

Tempo

Symphony Friends Newsletter

2020-21 Season - October 2020

Stunning Strings

CSO kicks off the 2020-21 Season with Stunning Strings on Oct. 17th, 2020 with performances at 2:00 PM and 7:30 PM, at the Cheyenne Civic Center.

CSO Music Director and Conductor, William Intriligator says, "I am so excited to begin a new concert season with the Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra! Yes, our concerts will have safety measures in place and will look and feel different; yet the music is powerful enough to get past all those differences and really move us! Our concerts October 17th feature just the string instruments of the orchestra. Back in the day, orchestras in Western music began with just strings. The other instruments were developed and added later. So, you could say this concert brings us back to fundamentals, in one sense. Yet in another way, there is tremendous spirit and innovation in this program!"

The season begins with a wonderful work by Florence Price. Price's *Five Folksongs in Counterpoint* was scored for string quartet but will be played by string orchestra at these concerts. Price uses familiar folksongs like 'Clementine,' 'Shortnin' Bread,' and 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot' and creates brilliant counterpoint and variations around them. Next, CSO Principal Harp Tonya Jilling is featured in Debussy's ethereal and beautiful

Dances Sacree et Profane. The concert continues with George Walker's *Lyric for Strings*, written in the 1940's when the composer was in his 20's. He wrote it originally as the second movement of a string quartet and as a memorial for his grandmother; it is now mostly played by full string orchestras. The concerts conclude with Grieg's vivacious and lively *Holberg Suite*. A masterpiece for string orchestra, it uses melodies in a purposely old-fashioned style to create exciting and beautiful dances and a powerful and deep, singing slow movement. "I've been wanting to program this piece with the Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra for many years," Intriligator says. "It is always a favorite that makes me, the players, and the audience smile!"

The Lunch & Learn Classic Conversations educational seminar that precedes each concert will be livestreamed on the CSO Facebook page on Friday, October 16th at noon and made available on the CSO website for on-demand viewing.



Tonya Jilling, CSO Principal Harpist

CSO AT-A-GLANCE

Livestream tickets available for all evening performances!

WITTY WINDS & BOISTEROUS BRASS

**SAT., NOV. 14th • 2:00 PM & 7:30 PM
CHEYENNE CIVIC CENTER**

A showcase of CSO's amazing winds and brass musicians featuring Copland, Mendelssohn, Gabrieli, Gounod and more!

HOLIDAY MAGIC

**SAT., DEC. 12th • 2:00 PM & 7:30 PM
CHEYENNE CIVIC CENTER**

This year it's a Bugler's Holiday with guest artist Justin Bartels, principal trumpet of the Colorado Symphony!

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SPONSORS OF OUR OCTOBER CONCERT:



FLORENCE PRICE: PIONEER FEMALE COMPOSER



The CSO will open their performances with a piece by Florence Smith Price, the first black female composer to have her work performed by a major symphony orchestra. *Five Folksongs in Counterpoint* is one of two string quartets Price wrote. It features African-American

spirituals: “Calvary”, “Clementine”, “Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes”, “Shortnin’ Bread” and “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”. Each spiritual is given slightly different treatment, with some in a hymn-like style and others performed in a lively fashion. Price framed these spirituals within a traditionally European classical music form and tradition to reflect the melting pot of cultures in America at the time.

Price was the first African-American woman to become famous as a composer of orchestral music. Beginning her career at a time when it was unheard-of for blacks to study classical composition, she was a founder of a tradition of African-American music in the twentieth-century. Her more than 300 completed works included symphonies and other orchestral works, choral pieces (some of them arrangements of spirituals), songs, piano and organ works, and music for small ensembles. Orchestras in several major American cities and abroad performed Price’s crowd-pleasing works.

It is instructive to look at Price’s life to appreciate her work. She was born in Little Rock Arkansas in 1887, in a mixed-race family. Her father was a dentist and her mother was the music teacher who guided Florence’s early musical training. Her first piano performance occurred at the age of 4 and her first composition was published at the age of 11. After graduating from high school at 14, she enrolled in the New England Conservatory of Music to major in piano and organ. Initially, she identified as Hispanic to avoid racial discrimination. She graduated in 1906 with honors, with an artist diploma in organ and a teaching certificate.

She returned to Arkansas, where she married Thomas J. Price, an attorney. After a series of racial incidents in Little Rock, including a lynching, the Price family moved to Chicago where Florence began a new and fulfilling period in her career. She studied composition, orchestration, and organ. Financial struggles and abuse by her husband resulted in her divorcing him in 1931. To make ends meet, she worked as an organist for silent film screenings and

composed songs for radio ads under a pen name, but she also continued composing classical music. In 1933, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra premiered one of her symphonies, making Price’s piece the first composition by an African-American woman to be played by a major orchestra. She was inducted into the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers in 1940. Despite these achievements, Price strongly felt that her work was ignored because of her race and gender. She expressed the view that orchestras preferred composers who were white, male, and dead. This frustration was expressed in a 1943 letter to the conductor Serge Koussevitzky, where she introduced herself as follows: “My dear Dr. Koussevitzky, to begin with I have two handicaps—those of sex and race. I am a woman; and I have some Negro blood in my veins.” Only in the past couple of decades have Price’s major works begun to receive recordings and performances, and these are still infrequent.

HARPIST TONYA JILLING WILL BE FEATURED IN FAMILIAR DEBUSSY PIECE

Dances Sacree et Profane by Claude Debussy will showcase Tonya Jilling, CSO’s Principal Harpist. Tonya has thrilled CSO audiences since 2012. She has a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Colorado and a Master of Music from CSU and has performed with many orchestras throughout the Rocky Mountain region. “Whenever we feature Tonya as a harp soloist, it is always a special occasion and you know you’re in for something especially beautiful,” adds Intriligator.

Claude Debussy is one of the most influential composers of the late 19th and early 20th century. His works strongly influenced a wide range of composers, including Bela Bartok, Olivier Messiaen, and Bill Evans, jazz pianist and composer. A music critic observed that “if one omits Schoenberg [...] a list of 20th-century composers influenced by Debussy is practically a list of 20th-century composers tout court.” Most of the major works for which Debussy is best known were written between the mid-1890s and the mid-1900s.

Inclusion of Debussy’s *Dances Sacree et Profane* in the “Stunning Strings” concert is appropriate as the harp is one of the earliest string instruments. It has a prosaic origin in 1904 when a Parisian musical instrument manufacturer commissioned Debussy to write a piece for the chromatic harp, which differed from the concert harp because it had no pedals. *Dances* was quickly accepted in the harp repertoire and is often performed. It is ironic that its muse, the chromatic harp, was quickly abandoned because of size and tuning challenges.

GEORGE WALKER: PULITZER PRIZE WINNER

George Walker was a successful composer and pianist. He enjoyed many firsts in his long life, including being the first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music. Walker's *Lyric for Strings*, (originally entitled *Lament*), was the second movement of a symphony composed in 1946, and dedicated to Walker's grandmother, who had been a slave. It is fitting that *Lyric for Strings* is on the CSO's October program, for it is said to evoke feelings of optimism and hope, certainly something that all of us can use right now!



Intriligator notes, "The piece does have a sad, 'Adagio for Strings'-like quality about it, but it's gorgeous, and it became one of the most frequently performed pieces of classical music by a living American composer during his lifetime."

Walker lived a long, productive and prolific life, and he passed away just two years ago at age 96. He was born in Washington, D.C. on June 27, 1922. His father, who emigrated from Jamaica, became a physician after graduating from Temple University School of Medicine. His mother supervised his first piano lessons. At the age of 14, Walker was admitted to the Oberlin Conservatory. He graduated at 18 and was admitted to the Curtis Institute of Music, graduating with Artist Diplomas in piano and composition in 1945. He was one of the first black graduates of the music school. In 1956, he became the first black recipient of a doctoral degree from the Eastman School of Music. He spent two years in Paris studying composition with Nadia Boulanger. Over the course of his long life, he balanced a career as a concert pianist, teacher, and composer.

Walker wrote more than 90 pieces for solo piano, voice, winds, small ensembles and orchestra. In addition to the Pulitzer, he earned dozens of composition awards and prizes including Guggenheim, Rockefeller, and Fulbright fellowships. While Walker is now best known as a composer, early on, composing was a side project that gave him somewhere to put his leftover musical energy when practicing five hours a day to become a concert pianist wasn't enough. As a composer, Walker's music has been influenced by a wide variety of musical styles including Chopin, Brahms, Beethoven, jazz, folk songs, and church hymns. It is fitting to pay homage to George Walker and his impressive career and his use of his singular talent to embody hope and optimism are especially welcome during this time.

EDVARD GRIEG: HOLBERG SUITES

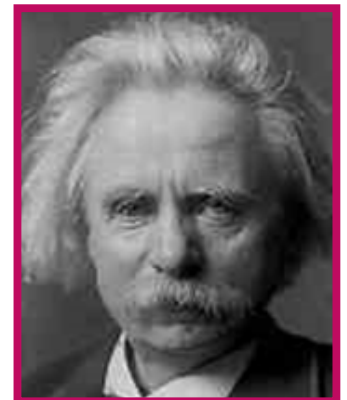
Members of the CSO audience need no introduction to Edvard Grieg, whose *Holberg Suites* will be performed on October 17th. When Grieg's name is mentioned, one quickly thinks of "In the Hall of the Mountain King," from the *Peer Gynt Suite*; however, the *Holberg Suites* is written in a much different style which will delight concert goers.

The *Holberg Suites* is a collection of baroque-style dances, composed in celebration of the two hundredth birthday of Baron Ludwig Holberg. It was originally written for the piano, and later arranged by the composer for string orchestra. There are five movements, each embodying a particular type of baroque dance.

Inquiring minds might ask, "Why was it important to celebrate Baron Holberg's birthday?" Quite simply, because Holberg's impressive career enhanced Norway's place in the world. He was a famous 17th century playwright, who was considered the most accomplished Scandinavian literary figure of the time. His plays were popular and often performed. He was also a philanthropist and philosopher who encouraged people to think for themselves. He is claimed by both Norway and Denmark as one of the founders of their literary tradition. Henrik Ibsen praised his "witty satire, his sympathy for women, and his interest in social reform."

Grieg is widely considered one of the leading composers of the Romantic era, and his music is part of the standard classical repertoire worldwide. His use and development of Norwegian folk music brought the music of Norway to international awareness, as well as helping to develop a national identity, like Sibelius did for Finland and Smetana in Bohemia.

Maestro Intriligator is excited to program this work describing it as "a masterpiece for string orchestra. It uses melodies in a purposely old-fashioned style to create exciting and beautiful dances and has a powerful and deep singing slow movement.



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Toma Nisbet

Sharon Novick

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DID YOU KNOW?

Traditional IRA owners must take a Required Minimum Distribution starting at age 70½ or face tax penalties. You can use a directed donation to CSO, a 501(c)(3) organization, to meet all or part of your IRA's required minimum distribution for the year.

Music in Words

The Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra hosted our annual Music in Words contest for third and fourth grade students in early March. Music in Words is a program that highlights a piece of music from one of the CSO's season concerts, and challenges students to write a creative response about the music. All throughout 2020 we have been celebrating Ludwig van Beethoven's 250th birthday, so to continue the celebration CSO selected Beethoven's *Symphony No. 3*, movement 3, to inspire the student's writing.

Through our Music in Words program the CSO strives to engage students in a cross-disciplinary collaboration of music and classroom studies. Students listen to this musical selection during their music class and engage in a discussion with their music teachers about the piece and composer. We encourage students to reflect upon the emotions and imagery that the music sparked within them as they write their stories using the writing processes and expectations outlined in the Common Core State Standards.

We would like to thank LCSD #2 music teacher Stephanie Barker, the judges, student participants and our generous program sponsors: BNSF Railway Foundation, Cheyenne Kiwanis Club, First Interstate Bank Foundation, Union Pacific Railroad Foundation, Wyoming Arts Council & Wyoming Community Foundation.

Third Grade Winners:

1st Place: Wyatt Stevens, Burns Elementary School

2nd Place: Reece West, Burns Elementary School

3rd Place: Azrael Rivera, Burns Elementary School

Honorable Mention: Elise Sandlin, Carpenter Elementary School

Finalists: Harper Hershey, Alyssa Hoffman, Trigg Roberts

Fourth Grade Winners:

1st Place: Baylor Odegaard, Burns Elementary School

2nd Place: Brecklynn Wenzel, Carpenter Elementary School

3rd Place: Grace Hale, Burns Elementary School

Honorable Mention: Toney Sandlin, Carpenter Elementary School

Finalists: Tessa Bybee, Brenden Halligan, Josian Romero, Xander Wilson

WITTY WINDS & BOISTEROUS BRASS

2:00 PM & 7:30 PM
CIVIC CENTER

Nov.

14

2020

PRESENTED BY
CHEYENNE SKIN CLINIC

Copland
Fanfare for the Common Man

Mendelssohn
Nocturno for Winds

Gabrieli
Canzon Septimi Toni No. 2

Gounod
Petite Symphonie

Holst/Friedman
Selections from *The Perfect Fool*

*Loggins-Hull
Hammers

Handel/Baines, McKerras
Overture from *Royal Fireworks Music*

