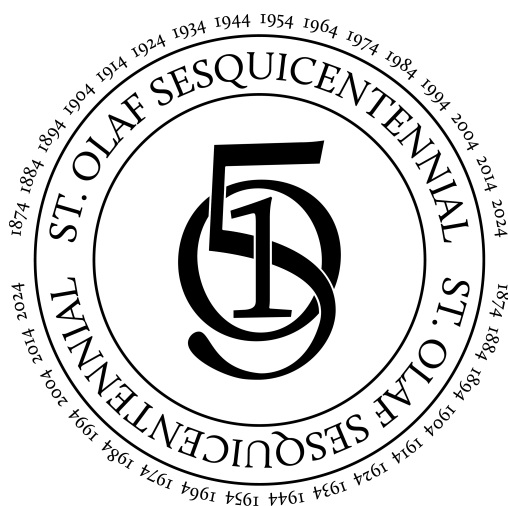

ST. OLAF PHILHARMONIA

CHUNG PARK, *CONDUCTOR*

NORSEMAN BAND

MICHAEL BUCK '89, *CONDUCTOR*



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2024 | 7:30 P.M.

BOE MEMORIAL CHAPEL

PROGRAM

ST. OLAF PHILHARMONIA CHUNG PARK, *CONDUCTOR*

- “Jesu, Meine Freude”*** (“Jesus, my joy”) from Motet No. 3 Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
- Finlandia, Op. 26** Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)
- Adoration** Florence Price (1887–1953)
arr. Elaine Fine
- Symphony No. 4 in F Minor** Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)
IV. Finale: Allegro con fuoco

NORSEMAN BAND MICHAEL BUCK '89, *CONDUCTOR*

- Fanfare Prelude: O How Shall I Receive Thee** J. Robert Hanson (1930–2022)
- Alleluia** Ralph Manuel (b. 1951)
arr. Travis J. Cross (b. 1977)
- Norsk Kunstnerkarneval*** (“Norwegian Artists’ Carnival”), Op. 14 Johan S. Svendsen (1840–1911)
arr. Stig Nordhagen (b. 1966)
- Valkyrie Rising** Chris Pilsner (b. 1986)

PROGRAM NOTES

ST. OLAF PHILHARMONIA CHUNG PARK, CONDUCTOR

Finlandia, Op. 26

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

During the 1890s, Sibelius took on the challenge of writing music that stirred Finnish patriotism in the face of Czar Nicholas II's Russification policies. The composer wanted to create something recognizably Finnish, but without resorting to direct imitation of folk music. As he wrote to his wife Aino, "I would not wish to tell a lie in art . . . But I think I am now on the right path. I now grasp those Finnish, purely Finnish, tendencies in music less realistically but more truthfully than before." Many of his early efforts in this direction were ephemeral — a composer in search of his voice — but the 1899 *Finlandia* has transcended both its local association and its political objective. Originally the finale of a suite of incidental music to accompany a historical tableaux, it was performed first at an event whose announced purpose was support of a journalist's pension fund but whose organizers sought to promote a spirit of national unity. The title, *Finland Awakens*, attracted negative attention from the czarist régime, so for a while, the piece was known as *Impromptu* — surely one of the great misnomers in music history!

Like all successful symphonic poems, *Finlandia's* extra-musical meaning generates the music's formal shape. The composer described this meaning in stirring words: "We fought 600 years for our freedom and I am part of the generation which achieved it. Freedom! My *Finlandia* is the story of this fight. It is the song of our battle, our hymn of victory." His genius is that this story functions simultaneously on both exterior and interior levels — capturing just that intersection where patriotism feeds personal identity and vice versa. Massive chords establish the music's parameters of great depth and seriousness. Very slowly, they yield to a woodwind choir, then to the strings; the judiciously-restrained orchestration suggests that there is power held in check. The accumulated tension yields to more defiant strains, then to a resolute, even jaunty section before settling into the strains of the last reverent theme (later used for the hymn "Be still, my soul," whose text emphasizes patience in the face of suffering), which Sibelius gradually builds into triumph.

