

PENINSULA *symphony*

Symphony Sounds

February, 2018

51st Season, Number 2

Terri Zinkiewicz

Peninsula Symphony Concert

Sunday, February 18, 2018, at 7:00 PM

Redondo Union High School Auditorium
222 North Pacific Coast Highway
Redondo Beach, CA 90277

ANIMAL FARM

Sam Fischer, violin

Sonya and Elizabeth Schumann, piano

David Selby, narrator

Auber Overture to *The Bronze Horse*

Bach "Sheep may safely graze" from *The Hunting Cantata*, BWV 208
(arr. Stokowski)

Vaughan Williams *The Lark Ascending*

Hovhaness *And God Created Great Whales*, Opus 229

Saint-Saëns *Carnival of the Animals*

Concert Details

Doors open at 6:00 PM. Center-section seating reserved for Patron and higher members.

Pre-concert lecture by Music Director Gary Berkson begins at 6:15 PM for Symphony Association members. General public admitted at approx. 6:50 PM.

Post-concert — Meet the Performers

We invite the audience to remain in the auditorium for a few minutes to talk to Gary Berkson and the soloists in an informal setting.

The February 18 Concert Is Coming Soon

It hardly seems possible that the calendars have been changed to 2018. Therefore, it is time to get on with the Peninsula Symphony's beautiful music-making. The next concert features a total of five pieces and four soloists. We have more variety than ever – all the way from an arrangement of an aria from a Bach cantata to Saint-Saëns' depiction of a variety of animals, to a work by 20th-century composer Alan Hovhaness that includes tape-recorded sounds of whales. It's whale-listening season!

If you have not already done so, please renew and consider upgrading your Peninsula Symphony Association membership. You may visit the membership table at our concerts, go to www.pensym.org, or call 310-544-0320.

This edition of ***Symphony Sounds*** includes photos from the first concert of the 2017-2018 season and recent events, short previews of the pieces, composers and soloists featured in the February 18 concert and other articles. We look forward to greeting you at the Redondo Union High School Auditorium on February 18.



Music Director Gary Berkson presents an educational pre-concert lecture before every concert to introduce the music and composers for the evening's concert. He presents a different perspective that can enhance your concert experience.

Music Preview (Please see the 2017-2018 Program Book that is distributed at all concerts for more detailed program notes.)

**Overture to *The Bronze Horse*
Daniel Auber (1782-1871)**

Daniel Auber is known primarily as a French composer of operas, especially comic operas. He was destined to follow his father in the print-selling business, but he eventually was able to follow his dream of being in the music business. One indication of Auber's popularity in Paris is that the *Rue Auber* leads up to the Paris Opera House.

The comic opera *The Bronze Horse* was first performed in Paris in 1835, and it is one of Auber's most popular operas. The delightful, lively overture is just under eight minutes in duration and seems stylistically similar to Rossini, who was one of Auber's contemporaries.

**"Sheep may safely graze" from *The Hunting Cantata*, BWV 208
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) (arr.
Leopold Stokowski (1882-1977))**

Johann Sebastian Bach was one of the most famous composers of all time, and the year of his death is often considered the end of the Baroque period of music. Bach was a church organist and wrote a large number of sacred cantatas. However, BWV 208 is an example of one of his secular cantatas. It was written for the birthday of a local aristocrat who enjoyed hunting. "Sheep may safely graze" was originally a soprano aria, and it is the most popular part of the cantata. Stokowski's orchestration is relatively thin, consisting of just strings, two flutes and two oboes.

Leopold Stokowski is probably best known as the long-term conductor of the Philadelphia orchestra and for his performance in the Disney movie *Fantasia*. Early in his career he was a church organist, and that is when he really began to appreciate Bach's music. Stokowski conducted most of the major symphony orchestras over a 60-year career, and he did many orchestral transcriptions and made many recordings. Both transcription and recordings

brought music of composers such as Bach to a far larger audience.

***The Lark Ascending*
Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)**

English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams began piano lessons at age five and violin lessons shortly after. He attended the Royal College of Music and Trinity College, Cambridge. He volunteered to serve in World War I despite his age of forty-two, and the experience influenced him profoundly. It also impacted his hearing and led to eventual deafness. Vaughan Williams was also active in civilian war efforts in World War II. Vaughan Williams often incorporated English folk songs into his music.

Vaughan Williams' works include songs, operas and choral music, nine symphonies and many other pieces. His productive period extended over a period of about fifty years. Two of his most famous works are *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* and *The Lark Ascending*, both written about a century ago.

The Lark Ascending was inspired by George Meredith's 122-line poem of the same name. The musical composition for violin and piano was begun in 1914, at the beginning of World War I, was revised and premiered in 1920 and was orchestrated shortly after. This pastorale romance is based on a pentatonic (five-note) scale. The first violin cadenza comes just three measures into the piece and is intended to be played very freely. It returns at the very end. This piece has continued to be one of Britain's all-time favorite classical compositions.

