



It's Your Choice

25TH ANNIVERSARY AUDIENCE SELECTIONS

Concert Programme

Terry Kowalczyk, music director

Jean Sibelius, Karelia Suite, op.11

Leroy Anderson, A Christmas Festival

Charles Gounod, Faust (Soldier's Chorus) (*Forte*
The Toronto Men's Chorus)

Modest Mussorgsky, A Night on the Bare Mountain,
arr. Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Nutcracker Suite
(Four selections)

Jacques Offenbach, Orpheus in the Underworld
(overture)

Aaron Copland, Quiet City (*Scott Duffus, english
horn, Erica Schengli-Roberts, trumpet*)

Welcome to the first Newsletter of Counterpoint Community Orchestra's 25th Season. Our first concert on Saturday, December 6, 2008, gives us an opportunity to thank you, our amazing audience, for your continued support, by performing pieces requested by you.

A special thank you to everyone who attended our Gala Fundraiser on October 5th at the Heliconian Club. Organized magnificently by Board member, Jeff Schmidt, and Counterpoint's Fundraising Committee, it showcased performances by members of Counterpoint and several guest artists. Over \$1,000.00 was raised thanks, in particular, to the generosity of our sponsors at à La Carte Kitchen Inc., and Steam Whistle Brewery.

As well, in order to help out the expenses of this

special season and move us forward toward our next 25 years, we have been fortunate in the last few months to receive a number of generous donations. In particular, we wish to thank TD Canada Trust, Nancy Ruth's Very Own Foundation and Geoffrey Vernon. We appreciate everyone who has supported us financially in the past and those of you who are planning to donate this year. Also, a special welcome to our two new board members, Lana Chou and Paul Rodger.

Finally, as we look forward to our 25th Anniversary season, it is a time to celebrate the immense amount of work and dedication of many people over these 25 years, especially our musicians and volunteers, that has resulted in the great organization that is Counterpoint Community Orchestra.

Next Concert: Saturday, December 6, 2008

St. Luke's Church (Sherbourne & Carlton) at 8:00pm

\$16 IN ADVANCE

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Mussorgsky: A Night On The Bare Mountain

Katya Diakow, violin



No work of Mussorgsky's has had a more confused history. *A Night on the Bare Mountain* was never performed during the composer's lifetime. In 1886, five years after he died, his friend Rimsky-Korsakov debuted a streamlined version to immediate success, helping establish Mussorgsky's name.

In a letter to a friend, Mussorgsky described how he wrote the piece without rough drafts in 12 days, saying, "It seethed within me, and I worked day and night, hardly knowing what was happening within me." Shortly after, Mussorgsky was crushed when his mentor harshly criticized the work, calling it, "rubbish."

The composition is a fantasy work based on a Russian legend. It was believed witches used to gather in late June on the Lysa Hora (Bare Mountain) near Kiev, to gossip, play tricks and wait for their chief, Satan. When he arrived, they circled around his throne and sang his praises. Once Satan worked up a sufficient passion, he chose the witches who caught his fancy and gave the command for the sabbath to begin.

The music also gained fame as part of Disney's *Fantasia*. It plays throughout the movie's final sequence, when an evil demon summons restless souls from their graves; but the horror abruptly ends with the sound of church bells, which sends the spirits back into hiding.

Mussorgsky intended for his orchestral tone poem to be "hot and chaotic," and critics deemed it his wildest and most barbaric piece. The music is vivid, feverish, obscene and hypnotizing. *A Night on the Bare Mountain* demonstrates Mussorgsky's skill in depicting his Russian musical identity with uniquely grotesque and majestic images.



Jacques Offenbach is best known nowadays as the author of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, his major operatic masterpiece composed at the end of his life. During his life time however, Offenbach enjoyed huge popularity for his many operettas, which combined political and social satire with witty parodies of grand opéra.

Born in 1819 in Cologne, Germany; the son of a synagogue cantor he went to Paris at age 14. After a brief career as a virtuoso cellist, he bought a little theater and began a successful career as an extremely prolific operetta composer: over a span of 16 years he composed almost 100 operettas (of which 40 were full-length works), who came to be considered emblematic of the French Second Empire of Napoleon III. His last work was the grand opera *The Tales of Hoffmann*, more serious and ambitious in musical scope than his other works, reflecting the desire of the humourist to be taken seriously.

