

# PENINSULA *symphony*

## *Symphony Sounds*

April 2013

46<sup>th</sup> Season, Number 3

Editor: Kenneth Gash

### Concert III

Sunday, April 14, 2013, 7:00 p.m.

Rolling Hills Covenant Church  
2222 Palos Verdes Drive North  
Rolling Hills Estates

#### PROGRAM

#### *American G-enius*

Grofé            *Mississippi Suite*  
Gould           *Amber Waves*  
Gershwin       *Rhapsody in Blue*

Kevin Fitz-Gerald, Soloist

Gottschalk     *Grand Tarantelle* for Piano and  
Orchestra

Gottschalk     *Symphony: A Night in the  
Tropics*

#### CONCERT DETAILS

Symphony Association members admitted at 6:00. Center-section priority seating is reserved for members at the Patron level and above.

Concert Preview by **Maestro Berkson** at 6:15.

General public admitted at approximately 6:50.

#### POST-CONCERT MEET THE PERFORMERS

After the concert, the audience is invited to remain in the auditorium and meet informally with our conductor, Gary Berkson, and with our soloist, Kevin Fitz-Gerald. The artists may make a few remarks about themselves and their program, and then the audience will have an opportunity to ask questions. Please call our office at 544-0320 if you have any questions about this event.

**G**-Whiz. Who knew that there were all those wonderful American composers who were *G-eniuses*?

As we have come to expect, our Maestro manages to provide a surprise or two at each concert. Although three of the composers on the program have had pieces performed previously by the orchestra, the musical selections of Grofé and Gould will be heard for the first time while *Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue* (for all of its popularity) has only been heard twice during our forty-six year history.

We are going to hear the music of the fourth composer, Louis Moreau Gottschalk, in its premier performance by the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra. It will also probably be the first time that many in our audience will have heard his wonderful music.

A final surprise is we will hear our soloist perform before the intermission *and* after intermission.

#### Music Preview

##### Ferde Grofé (1874-1954)

Ferde Grofé led a long and productive musical life. He was born to a musical family in New York and raised in Los Angeles. In his early teens he left home to



travel the country doing odd jobs and developing his musical skill by writing popular songs at night. When

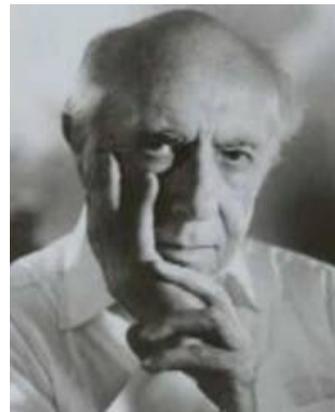
he was just seventeen, he got a commission from the Elks to write a special song for their 1909 national convention. He returned to Los Angeles and secured a job as a violist in the Los Angeles Philharmonic. In his spare time he played in dance halls, sometimes billing himself as "Professor Grofé." He founded his own jazz band in San Francisco and wrote arrangements for it.

From 1919 until 1931, he worked for Paul Whiteman as pianist and arranger. His orchestral ideas laid the foundation for what became the big-band sound. More important, he conceived the basic format that makes jazz playing in large ensembles possible: the contrasting of fully written-out orchestra passages with improvised "breaks."

In 1924, Whiteman asked Grofé to orchestrate Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* for full concert orchestra. This led Grofé into the realm of composing larger and more "serious" works and he soon completed his first large orchestral work, *Mississippi Suite* in 1925. During his lifetime, he composed many other musical pictures of America. In addition to the famous *Grand Canyon Suite*, he produced *Aviation Suite*, *Death Valley Suite*, *Hollywood Suite*, *Hudson River Suite*, *Mississippi Suite*, *New England Suite*, *Niagara Falls Suite*, *San Francisco Suite*, *Valley Of The Sun Suite*, *Wheels Suite*, and the *World's Fair Suite*.

In 1931 he resigned from the Whiteman organization and became conductor of the Capitol Theater orchestra in New York, hosted a network radio program, and was appointed to teach orchestration at the Juilliard School in 1939. During World War II he tirelessly conducted service bands and USO shows.

### Morton Gould (1913-1996)



Morton Gould is considered one of the most massively talented of all American composer-pianist-conductors. He was adept at classical, crossover, jazz, pops, and music

for films and television. His output was vast, and yet relatively little was recorded.