— Program notes by Susan Key from *laphil.com*

Adoration

Florence Price (1887–1953)
arr. Elaine Fine

Florence Price, a native of Little Rock, Arkansas, was a pioneer Black American composer who distinguished herself early on. Most notably, she is remembered as the first Black American woman to garner success as a composer of symphonic music. Her first symphony is perhaps her best-known work. Winner of a national prize, it was given its première in 1933 by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra — a social and cultural milestone in this country at that time.

As a young woman, she journeyed north to Boston to study at the New England Conservatory, and afterwards returned to Arkansas and Georgia to teach at various small Black colleges. After marriage, she and her husband left a racially-troubled Arkansas in 1927 for Chicago and her further study at the American Conservatory of Music. Her career blossomed, and recognition for her art led to the afore mentioned symphony in 1931, followed by two more symphonies, concertos, and other works for orchestra. She composed in a variety of other genres: chamber works, piano music, and vocal compositions — over 300 in all! Her songs and arrangements of spirituals were perhaps her most performed compositions, but they are not necessarily her distinguishing works. Sadly, little of her *œuvre* has been published, but with her increasing popularity today, that situation is rapidly changing. Now, her renaissance is owed in large part to the discovery not long ago of a substantial treasure trove of her compositions in a derelict house, including major works for orchestra. Included in this remarkable find was the short work for organ, *Adoration*.

Price played the organ, and earlier in her life had spent some time playing it in church, as well as in movie theatres. Her life as a composer was understandably fraught with difficulties, so it is not surprising at all that many of her works were never registered under copyright. And thus it is with *Adoration*. So, today we enjoy many arrangements of the piece in great variety — from cello choir to piano and solo viola. Tonight's version is an arrangement for string orchestra.

Adoration, written in the early 1950s, is couched in a lush, late Romantic style that defies time, place, as well as personal qualities of the composer. The 20th century, in which Price lived and worked, had yielded a remarkable avalanche of newer ways of composing, playing, and hearing music — led by familiar names like Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Bartók, Shostakovich, and a host of others. But, here in this little gem by Price, that contemporary world does not exist. Rather, here is an eloquent, lyrical repose of pure traditional musical beauty. Simple in its three-part form and straightforward in texture, it evidences the innate musicality of a composer who was equally gifted in the large form challenges of the symphony and the concerto. Speaking of his compositions, near the end of his life, Gustav Mahler famously said, “My time will come.” And so it is with Price. Though she achieved laudable recognition during her life, her star faded, only to resurge more luminously a half century after her death.

— Program notes by Wm. E. Runyan

Symphony No. 4 in F Minor

IV. Finale: Allegro con fuoco

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

“An artist lives a double life: an everyday human life and an artistic life, and the two do not always go hand in hand.” So wrote Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, whose often uneasy balances are well known: between a profoundly Russian spirit and European training, between heartfelt romanticism and reverence for Mozart's classicism, and, most painfully, between homosexuality and society's intolerance. His Fourth Symphony is the first full expression of his artistic voice and represents a turning point on multiple levels: as a composer, toward mastery of technique; as a human, toward confronting his demons; as an artist, toward a more cosmopolitan idiom. He wrote much of the work in Italy, and a sense of warm lyricism balances the work's dramatic and fantastic elements. “My symphony is definitely the best work I have written so far,” Tchaikovsky wrote to his brother Modest in the fall of 1877, “but it needed some hard work to compose it; especially the first part.”

Tchaikovsky's work on the symphony coincided with two relationships: with his wife in a short-lived and disastrous marriage and with his patroness Nadezhda von Meck in a long-term and productive association that, although the two never actually met, went beyond the financial to an emotional outlet for both. To her, he penned a detailed description of the symphony, and it offers a valuable guide through the music. Still, this is a classic example of a description that is at once candid and elusive, as it often stays on a level of suggestion rather than narrative.

In the Finale, Tchaikovsky drew on his Russian roots to produce the impression of a folk celebration; his message is to take joy in others' joy: “If within yourself you find no reasons for joy, then look at others. Go among the people. See how they can enjoy themselves, surrendering themselves wholeheartedly to joyful feelings.” He told Meck that the Russian element emerged “of its own accord,” no doubt stimulated by his homesickness while living in Italy. At the same time, the individual is lost in the crowd, and the “fate” motive intervenes before yielding to the collective celebration: “No sooner have you managed to forget yourself and to be carried away by the spectacle of the joys of others than irrepressible fate again appears and reminds you of yourself.” Certainly, by the dramatic last chords, no listener fails to grasp the central expressive impulse — nor can doubt the composer's contention that his works “have all been felt and lived by me, and have come straight from my heart.”

