

Cristian Măcelaru, conductor
Andrew Cuneo, bassoon

Friday, November 16, 2018 at 10:30AM
Saturday, November 17, 2018 at 8:00PM

BARBER

(1910-1981)

*Medea's Meditation and Dance of
Vengeance, op. 23a* (1955)

CHRISTOPHER ROUSE

(b. 1949)

Bassoon Concerto (2017)

World Premiere

Allegro—

Adagio tenebroso—

Allegro

Andrew Cuneo, bassoon

INTERMISSION

COPLAND

(1900-1990)

Symphony No. 3 (1944-1946)

Molto moderato—with simple expression

Allegro molto

Andantino quasi allegretto—

Molto deliberato; Allegro risoluto

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2018/2019 Classical Series is presented by **World Wide Technology** and **The Steward Family Foundation**.

Andrew Cuneo is the **Graybar Electric Company** Guest Artist.

The concert of Friday, November 16, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Gordon and Susie Philpott**.

The concert of Saturday, November 17, is supported by **Fifth Third Bank**.

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PROGRAM NOTES

BY TIM MUNRO

Editor's Note:

This season, our program notes are a little different. We are presenting a broad range of voices, a sort of “festival of ideas.” Some voices are conventional, some experimental. Some tell stories, some mine personal experience, some lean towards the experiential. This week’s notes are quite traditional, but I couldn’t shake one particular image: of composer Christopher Rouse seated at a table between the two older American titans on this program, Copland and Barber.

In 1990, Aaron Copland died. At the time, a young composer named Christopher Rouse was writing his first piece for soloist and orchestra, the Trombone Concerto.

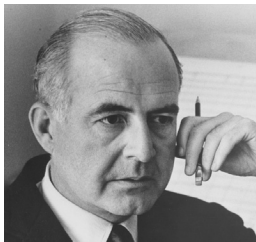
Stung by Copland’s loss (and by the death of Leonard Bernstein), Rouse found himself writing a searing lament for these musical giants. And, in a way, a lament for the passing of an entire era of American composers, an era of creators that had such a profound effect on the young Rouse.

This weekend, with the premiere of his latest concerto, Rouse finds himself seated at a musical table between two giants from this older generation.

Next to Copland, who was something of a mentor to Rouse in his youth. “He was a wonderful person and a superb composer.” Rouse doesn’t see “many direct correlations between his work and mine,” but maybe we can observe that Copland and Rouse both absorbed American popular styles into their music, and that both burst onto the scene with wildish-young-man works.

Next to Samuel Barber, whose impeccable technical skill aligns with Rouse’s own fastidious attention to composition craft. Rouse never met Barber, although he does “admire much of his music.” We might feel Barber’s Romantic spirit in Rouse’s own love for long, lyrical melodies and an affinity for the concerto form.

Of this “greatest generation” of composers, as Rouse calls them, Copland and Barber are best remembered. But Rouse finds it “sad that the music of so many others seems to have fallen by the wayside.” Composers like William Schuman and Walter Piston. “Piston for his fastidious sense of order and Schuman for his passionate intensity.”



SAMUEL BARBER

Born March 9, 1910, West Chester, Pennsylvania

Died January 23, 1981, New York City, New York

Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance, op. 23a

Samuel Barber had been playing it safe. According to Aaron Copland, the 26-year-old Barber's music was "emotionally conventional, making up in technical finish what he lacks in musical substance."

It might take ten years, but when the raw brute force of *Medea's Dance of Vengeance* was finally unleashed on the public, Copland would be proved wrong.

In 1945, legendary American choreographer and dancer Martha Graham approached Barber to write a ballet based on Euripides' *Medea*. Graham had recently worked with Copland on *Appalachian Spring*, but her collaboration with Barber would be quite different. Instead of optimistic folk dances, *Cave of the Heart* would capture wilder, more dangerous passions.

Medea's Dance of Vengeance is extracted from the climactic moment of Barber's ballet. Here Medea has been driven to murderous rage by the infidelity of her husband. Euripides captures her thoughts:

*O children, how ready to cry I am, how full of foreboding!
Jason wrongs me, though I have never injured him.
He has taken a wife to his house, supplanting me.
Now I am in the full force of the storm of hate.
I will make dead bodies of my enemies.
Come, Medea, go forward to the dreadful act.*

Barber's music fills the concert hall with uncomfortable mugginess. A bass drum trembles under an uncomfortable blanket of strings, punctuated by a xylophone's uncertain chattering teeth. Steadily the screw is turned, discomfort builds. When the tension seems unbearable, the pressure releases into music of violence and terror.