He was born in New York City and recognized as a prodigy at a very early age, publishing his first composition at age six. He played piano for silent movies and became the staff pianist at Radio City Music Hall. He also worked as a conductor and arranger of orchestral programs for the WOR radio station, combining classical and popular music.

His music was commissioned by many US symphony orchestras as well as by ballet companies. He also conducted all the major US orchestras, as well as some in Canada, Mexico, Europe, Japan and Australia. He won many awards including the Pulitzer Prize for Music and both a Kennedy Center Award and a Grammy for Lifetime Achievement.

*Amber Waves* is a series of variants on *America the Beautiful*. It starts quietly and lyrically, and builds to a big brass crescendo towards the end. It forms the second movement of a six part work called *American Ballads* which was one of three pieces commissioned for the Bicentennial.

In all, Gould published over 240 compositions, which include symphonies, concertos for various instruments, chamber works, three Broadway shows and music for film and television.

### George Gershwin (1898-1937)



George Gershwin was born Jacob Gershowitz on September 26, 1898, in Brooklyn, New York. The son of Russian-Jewish immigrants, George began his foray into music at age eleven when

his family bought a secondhand piano for George's older sibling, Ira. George immediately began picking out popular tunes and his natural talent led him to seek help and he soon began formal lessons.

On leaving school at the age of fifteen, Gershwin found his first job as a "song plugger" for a publishing firm on New York City's Tin Pan Alley, where he earned \$15 a week. His first published song was "When You Want 'Em, You Can't Get 'Em, When You've Got 'Em, You Don't Want 'Em." It was published in 1916 when Gershwin was only seventeen years old and earned him \$5. His 1917 novelty rag, "Rialto Ripples," was a commercial success, and in 1919 he scored his first

big national hit with his song, "Swanee." Al Jolson heard Gershwin perform "Swanee" at a party and decided to sing it in one of his shows. This bit of serendipity led to George becoming a millionaire!

In 1924, Gershwin composed the music for a show titled "Blue Monday." The bandleader in the pit, Paul Whiteman, asked Gershwin to create a jazz number that would heighten the genre's respectability. Just five weeks prior to Whiteman's concert, Gershwin had not committed to writing a piece for it until his brother Ira read him a report in the New York Tribune stating that George was "at work on a jazz concerto" for the program. Thus painted into a corner, George Gershwin pieced *Rhapsody In Blue* together as best he could in the time available, leaving his own piano part to be improvised during the world premiere.

### Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869)



Born in New Orleans in 1829, Louis Moreau Gottschalk grew up in a neighborhood where he was exposed to the Creole music with its African-Caribbean rhythms

and the melodious folk songs that would later become a characteristic ingredient of much of his own music.

He was exposed to a variety of musical traditions, and played the piano from an early age. He was soon recognized as a prodigy by the New Orleans bourgeois establishment, making his informal public debut in 1840 at the new St. Charles Hotel at a time when, despite his numerous

recitals in salons of wealthy New Orleans households, he had not yet performed in public concerts. The program described Gottschalk as “a young Creole” and his debut already foreshadowed his later work. Taking a Latin dance tune and performing a series of variations on the tune, he combined the popularity of the tune and subjected it to a very Gottschalkian treatment. He charmed the audience, and the debut became an instant success.

Gottschalk is remembered as a virtuoso, as well as a prolific composer of popular music. His compositions for orchestra show a composer who could create memorable and catchy tunes. His somewhat unusual orchestration, full of playful inventiveness and creativity, has a fresh and uninhibited atmosphere.

When our soloist, Kevin Fitz-Gerald returns to the stage after intermission, he will be performing the *Grande Tarantelle* for Piano and Orchestra. The *tarantelle's* origin is connected with *tarantism*, a form of hysteria that appeared in Italy in the 15th to the 17th century and that was obscurely associated with the bite of the tarantula spider; victims seemingly were cured by frenzied dancing. Unfortunately, the audience is requested to refrain from dancing in the aisles during this rather lively piece.

(George Balanchine created a ballet, *Tarantella*, which is set to this music. The nimble quickness of Gottschalk's music is portrayed in a profusion of steps and quick changes of direction in this brief but explosive pas de deux.)

