

October 21, 2023

7:30 pm

“Saluting Our Own”

America the Beautiful

Samuel A. Ward with lyrics by Katharine Lee Bates - Arr. Bradley Lebakken

Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 10 for Oboe and String Orchestra

Henry Cowell (1897 - 1965)

Mary Beth Hensel, oboe

Fantasia Mexicana for Two Flutes and Orchestra

Samuel Zyman (1956 -)

Jonathan Borja and Aalia Anif, Flutes

Concertino for Marimba

Paul Creston (1906 - 1985)

Matthew Coley, Marimba

INTERMISSION

Scheherazade, Op. 35

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844 – 1908)

Aaron Schwartz, violin

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Samuel A. Ward (1883 - 1903) with lyrics by Katharine Lee Bates (1895 - 1929) - Arr. Bradley Lebakken

"America the Beautiful" is a patriotic American song. Its lyrics were written by Katharine Lee Bates and its music was composed by church organist and choirmaster Samuel A. Ward at Grace Episcopal Church in Newark, New Jersey. Bates wrote the words as a poem originally entitled "Pikes Peak." It was first published in the Fourth of July 1895 edition of the church periodical, *The Congregationalist*. It was at that time that the poem was labeled "America."

The combination of Ward's melody and Bates's poem was first entitled "America the Beautiful" in 1910. The song is one of the most popular of the many U.S. patriotic songs. Yet, to arrange a musical composition is to rewrite the composition for a new set of musical forces or simply different instruments. Our arranger, Bradley Lebakken, a member of the LSO's first violin section, has done just that.

According to Miles Hoffman in *An Essential Guide for Enlightened Listening*, an arrangement means that "a piece may be shortened, lengthened, simplified, or made more complicated. The melodies, harmonies, and rhythms may all be subject to alterations of one kind or another, and the piece may be completely transposed to a different key."

So, an arranger, in this case Mr. Lebakken, is a musician who has specialized experience and training but didn't compose the original work. It's been said the best arrangements, while not intended to replace the original, are always interesting. This arrangement brings a welcome variety and can prompt us to listen to *America the Beautiful* with fresh ears. We can hear things in it that we may not have noticed before, or hear the whole piece in a different way.

Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 10 for Oboe and String Orchestra

Henry Cowell (b. Menlo Park, California, March 11, 1897; d. Woodstock, New York, December 10, 1965)

Mary Beth Hensel, oboe

The American composer Henry Cowell lived from 1897 to 1965 and wrote thousands of musical works in a wide variety of styles. He belonged to a group of composers who wanted to create an American style. Author Michael Hall continues in his book, *Leaving Home: A Conducted Tour of Twentieth-century Music with Simon Rattle*, "They wanted a sound that was independent of European influences, and did not require jazz, folk music, or quotations to give it character. Cowell was a founder of the Pan American

Association of Composers in 1927. He also belonged to the Composers' Collective of New York. He studied composition with Charles Seeger at the University of California at Berkeley."

As a young boy, Cowell lived near San Francisco's Chinatown, so Asian influences are as likely to crop up in his music as European models. Among Cowell's aggressively experimental works are piano pieces that employ what he called "tone clusters"— chords played with a fist or forearm – which piqued the interest of European composers like Bartók and Janáček. In addition to avant-garde scores, Cowell wrote dozens of conventionally tonal works, often hauntingly beautiful.

"Like many composers during the Great Depression, Cowell simplified his mode of expression. A good example is the series of Hymns and Fuguing tunes for various ensembles, begun in 1943," wrote Hall. "A good example is a fuguing tune which is a simple vocal piece in four-part harmony, where the entries of the supporting voices are staggered."

In 1941, Cowell discovered a collection of evocative 19th century American hymns titled "Southern Harmony." These reminded him of even earlier works by the 18th century American composer William Billings, who liked to write what he called "Fuguing Tunes." Combining these two influences, Cowell came up with his own series of "Hymns AND Fuguing Tunes" for various combinations of instruments. Stated by Cowell himself, a hymn and fuguing tune is simply "something slow followed by something fast."

More specifically, the genre was inspired by the music of early American composers William Billings and William Walker. Recalling the sounds of Protestant hymnody from his youth, Cowell created a style of music that emulated the sturdy, melodic tunes found in the shape-note books Walker published in the pre-Civil War era and in the boisterously spiritual song gatherings of the Sacred Harp style.

Cowell's *Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 10 for Oboe and Strings*, was premiered in 1955, in Santa Barbara, California, by oboist Bert Gassman and the Pacific Coast Music Festival orchestra, conducted by Leopold Stokowski.

While Cowell certainly diverges from his models to a considerable degree, certain gestures and sonorities stand out as direct borrowings: strong, simple diatonic melodies, lucid triadic motions with little dissonance and virtually no chromaticism, and emphasis on "open" harmonies, such as the unadorned perfect fifth.

