

**THE LINCOLN HOME SCHOOL JUNIOR AND SENIOR STRING
ORCHESTRAS**

Spring Concert

Junior Orchestra directed by Anne Ghormley
Senior Orchestra directed by Leonardo Lebas
Flute soloists – Christiana and Elisabeth Wismer
Harpsichordist – Helen Dowd
Solo Violoncello – Natalie Anderson

3:00 p.m., Sunday April 27, 2008

Faith Bible Church, Lincoln, Nebraska

PROGRAM

National Anthem (combined orchestras)

Junior Orchestra:

<i>Barcarolle from “The Tales of Hoffmann”</i>	Jacques Offenbach (1819 - 1880)
<i>Circassian Circle</i>	Scottish Folk Tune (arr. Anne Ghormley)
<i>Shaker Melody (“Simple Gifts”)</i>	Joseph Brackett Jr. (1797 - 1882) (arr. Anne Ghormley)
<i>Three Swedish Folk Dances</i>	Traditional (arr. Anne Ghormley)
<i>Bouree and Rigaudon from the “Water Music”</i>	George Frideric Handel (1685 - 1759)

Senior Orchestra:

<i>Prelude on “Rhosymedre”</i>	Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958), arr. M. Gaskell
<i>Serenade for Strings, Op. 20</i>	Sir Edward Elgar (1857 - 1934)
<i>Concerto for Two Flutes, RV 533</i>	Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741)

Please join us for refreshments at the back after the concert!

JUNIOR ORCHESTRA

Barcarolle from “The Tales of Hoffmann” – Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880). Arr. Anne Ghormley

A “barcarolle” is literally a “boat-song” from the Italian word *barca* meaning “boat” (cf. *barco* in Spanish). More specifically, a barcarolle is a song sung by a Venetian gondolier as he punts his gondola along the canals of Venice. A barcarolle is characterized by being in a moderate 6/8 time which supposedly represents the motion of the gondolier’s pole. Barcarolles were common as a musical form far away from the canals of Venice from the 18th century onwards. This afternoon the Junior Orchestra is performing an arrangement of the most popular barcarolle of all time, the one from *The Tales of Hoffmann* by French operetta composer Jacques Offenbach. Offenbach wrote almost 100 comic operettas. *The Tales of Hoffmann*, which was unfinished when Offenbach died, was his most serious and ambitious opera.

The Circassian Circle – Scottish Folk Tune. Arr. Anne Ghormley

The Circassian Circle Dance is a very popular folk dance. The dance is a “mixer” (meaning that you dance with a different partner every time through the music) and is danced in a large circle. It’s one of the easiest folk dances. Despite the name, the dance originated not in Circassia but in the British Isles. But where *is* Circassia?? To my surprise, while doing the intensive, in-depth, scholarly research Homeschool String Orchestra audiences expect for the preparation of program notes, I discovered that I actually *went* to Circassia in 2002! (to the Karachay-Cherkess Republic = Карачаево-Черкесская республика on the Russia/Georgia border.)

Shaker Melody (“Simple Gifts”) -- Joseph Brackett Jr. (1797-1882), Arr. Anne Ghormley

Even though they only had about 6000 adherents in their heyday (c. 1850), the “Shakers” or “Shaking Quakers”, formally called “the United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing”, are one of the most fascinating and widely written about religious movements in late 18th and 19th century America. The movement waned considerably in the 20th century, but as of two years ago there were still four Shakers left in the 224-year-old Shaker commune of Sabbathday Lake in southern Maine. The Shakers originated with Ann Lee (1736 – 1784), the daughter of an English blacksmith in Manchester, England, around 1770. She called herself “Ann, the Word” or “Mother Ann”, the latter being the name she was called by her followers who came to believe that she embodied all the perfections of God in female form, and that through her the promises of the second coming of Jesus were fulfilled. In 1774 Mother Ann moved to New York. Two of the notable characteristics of the Shakers were their requirement of celibacy (even though Mother Ann herself had come to America with her husband and had had four children!) and the demonstrations of shaking and trembling that were believed to be manifestations of sin being purged from the body. The Shakers had an enormous cultural impact that persists down to our present day through their furniture, inventions, architecture, and music. A number of common things in our lives trace back to the Shakers (e.g., washing machines, circular saws, clothes pins, and selling seeds in small packets).

