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The NIH Community Orchestra and Chorus present

Simple Gifts

The Music of Aaron Copland



June 7, 2015

Figge Theater

Georgetown Preparatory School

North Bethesda, MD

About the NIH Musical Organizations

The NIH Community Orchestra is an all-volunteer organization founded in the fall of 1996 for the purpose of bringing together the musical talent of NIH and the surrounding community. Since then, the orchestra has played music spanning six centuries, and it is becoming known in the arts community of Montgomery County.

The group presents two concerts a year, as well as a number of outreach performances. Many of the donations for our concert today benefit NIH charities, including the Children's Inn at NIH, Friends of the Clinical Center, the Patient Emergency Fund, and Special Love, Inc./Camp Fantastic (which provides a week-long summer camp and many other programs for children and young adults with cancer and their families). For its outreach activities, the orchestra has been nominated twice (in 2007 and 2008) for the Acacia Federal "Nice Guys" Award.

For more information, please visit our website at www.nihco.org.

The NIH Community Chorus originally began in 1996 when Bethesda Little Theatre began its collaboration with the NIH Community Orchestra to perform a sing-along of Handel's *Messiah*. Since then, the all-volunteer chorus has participated in seventeen sing-along *Messiahs*, as well as other concerts with the NIHCO, including a performance of Schubert's Mass in G last spring.

The NIH Community Chorus welcomes singers in all voice parts. For more information, please visit our website at www.nihco.org.

The East Avenue Ensemble came into being upon the demise of The New Century Singers, a community choir that operated in the greater Washington area for some 31 years.

From 2009, the Ensemble has joined with the NIH Community Chorus and the NIHCO to perform in the annual *Messiah* sing-alongs. Other performances with the Chorus include Brahms's *Naenie* and Lauridsen's *Le Chansons des Roses*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and *Prayers* by Gary Daum.

The NIH Community Orchestra

Music Director and Conductor, Richard Scerbo

Violin I

Sarah Romano,
Concertmistress
Koya Allen
Charles Flesch
Danielle Hegseth
Jakub Kostal
Sacha de Lang
Karin Peeters
Ellen Snyder
Kimberly Stradal
Liane Toohey

Violin II

Freda Balkan
Maria Barragan-Santana
David Benor
Candy Cheung
Stephanie Dailey
Moyna Daley
Kristi Johnson
Jane Koda
Basil Manns
Joy Nugent
Hyuna Sung
Karen Weinstein
Barbara Zain

Viola

Timothy Doerr
Lee Rucker Kaiser
Robert J. Palian
Stephanie Pappas
Ivars Peterson
Donald Patti
Elena Thompson

Cello

David Berley
Cheryl Fisher
Nancy Jakubowski
Cindi Lostritto
Thomas C. Zebovitz

Bass

John Abrahams

Flute

Catie Chang
Nancy Henderson
Sara Kane

Piccolo

Catie Chang

Oboe

Katie Kane
Daryl Kaufman
Robin Petrusak

Clarinet

Karin Caifa
Michelle Escumbise
Ed Kaita
Carole Read

Bass Clarinet

Ed Kaita

Bassoon

Asako Kobayshi
Steve Wechsler

French Horn

Carrie Hyde-Michaels
Julia Malafarina
Alyson Williams

Trumpet

Jonathan Gang
Ken Nolan
Rebecca Richardson
Cliff Schweinfest
Amanda Smith

Trombone

Allan Bowling
Steve Ferguson
Marc Williams

Tuba

Dale Kiesewetter

Percussion

Steve Soroka

Piano

Judith Bourzutschky

The NIH Community Chorus

Music Director, W. Robert Johnson

Soprano I

Lisa Duncan
Ivana Jochmanova
Dana Lemaster
Marian Kisch
Tina Neilson
Jennie Shamey
Terri Sorota
Kathleen Van Aalten

Soprano II

Lynn Balabanis
Blanca Barrera
Alison Bennett
Rose Berstein
Diana Hurley
Mitzi Likar
Hayley McCausland
Ana Astrid Molina
Toni Robison

