



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MEMPHIS®

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music

presents

Songbook

featuring

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

Symphonic Band

William Plenk, conductor
Wilker Augusto, guest conductor

with

Matthew Plenk, tenor

March 2, 2022

7:30 PM

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music
Scheidt Family Performing Arts Center

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music
Kevin Sanders, Director

College of Communication and Fine Arts
Ryan Fisher, Interim Dean

PROGRAM

Cajun Folk Songs II - Country Dance

Frank Ticheli
(b. 1958)

Wilker Augusto, guest conductor*

Allerseelen

Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)
arr. Davis

Matthew Plenk, tenor
Stephen Karr, piano

Old American Songs

The Boatmen's Dance
Simple Gifts
At the River
Zion's Walls

Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)
Arr. Silvester

Matthew Plenk, tenor

Variations on a Korean Folk Song

John Barnes Chance
(1932-1972)

Core 'n Grato

Salvatore Cardillo
(1874-1947)
arr. Dobbelstein

Matthew Plenk, tenor

*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Wind Conducting.

University of Memphis Symphonic Band
William Plenk, conductor

Flute

Dekimbryan Gillion
Ty Gross
Mercy Hammond
Matthew Hammons*
Micayla Scott

Oboe

Antoinette Conway
Jesus Salazar*

Bassoon

Mo Dorsey
Connor Lorino
Julian Rice*

Clarinet

Summer Moates
Onyinye Igboanugo
Eli Roy
Jacob Saunders
William Steen
Desmon Taylor*
Thaddeus Wilson

Bass Clarinet

Austin Kennedy

Alto Saxophone

Paris McCann
Amanda Roesch*

Tenor Saxophone

Josh Laughlin

Baritone Saxophone

Jacob Happy

Horn

Wilker Augusto**
Natasha McGlasson
Breanne Tompkins
Matt Whitt**
Drew Wolfe*

Trumpet

Gavin Burt*
Logan Pack
Jacob Rose
Trevor Todd
Jacob Turner

Trombone

Evan Green*
Val Huggins
Constance Robinson
Caleb Tosh

Euphonium

Ayden Bran*
Terrion Freeman

Tuba

Christopher Gilchrist*
Briley Brewer

Percussion

Malik Edwards
Tyler Dailey
Daniel Padron Hoepp
David Koger*
Mia Perez
Colton Renfrow
Daniel Young

Piano

Carmen Lemos-González

Bass

Kedrick Cottrell

*denotes principal player

**denotes guest musicians

Cajun Folk Songs II – Country Dance

Frank Ticheli (b. 1958)

This work is the second set of folk songs composed as a tribute to the people of the old Cajun culture. Cajuns are descendants of the Acadians, a group of early French colonists who settled in Nova Scotia and were driven south to Louisiana by the British in the mid-1750s.

Louisiana-born Frank Ticheli based these works on folk melodies whose precise origins are unknown, freely combining them with original music. *Country Dance*, evokes the energetic feeling and style of a Cajun two-step, a form commonly used in the dance halls of southern Louisiana that has stylistic similarities to Scottish folk dances and the American hoedown.

Currently Living in Los Angeles, and serving as Professor of Composition at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music, Frank Ticheli is one of the most well-known and performed composers of contemporary wind band music. Frank Ticheli's music has been described as being "optimistic and thoughtful" (Los Angeles Times), "lean and muscular" (The New York Times), "brilliantly effective" (Miami Herald) and "powerful, deeply felt, crafted with impressive flair and an ear for striking instrumental colors" (South Florida Sun-Sentinel).

Allerseelen

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Richard Strauss was a notable German Romantic composer and conductor of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A great master of orchestration, he created tone poems in which the orchestra became one marvelous instrument, capable of expressing the whole range of human emotions. Among them, *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Death and Transfiguration*, *Don Quixote*, and *The Hero's Life*, beside his fabulous operas such as *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Salome* and others, are masterpieces of the repertoire.

Allerseelen was written by Strauss as part of a collection of eight lieder in 1885 when he was just 21 years old. *Allerseelen*, which is translated as "All Souls' Day" in English, was initially performed by soprano voice and piano. *Allerseelen* exhibits powerful emotions and intense romanticism. The melody and rich accompaniment make it one of the most well-known lieder of Strauss. *Allerseelen* is set to text by Hermann von Gilm zu Rosenegg (1812-1864).

