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ORCHESTRA

NOLAN DRESDEN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Presents

VOYAGES

*World Beats:
Our 2014 Pride Concert*

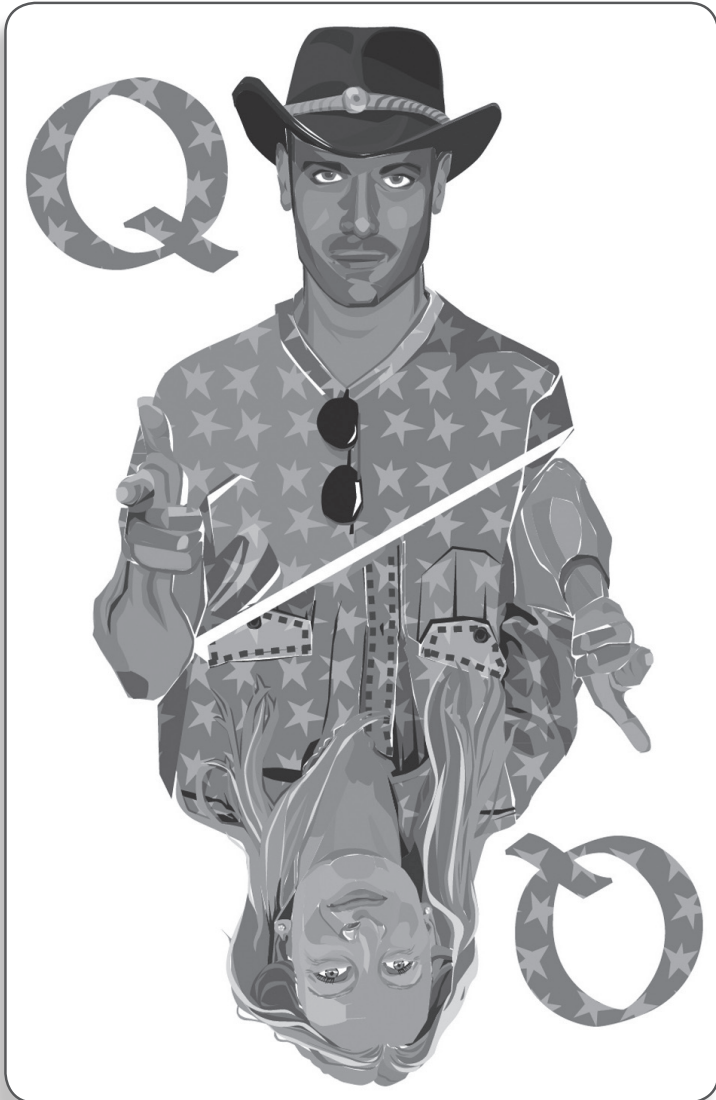
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FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

QUO is so glad you could join us for this very special evening of music. Tonight, we celebrate five wonderful years of being New York City's LGBT community orchestra. It's been such an amazing experience, and we thank you for joining us, whether you've been a loyal audience member since our *Debut* in November 2009, you're just joining us, or somewhere in between.

This performance also closes our 2013-2014 "Voyages" season, in which we've explored South America, India, Europe, the Far East, and the sights and sounds of our own home town. This evening we journey to three final ports of call: Russia, Japan, and once again, the US of A.

You join us on a bittersweet occasion, dear audience, as tonight marks QUO Artistic Director Nolan Dresden's final concert at the helm. He is off to bigger and better things and we are excited for him, but we will miss him dearly. We've grown so much under his baton, and this concert truly represents the pinnacle of our achievements together.

Finally, as we do every June concert, we celebrate the love, acceptance, and Pride that have brought us all together. Sometimes, people ask, "Why a gay orchestra?" The simple answer is, because we're gay and we're an orchestra. Why a gay running club? Why a gay bowling league? Why a gay swim team? (oh let me count the ways) The reason is we're a community full of love and we want to express that love through music, in that special way only music can.

If you're feeling the love, tear off the form on the inside back cover of this booklet and make a sustaining gift to QUO. Our box office attendants will be happy to accept your generous pledge of support. Gift or no gift, we're happy you're here to celebrate with us.

Yours truly,

Eric Hayslett
President, QUO

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Dmitri Shostakovich

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and Liann Wadewitz (II)

INTERMISSION

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Aaron Copland

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ABOUT QUO

Founded in July 2009, the Queer Urban Orchestra (QUO) is a musical organization dedicated to the promotion of fine arts in the New York City metropolitan area whose membership is open to all adult musicians regardless of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. QUO strives to entertain and educate members and audiences alike through performances of classical and contemporary music, promoting equality, understanding, acceptance, and respect.

