



Des Moines Community Orchestra

June Concert

Sunday June 20, 2021, 2:00 p.m.
Franklin Jr. High School, Des Moines, IA
Carl Johnson, Conductor

“DMCO Taxes Its Files”

Creole Overture Jean Berger
“The Walk to the Paradise Garden” from *A Village Romeo and Juliet*
.....Frederick Delius
Introduction to Act III from *Lohengrin*..... Richard Wagner
Bells of Iowa State..... “Jim” Wilson, arr. Carl Johnson
Celtic Concerto Laura Zaerr
Laura Erickson, harp

1. Bonny Portmore
2. Oro se do Bheatha Bhaile
3. The Blazing Turf Fire
4. The Kid on the Mountain
5. Oro se Jig and Transition
6. My Lagan Love and College Grove
7. Music in the Glen and Finale

Ancient Airs and Dances, Suite No. 1Ottorino Respighi
I. Balletto detto “Il conte orlando”
II. Gagliarda
III. Villanella
IV. Passo mezzo e mascherada

Program Notes – by Carl Johnson

■ *Creole Overture* (1947) Jean Berger (1909-2002)

Jean Berger, composer and conductor, was born Arthur Scloßberg in Hamm, Germany, September 27, 1909. The son of Orthodox Jews, he grew up in Alsace-Lorraine and attended the universities of Heidelberg and Vienna. He studied musicology and received his PhD in 1931 from Heidelberg. After serving briefly as assistant conductor at the Darmstadt Opera (1932-1933), he was forced to flee Nazi Germany in 1933.

He moved to Paris, France, and studied composition and orchestration. He also conducted Les Compagnons de la Marjolaine, a mixed choir, while in Paris. In 1937, his choral work *Le sang des autres* won first prize at an international competition in Zurich. For several years Berger toured Europe and the near East as pianist and concert accompanist. In Brazil, he was assistant conductor and coach at the Teatro Municipal and also taught for two years at the Conservatorio Brasileiro de Musica in Rio de Janeiro.

In 1941, he moved to the United States and became a citizen in 1943. During the war he served with the U.S. Army and produced foreign language broadcasts for the Office of War Information. In addition, he toured with the USO Camp Shows in all theatres of war. Subsequently, he spent two years as arranger, accompanist, and coach with the CBS and NBC networks. He served on the faculty of Middlebury College in Vermont beginning in 1948 and then moved to the University of Illinois as assistant professor of music from 1959-1961. From 1961-1968, he joined the music faculty at the University of Colorado. In 1964 he founded the John Sheppard Music Press in Boulder, and later Denver, Colorado.

Berger's compositions have been extensively performed by leading choral and orchestral organizations in Europe and the United States. His choral works constitute the bulk of his compositions, where he avoids an academic style, preferring a pragmatic blend of Franco-German folk music, South American melody and rhythm, and polyphonic modality. Jean Berger died May 28, 2002, in Denver, Colorado. [Edited from the American Music Research Center by C.J.]

The *Creole Overture* is a lively work in a variety of meters, and features many colorful percussion instruments. [C.J.]

■ **Introduction to Act III** from *Lohengrin* (1850)
Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

Lohengrin was first produced at Weimar in 1850, under the direction of Franz Liszt. Today's work is the instrumental introduction to the third act, which is followed by the festal music for the wedding of Elsa and Lohengrin. It starts off with immense spirit, the music leaping straight up, hesitating for a moment on a cross accent, then, after a crash of cymbals, sliding off into a more regular rhythm.

The introduction is neither traditional nor conventional, but the free development of two strongly contrasting themes, with an interlude on a third theme. The second theme, a period consisting of a phrase of four measures, twice repeated, rising a third each time, is an exceedingly impressive one. It is of this period that Berlioz wrote: "Nothing comparable to this can perhaps be found in all music for grandiose vigor, force and brilliancy; launched forth by the brass instruments in unison, this theme turns the strong beats at the beginning of the three phrases into as many cannon shots which make the listener's breast quake." [ed. CJ]

■ **"The Walk to the Paradise Garden"**
from *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (1901)
Frederick Delius (1862-1934)

Delius was born of German parents in England, managed a citrus plantation in Florida, absorbed the singing of Blacks he heard there, wandered aimlessly in Europe, studied for four not-very-productive years in Germany, and settled in France for the rest of his life. His music was championed by the great British conductor Sir Thomas Beecham and, in spite of his eclectic style, Delius is generally considered an English composer

His impressionistic writing and creative harmonies came at the end of the Romantic era and influenced many who followed him. The "village" of the opera's title is an actual one in Switzerland, but the plot has little to do with Shakespeare and The Paradise Garden is a run-down pub. Nevertheless, the music is a sublime depiction of serenity. [CJ]

■ *Bells of Iowa State* (1931)

“Jim” Wilson, arr. Carl Johnson

What started as a side project for a young instructor eventually became the song remembered by generations of alumni. The song is “The Bells of Iowa State” and in 1931, Jim Wilson, then a professor of English, rewrote the song and lyrics to the alma mater song for a contest the college was having to revamp the aging chorale. According to university records, the prize money for winning was \$100, and while trying to raise two children in the middle of the Depression, Wilson was in need of the money. [James Askew]

