



Lewisville Lake Symphony

Adron Ming, Music Director / Conductor

November 5, 2021

7:30 p.m.

Siegfried Idyll

Siegfried Idyll (1870)

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

Conducted by Charles Andersen

Overture on Hebrew Themes, Op. 34 (1919-1920)

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

*John Scott, clarinet; Tonda Sykes & Mary Havenstrite, violins;
Jennifer Sweetman, viola; Dan Lewis, cello; Heejung Kang, piano*

Appalachian Spring Suite (1945)

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

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Program Notes

by Deborah Svedman

Siegfried Idyll (1870)

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

First, let's get our Siegfrieds straight. The Siegfried of Richard Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll* is NOT the same character Siegfried in *The Ring of the Nibelung*. Nor is it related to the passage known as "Dawn and Siegfried's Rhine Journey" from the prelude of the opera, *Götterdämmerung*. This Siegfried is Wagner's son, named for his opera characters.

Wagner composed the *Siegfried Idyll* as a birthday present to his wife Cosima after the birth of their first and only son, Siegfried, in 1869. It is relatively short (for Wagner) and was composed and rehearsed in secret. The first performance took place on the morning of December 25, 1870, with fifteen musicians arranged on the staircase leading up to the bedroom at the Wagner villa in Tribschen, Switzerland. The piece became a cherished family document, celebrating not only Cosima's thirty-third birthday but also, retroactively, the Wagner's marriage and the births of both Siegfried the son and *Siegfried* the opera, which was by then receiving its final touches.

Wagner originally intended the *Siegfried Idyll* to remain a private piece. However, due to financial pressures, he decided to sell the score to publisher B. Schott in 1878. In doing so, Wagner expanded the orchestration to 35 players to make the piece more marketable. The piece is commonly played today by the larger ensemble, but tonight it is presented in the original format.

Originally titled the *Tribschen Idyll*, the *Siegfried Idyll* is ecstatic and flowing, with the opening seeming to emerge out of subconsciousness. Most of the musical themes in the *Siegfried Idyll* relate to pastoral passages in the third act of the opera *Siegfried*, although at least one of its melodies—at the opening of the *Siegfried Idyll*—had been set down earlier for a non-Siegfried project. At the end of the piece, the calm repose of the prolonged final chord tells us that we have returned home.

Overture on Hebrew Themes, Op. 34 (1919-1920)

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Following the Russian Revolution, Russian-Soviet composer and pianist Sergei Prokofiev decided to leave Russia and travel abroad to perform and compose. He came to the United States in 1918, where in New York City the sensational piano recitals of the "Bolshevik Pianist" evoked both delight and denunciation.

In 1919, the touring Zimro Ensemble from Russia was performing in New York. Zimro was comprised of six Zionist-oriented Jewish musicians from St. Petersburg's New National School in Jewish Music. The ensemble was committed to preserving Jewish culture, but publicity for the Zimro concerts referred to the programs simply as "Jewish folk music." Many people came expecting to hear simply rendered folk tunes in their original form—even at Carnegie Hall—rather than a strikingly classical format. Hearing the anticipated Jewish folk music in the polyphonic and refined form of cultivated art music must have been a surprise, especially to the voluminous New York City audiences.

One émigré—albeit, as it turned out, temporary—who was intrigued by Zimro's revelation of Jewish folk materials was Prokofiev. He wrote in his autobiography:

"In the autumn, the Jewish ensemble Zimro came to America. It consisted of a string quartet, a clarinetist, and pianist. All of them had been fellow pupils of mine at the Petersburg Conservatory. They had a repertoire of quite interesting Jewish music for various instrumental combinations. They asked me to write an overture for six instruments for them and gave me a notebook of Jewish melodies.... I chose a couple of nice melodies from it and began to improvise on them on the piano. I didn't place much importance on this overture, but it was quite a success."

Zimro presented the world premiere of the *Overture on Hebrew Themes* the following February (1920) at the Bohemian Club in New York—with Prokofiev as the guest pianist. The group repeated it, also with Prokofiev at the piano, in April of that year, at the ensemble's second concert at Carnegie Hall.

Despite its resounding success and enthusiastic reception within general musical and Jewish circles, the memory of Zimro's tour receded quickly into oblivion. It is an ironic twist of Jewish cultural history that, of the repertoire Zimro promoted and offered to the public, only the one piece by a non-Jewish composer—Prokofiev's *Overture on Hebrew Themes*—entered the mainstream chamber music repertoire.

Appalachian Spring Suite (1945)

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

During World War II, Aaron Copland was considered the voice of American music. In 1942 he wrote music such as *Fanfare for the Common Man* and *Lincoln Portrait*, that served the essential need for unity in wartime America. His music avoided sentimentality and reminded us of what we were supposed to have become as a nation. Five months after D-day, "Appalachian Spring" became the story of the struggle that leads, with graceful humility, to a new era of peace and prosperity in America.

