

Season 2014-2015

Thursday, December 11,
at 8:00
Friday, December 12,
at 8:00
Saturday, December 13,
at 8:00

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Bramwell Tovey Conductor
Alison Balsom Trumpet

Britten *Passacaglia, Op. 33b, from Peter Grimes*

Tovey *Songs of the Paradise Saloon, for trumpet and orchestra*
First Philadelphia Orchestra performances

Intermission

Gershwin *Catfish Row: Suite from Porgy and Bess*
I. Catfish Row
II. Porgy Sings
III. Fugue
IV. Hurricane
V. Good Mornin' Sistuh!

Bernstein/orch. Ramin & Kostal *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 40 minutes.

Philadelphia Orchestra concerts are broadcast on WRTI 90.1 FM on Sunday afternoons at 1 PM. Visit www.wrti.org to listen live or for more details.

The Philadelphia Orchestra



Jessica Griffin

The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the preeminent orchestras in the world, renowned for its distinctive sound, desired for its keen ability to capture the hearts and imaginations of audiences, and admired for a legacy of imagination and innovation on and off the concert stage. The Orchestra is transforming its rich tradition of achievement, sustaining the highest level of artistic quality, but also challenging—and exceeding—that level by creating powerful musical experiences for audiences at home and around the world.

Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin's highly collaborative style, deeply-rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm, paired with a fresh approach to orchestral programming, have been heralded by critics and audiences alike since his inaugural season in 2012. Under his leadership the Orchestra returned to recording with a celebrated CD of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* and Leopold Stokowski transcriptions on the Deutsche Grammophon label, continuing its history of recording success. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of listeners on the radio with weekly Sunday afternoon broadcasts on WRTI-FM.

Philadelphia is home, and the Orchestra nurtures an important relationship with patrons who support the main season at the Kimmel Center, and also with those who enjoy the Orchestra's other area performances at the Mann Center, Penn's Landing, and other cultural, civic, and learning venues. The Orchestra maintains a strong commitment to collaborations with cultural and community organizations on a regional and national level.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, presentations, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador for Philadelphia and for the United States. Having been the first American orchestra to perform in China, in 1973 at the request of President Nixon, today The Philadelphia Orchestra boasts a new partnership with the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing. The ensemble annually performs at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center while also enjoying summer residencies in Saratoga Springs, New York, and Vail, Colorado.

The Philadelphia Orchestra has a decades-long tradition of presenting learning and community engagement opportunities for listeners of all ages. The Orchestra's recent initiative, the Fabulous Philadelphians Offstage, Philly Style!, has taken musicians off the traditional concert stage and into the community, including highly-successful Pop-Up concerts, PlayINs, SingINs, and ConductINs. The Orchestra's musicians, in their own dedicated roles as teachers, coaches, and mentors, serve a key role in growing young musician talent and a love of classical music, nurturing and celebrating the wealth of musicianship in the Philadelphia region. For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit www.philorch.org.

Music Director

Chris Lee



Music Director **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** continues his inspired leadership of The Philadelphia Orchestra, which began in the fall of 2012. His highly collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm, paired with a fresh approach to orchestral programming, have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called Nézet-Séguin “phenomenal,” adding that under his baton, “the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better.” He has taken the Orchestra to new musical heights. Highlights of his third season as music director include an Art of the Pipe Organ festival; the 40/40 Project, in which 40 great compositions that haven’t been heard on subscription concerts in at least 40 years will be performed; and Bernstein’s *MASS*, the pinnacle of the Orchestra’s five-season requiem cycle.

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most exciting talents of his generation. He has been music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic since 2008 and artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000. He also continues to enjoy a close relationship with the London Philharmonic, of which he was principal guest conductor. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world’s most revered ensembles, and he has conducted critically acclaimed performances at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Deutsche Grammophon (DG) enjoy a long-term collaboration. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with a CD on that label of Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring* and Leopold Stokowski transcriptions. He continues a fruitful recording relationship with the Rotterdam Philharmonic on DG, EMI Classics, and BIS Records; the London Philharmonic and Choir for the LPO label; and the Orchestre Métropolitain for ATMA Classique.

A native of Montreal, Yannick Nézet-Séguin studied at that city’s Conservatory of Music and continued lessons with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini and with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick’s honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada, one of the country’s highest civilian honors; a Royal Philharmonic Society Award; Canada’s National Arts Centre Award; the Prix Denise-Pelletier, the highest distinction for the arts in Quebec; and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec in Montreal and the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

To read Yannick’s full bio, please visit www.philorch.org/conductor.