***And God Created Great Whales*, Opus 229
Alan Hovhaness (1911-2000)**

American composer Alan Hovhaness (born Alan Vaness Chakmakjian) lived through most of the 20th century. He began composing at an early age but most of his pre-1940 works were destroyed, possibly by his own hand. He studied at Tufts and the New England Conservatory of Music. He established Poseidon Records in 1965 primarily to showcase his own

compositions. Altogether he wrote a very large number of works, including 67 symphonies.

And God Created Great Whales, Opus 229 was commissioned and premiered by André Kostelanetz and the New York Philharmonic in 1970. It incorporates the actual taped sounds of humpback and bowhead whales, with the sounds occurring at four separate times in the twelve-minute piece of music. The music also includes a pentatonic melody that is from a five-note scale. The orchestra parts have instructions “to repeat and repeat and to continue rapidly and not together, in free non-rhythm-chaos.” This is intended to suggest the vastness of the ocean. The piece also makes use of major changes in volume, from *pp* (*p* means *piano* or soft) to *fff* or *ffff* (*f* means *forte* or loud), particularly toward the conclusion of the piece.

***Carnival of the Animals* Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)**

Camille Saint-Saëns showed prodigious musical talent early -- both on piano and as a composer. He began studying at the Paris Conservatory at age thirteen and following graduation was employed as a church organist for about twenty years. He was one of the first French composers to write piano concertos. He also wrote popular cello and violin concertos.

Carnival of the Animals was completed in 1886 which was the same time as his famous Symphony No. 3 (“Organ”), but it was about twenty years after Saint-Saëns came up with the idea for the piece. It was written for a small orchestra and prominently features two pianists. There are fourteen short sections or movements. Suffice it to say there are several humorous elements in the musical sections. Listen for a slow version of the can-can in the “Tortoises” section, kangaroos hopping, donkeys’ “hee-haws,” a clarinet repeatedly playing “cuckoo” and a xylophone portraying skeletons/fossils. Also – are pianists really animals???

Saint-Saëns gave a couple of private performances of *Carnival of the Animals* during his lifetime, but he would not allow it to be published, with the exception of the cello solo

piece, “The Swan.” The composer preferred to be known for more serious music. The full piece is often programmed on children’s concerts.

Soloists for the February 18 Concert

Music Director Berkson has programmed music requiring four soloists. Three of them – a sister duo piano team and a narrator – are for *Carnival of the Animals*.

Sam Fischer, violin



Sam Fischer is known to many Symphony Association members due to collaboration with Music Director Gary Berkson at a special event for

high-level donors in 2015. A native of Los Angeles, Fischer has music degrees from USC and Juilliard. He has recorded extensively for movies, records and video games. He is Artist Professor at the University of Redlands School of Music and is on the faculty of the Colburn School of Performing Arts. He is concertmaster of several orchestras, including the Desert Symphony and the Riverside County Philharmonic. Fischer also is active in the chamber music arena. The Peninsula Symphony’s February concert features Fischer in *The Lark Ascending*.

Sonya and Elizabeth Schumann, piano



The Schumann duo-pianists learned how to work together early in childhood, because they both needed to practice

on the family’s one piano before the family bought another one. In addition to performing together as duo-pianists, each sister maintains an active musical schedule with recitals, chamber music and orchestral solo performances, many in the Los Angeles area. Both Elizabeth and Sonya have won several major competitions.

David Selby, narrator



Actor David Selby will be the narrator in *Carnival of the Animals*. Selby is a West Virginia native with many years of stage performances to his credit. His most famous roles are probably as Quentin Collins on the daytime drama *Dark Shadows* and Richard

Channing on *Falcon Crest*. He has guest-starred on many television shows and continues to perform on stage and in radio dramas. Selby earned a PhD in theater from Southern Illinois University following earlier studies at West Virginia University.

Past Events

October 29, 2017 Concert

The October 29, 2017 Peninsula Symphony concert, titled *Water Music*, was on the same day as one of the Dodgers' World Series games, and the result was a smaller-than-usual attendance, but the audience was very attentive and truly seemed to enjoy the concert experience.

Music Director Gary Berkson gave an inspiring pre-concert talk on how the composers depicted the effects of water musically, particularly Glazunov's continuous action of the waves into the storm. He even invited the audience to close their eyes during the performance to feel the energy of the water. He also noted that *On the Waterfront* was the only movie score Bernstein ever wrote. The movie detailed the story of the "mafia-type" atmosphere on the docks in those days. Bernstein wrote the music to reflect the bitter animosity that prevailed.

One of the concert-goers said, "The Bernstein definitely stretched the musical experience for the audience." The musicians also found it challenging to play.

Post-Concert Q&A with the Music Director

Audience members met informally with Gary Berkson. A group of students from Cypress College who were taking a course at USC had plenty of questions and were very engaged with Gary Berkson during this period after the concert.

Post-Concert Reception at Ws China Bistro

Symphony Association members at the Sponsor level and above were invited to a post-concert reception at Ws China Bistro in Redondo Beach.



The orchestra's community players rehearse at Harbor College most Tuesday evenings and are joined by professional musicians for rehearsals two weeks prior to concerts. Note the large size of the ensemble for the first concert.