First Performance February 2, 1956, Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting the New York Philharmonic

First SLSO Performance January 5, 1957, Vladimir Golschmann conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance February 2, 2002, David Amado conducting

Scoring 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, E-flat clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, tom toms, triangle, tam tam, xylophone, whip), harp, piano, and strings

Performance Time approximately 13 minutes

Graham's solo performance of this dance was the stuff of legend. At the opening, her body trembled as she slowly pulled a long red ribbon from her body. Later, the extremity of *Medea's* state was captured in angular, forceful gestures. At times her body appeared like a rag-doll jolted by external forces.

Barber served in the Army Air Corps from 1942-45. The war had a tremendous effect on his worldview. In a 1946 note for the premiere of *Cave of the Heart*, the creators wrote, "Within the cave of the heart is a place of darkness. This cave is peopled with acts of violence, terror, and magic."

Created just months after a cataclysmic act of world-violence, Barber's music perhaps carries an extra weight of meaning. "Try as we might to escape this monstrous heritage," the note reads, "we are caught up into its surge. The past is alive."



CHRISTOPHER ROUSE

Born February 15, 1949, Baltimore, Maryland

Now Lives Baltimore, Maryland

Bassoon Concerto

American composer Christopher Rouse has written twelve works for soloist and orchestra. Some spring from varied external references (Nordic mythology, a rock 'n' roll guitarist, Wagner's *Ring* cycle). Some draw from the ancient traditions of solo instruments (Gaelic music in the Flute Concerto, Spanish music in his guitar concerto).

But his new Bassoon Concerto takes inspiration directly from the nature of the instrument itself.

Soloist (and SLSO Principal Bassoon) Andrew Cuneo describes his instrument "as the 'character actor' of the orchestra." Its sound varies across the instrument, "from low rumbles and snarls, through the mournful and smooth tenor register, to the keening highest notes." In this concerto, Rouse sought to capture the full compass of this musical actor.

Rouse has a long history with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. His wild *Phantasmata* was given its first performance by the orchestra in 1986, conducted by Leonard Slatkin. Twenty-five years later, in 2011, the orchestra commissioned Rouse's dizzying, kaleidoscopic Third Symphony.

The concerto's outer movements trip along lightly at a swift pace. At key moments, the soloist joins with the orchestra's bassoon section to create what Rouse calls a "mega bassoon." Rouse's concertos sometimes enact arguments: soloist against orchestra. But the original translation of *concertare* is "harmonize," and in this new "concertare," bassoon and orchestra often work together, hand in hand.

The bassoon "tends to have a limited dynamic range," says Cuneo, "and the loud end often isn't strong enough to project through a full orchestra." In response, Rouse has shrunk the size of the orchestra. At times this concerto has the intimacy

of a delicate chamber work, bassoon singing alongside cellos and clarinets at one moment, serenading violins and harp at another.

In the slow movement, marked *tenebroso* (“dark”), the soloist meanders through a barren landscape. Soft string hymns, disturbed only by the fluttering of musical wings. Near the end, a barely-audible string mist surrounds the soloist, who hesitates, suddenly uncertain. When space is given for a voice, what should it say?

First Performance November 16, 2018, Cristian Măcelaru conducting with Andrew Cuneo as soloist

Scoring solo bassoon, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings

Performance Time approximately 25 minutes



AARON COPLAND

Born November 14, 1900, Brooklyn, New York

Died December 2, 1990, Sleepy Hollow, New York

Symphony No. 3

With the attack on Pearl Harbor, art turned towards politics. “Every atom of artistic effort must be mobilized into action,” wrote conductor Serge Koussevitsky at the time.

Composer Aaron Copland obliged, mobilizing his music for the cause. *Letter from Home* conjures the emotions of a soldier reading words from his family. The propaganda film *The North Star*, for which Copland wrote music, depicts Ukrainian villagers resisting the Nazis. And *Lincoln Portrait* places Lincoln’s hopeful words on a cushion of Copland’s music.

When Koussevitsky commissioned a Third Symphony from Copland in 1944, he was subtly asking for a work of similar political purpose. For many composers, a wartime symphony was a chance to create a rallying action on behalf of a country locked in armed conflict.

The musical germ for the Third Symphony was a humble fanfare. A yet-unknown work, soon to take the world by storm. Copland had hemmed and hawed about the title for this “stirring and significant” fanfare for “the war effort.” He turned to a stirring speech in which Vice President Henry Wallace imagined a future century of freedom, fairness, and opportunity. A “century of the common man.”