Conductor



David Cooper

Pianist, composer, and Grammy Award-winning conductor **Bramwell Tovey** has been music director of the Vancouver Symphony (VSO) since 2000. His tenure there has included complete Beethoven, Mahler, and Brahms symphony cycles; tours of China, Korea, Canada, and the United States; and the establishment of an annual festival dedicated to contemporary music. He is also the artistic adviser of the VSO School of Music, which opened in downtown Vancouver in 2011. In 2018, the VSO's centenary year, he will become the ensemble's music director emeritus.

Since his debut with The Philadelphia Orchestra at the Mann in 2008, Mr. Tovey has performed with the ensemble at Saratoga and Wolf Trap and led holiday and New Year's Eve concerts. This season he makes his subscription debut and also returns for the Glorious Sound of Christmas. In the 2014-15 season he also makes guest appearances with the New York and BBC philharmonics, and the Melbourne, Sydney, Helsingborg, and Kansas City symphonies. He made his debut with the Chicago Symphony at the Ravinia Festival in the summer of 2014. Other recent guest appearances include performances with the Royal and Los Angeles philharmonics, the Boston and Toronto symphonies, and the Cleveland Orchestra.

Mr. Tovey's *Requiem for a Charred Skull* won the 2003 JUNO award for Best Classical Composition. His opera *The Inventor*, written with playwright John Murrell, was commissioned by Calgary Opera and recorded with the original cast, the Vancouver Symphony, and the University of British Columbia Opera for release on Naxos. As a pianist, Mr. Tovey has appeared as soloist with many major orchestras. In the summer of 2014 he played and conducted Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in Saratoga with the Philadelphians. He has performed his own *Pictures in the Smoke* with the Melbourne and Helsingborg symphonies and the Royal Philharmonic. Mr. Tovey was music director of the Winnipeg Symphony from 1989 to 2001, and music director of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Luxembourg from 2002 to 2006. He is a fellow of the Royal Academy of Music in London and the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, and he holds honorary degrees from the universities of British Columbia, Manitoba, Kwantlen, and Winnipeg. In 2013 he was appointed an honorary Officer of the Order of Canada for services to music.

Soloist

Maker



Gramophone Artist of the Year for 2013, trumpeter **Alison Balsom** is also a three-time winner at both the Classic BRIT and the ECHO Klassik awards. She has performed with some of the greatest conductors and orchestras of our time, including the Los Angeles, Hong Kong, and BBC philharmonics; the San Francisco, NHK, BBC, BBC Scottish, Vienna, and Toronto symphonies; the Philharmonia Orchestra; the BBC National Orchestra of Wales; and the Orchestre de Paris. She first performed with The Philadelphia Orchestra at Saratoga in August 2014 and makes her subscription debut with these current performances.

In 2014 Ms. Balsom visited some of the poorest areas of Uganda as a patron for Brass for Africa. Other highlights of the past year have included speaking at a TEDMED conference about the power of music; launching and supporting the BBC's long-term music education campaign, Ten Pieces; performing at the iTunes Festival for the first time; working in partnership with the newly invented all-plastic trumpet, the pTrumpet; and appearing in BBC Music's "God Only Knows" video, which had eight million YouTube hits in the first month. She also returned to Royal Albert Hall for her first solo show, which was the climax of a successful U.K. tour based on her new album, *Paris*, and featured performances with a string quartet, a jazz quintet, and her own band.

In addition to transcribing and arranging existing works for both natural and valved instruments, Ms. Balsom is increasingly active in commissioning new works for trumpet. She has performed *Songs of the Paradise Saloon* by Bramwell Tovey and earlier this year premiered a new work by Qigang Chen in China and at the BBC Proms. She is currently working with Guy Barker on a new symphonic work for 2015. Her world premiere performance of James MacMillan's *Seraph* at Wigmore Hall in February 2011 went on to become the title track of her EMI Classics release that year. Her 2012 album, *Sound the Trumpet*, features works by Purcell and Handel with harpsichordist Trevor Pinnock and the English Concert on period instruments. And *The Sound of Alison Balsom*, released in 2013, features favorite recordings from her past award-winning albums, including performances on both the natural and the modern trumpet. Ms. Balsom studied trumpet at the Paris Conservatory and the Guildhall School of Music, where she is now a fellow.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1934

Gershwin

Catfish Row

Music

Prokofiev

Lieutenant Kijé

Literature

Graves

I Claudius

Art

Arp

Human

Concretion

History

John Dillinger

shot

Music originally conceived for opera and musical theater, adapted for orchestral concert performance, connects the four pieces on the program tonight, works written by figures notable both as composers and performers.

