# ORCHESTRA SEATTLE SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS GEORGE SHANGROW, MUSIC DIRECTOR 2001-2002 SEASON

## Love & Romance

Friday, February 15, 2002 = 8:00 PM

Meany Hall
University of Washington

Jeffrey Cohan, *flute*Orchestra Seattle
Seattle Chamber Singers
George Shangrow, *conductor* 

SAMUEL BARBER 1910-1981 Adagio for Strings, Op. 11

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

1732-1809

Symphony No. 73 in D major

Grave – Presto Poco adagio

Menuetto - Trio (Allegretto)

La chasse: Vivace

ROBERT KECHLEY

\*1952

Flute Concerto

WORLD PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

Allegro Largo Presto

Jeffrey Cohan, flute

INTERMISSION

ROBERT KECHLEY Frail Deeds

A Noiseless, Patient Spider
There Was a Child Went Forth
I Cannot Dance Upon My Toes
Down by the Salley Gardens
Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

He Fumbles at Your Soul

Please disconnect signal watches, pagers and cellular telephones. Thank you. Use of cameras and recording equipment is not permitted in the concert hall.

This concert is being broadcast live on the Classical Station, KING-FM 98.1.

#### **PROGRAM NOTES**

## SAMUEL BARBER Adagio for Strings, Op. 11

Samuel Barber was born March 9, 1910 in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and died January 23, 1981 in New York. The Adagio for Strings was originally the slow movement of his string quartet, composed during 1936 in an around Salzburg, Austria. He transcribed it for string orchestra two years later; this version received its first performance by the NBC Symphony under the direction of Arturo Toscanini on November 5, 1938.

Born into an upper-middle-class Pennsylvania family, Samuel Barber was one of the few important composers of his generation schooled entirely in the United States. At the age of 14 he entered the newly founded Curtis School of Music in Philadelphia, where he wrote a number of works that quickly entered the repertoire, including *Dover Beach* for baritone and string quartet and the witty Overture to *A School for Scandal*.

During the 1930s he traveled Europe with Gian-Carlo Menotti, who Barber had met while the two were students at Curtis, spending many summers there. It was on one of these trips, in 1936, that Barber composed his string quartet, the central movement of which (with little modification) would become his Adagio for Strings. The previous summer Barber and Menotti had dropped in (unannounced) on Arturo Toscanini at his Italian villa. The famous conductor took an instant liking to Barber and his music, and soon became an important champion.

In November of 1936, Toscanini led the first performances of Barber's First Essay for Orchestra and the *Adagio for Strings* in a concert with the NBC Symphony that was broadcast across the United States, achieving instant fame for the composer. By the time Barber's violin concerto, now a standard of the repertoire, premiered in 1941 he was firmly established as one of the most important composer's of his generation.

The Adagio for Strings is spun from the simplest of musical materials – slowly changing harmonies over a simple quarter-note melody developed from a rising sequence of notes – yet it is not simplistic. The architecture of the pieces is likewise straightforward – a simple arch form that moves from a hushed opening to an overwhelming climax, then dies away to a whispered coda.

Barber's Adagio is one of those rare pieces of music that has moved beyond the confines of the concert hall to invade the public subconscious. This began with its performance at Franklin Delano Roosevelt's funeral, and at similar occasions of public mourning, and has been furthered by its use in films such as The Elephant Man and Platoon.

- Jeff Eldridge

#### FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN Symphony No. 73 in D Major ("La chasse")

Haydn was born in Rohrau, Lower Austria on March 31, 1732, and died in Vienna on May 31, 1809. His Symphony No. 73 was composed and first performed in 1781 or 1782. The work is scored for one flute, pairs of oboes, bassoons, horns and trumpets, timpani and strings.

In Haydn's opera *La fedeltà premiata*, the goddess Diana is an important part of the very complicated plot, even though she makes only a brief appearance at the end. Diana, of course, was the

huntress in Roman mythology, so Haydn makes use of traditional hunting horn calls in the overture to the opera. (He would later use the same idea in his great oratorio *The Seasons*.) Shortly after the opera was written, Haydn recycled this overture for the finale of a new symphony, No. 73. The second movement of this symphony was also adapted from an earlier work, the song "Gegenleibe."

