

Livermore-Amador Symphony

Lara Webber, Music Director & Conductor
Arthur P. Barnes, Music Director Emeritus
Saturday, May 21, 2016, 8:00 p.m.
Bankhead Theater, Livermore



A Tale of Two Cities

Prelude Talk at 7 p.m. by Lara Webber

Knoxville: Summer of 1915

Samuel Barber
(1910–1981)

Heidi Moss, soprano

*Heidi Moss would like to dedicate this performance to
her mother and father, who are so “good to me”*

On the Town: Three Dance Episodes

Leonard Bernstein
(1918–1990)

- I. Dance of the Great Lover
- II. Lonely Town: Pas de Deux
- III. Times Square: 1944

————— **INTERMISSION** —————

Presentation to Virginia McFann, LASA board member, Guild member, and founding orchestra member by Denise Leddon, LAS Association president

L’Arlésienne Suites No. 1 and No. 2

Georges Bizet
(1838–1875)

- Suite 1**
- I. Prélude
 - II. Minuetto
 - III. Adagietto
 - IV. Carillon
- Suite 2**
- I. Pastorale
 - II. Intermezzo
 - III. Menuet
 - IV. Farandole

*The audience and performers are invited
to enjoy a sparkling wine reception in the lobby after the concert,
hosted by the Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild.*

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Conductor

Lara Webber

First Violin

Kristina Anderson

Concertmaster

Juliana Zolynas

Assistant

Concertmaster

Norman Back

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JoAnn Cox

Judy Eckart

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Doug Morrison

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Second Violin

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Paul Pappas

String Bass

Nick James

Principal

Alan Frank

Elijah Kane*

Patricia Lay

Anya Massoud*

Flute

Marianne Beeler

Nan Davies

Piccolo

Marianne Beeler

Nan Davies

Oboe

Eva Langfeldt

Jeanne Brown

English Horn

Eva Langfeldt

E-flat Clarinet

Kathy Boster

Clarinet

Kathy Boster

Phil Pollard

Jack Stanley

Bass Clarinet

Phil Pollard

Bassoon

Douglas Stark

Lynn Stasko

Alto Saxophone

Jack Stanley

Horn

Christine-Ann

Immesoete

James Hartman

Bryan Waugh

Robert Williams

Trumpet

Michael Portnoff

Steve Anderson

Bob Bryant

Trombone

Diane Schildbach

Marcus Schildbach

Bass Trombone

Larry Dias

Timpani

April Nissen

Percussion

Todd Evans

Robert Hamaker

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Harp**

Constance Koo

Piano

Todd Evans

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The Horning Family,

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Monisa Wilcox

* *High school student*

** *The Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild is underwriting the cost of providing a harp player at every LAS concert during the 2015–2016 season.*

Program notes

Knoxville: Summer of 1915

Samuel Barber
(1910–1981)

When Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music opened its doors to receive its first students, on October 1, 1924, Samuel Barber was second in line. (It was a violinist who managed to pass through the portal before him: Max Aronoff, who would later become well known as a member of the Curtis String Quartet.) Thanks to his studies there with the baritone Emilio de Gogorza, a Metropolitan Opera colleague of Barber's aunt Louise Homer, Barber developed into a fine baritone himself, and his work under Rosario Scalero refined his technique as a composer. Writing for the voice represented the perfect confluence of his two musical vocations. Nonetheless, by the time Barber wrote "Knoxville: Summer of 1915," he had become one of the most famous of all American composers, thanks to such large-scale works as his two symphonies, his concertos for violin and for cello, and his B minor string quartet (with its slow movement taking on independent life as "Adagio for Strings").

