

EIGHTY-SIXTH SEASON

Symphony Center Presents

Wednesday, December 14, 2016, at 8:00

Special Concert

THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA BRASS**Michael Mulcahy** Conductor**Jay Friedman** Conductor**Gene Pokorny** Tuba**Schuller**

Symphony for Brass and Percussion, Op. 16

Andante

Vivace

Lento desolato

Introduction: Allegro

Schuman (arr. Schutz)When Jesus Wept FROM *New England Triptych***Bernstein (arr. Erikson)**Presto barbaro FROM *On the Waterfront***INTERMISSION****Debussy**Fanfare FROM *Le martyre de Saint Sébastien***Tomasi***Être ou ne pas être*

GENE POKORNY, tuba

Fauré (arr. Pollard)

Pavane, Op. 50

Poulenc (arr. Higgins)*Quatre petites prières de Saint François d'Assise*

Salut, Dame Sainte

Tout puissant, très saint

Seigneur, je vous en prie

Ô mes très chers frères

Tomasi*Fanfares liturgiques*

Annonciation

Evangile

Apocalypse

Procession du Vendredi-Saint

Gunther Schuller

Born November 22, 1925; New York City, New York
Died June 21, 2015; Boston, Massachusetts

Symphony for Brass and Percussion, Op. 16



COMPOSED
1949–50

Gunther Schuller led a musical career of almost dizzying diversity. The son of a German-born violinist in the New York Philharmonic, he studied theory, flute, and

horn privately while attending the Saint Thomas Choir School in New York City. He proved to be a prodigy on the horn, and at the age of eighteen, he joined the New York City Ballet Orchestra. A year later, he was appointed principal horn of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

During his tenure in Cincinnati, he discovered the music of Duke Ellington and thereafter devoted much of his career to jazz; he performed and recorded with such jazz greats as Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, and John Lewis, and became a leading authority on the subject. Schuller's *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development* is one of the most important contributions to the field of historical jazz research; his monumental study titled *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz, 1930–1945* was published in 1989.

From 1945 to 1959, Schuller was principal horn of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Though he had no conservatory training, he began composing around 1940. Among his first works was *Concerto for Horn*, which he premiered in Cincinnati in 1945. By the time he gave up performing in 1962, Schuller had completed some forty compositions.

From 1950 to 1963, Schuller taught at the Manhattan School of Music and spent the following three years on the faculty of Yale University. He then moved to the New England Conservatory of Music, for which he served as president from 1967 to 1977. As a conductor and recording artist, he championed the works

of underappreciated American composers such as Scott Joplin and John Knowles Paine and, in 1975, he founded the Margun Press to issue previously unpublished American scores. He also prepared important editions of works by Ives, Joplin, Weill, and Hartmann.

Schuller also was a broadcaster and produced a series of weekly radio programs on twentieth-century music for New York's WBAI-FM. In 1973, he wrote and introduced six programs on contemporary music for PBS. A collection of his writings, *Musings: The Musical Worlds of Gunther Schuller*, was published in 1986. In 1997, Schuller published *The Compleat Conductor*, a survey of the history, philosophy, and art of conducting (as well as a frank commentary on the rise of celebrity conductors). In 2011, he saw the publication of the first volume of his autobiography, *Gunther Schuller, A Life in Pursuit of Music and Beauty*.

Among Schuller's many honors are eleven honorary degrees, membership in the National Institute of Arts and Letters and American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the William Schuman Prize of Columbia University, a MacArthur Foundation grant, a BMI Lifetime Achievement Award, the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for Music (for his *Of Reminiscences and Reflections*), and the Gold Medal for Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 1970, he received the Ditson Conducting Award for "his unselfish championship of fellow composers."

He remained active as a conductor and composer until his death in June 2015.

The *Symphony for Brass and Percussion* was completed in February 1950, with the first three movements written in late 1949. The premiere occurred in 1951 at a concert of the International Society of Contemporary Music in New York under the direction of Léon Barzin. The work received subsequent performances conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos and Pierre Monteux, the

former performing the work with the New York Philharmonic as well as at the Salzburg Festival. It also has served as the basis for a dance treatment by José Limon under the title *The Traitor*.

