

Midland-Odessa

Symphony & Chorale



2017 | 2018
SEASON

GARY LEWIS
Music Director
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55 Seasons of Enriching Lives Through Music!



Midland-Odessa Symphony & Chorale

Gary Lewis, Music Director & Conductor

Presents

Mr. Tambourine Man



Amy Burton, soprano

SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 2018

7:30 P.M.

WAGNER NOËL PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

MS. BURTON'S APPEARANCE PROUDLY SPONSORED BY PERMIAN BASIN OPERA



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MR. TAMBOURINE MAN

Mr. Tambourine Man

7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 7, 2018

Wagner Noël Performing Arts Center

Gary Lewis, conductor

Amy Burton, soprano

Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan

John Corigliano (b. 1938)

Amy Burton, soprano

I. Prelude: Mr. Tambourine Man

II. Clothes Line

III. Blowin' in the Wind

IV. Masters of War

V. All Along the Watchtower

VI. Chimes of Freedom

VII. Postlude: Forever Young

Voyage (from L'Invitation au Voyage, 1971)

John Corigliano (b. 1938)

~ I N T E R M I S S I O N ~

La mer

Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)

I. De l'aube à midi sur la mer (From Dawn to Noon on the Sea)

II. Jeux de vagues (The Play of the Waves)

III. Dialogue du vent et de la mer (Dialogue of the Wind and Sea)

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Amy Burton, soprano

With a voice the New York Times has called, “luminous” and “lustrous”, versatile soprano **Amy Burton** enjoys an eclectic career of opera, concert, and cabaret. She has sung at the White House, with the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Zürich Opera, L’Opéra de Nice, Scottish Opera, Wexford Festival, the New Japan Philharmonic, Israel Philharmonic, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, and Philharmonia Baroque, among many others. A frequent interpreter of 20th and 21st-Century

music, she has premiered pieces by John Musto, Paul Moravec, Lee Hoiby, John Harbison, and Richard Danielpour, to name a few. Ms. Burton has performed John Corigliano’s *Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan* many times, in New York City, Miami, Greeley, Colorado, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and, most notably, with Marin Alsop and the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra.

Also specializing in French vocal music of the 1920s and 30s, Ms. Burton has performed both art songs and popular music of this era throughout the United States and Europe. Her critically acclaimed cd with Yves Abel and John Musto, “Souvenir de Printemps” was the result of a one-woman show based on the life of French singer Yvonne Printemps, which has been performed in New York and Barcelona.

In addition to numerous recitals and cabaret performances with Mr. Musto at Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, New York’s Café Sabarsky, The National Arts Club, Joe’s Pub, Washington Museum for Women in the Arts, Barcelona’s Liceu, The Glimmerglass Festival, and other venues, Ms. Burton has performed in the modern-day premiere of Cole Porter’s rediscovered 1928 musical, *The Ambassador Revue (La Revue des Ambassadeurs)* at Town Hall in New York (2014) and in Paris (2012). Winner of top awards from The Gerda Lissner, George London, and Sullivan Foundations, as well as the Silver Medal in the Marian Anderson International Vocal Competition, she has recorded for Bridge, Naxos, Harbinger, Albany, Angel/EMI, Opera America, and CRI.

A sought-after teacher, Ms. Burton is on the voice faculty at Mannes College of Music and the CUNY Graduate Center DMA program. Her students have won major prizes from the Metropolitan Opera Council Auditions, Opera Index, Gerda Lissner Foundation, George London Foundation, Puccini Foundation, and the Ziering-Conlon Art Song Competition. She also teaches, coaches and directs at *SongFest*, a prestigious summer festival in Los Angeles at Colburn Conservatory. Previously she has taught French Vocal repertoire at Manhattan School of Music, and was a guest teacher at Opera on the Avalon in Newfoundland. Also is in demand for master classes and residencies, Amy Burton maintains a busy private voice studio in New York City.

MR. TAMBOURINE MAN PROGRAM NOTES

Masterworks: Mr. Tambourine Man Program Notes

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Photo by J. Henry Fair
Courtesy of www.johnncorigliano.com

John Corigliano

b. February 16, 1938, New York City

Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan

Composed: 2000

Premiere: October 23, 2003, soprano Hila Plitmann with conductor Robert Spano and the Minnesota Orchestra

Approximate duration: 37 minutes

Voyage (from L'Invitation au Voyage, 1971)

String Orchestra version: 1976

Premiere of this arrangement: April 22, 1977, conductor Mary Canberg and the Rockland County Youth String Orchestra in Rockland County, New York

Approximate duration: 8 minutes

Timeline Connections

- 1971: George Harrison releases “My Sweet Lord” (a quick #1 on the UK pop charts)
- 1973: First portable cell phone call is made (New York City)

- 1973: Queen Elizabeth II opens the Sydney Opera House
- 1977: Apple Computer incorporates, ships first Apple II computers
- 1997: J.K. Rowling’s first Harry Potter novel is released (UK)
- 2000: Last original “Peanuts” comic strip is published
- 2000: Premiere of Higdon’s blue cathedral