"We are talking now of summer evenings in Knoxville, Tennessee, in the time that I lived there so successfully disguised to myself as a child." These words, which stand inscribed (but unsung) at the head of Barber's score, are drawn from a prose poem by the author James Agee (1909–1955) that the composer had found in an anthology of writings from *The Partisan Review*. The magazine had published it as an independent prose poem, and Agee later incorporated it as the prologue to his novel *A Death in the Family*. Barber identified with the text's images: "Agee's poem was vivid and moved me deeply," he later recalled, "and my musical response was immediate and intense.... The summer evening he describes...reminded me so much of similar evenings when I was a child at home." In fact, when he finally met Agee, after he had finished this "lyric rhapsody," he discovered that their childhood memories agreed in certain particulars: "We both had backyards where our families used to lie in the long summer evenings, we each had an aunt who was a musician. I remember well my parents sitting on the porch, talking quietly as they rocked. And there was a trolley car with straw seats and a clanging bell called The Dinky that traveled up and down the main street."

The soprano Eleanor Steber, who commissioned the work and was the soloist at its premiere, insisted, "That was *exactly* my childhood in Wheeling, West Virginia." Similarly, Leontyne Price, an indelible interpreter of the work: "As a Southerner, it expresses everything I know about my roots and about my mama and father...my home town.... You can *smell* the South in it." Knoxville, West Chester, Wheeling, the South—it could just as easily be anywhere in small-town America in the innocent years before World War I changed the nation and the world forever.

Barber created "Knoxville: Summer of 1915" in a flurry of inspiration. Rather than set Agee's text wholesale, he selected passages to craft into a libretto and then completed the musical composition in the space of only a few days, finishing it on April 4, 1947. (He revised the score in 1950.) Family was much on his mind at the time, as both his father and his aunt Louise were terminally ill. Louise Homer would die that May, and his father, to whose memory the work is dedicated, would follow three months later. "Knoxville: Summer of 1915" bears witness that Barber responded to these losses not with anger but, rather, with tender contemplation and sincere nostalgia. The piece unrolls in a leisurely way in a single

movement. The soprano's line captures the conversational flow of the text, while the chamber orchestra delicately evokes the charmed atmosphere—from the swaying of a porch rocker to the rattling of a streetcar—without ever resorting to cheap effects. Few pieces have ever sounded at once so simple and so unquestionably like a masterpiece.

Knoxville: Summer of 1915, by James Agee

We are talking now of summer evenings in Knoxville, Tennessee, in that time that I lived there so successfully disguised to myself as a child.

... It has become that time of evening when people sit on their porches, rocking gently and talking gently and watching the street and the standing up into their sphere of possession of the trees, of birds' hung havens, hangars. People go by; things go by. A horse, drawing a buggy, breaking his hollow iron music on the asphalt; a loud auto; a quiet auto; people in pairs, not in a hurry, scuffling, switching their weight of aestival body, talking casually, the taste hovering over them of vanilla, strawberry, pasteboard, and starched milk, the image upon them of lovers and horsemen, squared with clowns in hueless amber. A streetcar raising its iron moan; stopping, bell and starting; stertorous; rousing and raising again its iron increasing moan and swimming its gold windows and straw seats on past and past and past, the bleak spark crackling and cursing above it like a small malignant spirit set to dog its tracks; the iron whine rises on rising speed; still risen, faints; halts; the faint stinging bell; rises again, still fainter, fainting, lifting, lifts, faints foregone: forgotten. Now is the night one blue dew.

Now is the night one blue dew, my father has drained, he has coiled the hose.

Low on the length of lawns, a frailing of fire who breathes...

Parents on porches: rock and rock. From damp strings morning glories hang their ancient faces.

The dry and exalted noise of the locusts from all the air at once enchants my eardrums.

On the rough wet grass of the back yard my father and mother have spread quilts. We all lie there, my mother, my father, my uncle, my aunt, and I too am lying there.... They are not talking much, and the talk is quiet, of nothing in particular, of nothing at all. The stars are wide and alive, they seem each like a smile of great sweetness, and they seem very near. All my people are larger bodies than mine,...with voices gentle and meaningless like the voices of sleeping birds. One is an artist, he is living at home. One is a musician, she is living at home. One is my mother who is good to me. One is my father who is good to me. By some chance, here they are, all on this earth; and who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth, lying, on quilts, on the grass, in a summer evening, among the sounds of the night. May God bless my people, my uncle, my aunt, my mother, my good father, oh, remember them kindly in their time of trouble; and in the hour of their taking away.

