

PROGRAM NOTES BY KEN MELTZER

t e n T H I N G

Thursday, April 11 at 11 am
Trinity United Methodist Church

EDVARD GRIEG (1843–1907)
Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen,
from *Lyrical Pieces*, Opus 65, No. 6 (1896)

In the Hall of the Mountain King,
from *Incidental Music to Peer Gynt* (1875)

JEAN-BAPTISTE LULLY (1632–1687)
Excerpts from *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*
(1670)

BIAGIO MARINI (1594–1663)
Passacalio a 3 & a 4 (1655)

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL
(1685–1759)
“The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba,”
from *Solomon* (1749)

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957)
Valse Triste (1903)

BÉLA BARTÓK (1881–1945)
Romanian Folk Dances (1915)

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921–1992)
Invierno Porteño (Winter)
from *Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*
(*Four Seasons in Buenos Aires*)
(ca. 1968)

JOHN KANDER (b. 1927)
“Hot Honey Rag” and “Cell Block Tango”
from *Chicago* (1975)

AARON COPLAND (1900–1990)
Hoe-Down, from *Rodeo* (1942)

Tine Thing Helseth, trumpet
Guro Bjørnstad Kraft, trumpet
Elin Holmen Kurverud, trumpet
Maren Ingeborg Tjernsli, trumpet
Lena Wik, horn
Ingebjørg Klovholt, trombone
Tone Christin Lium Røssland, trombone
Frødis Aslesen, trombone
Astri Karoline Ellann, bass trombone
Karin Nordli, tuba

***Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen,*
from *Lyrical Pieces*, Opus 65, No. 6 (1896)**

🕒 *Approximate performance time is 7 minutes.*

📅 *SMF performance history: SMF premiere*

Between 1867 and 1901, Edvard Grieg composed ten volumes of solo piano works entitled *Lyrical Pieces*, comprising 66 pieces. The eighth volume of *Lyrical Pieces*, a set of six works, was composed in 1896, and published the following year as Grieg's Opus 65. Edvard Grieg married his first cousin, soprano Nina Hagerup, on June 11, 1867. In 1892, the couple celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary with dear friends. To memorialize the occasion, Grieg composed a piano work he originally titled *The Well-Wishers are Coming*. Grieg later changed the title to *Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen*, a reference to the composer's home (the translation of the Norwegian name is “The Hill of the Trolls”) located in the city of his birth, Bergen.

Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen is in A–B–A form, with two lively and cheerful episodes (*Tempo di Marcia un poco vivace*) framing a more lyrical section (*Poco tranquillo*).

***In the Hall of the Mountain King,*
from *Incidental Music to Peer Gynt* (1875)**

🕒 *Approximate performance time is 4 minutes.*

📅 *SMF performance history: SMF premiere*

In January of 1874, Norwegian author Henrik Ibsen asked his compatriot Grieg to compose incidental music for the premiere of his dramatic poem, *Peer Gynt*. On February 24, 1876, Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, accompanied by Grieg's score, premiered in Oslo. The production was a triumph, and soon, Ibsen's text and Grieg's music were considered inseparable.

Peer Gynt is a young Norwegian peasant who leaves his village, and Solveig—the one woman who truly loves him—in search of adventure. Peer's travels, which span the globe and many decades, fail to provide him with true happiness. As an old man, Peer finally returns to his village. There, he is met by Solveig, who cradles Peer in her arms.

“*In the Hall of the Mountain King*”—Peer meets the daughter of the Troll King of the Mountains.

She takes Peer to her father's palace. Peer is surrounded by the Troll King's subjects, who threaten the young man.

Excerpts from *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (1670)

🕒 *Approximate performance time is 10 minutes.*

📅 *SMF performance history: SMF premiere*

Molière's play *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (*The Bourgeois Gentleman*) concerns the misadventures of Monsieur Jourdain, a member of the nouveau-riche who aspires to the aristocracy. To that end, Jourdain hires a host of teachers and other artisans in order to assist him with his attempts at social climbing. In the end, Jourdain's aspirations cause him to be duped into allowing a middle-class young man to marry his daughter. The first performance of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* was presented on November 23, 1670 for the Court of Louis XIV. Molière himself performed the role of M. Jourdain. Jean-Baptiste Lully, one of France's most prominent composers, provided the music for the five-act *comédie-ballet*. This concert features excerpts from Lully's rich and delightful score.

***Passacalio a 3 & a 4* (1655)**

🕒 *Approximate performance time is 6 minutes.*

📅 *SMF performance history: SMF premiere*

Italian composer Biagio Marini began his musical career as a violinist at St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice, under the direction of Claudio Monteverdi. After serving the Parma court from 1621–3, Marini traveled throughout Europe. In 1649, Marini returned to Italy, working in Brescia and Venice. Marini composed both vocal and instrumental music, although he is best known for the latter.

The *Passacalio* (*Passacaglia*) for three and four instrument voices, opens with a brief *Introduction*, in 4/4 time. The meter then shifts to 3/2, for the introduction of the repeated *Passacaglia* figure that serves as the basis for three episodes. The work closes with a short *Finale* that returns to 4/4.

“The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba,” from *Solomon* (1749)

🕒 *Approximate performance time is 4 minutes.*
📅 *SMF performance history: SMF premiere*

Solomon, one of Handel's finest oratorios, premiered at London's Covent Garden Theatre on March 17, 1749. *Solomon*, depicting episodes in the life of the biblical king, is in three acts. The first is set around the consecration of the Temple in Jerusalem. The second depicts the famous episode in which two women claim a child as their own, with Solomon displaying the wisdom that solves the mystery. The final act concerns a visit to Solomon's kingdom by the Queen of Sheba. The act begins with a lively orchestral piece, “The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba.”