Peter Grimes, Benjamin Britten's first full-scale opera, was hailed as a masterpiece upon its premiere in 1945. It is based on a poem about a small coastal village in which a fisherman's apprentices die mysteriously; the scenes are linked by evocative interludes that are frequently excerpted in concert. Tonight's concert opens with the *Passacaglia* from the Second Act, an extended funereal interlude foreshadowing the death of one of the apprentices and ultimately of *Peter Grimes* himself.

1944

Britten

Peter Grimes

Music

Strauss

Metamorphosen

Literature

Hersey

A Bell for Adano

Art

Kahlo

The Broken

Column

History

D-Day landings

in Normandy

While composing his opera *The Inventor*, the conductor this evening, Bramwell Tovey, decided to employ some of its musical material in an orchestral piece called *Songs of the Paradise Saloon*, which features a single soloist playing trumpet, flugelhorn, cornet, and piccolo trumpet. George Gershwin likewise choose to excerpt sections from his popular opera *Porgy and Bess* for use in a concert suite now known as *Catfish Row*, which The Philadelphia Orchestra premiered in 1936 with Gershwin himself as piano soloist.

1957

Bernstein

West Side Story

Music

Shostakovich

Symphony No.

11

Literature

Fleming

From Russia,

with Love

Art

Noguchi

Endless

Coupling

History

USSR launches

Sputnik 2

Leonard Bernstein, another conductor/composer, cast *West Side Story* as a modern retelling of the familiar story of Romeo and Juliet. The concert concludes with a suite of Symphonic Dances, including favorite moments such as "Mambo," "Rumble," "Maria," and "Somewhere."

The Music

Passacaglia, from *Peter Grimes*



Benjamin Britten
Born in Lowestoft, England,
November 22, 1913
Died in Aldeburgh,
December 4, 1976

Benjamin Britten numbers among a select company of composers who mastered both dramatic and non-dramatic music. Rossini, Wagner, Verdi, Puccini, and others devoted their careers primarily to opera while figures such as Beethoven, Schumann, Brahms, and Mahler either shunned theatrical music entirely or essayed a lone opera. Mozart was perhaps the one who best did it all and Britten was a rare 20th-century example. He composed a dozen operas, with *Peter Grimes* his first full-scale one and his most famous. The advantage of writing across various genres is that a composer can learn from experience, bringing, for instance, dramatic elements into an instrumental work or enriching an opera with an abstract formal technique, such as the Passacaglia from *Peter Grimes* we hear tonight.

From Poem to Opera Britten and his life-long partner, tenor Peter Pears, came to America in April 1939 and stayed for three years. In his native England, Britten had already written incidental music for stage, film, and radio and now produced an operetta, *Paul Bunyan*, which premiered at Columbia University in 1941. Although he recalled that “critics damned it unmercifully,” audiences seemed to like it, which encouraged him to take on a larger operatic project. While in California that year he became intrigued by writings of the English poet George Crabbe (1754-1832) and decided to write an opera based on part of his collection of poems, *The Borough*, about a gossiping town in which a fisherman’s apprentices die mysteriously.

Bolstered by a commission from conductor Serge Koussevitzky, Britten and Pears developed a scenario, partly written aboard ship while returning to England in April 1942, and then enlisted Montagu Slater to write the libretto. Britten began composing the music in January 1944 and completed the work in February of the next year, premiering it at Sadler’s Wells in London that June. Many hailed it as the greatest English opera since Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* more than 250 years earlier.

A Closer Look Britten made *Peter Grimes*, an outcast shunned by most of the folks in a small coastal fishing village, more sympathetic than in Crabbe’s original poem. The opera opens with an inquest into the death at sea

Peter Grimes was composed between 1944 and 1945.

The Passacaglia has only been performed twice by The Philadelphia Orchestra, both on subscription concerts: in 1975 with Eugene Ormandy and in 1981 with James Conlon.

The Philadelphia Orchestra and Eugene Ormandy recorded the work in 1977 for RCA.

The score calls for two flutes (fl doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, gong, snare drum, tambourine, tam-tam, tenor drum), harp, celesta, and strings.

The Passacaglia runs approximately seven minutes in performance.

of one of the fisherman's young apprentices; Grimes is exonerated but warned to watch his behavior. After a second apprentice accidentally falls to his death, Grimes casts his boat off to sea and drowns.