The American **John Corigliano** continues to add to one of the richest, most unusual, and most widely celebrated bodies of work any composer has created over the last forty years. Corigliano’s numerous scores—including three symphonies and eight concerti among over one hundred chamber, vocal, choral, and orchestral works—have been performed and recorded by many of the most prominent orchestras, soloists, and chamber musicians in the world. Recent scores include *Conjurer* (2008), for percussion and string orchestra, commissioned for and introduced by Dame Evelyn Glennie; *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra: The Red Violin* (2005), developed from the themes of the score to the François Girard’s film of the same name, which won Corigliano the Oscar in 1999; *Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan* (2000) for orchestra and amplified soprano, the recording which won the Grammy for Best Contemporary Composition in 2008; *Symphony No. 3: Circus Maximus* (2004), scored simultaneously for wind orchestra and a multitude of wind ensembles; and *Symphony No. 2* (2001: Pulitzer Prize in Music.) Other important scores include *String Quartet* (1995: Grammy Award, Best Contemporary Composition); *Symphony No. 1* (1991: Grawemeyer and Grammy Awards); the opera *The Ghosts of Versailles* (Metropolitan Opera commission, 1991, International Classical Music Award 1992); and the *Clarinet Concerto* (1977.) One of the few living composers to have a string quartet named for him, Corigliano serves on the composition faculty at the Juilliard School of Music and holds the position of Distinguished Professor of Music at Lehman College, City University of New York, which has established a scholarship in his name; for the past fourteen years he and his partner, the composer-librettist Mark Adamo, have divided their time between Manhattan and Kent Cliffs, New York. More information is available at www.johnncorigliano.com. (*Biography and notes printed with permission.*)

MR. TAMBOURINE MAN PROGRAM NOTES *(continued)*

Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan

When Sylvia McNair asked me to write her a major song cycle for Carnegie Hall, she had only one request; to choose an American text.

I have set only four poets in my adult compositional life: Stephen Spender, Richard Wilbur, Dylan Thomas (whose major works generated the oratorio *A Dylan Thomas Trilogy*) and William M. Hoffman, collaborator with me on, among other, shorter pieces, the opera *The Ghosts of Versailles*. Aside from asking Bill to create a new text, I had no ideas.

Except that I had always heard, by reputation, of the high regard accorded the folk-ballad singer/songwriter Bob Dylan. But I was so engaged in developing my orchestral technique during the years when Dylan was heard by the rest of the world that I had never heard his songs.

So I bought a collection of his texts, and found many of them to be every bit as beautiful and as immediate as I had heard-and surprisingly well-suited to my own musical language. I then contacted Jeff Rosen, his manager, who approached Bob Dylan with the idea of re-setting his poetry to my music.

I do not know of an instance in which this has been done before (which was part of what appealed to me), so I needed to explain that these would be in no way arrangements, or variations, or in any way derivations of the music of the original songs, which I decided to not hear before the cycle was complete. Just as Schumann or Brahms or Wolf had re-interpreted in their own musical styles the same Goethe text, I intended to treat the Dylan lyrics as the poems I found them to be. Nor would their settings make any attempt at pop or rock writing. I wanted to take poetry I knew to be strongly associated with popular art and readdress it in terms of concert art-crossover in the opposite direction, one might say. Dylan granted his permission, and I set to work.

I chose seven poems for what became a thirty-five minute cycle. A Prologue: *Mr. Tambourine Man*, in a

fantastic and exuberant manner, precedes five searching and reflective monologues that form the core of the piece; and Epilogue: *Forever Young* makes a kind of folk-song benediction after the cycle's close. Dramatically, the inner five songs trace a journey of emotional and civic maturation, from the innocence of *Clothes Line* through the beginnings of awareness of a wider world (*Blowin' in the Wind*), through the political fury of *Masters of War*, to a premonition of an apocalyptic future (*All Along the Watchtower*), culminating in a vision of a victory of ideas (*Chimes of Freedom*). Musically, each of the five songs introduces an accompanimental motive that becomes the principal motive of the next. The descending scale introduced in *Clothes Line* resurfaces as the passacaglia which shapes *Blowin' in the Wind*. The echoing pulse-notes of that song harden into the hammered ostinato under *Masters of War*; the stringent chords of that song's finale explode into the raucous accompaniment under *All Along the Watchtower*; and that song's repeated figures dissolve into the bell-sounds of *Chimes of Freedom*.

Several years after composing the vocal/piano score I orchestrated the work. Since I did not want the soprano to have to sing in an "operatic" manner (with these Dylan texts), I specified that she be amplified. This way, she can project her voice over the orchestra while remaining intimate in her sound. The work is dedicated to Mark Adamo.

— John Corigliano

Voyage (from L'Invitation au Voyage, 1971)

Voyage string orchestra (1976) is an instrumental version of a 1971 a cappella choral work that was a setting of Richard Wilbur's translation of Baudelaire's famous *L'Invitation au voyage*. Wilbur's poignant setting pictures a world of obsessive imagination — a drugged version of heaven full of sensual imagery. The music echoes the quality of the repeated refrain found in this lush translation: "There, there is nothing else but grace and measure, richness, quietness and pleasure."