Copland placed this *Fanfare for the Common Man* at the apex of his new symphony. A heroic cap on a “grand” symphony. But the Third Symphony encompasses much more than unadulterated climax. It contains “an exquisite

delicacy,” wrote Leonard Bernstein, “a prophetic severity, a sharp bite, a wounding stab, an agonized howl.”

The introductory first movement is sparse, austere. Imagine a hand, palm down on the piano. Many traditional melodies can be played with this contained hand. Now stretch the hand wide. This hand is Copland’s musical hand, wide enough to encompass the large spaces between the notes of his melodies. Wide enough, perhaps, to span the epic horizons of the American West.

The thrilling dances and celebratory flourishes of the second movement capture perfectly Copland’s belief that music should not belong to a “special society,” but should be open to all audiences.

In contrast, the meandering strings of the third movement express anxiety. Seeking rest, comfort. Copland was reserved in person. But music was the outlet for his emotions, emerging “from some deep mysterious place he never reveals to us,” wrote Bernstein, “except in his music.”

The Third Symphony was finished in 1946, and its finale hums with the hope and optimism of post-war America. But near the conclusion, when we surely think that challenge and conflict are at an end, the full orchestra lets out a collective scream of pain.

Several years after the first performance of the Third Symphony, the Left-leaning Copland was investigated and blacklisted by the FBI, a victim of “The Red Scare.” These accusations took a terrible emotional toll, but thanks to the artists who rallied by his side, Copland’s career suffered little.

After the orchestra scream, ribbons of wind instruments quietly swirl, and the *Fanfare* reappears, first in hazy brass solos and angelic string chords, later enveloping the orchestra in music of pure, blazing light.

First Performance October 18, 1946, Boston, Serge Koussevitsky conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra

First SLSO Performance February 7, 1964, Eleazar de Carvalho conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance April 27, 2014, Leonard Slatkin conducting

Scoring 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), piccolo, 3 oboes (3rd doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, E-flat clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, snare drum, tenor drum, triangle, tam tam, glockenspiel, xylophone, chimes, wood block, whip, ratchet, claves, anvil), 2 harps, piano, celesta, and strings

Performance Time approximately 43 minutes



Cristian Măcelaru on This Weekend's Program

AS TOLD TO TIM MUNRO

Copland's Third Symphony is a masterpiece. It represents what Copland arrived at in his maturity. It is both a piece that is uplifting, not just because of the music itself, but also because of the message behind it.

Copland was quite political and quite controversial. In the McCarthy era his music was banned from military and government ensembles because he was considered a Communist. I'm certain that he had a political statement in mind when writing music that climaxed in the *Fanfare for the Common Man*.

I've known Chris Rouse's music for a long time, but I'd never had the opportunity to do a new work of his. Rouse was a guest composer when I was a student at the Aspen Music Festival. Every time [conductor David Zinman] turned around to ask "how does it sound," Chris said, "Can it be louder and more rock 'n' roll?"

Andrew Cuneo and I went to school together at Rice University. Andrew is an unbelievable player. I said yes to the idea of the Rouse, knowing that Andrew was going to be playing. There was no question in my mind. He really is fabulous.

Samuel Barber from the very beginning had a style, a language. From the first note, it's just perfect. Copland, he went through variations of his music before he defined what we know as his "American music."

Barber's music for *Medea* is challenging for the orchestra, but it's also grotesquely fun. (It's not a piece that one is supposed to have fun; the dance is supposed to be maniacal.)



SORIN POPA

Cristian Măcelaru most recently appeared with the SLSO in March 2018.

CRISTIAN MĂCELARU

Newly appointed Chief Conductor Designate of the WDR Sinfonieorchester, Cristian Măcelaru is one of the fast-rising stars of the conducting world. He takes on this new position at WDR, one of Europe's leading orchestras, effective with the 2019/2020 season.

Măcelaru is Music Director and Conductor of the internationally renowned Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music. In August 2018, he lead his second season in premiere-filled programs of new works by an esteemed group of composers. Among the 2018 season's highlights are 3 world premieres, a record-breaking 16 composers-in-residence, a stunning roster of international guest artists, and two special tributes to commemorate William Bolcom's and John Corigliano's respective 80th birthdays.