Britten divided the opera into a prologue and three acts, each with two scenes for which he wrote purely instrumental interludes. There is a long history of such bridging material; one thinks of great examples from 19th-century Italian opera, but Britten had more recent models in Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* (1925) and Dmitri Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (1934). The young Britten had hoped to study with Berg (an unrealized wish) and greatly admired his slightly older Russian contemporary. About the "remarkable" instrumental sections in *Lady Macbeth* he observed that "Shostakovich makes detached comments on the previous gruesome events on the stage." This is a possibility Britten also exploits: using the interludes to comment on what is happening dramatically, either on what has just occurred or anticipating what will come. Musical themes likewise can pass in review or be prefigured. There is a practical benefit as well to such interludes as it allows time for sets to be changed.

There are six orchestral sections in *Peter Grimes*, four of which Britten published separately as "Sea Interludes": "Dawn," "Sunday Morning," "Moonlight," and "Storm." In addition there is the Passacaglia that serves as the interlude in Act 2. In the previous scene, Ellen Orford, who Grimes hopes to marry, notices that his new apprentice has a bruise. The increasingly unstable Grimes hits her and the townspeople sing a chorus stating "Grimes is at his exercise." The Passacaglia serves as an interlude to the next scene in which the apprentice will fall to his death.

The passacaglia is a Baroque technique in which a theme or harmonic pattern is repeated many times underneath countermelodies above. Britten uses a brief bass theme, initially plucked in the double basses and leading to a timpani roll, which he repeats 39 times. A countermelody first played by solo violas undergoes a series of contrasting variations. The first one is livelier, scored for brass and woodwinds, but the listener still perceives the constant repetition underneath of the passacaglia motto. The unfolding of this interlude, gaining power and intensity and building to an inexorable climax, might be likened to a funeral march, evoking the deaths of the two apprentices and ultimately of Peter Grimes, who Britten casts as a figure as much to be pitied as blamed.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

The Music

Songs of the Paradise Saloon

Jyer Boye



Bramwell Tovey
Born in Ilford, England,
July 11, 1953
Now living in Vancouver,
Canada

English-born Canadian musician Bramwell Tovey belongs to the tradition of the conductor-composer, whose ranks also include Gustav Mahler and Leonard Bernstein. A graduate of London's Royal Academy of Music, Tovey enjoys a busy schedule as music director of the Vancouver Symphony, plus regular guest conducting engagements with the orchestras of Toronto, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Chicago, and elsewhere. His conservatory training was as a pianist and composer, but Tovey's talent on the podium led him early into a conducting career and, in 1986, "overnight" recognition came when, at the last minute, he took over a festival of Leonard Bernstein's music at London's Barbican Centre, under the watchful eye of Bernstein himself.

From Opera to Concerto Tovey returned to his original musical passion of composing in the year 2000, writing a Cello Concerto, and has since accelerated his production of new works. Many feature whimsical titles, such as the choir-and-band piece *Requiem for a Charred Skull* and the orchestral score *Urban Runway*. Critics have variously termed his compositions "arch," "fun," "jazzy," and "crazy." *Songs of the Paradise Saloon* was commissioned in 2008 by the Toronto Symphony for its principal trumpet, Andrew McCandless, to whom the score is dedicated. In keeping with the present program's theme of music derived from stage works, *Songs of the Paradise Saloon* expands on music from the bar scene in Tovey's opera, *The Inventor*, to a libretto by John Murrell.

Commissioned by the Calgary Opera and premiered by that company in 2011, *The Inventor* is based on historical events. The actual Paradise Saloon was a 19th-century New York bar frequented by the opera's central character, Alexander "Sandy" Keith, Jr., of Nova Scotia. Keith was a con man and mass murderer, notorious for having blown up an ocean liner, killing 80 people in order to collect the insurance money. He was also a spy for the Confederacy in the Civil War, and yet, by all accounts, a loving husband and father. The bar scene in *The Inventor* finds Keith taking in the atmosphere of the Paradise, a "cocktail of characters, ... lots of loose life with Bacchanalian intentions," in the words of the composer.

Songs of the Paradise Saloon was composed from 2008 to 2009.

These are the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work.