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section leader
Charles Lee
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Ben Solis

ALTO FLUTE

Craig Devereaux

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Christian Smythe

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Seth Bedford
Mark Saccomano
Brian Shaw
Christian Smythe



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, NOLAN DRESDEN



At an early age I took an interest in classical music. When other kids were out buying Madonna on cassette tape, I was purchasing Mozart on sheet music. First picking up piano at age eight and French horn at age nine, my love affair began to grow rapidly.

In 1999 I traveled the country playing Mellophone with the Phantom Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps, where I had the opportunity to work with some of the best in the field... pun intended. However, in the final performance of the season, I suffered an injury that ended my brass-playing career indefinitely. Though my obsession with brass and percussion lives on.

Since earning my BFA from Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wisconsin, where I studied Opera and Theater performance, I have been acting, music directing, and conducting in Chicago and New York, and spent six months outside of Hong Kong developing a new opera company, as well as leading the Team Band Symphonic Band in Cologne, Germany during the 2010 Gay Games VIII.

After a successful first official season with QUO entitled “Date Night”, I am ecstatic to round off the 2013/2014 QUO season, “Voyages”, with tonight’s presentation of World Beats. This season we started at the corner of Sixth and Houston with Michael Torke’s Corner in Manhattan, and tonight we bring everything back home with Aaron Copland’s third Symphony. We have visited India, China, Mexico and even delved into the hobbit world of Middle Earth...and what a trip it has been.

I have also had the privilege to work with the InterSchool Orchestra’s Symphonic Band, the Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra, Litha Chamber Orchestra, and the Lesbian and Gay Big Apple Corps Symphonic Band (Associate Conductor). As well as with Dr.

Mallory Thompson, the head of Northwestern University's Masters of Conducting program, in a symposium that changed my life. In addition I was given the extreme honor of being invited to audition for the MM program in Orchestral Conducting at Juilliard with Maestro Alan Gilbert.

Tonight is a very special occasion for a few reasons; it is the QUO 5th anniversary concert, it is the kickoff to Pride week in NYC with our Pride concert, and sadly it is my last time on the podium with this amazing group of musicians and friends. I would like to thank the ongoing support of my friends and family, especially my fellow V-Hawks and V-Hawk spouses both here in NYC and afar. My gays that hold me up every day (did that sound dirty?). The Board of Directors of QUO, the section leaders and of course the general membership, all of whom make me look really good at every performance.

I hope all of you enjoy tonight's performance as much as we enjoy performing it. Thank you to all of our supporters both veteran and new, and I wish QUO the best of luck in all future endeavors.

-Much Love

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PROGRAM NOTES

Overture on Russian and Kirghiz Themes – Dmitri Shostakovich

Perhaps one of Western music's most liminal artists, Dmitri Shostakovich precariously yet masterfully balanced his career (and very life) between being a composer for the people and a composer for his government. Born in St. Petersburg, Russia on September 25, 1906, to working class parents, Shostakovich studied piano with his mother from age nine. He displayed a precocious natural talent in music; at the age of thirteen, he was admitted to the Petrograd Conservatory, headed by one of the greatest Russian composers of the previous generation, Alexander Glazunov. Shostakovich dutifully studied the classics but was most drawn to the works of Sergei Prokofiev and Igor Stravinsky, much to the chagrin of his professors. However, he exhibited great promise as a composer, as displayed in his publicly acclaimed First Symphony of 1926, written at the age of nineteen for his graduation.

Despite increasing pressures to conform to Soviet standards, Shostakovich continued to push the envelope. The 1930s and 1940s brought subsequent symphonies, chamber works, operas, and solo pieces. Unfortunately, this prolific output could not save him from official state denunciation. Upon Joseph Stalin's negative reactions to the opera *Lady Macbeth* (Shostakovich recalled that "Stalin shuddered every time the brass and percussion played too loudly"), his music was formally decried as anti-Soviet. Fearing for the safety of his wife and young family, he acquiesced to limit his output to pro-Soviet film scores.

The Fifth Symphony was a watershed moment: it managed not only to emotionally move the masses, but also to be accepted by the authorities as appropriately Soviet in nature. Its success secured Shostakovich a post as composition professor at the Leningrad Conservatory. He remained in good standing with the government through the premiere of his Seventh Symphony, a massive work that commemorated the siege of Leningrad during World War II. Angered by increasing limitations made upon his output, Shostakovich brashly finished his Ninth Symphony in 1945, a Haydn-esque work "which intentionally failed to satisfy Stalin's demands for a 'hymn of victory.'" Nevertheless, while ostensibly composing works meant to return him to official favor, he secretly penned serious works "for the desk drawer," including the song cycle *From Jewish Folk Poetry*, which was an especially dangerous project, due to post-war anti-Semitism.