The composer provided the following information as a preface to the score, published in 1959:

The concept of the symphony is of four contrasting movements, each representing one aspect of brass characteristics. Unity is maintained by a line of increasing inner intensity (not loudness) that reaches its peak in the last movement. The introductory first movement is followed by a scherzo with passages requiring great agility and technical dexterity. The third movement, scored almost

entirely for six muted trumpets, brings about a further intensification of expression. The precipitous outburst at the beginning of the last movement introduces a kind of cadenza in which a solo trumpet dominates. A short timpani roll provides a bridge to the finale proper, which is a kind of perpetuum mobile. Running through the entire movement are sixteenth-note figures passing from one instrument to another in an unbroken chain. Out of this chattering pattern emerges the climax of the movement, in which a chord consisting of all twelve notes of the chromatic scale is broken up in a sort of rhythmic atomization, each pitch being sounded on a different sixteenth of the measure. ■

William Schuman

Born August 4, 1910; New York City, New York

Died February 15, 1992; New York City, New York

When Jesus Wept FROM *New England Triptych*



COMPOSED
1956

William Schuman was one of America's most distinguished composers and educators. After studying at Columbia University and privately with Roy Harris, he

joined the faculty of Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York, in 1935; he became one of the leading artistic figures of his generation, receiving the first Pulitzer Prize for Music, in 1943, for his *Secular Cantata no. 2: A Free Song*. In 1945, he left Sarah Lawrence to assume the dual responsibilities of director of publications for G. Schirmer, Inc., and president of the Juilliard School of Music in New York City. From 1962 to 1969, Schuman served as president of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. He also was among this country's most prominent spokesmen and arts consultants, advising, among many

others, CBS, the Rockefeller Foundation, the MacDowell Colony, and Broadcast Music, Inc.

Schuman had a strong attraction to the works of William Billings, the American Revolutionary War-era musician generally regarded as this country's earliest composer of significance. Before he wrote the *New England Triptych* on a commission from conductor André Kostelanetz in 1956, Schuman had used that composer's music in the *William Billings Overture* for orchestra in 1943 and *Chester* for concert band in 1956. The critic Arthur Cohn wrote, "Schuman's kinship with Billings seems to extend only to the latter's melodies; yet, paradoxically, it goes further. He retained Billings's style by synchronizing present-day techniques with the traditional past. It is as if Billings were alive and composing music, having had Schuman's training and experience."

As an introduction to the published score, Schuman wrote the following note and requested that it appear in program books for performances of *New England Triptych*:

William Billings (1746–1800) is a major figure in the history of American music. The works of this dynamic composer capture the sinewy ruggedness, deep religiosity, and patriotic fervor that we associate with the Revolutionary War period. Despite the undeniable crudities and technical shortcomings of his music, its appeal, even today, is forceful and moving. I am not alone among American composers who feel an identity with Billings, and it is this sense of identity that accounts for my use of his music as a point of departure. These pieces do not constitute a “fantasy” on themes of Billings,

nor “variations” on his themes, but rather a fusion of styles and musical language.

[Here is the text of the song:] *When Jesus wept the falling tear/In mercy flowed beyond all bound;/When Jesus groaned, a trembling fear/Seized all the guilty world around.* The setting of this text is in the form of a round [i.e., several voices in imitation all using the same melody, like “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”]. Here, Billings’s music is used in its original form, as well as in new settings with contrapuntal embellishments and melodic extensions. ■

Leonard Bernstein

Born August 25, 1918; Lawrence, Massachusetts
Died October 14, 1990; New York City, New York

Presto barbaro FROM *On the Waterfront*



COMPOSED

1954

By early 1954, when Hollywood producer Sam Spiegel first approached Leonard Bernstein about writing the score for a new film, the maestro had firmly established himself

on the American musical scene as a conductor and composer. He had served as assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic, music director of the New York City Symphony, and musical advisor to the Israel Philharmonic. As a composer, he had won the New York Music Critics Circle Award for his *Jeremiah* Symphony and completed his Second Symphony (*The Age of Anxiety*) and the ballets *Fancy Free* and *Facsimile*, as well as the scores for two Broadway shows (*On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*). During the middle 1950s, he was much in demand as a

guest conductor in Europe and America, having created a sensation in December 1953 as the first American to conduct at La Scala.

Initially, Bernstein turned down Spiegel’s offer to supply the music for *On the Waterfront*, the film based on gritty articles about corruption on the docks, but after seeing a work print in February 1954, he agreed to undertake the project. *On the Waterfront*, starring Marlon Brando as a longshoreman who defies the racketeers, enjoyed enormous success when it was released, earning eight Academy awards. (Bernstein’s nominated score lost to Dimitri Tiomkin’s *The High and the Mighty*.) Bernstein, however, was not content to have his music (which he insisted “had been planned as a composition with a beginning, middle, and end”) remain in the background. In 1955, he extracted a “symphonic suite” based on the half-dozen thematic ideas from which he wove the tightly integrated movie score. In the film, the powerful Presto Barbaro anticipates or heightens scenes of violence. ■

Claude Debussy

Born August 2, 1862; Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France

Died March 25, 1918; Paris, France

Fanfare FROM *Le martyre de Saint Sébastien*



COMPOSED
1911

The Italian poet, writer, journalist, and political activist Gabriele d'Annunzio had long harbored a desire to write a modern mystery play on the subject of Saint