All these qualities are found in abundance in the *Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 10 for Oboe and Strings*. This work stands as a fair representative of the genre, chronologically and stylistically, Cowell having settled comfortably into rendering the style for larger forces and taking some licenses according to his own tastes, while still observing some of its most essential and unique features.

What to Listen For

The first section, **the Hymn**, begins with a robust, lyrical theme introduced by the oboe. Its modern identity is given away from the outset, as the oboe's entrance immediately outlines a plaintive major seventh interval. The melody unfolds in a moderately paced triple meter, with an underlying B minor tonality that hints strongly at its relative major, D. The hymn tune undergoes various transformations as it moves through the orchestra, including a rendering in exact inversion. A central section features various combinations of instrumental trios, this exchange leading to a return of the opening material.

The Fuguing Tune takes the form of a nimble duple meter dance in D Dorian (a modality closely associated with the practices of Sacred Harp singing). The principal eight-bar melody is split in two, its halves passed around the orchestra. Its transformations are easy to track, as it begins with a strident upward leap of a perfect fifth. A subsequent development section contains all sorts of contrapuntal tricks, including stretto (one instrument picking up the melody before another is done with it), augmentation (stretching the tune out into longer notes), and inversion (flipping it upside down). As the melody undergoes this extensive working out, it seems to have its rougher edges smoothed, and when it emerges in the final coda, it is not only more lyrical, but has been transformed into a vibrant major mode.



Henry Cowell

Fantasia Mexicana for Two Flutes and Orchestra

Samuel Zyman (b. Mexico City, Mexico, 1956)

Jonathan Borja and Aalia Anif, Flutes

The score is written for two solo flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, percussion (bass drum, suspended cymbal, large bongos, güiro, triangle, crash cymbals, claves), and strings. Performance time is 10 minutes.

The Flute New Music Consortium's website states that Samuel Zyman, a long-time New York-based Professor of Music Theory and Analysis at The Juilliard School, is acknowledged as "one of the leading Mexican composers on the international scene today." flutenewmusicconsortium.com/samuel-zyman-commission.html

Zyman's music is characterized by intense and vigorous rhythmic energy, expressive lyricism, and the frequent use of near-jazzy imitative counterpoint. His musical language often displays both his Mexican and his Jewish heritage.

Samuel Zyman was born in 1956 in Mexico City, where he studied piano and conducting at the National Conservatory of Music with María Teresa Castrillón and Francisco Savín, respectively. Privately, he studied counterpoint and analysis with Mexican composer Humberto Hernández Medrano. He also studied piano with the legendary Mexican jazz pianist Juan José Calatayud and with Héctor Jaramillo (principal flutist of the National Autonomous University Orchestra of Mexico, OFUNAM).

He received MM and DMA degrees in composition from The Juilliard School in New York City, studying with the American composers Stanley Wolfe, Roger Sessions, and David Diamond. He is the recipient of numerous commissions and awards, including Meet-the-Composer grants in the U.S, the Diploma from the Mexican Society of Theater and Music Critics of Mexico naming him Most Outstanding Composer of the Year (1992), the Mozart Medal (1998) for outstanding achievement in music, awarded by the Embassy of Austria in Mexico, and the Medal of Merit in the Arts (2014), awarded by the Commission on Culture of the Mexico City Legislature for his contributions to art and culture in Mexico City.

Besides, *Fantasia Mexicana for Two Flutes and Orchestra* which we will hear tonight, Zyman's best known composition is his *Sonata for Flute and Piano No. 1*, a work that has entered the standard solo flute repertoire. Zyman's sonata is frequently performed all over the world and has been commercially recorded and posted on *Youtube* numerous times. The sonata is often included in graduation recital programs and has been used as a recommended or required piece at national and international flute competitions and as a topic for doctoral dissertations.



Samuel Zyman

Concertino for Marimba

Paul Creston (b. New York City, New York, October 10, 1906; d. San Diego, California, August 24, 1985)

Matthew Coley, Marimba

Born in New York City to Sicilian immigrants, Creston was self-taught as a composer. Interestingly, *The Los Angeles Times*, in an article by Burt A. Folkart, notes that Paul Creston described himself as a “self-learned” – as opposed to a “self-taught” – composer. “His 100 symphonic compositions placed him at the front of the melodic, rhythmic school of musicians who dominated the American classical scene in the 1930s and 1940s.”

Creston's actual name was Giuseppe Guttovveglio. He later adopted the name “Paul Creston” from a character in a high school play. Creston credited some of his versatility to his spending several years as a theater organist for silent pictures. In 1934, he became organist at St. Malachy's Church, New York City.