Several pivotal moments in the 1950s provided radical change for Shostakovich, particularly his state-sanctioned (though tightly controlled) visit to New York City for the Cultural and Scientific Congress for World Peace. The trip introduced him to many American luminaries who would later champion his works worldwide, including Aaron Copland and

Leonard Bernstein. The other momentous event at this time was Stalin's death. The immediate fallout for Shostakovich remains hotly debated. Some historians believe he was pressured by Khrushchev to join the Communist Party or face detention in a labor camp while others insist he joined the party of his own accord; Shostakovich himself claimed he was blackmailed, and a close friend later revealed the composer was near-suicidal.

Shostakovich's compositional output remained strong through deteriorating health, even when he was left nearly totally incapacitated by leg injuries and poliomyelitis in his right hand. The last symphonies, the Fourteenth – dedicated to close friend Benjamin Britten – and the Fifteenth – imbued with retrospective musical quotes from his early career – were premiered in 1970 and 1971, respectively. A chronic smoker, Shostakovich died of lung cancer on August 9, 1975, at the age of sixty-eight.

Early in 1963, Shostakovich visited the remote USSR republic of Kyrgyzstan. Bordering China, India, and Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan lies nearly 3,000 miles from St. Petersburg in one of the most isolated parts of central Asia. During his travels, Shostakovich was fascinated by how the region's extreme isolation preserved Kirghiz folk traditions. He later remarked that Kyrgyzstan was a place "where everyone sings." Less than a year after his return home, he was commissioned by the Soviet government to compose a centennial celebratory work marking the "voluntary incorporation"(annexation) of Kyrgyzstan; his fresh and firsthand experiences with native Kyrgyz music resulted in a work blending a Kyrgyz folk song with a Siberian melody. This work, *Overture on Russian and Kirghiz Themes*, Op. 115, was premiered on November 2, 1963, at the Theatre of Opera and Ballet in the Kyrgyz capital, Frunze.

Two Cine Pastrali – Toru Takemitsu

Japanese composer and theorist Toru Takemitsu was born in Tokyo on October 8, 1930. As a young teen, he was conscripted to fight for his country during the last throes of World War II. The often-horrific experiences of his military life left him very embittered yet also exposed him to his first tastes of Western music, including popular European songs. During the post-war American occupation of Japan, Takemitsu took work with the U.S. Armed Forces. However, he was severely ill for several years and remained almost constantly bedridden. To pass the long hours, Takemitsu amassed a large collection of Western music, familiarizing himself with much of the music formerly forbidden by the Japanese government. This experience led him to distance himself from much of the music of his native culture. Despite his nearly complete lack of formal musical training, Takemitsu began to compose: "Being in music I found my *raison d'être* as a man...choosing to be in music clarified my identity."

In 1948, Takemitsu developed an early concept of electronic music; sound engineer Pierre Schaeffer birthed a very similar notion – *musique concrète* – in France at the same time. Throughout the 1950s, Takemitsu's influences upon Japanese contemporary music grew: he founded an anti-academic experimental multidisciplinary workshop called *Jikken Kobo* and worked with Japanese film composer Fumio Hayasaka. It was his 1957 Requiem for string orchestra that catapulted Takemitsu into the international music scene; Stravinsky heard the piece, lauding its sincerity and passion. Consequently, Stravinsky encouraged his American colleague, Aaron Copland, to provide Takemitsu a commission from the Koussevitsky Foundation. The resulting work, *Dorian Horizon*, was premiered by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra in 1966.

From the 1960s until his death in 1996 at the age of 65, Takemitsu embraced a wide variety of musical styles ranging from the indeterminacy of John Cage and serialism of Webern to the otherworldliness of Balinese gamelan and timeless constructions of J.S. Bach. Considered “among the most important composers in Japanese music history” and “the guiding light for the younger generations of Japanese composers,” Takemitsu prolifically composed full orchestral works, dozens of chamber pieces, solo pieces for both Western and traditional Japanese instruments, experimental pieces for electronics and tape, and over one hundred film scores. In 2010, a special concert highlighted Takemitsu's contributions to film during Carnegie Hall's JapanNYC Festival.

