 1868, at the Königliches Hof- und Nationaltheater in Munich under Hans von Bülow.

Wagner intended the opera's plot, which presents a fictionalized version of real events, to glorify the tradition of German music and culture. In Renaissance Germany, tradesmen and artisans of all sorts were organized into guilds that oversaw their training and professional standards. The Meistersingers (master singers), unlike the trade guilds, were an organization of men with other professions — cobblers, blacksmiths, bookbinders, etc. — who cultivated the composition and performance of solo song, both text and melody. One of Wagner's main characters, Hans Sachs (1494–1576), was a real person, a cobbler and the most famous member of the Nuremberg Meistersinger guild. In Wagner's story, Sachs represents the learned man who has learned to control and suppress his worldly desires after the fashion of Schopenhauer, under whose spell the composer had fallen during his exile. Sachs uses his virtue in the service of others: a young knight named Walther and Eva, the daughter of a guild-member whose hand in marriage has been promised to the winner of an impending song contest. Walther resolves to win this competition, but cannot learn the Meistersingers' rules in time, and embarrasses himself when he tries to join the guild. After a good deal of comic action and a smattering of more serious philosophy, Sachs

helps Walther compose his Prize Song, which wins over the judges with its expressiveness despite breaking all the rules. The opera's final chorus celebrates the edifice of learning and culture that renders such innovation possible, attributing it all, of course, to the German spirit.

The colorful prelude to *Die Meistersinger* is commonly played in concert. It opens with the theme of the Meistersingers, serious and forthright, proceeding in a contrapuntal fashion redolent of the German Baroque tradition (though this style dates from more than 100 years after the opera's action). A contrasting second theme invokes Walther's amorous intentions, but is suddenly interrupted by a bright wind fanfare that may have a historical association with the actual guild. Ensuing development is businesslike and genial, as befits the idealized atmosphere of sixteenth-century Nuremberg, a prosperous free city. Soon, however, passions intrude, and we hear the later motive of Walther's yearning for Eva and a portion of his Prize Song. A playful episode varies the opening theme to represent the guild's apprentices before the marvelous finale combines the Meistersingers' theme, the Prize Song, and the fanfare in a climactic celebration of polyphony. Wagner took dramatic license in associating this texture with the Meistersingers, whose songs were monophonic, but the point is well-taken, and we can hardly avoid a swell of gratitude to the long line of German masters.

We might reflexively wish to avoid it at first; the opera is tarnished by association with the Third Reich, which often used its prelude for official functions, and it would be dishonest to ignore the alignment of Wagner's racist views with subsequent political events. The fact remains, however, that beauty is beautiful, and splendor splendid, no matter who created them. We can separate these things, as nature did in allowing them to blossom from such rocky soil: Wagner's thoughts on non-musical subjects have nothing to do with Schütz, Bach or Beethoven, and nothing to do with Gutenberg, Kepler or Kant. The impulse to celebrate their tradition renders *Die Meistersinger* a nationalist work, but not a political one; we are not wrong to salute the tradition that Wagner here salutes.

Notes by Paul Covey



JEAN SIBELIUS (1865-1957)

Symphony No. 4 in A Minor, op. 63

Premiere April 3, 1911 in Helsinki

First reactions to Sibelius's groundbreaking masterpiece, the Fourth Symphony, ranged from lukewarm politeness to loud hissing. One Copenhagen critic called the symphony "merely fantastic sketchings in a grey and mystical world." Indeed, Sibelius's sketchings, organically grown forms in a sparse orchestration, have perplexed both the listener and musician. Yet some enthusiasm eventually emerged for the symphony that Sibelius called an "inner confession" and a "protest against present-day music." As one early critic perceived, the Fourth Symphony is a "synthesis of classicism, romanticism and modernism, which might serve as the ideal for the music of the future."

When Sibelius composed the Fourth Symphony, his life was fraught with difficulties, including serious illness for himself and his wife Aino. To work steadily on the symphony, Sibelius isolated himself, traveling despite a crushing debt and other pressing obligations.

Life was not all pale. Sibelius accompanied his brother-in-law Eero Järnefelt (1863-1937) in early fall 1909 to Koli, a small mountain in Eastern Finland. Järnefelt, a leading Finnish painter, shared a panorama of great majesty, mystery and ever-changing light with his good friend. As the smooth rocks, terraced hillsides of towering trees, mysterious fog and golden autumnal hues at Koli inspired Järnefelt's most important paintings, so Koli greatly impressed Sibelius. As Erik Tawaststjerna suggests, material from a sketch for *La Montagne (The Mountain)* survived in the first movement of the Fourth Symphony.