The first movement is a wonderful example of what Haydn could create from very limited material. The basic idea is four or more eighth notes, all on the same pitch with no variation in rhythm. That's how the *Adagio* introduction begins; in the *Allegro*, not only does almost every short phrase begin this way, but so do the accompanying parts. As I've just described it, it sounds boring, doesn't it? But within the restrictions Haydn imposed on himself, he produced a movement that is full of energy, surprise, and high spirits.

The form of the *Andante* is roughly ABACA, with the first A section repeated. The B and C sections develop the theme of the A section; they both begin in G minor but follow very different modulatory paths back to G major. There is almost no motivic variety in the *Menuetto* before the Trio section; most measures consist of three quarter notes, with either the first two or the last two slurred together. Yet once again, Haydn conjures up a delightful piece out of what seems to be thin air.

The last movement is the only one that uses trumpets and timpani. This energetic piece comes to a sudden stop on four occasions; one of these comes at the end of a long and varied development section. The other three each precede a fanfare for the horns, doubled by oboes. The fanfare is always exactly the same, but the harmonic context is different the last time. Indeed, Haydn shuffles the music around extensively in this recapitulation. It is worth remembering that what we have come to think of as "standard" sonata form was usually followed more closely by Mozart and Beethoven than by the father of sonata form himself.

- Fritz Klein

## ROBERT KECHLEY Flute Concerto

Robert Kechley was born in Seattle in 1952. He composed this concerto, the result of a commission from Orchestra Seattle and flutist Jeffrey Cohan, in January of 2001. The concerto, which receives its first performance this evening, is scored for solo flute, pairs of oboes, clarinets and bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, percussion (snare drum, bass drum, temple blocks, conga drum, bongo drums, triangle and suspended cymbal) and strings.

The music of Robert Kechley is familiar to audiences of Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers through the numerous works of this composer that have been premiered by both ensembles. These range from arrangements of brief folk songs and hymns to major symphonic and choral works, including the delightful Symphony No. 2 ("Ferdinand the Bull") and a setting of *Psalm 100* for organ, chorus and orchestra, performed in September of 2000 by OSSCS at Benaroya Hall.

Mr. Kechley grew up in Seattle and attended the University of Washington, where he studied harpsichord performance with Sylvia Kind and composition with Kenneth Benshoof, Robert Suderberg, William O. Smith, and others. A member of the Seattle Chamber Singers from the early days of the ensemble, he not only sang in the

chorus but played oboe and keyboard. Mr. Kechley currently serves as principal harpsichordist for Orchestra Seattle.

The composer has provided the following note about the genesis of this work:

Jeff Cohan asked me to think about writing a concerto last year and I agreed immediately. I had written three multimovement sonatas for Jeff and George Shangrow some years ago and these have been performed frequently. I was obviously familiar with Jeff's playing and wrote the piece with that in mind. However, because of other commitments, I was unable to really launch in to the project until this January. It is one of the most quickly written pieces of this size that I have ever done.

The first movement is a standard sonata-allegro form in which the two contrasting themes (one fast and snappy, the other lyrical) are introduced in the exposition, first in the orchestra and then in the flute. The development section takes these themes and mixes them up and combines them in various ways. This playful game leads to the satisfying homecoming at the recapitulation of the exposition. I insert a cadenza between the two themes and wind up with a rousing coda. When I was playing harpsichord for Orchestra Seattle's performance of Handel's *Messiah* this past Christmas, I had a backstage discussion with Dan Oie, the orchestra's principal percussionist; he suggested featuring bongo drums, so I have included a fun drum and flute duet in this movement.

The second movement plays with the idea of changing the underlying rhythmic pulse while creating a melody that feels stretched by that pulse. The result is a feeling of always waiting for a little longer than you expect for that next chord change. The central section uses a lilting dance rhythm in the strings while the flute provides a florid countermelody.

The third movement, in the context of a lively rondo, journeys from an opening hoedown through various playful games of dialogue between the flute and the orchestra. Notable in the middle section is the use of an extended flute technique in which the flutist buzzes his lips into the mouthpiece (as if it were a brass instrument), thus producing a humorous low-pitched tone. I first heard flutist Felix Skowronek, Professor of Flute at the University of Washington and one of Jeff's teachers, perform this technique when I was in college.