*Place on the table the fragrant mignonettes,
Bring the last red asters inside,
and let us speak again of love,
As once in May.*

*Give me your hand, so that I may secretly press it;
And if someone sees, it's all the same to me.
Just give me one of your sweet glances,
As once in May.*

*Every grave blooms and is fragrant tonight,
One day in the year are the dead free,
Come to my heart, so that I may have you again,
As once in May.*

Old American Songs

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Aaron Copland was asked by fellow composer Benjamin Britten to arrange a set of American folk tunes for his Music and Art Festival in Aldeburgh, England. Copland wrote five songs for male soloist and piano for the occasion: "The Boatmen's Dance," "The Dodger," "Long Time Ago," "Simple Gifts" and "I Bought Me a Cat." The first set of Old American Songs was written in 1950 and premiered in June of that year by the famous tenor Peter Pears, with Britten at the piano. In 1951 the work premiered in America with Copland himself playing the piano and baritone William Warfield singing. Warfield would go on to become the singer most identified with the songs and spoke often on his collaborations with the composer. The songs were met with such success that Copland composed a second set in 1952 consisting of "The Little Horses," "Zion's Walls," "The Golden Willow Tree," "At the River" and "Ching-a-Ring Chaw." The second set premiered in 1953, again with the Warfield/Copland pairing. Copland transcribed both sets for vocal soloist and orchestra in 1957, and many of the songs have been arranged for chorus and piano or chorus and orchestra.

The subject matter for Copland's songs was drawn from several places, not all uniquely American - politics, religion, children, love and loss, death. When searching for songs to set for his Old American Songs Copland scoured the Brown University Library, specifically the Harris Collection, in search of interesting material. This proved successful, yielding both "Long Time Ago" and "The Boatmen's Dance."

In **The Boatmen's Dance**, Copland used an echo effect before each verse to reflect the Ohio River landscape.

*High row the boatmen row,
Floatin' down the river the Ohio.*

*The boatmen dance,
the boatmen sing,
The boatmen up to ev'rything,
And when the boatman gets on shore
He spends his cash and works for more.
Then dance the boatmen dance,
O dance the boatmen dance.
O dance all night 'til broad daylight,
And go home with the gals in the mornin'.*

*High row the boatmen row,
Floatin' down the river the Ohio.*

*I went on board the other day
To see what the boatmen had to say.
There I let my passion loose
An' they cram me in the callaboose.
Dance the boatmen dance,
O dance the boatmen dance.
O dance all night 'til broad daylight,
And go home with the gals in the mornin'.*

*High row the boatmen row,
Floatin' down the river the Ohio.*

*The boatman is a thrifty man,
There's none can do as the boatman can.
I never see a pretty gal in my life
But that she was a boatman's wife.
Dance the boatmen dance,
O dance the boatmen dance.
O dance all night 'til broad daylight,
And go home with the gals in the mornin'.*

*High row the boatmen row,
Floatin' down the river the Ohio*

“Simple Gifts” is the most familiar of the tunes that Copland uses for his Old American Songs; it is of course the cornerstone melody of his 1944 ballet, *Appalachian Spring*. “Simple Gifts” is a Shaker hymn from 1848, the words and melody written by Elder Joseph Brackett, which was later quoted by Edward D. Andrews in his book *The Gift to be Simple: Songs, Dances and Rituals of the American Shakers* (1940). Copland uses a homophonic, chordal style of accompaniment for the uncomplicated melody. William Warfield noted that Copland had worked to achieve a recitative style by placing the simple accompaniment on the weak beats. This gives the illusion of a slower tempo, even though Copland’s treatment of the hymn is fairly brisk.

*'Tis the gift to be simple
'Tis the gift to be free
'Tis the gift to come down
Where you ought to be
And when we find ourselves in the place just right
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed
To turn, turn will be our delight
Till by turning, turning, we come round right.*

“At the River” is a gentle and much-loved hymn dating from 1865 by the Reverend Robert Lowry. Copland begins with a simple accompaniment which gains in strength and intensity beginning with the orchestral interlude before the third verse. “At the River” was used fittingly on memorial concerts for both Aaron Copland (with baritone, Kurt Ollmann), and Leonard Bernstein (on the famed 1990, “A Concert Remembering Lenny” with Marilyn Horn).

*Shall we gather by the river,
Where bright angels' feet have trod,
With its crystal tide forever
Flowing by the throne of God.
Yes, we'll gather by the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river,
Gather with the saints by the river
That flows by the throne of God.
Soon we'll reach the shining river,
Soon our pilgrimage will cease,
Soon our happy hearts will quiver
With the melody of peace*

“Zion’s Walls” is a revivalist tune with words and music by John G. McCurry (1821 – 1886), a farmer from Georgia who published the song collection, *The Social Harp*. Copland used this song again in his opera, *The Tender Land* (1952-1954). Copland’s orchestration alternates between various instruments playing the tune with the singer and descant instrumental accompaniment, sometimes using both in one phrase.