Alto I

Laura Ariovich
Linda Edwards
Miriam Goldberg
Carol Meyers
Domenie Nash
Terri Reiskin
Helena Vogel

Alto II

Miriam Bunow
Angeline Butler
Lucy Hand
Helen Ingalls
Barbara Moschella
Eileen Pensinger

Tenor I

K. David Hulteng
Tom Robbins
Joyce Rosenthal
Kenneth Weeman

Tenor II

Weilin Moy
Kathie Rogers
Lee Weber

Bass I

Robert Berendt
Tom Dine
Paul Zoccola

Bass II

Igor Baumann
Richard Ellestad
Thomas Kirby
Bruce Weber

Program

Simple Gifts
The Music of Aaron Copland

Old American Songs

The Boatman's Dance
W. Robert Johnson, Baritone
The Dodger
W. Robert Johnson, Baritone
Long Time Ago
Simple Gifts
I Bought Me a Cat
Zion's Walls
At the River
Ching-a-Ring Chaw

Intermission

Variations on a Shaker Melody

Three Dances from Rodeo

Corral Nocturne
Saturday Night Waltz
Hoe-Down

Program Notes

Aaron Copland (1900 – 1999)

Aaron Copland is considered by many to be the dean of American orchestral composers. A son of immigrant parents, he studied piano while attending Boys' High in Brooklyn. He later studied under Rubin Goldmark in Manhattan and continued his studies in France, under the tutelage of the famed Nadia Boulanger.

One of Copland's early musical goals was to create an American musical idiom to rival European serious orchestral music. He wanted to be known as being as "American" as Mussorgsky was "Russian."

Beginning with "El Salón México" in 1935, Copland began his most productive and popular years. In his search for the widest audience, he began composing for the movies and ballet. His film score for *The Heiress* (1949) won him an Academy Award for best score. He also composed scores for a number of ballets, including Agnes DeMille's *Rodeo* (1942) and Martha Graham's *Appalachian Spring* (1944), for which he won the Pulitzer Prize. Both ballets presented views of American country life that corresponded to the folk traditions Copland was interested in.

In addition to his composing and conducting activities, Copland wrote more than sixty articles and essays on music, as well as five books. He died on December 2, 1990, in North Tarrytown, New York.

Old American Songs

The subject matter for Copland's two sets of *Old American Songs* was drawn from several places, not all uniquely American—politics, religion, children, love and loss, death, and the minstrel stage. Many of them are based on popular and minstrel songs and hymns from the early 19th century. The two sets were published in 1950 and 1952, respectively. Eight of the ten songs are on today's program.

The first set was composed at the behest of the British composer Benjamin Britten for his Music and Art Festival in Aldeburgh, England, and premiered in June 1950. In 1951, the work premiered in America with Copland himself playing the piano and baritone William Warfield singing. The second set, composed in 1952, was premiered in 1953, again with Warfield and Copland performing. Copland transcribed both sets for vocal soloist and orchestra in 1957, and the songs have also been arranged for chorus and piano or orchestra.

From the First Set: "The Boatmen's Dance," published in 1843 as an "original banjo melody," was written by Dan Emmett, composer of *Dixie* and *Polly Wolly Doodle*. "The Dodger" appeared during the 1884 presidential campaign of Grover Cleveland, and satirizes a number of

Mr. Scerbo is the Associate Artistic Director and General Manager of the National Orchestral Institute, a training program for orchestra musicians on the threshold of their professional careers. He serves concurrently as Assistant Director for Artistic Planning and Operations at the University of Maryland School of Music.

W. Robert Johnson W. Robert (Bob) Johnson (Music Director, NIHCC and East Avenue Ensemble) has had a long and varied association with choral music. Beginning in Kansas, he sang in choirs and choruses for more than 50 years. Although he chose a career in the military and government service, he conducted choirs and choruses wherever his assignments took him. In 1971, while employed by the National Security Agency, he organized the Parkway Chorale and served as its Music Director until he retired from federal service in 1998.

He founded The New Century Singers in 1975 and sang in the Washington Cathedral Choral Society for 28 years, serving on the Society's Board of Trustees for 16+ years. As a member of the American Choral Directors Association, he served as the President of the District of Columbia Chapter. In 2003, he was appointed the ACDA National Chair for Community Choirs, retiring in June 2009.