The premiere of a new work for flute and orchestra is always an exciting event for flutists. Robert Kechley's concerto gives a flutist everything one could ask for: rapid-fire scales and arpeggios running over the entire range of the instrument, ultra-fast tonguing, use of the very lowest and highest notes in the flute's range (note the high, high F at the beginning of the cadenza in the first movement) as well as beautiful passages that showcase the instrument's lyricism and tone color. While these features may appeal especially to the flute players in the audience, others will surely enjoy the work's rhythmic vitality, humor, and catchy themes (such as the "circus" music in the third movement), as well as its virtuosity.

## ROBERT KECHLEY Frail Deeds

Robert Kechley's Frail Deeds, a setting of poems by Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, William Butler Yeats and Dylan Thomas for a capella double chorus, was composed in 1975 and premiered shortly thereafter by the Seattle Chamber Singers under the direction of George Shangrow.

For a 1982 performance of *Frail Deeds* by the Seattle Chamber Singers the composer's brother, Peter Kechley, provided the following program note:

The six movements of Robert Kechley's work for a capella double chorus and soloists represent the various stages of growth in a person's life: a progression from birth through death. The first movement describes the first tentative reaching out to the world. While one chorus repeats an ostinato figure, the other chorus comments over this "weblike" background. The movement makes use of elaborate word painting, while antiphonal effects musically represent the void and tireless efforts to form a bridge over it.

The second movement assumes that the bridge has been formed. The poem used here was taken from an early edition of Leaves of Grass by Walt Whitman, and the freshness and optimism found here are contrasted with the uncertainty of the later poem used in the first movement. The child and the experiences he encounters are all introduced by motives. The elements of his world are often contrasted humorously through antiphonal effects, as in the transition from the old drunkard section into that of the schoolmistress. All of the child's impressions are finally brought together, interrupted suddenly by a soprano soloist, who opens the third movement.

Naïve childish wonder is replaced by the pride and coy selfconsciousness of adolescence. The prima ballerina of the poem has inspired a musical competition between two operatic coloraturas. The tongue-in-cheek theatricality is enhanced by the underlying barbershop harmony.

A folk song style is used in the fourth movement to communicate the expression of love, with its accompanying sense of loss and nostalgia. The repeat of the second verse features a tenor descant, which imitates the melody canonically.

In the fifth movement, death's inevitability and the struggle against it are represented by the juxtaposition of a dirge-like refrain and brief dramatic sections. In these sections, the somber religious flavor of the movement is emphasized by the use of *cantus firmus* style, with its underlying chromatic counterpoint. The verses increase in intensity, while canonic imitation adds to the complexity of the refrain.

The last movement pictures an enlightenment that transcends the concerns of the previous movement. A predominance of major sevenths in the harmony creates a sense of not quite grasping the approach of inspiration. Antiphonal effects, including a reference to the first movement, measure the gradual approach to the biggest climax of the work. Following a silence, the stark harmonies of the opening return, as the natural cycle from birth to death is ready to begin again.

#### A Noiseless, Patient Spider

A noiseless patient spider,
I marked where on a little promontory it stood isolated,
Marked how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,
It launched forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing,
seeking the spheres to connect them,

Till the bridge you will need be formed, till the ductile anchor hold, Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

- from Leaves of Grass by Walt Whitman

#### There Was a Child Went Forth

There was a child went forth every day, And the first object he look'd upon, and received with wonder, or pity or love or dread,

That object became part of him...

And the early lilacs became part of this child...

And the March-born lambs and the sow's pink-faint litter,
And the mare's foal and the cow's calf,

And the noisy brood of the barn yard or by the mire of the pondside,
And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below there,
and the beautiful curious liquid,

And the waterplants with their graceful flat heads, all became part of him.

And the old drunkard staggering home from the outhouse of the tavern from whence he had lately risen,
And the schoolmistress that pass'd on her way to the school,
And the friendly boys that pass'd...
And the tidy and fresh cheek'd girls...
...All became part of him.

