



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra

**Neil Varon and Matthew Straw,
conductors**

**Peter Davies,
oboe**

Wednesday, February 1, 2023
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre
7:30 PM

~ PROGRAM ~
Eastman School Symphony Orchestra
Neil Varon and Matthew Straw, *conductors*

Egmont: Overture (1810)

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)
9'

Concerto for Oboe, H. 353 (1955)

- I. Moderato
- II. Poco andante
- III. Poco allegro

Bohuslav Martinů
(1890-1959)
15'

Peter Davies, oboe
Matthew Straw, conductor

~ INTERMISSION ~

Vanessa, op. 32: Intermezzo (1957)

Samuel Barber
(1910-1981)
4'

Billy the Kid: Suite (1938)

- I. Introduction: The Open Prairie
- II. Street in a Frontier Town
- III. Mexican Dance and Finale
- IV. Prairie Night (Card Game at Night)
- V. Gun Battle
- VI. Celebration (After Billy's Capture)
- VII. Billy's Death
- VIII. The Open Prairie Again

Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)
22'

~ PROGRAM NOTES ~

Egmont: Overture

Beethoven wrote a set of ten incidental musical numbers to accompany Goethe's play *Egmont*. The subject of the play is the sixteenth century Count of Egmont a powerful politician and soldier who campaigned for the liberation of the Netherlands from Spanish control, and was as a consequence beheaded in the Grand Place in Brussels in 1568. Egmont's death was the spark for public protests throughout the Netherlands which eventually resulted in their liberation from the Spaniards. The message of the play stuck a strong chord with Beethoven, who was opposed to the tyranny of the French empire and its expansion over Europe. He wrote a heroic piece about the struggle against oppression and the eventual triumph of liberty. Like the fifth symphony, composed two years earlier, Beethoven creates a journey from darkness into light.

The overture opens with a short slow sombre introduction, which moves into a stormy minor key allegro describing the struggle against oppression. It is turbulent music, full of dramatic passion, ceaselessly searching without rest and leading towards the moment of Egmont's execution which is vividly portrayed. There is then a short mournful chorale before the key changes to the major and the music takes on a triumphant character culminating in a blazing set of F major chords crowned by the shrill piccolo.

The music was immediately successful and the overture has remained a popular concert piece ever since. Goethe himself declared that Beethoven had expressed his intentions with "a remarkable genius". - **Portabello Orchestra**

Concerto for Oboe, H. 353

Bohuslav Martinů wrote his *Oboe Concerto* in 1955 at the request of Czech oboist Jiri Tancibudek. Like other composers, most notably Richard Strauss, Martinů was initially hesitant to write a solo piece for oboe and turned down the request. He eventually relented and wrote the *Concerto*, which had its premiere in Sydney, Australia in 1956 in celebration of the Olympic games held in Melbourne that year. In the following years the piece had many performances throughout Europe, including its British premiere in 1959 by the oboist Evelyn Rothwell, one of the most famous oboists from the early 20th century and whose pedagogical materials continue to be relevant and influential to oboists today.

As a composer, Martinů is often grouped in the same category as Béla Bartók, whose understanding of his country's folk music deeply impacted his compositional output. Indeed, much of Martinů's music is ripe with melodies and harmonies reminiscent of his home, Czechoslovakia. There are many moments in the *Oboe Concerto* when the listener feels a certain folk quality and the simplicity of these moments seems to suggest that the themes could have been plucked straight from the Czech folk-music canon.

Perhaps inspired by the occasion for which the piece was written, the *Oboe Concerto* feels truly Olympian in terms of its demand on the oboe soloist. It stretches the performer alternately to play with great virtuosic brilliance and, at moments, with the most precious tenderness. The great variety that the relatively short piece offers is possibly one of the reasons that it remains as one of the most important concertos written for this instrument. - **Max Blair**

Vanessa, op. 32: Intermezzo

Barber's opera *Vanessa*, with libretto by longtime partner Gian Carlo Menotti and produced by the Metropolitan Opera Association, New York City, in 1958, was awarded a Pulitzer Prize. [...] *Vanessa* examines the conflicts and disparities between romantic idealism and emotional reality in the lives of three women immured in a remote mansion in an unspecified "northern country". After waiting 20 years for the return of her former lover Anatol, Vanessa finds herself confronted by his son of the same name, to whom she becomes obsessively drawn, oblivious to the fact that he is a shameless opportunist.

He, meanwhile, seduces Vanessa's niece Erika, whose growing desire for him is tempered by her awareness of his inability to love, and who determines not to bear his child when she discovers she is pregnant. Watching and judging is Vanessa's mother, the Baroness, a formidable arbiter of moral truth, who refuses to speak to anyone she considers to be living a lie. - **Tim Ashley**

Billy the Kid: Suite

If there ever was an American "composer laureate," then Aaron Copland is surely he. A native of Brooklyn, the son of Jewish immigrants of Lithuanian descent, he established what many call the "American sound" in art music. He had gone to Paris, like so many during the 1920s, to study advanced composition, and his musical style when he returned was accordingly advanced, some would say "academic." It certainly was often dissonant, and in no way exhibited the popular tunefulness that later made him the darling of mainstream America. But then, like so many other artists during the depression, he turned to a simpler, more accessible style, rooted in the populism of the time. Thus we have such evergreen compositions as *Appalachian Spring*, *Rodeo*, *Fanfare for the Common Man*, and *Billy the Kid*. Later, after the war, with the New Deal, the dust bowl, and the popularity of the communist party in America gone, he returned to the austere, more advanced musical style that previously had characterized his work. Nevertheless, most audiences today think of his "depression era" musical style when his name is mentioned.