*Come fathers and mothers,
Come sisters and brothers,
Come join us in singing the praises of Zion.
O fathers, don't you feel determined
To meet within the walls of Zion?
We'll shout and go round
The walls of Zion.*

Variations on a Korean Folk Song

**John Barnes Chance
(1932-1972)**

John Barnes Chance received Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the University of Texas, where he studied with Clifton Williams, Kent Kennan, and Paul Pisk. After studies at the University of Texas, Chance played with the Austin Symphony Orchestra, and also performed with the Fourth U.S. Army Band in San Antonio and the Eighth U.S. Army Band in Korea.

After leaving the army, Chance was selected by the Ford Foundation to be a part of the Young Composers Project. From 1960 through 1962 he was composer-in-residence at the Greensboro, North Carolina, public schools. It is there that he composed seven pieces for school ensembles including his first work for wind band. Throughout his short career, Chance composed for band, orchestra, chorus, chamber groups and solo instruments.

Variations on a Korean Folk Song is based on a folk tune that the composer learned while serving the U.S. Army in Seoul, Korea. The tune is known as *Arrirang*, a song of love and heartbreak that can be found in many variations, with an origin that may date back 1000 years. In autumn 1966, for the *Journal of Band Research*, Chance said: "I became acquainted with the folk song while serving in Seoul, Korea, as a member of the Eighth U.S. Army Band in 1958-59. The tune is not as simple as it sounds, and my fascination with it during the intervening years led to its eventual use as the theme for this set of variations."

Core 'n Grato (Catari, Catari)

Salvatore Cardillo (1874-1947)

Italian composer Salvatore Cardillo studied piano and composition at university while still living in Italy. After graduating he emigrated to America in 1903. He composed music for films but gained his reputation composing in the Neapolitan song style. Some of his most popular songs in this genre include *Core 'n Grato (Catari, Catari)* and *Oi Luna*, all of which are based on the text of Riccardo Cordiferro.

Cori 'n Grato (Ungrateful heart) written in 1911 of Enrico Caruso, has remained a staple of the Italian tenor concert repertoire, having been recorded by Corelli, Domingo, and Pavarotti.

Matthew Plenk

Matthew Plenk is the Artistic Director of Lamont Opera Theatre at The University of Denver's Lamont School of music where he is also appointed as Associate Professor of Voice. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 2007 while a member of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. He holds a Bachelor's degree from the Hartt School of Music, a Master's degree from Yale University, and a Samling Scholar. Mr. Plenk has had the opportunity to study with some of the greatest artists in the world including Renatta Scottò, Sir Thomas Allen, Kiri Te Kanawa, Thomas Hampson, Jose van Dam, Hakken Hagegård, Reri Grist, Benita Valente, Diana Soviero, Matthew Polenzani, and Piotr Beczala.



Since returning to the stage in November of 2022, Mr. Plenk has appeared with the Central City Opera as Nemorino, and Alfred, performed with the Colorado Symphony in the season finale as a soloist in Bruckner's Te deum and Beethoven's 9th Symphony. Matthew also presented a faculty recital at Lamont, performing the groundbreaking *Schöne Müllerin* with Keith Ward at the piano. In the 20-21 season, Matthew was scheduled to return to the Cleveland Orchestra, Denver Philharmonic (Donizetti, Beethoven, Mozart), and debut with the Rogue Valley Symphony, unfortunately, all were canceled for Covid. In October of 2022 he will premiere a new work with the Boulder Philharmonic, *Ozymandias – To Sell a Planet*, by Drew Hemenger.

Mr. Plenk has been seen on the operatic stages of the Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Virginia Opera, Atlanta Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and Des Moines Metro Opera. He has also had the honor of sharing some of the world's greatest concert stages with the Cleveland, Boston, Philadelphia, and Minnesota Orchestras, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, RAI Symphony Nazionale, Baltimore, Houston, Colorado and Hartford Symphonies, University Musical Society, Aspen Music, and La Jolla Summerfest festivals, and with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi.

In 2005 Mr. Plenk was one of sixteen singers invited to work with Naxos Records and Yale University in a collaborative project to record the complete songs of Charles Ives and his many awards include Grand Finalist in the 2007 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, First Place winner of the Five Towns Music Competition, and Grand Prize winner at the Music Lovers Competition.