— John Corigliano

MR. TAMBOURINE MAN PROGRAM NOTES *(continued)*



Claude Debussy

b. August 22, 1862, St. Germain-en-Laye, France

d. March 25, 1918, Paris

La mer

Composed: 1903-1905, revised 1908

Premiered: October 15, 1905, Paris, conductor

Camille Chevillard and the Concerts Lamoureux

Approximate duration: 23 minutes

Timeline Connections

- 1889: World Fair in Paris (world music such as Javanese Gamelan influenced Parisian composers - notably Debussy)
- 1893: Dvořák premiered his New World Symphony
- 1901: First US speed limits for automobiles (10 MPH in cities, 15 in villages, and 20 MPH in rural areas)
- 1905: Premiere of Arnold Schoenberg's *Pelleas und Melissande* (Vienna)
- 1910 :US Immigration at a peak with 8.8 million immigrants (1901-1910)

While it is thoroughly documented that **Debussy** despised the term *impressionistic* being applied to his work, the correlation does illuminate crucial elements. Impressionism in painting captures the essence of the subject by focusing on light contrasts, texture, and color. It seeks to allude to the moment as time passes. It neither ignores the affect of the setting nor restricts the style to previous techniques. Much in this same manner, the work of Debussy provides a holistic impression – regardless of whether or not there is an intended concrete subject. (In fact, some works that seem to have a subject are intentionally ambiguous, such as *Voiles* from his *Préludes* - the title of this work could be translated as *sails* or *veils*.)

Perhaps one reason he rejected the term “impressionistic” in correlation to music is that the techniques utilized are not necessarily impressions of moments in time. To claim that his music is merely impressionistic would pigeonhole away the fantastic ramifications of his core techniques.

Most notably, Debussy is proclaimed as a liberator of music from the confines of functional harmony. “Functional harmony” is the base of common-practice tonality, a system at the root of all Western music since its establishment in the Baroque era. Functional harmony is, in essence, the reason there is a sense of “home” in music - a pitch that feels like the center or end, and often provides musical punctuation. As an example, consider the first (or identical last) phrase of *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* or the last line of *Happy Birthday*. Both comfortably finish on the “home” pitch (the tonic), and thus, provide a clear sense of tonality. Listeners expect the finish and feel rooted with its completion. If a happy partygoer were to sing the last bit of *Happy Birthday* and stopped before the final “you,” someone would undoubtedly feel compelled to finish. To claim that Debussy liberated music from this deeply rooted sense of expectation is quite extraordinary.

Debussy often compositionally explores this liberation by alluding to tonality without actually settling on a tonic, or by settling in enough layers

MR. TAMBOURINE MAN PROGRAM NOTES *(continued)*

of homes that the sense of expectation is thwarted. The result is utterly brilliant for a subject such as the sea (though fantastic in its own right without an extramusical theme in mind). One can easily imagine the waters of the ocean as the wafting and drifting sea of tonal ambiguity rises and falls.

It could be noted that Debussy was not the only composer working to liberate music from the common-practice confines. He was contemporary with the early atonal work of Arnold Schoenberg, an Austrian composer associated with German Expressionism. By the time of *La mer*, Schoenberg had likewise begun to seek ways to abandon tonality (though his *Pelleas und Melissande* of the same year is considered evolutionary rather than an example of the revolution which was to come). Schoenberg worked toward this goal by building levels of dissonance rather than layers of homes. Where Debussy may allude to numerous tonics in order to liberate his music from the confines of one home, Schoenberg sought to avoid any sense of home by “resolving” one dissonance to a lesser dissonance, thereby -as he would put it- creating the “emancipation of dissonance” (a phrase he himself first used in the 1920s). Schoenberg later developed an entire strict system of composition (12-tone serialism) in a dutiful effort to push music forward into new realms. The result of these efforts was quite terrifying at times, though arguably equally awe-inspiring.

Debussy, on the other hand, conscientiously sought an absence of theory. He utilized timbre (tone color) as the point rather than an effect; he explored texture and temporal space for the sake of themselves rather than a means to a different end. Though the connections to Impressionism may be tempting in this light, the work of Debussy endeavors to be beyond any such confines. In his words, “there is no theory. You have only to listen. Pleasure is the law. I love music passionately. And because I love it, I try to free it from barren traditions that stifle it. It is a free art gushing forth, an open-air art boundless as the elements, the wind, the sky, the sea. It must never be shut in and become an academic art.”

La mer is no exception to this philosophy. Subtitled *Three Symphonic Sketches* and birthed of his childhood love of the sea, *La mer* is a fantastic journey utilizing musical language that at once seems familiar and strange. It suggests and alludes but ultimately rejects traditional confines. Its only law is pleasure.

“The sound of the sea, the curve of a horizon, wind in leaves, the cry of a bird leave manifold impression in us. And suddenly, without our wishing it at all, one of these memories spills from us and finds expression in musical language... I want to sing my interior landscape with the simple artlessness of a child.” - Debussy



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