Sebastian when he saw the beautiful and sensuous Russian-born dancer Ida Rubinstein in Paris in Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes production of *Cléopatra* in 1910. Seeing the embodiment of the third-century saint in the androgynous Rubinstein, d'Annunzio sought her out, and together they conceived a five-act drama for which she would dance and speak the title role, Michel Fokine would do the choreography, and Léon Bakst the decor; Debussy supplied about fifty-five minutes of incidental music for the production. *Le martyre de Saint Sébastien* (The

martyrdom of Saint Sebastian) was premiered at the Théâtre de Châtelet on May 22, 1911, though its success was undermined by its five-hour length and by the opposition of the Catholic Church, which not only objected to having a saint portrayed in a popular theater (attendees were threatened with excommunication) but also to the Christian holy man being played by a Jewish woman. "From the artistic point of view such a decree cannot be considered," Debussy countered in an article published shortly before the premiere. "I assure you that I wrote my music as though I had been asked to do it for the Church."

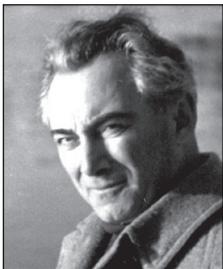
According to legend, Sebastian was born in Gaul and went to Rome, where he became a captain and the finest archer in the guard of the Emperor Diocletian. When it was discovered that Sebastian was a Christian who had converted many soldiers, Diocletian ordered him to be killed by arrows. The fanfare accompanies an invocation to the pagan gods at Diocletian's court. ■

Henri Tomasi

Born August 17, 1901; Marseilles, France

Died January 13, 1971; Paris, France

Être ou ne pas être



COMPOSED
1963

Composer and conductor Henri Tomasi, born into a working-class family of Corsican descent, began studying music at the age of seven at the city's conserva-

tory and progressed so rapidly on piano that he complained about feeling "humiliated to be on show like a trained animal" when his

father introduced him at social gatherings as a child prodigy.

During World War I, young Henri supplemented the family's finances by playing anywhere there was work, from fancy hotels to brothels and movie houses. In 1921, he received a scholarship from the city of Marseilles to attend the Paris Conservatory to study composition with Georges Caussade and Paul Vidal, and conducting with Philippe Gaubert; he also studied privately with Vincent d'Indy. Tomasi established parallel careers as composer and conductor soon after leaving the school, and from 1930 to 1935, he

worked for the French National Radio as music director of its programs beamed to Indochina and other Asian nations, an experience that stimulated his interest in world music and influenced the settings and style of several of his compositions.

Tomasi was inducted into the French army in 1939 and served as a band director near Nice until the Germans overran France the next year. He continued to compose during World War II and also conducted the Orchestre National, which had been moved from Paris to Marseilles because of the war. Tomasi was named principal conductor of the Monte Carlo Opera in 1946, and he enjoyed considerable success conducting many of France's finest orchestras until the loss of hearing in his right ear forced him to retire

from the concert stage in 1957. He thereafter devoted himself to composition until his death in 1971.

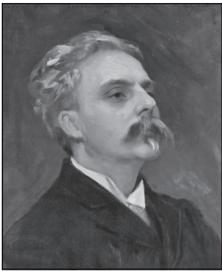
In the last decade of his life, Tomasi considered making an opera of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, but he never got around to composing anything more on the subject than the instrumental evocation of Hamlet's soliloquy ("To be or not to be," or in French, "Être ou ne pas être") which he wrote for the annual student competitions at the Paris Conservatory in 1963, scored for solo bass trombone (or tuba) and three trombones. The gravity and profound introspection of Hamlet's famous speech is mirrored in the noble sonorities of the trombone ensemble and the declamatory phrases of the soloist. ■

Gabriel Fauré

Born May 12, 1845; Pamiers, Ariège, France

Died November 14, 1924; Paris, France

Pavane, Op. 50



COMPOSED
1887

Fauré originally composed his pavane as a purely orchestral work for Jules Danbé, conductor of the Opéra-Comique and director of the Paris Conservatory concerts.

There is no record, however, that Danbé performed the work, and Fauré came up with another plan. On September 29, 1887, he wrote to Countess Élisabeth Greffulhe:

Robert de Montesquiou [the model for Proust's Baron Charlus], whom I have had the great fortune to meet in Paris, has most kindly accepted the egregiously thankless and difficult task of setting to this music, which is already complete, words that will make our Pavane fit to be both danced and sung. He has given it a delightful text in the manner of Verlaine: sly coquetries by the female dancers, and great sighs by the male

dancers that will singularly enhance the music. If the whole marvelous thing with a lovely dance in fine costumes could be performed, what a treat it would be!