After a little I am taken in and put to bed. Sleep, soft smiling, draws me unto her: and those receive me, who quietly treat me, as one familiar and well-beloved in that home: but will not, oh, will not, not now, not ever; but will not ever tell me who I am.

On the Town: Three Dance Episodes

Leonard Bernstein

(1918–1990)

In the words of the composer:

"It seems only natural that dance should play a leading role in the show *On the Town*, since the idea of writing it arose from the success of the ballet *Fancy Free*. I believe this is the first Broadway show ever to have as many as seven or eight dance episodes in the space of

two acts; and, as a result, the essence of the whole production is contained in these dances. I have selected three of them for use as a concert suite. ... That these are, in their way, symphonic pieces rarely occurs to the audience actually attending the show, so well integrated are all the elements, thanks to George Abbott's direction, the choreographic inventiveness of Jerome Robbins, and the adroitness of the book by Betty Comden and Adolph Green.

"The story is concerned with three sailors on 24-hour leave in New York, and their adventures with the monstrous city which its inhabitants take so much for granted.

"In the Dance of the Great Lover, Gaby, the romantic sailor in search of the glamorous Miss Turnstiles, falls asleep in the subway and dreams of his prowess in sweeping Miss Turnstiles off her feet.

"In the Pas de Deux, Gaby watches a scene, both tender and sinister, in which a sensitive high-school girl in Central Park is lured and then cast off by a worldly sailor.

"The Times Square ballet is a more panoramic sequence in which all the sailors in New York congregate in Times Square for their night of fun. There is communal dancing, a scene in a souvenir arcade, and a scene in the Roseland Dance Palace."

L'Arlésienne Suites No. 1 and No. 2

Georges Bizet

(1838–1875)

Best known as the composer of the opera *Carmen*, Georges Bizet was considered a child prodigy, entering the National Conservatory in Paris at age 9. An early death cut short his promising career, but the music he left is tuneful, approachable, and among the most frequently programmed classical music.

Bizet was born in Paris, the son of amateur musicians. He was able to read and write music at age 4, and after his enrollment at the National Conservatory, he earned a series of prizes for music theory, organ, piano, and composition. His Symphony in C, written at age 17 while he was still a student at the conservatory, is considered a masterwork.

The incidental music to Alphonse Daudet's play *L'Arlésienne* (*The Girl from Arles*) was composed in 1872. The play was a failure, with critics complaining that there were "too many overtures." In other words, Bizet's music overpowered the drama. Fortunately, Bizet rescued some of the best music and assembled two suites, performed tonight.

First Suite:

For the "Prélude," Bizet borrows the French Christmas carol "The March of the Kings" and offers it in several ways: the strings, woodwinds, and horns open with a vigorous rendition; then the woodwinds alone play it as a quiet chorale. The full orchestra with percussion and brass follows, presenting the melody as a storm at sea, with rising and falling dynamics and a rolling chromatic underpinning. Cello, horn, and bassoon then offer the theme with gently loping rhythms, and the final variant is a return to full orchestra with a military flourish. Bizet ends the movement with a second melody featuring the saxophone, its first appearance in the standard orchestral repertoire following its invention, in 1844, by the fiery Belgian instrument maker Adolphe Sax.

The "Minuetto" begins with a sharp, rhythmic melody passed from section to section within the orchestra before yielding to the soaring second subject. The piece ends as any proper classical minuet should, by returning to the first theme.

The “Adagietto” is scored for strings alone. The instruments are muted to dampen their sound, giving a hushed, veiled quality to the heartfelt music.