Orpheus in the Underworld was Offenbach's first full length operetta, in which he not only turns the legend of Orpheus on its head, but he also irreverently parodies Gluck's opera *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and also satirizes the moral hypocrisy of the Second Empire. The premiere wasn't very successful, but the subsequent scathing review by Jules Janin, the dean of French musical critics, made it a succès de scandale.

Orpheus and Euridice are unhappily married and hate each other. Orpheus is in love with a shepherdess, and torments Euridice by playing on his violin the aria *Che farò senza Euridice* from Gluck's *Orfeo*. Euridice is in love with the shepherd Aristeus who is none other than the god Pluto in disguise and willingly lets herself to be kidnaped into the Underworld. Everything seems to be resolved to everyone's satisfaction, except that now the Public Opinion (who introduces herself as guardian of morality) forces Orpheus to ascend the Olympus and demand justice from the gods. Jupiter goes to Hell to sort things out. There he discovers Euridice and likes her and decides to keep her for himself. However the Public Opinion and the unwilling Orpheus intervene again and force Jupiter to give up Euridice. However Jupiter frustrates their plan by sending a lightning bolt which startles Orpheus and causes him to break his promise not to look back. Everything ends in general merriment and the operetta's most famous number the *Gallop Infernal*, made popular during the Belle Epoque as musical background for the Can-can dance.

The overture, as we know it nowadays, is actually by Carl Binder who compiled it for the Vienna performance in 1860 from the most popular numbers of the operetta. It starts with a fanfare, followed by a tender love song, a dramatic passage and finally the famous *Gallop Infernal*.

Roy Dean Design



In honour of and in celebration of Counterpoint Community Orchestra 25th season, jewellery designer Roy Dean of *Roy Dean Design* is exclusively creating icon pins for the entire orchestra.

Roy Dean has been designing fine custom jewellery for over 20 years and has won several international and national design awards. Roy has twice entered prestigious De Beers international diamond design awards and reached the finals both times. He was in competition with over seven thousand designers worldwide. Dean says, "The 2010 competition will be a win"!

Roy Dean Design specializes in recycling jewellery from treasured items and heirlooms; creating unique, one of a kind pieces for a discerning clientele from around the world. It is with great pride that *Roy Dean Design* has recommitted its support of the Counterpoint Community Orchestra in its twenty-fifth year.

Anderson: *Christmas Festival*

Bill McQueen, clarinet

A Christmas Festival combines nine familiar carols in Anderson's popularly orchestrated style. These carols blend harmoniously in an upbeat and colourful manner, including the ever favourites, Joy to the World, Deck the Halls, God Rest ye Merry, Gentlemen, Good King Wenceslas, Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, The First Noel, Silent Night, Jingle Bells, and O Come All Ye Faithful.



Forte - The Toronto Men's Chorus has been invited to sing with us at our December 6th holiday concert. Forte tries to have something to say about the gay world. In two of its most celebrated works, Steam Heat tells the story of the 1981 Toronto bathhouse raids and how they ultimately led to Pride Week. Queerly Beloved takes a light-hearted look at the issues surrounding gay marriage. Their upcoming concert on November 29 is entitled, Midnight Clear, a concert for

World AIDS Day.

Midnight Clear will take place at Metropolitan United Church, 56 Queen Street East, Toronto, at 8pm on November 29.

Tickets are \$25 and can be obtained through the chorus website, www.forte-chorus.com, from chorus members, or at the door. Ask about our special \$5 discount coupon!

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25 Years of Counterpoint

Bill McQueen, clarinet



Early Counterpoint logo (1986).

Counterpoint Community Orchestra is now entering its 25th season. CCO is unique in Canada and in North America and the first secular Gay and Lesbian Orchestra in the world. As an important artistic, cultural and educational outlet for music in the Toronto gay community, CCO had its humble beginnings in 1984 at the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto. By 1985, under the leadership of Bruce Ewen and Joseph Lauzon, and other stalwarts, these young, ambitious gay musicians sought to form their own independent, community organization. They sought to move closer to the gay community at large.