Tovey scored the piece for soloist (playing trumpet, flugelhorn, cornet, and piccolo trumpet), three flutes (II doubling piccolo), two oboes (II doubling English horn), two clarinets (II doubling bass clarinet), two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, bell tree, brass wind chimes, claves, crash cymbals, glockenspiel, marimba, slapstick, suspended cymbal, tambourine, tam-tam, trap set, triangle, vibraphone, vibraslap, xylophone), harp, piano (doubling celesta), and strings.

The concerto runs approximately 25 minutes.

A Closer Look Tovey explains *Songs of the Paradise Saloon* as follows:

Listeners might imagine their own scenario. The work is based upon a brief motif heard at the outset on violas and cellos, again in the central slow section, and finally in a blaze of color at the climax of the work. Its character is ambivalent; aspirational yet despairing, passionate but desolate. The trumpet soloist (who also plays flugelhorn, cornet, and piccolo trumpet) never plays the theme, but manipulates it throughout. Fragments of the theme (as if it has been shattered) are used in the 12 variations that follow. The music is laced with post-minimalism, jazz, and polytonal elements.

Tovey has said that the commission to write a trumpet concerto came in the midst of composing *The Inventor*, and that he decided to use materials from the opera's bar scene because "brass players and saloons are not necessarily inseparable." The materials include music from the completed opera, but also passages used in the workshop for the production that were later excised. Tovey's idea was that the orchestra represents visitors to the saloon. Among them are: "A Man Who Scratches and Smells" and "A Woman with a Feathery Fan." The soloist stands in for con man Keith, a manipulator hunting for a mark among the inebriated. As he moves from potential victim to potential victim, Keith changes his approach and his character; likewise, the soloist changes his instrument from one member of the trumpet family to another. As Tovey describes it, "One minute, the soloist is on the trumpet in C, being brazen and brash with all the lads at the bar. The next minute, he's on the flugelhorn, being seductive. Then he's being softer and more delicate on the B-flat trumpet." Cornet and piccolo trumpet are also exploited for their respective sounds, as Keith slithers his way around the barroom.

"It's pretty obvious what's going on, if you've ever been in a pub," Tovey says. "If you've never been in a pub, here's your chance to experience one without having to buy your own round."

—Kenneth LaFave

The Music

Catfish Row: Suite from Porgy and Bess



George Gershwin
Born in Brooklyn, New
York, September 26, 1898
Died in Hollywood,
California, July 11, 1937

By 1920 the fabulously successful George Gershwin had begun to contemplate venturing further into the realm of concert music, remarking, "Operettas that represent the life and spirit of this country are decidedly my aim. After that may come opera, but I want all my work to have the one element of appealing to the great majority of our people." In 1922 he experimented with the creation of a concise, one-act "jazz opera," *Blue Monday Blues*. This attractive and lively score only whetted the appetite of Gershwin's legion of admirers for a full-length opera. Two years later he composed his great "crossover" hit, the *Rhapsody in Blue* for piano and jazz band.

Alongside his invaluable apprenticeship on Tin Pan Alley, Gershwin was exposed to classical music at an early age. The child of Jewish immigrants from Russia, Gershwin, along with his brother Ira, who was one of the most gifted lyricists ever, grew up in New York's colorful and teeming Lower East Side. At that time the area was home to an astonishing immigrant culture, including superb Yiddish theaters and opera companies.

A Grounding in Classical Music A decisive moment in Gershwin's musical development came when he was around 10 years old and heard a student violinist perform Antonín Dvořák's Humoresque. Enraptured, he later recalled, "It was, to me, a flashing revelation of beauty." Interestingly enough, Dvořák's music, and especially the Humoresque, had a profound influence on Gershwin's later music. As his biographer Howard Pollack has noted, "Regarding Humoresque, this included Gershwin's predilection for pentatonic melodies, dotted rhythms, and even blue notes." Furthermore, Gershwin's first piano teacher, Charles Hambitzer, made sure that his precocious student had a thorough grounding in the classical piano repertory, including music by Chopin, Grieg, Liszt, Debussy, and Ravel.

An omnivorous curiosity led Gershwin to study in later years with Henry Cowell, Wallingford Riegger, and, most importantly, Joseph Schillinger. (Like Sergei Prokofiev, Schillinger was a pupil of Nikolai Tcherepnin in St. Petersburg; he developed an idiosyncratic method of

Porgy and Bess was composed from 1933 to 1935 and the *Catfish Row Suite* was arranged in 1936.

Catfish Row was given its world premiere by The Philadelphia Orchestra in January 1936, led by Alexander Smallens, with Gershwin himself playing the piano part; the composer also performed his *Piano Concerto in F* on the same program.