As the name implies, the “Carillon” movement has the orchestra imitating the ringing of church bells in the opening, quieting as the first theme is introduced by the violins. A second theme is a gentle Sicilienne—a style that is slow but lilting and pastoral—and the piece closes with the return of the carillon.

Second Suite:

The first movement of the second suite, “Pastorale,” is slow and rhythmic in the manner of a barcarolle, which is music in the style of folk songs sung by gondoliers in Venice. This “rowing” pace is broken by a faster section, decidedly Spanish in flavor, after which the music returns to its previous mood.

The second movement, “Intermezzo,” is the only number of the second suite that appears intact from the original score. Based on a Provençal folk song, it occurs as an orchestral interlude during the second act of the play.

The third movement, a stately and dignified minuet, sees the first and last sections of the movement given to harp and solo flute, with a saxophone counterpoint near the end. The middle section consists of short, punctuated chords for full orchestra.

The last movement, “Farandole,” returns to the opening theme of the first suite’s “Prélude,” a stately theme, now treated in canonic fashion. Then the flute leads us into a lively dance, after which the two themes are played simultaneously to the end.

*program notes compiled by Kathy Boster from Internet sources
edited by Eva Langfeldt*

Soloist—Heidi Moss, soprano

Heidi Moss has performed with Opera Parallèle, Pocket Opera, Oakland Symphony, Livermore Valley Opera, Opera San Jose, and more. She holds bachelor’s degrees from Oberlin College in voice and biology and a master’s degree in biochemistry from the University of Pennsylvania. Moss was a research scientist before relocating to the Bay Area in 2003 and pursuing a music career. She is a champion of new music and has collaborated with Jake Heggie, Daron Hagen, Gilda Lyons, Luciano Chessa, Gordon Getty, and other composers. Moss teaches voice at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, LIEDER ALIVE!, and her private studio.



In 2007, Moss was stricken with a severe version of Bell’s palsy that left the right side of her face partially paralyzed. This disability has inspired her to learn more about the ways in which vocal physiology and pedagogy are related to facial musculature. In addition to her intensive study of vocal pedagogy, her musical ventures involve a passion for opera, lieder, and art song.

Insider News: At Oberlin College, Heidi Moss met a fellow voice student whom she describes as “the incredible Lara Webber” and a “rock star conductor.”

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The Livermore-Amador Symphony Association gratefully acknowledges funding support from:

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Summer youth orchestra

Auditions for the eighth season of LASYO, the Livermore-Amador Symphony Youth Orchestra, will be held on May 23 and 24. After rehearsals this summer, a free concert will be presented on August 6 at 8 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church in Livermore.

Competition for young musicians

Recordings are due by September 18 for the competition on October 9, 2016.

Pops concert

Call 925.447.6454 starting on September 15 to reserve tickets for “POPS Groovin’ in the ’60s,” presented by the Symphony Guild on October 21 at the Livermore Community Center.

Next season—and the rose tradition

In keeping with a Symphony Guild tradition, season ticket subscribers for 2016–2017 (concerts on December 3, 2016, and February 18, April 8, and May 20, 2017) are entitled to pick up a rose in the lobby tonight.



Estate sales that benefit the symphony

The Symphony Guild volunteers are experts at running professional estates sales. If it’s time for an estate sale, contact the LAS Guild. Call Nancy McKenzie, 925.294.8657; Marie Ruzicka, 925.447.5521; or Adela Cook, 925.216.7280.

We invite you to join the A.P. Barnes Society

Members of the A.P. Barnes Society are dedicated supporters of the Livermore-Amador Symphony who have included the symphony in their estate plans. Questions? Write to APBarnesSociety@livermoreamadorsymphony.org.

Livermore-Amador Symphony is a member of the Livermore Cultural Arts Council and a resident company of the Bankhead Theater.



See the Cultural Arts Calendar at www.independentnews.com.



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