In naming the orchestra Counterpoint, members felt "a more distinct image (identity) would permit the Orchestra to become an object of pride for all segments of Toronto's gay Community." Here's a toast to the next twenty-five years of our accomplished, LGBTQ Orchestra, in the tradition of our founders. In our next newsletter, Counterpoint moves out into the Community.

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Copland: *Quiet Night*

Katya Diakow, violin



In *Quiet Night*, Aaron Copland instantly transports the listener to the stillness of night in a metropolis that never sleeps.

The piece invokes the melancholy and nostalgia of this scene, originally written in 1940 as a score for an experimental play by Irwin

Shaw. Though the original play had only two performances, Copland marveled in his autobiography about the longevity of his music, saying, "Quiet City seems to have become a musical entity, superseding the original reasons for its composition."

The music begins and ends with a depiction of the tranquility of a slumbering city. A lonely trumpeter imagines the various city dwellers at

night, and improvises on what they may be feeling. In the piece, Copland calls for the trumpeter to play "nervously" to mirror the troubled main character.

The soloist is seconded by the dark-toned English horn and supported by richly-harmonized strings which contribute eloquently to the climax. The result of this orchestration is an urgent, mysterious and haunting mood.

Copland is considered the "dean of American composers" for his distinct way of balancing modern and folk styles. The slowly changing harmonies and spaciousness of his musical textures are said to evoke vast landscapes. *Quiet City* is symbolic of the urban side of Americana with its breathtakingly evocative sound.

Sibelius: *Karelia Suite*

Joseph Nachman, violin

The second half the 19th century saw the emergence in Europe of national schools of music, as an expression of both cultural independence, and of political and national aspirations. National composers typically draw their inspiration from historical events, national epics or folk poetry, and their musical language was often inspired by folk music. The Finnish composer Jean Sibelius was a typical example this kind of composer: most of his works are inspired by Finnish legends, or by Finnish literary works and they often evoke the landscape of his country. His music played an important role in the formation of Finnish national identity at a time when Finland was still part of Russia, and it was acknowledged as such: he was often feted, he repeatedly received proceeds of nationwide donations, and after Finland gained independence he was treated as a living national monument and granted generous state pensions.

The *Karelia Suite*, one of Sibelius's early and most popular works, is a collection of pieces he wrote in 1893 for a patriotic historical pageant presented by the students of the University of Helsinki in Viipuri, Karelia (Karelia is a province in the South-East of Finland and regarded as the cradle of Finnish culture). Sibelius subsequently chose three pieces from the incidental music for that pageant, which became immensely popular worldwide. The first movement, *Intermezzo*, a jaunty march-like *Allegro* depicts a procession. The second movement, *Balade*, is melancholic in character, reflecting the mood of knight reminiscing in his castle, whilst being entertained by a minstrel. The last movement, *Alla Marcia*, is again a march depicting a castle siege.

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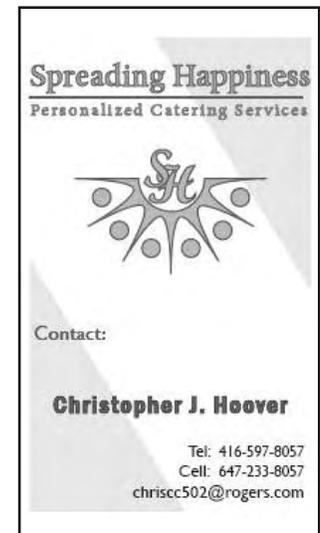
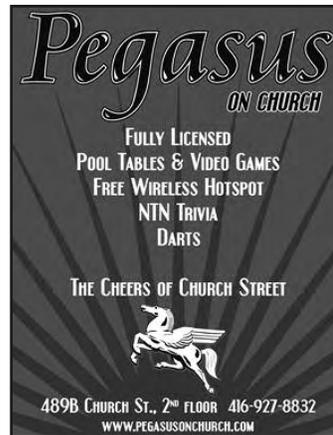
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