

PENINSULA *symphony*

Symphony Sounds

February 2010

43rd Season, Number 2

Editor: Kenneth Gash

Concert II

Sunday, February 21 at 7:00 PM

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

PROGRAM

An Intimate Evening

- Vaughan Williams Overture to
"The Wasps"
- Haydn Symphony #45 "Farewell"
- Mozart Concerto in A Major
David Nicholson, Clarinet
- Kodály *Dances of Galánta*

CONCERT DETAILS

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

Concert Preview by **Gary Berkson** at 6:15 PM

General public admitted at approximately 6:50 PM

POST-CONCERT MEET THE CONDUCTOR

After the concert, the audience is invited to remain in the auditorium and meet informally with our Conductor, Gary Berkson and with our Soloist, David Nicholson. The artists may make a few remarks about themselves and their program, and then the audience will have an opportunity to ask questions.

On Sunday, February 21, 2010, we will hear the second concert conducted by our recently appointed music director, Gary Berkson. It has been almost four months since his inaugural concert in October, 2009, and I, for one, am eagerly awaiting the new surprises he has in store for us. Gary has entitled this concert "An Intimate Evening", and during it he will demonstrate how beautiful music can be created with reduced orchestral forces. At one point in the evening, the size of the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra will be reduced to only two players!

Music Preview

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Ralph Vaughan Williams was born while Wagner, Tchaikovsky and Brahms were still alive, yet he lived long enough to witness a complete upheaval in the musical world: the exploration of entirely new tonal systems, a revolution in the approach to rhythm, through to the avant-garde movement, led by composers like John Cage. Rather than retreat into inactivity, as Finland's Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) did, Vaughan Williams kept writing, completing five of his nine symphonies after the age of seventy. Compositions from any point of his career have the characteristic Vaughan Williams sound: a clear folk influence, traditional tonal and harmonic language, and lush, straightforward orchestration.

In 1909, Vaughan Williams was asked to write incidental music for a performance of Aristophanes' great satire "The Wasps" at

Cambridge. The suite derived from this music consists of the Overture plus four other sections, the third of which is entitled "March Past of the Kitchen Utensils."

The Overture begins with the sounds of buzzing wasps, which symbolize the chorus of the Athenian citizens who were obsessed with their duty as jurors in court. The music then proceeds to become bound up in the English countryside, its cheeriness and its verdant beauty (with an occasional wasp reappearing). Full of good spirit and catchy tunes, the Overture avoids taking itself too seriously, and provides a perfect introduction to this evening's concert.

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Haydn was one of the most important, prolific and prominent composers of the classical period. He is often called the "Father of the Symphony" (he wrote 104) and "Father of the String Quartet". In all, he has over 750 works listed in the Hoboken catalogue. During his lifetime, he was a teacher of Beethoven and a close friend of Mozart.

For almost thirty years, Haydn served as Kappelmeister at the Eszterházy court where his responsibilities included composition, running the orchestra, playing chamber music for and with his patrons, and eventually the mounting of operatic productions. As the Kapellmeister he was the manager of a fairly large group of musicians. Haydn's authority was evidently rather benevolent, and orchestra members started referring to him as "Papa" Haydn.

Thus, in 1772, Haydn used his extraordinary talent to convince the Prince that he had kept the musicians at his country estate, and away from their families, much too long. Instead of confronting the Prince directly, he wrote a "Farewell" symphony which eloquently brought home the message. The symphony opens in a manner typical of Haydn's *Sturm und Drang* ("storm and stress") period. The second (Adagio) movement and the third (Minuet) are beautiful examples of Haydn's elegant writing.

It is in the fourth and final movement that Haydn brings his message directly to the Prince. It begins as a characteristic Haydn finale in fast tempo, and just as the movement seems to be nearing its conclusion, everything stops and what follows appears to be a second slow movement — which probably sounded very surprising to the Prince.