## Kevin Fitz-Gerald



Kevin Fitz-Gerald, pianist and teacher, was born in Kelowna, British Columbia. He studied with Dorothy Clyne, then with Phyllis Schuldt, Robin Wood, and Alma

Brock-Smith at the Victoria Conservatory (from which he received three diplomas 1979-81), and with Marek Jablonski at the Banff Centre for the Arts and the Royal Conservatory of Music. He also worked with Leon Fleisher, John Perry, Menahem Pressler and Gyorgy Sebok.

Fitz-Gerald began his performing career as a church organist at eleven, and as the pianist for the Canadian School of Ballet in Kelowna at fourteen. He made his orchestral debut with the Calgary Philharmonic in 1979, and has also appeared with the Esprit Orchestra, the Hamilton Philharmonic, and the Toronto Symphony. He was guest music director in 1986 of COMUS Music Theatre and apprentice coach 1987-8 for the Canadian Opera Company.

As an accompanist and chamber musician, Fitz-Gerald has performed with Shauna Rolston, the St Lawrence String Quartet, the Bartok String Quartet, Alan Civil, Gisela Depkat, Patrick Gallois, Stephen Isserlis, Maurice Solway, Richard Stoltzman, Camilla Wicks, and others. As a chamber musician, Fitz-Gerald has appeared at music festivals in Banff; Kincardine, Ont; Roundtop, Texas; Park City, Utah; San Miguel de Allende, Mexico; Tucson, Arizona; and La Jolla, California.

In 1990 Fitz-Gerald began teaching chamber music and accompaniment at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. He is currently Professor of Keyboard Collaborative Arts and Keyboard Studies at the USC Thornton School of Music.

### Past Events: Second Concert

On Sunday, February 17, Maestro Berkson presented a program entitled Russian Roulette. The concert featured Mimi Jung, co-winner of the 2011 Edith Knox Performance Competition. She played the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto in D – and played it wonderfully!



The concert opened with the *Overture on Three Russian Themes* by Mily Balakirev and concluded with a very unusual piece by Dmitri Shostakovich entitled *Suite for Variety Stage Orchestra*. It is scored for a large orchestra with a *variety* of added instruments like the guitar and accordion.

### Edith Knox Performance Competition

On February 25, 2013, twelve performers (and their accompanists) each played a full concerto for their instrument in front of a panel of judges. At the end of the day, the judges picked the best seven who will compete as finalists on April 14, 2013. Through a quirk of scheduling, this happens to be the same day as the upcoming third concert of the season. These finals are open to the public and you are invited to attend and hear some of the finest young talent in our area perform.

The finalists, their age, home city and concerto to be played are:

**Erick Chong (17)**, Manhattan Beach  
Tchaikovsky - Rocooco Variations for Cello in A major

**Geneva Lewis (15)**, Irvine  
Saint-Saens - Violin Concerto No. 3

**Shotaro Matsumoto (20)**, Montebello  
Beethoven - Piano Concerto No. 1 in C major

**Joseph Morris (22)**, Los Angeles  
Nielsen - Clarinet Concerto

**Noah Sonderling (17)**, La Crescenta  
Prokofiev - Piano Concerto No. 1 in D flat,

**Karen Su (14)**, Rolling Hills Estates  
Wieniawski - Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor

**Hao Zhou (16)**, Mission Viejo  
Wieniawski - Violin Concerto No. 1

The first-place winner will receive a check for \$1,500 and will become the soloist at the June 2 concert.

**Armstrong Theater**  
**April 14, 2013, 2:00 PM**  
**3330 Civic Center Drive**  
**Torrance, CA**

### **Peninsula Symphony Association Board of Directors**

On March 25 2013, the General Membership of the Peninsula Symphony Association met to receive nominations for positions on the Board of Directors. There were five persons who were nominated for an additional term and four members who chose to retire at the end of their current term.

The slate of nominees was elected by a unanimous vote.

The Board members elected for an additional term are:

George Bender  
 Bruce Erickson  
 Eugene McAdoo  
 Marion Ruth  
 Faye Schwartz

The term of office is three years and these Board members will serve until June, 2016. The four newly elected Board members will be formally installed on July 21, 2013, prior to the first Board meeting of the new fiscal year.

The board members who have retired at the end of their current term are:

Bob Coffey  
 John Copper  
 Barbara Gerber  
 Chuck Klaus

We thank them for their service to the Peninsula Symphony Association and wish them well.