Valse Triste (1903)

🕒 *Approximate performance time is 6 minutes.*
📅 *SMF performance history: SMF premiere*

Jean Sibelius's *Valse Triste* was originally part of incidental music the Finnish composer wrote for a play by his brother-in-law, Arvid Järnefelt. That play, *Kuolema* (*Death*) premiered in 1903. The music accompanied a scene in which the hero's gravely-ill mother dances with Death.

Sibelius's haunting and beautiful music quickly established itself as an independent concert piece. It remains one of the composer's most popular compositions.

Romanian Folk Dances (1915)

🕒 *Approximate performance time is 4 minutes.*
📅 *SMF performance history: 4/08/18*

Béla Bartók maintained a lifelong affection for the folk music of his native Hungary. As a young man, Bartók made the first of many journeys to the Hungarian countryside. On several of these trips, Bartók was joined by his friend, contemporary and fellow Hungarian composer, Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967). Bartók and Kodály used manuscript paper and a phonograph recorder to document thousands of Hungarian folk melodies. Bartók and Kodály believed these melodies were important not only in the context of ethnomusicology, but as the basis for concert works.

Bartók's use of folk music in his own compositions encompassed other nationalities as well. In 1915, Bartók composed the *Romanian Folk Dances*, a brief work for solo piano. Two years later, Bartók arranged the *Romanian Folk Dances* for small orchestra. There have been several other arrangements for various ensembles. The dances, played without pause, are:

I. *Joc cu bâta* (*Stick Dance*); *Allegro moderato*

II. *Brâul* (*Sash Dance*); *Allegro*

III. *Pe loc* (*In One Spot*); *Andante*

IV. *Buciumeană* (*Horn Dance*); *Moderato*

V. *Poargă românească* (*Rumanian Polka*); *Allegro*

VI. *Mâruntel* (*Fast Dance*); *Allegro*

Invierno Porteño (*Winter*) from *Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* (*Four Seasons in Buenos Aires*) (ca. 1968)

🕒 *Approximate performance time is 7 minutes.*
📅 *SMF performance history: SMF premiere*

As a youth, Astor Piazzolla spent time both in his native Argentina and New York City's Little Italy. During that period, Piazzolla was exposed to classical and popular music, including the tango. In 1954, Piazzolla moved to Paris, where he studied with Nadia Boulanger. Piazzolla's classical works failed to impress Boulanger. “This music is well written,” Boulanger observed, “but it lacks feeling.” But when Piazzolla performed one of his tangos, Boulanger exclaimed: “This is Piazzolla! Don't ever leave it!” This marked a turning point for Piazzolla. As he later recalled, Boulanger “helped me find myself.”

Piazzolla “threw away all the other music and, in 1954, started working on my New Tango.” This “New Tango” infused the seductive Latin American dance with elements of jazz and modern classical music. Piazzolla encountered considerable initial resistance to his “New Tango,” particularly in his native Argentina. However, by the time of his death in 1992, Astor Piazzolla was mourned as a national hero. The admiration for Astor Piazzolla extended far beyond his native land. He earned the acclaim of some of the world's greatest musicians, including such

classical artists as Gidon Kremer, Yo-Yo Ma, and the Kronos String Quartet.

Astor Piazzolla's *Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* (*Four Seasons in Buenos Aires*) are a superb example of the composer's blending of tango, jazz, and classical elements. The work is in four movements, *Verano Porteño* (*Summer*) *Otono Porteño* (*Autumn*) *Invierno Porteño* (*Winter*), and *Primavera Porteño* (*Spring*). This concert features the *Winter* movement.

“Hot Honey Rag” and “Cell Block Tango” from *Chicago* (1975)

🕒 *Approximate performance time is 10 minutes.*
📅 *SMF performance history: SMF premiere*

The iconic Broadway musical *Chicago* opened at the 46th Street Theatre in New York on June 3, 1975, and ran for a total of 936 performances. Other major productions, and a movie version in 2002, followed. *Chicago*, one of the longest-running musicals in the history of Broadway, features music by John Kander, lyrics by Fred Ebb, and a book by Ebb and Bob Fosse. Set in the Roaring Twenties, *Chicago* tells the story of two song and dance performers, Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly (Gwen Verdon and Chita Rivera, in the original Broadway production), both charged with murder. At the close of the show, Roxie and Velma team for a two-woman show, performing the “Hot Honey Rag.” “Cell Block Tango” takes place in Act I. Roxie, arrested and jailed, encounters other inmates who relate the stories of their crimes.

Hoe-Down, from *Rodeo* (1942)

🕒 *Approximate performance time is 3 minutes.*
📅 *SMF performance history: 3/22/13*

After studies with Nadia Boulanger in Paris in the 1920s, Aaron Copland returned to his native United States. Copland decided that he would devote himself to composing music “that would immediately be recognized as American in character.” Copland's desire to compose in an “American” fashion ultimately manifested itself in two compositional styles, one not necessarily independent of the other. One technique featured the incorporation of the jazz idiom into classical works.

The other method, and the one for which Copland is best known, involved the use of American folk subjects and/or melodies, as exemplified by such works as *Billy the Kid* (1940), *Lincoln Portrait* (1942), and *Appalachian Spring* (1944). Another work from the latter category is the ballet *Rodeo*. Copland composed *Rodeo* at the request of Agnes de Mille, who danced the lead female role in the world premiere, presented by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo at New York's Metropolitan Opera House on October 16, 1942.

The ballet's scenario depicts a Saturday afternoon rodeo, as well the dance that follows in the evening. *Hoe-Down*, the most famous excerpt from *Rodeo*, gained even wider fame after its inclusion in beef commercials!