Musical inspiration has been very highly regarded among Shakers and thousands of songs and dances were written. The most famous dance-song is *Simple Gifts*. Both the words (a single verse including some dance instructions) and the tune were written in 1848 at the height of the movement by Shaker elder Joseph Brackett who served in the communes which merged to form the remaining Sabbathday Lake commune. The tune of *Simple Gifts* became the most famous of Shaker dance songs through two events. The first was its incorporation by Aaron Copland into his ballet score for *Appalachian Spring* (which Leonardo Lebas conducted at UNL last year). This made Brackett’s tune famous and Brackett’s tune arguably made *Appalachian Spring* Copland’s most popular work. The second thing that made Brackett’s tune popular was Sydney Carter’s adaption of it for his 1963 song “Lord of the Dance” that has found its way into a number of hymn books. Since then there have been many arrangements of *Simple Gifts*.

Three Swedish Folk Dances – Trad., Arr. Anne Ghormley

Anne found these three Swedish folk dances in a collection on the internet and really liked them, so she arranged them for the Junior Orchestra. These dances trace back to one of the world’s most prolific composers: Trad. While we don’t know the exact dates of birth or death of Trad., he does seem to have been active in many countries, including the USA. Trad. should not be confused with the late Renaissance Italian composer *Anonimo* (who moved to England and anglicized his name to Anonymous), nor with the 15th century German composer Ungenannt.

Bouree and Rigaudon from the Water Music – George Frideric Handel (1685 - 1759), Arr. Anne Ghormley

On July 17, 1771, King George I of England took a barge trip on the Thames (pronounced “Tems”). In the absence of Venetian gondoliers on the Thames (it’s a bit deep for punting), a baroque orchestra floated along to provide music. The music was composed especially for the occasion by Handel, and was a big hit with everybody. (I guess it didn’t rain that day.)

SENIOR ORCHESTRA

[Maestro Leonard independently asked UNL Doctor of Musical Arts candidate Ilana Schroeder to write some program notes on the Senior Orchestra pieces, so Leonardo and I decided that we’d provide you with two sets of notes – the musicological program notes from Ilana, and comments from me giving some more personal insights. So you get two different perspectives on the same pieces!. I bet you’ve never been to a concert before where there were two sets of program notes! This is all part of the exceptional educational value the Lincoln Homeschool String Orchestras brings to audiences! (However, you will have noticed that because we have doubled the educational content of the Senior Orchestra notes, we did double the cost of admission to this afternoon’s concert)]

Prelude on Rhosymedre – Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958), arr. Martin Gaskell

In 1836 a young Welsh minister and musician by the name of John David Edwards (1805-1885) published his *Original Sacred Music*, the first *tonau* (hymn book) for use by the Anglican congregations in Wales. Seven years later he became vicar of a small Welsh mining town called Rhosymedre (pronounced with an open “o”, accent on first syllable, and with the end of word barely sounded by the locals). The summer before I went off to university I went hiking through this region of North East Wales and I still vividly remember stopping for lunch a few miles from the Rhosymedre. The most common way of naming hymns tunes and folk dances is with a place name, and one of Edward’s tunes became known as “Rhosymedre”. It was also known as “Lovely” but, despite what one sometimes hears, Rhosymedre does *not* mean “lovely.” Instead “Lovely” refers to an association with Samuel Crossman’s famous 1664 passiontide hymn, “My Song is Love Unknown”. Like most Welsh place names, the word Rhosymedre, is actually a description of a *location*. Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch, for example, means “The church of St. Mary in the hollow of white hazel trees near the rapid whirlpool by St. Tysilio’s of the red cave.” (I don’t know of a tune called Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch!) The “Rhos” of Rhosymedre is a common Welsh word meaning “moor” or “plain”; the meaning of “ymedre” is uncertain.

In 1904 English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams (“Ralph” is pronounced “Rayf” and *not* like “Rolf”!), accepted a job as music editor of a new hymnal called *The English Hymnal*. This was an artificial attempt by a few individuals to impose their ideas on the Church of England, and the hymnal met with a frosty reception (the Archbishop of Canterbury expressed the hope that none of the parishes in his diocese would use it!), but a few of its new tunes came into regular use. The editors of chose not to include “My Song is Love Unknown”, but Vaughan Williams used *Rhosymedre* for a 1745 Charles Wesley communion hymn instead. This never caught on and “My Song is love unknown” is now always sung to the 1918 tune “Love Unknown” by John Ireland (1879 - 1962), the composer of the famous anthem “Greater Love hath no man.”

Despite the hymnal’s reception, the editing experience was very musically stimulating for Vaughan Williams. One result was that in 1920 he published *Three Preludes on Welsh Hymn Tunes* for organ. The second, and most famous, of these is the beautiful, and beautifully constructed, prelude on *Rhosymedre*. Even though *Rhosymedre* doesn’t mean “lovely”, this certainly is a lovely prelude! I was stimulated to make the arrangement the orchestra is doing today by hearing the prelude in an instrumental arrangement on the radio in the mid 1970s. I later found that my father had played the prelude on the organ in Cambridge in the 1930s, and now in the 21st century our son Timothy likes to play it too, so it’s been a favorite of the Gaskell family for at least three generations!