- from Leaves of Grass by Walt Whitman

#### I Cannot Dance Upon My Toes

I cannot dance upon my Toes – No Man instructed me – But oftentimes, among my mind, A Glee possesseth me,

That had I Ballet knowledge – Would put itself abroad In Pirouette to blanch a Troupe – Or lay a Prima, mad,

And though I had no Gown of Gauze – No Ringlet, to my Hair, Nor hopped to Audiences – like Birds, One Claw upon the Air,

Nor tossed my shape in Eider Balls, Nor rolled on wheels of snow Till I was out of sight, in sound, The House encore me so –

Nor any know I know the Art I mention -- easy -- Here --Nor any Placard boast me -It's full as Opera -

- #326 in Complete Poems by Emily Dickinson

#### Down by the Salley Gardens

Down by the Salley gardens my love and I did meet; She passed the Salley gardens with little snow-white feet. She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree; But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand, And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand. She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs; But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

- from Crossways by William Butler Yeats

#### Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

Do not go gentle into that good night, Old age should burn and rage at close of day; Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right, Because their words had forked no lightning they Do not go gentle into that good night,

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay, Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight, And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way, Do not go gentle into that good night,

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay, Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height, Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray. Do not go gentle into that good night, Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

- Dylan Thomas

#### He Fumbles at Your Soul

He fumbles at your soul
As Players at the Keys
Before they drop full Music on;
He stuns you by degrees,

Prepares your brittle Nature For the Ethereal Blow, By fainter hammers, further heard, Then nearer, then so slow

Your Breath has time to straighten, Your Brain to bubble Cool,— Deals One imperial Thunderbolt That scalps your naked Soul.

When Winds take Forests in their Paws— The Universe is still—

- #46 in Complete Poems by Emily Dickinson

#### **ORCHESTRA SEATTLE**

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Rachel Fisher	Dawn Juliano	Chris Simison		David Holmes
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Sue Herring	Håkan Olsson	Flute	Barney Blough	Tuba
Fritz Klein**	Timothy Prior	Megan Lyden	Don Crevie	David Brewer
Pam Kummert	•	•	Jennifer Crowder	
Natasha Lewis	Cello	Oboe	Laurie Heidt	Percussion
Eileen Lusk	Julie Reed*	Shannon Hill*		Daniel Oie
Mark Lutz	Valerie Ross	Kate Loughlin	Trumpet	<u> </u>
Avron Maletzky	Katie Sauter	J	Chuck Colburn	Keyboard
Gregor Nitsche	Joan Selvig	Clarinet	David Cole*	Robert Kechley
Susan Ovens	Matthew Wyant	Alan Lawrence	Gordon Ullmann	1100011 11001110,
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	Hope Wechkin*		* denotes soloist	Thomas Nesbitt	Jeff Thirloway

#### **SOLO ARTIST**

Flutist Jeffrey Cohan, who according to the New York Times can "play many superstar flutists one might name under the table," has performed as soloist in 23 countries, having received international acclaim both as a modern flutist and as one of the foremost specialists on transverse flutes from the Renaissance through the mid-19th century. He won the Erwin Bodky Award in Boston, and the highest prize awarded in the Flanders Festival International Concours Musica Antiqua in Brugge, Belgium with lutenist Stephen Stubbs. First Prize winner of the Olga Koussevitzky Young Artist Awards Competition, he has performed throughout Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the United States, and worldwide for the USIA Arts America Program. Mr. Cohan received the highest rating from the Music Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts, and has recorded for NPR in the United States, and for national radio and television in Germany,

Switzerland, France, Belgium, Holland, Fiji and the Solomon Islands. Many works have been written for and premiered by him, including recent flute concertos by Roupen Shakarian and William O. Smith. Jeffrey Cohan resides in Seattle, where he directs the period instrument concert series Concert Spirituel, and concertizes frequently with OSSCS music director George Shangrow as the Cohan-Shangrow Duo.

On Sunday, April 14, Jeffrey Cohan and George Shangrow will present a recital at the Frye Art Museum entitled "Seattle Fireworks." Part of the Frye's 50th anniversary celebration, the program will feature virtuoso music for flute and piano written for the Cohan-Shangrow Duo by Seattle composers Robert Kechley and Huntley Beyer.

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