He did take piano and organ lessons, but he never formally studied composition, saying his musical education came from “learning” the works of Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, and Stravinsky. While he had no conventional training in music theory, he taught himself composition by studying musical scores and by reading. “His work tends to be conservative in style, with a strong rhythmic element,” reads *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

Creston's pieces include six symphonies; a number of concertos, including two for violin, one for marimba and orchestra which we will hear tonight, one for one piano, one for two pianos, one for accordion and one for alto saxophone; and a fantasia for trombone and orchestra. He did explore the possibilities of many of the instruments of his day, but his traditional posture had placed him in disfavor by the 1960s.

His five major symphonies were recorded and performed by the world's leading orchestras. Arturo Toscanini conducted many of Creston's works and presented the premiere of his *2 Choric Dances* for woodwinds, piano, percussion, and strings in 1938, commenting, "I love them without reserve."

Creston began composing his strong melodic lines and fleshed-out harmonics in 1932 with *Five Dances for Piano*, but it was not until his much-heralded *Symphony No. 1* that he moved to the front ranks of American composers.

In 1943, his *Symphony No. 1* won the New York Music Critics Circle award, and in 1981, he composed a work he called *Sadhana*, under commission from the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, which performed it throughout Southern California. *Los Angeles Times* music critic Albert Goldberg found that work, based on the philosophy of the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, "conservative enough in manner to be readily accessible." Poet Tagore's philosophy is basically, "the highest religion of man is to try to enhance creativity."

In 1956, some of his works were chosen by the Boston Symphony to be performed in the Soviet Union, when the orchestra became the first American symphony to play there.

Interestingly, Creston also wrote music for *The Twentieth Century with Walter Cronkite*, the TV series (seven episodes, 1958–1964). Creston received a Christopher Award for one of the episodes.

At a time when music was turning atonal and rhythm was chancy, Creston clung to his commitment to melodic themes and regular meters. There was a brief resurgence in interest in his work in 1980, when an all-Creston program at Grinnell College in Iowa was taped for public television.

Creston was one of the most performed American composers of the 1940s and 1950s. Several of his works have become staples of the wind band repertoire. *Zanoni*, *Prelude and Dance* and the *Celebration Overture* have been and still are on several state lists for wind band contests across the USA.

Creston was also a notable teacher, whose students included the composers John Corigliano, Alvin Singleton, Elliott Schwartz, and Charles Roland Berry; accordionist/composer William Schimmel; and the jazz musicians Rusty Dedrick and Charlie Queener. He wrote the theoretical books *Principles of Rhythm* (1964) and *Rational Metric Notation* (1979). He taught at Central Washington State College from 1968 to 1975. Creston was also active as a conductor and lecturer.



Paul Creston

INTERMISSION

Scheherazade, Op. 35

Rimsky-Korsakov (b. Novgorod, Russia, March 18, 1844; d. St. Petersburg, Russia, June 21, 1908)

- I. **The Sea and Sinbad's Ship**
Largo e maestoso – Lento – Allegro non troppo – Tranquillo
- II. **The Kalandar Prince**
Lento – Andantino – Allegro molto – Vivace scherzando – Moderato assai – Allegro molto ed animato
- III. **The Young Prince and the Young Princess**
Andantino quasi allegretto – Pochissimo più mosso – Come prima – Pochissimo più animato
- IV. **Festival at Baghdad. The Sea. The Ship Breaks against a Cliff Surmounted by a Bronze Horseman**
Allegro molto – Lento – Vivo – Allegro non troppo e maestoso – Tempo come

Aaron Schwartz, violin

The score calls for three flutes (with second doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion instruments (bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, tam-tam), harp, and strings. The performance time is approximately 43 minutes.

Scheherazade is a symphonic suite composed in 1888 and based on “One Thousand and One Nights,” a collection of Middle Eastern folk tales compiled in Arabic during the Islamic Golden Age. It is often known as the *Arabian Nights*.

The main story concerns Shahryār, the king, who discovers his wife's infidelity and has her killed. In his bitterness and grief, he decides that all women are the same.

Shahryār begins to marry a succession of virgins only to execute each one the next morning, before she has a chance to dishonor him. Now, he has yet another new wife, but this one is clever; her name is Scheherazade. On the night of their marriage, Scheherazade begins to tell the king a tale, but does not end it. The king, curious about how the story ends, is thus forced to postpone her execution so that he may hear the conclusion. The next night, as soon as she finishes the tale, she begins another one, and the king, eager to learn the conclusion of that tale as well, postpones her execution once again. This

goes on for one thousand and one nights, hence the name. The tale ends with the king giving his wife a pardon and sparing her life.