Composing organ pieces based on hymn tunes is a time-honored tradition that goes back to the 15th century and is very much alive in our own time. The form of the *Rhosymedre* prelude follows a standard model used by late German baroque organ composers such as J. S. Bach in his *Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring* (which the orchestra performed in 2006) or *Wachet auf*, but the parts are a lot more complicated with Vaughan William’s version of the fussy part writing taught to British music students at the end of the 19th century. Edwards’ tune is accompanied, and perfectly complemented, by a gentle motif in the violins. After the accompanying motif has first been heard on its own, the hymn tune is sung out by the violas and then repeated by the first violins. The overall effect of the prelude is wonderful, so much so that the piece has been used in at least two published studies in music therapy. To me, the prelude has always drawn up imagery of the English and Welsh countryside and the small quiet rural churches that dot the countryside.

Serenade for Strings, Op. 20 – Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Edward Elgar was an entirely self-taught English composer. He completed the *Serenade for Strings*, one of the staples of the string orchestra repertoire, and probably his most frequently performed work, as a present for his wife, Alice, on their third wedding anniversary. Elgar and Alice had a happy marriage and she was one of the two great inspirations in his music. In fact, Elgar’s first published piece, and first musical success, came with *Salut d’amor*, a piano and violin piece he wrote for her just before he proposed to her. Most of his major work was written between the time of their marriage in 1889 and her death in 1920. (The later was a blow from which he never recovered.) Of the *Serenade* Elgar said that Alice “helped a great deal to make these little tunes.”

There has been speculation by some writers that the *Serenade* was a remaking of three now lost pieces for string orchestra written before Elgar’s marriage, but the argument for this is weak, since all we know about the three earlier pieces are their titles and tempi, and that they were the first pieces Elgar wrote that he liked. We can certainly discount the third of the earlier pieces having any connection to the finale of the *Serenade* because the lost finale was too fast (*Presto*). The second of the three lost pieces had the title of *Elegy* (a melancholy lament for a dead person) and a tempo of *Adagio*. This is a much better description of the Elgar’s Op. 58 *Elegy for Strings* (an *Adagio*) rather than the intimate *Larghetto* of the *Serenade*. The first of the three lost pieces had the title of *Spring Song*, and I find it a bit hard to think of the opening *Allegro* of the *Serenade* as a song about spring, although in this case the tempo marking agrees.

What I think is better than trying to look for interpretations through the possible association with the names of the earlier lost pieces, is to look at the music of the *Serenade* itself and Elgar’s known sources of inspiration. The heart of the *Serenade* is unquestionably the *Larghetto* central movement. This is delicate, tender, emotional, and very domestic music. The mood fits perfectly with a happily-married couple with a new baby daughter approaching their third wedding anniversary. The movement of the *Serenade* has the title *Allegro piacevole*. The Italian “piacevole” translates as “pleasant” in English. We know that the second big inspiration for Elgar was the English countryside, so it is not unreasonable to speculate that the opening movement is inspired by it. I suggest thinking of a windy day in the English countryside, or perhaps a rural bicycle ride (Elgar was a keen bicyclist). The *Serenade* ends with a light and gentle movement that brings the work to a gentle close with some tender reminiscences of the opening movement.

Concerto in C Major for Two Flutes, RV 533 – Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

In the Senior Orchestra’s Christmas concerts we have featured “concerti grossi” with a small *concertina* solo group of a pair of violins accompanied by a “basso continuo” (typically a ‘cello and harpsichord or organ) alternating with a the full orchestra (the *ripieno*). The idea of the *concertina* in these concerti was derived from so-called “trio sonatas”, a form that became wildly popular starting in Italy around 1600-1610. A trio sonata has a pair of high instruments accompanied by a continuo. Today we are doing a concerto where the solo group has two flutes instead of two violins. Antonio Vivaldi wrote over 500 concerti. The majority of the solos in these are for strings, but he wrote for many other solo instruments as well. Several dozen of Vivaldi’s concerti are for pairs of instruments, and he wrote many concertos for flutes (and oboes, clarinets, and especially bassoons), but the concerto we are doing today is Vivaldi’s only surviving concerto for *two* flutes.

As with most of Vivaldi’s concerti, we don’t know about the circumstances of the composition or first performance of the concerto. The vast majority of the concerti were written for the *Ospedale della Pietà*, the famous girls’ orphanage in Venice with which he was associated on and off throughout his life. (Even when he was away Vivaldi would mail them two new concertos per month.) The manuscript of the concerto traces back to Venice, where it was one of 450 manuscript works of Vivaldi that a Venetian senator acquired soon after Vivaldi’s death (probably from Vivaldi’s brother). It is in Vivaldi’s own handwriting, and he specifies that the concerto is for two flutes (*flauti traversi*) rather than two recorders. The concerto is typically bright, sunny, cheerful Vivaldi. The two solo flutes twitter away like a couple of happy birds in the morning!