As this Adagio progresses, groups of musicians are given little solos to play just before they leave the stage. The order of departure is: first oboe and second horn (solos), bassoon (no solo), second oboe and first horn (solos), double bass (solo), cello (no solo), orchestral violins (solos; first chair players silent), viola (no solo). The first chair violinists remain to complete the work. From all accounts, the Prince got the message and we got an amazing piece of music to enjoy.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

The clarinet was a relatively new instrument that was first produced in the early 18th century and was still undergoing modifications at the time Mozart began writing music for it.

Mozart showed a particular affinity for the clarinet. He made use of it in his operatic music, Serenades, and German Dances, but it only features in four of his last eleven symphonies. Then came the three important clarinet works: the Trio K498, the Quintet K581 which dates from September 1789, then finally the Concerto (which does not include clarinets in the orchestra). This concerto is one of the best known pieces of clarinet music today.

The concerto is in three movements following the typical fast, slow, fast pattern. Originally written as a sketch for basset horn (a member of the clarinet family invented in 1771), the first movement opens with an orchestral statement of the main theme. The theme is taken up by the soloist, and the music quickly takes on a more melancholy feel. After full development the movement ends in a relatively cheerful mood. It is interesting to note that the second half of the exposition of this movement

appears on almost every professional orchestral clarinet audition.

The second movement, a beautiful and profound Adagio, is possibly the best-known part of this concerto and was featured in the 1985 movie "Out of Africa."

The closing movement is in rondo form and has a cheerful refrain, with episodes either echoing this mood or recalling the darker colors of the first movement. The theme is developed dramatically, using the full range of the clarinet. Mozart uses leaps, trills, and figurations. In the end, the more cheerful mood returns, and the concerto ends with a tutti untouched by the melancholy seen elsewhere in the work.

Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967)

Along with Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály is one of the two major figures in Hungarian music in the twentieth century. Composer, pioneering ethnomusicologist, groundbreaking educationalist and critic, Kodály enjoyed a status in his native land that is perhaps unrivalled by any other figure anywhere else in the world.

Kodály's Dances of Galánta, from 1933, takes its name from a market town between Vienna and Budapest. This Hungarian town was Kodály's home for seven years when he was a child. In Galánta, Kodály sang in the choir, and he also heard the music of a famous gypsy band. Later in his life, Kodály would become reacquainted with some of these gypsy tunes in a published collection. Believing that it was his duty to preserve and ensure the survival of this fine folk music, Kodály used tunes from this collection as inspiration for the Dances of Galánta.

The style of these dances is known as verbunkos, from the German Werbung (recruitment). The Austrian army recruiters used to travel around the countryside with dancers and musicians in tow, whose performances were meant to entice young men to sign up. These performances were often accompanied by gypsy bands, whose players

often performed breathtakingly elaborate improvisations over basically simple tunes.

Kodály gave the various verbunkos melodies some exquisite musical coloring and arranged them in a masterful sequence. After an opening flourish, a series of sultry and exhilarating dances, with alternating moods and tempos, are presented in glowing orchestral sonorities. Dances of Galánta is considered by many as perhaps the last and finest composition in the mold of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies.

David Nicholson

Our soloist tonight, Clarinetist David Nicholson, has been the Peninsula Symphony principal clarinetist for twelve years. He is a native of Los Angeles and began studying the clarinet at age 12. His first teacher was Franklin Sabin, then principal clarinetist of the Pasadena Symphony. He did advanced study with Michele Zukovsky, principal clarinetist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra who encouraged him to complete his degree at CalArts. Established in 1961 by Walt and Roy Disney, the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) is the nation's first higher education institute to offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in both the visual and performing arts.



David has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, the Pacific Symphony in Orange County, and the New West Symphony in Thousand Oaks as well as playing in chamber groups.

Alas, music may soothe the soul but does not fill the belly, so David also works as a legal researcher at a law firm in Los Angeles. He does not play any other instrument, but if he could, it would be a bluegrass fiddle.

Past Events

First Concert

The Inaugural Concert of our new Music Director/Conductor took place on October 25, 2009; the program was entitled "Meet the Maestro." As Gary described it in his opening talk, the program represented his "musical biography" which he used to introduce himself to the audience.