I. The introductory syncopated figure, the notes C, D, F#, E, spawns other whole tone and tritone constructs in the work. The solo cello introduces a contrasting a minor triad, in undulating eighth notes. The first loud symphonic entry startles the chamber orchestra texture. Shivering strings follow a remarkable crest by the violins on icy high notes. Glosses of woodwind scales, tritone figures and the rattle of timpani move the music briefly into F# minor. Only the return of the undulating theme warms the listener with the brighter key of A major. After continued development of the two themes, the movement ends with the first theme now resolved by half step to the tonic A.

II. Sibelius ornaments folksy melodies within simple triple meter. Flirting bends of the Lydian emphasize the tritone within the key of F major. The B section music slows somewhat by metric modulation into duple meter. A persistent rhythm in the strings is accompanied by delicate timpani rolls and low tones in basses and bassoons. Here Sibelius does not knock us over the head with his bewitching fairy world music,

rather he charms with the churning of soft slurred tremolos. The return of a darker A section, thus emotionally transformed, wisps away with final gestures of F in the timpani and violins.

III. Sibelius crafted beautifully responsive music, in that changing long tones catalyze solo gestures clearly derived from the symphony's opening motive. Each gesture rises, only to fall or to evaporate. Fifths in the harmonic backdrop add a mystical quality to the music. The diffuse rhythm of syncopated and long triplet notes lacks any urgency. Scoring is sparse; at times there is only one player.

Finnish composer and theorist Kalevi Aho appropriately describes the development of the principal theme that follows as a waveform. The music gathers force through the energy released with each wave, including through the development of thematic fragments deposited at the shore as the wave subsides. Each time the theme returns bolder and more expansive, as if to meet the spiritual challenge of this movement, one that meant so much to Sibelius that he requested it played at his funeral.

The movement's most striking theme, beginning with two rising fifths separated only by a semitone, first occurs as a rising melody in the cellos. At its second appearance, a C# minor sound world shivers falling fifths, to confront the longest reach yet, as the cellos crest in a crescendo. The power of this second wave unleashes a wealth of thematic fragments and variants in the strings and winds. After a solo cello intones the theme a third time, the winds develop the fragments once more against a hazy syncopated G# drone in second violins. The descending winds, including dark A clarinets, oppose the most powerful thematic expanse, originating in celli, and supplemented with other strings. The wave reaches shore a few more times before all instruments converge to a C# pulsing tone and fade.

IV. Sweeping Straussian solos against a rich tapestry of overlapping long tones energize the final movement. Contrasting keys of A minor and E-flat major again spell the tritone. A fiddle tune and strumming makes its way through the strings. A hushed tremolo, a rustling of leaves, betrays a mystical world of vast forests. Wave figures, layered against long tones and a timpani roll, usher in a celebratory glockenspiel tune. After a meltdown of opposing tones, minor third utterances recall the thin texture of the opening movement. The strings respectfully resolve the symphony with an A minor chorale.

Notes by Alyssa Moquin

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)*Ma mère l'Oye* ("Mother Goose")

A versatile craftsman with a happy blend of patience and imagination, Ravel is sometimes mistaken for a "simple" composer; at other times, he is mistaken for an aimless, opulent impressionist, for he did not shy away from influences that struck his fancy, but experimented with them all, bestowing on each his personal twist and commitment to excellence. In his time at the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied off and on from 1891 until 1905, Ravel succeeded only in irking his conservative teachers by following the increased harmonic freedom of the day. On the other hand, his first orchestral piece, *Shéhérazade*, scored a mild success given the contentious artistic atmosphere in which it premiered. Young Ravel thus established himself relatively quickly, becoming associated with Debussy and the Parisian avant-garde. In 1909, he was a founding member, along with Fauré and other contemporaries, of the Société Musicale Indépendante, a group dedicated, in direct opposition to the Conservatoire's policies, to the performance of new works regardless of style, and it was at the inaugural concert of the Société, on April 20, 1910, that tonight's work premiered in its original piano four hands version. Its success encouraged Ravel to orchestrate it in 1911, and in 1912, with the addition of a prelude, interludes and an additional dance movement, to make it a ballet.