Fauré, however, did not see his pavane staged until 1919, when he included it in the one-act *divertissement* for Monte Carlo, *Masques et bergamasques*, though the score was earlier performed, with voices, at Charles Lamoureux's concert in Paris on April 28, 1899.

The pavane was a sixteenth-century court dance from Padua ("Pava" in the local dialect, hence "pavane") of a stately, processional nature. Carried across the Alps, the form reached its highest point of artistic perfection in the works of the Elizabethan virginalists and then fell from favor. As the riches of ancient music began to be uncovered in the late nineteenth century by pioneering musicologists, interest among composers in such old forms as the pavane was stirred. Saint-Saëns included an example of the genre in his opera *Étienne Marcel* of 1879, and a few years later, Fauré contributed his interpretation of the early dance, marking it with his characteristic

blend of yearning sensuality and cool classicism that Marcel Proust described as “a mixture of lechery and litanies.”

The piece is in a three-part form, with the return of the haunting opening flute melody following a stern middle section. In 1903,

Debussy, who, as man and musician, knew whereof he spoke, said, “The play of the graceful, fleeting lines described by Fauré’s music may be compared to the gesture of a beautiful woman without either suffering from comparison.” ■

Francis Poulenc

Born January 7, 1899; Paris, France

Died January 30, 1963; Paris, France

Quatre petites prières de Saint François d’Assise



COMPOSED

1948

Francis Poulenc grew up in a home that valued religion deeply. His father was thoroughly committed to the beliefs and practice of Catholicism,

“but in a very liberal way, without the slightest meanness,” the composer once observed. When the young Poulenc left home for military service in 1918, a year after his father died, and later jumped into the heady life of artistic Paris, his interest in religion declined. “From 1920 to 1935, I was very little concerned with the faith,” he admitted. In 1936, he underwent a rejuvenation of his religious beliefs when fellow composer Pierre-Octave Ferroud was killed in an automobile accident at the age of thirty-six. Deeply shaken, Poulenc wrote, “The atrocious extinction of this musician so full

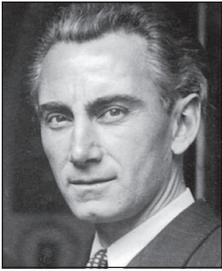
of vigor left me stupefied. Pondering on the fragility of our human frame, the life of the spirit attracted me anew.” He thereafter expressed his faith frequently and unashamedly in both his daily life and his music.

Poulenc composed his *Quatre petites prières de Saint François d’Assise* (Four short prayers of Saint Francis of Assisi) in 1948 for the Franciscan monastery choir at Champfleury, where his grand-nephew Jérôme was a lay brother. In setting Saint Francis’s “marvelously touching little prayers to music,” Poulenc said: “I wished to perform an act of humility. Thus, in the fourth piece, for example, a simple solo is heard at the beginning, like a monk leading his brothers in prayer.”

The texts of the four prayers begin: *Hail, Holy Lady, Queen most holy, Mother of God; Almighty, most holy, most high, and sovereign God; Lord, I pray you that the burning and gentle force of your love consume my soul; Oh, my very dear brothers and my children, blessed for all eternity.* ■

Henri Tomasi

Fanfares liturgiques



COMPOSED

1941–44

Tomasi adapted the *Fanfares liturgiques* (Liturgical fanfares) from his opera *Don Juan de Mañara*, based on a spiritual “mystery play” from 1913 by the

French-Lithuanian playwright and diplomat Oscar Milosz, in which the legendary libertine Don Juan renounces his dissipated ways to find redemption in the monastic life. Tomasi composed the opera between 1941 and 1944, when he found solace from wartime tensions and a troubled marriage in long residencies at the Dominican Monastère de la Sainte-Baume, near Marseilles. *The Fanfares liturgiques*, which in the opera accompany Don Juan’s visionary acceptance into the monastery, received their concert premiere in May 1947 by the orchestra of the Monte Carlo Opera under the composer’s direction.

Each of the four movements is associated with a significant aspect of Christian belief.

Annonciation (Annunciation) evokes the visit by the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary to announce that she has been chosen to be the mother of Jesus Christ: bold summons at beginning and end accompany his arrival and departure, a hushed strain for horns at the center suggests his profound message. In Evangile (Gospel), trumpet fanfares herald a priestly oration from the solo trombone, which receives a hymnlike response from the assembled brass choir. The jogging rhythms of Apocalypse suggest the fearsome descent upon the world of the prophesied Four Horsemen, while the noble Procession du Vendredi-Saint (Good Friday Procession), based on a repeating, chant-like phrase rolling inexorably through the ensemble’s lowest registers, seems to offer the hope of redemption. ■

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Richard E. Rodda teaches at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, and provides program notes for many American orchestras, concert series, and festivals.