Two Cine Pastrali is a two-movement orchestral suite, completed only months before Takemitsu's death. It is based upon ethereal music from his film scores to *Orin/Banished* (1977) and *Izu Dancer* (1967). It premiered under the baton of Seiji Ozawa in Yokosuka, Japan with the New Japan Philharmonic. The first film follows the tragic story of a blind Geisha banished from her village for her sexual desires; she suffers much hardship in her isolation, eventually taking her own life. The second film, based upon a 1926 Pulitzer Prize-winning short story by Yasunari Kawabata, tells the tale of a lonely young student traveler from Tokyo visiting the Izu Peninsula who befriends a group of nomadic dancers and musicians. He accompanies the troupe for some time before returning home, crestfallen that he will most likely never see them again.

Symphony No. 3 – Aaron Copland

With a vibrant career spanning nearly the entire 20th century, the Dean of American Composers Aaron Copland discovered his love for music at an early age with piano lessons from his older sister. Born to Lithuanian Jewish immigrants in Brooklyn on November 14, 1900, Copland began serious musical study at the age of thirteen. A patient and respectful student, he dutifully learned traditional Western harmony and form yet yearned to experiment with more contemporary fashions. At the encouragement of some of his friends, he moved to Paris after high school to study with Paul Vidal at the Fontainebleau School of Music. Finding

Vidal too conservative and similar to his American teachers, Copland switched to the studio of Nadia Boulanger, then only fourteen years his senior. Boulanger helped introduce the young American to some of the early 20th century's greatest artistic and literary minds including Hemingway, Stein, Picasso, Chagall, Proust, and Satre; Copland's initial one-year stay in France turned into three years of unimaginable inspiration and growth.

Copland returned to New York City determined to become a successful composer. He continued to network as much as possible, securing himself wealthy patrons and two Guggenheim Fellowships. One of his most influential connections was influential photographer and gallerist Alfred Stieglitz, who encouraged Copland to write music which reflected "the ideas of American democracy." Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Copland collaborated with other young American composers of the period including Roy Harris and Virgil Thomson and traveled extensively throughout Europe, Africa, and Mexico. During this time he wrote his play-opera *The Second Hurricane* and a variety of piano works including *The Young Pioneers*; these works –in the spirit of American Gebrauchsmusik (utilitarian music with wide appeal) – paved the way for Copland's seminal 1936 *El Salón México*, a one-movement symphony influenced by the folk music of colleague Carlos Chávez's home country.

With his increasingly "American" music now reaching a far broader audience, Copland enjoyed the financial freedom to pursue broader musical interests in conducting and teaching. The remarkable success of his ballet *Billy the Kid* provided American choreographers a true national visionary: a second-generation immigrant composer with an authentically American outlook on the future of American music. *Rodeo* of 1942 and Pulitzer Prize-winning *Appalachian Spring* of 1944 not only encapsulated the essence of mid-century Americana but remain today some of the most-recognized, most-played symphonic music of all time. Other significant works of the 1940s and 1950s include the patriotic *Lincoln Portrait* and stirring *Fanfare for the Common Man* as well as the *Third Symphony* and *Clarinet Concerto*; the latter, dedicated to jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman, showcased Copland's tremendous versatility in compositional style.

Although he rarely spoke publicly of his sexuality, it was well known in musical circles that Copland was an openly gay man. Still, he considered his homosexuality and Jewish heritage as two important but not all-encompassing components of both his character and creative output. According to Erik Johns, the librettist of *Tender Land* and one of Copland's former lovers,

... Aaron felt that his sexuality was there in his music, that it was represented, but also that it was so incidental to his major theme. [...] Copland felt his sexuality to be there by virtue of a general outlook.

Following World War II, Copland returned to Europe. Although eager

to experiment in the new serial trends popularized by Pierre Boulez, Copland never found great commercial success in his forays into twelve-tone music. One of his last great works, the opera *The Tender Land*, was a commission from Rodgers and Hammerstein based on author James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Completed in 1954, the opera received ambivalent critical reaction yet became one of the few American operas within standard repertory. Copland continued to find musical inspiration throughout his global travels as a guest artist, conductor, and teacher, including in the works of Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu and the music of Soviet post-war avant-garde composers. Unfortunately, Copland's broad horizons landed him in front of Congress, where like hundreds of other writers, playwrights, artists, and composers of the time, he was accused of sympathizing with Communists.