The program included Ives "Variations on America" (Gary was born and raised in America), Beethoven Symphony No. 1 (he conducted the first movement while in college), Wagner Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan und Isolde* (his first conducting appointment was with the Miami Opera Company) and finally Alfvén *Midsommarvaka* (he spent thirty years in Sweden).



The concert was warmly received by the capacity audience. It also received a glowing review by Kari Sayers in the Daily Breeze.

After the concert there was a reception at the beautiful Rolling Hills home of Marion Ruth for Symphony Association members at the Patron level or above.

Dress Rehearsal

About 100 students from Lomita Magnet School and 15th Street Elementary School of San Pedro attended the dress rehearsal preceding the concert. They heard a brief talk about the music from Ken Gash who also answered their many questions. During the rehearsal break, a cellist from the orchestra, Sophia Momand-Bunker came and talked to the students about what it meant to play in an orchestra. Then Gary spent almost fifteen minutes talking to the students and answering their questions.



It was a very enjoyable occasion for the students, their teachers and for those of us that interacted with them. It should be noted that the dress rehearsals are held in the same auditorium as the concert. They start at 2:00 PM and are open to the public. Please consider joining us at the next one in February.

Join our Symphony Team - Become a Volunteer

The Symphony Association could not function without the help of volunteers. There are all sorts of opportunities where your talents could be used to help us continue to produce these concerts for the benefit and enjoyment of our community.

Some examples of these opportunities include helping us with mailings, ushering, intermission refreshments, receptions, the membership campaign, pre-concert set up, and maintaining files. This is only a partial list, but it shows the diversity of tasks that must be done. If you have any questions or are ready to become a volunteer, please contact Jane Jones, Concerts Committee Chair, (310) 831-3372. We are looking forward to having you join us.

Survey Results

Many of you participated in a survey prepared by Gary to help him prepare future concerts. The responses of over 140 survey sheets have been analyzed and they have been proven to be informative and useful. Here is a brief summary:

Favorite type of music
 Classical - 90%
 Broadway/film music 71%

Favorite types of Classical Music
 Classical - 85%
 Romantic - 78%

72% of the respondents prefer concerts with soloists.

Favorite solo instrument
 Piano - 82%
 Violin - 67%

84% said they like hearing old favorites, but 43% like hearing unfamiliar works

Favorite Composers
 Beethoven, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Gershwin

Beethoven's 5th Symphony tied with his 9th Symphony as the number one piece.

Most respondents want five concerts a year and are evenly split over classical or pops for the fifth concert.

Gary has taken these results into account for his planned 2010 - 2011 season.

2009 - 2010 Schedule

All regular concerts are held at:

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

Concert III

April 18, 2010, 7 PM

Johann Strauss, Jr.	Artists' Quadrille
Mozart	A Musical Joke
Schickele	Eine Kleine Nichtmusik
Tchaikovsky	Francesca da Rimini

Young Artists Showcase

April 25, 2010, 2 PM

**ARMSTRONG THEATER
 3330 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE, TORRANCE**

The finalists in the Edith Knox Performance Competition will play with their accompanists in a full-dress stage performance for professional judging. The first prize winner will be selected at the end of the program, and will perform as soloist with the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra at our June 27 concert

Concert IV

The Norris Foundation Concert

June 27, 2010, 7 PM

Brahms	Academic Festival Overture
TBA	Concerto chosen by winner of the Knox Competition
Schumann	Symphony #3, "Rhenish"

Friends of the Peninsula Symphony

Thank you for your membership in the Friends and the support you provide to this organization and to the Symphony Association. The Friends plan events where their members can gather at social, educational and music performances while giving support for the Symphony Association. Our goal is to fund the Celebrate Mozart programming in Peninsula second-grade classes and to assist in the funding of the Peninsula Symphony's Summer Pops Concert.



On November 12th, the Friends were together for a day on an excursion to the Nethercutt Museum and Collection in Sylmar. We boarded the bus in the morning at the Covenant Church parking lot. The mood was carefree as we were relieved of not being behind the wheel of our own cars but on a luxury bus and in the hands of a very capable driver. Midge and Jack Trost and their committee selected a most picturesque location at El Cariso Regional Park where we took a break from the bus ride and enjoyed our Jacaranda Café-catered box lunch picnic in the comfort of one of the many park pavilions

The Nethercutt Museum and Collection offered a unique presentation of the Nethercutt families' 250 marvelously restored automobiles.