The *Suite* has never appeared on a Philadelphia Orchestra subscription concert until now.

The score calls for two flutes (II doubling piccolo), two oboes (II doubling English horn), four clarinets (IV doubling bass clarinet), bassoon, three horns, three trumpets, two trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, chimes, cymbals, drum set, glockenspiel, snare drum, suspended cymbal, tom-tom, triangle, woodblock, xylophone), piano, banjo, and strings.

The piece runs approximately 23 minutes in performance.

composition based on mathematical principles.) As Ira Gershwin testified, "George from the age of 13 or 14 never let up in his studies of so-called classical foundations and that by the time he was 30 or so could be considered a musicologist (dreadful word) of the first degree besides being a composer." Upon George's tragic early death at age 38, his friend in Los Angeles, Arnold Schoenberg, paid him a moving tribute: "Music to him was the air he breathed, the food which nourished him, the drink that refreshed him. ... Directness of this kind is given only to great men and there is no doubt that he was a great composer."

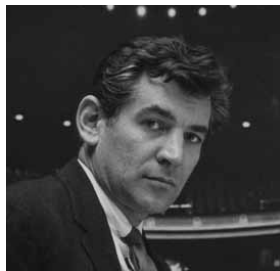
Like Dvořák, Gershwin believed that one of the cornerstones of any authentically "American" art music must be that of African Americans, especially spirituals and jazz. So when it came time for him to write his grand opera, he turned to the lives, joys, and sufferings of African Americans as a subject. In 1926 Gershwin read DuBose Heyward's novel *Porgy*, which had been published to great acclaim the year before. It is a tale of love and loss set amid the lives of African Americans in Charleston, South Carolina. Work on the opera, entitled *Porgy and Bess*, occupied Gershwin, Ira, who wrote many of the lyrics, and Heyward from 1933 until its first performance on Broadway on October 10, 1935. Heyward later recalled Gershwin as a "young man of enormous physical and emotional vitality ... who knew exactly what he wanted and where he was going."

A Closer Look In its first version, which was premiered in Boston on September 30, 1935, *Porgy and Bess* lasted some four hours. Gershwin realized that his opera was too long—the part of *Porgy* was both grueling and impractical—and began to make cuts to his score with an eye towards the New York production. During the opera's run on Broadway, he extracted a suite that Ira more than two decades later entitled *Catfish Row*. George clearly sought to save some of the music that he had cut from the original version, but also wanted to disseminate *Porgy and Bess* as widely—and quickly—as possible. This suite, which contains beloved passages such as "Summertime" and "Bess, You Is My Woman" as well as less familiar music, such as the "Fugue," the skillfully wrought fight music from the third act, was premiered by the Russian-born conductor Alexander Smallens leading The Philadelphia Orchestra on January 21, 1936.

—Byron Adams

The Music

Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*
(orchestrated by Sid Ramin and Irwin Kostal)



Leonard Bernstein
Born in Lawrence,
Massachusetts, August 25,
1918
Died in New York City,
October 14, 1990

"Street brawls, double death—it all fits." Thus the 30-year-old Leonard Bernstein had first mused over the idea of making Shakespeare's classic into a Broadway musical. During the mid-1950s, when he and his collaborator, Arthur Laurents, began sketching out the piece that would become one of the most successful musicals of all time, the issue of juvenile crime was reaching epidemic proportions in America. And it was in this setting that Bernstein found the ideal backdrop for his love story—a musical that succeeded not just because of its wonderful music, but because it dealt in a subject matter that yearned toward universality.

Love vs. Hate "The chief problem," wrote the composer, "is to tread the fine line between opera and Broadway, between realism and poetry, ballet and 'just dancing,' abstract and representational ... [to tell] a tragic story in musical-comedy terms." *West Side Story*, which received its premiere in August 1957 in Washington's National Theater, tread that line as effectively as any musical has. It was an enormous hit then, and it has remained a model for composers of musical theater ever since. "I am now convinced," wrote the composer later, "that what we dreamed all these years *is* possible; because there stands that tragic love story, with a theme as profound as love versus hate."

A sense of impending doom is palpable throughout *West Side Story*, as it is in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*—but it doesn't prevent the principals from singing and dancing as if their lives depended on it. A great many arrangements of this music, for a variety of instrumental combinations, have been produced over the years; the best of these is the 20-minute collection of Symphonic Dances arranged by the composer with his friends Sid Ramin and Irwin Kostal, who had worked with Bernstein in orchestrating the original *West Side Story*.

