



Gustav Meier  
Music Director  
64th Season  
3rd Subscription Concert  
Klein Memorial Auditorium  
Saturday, December 12, 2009  
8:00 p.m.

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Mark Shapiro, Guest Conductor  
Harolyn Blackwell, Soprano

- I. KENT, arr. GOLD I'll be Home for Christmas  
KORNGOLD The Snowman  
ANDERSON Sleigh Ride  
LEONTOVICH, Carol of the Bells  
HAYMAN, arr.
- II. RODRIGO Cuatro Madrigales Amatorios  
Harolyn Blackwell, Soprano
- III. MOZART Overture to the Abduction from the Seraglio  
MOZART Alleluia from Exultate Jubilate  
Harolyn Blackwell, Soprano

**Intermission**

- IV. arr. HOLCOMBE Festive Sounds of Hanukah
- V. FRY abr. SHAPIRO Santa Claus Symphony
- VI. Four Spirituals  
Traditional Sweet Little Jesus Boy  
arr. BONDS I Got a Home  
arr. SAYLOR Honor, Honor  
arr. BONDS He's Got the Whole World in His Hands  
Harolyn Blackwell, Soprano
- VII. arr. FINNEGAN Christmas Sing-Along

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*Tonight's concert is made possible in part by a generous grant from JPMorgan Chase and the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism.*

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*Poinsettias on stage courtesy of City Line Forist of Trumbull*

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*Please be courteous by turning off your cell phones and remember the use of photographic equipment or recording devices is strictly prohibited.*

## PROGRAM NOTES

### I I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS Walter Kent, arr. Marty Gold THE SNOWMAN

Erich Korngold (1897 - 1957)  
SLEIGH RIDE

Leroy Anderson (1908 - 1975)  
CAROL OF THE BELLS

M. Leontovich, arr. Richard Hayman  
*I'll be home for Christmas* (if only in my dreams) is a nostalgic song about the strain of separation written at the height of World War II: Astronauts Lovell and Borman also requested that Bing Crosby's recording of it be played on their way back from space aboard Gemini 7 on December 7, 1965.

Korngold was a child prodigy whose early work impressed every musician of note (Richard Strauss, Mahler, Artur Schnabel and the like). He went on to produce one operatic masterpiece, *Die tote Stadt*, and 20 scores for Hollywood films which won him two Oscars. At thirteen, he wrote his "pantomime with music," *The Snowman (Der Schneemann)*, with orchestration by his teacher, Zemlinsky. Its charming music is in the neo-romantic style of melody and lush harmony that characterized Korngold's work his whole life.

A perennial favorite, *Sleigh Ride* is no exception to the near-rule about Anderson that he favored nostalgia and sentiment, often touched by humor, in his compositions. They are characterized by light-hearted tunes, novel orchestration and infectious rhythms as well. He was educated at Harvard where he studied both music and languages. From a position as Director of the University Band there, he went on to other arranging assignments. He served as translator for the U. S Army during the second World War.

Based on an ancient Ukranian melody, the *Carol of the Bells* probably owes its origin to the legend that at midnight when Jesus was born all the bells on earth started pealing joyously in unison.

### II CUATRO MADRIGALES AMATORIOS Joaquin Rodrigo (1901 - 1999)

The four short songs of Rodrigo's 1947 cycle, *Amorous Madrigals*, examine "different facets of love, including despair, deceit and delight." In the first, *Con qué la lavaré?*, the singer asks, "With what shall I wash the skin of my face?...married women (are washed) with water from lemons....(but) I wash myself, anguished, with grief and sorrow." The second *Vos me metásteis* states "You killed me, girl with your hair...you have killed me." The third and fourth have complementary

texts. In *De Dónde venis, amore?* the singer is asked, "From where do you come love?... (and)... I know well from where...I have been a witness" is the answer, while in the last song, *De los álamos vengo, madre*, the singer says, "From the poplars I come, Mother... from the poplars of Seville... to see my pretty girlfriend."

The madrigal was a late-Renaissance/early Baroque form for a soloist or small vocal ensemble in which following the sense of the words or even painting them in the music became important. Rodrigo remains faithful to a Baroque 'flavor' in this set. Educated in Paris and blind from the age of three, he, nevertheless, had an influential career as composer, critic and professor of music history at the University of Madrid. "His aim has been to create a Spanish ambience, full of color and agreeable tunes, where folklore is a picturesque element" (Grove: 1980).

### III OVERTURE TO THE ABDUCTION FROM THE SERAGLIO

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

*The Abduction from the Seraglio* concerns the rescue from a Turkish harem of Constanze by her noble lover, Belmonte. She is, in effect, the prisoner there of a Pasha, but the latter realizes he cannot make her love him. He lets the pair go in a drama in which humanistic ideals of the Enlightenment prevail. The work set a new standard for an opera written to a German libretto.

