

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Violin I

Paul Navratil
Concertmaster
Jennifer Arel
Kayla DeCaprio
Barbara Horn
Margo Kaufman
Joseph Piresson
Sharon Whitehead

Violin II

Morgan Glassberg
Cheryl Bayline
Hyunmin Lee
Scott Lehmann
Elizabeth Neysen
Kimberly Blair Rontey
Dianne Tewksbury

Viola

Dora DeCaprio
Genea Bell
Barbara Gibson
Don Shankweiler

Cello

Kurt Kaufman
Sondra Boyer
Emily Green
John Lenard
Mary Neysen

Bass

Liz Davis
Dave Hosking
Charles Seivard
Peter Tomanelli

Flute

Joan D' Auria
Sue Burgess
Sandra Smith Rosado

Oboe

Emily Ferguson
Althea Madigan

Clarinet

Rick Bennett
Shannon Copeland

Bass clarinet

Joe Tomanelli

Bassoon

Peggy Church
Lou Lazerini

Horn

Bethany Croxton
Virginia Eurich
Beth Pratt
Kurt Scimone

Trumpet

Sam Eurich
Robert Lemons
Edward Pitkin

Trombone

Andrew Janes
Joe Park
Kevin Tracy

Tuba

Allison Lazur

Percussion

Terry Cote
Brian Girasoli
Liz Kiebler

Children's Literature

“My duty as a composer seemed clear: to turn back, in my music, the tide of the Hastings battle, by celebrating all seemingly Old English (Anglo-Saxon) & Norse characteristics, by ignoring, as far as possible, all seemingly Norman traits & influences & those derived from the civilization of the Roman Empire. That is why I have called my quartets ‘four-somes’, have coined ‘louden’ & ‘middle-fiddle’ to replace ‘crescendo’ & ‘viola’ & have refused to write in any form bearing Southern-European titles such as Sonata, Symphony, Concerto.”

Percy Grainger (1934), on the impact of reading the Icelandic ‘Saga of Grettir the Strong’ and Freeman’s *History of the Norman Conquest* as a child.

WILLIMANTIC ORCHESTRA

Dr. Kyle Wernke, Guest Conductor

FALL CONCERT

3:00 P.M., Sunday, 06 November 2016

Fine Arts Instructional Center, ECSU

Willimantic

PROGRAM

The Immovable Do, or The Ciphering C

Percy Grainger

Our Town

Aaron Copland

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 3 in E^b (“Rhenish”)

Robert Schumann

- I. Lebhaft (spirited)
- II. Scherzo: Sehr mässig (very moderate)
- III. Nicht schnell (not fast)
- IV. Feierlich (solemn)
- V. Lebhaft (sprited) – Schneller (faster)

Musicians tend to become enamored with what I call our ‘Extended Family,’ that is, the musicians who taught our teachers, a sort of musical lineage. When I was considering this program, I knew from the beginning that I wanted to honor a few of those composers whom I can consider part of my own ‘Extended Family.’ Percy Grainger, in addition to being an incredible composer, was also a world-famous pianist. He was a frequent accompanist for saxophonist Cecil Leeson, who taught my own saxophone teacher, Nicholas Brightman, at Ball State University. Aaron Copland is famous for having taught numerous composers throughout his lifetime, including my teacher at Butler University, Michael Schelle. And Schumann? Well, there’s no direct lineage, but I value my German musical heritage a great deal, and I identify strongly with Robert Schumann. By performing his symphony today, I honor some distant relative, a relationship perhaps real or perhaps imagined.

Kyle Wernke

PROGRAM NOTES

The Immovable Do, or The Ciphering C Percy Grainger (1882–1961)

Born in Melbourne, Australia, Percy Grainger was brought up by his domineering mother, as his alcoholic father became increasingly disengaged, finally leaving the home in 1890. From her, Percy received love, whippings, piano lessons, such schooling as he had, and crackpot ideas about racial purity. Celebrated as a piano prodigy in Melbourne, he left Australia with his mother in 1895 for Germany to study—for the most part, unhappily—piano & composition. In 1901, the pair moved to London, where Percy launched his career as a concert pianist. Despite great success at this, he regarded piano playing as a way to pay the bills; his primary musical interests were researching folk music and composing. At the outbreak of World War I, mother and son abandoned Europe for America, becoming U.S. citizens in 1918.

A true original, rather like Charles Ives, Grainger wrote a great deal of music, much of it challenging for listeners and performed during his lifetime (if at all) only in concerts Grainger himself gave, sometimes for no fee. Today he is known primarily for arrangements of folk tunes—such as *Lincolnshire Posy* (1905), *Country Gardens* (1908), and *Mock Morris* (1910). However, a wider view (and appreciation) of his work can be had from CDs in Chandos' 19-volume Grainger Edition or recordings posted on YouTube. The latter include some of his 'free music'—music free of traditional harmonic and metrical constraints that bar inclusion of the "lovely and touching . . . combinations of tones" heard in nature.

The impetus for *The Immovable Do* was a mechanical problem with Grainger's harmonium: one day in 1933 he found that the C-pipe sounded ("ciphered") through whatever he played. Others would just have called in an organ builder to fix the problem, but Grainger began improvising around the sustained C. The resulting piece exists in several arrangements Grainger made in 1939 for various combinations of instruments and voices.