Cristian Măcelaru attracted international attention for the first time in 2012, when he stepped into the breach with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, deputizing for Pierre Boulez. In the same year, he received the "Solti Emerging Conductor Award" for young conductors, followed in 2014 by the "Solti Conducting Award". Since then, he has performed regularly at the podium of the best American orchestras, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, and National Symphony Orchestra. A particularly close collaboration connects him with the Philadelphia Orchestra: Since his subscription debut in 2013, he has been on the podium of this orchestra over 100 times and served there for three seasons as Conductor-in-Residence. Prior to that, he was its Associate Conductor for two seasons and previously Assistant Conductor for one season from September 2011. He continues a close relationship with the orchestra in leading them on annual subscription programs and other special concerts.

In Europe, Măcelaru has been in great demand as a guest conductor with many well-known orchestras and festivals, among others the Bayerischen Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Dresden Staatskapelle, Leipzig Gewandhausorchester, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, and Danish National Symphony Orchestra.



Andrew Cuneo is Principal Bassoon of the SLSO.

ANDREW CUNEO

Graybar Electric Company Guest Artist

Andrew Cuneo is the Principal Bassoon with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Prior to his appointment in St. Louis, he was Principal Bassoon of the Louisville Orchestra and the Sarasota Opera. In addition, he has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Milwaukee, Boston, and Houston symphonies, as well as the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Houston Grand Opera. He has played with the Sun Valley Summer Symphony since 2011, and has been a fellow at several summer festivals, including Tanglewood, the Music Academy of the West, and the Youth Orchestra of the Americas. Andrew Cuneo is a former student of Bernard Garfield and Daniel Matsukawa at the Curtis Institute of Music and Benjamin Kamins at Rice University.

Gemma New, conductor

Sunday, November 18, 2018 at 3:00PM

DVOŘÁK *Carnival Overture, op. 92* (1891)
(1841-1904)

SIBELIUS *Finlandia, op. 26* (1900)
(1865-1957)

INTERMISSION

BRAHMS *Symphony No. 1 In C minor, op. 68* (1855-1876)
(1833-1897)
Un poco sostenuto; Allegro
Andante sostenuto
Un poco allegretto e grazioso
Adagio; Più andante; Allegro non troppo, ma con brio

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This concert is presented by **Kathleen Clucas**.

This concert is supported by **Whole Foods Market**.

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PROGRAM NOTES



ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

Born September 8, 1841, Nelahozeves, Czech Republic

Died May 1, 1904, Prague, Czech Republic

Carnival Overture, op. 92

In the spring of 1891, Dvořák conceived a series of three programmatic overtures, related thematically and collectively titled *Nature, Life and Love*. By the time he completed the three, he had decided to publish them separately, under the titles *In Nature's Realm*, *Carnival*, and *Othello*.

He introduced the first two in a concert, which was to be the last he conducted in Prague before setting out for America. Less than a month after his arrival in New York, he made his conducting debut in Carnegie Hall in a program which included this entire “triple overture,” as he called the cycle.

Dvořák outlined narratives for these overtures. In the story for *Carnival*, a solitary wanderer comes to a Bohemian town in which a carnival is in progress. He is swept into the revelry as night falls, engulfed by tumultuous gaiety and surrounded by eager couples. One such couple separates from the throng long enough for a tender dialogue to take place, but the interlude is a brief one. The revelry (representing a sort of life-force), returns and sweeps everything before it.

Adapted from a note by Richard Freed.

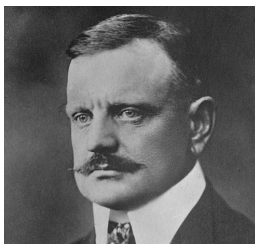
First Performance September 12, 1891, Prague, Czech Republic, Dvořák conducting

First SLSYO Performance March 1, 1974, Leonard Slatkin conducting

Most Recent SLSYO Performance October 18, 2009, Ward Stare conducting

Scoring 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (tambourine, triangle, and cymbals), harp, and strings

Performance Time approximately 10 minutes



JEAN SIBELIUS

Born December 8, 1865, Hämeenlinna, Finland

Died September 20, 1957, Ainola, Finland

Finlandia, op. 26

The importance of Jean Sibelius's *Finlandia* to the Finnish people cannot be overstated.

Finlandia was written during a time of political unrest. After a century of Russian rule, many Finns were angry that they were being drafted into the Russian military and their press was being censored. The “February Manifesto” of Tsar Nicholas II, in 1899, gave the Russian government complete control over Finland, stripping all but symbolic power from the Finnish Senate.

In November, a group of Helsinki artists and activists organized several events in support of censored journalists. The earliest iteration of *Finlandia*, then titled *Finland Awakes*, was the rousing finale for a series of patriotic historical tableaux that Sibelius wrote for one such pageant. The following year Sibelius revised *Finland Awakes* to create the version we know today, and his friend and compatriot Robert Kajanus conducted the premiere on July 2, 1900, with the Helsinki Philharmonic Society.