A Closer Look The **Prologue**, depicting the rivalry between the two gangs, the "Jets" and the "Sharks," contains the famous "finger-snapping"—to be executed

West Side Story was composed in 1957, and the Symphonic Dances were arranged/orchestrated in 1961.

The Philadelphia Orchestra first performed selections from West Side Story in November 1961, with Arthur Fiedler. The Symphonic Dances were first played in July 1976 at the Robin Hood Dell, led by Bernstein himself. The most recent subscription concerts were conducted by Christoph Eschenbach, in January 2008, but the work was last performed this past October on the Orchestra's free College Night Concert, led by Assistant Conductor Lio Kuokman.

The Dances are scored for piccolo, three flutes (III doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, E-flat clarinet, two clarinets, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, bongos, chime, conga drums, cowbells, cymbals, drum set, finger cymbals, gong, guiro, maracas, orchestra bells, police whistle, tambourine, tenor drum, timbales, triangle, vibraphone, wood block, and xylophone), celesta, harp, piano, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 20 minutes.

by "as many members of the orchestra as possible," as Bernstein writes in the score. Its climax segues directly into **Somewhere**, the visionary scene in which the gangs momentarily unite in friendship, breaking out of the city's grimy confines (in the **Scherzo**) to find themselves in a dreamlike world where there is no hatred. The **Mambo** returns the listener to the gangs and their grudges.

In the **Cha-Cha** and the **Meeting Scene** the doomed lovers meet for the first time, dance together (amidst general disapproval), and speak for the first time (the "Maria" tune is heard here). The **"Cool" Fugue** finds the Jets in a conciliatory mood, "stylizing" their aggression with a strutting dance-complex. **Rumble** depicts the final gang war, in which the two leaders die. The "Somewhere" melody returns for the **Finale**, as if to say, there is a place for our "forbidden" love, somewhere—but not here, not now.

—Paul J. Horsley

Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

Cadence: The conclusion to a phrase, movement, or piece based on a recognizable melodic formula, harmonic progression, or dissonance resolution

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Chromatic: Relating to tones foreign to a given key (scale) or chord

Dissonance: A combination of two or more tones requiring resolution

Fugue: A piece of music in which a short melody is stated by one voice and then imitated by the other voices in succession, reappearing throughout the entire piece in all the voices at different places

Ground bass: A continually repeated bass phrase of four or eight measures

Harmonic: Pertaining to chords and to the theory and practice of harmony

Harmony: The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

Humoresque: Derived from the Latin "humor," pertaining to human disposition. A genre of music characterized by pieces with strongly marked rhythms and the frequent repetition of short-breathed tunes, mostly written for piano.

Legato: Smooth, even, without any break between notes

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Minimalism: A style of composition characterized by an intentionally simplified rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic vocabulary

Octave: The interval between any two notes that are seven diatonic (non-chromatic) scale degrees apart

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output. Opus numbers are not always reliable because they are often applied in the order of publication rather than composition.

Ostinato: A steady bass

accompaniment, repeated over and over

Passacaglia: In 19th- and 20th-century music, a set of ground-bass or ostinato variations, usually of a serious character

Pentatonic: Five tones

Polyphony: A term used to designate music in more than one part and the style in which all or several of the musical parts move to some extent independently

Polytonal: The simultaneous use of multiple keys or tonalities in different parts of the musical fabric

Rhapsody: Generally an instrumental fantasia on folksongs or on motifs taken from primitive national music

Scale: The series of tones which form (a) any major or minor key or (b) the chromatic scale of successive semi-tonic steps

Semitone: The smallest interval of the modern Western tone system, or 1/12 of an octave

Timbre: Tone color or tone quality

Tonic: The keynote of a scale

January

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Enjoy the ultimate in flexibility with a Create-Your-Own 4-Concert Series today! Choose 4 or more concerts that fit your schedule and your tastes. Hurry, before tickets disappear for this exciting season.

There's still time to subscribe and receive exclusive subscriber benefits! Choose from over 50 performances including:

Eschenbach Visits with Strauss and Schumann

Thursday, January 8 8 PM

Friday, January 9 2 PM

Saturday, January 10 8 PM

Christoph Eschenbach Conductor

Jennifer Montone Horn

Strauss *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*

Strauss Horn Concerto No. 1

Schumann Symphony No. 2

St. Petersburg Festival 1: Tchaikovsky

Thursday, January 15 8 PM

Friday, January 16 2 PM

Saturday, January 17 8 PM

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor

Glazunov "Winter," from *The Seasons*

Tchaikovsky Suite Nos. 1 & 2, from *The Nutcracker*

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5

TICKETS Call 215.893.1999 or log on to www.philorch.org

PreConcert Conversations are held prior to every Philadelphia Orchestra subscription concert, beginning 1 hour before curtain.