Our Town Aaron Copland (1900–90)

Music Copland wrote for *The City*, a documentary film about New York shown several times a day at the 1939 World's Fair, attracted the attention of Hollywood and led to a commission to compose music for the 1939 film version of John Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men* (1937). Copland did the job quickly and effectively—his score was nominated for an Academy Award—and early in 1940 he was again asked to write music for a film adaptation, this time of Thornton Wilder's play *Our Town* (1938). This music was also nominated for an Oscar. The piece on today's program is a short orchestral suite extracted from it in 1945 and dedicated to Leonard Bernstein.

In notes for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Michael Steinberg writes: "*Our Town*, with its lovely sense of quiet and its beautiful evocation of New England hymn tunes, is a wonderfully achieved film score; not least, one admires Copland's discretion even in the scenes when the need to go for the hankies is most irresistible. The brief orchestral suite, which moves along at a calm tempo, draws on the title music, the churchyard scene, and passages showing daily life in Grover's Corners [the fictional location of *Our Town*, based on Peterborough, NH]." In later writings, Copland emphasized the subservient role of music in film: it should enhance the emotional and dramatic impact of the story told on the screen without calling attention to itself. It is remarkable that he was able to honor this constraint while composing music worth hearing on its own.

According to Vivian Perlis (letter to *TNYT*, 31 Jan 1988), Rudolf Bing approached Copland in 1951 about composing an opera for the Met based on *Our Town*. Copland was interested, but only if Wilder could be persuaded to write the libretto. Wilder, however, demurred—his texts, he claimed, were "homely and not one bit lyrical." Perhaps,

having been talked into altering the script for the film so that Emily merely *dreams* of dying in childbirth, he decided "Enough already!"

Symphony No. 3 in E^b ("Rhenish"), Op. 97 Robert Schumann (1810–56)

This symphony—the last of four that Schumann composed, its publication number notwithstanding—was written in the space of one month in late fall 1850, shortly after Schumann moved to Düsseldorf to assume the post of Music Director for the city. Its inspiration seems to have been two pleasure trips Robert and his wife Clara made up the Rhine to Cologne to see its cathedral earlier in the fall. The title given to the fourth movement in Schumann's autograph score—"In the character of an accompaniment to a solemn ceremony"—and the evocation of church bells at the very end of this movement suggest that it may have been written with the elevation of Cologne's Archbishop to Cardinal (celebrated in the city just after the Schumanns' second visit) in mind. Beethoven's *Symphony No. 6 in F ("Pastoral")* may have been the model for the symphony's unusual 5-movement form, but Schumann did not follow Beethoven in providing descriptive titles for the movements in the published score. He preferred that listeners hear the work without imagining that it had some programmatic content, and he would probably be annoyed that it is now dubbed "The Rhenish Symphony".

Its premiere under Schumann's direction in February 1851 was wildly successful. A review in *Signale für die musikalische Welt* noted that "Our rather phlegmatic audience, which is somewhat sparing with its applause, was carried away to such an extent by the great inherent sweep of the work that it broke out into loud exclamations after the individual movements and at the end, in which finally the orchestra also heartily joined by means of a three-fold 'hurrah.'" Unfortunately, this may have been the high point of Schumann's tenure at Düsseldorf. Tensions developed between him and the city's musical establishment. Schumann was a brilliant composer and—though not in the same league as his wife—a good pianist. But he was not an accomplished conductor and could not get the city's orchestra and chorus to perform at a high level, especially when neither ensemble was very enthusiastic about the new music he programmed.

Adding to these problems in 1853 were signs of neurological impairment—normal tempi seemed to him too fast, his piano playing deteriorated, he kept dropping his baton. Worst of all, he began to experience debilitating auditory hallucinations: at first, loud and persistent tones, like Grainger's ciphering C, that gave him no rest; later, music and voices, sometimes angelic, sometimes demonic. In February 1854, sensing that he was losing his mind, he asked to be taken to an asylum and, when Clara and his doctors hesitated, forced the issue by throwing himself into the icy Rhine. Quickly rescued by fishermen, he spent the remainder of his life wasting away in a private asylum near Bonn. In *Robert Schumann: Life and Death of a Musician*, John Worthen argues that what afflicted Schumann was tertiary syphilis. {Notes by S. K. Lehmann}

Guest Conductor **Kyle Wernke** is a Connecticut-based composer, conductor, educator, and film-music scholar. He earned his D.M.A. in Composition from the Hartt School and his M.M. in Orchestral Conducting and B.M. in Composition from Butler University in Indianapolis. As a conductor, Kyle has appeared with various orchestras and bands throughout the Midwest and New England. His compositions have been performed by the Fort Smith Symphony, Butler Symphony, Hartt Wind Ensemble, and many other ensembles. Recently he completed his first opera, based on Stephen King's novel *The Wind Through the Keyhole*. He has also worked as an orchestrator on the Netflix original series *Chef's Table: France*. In addition to music, Kyle loves cinema and United States history. He currently lives in West Hartford with his wife, violist Lauren Perala, and their cat Nubbins.