First performed in 1938 by the Ballet Caravan Company, *Billy the Kid* contains lots of cowboy songs and other American folksongs, and in its eight sections roughly tracks some putative events in the desperado's life. It's fairly easy to follow the action from the titles of the movements and the nature of the music. The ballet opens and closes with the familiar "American sound" of the open prairie that depicts the loneliness of the landscape and the trekking of the pioneers. The cowboy song, "Great Granddad," is heard in the street scene of the second dance. Later, one hears the fight between drunks in the trombones, playing "Git Along Little Doggies," and "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie" during the quietude of the card game scene. The violence in the gun battle scene is relieved by the humor of the celebration, aided by Copland's clever intimation of two different keys going at the same time. As the little drama leads into Billy's death, the whole orchestra ends in a heroic, if not defiant, affirmative mood. We are left to muse over the enigmatic ending: is Copland celebrating the resilience of the pioneers of the American West, or commemorating the tragedy of the common man that so concerned social activists around the world during the 1930s? - **Wm. E. Runyan**

~ MEET THE ARTIST ~

Peter Davies is a student of Richard Killmer at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Prior to his undergrad, he was a student of Erin Hannigan. Peter has been a member of various festivals including the National Orchestral Institute, Round Top Music Festival, and National Youth Orchestra USA for the 2017, 2018, and 2019 seasons, with which he toured Europe, Asia, and South America. Peter has shown further success in competitions, winning First among winds and Third overall in the 2018 Blount-Slawson Competition, First Prize and Audience Favorite in the Music in the Mountains Concerto Competition, and First Place in the Greater Dallas Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition. Peter has played under the batons of Marin Alsop, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Sir Antonio Pappano and alongside pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet.

~ PERSONNEL ~

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra

Violin I

Amelia Posner-Hess,
concertmaster
Anne-Marie Wnek
Magali Pelletier
Leona Liu
Samuel Shen
Madison Oh
Xuanzhen Zhang
Lisa Wang
Victoria Zhao
Ingrid Buschkopf
Kaylynn Li
Nicole Cheng
Erica Lin

Violin II

Ellie Loya,
principal
Isabel Chen
Veronica Rokicki
Yan Yue
Aviva Bock
Kaitlyn McLaughlin
Olivia Walberger
Liliana Mahave
Hagan Tran
Ellen Kim
Simon Cheng
Kristina Kaye

Viola

Arthur Nyanfor II,
principal
Alexander Diaz
Max Wang
Phoenix Mercier
John Crowley
Katherine Park
Juan Alvarez Jimenez
Ethan Shin
Mack Jones

Violoncello

Abby Hanna,
principal
Haozheng Sun
Ivy Robison
Amarilli Severa
Ryan Post
Gabriel Hennebury
Joseph Yang

Double Bass

Nadia Magalski,
principal
Emma Goldberg
Nathan Kim
Samantha Liu
Riley Collier

Flute

Helen Freeman
Andrew Hanks
Alexander Lehmann
Angelina Lim

Oboe

Carson Harth
Claire Kross
Josh So
Semira Vinson
Alexis Wilson

Clarinet

Lauren Enos
Alyssa Estrella
Kailan Fournier

Bassoon

Roan Alonzo
Trey Barrett
Ryan Zych

Horn

Ameila Caruk
Morgan Chalmers
Aliceyn Covington
Lea Helsel
Alina Liebschner
Aby Stumpf
Jennelle Williams

Trumpet

Trevor King
Matt Naeger
Yue Zhang

Trombone

Danny Bolaños
Jacob Ellgass
Aiden Fuller
Charley Hibscheiler

Tuba

Josh Lesperance

Timpani

Izaiah Gonzales
Aiden Hughes

Percussion

Lexi Kunz
Ben Landon
Fletcher Leonard

Harp

Elizabeth Mayo
Catherine Reid

Keyboard

Federico Ercoli
Mei Li

Upcoming Collegium Concerts

Events are free unless otherwise noted.

Friday, February 3

Eastman Philharmonia

Music of Weber, Coleridge-Taylor, and Rachmaninoff
Neil Varon, conductor
Featuring Shangru Du, piano
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre • 7:30PM

Saturday-Sunday, January 28-29

Thursday-Sunday, February 2-5

Eastman Opera Theatre Presents:

Handel's Alcina

Timothy Long, conductor
Annex-804 Opera Studio • 7:30PM/Sundays 2PM
Tickets required – go to www.EastmanTheatre.org for more information

Tuesday, February 14

Eastman Jazz Ensemble

Christine Jensen, director
Kilbourn Hall • 7:30PM

Wednesday, February 15

Eastman New Jazz Ensemble

Dave Rivello, director
Kilbourn Hall • 7:30PM

We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the “Great Hill People” and “Keepers of the Western Door” of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.

Information about upcoming Eastman concerts and events can be found at:

www.esm.rochester.edu/calendar

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre fire exits are located along the right and left sides, and at the back of the hall on each level. In the event of an emergency, you will be notified by the stage manager. If notified, please move in a calm and orderly fashion to the nearest exit.

Restrooms are located on each level of Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre. Our ushers will be happy to direct you to them.

Please note: The use of unauthorized photo-graphic and recording equipment is not allowed in this building. We reserve the right to ask anyone disrupting a performance to leave the hall.

Supporting the Eastman School of Music:

We at the Eastman School of Music are grateful for the generous contributions made by friends, parents, and alumni, as well as local and national foundations and corporations. Gifts and grants to the School support student scholarships, performance and academic facilities, educational initiatives, and programs open to the greater Rochester community. Every gift, no matter the size, is vital to enhancing Eastman's commitment to excellence. For more information on making a gift, please visit www.esm.rochester.edu/advancement or contact the Advancement Office by calling (585) 274-1040. Thank you!