The tour culminated with a concert on the 5000-pipe Wurlitzer Theatre Organ set among festive décor and holiday music. On Saturday January 23, the Friends met at the Norris Theater for the Performing Arts in Rolling Hills Estates, where we hosted a private reception in the Soldoff Lounge prior to the Norris presentation of "A Lady, A Man & A Baby Grand."

At the end of January and early February, our educational program "Celebrate Mozart" takes place in the Peninsula Schools for the second grade classrooms. Two of our Friends volunteers, Maude Landon and Carolyn Hyde, present the narrative of Mozart at a young age while musicians perform portions of Mozart's compositions and demonstrate their instruments and sounds.

The date of April 13, 2010 is set for Friends members to be invited for an Afternoon with Annika and Gary Berkson. Annika will be the honored guest and will share highlights of her career with the Royal Swedish Ballet. Members of the Friends will receive an invitation in March.

Membership in the Friends is open to all members of the Symphony Association. Prior to the concerts our membership information is available in the lobby. Contact Membership VP- Anita Gash 310/541-3516, or you may mail your membership support donation (\$50, \$75, \$125) to Friends of the Peninsula Symphony, PO Box, 3961, Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

The Cost of Music

Every week I see an article in the press about the economic troubles of symphony orchestras throughout the country. I decided to do an Internet search to see the extent of the problems. After about five minutes of searching I quit - it was too depressing. Listed below are just a few of the news excerpts I found:

- ♪ Across the country, orchestras are seeing endowments tanking and donations plunging.
- ♪ The Long Beach Symphony Orchestra's concert this Saturday might be its last for this season unless its musicians agree to changes in their contract that will cut their income, according to Symphony management.
- ♪ Musicians with the Cleveland Orchestra, one of the top-tier symphonies in the nation, walked off the job for a day over a proposed pay cut.
- ♪ The New York Philharmonic reported a \$4.6 million deficit.
- ♪ The Seattle Symphony's recent troubles have put it in the same company with orchestras nationwide whose economic woes have been thrust into the spotlight.
- ♪ The Brooklyn Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra has canceled its entire 2009-10 season for the full orchestra because of a drop in donations.

Of course, I did not find any negative information about the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra. Our orchestra is financially able to complete the current season, but we are not yet sure if we can fund the Summer Concert this year. We are planning the 2010-2011 season and are hopeful that it will be fully funded. The Board of Directors maintains tight control over our budget and our Treasurer, Bob

Vasey, provides detailed monthly reports, complete with cash forecasts for the entire fiscal year.

We essentially "broke even" last year (with a surplus of \$467) and are hoping to do at least as well this year. What concerns the Board is that the costs for each concert will be increasing and, if revenues do not keep up, we may find it necessary to curtail our musical efforts. Our new Music Director/Conductor, Gary Berkson, has outlined a marvelous concert plan for the next four years, and we want to take full advantage of his ideas.

Concerts are expensive. Last year, the five concerts plus the Knox Performance Competition consumed 72% of the total income for the year. Of that income, 46% was generated from your membership donations. It is those donations which have kept the orchestra providing concerts for over forty-two years **without charging for admission**.

If you look forward to the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra continuing to provide a full concert season of wonderful music each year into the future, you might consider increasing your membership level, either when you sign up for next season or anytime during this season. You also have received occasional letters from the Peninsula Symphony Association asking for additional support and suggesting several ways to provide this support.

With your continued help, we will **never** see a newspaper article which starts: "*After many, many years of providing free concerts to the people in the communities of Palos Verdes, the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra has been forced to...*"

You may contact me with comments, etc. at

kenmusic@cox.net



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Contact Information

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

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

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

Other Contacts are:

Peninsula Symphony Association President, John Copper
310-375-1176 (Home), johncopper@cox.net

Friends of the Peninsula Symphony, Harriet Servis
310-832-3791, harrietservis@hotmail.com

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