The work was commissioned in 1942 for the grand sum of \$500 by an American patron of the arts, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, who requested a new ballet for the dancer and choreographer Martha Graham. The ballet, with a 13-member chamber orchestra, was premiered in Washington, D.C., on October 30, 1944. Copland then created a suite for full orchestra, which garnered the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1945. The ballet and suite both contain some of the composer's most familiar music, particularly his set of variations on the Shaker hymn "Simple Gifts." The *Variations on a Shaker Tune* is frequently played as a solo entity, separate from the *Suite*.

The setting is the early 19th century, on the site of a Pennsylvania farmhouse where a couple is to be wed and begin a new life in a new home. It opens at dawn with a gentle theme for strings and winds. The characters are introduced: a revivalist preacher, a pioneer woman, the young couple to be married, and the preacher's followers. There is a lively general dance, a prayer, and then a dance by the young couple. Joyous dancing erupts as the wedding is celebrated. Still, the couple remains apprehensive about their new life. Only the strength of their faith (conveyed by Copland's direct quotation of the hymn "Simple Gifts") provide reassurance. At the end the couple are left quiet and strong in their new house. Copland's score concludes as serenely as it begins, ending the day with the same chords with which dawn was evoked.

NOTE: Martha Graham named the ballet "Appalachian Spring" from a poem by Hart Crane (1899-1933). The poem describes the beautiful landscape of the New York section of the Appalachian Trail, and could refer to a water feature rather than the presumptive season. Its true meaning was never established by Graham or Copland.

Upcoming concerts

International Chamber Series

Hyeyeon Kim, flute

Paulina Delgadillo, harp

Tuesday, December 28 @ 7:30 p.m.

Trinity Presbyterian Church, Flower Mound

Lewisville Lake Symphony

Surprise

Haydn: Symphony No. 94 ("Surprise")

and the winner of the 2022 Vernell Gregg Young Artists Competition

Friday, February 11, 7:30 p.m.

Lewisville Grand in Old Town Lewisville

The Musicians

Adron Ming, Music Director/Conductor

Friends of the Music Director/Conductor Podium¹

Charles Andersen, Assistant Conductor

Friends of the Assistant Conductor Podium²

First Violins

*Tonda Sykes, *Concertmaster*

Samuel & Kim Arney Chair

*Kathy Johnson, *Assoc. Concertmaster*

The Honorable R Neil & L. Jean

Ferguson Chair

Mia Cantania

Rob Flickinger

Lisa Shields

Kristin van Cleve

Hanyuan Wang

Tami Peterson

Second Violins

*Mary Havenstrite, *Principal*

Marguerite Lamp Chair

*Susan Younghans

Yuri Noh

Harvey Wechsler

Julianne Booth

Chris Chapin

Violas

*Jennifer Sweetman, *Principal*

Forrest & Martha Whitescarver

Chair

*Iris Messinger

Sonja Ryberg

Monika Idasiak

Cellos

*Dan Lewis, *Principal*

Paul & Marjory Vickery Memorial

Chair

Hsinyi Wang

*Jim Higgins

Kyle Rosenquist

Basses

*David Shaw, *Principal*

Vernell T. Gregg Chair

Brian Peacock

Flutes

*Jackie Akin, *Principal*

Green Family Chair

Jennifer McElroy

Piccolo

Jennifer McElroy

Christine Hotchkiss Chair

Oboes

*Sally Bohls, *Principal*

Allen G. & Jane Davis Roe Chair

Cecile Lagarenne

English Horn

Cecile Lagarenne

Martha Cecile Storrie, M.D. Chair

Clarinets

*John Scott, *Principal*

Marguerite Lamp Chair

Daryl Coad

Bass Clarinet

Doug Obst

Saxophone

Don Fabian

Martin Family Chair

Bassoons

*Charlie Hall, *Principal*

Dan Whittington Memorial Chair

Ralph Morgan

Contra Bassoon

Jeff Strong

French Horns

*Daniel Serrago, *Principal*

Fred & Diane Busche Chair

*Nancy Jarrett

Mark Jansen

Chrystal Stevens

Trumpets

*James Sims, *Principal*

Anonymous sponsor

Richard Hall

Trombone

James McNair

Friends of Live Music Chair

Jonathan Gill

Bass Trombone

Jon Bohls

Alex McDonald Chair

Tuba

Jason Wallace

Robert W. & Nancy Brown

Memorial Chair

Timpani

Steven Kimple

Rev. Dr. Byron & Margaret Wells

Chair

Percussion

David Elias, *Principal*

Dave & Susan Mullins Chair

Michael McNicholas

Harp

Laura Brandenburg

Bill & Grace Lawrence Chair

Keyboard

*Heejung Kang

Glenn Schmidt Memorial Chair

Production Manager

David Elias

* performing in tonight's concert

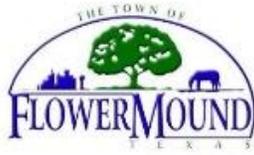
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