In skillful hands an overture prefigures the mood of the work it introduces, at the same time that it gives the audience a chance to settle in its seats. The *Overture to The Abduction from the Seraglio* opens brightly suggesting the eventual happy ending. Triangle, drums and cymbals set the Turkish tone. A slower middle part reflects Belmonte's longing to see Constanze again and will be adapted for his opening arietta.

### ALLELUJA from EXULTATE JUBILATE, K 165

Mozart

An Alleluia is an expression of rejoicing and its use for this purpose was recognized early as a major factor both inside and outside Christian liturgy by important figures such as St. Augustine (d. 430). This *Vivace* is the final section of a motet written by Mozart in Milan in 1343 (1373 years after Augustine died!). Mozart was 17, but already possessed astonishing maturity. Structurally strong and vocally grateful, this *Finale* is one of the best known musical expressions of jubilation.

IV  
**FESTIVE SOUNDS OF HANUKAH**  
arr. **Bill Holcombe**

A small band of Jewish guerillas under Judas Maccabeus retook Jerusalem from the Syrians in 164 B. C. E. When a lamp that had oil for only one day burned for all 8 days of the rededication of the temple that took place following the victory, it became known as the "Miracle of Hanukah". The lighting of 8 candles in a menorah on successive evenings along with an exchange of gifts is a modern commemoration of this event. The spinning of tops, called dreidels, which have a letter inscribed on each of their four sides that together stand for the words, "a great miracle happened here," is also part of the celebration.

*Festive Sounds of Hanukah* is based on six traditional melodies of the holiday. Maoz Tsur (Rock of Ages) and Mi Ymalel (Who Can Retell) describe the struggles of Judas Maccabeus: Hanukah Hanukah is sung after the traditional blessings; My Dreidel and S'Vivon (Spin Dreidel) are children's songs; Hanukah, Oh Hanukah is about all the events of the season. They are here given a joyous musical setting.

V  
**SANTA CLAUS SYMPHONY**  
**William Henry Fry (1813 - 1864)**

Fry was one of the most important prosyletizers for American music when it hardly existed apart from European models as journalist, critic, lecturer and composer. The 16 performances of his full-length opera, *Leonora*, in Philadelphia in 1845 can lay claim to being the first by an American to reach stage production. He wrote four programmatic one-movement orchestral pieces of which *Santa Claus, a Christmas Symphony* is one. A lullaby, snow storm, howling winds, trotting horses, cracking whips, sleigh bells, children playing are all here until a climactic presentation of *Adeste Fidelis* (O Come All ye Faithful) ends the piece. The realism is naive, but honest. A long work, tonight's performance omits some repetitions and transitions.

At its 1853 first performance, a commentator noted in an extensive article that "the orchestra of drums to represent the rolling of the spheres near the end (with) towering sonority (is a fitting way) to crown a long work designed to be of religious and romantic character" (NY Tribune 1853). It is due history that such compositions be heard again!

VI  
**FOUR SPIRITUALS**  
**Traditional**

A Spiritual is defined in the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* as "a Christian religious folk song of the U. S. Related types were cultivated by whites (songs of revival meetings) and blacks (songs in contexts of work as well as religious meetings) throughout the 19th and 20th centuries." The sophisticated rhythmic complexities of African American versions were seminal in the development of Ragtime, Blues and Jazz, important American contributions to world music.

Of the spirituals performed in arrangements this evening Sweet Little Jesus Boy is a lullaby to the Christ child and a lament for the way He (and some people) have been treated. Honor, Honor is a paean to children being baptized and He's Got the Whole World in his Hands a celebration of the Lord as holder of power over everybody and everything in the universe.

VII  
**CHRISTMAS SING-ALONG**  
arr. **John Finnegan**

Like Leroy Anderson, John Finnegan also made arrangements for the band while an undergraduate at Harvard. Here he has set eight of the best-loved carols and songs of the season in a *Christmas Fantasy*, the words of which are inserted in the program. Two are secular; Jingle Bells, James Pierpont's 1857 song for his Boston Sunday School class which started life as a Thanksgiving Day tune, but was quickly adapted for Christmas, and Deck the Halls, the melody of which seems to be an old Welch air of unknown vintage. and whose words, also somewhat obscurely, are probably of 19th century American origin. The other six concern the religious aspects of the season. They range from the two quiet lullabys, Away in a Manger and Silent Night, to Mendelssohn's majestic Hark the Herald Angels Sing, the gentle It came upon the Midnight Clear, the triumphant Joy to the World and the procession-like O Come All Ye Faithful. Collectively these poems represent a litany of many of the hopes of mankind; - to enjoy simple pleasures, find solace, reinforce faith and courage etc. All cultures seek such blessings, but do not necessarily find them everywhere nor universally available through all levels of society in what has become a shrinking world .

- Burton Hatherway