Martin Gaskell

JUNIOR ORCHESTRA

First Violins

Charles Dowd
Allison Ediger
Tom Porath
Kalista Trotter
Kristen Unterseher

Second Violins

Ceirra Austin
Rachel Hollenbeck
Chloe Pinkman

Viola

Mary Dowd

Violoncello

Joshua Hoover

SENIOR ORCHESTRA

First Violins

Catherine Dowd
Emily Ediger
Daniel Gaskell
Dylan Hoover
Aaron Kessler
Breanna Thornton*

Sam Pelton

Bethany Thornton

Lesley Hoover

Kaitlyn Hurdle

Violas

Leah Bernhardson
Taylor Birdwell
Jane Dowd
Lynnette Hendrickson
Samantha Moser
Max Oehlertz

Contrabass

George Bryan
Lily Ealey

Second Violins

Helen Dowd
Barbara Gaskell
Laura Gaskell
Elly Radcliffe-Hines
Angelica Hoover

Violoncellos

Natalie Anderson⁺
Hana Bernhardson

Harpichord Continuo

Helen Dowd⁺

**concert mistress*

⁺Solo in Vivaldi concerto

Anne Ghormley, our Junior Orchestra conductor, graduated from UNL in 2005 with a degree in music education. She studied voice with Professor Donna Harler-Smith, and viola with Professor Clark Potter. After graduating, she taught vocal music to 6th through 12th grades in Auburn, Nebraska. Anne is currently living in Lincoln and teaching private violin, viola, and piano lessons at Harris Music Studio.

Leonardo Lebas, Leonardo Lebas, our Senior Orchestra conductor, has master's degrees in orchestral conducting, choral conducting, and composition. He is currently studying for a doctorate in orchestral conducting at the University of Nebraska where he also serves as an associate conductor of the University Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia, and Chamber Singers. In 2007 he was awarded the UNESCO-Aschberg Fellowship to be resident composer and conductor for three months in the Conservatorio de las Rosas in Morelia, Mexico. Next month, he will be back in Morelia for a week to conduct new and old music with his double wind quintet "Campo Aperto."

Christiana Wismer has been homeschooled from kindergarten. She started playing the flute when she was nine. Her flute teachers in Lincoln have been Tag Tuck and Betsy Bobenhouse. Christiana has been principal flautist of the Lincoln Youth Symphony, and this spring was one of the winners of the orchestra's senior soloist competition. She has been in various honors ensembles and was in the Interlochen program in Michigan last summer. Christiana also plays clarinet, saxophone, and piano, and has sung in the *Deo Gratias* and *Coram Deo* homeschool choirs since the choir program started. This year she is graduating and going to Wheaton College where she will be a flute performance and music education major.

Elisabeth Wismer has also been homeschooled from kindergarten. She started playing the flute when she was ten and also studies with Betsy Bonenhouse. Elisabeth, who has just finished 10th grade, plays second chair flute in the Lincoln Youth Symphony orchestra next to her sister Christiana. Elisabeth has also been in various honors ensembles, including being first chair flautist in the Nebraska All State Honor Band. Last summer she was in the International Music Camp. In addition to playing the flute, Elisabeth plays the piano and, like Christiana, has sung in the *Deo Gratias* and *Coram Deo* homeschool choirs since the choir program started.

In addition to the performers listed above, we would like to thank Jane Dowd, Barbara Gaskell, and Belinda Thornton, and Breanna Thornton for helping run sectional rehearsals, the Gaskell family and Aaron Kessler for preparing parts, Timothy Gaskell for being our recording engineer, Jane Dowd and Amy Hoover for serving as orchestra treasurers, Barbara Gaskell for being orchestra secretary, Cathy Hurdle for serving as facilities liason, and the other many parents who help keep things running. We are grateful to Lincoln Symphony Orchestra conductor Edward Polochick for guest conducting, and to the Sacred Arts Council of Lincoln for providing administrative support. Finally, we must express our deep gratitude to Faith Bible Church for kindly allowing us to use their facilities for rehearsals and concerts.

We are always looking for more string players! Since we are family oriented, we encourage string-playing parents and older siblings who can play the music and attend rehearsals to play too. Families interested in either orchestra should contact Jane Dowd (489-8870 or kd14349@windstream.net). Orchestra information (including sample music) can be found on the web by searching for "Lincoln Homeschool String Orchestra."