— Program notes by Susan Key from *laphil.com*

NORSEMAN BAND

MICHAEL BUCK '89, CONDUCTOR

Fanfare Prelude: O How Shall I Receive Thee

J. Robert Hanson (1930–2022)

The familiar hymn, *Valet Will Ich Der Geben*, has been used by many composers throughout the past several centuries including J. S. Bach. Its text, written by St. Theodolph of Orleans (c. 760–821) was set to music by Melchoir Teschner in 1615. It is presented here in the traditional form of a chorale prelude by combining original material with this sturdy melody during the entire piece. The opening trumpet fanfare is followed by statements of the first phrases of the chorale in the low brass. After a soft woodwind statement, the piece builds gradually to a climactic ending which calls upon all the forces of the concert band. *Fanfare Prelude: O How Shall I Receive Thee* was written in 1973 for the Concordia College Band of Moorhead, Minnesota.

— Program notes by the composer

Alleluia

Ralph Manuel (b. 1951)
arr. Travis J. Cross (b. 1977)

In composing “Alleluia,” Ralph Manuel created a masterwork for the a cappella choir. Through its melodic simplicity and warm harmonic textures, it beautifully expresses the sentiments of “Alleluia,” its only word of text. The numerous timbral possibilities of the symphonic wind ensemble provides an exciting palette of sound for this arrangement. Premiered by the Ankeny High School Band at spring contests in 1997, the piece seems right at home in the wind band world. The Gahanna Lincoln High School performed the work at the 2002 Ohio Music Educators Association conference, and the Ankeny High School Band performed the work at the 2002 Iowa Bandmasters Association conference.

— Program notes by the arranger

Norsk Kunstnerkarneval (“Norwegian Artists’ Carnival”), Op. 14

Johan S. Svendsen (1840–1911)
arr. Stig Nordhagen (b. 1966)

This well-known work was composed in Christiania in 1874 for a burlesque Carnival in “Kunstnerforeningen.”

An early title for the work was *Bryllup paa Dovre* (“Wedding at Dover”). The manuscript score and parts of the early version with this title found at The National Library in Oslo have much more music than the version printed by C. F. Peters, Leipzig in 1881. The form in this first version was A–B–A with an additional trio part that later were discarded. In the trio, Svendsen used the melody *Sæterreisen «Os har gjort kva gjeras skulle»* (“We have done what had to be done”) from Lindeman’s collection of Norwegian Folk Tunes (Vol. 1/115). In the A-part, a wedding tune, (*Bruraslaatten*) from Sogn is used (Lindeman Vol. 1/476). The Carnival’s literary theme was the connection between the cold north and the warm south. Musically, the south is represented in Svendsen’s music by Raffaele Sacco’s melody from 1835, *Te voglio bene assai* (“I love you very much”).

— Program notes by the arranger

Valkyrie Rising

Chris Pilsner (b. 1986)

Valkyrie Rising is a huge departure from my normal compositional style. My goal with this piece was to create something that was fun, loud, and exciting throughout. And those ideas formed through a sense of constant motion and polyrhythmic motives. Throughout the piece, there is a heavy emphasis, never letting the audience tell if the piece is in 6/8 or 3/4. Furthermore, I utilize frequent hemiolas to create a complex rhythmic texture that makes sure to fill any static space.

The title refers to a fantastical version of the female figures from Norse mythology who choose who lives and dies in battle. My interpretation views these powerful women battling with the power over life and death in the midst of an incredible turmoil, while also showing their true regal nature of bringing the fallen warriors to the afterlife hall of the slain, Valhalla.

Valkyrie Rising is composed for and dedicated to my dear friend Corry Petersen. It was commissioned by Petersen and the Poudre High School Wind Ensemble in 2019. It premiered on March 5, 2019 at the Colorado Bandmasters Association Regional Festival.

— *Program notes by the composer*

ST. OLAF PHILHARMONIA

CHUNG PARK, CONDUCTOR

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MICHAEL BUCK '89, CONDUCTOR

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