In September 2009, he was appointed Chorus Master of the NIHCO Community Chorus, a position he currently fills, in addition to serving as the Music Director of The East Avenue Ensemble.

In September 2012, he was appointed director of the Asbury Village Encore Chorale.

Meet the Music Directors

Richard Scerbo (Music Director and Conductor) maintains an active schedule as a conductor, performer, teacher, and arts administrator.

In 2004, he founded the Inscape Chamber Orchestra with the intent of introducing audiences to diverse chamber and ensemble repertoire. This unique brand of programming has made Inscape one of the most exciting ensembles in the Washington metropolitan area. Under Mr. Scerbo's leadership, Inscape has commissioned and premiered over twenty-five new works. In 2012, Mr. Scerbo conducted members of Inscape in a performance of Dominick Argento's opera *A Water Bird Talk* for the composer as part of a month-long festival celebrating his music at the University of Maryland. In the spring of 2013, he led Inscape in multiple performances at the National Gallery of Art, including a program highlighting the music of the *Ballets Russes* featuring Igor Stravinsky's *Renard* and Manuel de Falla's *El corregidor y la molinera*.

Mr. Scerbo co-founded his first orchestra, The Philharmonia Ensemble, in 2000 while studying at the University of Maryland. As Music Director, he led the orchestra in a series of diverse programs that included collaborations with artists such as pianist Rita Sloan, soprano Carmen Balthrop, and the Prism Brass Quintet. In 2003, he made his operatic debut conducting Argento's *A Water Bird Talk* with The Philharmonia Ensemble and G.F. Handel's *Xerxes* with the Maryland Opera Studio. That same year he conducted Igor Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du soldat* at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center.

Mr. Scerbo is a graduate of the University of Maryland where he studied conducting with James Ross and bassoon with Daniel Matsukawa, Sue Heineman, and Linda Harwell. He has attended conducting programs in Austria and the Czech Republic, working both with the International Festival Orchestra, Kromeriz, and the Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic.

professions, three of which remain in Copland's version: the political candidate, the preacher, and the lover. "Long Time Ago" is an arrangement of an 1837 minstrel tune. "Simple Gifts," a Shaker hymn from 1848, written by Elder Joseph Brackett, is the cornerstone melody from Copland's 1944 ballet, *Appalachian Spring*. "I Bought Me A Cat," a child's nonsense song, was sung to Copland by playwright Lynn Riggs, author of *Green Grow the Lilacs*, on which the musical *Oklahoma!* would be based.

From the Second Set: "Zion's Walls," a revivalist hymn, uses words and a melody attributed to John G. McCurry, a farmer from mid-19th century Georgia who published a song collection called *The Social Harp*. "At the River" is a hymn dating from 1865 by the Reverend Robert Lowry. The song was used on memorial concerts for both Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein. "Ching-a-Ring Chaw" is an early minstrel song.

Variations on a Shaker Melody (from *Appalachian Spring*)

In 1942, choreographer Martha Graham commissioned Copland to write a ballet score with an American theme. The script centered on figures emblematic of the American tradition: Puritans, preachers, pioneers; and rural activities like homesteading, revival meetings, courtship, celebrations, and war. Copland presents a series of variations on the Shaker tune "Simple Gifts" at the climax of the ballet. Copland later arranged this section for orchestra in 1967.

Three Dances from *Rodeo*

Premiered at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1945, ballet *Rodeo*, was commissioned, surprisingly enough, by the classically oriented *Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo*, with the music by Copland and the choreography and scenario by Agnes de Mille. The ballet was precedent setting, and its success insured that dance would thrive as an integral part of American musical theater. *Rodeo* is one of the best examples of Copland's "popular" style. Its fanciful story line has little substance, but provides a perfect vehicle for the Old West impressions Copland hoped to create. In 1945, Copland made a symphonic arrangement of the dance episodes from the ballet, three of which we will hear today.