Music Director/Conductor Gary Berkson led the orchestra at its October 29, 2017 concert.



Symphony Association members at the Sponsor level and above enjoyed the post-concert reception at Ws in Redondo Beach.



Orchestra violinist Pam Bleich celebrated her 89th birthday at one of the rehearsals leading up to the first concert

***An Evening of Piano Puzzlers* ©**

One of the membership benefits for Symphony Association members at the level of Founders and above is an invitation to a special musical event with Maestro Berkson. This year Berkson programmed *An Evening of Piano Puzzlers*. He played a number of piano pieces written by Bruce Adolphe that contain well-known popular tunes re-written in the style of different classical composers. Berkson asked the audience to identify the composer based on the style of the piece and then also to identify the hidden, popular tune. The pieces provided an opportunity for all to discuss various styles of music including Baroque, Classical, Romantic and 20th/21st century and try to differentiate between them. The reasoning behind the guesses was more important than actually getting them right. It was both fun and educational.

Prior to the program, Symphony Association President John Williams announced he had just received a generous donation from Marylyn and Chuck Klaus in recognition of fifty years of symphony music.

Jackie Glass was hostess for this event, and we enjoyed listening to her fine piano. Marion Ruth was in charge of an overflowing table of delicious treats.



The Peninsula Symphony Association considers Marylyn Klaus to be a true angel. She is pictured in front of Jackie Glass' front door.



Audience members await the beginning of the *Piano Puzzlers*© program.



Top: Music Director Gary Berkson, the piano performer/lecturer for the evening. **Middle:** Berkson with hostess Jackie Glass in front of her concert grand piano. **Bottom:** Marion Ruth assembled a full table of goodies.

Knox Competition

The application period recently closed for the 2018 Edith Knox Young Artists Performance Competition. The preliminary round is scheduled for Saturday, February 24 at Harbor College. Symphony Association members at the Benefactor level (\$1000+) and above are invited to attend all or part of the preliminary round and will receive a tentative program schedule in the mail prior to February 24. The final round of competition will be Sunday, April 8 at Redondo Union High School Auditorium and is open to the public for no admission charge.

We rely on private donations to offset competition expenses such as prize monies, facility rental, piano rental and tuning and judging fees. If you would like to contribute, please send a check in any amount to the Peninsula Symphony office and write "Knox" in the memo section.

Membership Update

Our individual members are vital to the success of the Peninsula Symphony. We have a small number of government and foundation grants, but we rely heavily on our individual and family contributors. We set a goal of \$100,000 for membership income in the 2017-2018 season, and we are currently at \$88,769. We have different membership levels, beginning with Contributors at \$75, extending to the Virtuoso level for contributions of \$5000 and above. All members are entitled to attend Music Director Berkson's pre-concert lectures, and the various other levels offer additional benefits. For example, Patrons have preferred seating at all concerts, Sponsors were invited to a reception following the October concert, Founders were invited to a special musical event with Maestro Berkson in December, and Benefactors have reserved seats at concerts and may attend the Edith Knox Young Artists Performance Competition preliminary auditions. These are only some of the benefits of membership. You may visit our website at www.pensym.org, stop by the membership table at any of our concerts or leave a telephone message at the Symphony office at 310-544-0320 for more information.

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The Peninsula Symphony's concerts are also generously supported by the Recording Industry's Music Performance Trust Fund.

Thank you to our Virtuoso Level Members

Our highest membership level, Virtuoso, is for individuals or couples who contribute at least \$5000 to the Peninsula Symphony Association in a single season. As of the end of January, we are proud to announce the Virtuoso contributors for the 2017-2018 season:

Ken and Anita Gash

Marylyn and Chuck Klaus

Dorothy and Allen Lay

John and Sue Williams

General Meeting of the Peninsula Symphony Association

The Symphony Association's annual meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 26, 2018 at Keller Williams Realty Office, 550 Deep Valley Drive (top floor of the Promenade), Rolling Hills Estates. The Board meeting begins at 7:30 PM and the annual membership meeting will follow, at approximately 9:00 PM. All Symphony Association members are eligible to attend either or both meetings.

The primary item of business at the annual meeting is the election of new Board members for the 2018-2019 fiscal year that will begin in July, 2018. The Nominating Committee will present a list of candidates. Association members attending this meeting may nominate additional candidates and may also vote. Please call the Symphony Association office (310-544-0320) if you plan to attend, so that we have sufficient capacity for all attendees. You will receive additional details about the meeting location when you call.

Enjoy the Next Concert!

ANIMAL FARM

Sunday, February 18, 2018 at 7:00 PM
Redondo Union High School Auditorium



Post Office Box 2602
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Contact Information

Any questions or requests about the Peninsula Symphony, the Peninsula Symphony Association or ***Symphony Sounds*** 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 AM 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 also e-mail us at music.pensym@verizon.net. General information about the Symphony (current season schedule, maps and directions, etc.) can be found on our website (www.pensym.org).

Other contacts are:

Peninsula Symphony Association president, John Williams jwskrs@verizon.net

Music Director/Conductor, Gary Berkson conductor.pensym@verizon.net