The diminutive and whimsical Ravel often befriended the children of his friends. Especially dear to him were the son and daughter of Ida and Cipa Godebski, whose salon he frequented in these early years along with Cocteau, Satie, Roussel and other prominent Parisian figures; six and seven years old, respectively, in 1909, the Godebski children inspired *Ma mère l'Oye*. Both were precocious pianists, and Ravel meant for them to perform it, but it proved a bit too difficult for them at the time, so the premiere was given by a pair of older children instead. For the subject matter of this Mother Goose Suite, Ravel turned to the elegant literary fairy tales written in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Charles Perrault; Marie-Catherine, Comtesse d'Aulnoy; and Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont; the title comes from a collection published by Perrault in 1697. The movements proceed as follows, with quotations Ravel placed in the score:

1. Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty
2. Tom Thumb

He thought that he would easily find his way back with the help of the bread he had sown all along as he passed; but to his surprise he could not find a single crumb: birds had come to eat them all up. (Perrault)

3. The Plain Little Girl, the Empress of the Pagodas
(performed as movement 4 in tonight's performance)

She undressed and got into the bath. All of a sudden the little porcelain girls and boys started to sing and play instruments: some had theorbos made of nutshell, some viols made of the shell of almonds, because the instruments had to be accommodated to their size. (d'Aulnoy)

4. The Conversations of the Beauty and the Beast
(performed as movement 3 in tonight's performance)

- When I think of how good-hearted you are, you do not appear so ugly to me.
- Oh, Lady, yes, I do have a good heart, but I am a monster.
- There are quite a lot of people who are more of a monster than you.
- If I were witty enough I would pay compliments to you, but I am only a beast. . . .
- Beauty, will you marry me?
- No, Beast.
. . . .
- I happily die because I had the pleasure to meet you once more.
- No, my dear Beast, you shall not die: you shall live to become my husband!
The Beast disappeared and all she saw in front of her was a prince more beautiful than Love, who thanked her for having put an end to his enchantment. (Leprince de Beaumont)

5. Fairy Garden

Tonight, movements three and four are performed in reverse order. Musically, *Ma mère l'Oye* is modern but restrained, in a neo-classical vein. It is always clear of form and tonality, but graced by such then-innovative techniques as pentatonic scales, quartal harmonies and unresolved dissonance.

Notes by Paul Covey

ARTURO MÁRQUEZ (b. 1950)*Danzón No. 2*

Arturo Márquez, born in Álamos, Sonora, México in 1950, is one of today's best-known Mexican composers. He studied at the Conservatorio Nacional in Mexico City, in Paris with Jacques Castérède, and at the California Institute of the Arts, where his teachers included Morton Subotnick and Mel Powell; subsequently, he has taught at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the National

Conservatory of Music, both in Mexico City. Early in his career, Márquez was involved with electronic music and multimedia, while more recently he has pursued a more traditional vein of composition. His is tradition with a twist, however, infusing the European tradition of concert music with a Latin American vernacular flavor. Márquez's music has become popular with audiences and won many awards, including the Mexican Gold Medal of Fine Arts, which in 2006 he became the first musician to receive. Best known are his continuing series of *Danzóns*, for various forces, which celebrate this genre of dance, not originally Mexican, but finding its origin in the adaptation of the European contradance to the then-colonial setting of Cuba and the Caribbean in the eighteenth century. The *danzón* developed a freer and jauntier spirit than its progenitor through the interaction of native, creole, Spanish, and French cultures, and by bringing it into the modern concert hall, Márquez now reciprocates this process.

In 1994, the orchestra of the Autonomous University commissioned *Danzón No. 2*, about which the composer has written:

The idea of writing the *Danzón No. 2* originated in 1993 during a trip to Malinalco with the painter Andrés Fonseca and the dancer Irene Martínez, both of whom are experts in salon dances with a special passion for the *danzón*[.] . . . From these experiences onward, I started to learn the *danzón's* rhythms, its form, its melodic outline, and to listen to the old recordings[.] . . . I was fascinated and I started to understand that the apparent lightness of the *danzón* is only like a visiting card for a type of music full of sensuality and qualitative seriousness, a genre which old Mexican people continue to dance with a touch of nostalgia and a jubilant escape towards their own emotional world[.] . . . [W]e can fortunately still see this in the embrace between music and dance that occurs in the State of Veracruz and in the dance parlors of Mexico City. The *Danzón No. 2* is a tribute to the environment that nourishes the genre. It endeavors to get as close as possible to the dance, to its nostalgic melodies, to its wild rhythms, and although it violates its intimacy, its form and its harmonic language, it is a very personal way of paying my respects and expressing my emotions towards truly popular music.