### **2012 - 2013 Schedule**

All regular concerts are held at:  
 Rolling Hills Covenant Church  
 2222 Palos Verdes Drive North  
 Rolling Hills Estates

#### **Young Artists Showcase**

**April 14, 2013, 2:00 p.m.**

**ARMSTRONG THEATER**

**3330 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE, TORRANCE**

The finalists in the Edith Knox Performance Competition will play with their accompanists in a full-dress stage performance for professional judging. The first-prize winner will be selected at the end of the program, and will perform as soloist with the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra at our June 2 concert.

Admission is free. Join us and bring the family.

#### **Concert IV**

#### **The Norris Foundation Concert**

**June 2, 2013, 7 p.m.**

Jenkins	<i>Palladio</i>
TBA	Concerto performed by the winner of the Knox Competition
Wagner	Selections from the <i>Ring of the Nibelungen</i>

**Summer Pops Concert  
July 14, 2013, 5:00 p.m.**

**MOVIE MAGIC**

A medley of favorite themes from  
Tinsel Town

*Murder on the Orient Express*

*James Bond: 007*

*Rebecca*

*Somewhere in Time*

*Titanic*

*Dances with Wolves*

*Double Indemnity*

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## Notes from the Editor

One of the chronic concerns of non-profit organizations like us is the uncertainty of raising enough funds to meet our budget. About this time of year, our treasurer gets a little nervous. We have completed two concerts and are about to produce a third one. And then, there is the June concert plus the Summer Pops to consider.

Revenue from membership donations has not yet reached the level we had projected and we are hoping it will get to that level before we have to pay the bills for all the concerts. We have a number of grant applications in the works and are hoping for positive results but the granting agencies are still in the process of recovering from the problems of the past decade.

So, if it seems that we are constantly seeking additional sources of income from you, our members, we do so because the cost of producing our wonderful concerts is rising faster than we had anticipated. The Peninsula Symphony Association is solvent but there is the real danger that we may have to dip into our reserves to cover our season expenses.

If you wish to help, here are some suggestions.

At the February concert, we announced that we have joined **Amazon Associates** through which we get a percentage of every purchase made through this program. As explained in the handout provided at the concert a person merely has to logon to Amazon through the Peninsula Symphony website and make whatever purchase(s) were planned.

The easiest way to do this is to use the web address below to logon to Amazon and to then save it as a Favorite or Bookmark:

[www.amazon.com/?&tag=wwwpensymorg-20](http://www.amazon.com/?&tag=wwwpensymorg-20)

In case you are wondering what to do with that nice tax refund you got this year, you can always consider making a gift donation to the Peninsula Symphony Association.

Another handout provided at the last concert explained how those who are eligible can donate money directly from an IRA to charitable organizations. By donating from a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) the donated funds are not added to the gross income and therefore have no tax liability. I personally will be using this means for the donations I make to approved charitable organizations. (Peninsula Symphony Association is approved!)

And finally, if you have friends or acquaintances who attend our concerts but who are not yet members, please encourage them to become members. The Association will benefit and the new members will benefit. They will not only continue to enjoy the concerts but they will also be able to get to hear the superb pre-concert lectures given by our Maestro Gary Berkson.

Ken Gash, Editor



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### Contact Information

Any questions or requests about the Peninsula Symphony, the Peninsula Symphony Association, **Symphony Sounds**, or the *Friends* of the Peninsula Symphony should be sent to the Peninsula Symphony Association office (we will route your message to the appropriate person):

The Peninsula Symphony Association  
Post Office Box 2602  
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

The office is normally staffed from 9:00 to noon on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. You may call at any time (310-544-0320) and leave a message on our answering machine, but phone replies will usually be made only during normal staffing hours. You can e-mail us at [music.pensym@verizon.net](mailto:music.pensym@verizon.net). General information about the Symphony (current season schedule, etc.) can be found on our website ([www.pensym.org](http://www.pensym.org)).

Other contacts are:

Peninsula Symphony Association President, John Williams  
310-541-3516 [jwskrs@verizon.net](mailto:jwskrs@verizon.net)

*Friends* of the Peninsula Symphony, Mona Gifford, Chair  
310-377-7711 [monagee@cox.net](mailto:monagee@cox.net)

Music Director/Conductor, Gary Berkson [conductor.pensym@verizon.net](mailto:conductor.pensym@verizon.net)