We are performing this work (and the Delius and Wagner works) in celebration of the life of David Hindal, our beloved librarian, who passed away from COVID-19 in January, 2021. His two favorite things were music by Wagner and playing with the Iowa State Alumni Band. We honor him today with these selections. [CJ]

■ *Celtic Concerto* (2000)

Laura Zaerr (b. ~1969)

Laura Zaerr is a harpist and composer. Her interest in Celtic harp music is apparent in her compositions *Celtic Concerto* and *Appalachian Concerto*. She has appeared as a guest soloist with orchestras throughout Oregon and California as well as on Alaskan cruises.

The *Celtic Concerto* is a suite of seven Celtic folk songs arranged for Celtic harp, flute, oboe, and string orchestra. We will perform the piece with a reduced group of strings. The seven folk songs are:

- “Bonny Portmore,” an Irish traditional folk song which laments the demise of Ireland's old oak forests, specifically the Great Oak of Portmore or the Portmore Ornament Tree, which fell in a windstorm in 1760 and was subsequently used for shipbuilding and other purposes.
- “Oro se do Bheatha Bhaile” is a traditional Irish song, that came to be known as a rebel song in the early 20th century. *Óró* is a cheer, while *se do bheatha 'bhaile* means “welcome home.” This song features a penny whistle.
- “The Blazing Turf Fire” is an Irish jig and appears in a collection of dances published in 1907.
- “The Kid on the Mountain” is a slip jig and has been recorded 113 times!
- “Oro se Jig” and Transition develops the jig and then uses bits of it for a transition.
- “My Lagan Love” and “College Grove” are two songs combined. The first is a traditional Irish air collected in 1903 in northern Donegal. The

Lagan referred to in the title most likely is the River Lagan that runs through Belfast. The second is a reel, an instrumental dance.

- “Music in the Glen” and Finale takes a lively dance and uses it to bring the concerto to an exciting conclusion. [C.J.]

■ *Ancient Airs and Dances, Suite No. 1* (1917)

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Ottorino Respighi spent much of his life in his home country of Italy, but he did travel to study with Rimsky-Korsakov in Saint Petersburg and Bruch in Berlin. However, his orchestral postcards from Rome – *Fountains of Rome*, *Pines of Rome*, and *Roman Festivals* – traveled even more widely than their author and remain internationally popular. Like the fascination with ancient Rome in his colorful tone poems written for large orchestras, his *Ancient Airs and Dances* shows him to be a classicist among his modernist peers. His first internationally famous work had been an arrangement of Monteverdi’s *Lamento d’Arianna* for voice and orchestra.

The orchestral suite we play today maintains the clarity of the lute pieces Respighi borrowed from Renaissance composers, known and unknown, including Simone Molinaro and Vincenzo Galilei (the father of Galileo). The style of each movement echoes its origin, whether in song (*villanelle*) or dance (*balletto*, *gagliarda*, and *passo mezzo*). Balancing his preference for expressive orchestration with his Renaissance source material, Respighi opts for a small ensemble with brilliant timbres. [C.J.]

— *Orchestra Musicians* —

Violin-I

Kris Shay,
concertmaster *
Kathy Naja
Brad Benson
Madalyne Rutledge

Violin-II

Greg Woolever *
Sue Sevedge
Susan Kozak
Hoang Bui
Chelsea Vosburgh

Viola

Nick Brown *
Ben Munson
Krista Baskerville

Cello

Xavier Quinn *
Julie Watson
Kathy Harvey
Carolyn Rogers

Bass/Tuba

Brian Kinnan

Flute/Piccolo¹

Sharon Stilwell *
Patricia Telthorst
Sharon Buck

Oboe²

Angela Aldridge *
Don Opperthausen

Clarinet

Kevin Allemagne *
Lori Bees

Bassoon

Richard Gordley *
Dawn Parker

French Horn³

Cristina Deeds *
Lawrence Brennan
Greg Barton
Samantha Bouwers

Trumpet

Loren Stoneberg *
Carolyn Knittle

Trombone⁴

Fred Lange *
Derrick Hawks
J.R. Deeds

Tuba

Henry Von Ruprecht

Percussion⁵

Josh Whitver *
Michael S. Ramirez
Steven Richmond
Hope Stice
Bob Bees
Jim VanDorn

Keyboard

Anna Lee

Harp

Laura Erickson

Librarian

Stacey Ramirez

Website

John Sens

- 1 Principal Flute - Provided through an endowment by Ann Detlefson, Principal Flute Emeritus.
 - 2 Principal Oboe - The Deb Gordley Endowed Chair of Oboe.
 - 3 Third Chair French Horn - The David Hindal Endowed Chair of French Horn
 - 4 Principal Trombone - The Martin Ramirez Endowed Chair of Trombone.
 - 5 Principal Percussion - The Dee & Helen Jewell Endowed Chair of Percussion.
- * Section principal.

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