All artists, dates, programs, and prices subject to change. All tickets subject to availability.

Tickets & Patron Services

Thank you for joining us in Verizon Hall. We want you to enjoy each and every concert experience you share with us. We would love to hear about your experience at the Orchestra and are happy to answer any questions you may have. Please don't hesitate to contact us via phone at 215.893.1999, in person in the lobby, or by e-mail at patronservices@philorch.org.

Subscriber Services: **215.893.1955**

Patron Services: 215.893.1999

Fire Notice: The exit indicated by a red light nearest your seat is the shortest route to the street. In the event of fire or other emergency, please do not run. Walk to that exit.

No Smoking: All public space in the Kimmel Center is smoke-free.

Cameras and Recorders: The taking of photographs or the recording of Philadelphia Orchestra concerts is strictly prohibited.

Phones and Paging Devices: All electronic devices—including cellular telephones, pagers, and wristwatch alarms—should be turned off while in the concert hall.

Late Seating: Late seating breaks usually occur after the first piece on the program or at intermission in order to minimize disturbances to other audience members who have already begun listening to the music. If you arrive after the concert begins, you will be seated as quickly as possible by the usher staff.

Accessible Seating: Accessible seating is available for every performance. Please call Patron Services at 215.893.1999 for more information. You may also purchase accessible seating online at www.philorch.org.

Assistive Listening: With the deposit of a current ID, hearing enhancement devices are available at no cost from the House Management Office.

Headsets are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Large-Print Programs:

Large-print programs for every subscription concert are available in the House Management Office in Commonwealth Plaza. Please ask an usher for assistance.

PreConcert Conversations:

PreConcert Conversations are held prior to every Philadelphia Orchestra subscription concert, beginning one hour before curtain. Conversations are free to ticket-holders, feature discussions of the season's music and music-makers, and are supported in part by the Wells Fargo Foundation.

Lost and Found: Please call 215.670.2321.

Web Site: For information about The Philadelphia Orchestra and its upcoming concerts or events, please visit www.philorch.org.

Subscriptions: The Philadelphia Orchestra offers a variety of subscription options each season. These multi-concert packages feature the best available seats, ticket exchange privileges, guaranteed seat renewal for the following season, discounts on individual tickets, and many other benefits. For more information, please call 215.893.1955 or visit www.philorch.org.

Ticket Turn-In: Subscribers who cannot use their tickets are invited to donate them and receive a tax-deductible credit by calling 215.893.1999. Tickets may be turned in any time up to the start of the concert. Twenty-four-hour notice is appreciated, allowing other patrons the opportunity to purchase these tickets.

Individual Tickets: Don't assume that your favorite concert is sold out. Subscriber turn-ins and other special promotions can make last-minute tickets available. Call Ticket Philadelphia at 215.893.1999 or stop by the Kimmel Center Box Office.

Ticket Philadelphia Staff

Gary Lustig,
Vice President
Carrie Farina,
Director, Patron Services
Dan Ahearn, Jr.,
Box Office Manager
Gregory McCormick,
Service and Training Manager
Catherine Pappas,
Project Manager
Michelle Parkhill,
Client Relations Manager
Jayson Bucy,
Patron Services Supervisor
Samantha Apgar,
Business Operations
Coordinator
Elysse Madonna,
Program and Web Coordinator
Tad Dynakowski,
Assistant Treasurer, Box Office
Michelle Messa,
Assistant Treasurer, Box Office
Patricia O'Connor,
Assistant Treasurer, Box Office
Thomas Sharkey,
Assistant Treasurer, Box Office
James Shelley, Assistant
Treasurer, Box Office
Tara Bankard,
Lead Patron Services
Representative
Meg Hackney,
Lead Patron Services
Representative
Hannah McIntosh,
Lead Patron Services
Representative
Julia Schranck,
Lead Patron Services
Representative
Elizabeth Jackson-Murray,
Priority Services
Representative
Megan Brown,
Patron Services
Representative
Maureen Esty,
Patron Services
Representative
Isaiah Harris,
Patron Services
Representative
Brand-I Curtis McCloud,
Patron Services
Representative
Scott Leitch,
Quality Assurance Analyst