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, a Russian composer and teacher – the Grand Old Man of Russian music – who not only taught composition in St. Petersburg, but mentored distinguished students including Ippolitov-Ivanov (whose work, *Procession of the Sardar*, patrons of the La Crosse Symphony heard in 2018), Prokofiev (whose *Piano Concerto No. 3, Allegro, ma non troppo* was performed by the LSO and a student competition finalist in 2019), and Stravinsky (his *Firebird Suite* was performed by the LSO in 2017).

“While Rimsky-Korsakov’s earlier compositions were influenced by Glinka, Liszt, Robert Schumann, and Berlioz, his harmony has freshness and individuality,” reads *Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Fifth Edition, edited by Eric Blom*.

Rimsky-Korsakov also wrote a famous book on orchestration, *Foundations of Orchestration*, while teaching at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. A great orchestrator, he orchestrated parts of Borodin’s *Prince Igor*, and Mussorgsky’s operas *Khovanshchina* and *Boris Godunov*.

Adam Carse in *The History of Orchestration* writes, “Rimsky-Korsakov’s orchestration provided super-brilliance, splendor of coloring, and sophistication. Exploring every corner of the orchestra for variety of color and novel treatment, he surpassed Tchaikovsky in sheer brilliance.”

Mr. Carse continues, “The learning of orchestration is really only acquired by the practical experience which neither textbook nor teacher can supply.”

Growing up in a Russian aristocratic household, Rimsky-Korsakov was expected to pursue a career as a naval officer. Yet, when possible, he purchased scores, along with a piano on which to play them, and filled his hours studying composer Berlioz’s *Treatise on Instrumentation*. “He started focusing on a serious music career relatively late in life; however, he was extremely talented and learned quickly studying with Balakirev,” states *Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

His wife, a gifted pianist, helped him musically; she and her sister played important parts in the history of the modern Russian school. They made pianoforte arrangements of many of the great orchestral works while also taking leading female parts in the new operatic works of Cui, Mussorgsky, and Borodin.

When Rimsky-Korsakov died, the great age of Russian music died with him – and a new one was to begin two years later, when Stravinsky’s *Firebird* received its first performance.

What to Listen For

“The violin solos in Scheherazade are some of the most beautiful violin solos ever written for the concertmaster– the melodies are simply gorgeous,” writes Glenn Dicterow, former concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic and teacher at The Juilliard School. “At least 80 per cent of the solos are meant to be played freely, which is a rare luxury in the orchestral repertoire.”

“As Sheherazade’s voice, the violin must beguile and enchant, and the power of this musical seduction depends on the quality of sound, color, and phrasing. Many of the passages are constructed around scales, so the challenge for the violinist is to reach beyond the notes and rhythms, and to touch

something altogether more ethereal,” he continues. “The more Scheherazade’s solos progress, the more she gains confidence. The violin section must breathe like a chamber ensemble, with an intuitive understanding of tempos and phrasing. The freedom and spontaneity are what is so wonderful about the piece.”

I. The Sea and Sinbad's Ship

Largo e maestoso – Lento – Allegro non troppo – Tranquillo

This movement is made up of various melodies. Although each section is highly distinctive, aspects of melodic figures carry through and unite them into a movement.

II. The Kalandar Prince

Lento – Andantino – Allegro molto – Vivace scherzando – Moderato assai – Allegro molto ed animato

The variations only change by virtue of the accompaniment, highlighting the sense of simple musical lines allowing for greater appreciation of the orchestral clarity and brightness. Inside the general melodic line, a fast section highlights changes of tonality and structure.

III. The Young Prince and The Young Princess

Andantino quasi allegretto – Pochissimo più mosso – Come prima – Pochissimo più animato

This movement is considered the simplest movement in form and melodic content with song-like melodic content. The outer themes are related to the inner by tempo and common motif, and the whole movement is finished by a quick return to the inner motif, balancing it out nicely.

IV. Festival at Baghdad. The Sea. The Ship Breaks against a Cliff Surmounted by a Bronze Horseman

Allegro molto – Lento – Vivo – Allegro non troppo e maestoso – Tempo come

This movement ties in aspects of all the preceding movements as well as adding some new ideas, including an introduction to both the beginning of the movement and a repeat of the main Scheherazade violin theme. A reiteration of the fanfare motif portrays the shipwreck. Coherence is maintained by the ordered repetition of melodies, and continues the impression of a symphonic suite, rather than separate movements. A final conflicting relationship resolves in a fantastic, lyrical, and finally peaceful conclusion.

“The violinist now takes his time on the final solo. It is the most confident of all of Scheherazade’s themes. She has won the challenge where dozens failed and is deservedly basking in her glory. The violinist will play this with the feeling that Scheherazade has won the battle. This is as sensuous and decadent as the theme gets,” concludes Dicterow, former concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic. Enjoy!

Recommended Reading

<http://www.violinexcerpts.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/DicterowMasterclass.pdf>



Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov