

SAHarmonie
Brett A. Richardson, Conductor and Artistic Director

5.10.2022

APPALACHIAN SPRING

Ping Yee Ho
Beethoven
Copland

Wind Octet
Sextet, Op. 71
Appalachian Spring



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APPALACHIAN SPRING

ALICE PING YEE HO | LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN | AARON COPLAND

*Fifth Performance of the 2021-2022 Season
10th Performance*

Brett A. Richardson

Conductor and Artistic Director

Tuesday, May 10, 2022

7:30 PM CDT

University of the Incarnate Word
Luella Bennack Music Center
Diane Bennack Concert Hall

@SAHarmonieEnsemble



PROGRAM

Wind Octet (1982) **ALICE PING YEE HO | 13'00"**
(b. 1960)

- I. Humoroso energico
- II. Lento cantabile
- III. Vivace (The Dance)
- IV. Mistero
- V. Finale: Largo

Sextet in E-flat Major, Op. 71 (1796) **LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN | 18'00"**
(1770-1827)

- I. Adagio – Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Menuetto – Trio
- IV. Rondo

INTERMISSION (15 mins)

Appalachian Spring for 13 instruments (1943) **AARON COPLAND | 25'00"**
(1900-1990)

SPECIAL THANKS

- University of the Incarnate Word Department of Music, Prof. William Gokelman, Chair, and Melinda Wright, Venue Manager, for the use of the UIW Concert Hall
- Our wonderful guest artists!

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PERSONNEL

Brett A. Richardson
Conductor and Artistic Director
San Antonio Harmonie Ensemble

Danielle Aicher#
Flute

Sarah Wildey-Richmond#
Principal Bassoon

Stephanie Hulsey*
Flute

Sabrina Stovall*
Bassoon
Adelante Winds

Erin Webber
Principal Oboe

Justin Gonzales
Principal Horn

Don Bierschenk#
Clarinet

Tyler Neuffer*
Horn
USAF Band of the West

William Hayter*
Clarinet
Texas Lutheran University

George Fahlund#
Double Bass

Violin I

Erin Rushforth
*Japan-Seattle Suzuki
Institute*

Violin II

Amanda Slagle
Symphony Viva

Viola

Amy Pikler
*Musicians of the
San Antonio Symphony*

Cello

Ryan Post
SA Sinfonietta

Noelle Nimchan
Sonido Barroco

Ashley Arvis
*Orchestra of the
Incarnate Word*

Tori Johnson
UIW Music Alumna

**Mary Ann
McAfee**
*Orchestra of the
Incarnate Word*

Piano

Daniel Anastasio
Agarita Chamber Ensemble

***Guest Artist**
#Copland personnel

PROGRAM NOTES

***Wind Octet (1982)*ALICE PING YEE HO**
(b. 1960)

One of the most acclaimed composers writing in Canada today, Hong Kong-born **Alice Ping Yee Ho** has written in many musical genres and received numerous national and international awards, including the 2019 Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prize, 2016 Louis Applebaum Composers Award, 2014 Prince Edward Island Symphony Composers Competition, 2014 Kitchener Waterloo Symphony Friendship Orchestral Composition Competition, 2013 Dora Mavor Moore Award “Outstanding Original Opera” for her opera *The Lesson of Da Ji*, 2013 Boston Metro Opera International Composition Competition, K.M. Hunter Artist Award, du Maurier Arts Ltd. Canadian Composers Competition, MACRO International Composition Competition, Luxembourg Sinfonietta International Composition Prize, and International League of Women Composers Competition.



Critics have called her music dramatic and graceful, while praising its “organic flow of imagination,” “distinctly individual” style”, “colourful orchestration”, and “emotive qualities”. Influences evident in her proudly eclectic approach include Chinese folk and operatic idioms, Japanese Taiko, jazz, pop culture, and other contemporary art forms. Ms. Ho holds a Bachelor of Music degree in composition with high distinction from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and a Master of Music degree in composition from the University of Toronto. The composer writes:

“The *Wind Octet* is a 15-minute work scored for horn, 2 flutes, oboe, 2 clarinets, and 2 bassoons. This whimsical composition has 5 short movements of contrasting characters, the energetic movements are full of humor and vigor, and the slow movements are coloristic and lyrical. It is one of my earliest compositions to explore dramatic writing for a larger woodwind ensemble. One can imagine the work as a musical riddle in the form of ‘question’ and ‘answer’ – an animated musical journey of multiple dimensions to showcase the musicality and virtuosity of ensemble playing.”

Sextet in E-flat Major, Op. 71 (1796)LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(1770-1827)

Beethoven started composing music for winds in the early 1790s, while he still worked for Maximilian Franz, the Archbishop and Elector of Cologne, who had his capital in Bonn. The Elector (so called because he was one of the German rulers who cast a vote for the Holy Roman Emperor when the previous one died) thought that wind music helped his digestion and had an ensemble consisting of pairs of oboes, clarinets, horns, and bassoons to accompany his meals. Beethoven also knew Mozart's music for wind ensemble, especially his serenades. Thus, the younger composer was well-versed in the possibilities of various combinations of wind instruments when he settled for good in Vienna in November 1792.



The Sextet was, according to Beethoven's biographer Alexander Thayer, composed in 1796. It waited for its first performance for nearly a decade, when Beethoven offered it up at a benefit concert for his violinist friend Ignaz Schuppanzigh in April 1805. The *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, the music journal of record for German-speaking Europe during Beethoven's lifetime, described the Sextet in a review of the benefit as "a composition which shines resplendent by reason of its lively melodies, unconstrained harmonies, and a wealth of new and surprising ideas," praise tinged with irony for a nine-year-old work.

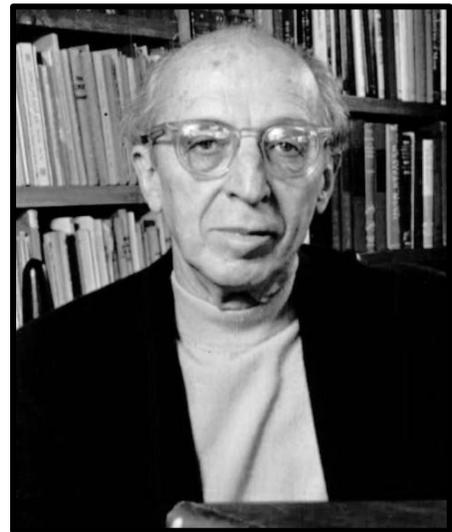
The Sextet's layout reflects the typical classical pattern of four movements, including a minuet, which Beethoven would forego in later works in favor of the more explosive scherzo. The clarinet and the bassoon get most of the "lively melodies" in the Sextet's opening and closing movements (although the horn has an especially rousing outburst at the end of the first allegro).

Beethoven also takes advantage of the different characteristics of the instruments to great effect. Witness, for example, the simplicity of the theme played by the bassoon at the outset of the adagio, and how Beethoven recasts it for clarinet and bassoon in dialogue over a gently rocking accompaniment, as a single theme becomes a conversation between two players.

– John Henken, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra

***Appalachian Spring* (1943)..... AARON COPLAND**
Chamber Version for 13 instruments (1900-1990)

Appalachian Spring (for chamber orchestra) began as “Ballet for Martha,” referencing Martha Graham’s ballet troupe. According to Copland, the music was based on his friendship with Graham herself. “I was thinking primarily about Martha and her unique choreographic style, which I knew well. Nobody else seems quite like Martha: she’s so proud, so very much herself. And she’s unquestionably very American: there’s something prim and restrained, simple yet strong about her which one tends to think of as American.” Copland met Martha Graham in the early 1930s at a concert that featured his *Piano Variations*. She told the composer she wanted to dance to it; Copland told her that was “impossible.” Proving him wrong, she created the dance *Dithyramb*. Copland was thunderstruck. “Surely only an artist with an understanding of my work could have visualized dance material in so rhythmically complex and thematically abstruse a composition.”



The composer began work on *Appalachian Spring* in 1943, commissioned by the Foundation of Arts patron Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, who paid him \$500 “for a dance piece.” Martha Graham (who actually titled the work) had been inspired for a ballet by Hart Crane’s poem, “The Dance,” which included these words:

*O Appalachian Spring! I gained the ledge;
Steep, inaccessible smile that eastward bends
And northward reaches in that violet wedge
Of Adirondacks!*

The ballet received the Pulitzer Prize in May 1945. Copland orchestrated the chamber score, and the Suite for Orchestra premiered in 1945 with the New York Philharmonic.

The setting is the early 19th century, on the site of a Pennsylvania farmhouse that was a wedding gift to a young couple. Copland wrote, “The bride-to-be and the young farmer-husband enact the emotions, joyful and apprehensive, which their new domestic partnership invites. An old neighbor suggests, now and then, the rocky confidence of experience. A revivalist and his followers remind the new householders of the strange and terrible aspects of human fate. At the end the couple are left quiet and strong in their new house.”

The ballet had 14 segments; the orchestral version eight. The composer kindly provided the following road map:

- I. **Very slowly.** Introduction of the characters, one by one, in a suffused light.
- II. **Fast.** Sudden burst of unison strings in A-Major arpeggios starts the action. A sentiment both elated and religious gives the keynote to this scene.
- III. **Moderate.** Duo for the Bride and her Intended — scene of tenderness and passion.
- IV. **Quite fast.** The Revivalist and his flock. Folksy feeling — suggestions of square dances and country fiddlers.
- V. **Still faster.** Solo dance of the Bride — presentiment of motherhood. Extremes of joy and fear and wonder.
- VI. **Very slowly (as at first).** Transition scene to music reminiscent of the introduction.
- VII. **Calm and flowing.** Scenes of daily activity for the Bride and her Farmer husband. There are five variations on a Shaker theme. The theme, sung by a solo clarinet, was taken from a collection of Shaker melodies compiled by author Edward D. Andrews, and published under the title “The Gift to Be Simple.” The melody most borrowed and used almost literally is called “Simple Gifts.”
- VIII. **Moderate. Coda.** The Bride takes her place among her neighbors. At the end the couple are left “quiet and strong in their new house.” Muted strings intone a hushed prayerlike chorale passage. The close is reminiscent of the opening music.

The above became iconic American music, deeply embedded, and embraced in our culture. The seventh section, “Simple Gifts,” sometimes tends to “steal the show.” In response, Copland made a separate arrangement for orchestra, titled “Variations on a Shaker Tune,” which has also become part of our American musical heritage.

– Marianne Williams Tobias, *Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra*

CONDUCTOR



Brett A. Richardson

Conductor & Artistic Director

Known for his energy and versatility as a music educator and conductor, Brett A. Richardson is the Conductor and Artistic Director of the San Antonio Harmonie Ensemble. He also serves as the Director of Bands and Associate Professor of Music at the University of the Incarnate Word where he was named a *2019 UIW Provost's Legacy in Teaching Award* recipient.

Recently named a finalist for Music Director of the *Austin Symphonic Band*, "The Official Band of the City of Austin," Dr. Richardson will guest conduct the group in June 2022. In addition to serving as a clinician and adjudicator for bands of all levels, Dr. Richardson has conducted numerous junior high and high school All-Region/All-City Honor Bands across the U.S., as well as serving as a guest conductor and invited presenter at thirteen state music conferences, several universities, and *The Midwest Clinic*, where he participated in the 2018 H. Robert Reynolds Conducting Institute. Dr. Richardson has been published in the *TMEA Southwestern Musician*, *TBA Bandmasters Review*, and is a contributing author to GIA Publications' *Teaching Music Performance in Band* and *Program Notes: A Complete Guide to Band Directing* by John Denis. His professional affiliations include membership in the Phi Beta Mu International Honorary Bandmasters Fraternity, Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Bandmasters Association, and College Band Directors National Association. Dr. Richardson holds degrees in wind conducting and music education from the world-renowned Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, Texas A&M University-Commerce, and Stephen F. Austin State University. He lives in San Antonio with his wife, Jacquelyn Matava, an accomplished mezzo-soprano and voice professor at Trinity University, and their shih-tzu, Lanny.

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE

The **San Antonio Harmonie Ensemble** (SAHarmonie) is a group of like-minded musicians with a passion for performing chamber music at the highest level. All of the members call San Antonio home and are proud to share their talents with the Alamo City.



SAHarmonie performing Elgar's *Enigma Variations*. Virtual Concert, Spring 2021.

ABOUT OUR HOME

Since its inception, the San Antonio Harmonie Ensemble has maintained a close partnership with the **University of the Incarnate Word** (UIW). Several members of the group serve on the music faculty of UIW, the largest Catholic university in Texas, and reside in San Antonio. The group rehearses once a week in the Diane Bennack Concert Hall at UIW and performs four concerts annually. Many concerts are live-streamed and archived on YouTube.



SAHarmonie in the Diane Bennack Concert Hall at the University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, TX



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