In its final form *Finlandia* begins with an ominous brass crescendo, introduces its hymn-like theme with woodwinds and strings, and concludes with thundering percussion and a blazing fanfare.

This work helped forge a nation. When Finland declared its independence from Russia, in December 1917, more than a few happy citizens must have been singing Sibelius's most popular melody. It had always been theirs anyway.

Adapted from a note by René Spencer Saller.

First Performance July 2, 1900, Helsinki, Finland, Robert Kajanus conducting the Helsinki Philharmonic Society

First SLSYO Performance November 18, 2018, Gemma New conducting

Scoring 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 oboes, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, and triangle), and strings

Performance Time approximately 8 minutes



JOHANNES BRAHMS

Born May 7, 1833, Hamburg, Germany

Died April 3, 1897, Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 1 In C minor, op. 68

Johannes Brahms aspired to emulate the achievement of his predecessor Ludwig van Beethoven. Beethoven's work served as a model but also as a daunting example, and Brahms felt the gravity of his undertaking. "You have no idea," he reportedly told the conductor Hermann Levi, "what it is like to try to write a symphony while hearing the footsteps of a giant like [Beethoven] behind you."

By 1862, he had substantially completed the opening movement of a new symphony. Completion of this work proved arduous. Brahms continued to revise the score, submitting it to trusted friends for criticism and ignoring their pleas that he bring it before the public. Not until 1876 was he sufficiently satisfied with the work that he released it for performance.

As the symphony became known, many musicians noted similarities to Beethoven's Ninth. The stormy opening movement, the broad anthem-like theme of the finale, and the dramatic progression over the course of the work from struggle to exultation all have obvious precedents in Beethoven's last symphony.

The first movement opens with a dramatic introduction in slow tempo. In its opening measures two melodic lines—one rising, the other descending—pull roughly at each other while timpani and bass instruments toll ominously below. A plaintive melody introduced by the oboe then leads to the faster *Allegro* portion of the movement.

The inner movements are less turbulent but no less moving. A feeling of almost religious serenity pervades the second, while the third is breezy and melodious.

With the onset of the finale, Brahms returns to the drama established in the opening movement. Its initial section is shrouded in darkness. Suddenly, however, a clarion horn call dispels the shadows and leads to the movement's broad principal theme.

The triumphal character and anthem-like simplicity of this subject inevitably brought comparisons with the "Ode to Joy" melody in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. Brahms dismissed these as incidental and obvious. "Any ass can see that," he reportedly exclaimed when the similarity was pointed out.

Adapted from a note by Paul Schiavo.

First Performance November 4, 1876, Karlsruhe, Germany, Felix Otto Dessooff conducting

First SLSYO Performance February 28, 1986, Tsung Yeh conducting

Most Recent SLSYO Performance May 4, 2007, Scott Parkman conducting

Scoring 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, and strings

Performance Time approximately 45 minutes

ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA | 2018–2019

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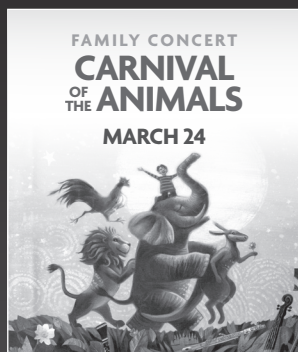
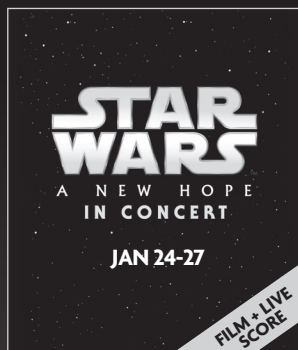
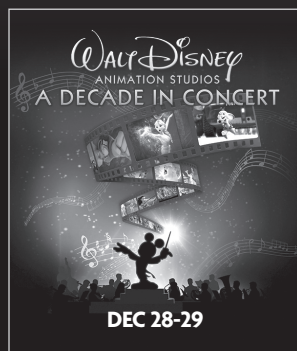
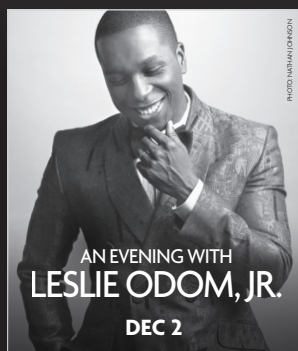
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