"Corral Nocturne" is moody, yearning, and melancholy. The moodiness continues in the "Saturday Night Waltz," in which Copland quotes the song "Old Paint." For the "Hoe-Down," Copland borrows two square dance tunes—"Bonyparte" and "McLeod's Reel"—to aid in this romp, a fanciful and uplifting take on the American square dance.

Texts

The Boatmen's Dance

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.

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

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 calaboose.
O dance the boatmen dance. . .

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.
O dance the boatmen dance. . .

The Dodger

Yes the candidate's a dodger,
Yes a well-known dodger.
Yes the candidate's a dodger,
Yes and I'm a dodger too.

He'll meet you and treat you,
And ask you for your vote.
But look out boys,
He's a-dodgin' for your note.

Yes we're all dodgin'
A-dodgin', dodgin', dodgin'.
Yes we're all dodgin'
Out away through the world.

Yes the preacher he's a dodger,
Yes a well-known dodger.
Yes the preacher he's a dodger,
Yes and I'm a dodger too.

He'll preach you a gospel,
And tell you of your crimes.
But look out boys,
He's a-dodgin' for your dimes.
Yes we're all dodgin' . . . *etc.*

Yes the lover he's a dodger,
Yes a well-known dodger.
Yes the lover he's a dodger,
Yes and I'm a dodger too.

He'll hug you and kiss you,
And call you his bride,
But look out girls,
He's a-tellin' you a lie.
Yes we're all dodgin' . . . *etc.*

Long Time Ago

On the lake where droop'd the willow
Long time ago,
Where the rock threw back the billow
Brighter than snow.
Dwelt a maid beloved and cherish'd
By high and low,
But with autumn leaf she perished
Long time ago.
Rock and tree and flowing water
Long time ago,
Bird and bee and blossom taught her
Love's spell to know.
While to my fond words she listen'd
Murmuring low,
Tenderly her blue eyes glisten'd
Long time ago.

Simple Gifts

'Tis the gift to be simple,
'tis the gift to be free
'Tis the gift to come down
where we 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 gain'd,
To bow and to bend we
shan't be asham'd,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning
we come 'round right.*

I Bought Me a Cat

I bought me a cat,
My cat pleased me
I fed my cat under yonder tree
My cat says fiddle I fee.

I bought me a duck,
My duck pleased me
I fed my duck under yonder tree
My duck says "quack, quack," *etc.*
My cat says fiddle I fee.

I bought me a goose,
My goose pleased me
I fed my goose under yonder tree
My goose says "hiss,hiss," *etc.*

I bought me a hen,
My hen pleased me
I fed my hen under yonder tree
My hen says "chimmy-chuck
chimmy-chuck," *etc.*

I bought me a pig,
My pig pleased me
I fed my pig under yonder tree
My pig says "griffey, griffey," *etc.*

I bought me a cow,
My cow pleased me
I fed my cow under yonder tree
My cow says "moo, moo," *etc.*

I bought me a horse,
My horse pleased me
I fed my horse under yonder tree
My horse says "neigh, neigh," *etc.*

I got me a wife,
My wife pleased me
I fed my wife under yonder tree
My wife says "honey, honey," *etc.*

Zion's Walls

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.

At the River

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.

Ching-a-Ring Chaw

Ching-a-ring-a ring ching ching,
Ho a ding-a-ding kum larkee,
Ching-a-ring-a ring ching ching,
Ho a ding kum larkee.

Brothers gather round,
Listen to this story,
'Bout the promised land,
An' the promised glory.
You don't need to fear,
If you have no money,
You don't need none there,
To buy you milk and honey.

There you'll ride in style,
Coach with four white horses,
There the evenin' meal,
Has one two three four courses.
Ching-a-ring-a ring, *etc.*
Nights we all will dance.
To the harp and fiddle,
Waltz and jig and prance,
"And Cast off down the middle!"

When the mornin' come,
All in grand and splendour,
Stand out in the sun,
And hear the holy thunder!

Brothers hear me out,
The promised land's a-comin'
Dance and sing and shout,
I hear them harps a strummin'.

Ching-a-ring-a ching
Ching ching, ching a ring ching
Ching-a-ring-a ching ching,
Ching-a-ring-a ching ching,
Ring, ching ching ching CHAW!