From approximately 1960 onward, Copland dedicated most of his musical energy to teaching and conducting. His egalitarian book *What to Listen for in Music* (first written in 1939 and revised in 1957), specifically written to introduce non-musicians to the basics of music, as well as his countless guest lectures at universities worldwide proves the power of his artistic and pedagogical influence beyond his compositions. Copland received dozens of noteworthy awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the National Medal of Arts. Entire generations of young composers owe their start to him, perhaps none more so than Leonard Bernstein, who considered Copland his musical hero. The two met by chance at a dance recital given by a mutual friend in 1938 and subsequently remained close friends and colleagues for over half a century.

On December 2, 1990, at the age of ninety, Aaron Copland died of Alzheimer's disease and respiratory failure. His legacy remains one of our nation's greatest treasures – a pioneering, ebullient artistic force best defined in Copland's own words: "So long as the human spirit thrives on this planet, music in some living form will accompany and sustain it and give it expressive meaning."

Copland's third and final symphony was written between 1944 and 1946 on a commission from the Koussevitzky Foundation; Serge Koussevitzky himself conducted the premiere with the Boston Symphony Orchestra on October 18, 1946. The work is considered to be one of the most iconic and significant symphonic works of both American music and 20th century orchestral music at large. Composed in four movements, the symphony is scored for strings, woodwinds, brass, extensive percussion, two harps, celesta, and piano. The first three movements encapsulate Copland's masterful blend of expansive harmonies within both jazz-based and traditional symphonic forms and rhythms. The final movement presents dazzling variations on the principal theme from Copland's own *Fanfare for a Common Man*. The New York Philharmonic first played the *Third Symphony* in December 1947 under the baton of George Szell.

Program Notes by A. Patterson

SPECIAL THANKS

Will Clark and Uncle Charlie's for their generosity in hosting a benefit for QUO

Jon Lee, Susanna Stein, and the **Big Apple Ranch** for their generosity in hosting a benefit for QUO and for their donation

The **Lesbian and Gay Big Apple Corps** for the use of their percussion and for their friendship

Hillary McAndrew Plate and **Lincoln Center** for including us in the Lincoln Center free concert series

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Kyle Payton, Alan Hyde, and Morgan Bartholick for managing our music library

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In the mean time, save these dates!

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LAPD Detectives Dusty Ellis and Jake Roper were partners and lovers in the dim long-ago, after veteran Jake had taken fledgling Dusty under his wing. Unbeknownst to Jake and the rest of the department, Dusty was a plant in the department, the pawn of a criminal matermind who used her status as a detective to gain information that kept him a step ahead of the law, and her gun as an instrument of death for his enemies. Eventually Dusty's cover slipped and Jake discovered what his partner/lover was really about, though she slipped away and disappeared before she could be arrested.

Frank Willoughby is a Manhattan lawyer returned from the grave, Five years ago a felony prison sentence cost him his license, and he's lived ever since his release on menial clerk jobs and investigative stints for law firms to regain status and rejoin his profession. Today he gets by on court appointments, with real paying clients few and far between. Desperate for a fee, Frank takes on a law school flunkout acquaintance named Ed Mobley, Ed's young wife, the former Shannon Hastings, is heir to a theater chain fortune, though her mother tightly controls the purse strings. When Ed is arrested on check fraud charges, Frank sets about to raise bail. Before Ed's release, Frank resists advances from Shannon, who tells her husband that Frank has pursued her while he was locked up. Ed attacks Frank and then turns up dead the next morning, leaving Frank as the main suspect in his murder.

Biography

A.W. Gray's twenty-two books have been widely reviewed in the US and translated into seven foreign languages. He lives in Texas.



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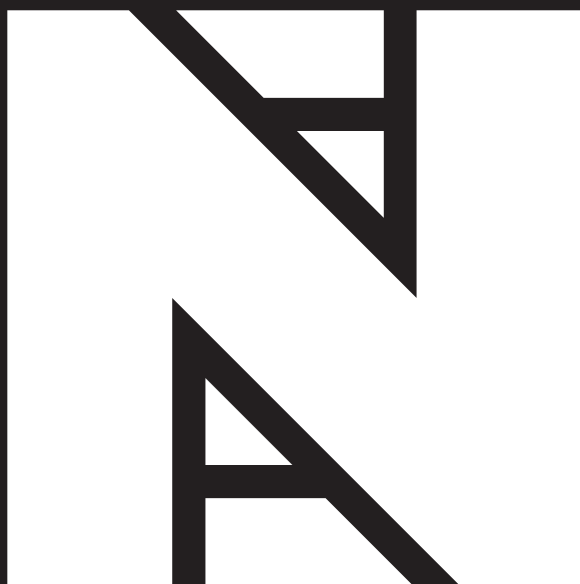
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