Márquez dedicated *Danzón No. 2* to his daughter Lily. Musically, it follows the journey of a lively melody, several distinct ideas, through a continually shifting series of instrumental colors and ambient characters. A relatively placid beginning becomes somewhat wilder, giving way to a central section that alternates a degree of repose with internal climaxes. Finally, a rousing conclusion is capped by a sudden crescendo. Throughout, *claves* and *güiro* repeatedly present the infectious rhythmic pattern that underlies the entire work.

Notes by Paul Covey

ORCHESTRA MEMBERS

UM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

James Ross, Music Director

VIOLIN

Concertmaster:

Daniel Sender (Wagner, Sibelius)

Netanel Draiblate (Ravel, Márquez)

Principal 2nd :

Francis Liu, (Wagner, Sibelius)

Zack Stokowski, (Ravel, Márquez)

Jheesoo Ahn

Salvatore Amadeo

Tommy Atkinson

Anne Chicheportiche

Laura Childs

Allyn Custer

Emily Cutright

Marianna Cutright

Julia Frantz

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Melanie Kuperstein

Swiatoslaw Kuznik

Sean Larkin

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Allison Monroe

Nicholas Montopoli

Hoorig Poochikian

Rebecca Racusin

Ashley Re

Madeline Watson

Jenny Wu

Alexander Yin

Sarah York

Scarlett Zirkle

VIOLA

Principal:

Jonathan Richards (Wagner, Sibelius)

Daniel McCarthy (Ravel, Márquez)

Emily Cantrell

Mary Ferrillo

Chelsey Green

Rebecca Gu

Sarah Hart

Dong Wook Kim

Kelly Klein

Leonardo Piermartiri

Elizabeth Polek

Cassie Stephenson

CELLO

Principal:

Elizabeth Meszaros, (Wagner, Sibelius)

Devee Lewis, (Ravel, Márquez)

Crista Alejandre

JiHea Choi

Alex Ellsworth

Sarah Hamann

Robert Heald

Amy Huzjak

Juwon Moon

Alyssa Moquin

Kathleen White

Gozde Yasar



BASS

Julie Wagner, principal
 Andrew Coccoli
 Cassidy Morgan
 Lindsay Walters

FLUTE

Nicole Cummings
 Christi Rajnes
 Kathryn Speer

OBOE

Brett Bakalar
 Janet Blair
 Noelle Drewes

CLARINET

Ben Chapin
 Santana Moreno
 Stephanie Wheeler

BASSOON

Samantha Brenner
 Nicholas Cohen

HORN

Philip Browne
 Keagan Maryman
 Kara Neil
 Brad Tatum

TRUMPET

Nathan Clark
 Jose Luis Oviedo
 Lisa Rodio
 Lily Shapiro

TROMBONE

Ben Baldwin
 David Brenneman

BASS TROMBONE

Timothy May

TUBA

Matthew Lindahl

PERCUSSION

Don Johns
 Dane Krich
 Keith Williams
 Shaun Rogers

TIMPANI

Don Johns
 Dane Krich

HARP

Sara Magill

ORCHESTRA MANAGER

Mark Wakefield

UPCOMING UMSO PERFORMANCES

Friday, December 4, 2009 . 8PM

Thursday, December 10, 2009 . 8PM, (Varese only)

FAREWELL AND FANFARE

Rachmaninov, *Piano Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp minor*
Jasmin Lee, piano (2008 UMSO Concerto Competition Winner)
 Strauss, *Metamorphosen*
 Brahms, *Nanie*
w/ UM Concert Choir
Nicole Aldrich, guest conductor
 Varese, *Ameriques*
 DEKELBOUM CONCERT HALL

Saturday, February 20, 2010 . 8PM

SOARING VOICES

Gibson, *The Sound of Light*
UM Wind Orchestra, Michael Votta - conductor
 Prokofiev, *Sinfonia Concertante*
Evelyn Elsing, cello
 Zemlinsky, *Lyric Symphony*
Linda Mabbs, soprano
Jason Stearns, bass
 DEKELBOUM CONCERT HALL

Friday, March 26, 2010 . 8PM

THE HERO'S LIFE

Hindemith, *Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber*
 Berg, *Chamber Concerto for piano, violin, and 13 wind instruments*
UM Wind Orchestra, Michael Votta - conductor
Audrey Andrist, piano
James Stern, violin
 Strauss, *Ein Heldenleben*
 DEKELBOUM CONCERT HALL