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Concert: Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Jeffery Meyer

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PROGRAM

Bolero (1928)

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1973)

Lincoln Portrait (1942)

Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)

ITHACA COLLEGE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Jeffery Meyer, conductor

Thomas R. Rochon, speaker

Thomas R. Rochon, speaker

INTERMISSION

Concerto for Orchestra (1943)

Béla Bartók
(1881-1945)

I. Introduzione

*II. Giuoco delle Copie ("Game of the
Couples")*

III. Elegia

IV. Intermezzo Interrotto

V. Finale

**Ford Hall
Sunday, May 2, 2010
8:15 p.m.**

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Program Notes

Bolero (1928) **Maurice Ravel**

I have written only one masterpiece. That is Bolero. Unfortunately, it contains no music.
- Ravel

Bolero, one of Ravel's most performed pieces, was composed in 1928. It was commissioned by Russian dancer Ida Rubinstein. When Ravel applied his experiment to develop one single theme to a large work, *Bolero* was born. The composer explained his intentions in a letter to the *London Daily Telegraph*:

Before its first performance I issued a warning to the effect that what I had written was a piece lasting seventeen minutes and consisting wholly of 'orchestral tissue without music' - of one long very gradual crescendo. There are no contrasts. There is practically no invention except the plan and manner of execution... I have carried out exactly what I intended and it is for the listener to take it or leave it.

The ballet premiere took place at Paris Opéra on November 22, 1928 with the choreography of Bronislava Nijinska with Walter Straram conducting. This piece received huge success after the premiere and was performed widely in Europe. The United States premiere took place at Carnegie Hall on November 14, 1929 by the Philharmonic Society of New York under Arturo Toscanini's baton.

Lincoln Portrait (1942) **Aaron Copland**

The qualities of courage, dignity, strength, simplicity and humor which are so characteristic of the American people are well represented in these three outstanding Americans.

André Kostelanetz
Conductor of Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra

Soon after the United States joined World War II, Kostelanetz commissioned three leading American composers to create a "portrait gallery" of great Americans. The results of this commission were: *A Lincoln Portrait* by Aaron Copland, *An Orchestral Portrait of Mark Twain* by Jerome Kern, and *A Portrait of the Late Fiorello H. La Guardia* by Virgil Thomson. At first, Copland's intention was to compose a portrait of Walt Whitman, but he changed his decision to Abraham Lincoln after Kostelanetz asked him to aim for a Statesman.

In 1943, before the Boston premiere, the composer spoke about his piece:

In discussing my choice with Virgil Thomson, he amiably pointed out that no composer could possibly hope to match in musical terms the stature of so eminent a figure as that of Lincoln. Of course, he was quite right. But secretly I was hoping to avoid the difficulty by doing a portrait in which the sitter himself might speak. With the voice of Lincoln to help me I was ready to risk the impossible.

The letters and speeches of Lincoln supplied the text. It was a comparatively simple matter to choose a few excerpts that seemed particularly apposite to our own situation today. I avoided the temptation to use only well-known passages, permitting myself the luxury of quoting only once from a world-famous speech. The order and arrangement of the selections are my own.

The first sketches were made in February and the portrait was finished on April sixteenth. The orchestration was completed a few weeks later. I worked with musical materials of my own, with the exception of two songs of the period: the famous "Camptown Races" and a ballad that was first published in 1840 under the title "The Pesky Serpent" but is better known today as "Springfield Mountain." In neither case is the treatment a literal one. The tunes are used freely, in the manner of my use of cowboy songs in *Billy the Kid*.

The composition is roughly divided into three main sections. In the opening section I wanted to suggest something of the mysterious sense of fatality that surrounds Lincoln's personality. Also, near the end of the section, something of his gentleness and simplicity of spirit. The quick middle section briefly sketches in the background of the times he lived. This merges into the concluding section where my sole purpose was to draw a simple but impressive frame about the words of Lincoln himself.

The premiere of this piece took place in Cincinnati by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra with Kostelanetz conducting and William Adams speaking on May 14, 1942.

Concerto for Orchestra (1943)

Béla Bartók

After its premier in Boston, Serge Koussevitzky said that *Concerto for Orchestra* was "the best orchestra piece of the last 25 years." *Concerto for Orchestra* has appeared in concert halls regularly since 1943 and is considered one of Bartók's most important works. Benjamin Suchoff observed: "Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* embodies what one might refer to as the 'total Bartók' within a context based on the composer's most classical, lucid approach to form and

texture. The Concerto can serve as a musical model for identifying the numerous types of folk-music sources collected by the composer and pointing to their infusion into an entirely original contemporary musical vocabulary." This, Bartók's final work, was the culmination of his folk songs studies.

Concerto for Orchestra was commissioned by Serge Koussevitzky, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1943. Bartók spent the summer of 1943 at Saranac Lake, New York, composing this work. He started the composition with the third movement (*Elegia*) on August 15. Following the third movement, he composed the fourth and fifth movements, then finished with the second and first movements. The whole work was completed on October 8, 1943.

In 1941, Bartók was working on the transcription of Yugoslavian folk music and was surprised by a unique recording of Dalmation two-part melodies. As he said in lecture at Harvard University: "unity, higher development, and unusual effect on listeners" of the melodies and it influence the style on the *Giuoco Delle Coppie* directly. In the *Concerto for Orchestra*, Bartók applied appropriated ideas from previous works, including *Kossuth*, a symphonic poem he composed in 1903, *The Miraculous Mandarin op.19*, a one-act pantomime he composed in 1917, and *Bluebeard's Castle*, an opera from 1911.

The premiere was on December 1, 1944 by Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The program included Mozart's overture to *Idomeneo* and Franck's *Symphony in D Minor*. The premiere was so successful that they played the *Concerto for Orchestra* again on December 29 and 30, 1944. The New York premiere was on January 10 and 13, 1945 again under Koussevitzky with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. After the New York premiere, Bartók responded to Koussevitzky's request to write a new ending in February or March

of 1945. In a letter from his publisher, Ralph Hawker said:

I thought I should let you know that I had a most pleasant meeting with Koussevitzky this morning. He asked me to tell you how happy he is about the new ending and that he will play the Concerto "many times" next season. He will repeat it again in New York among others.

For the Boston premiere, Bartok provided a program note of his own:

Explanation to Concerto for Orchestra:

The title of this symphony-like orchestra work is explained by its tendency to treat the single instruments or instruments groups in a "Concertant" or soloistic manner. The "virtuoso" treatment appears, for instance, in the fugato sections of the development of the first movement (brass instruments) or in the "perpetuum mobile" - like passages of the principle theme in the last movement, in the last movement (Strings), and, especially, in the second movement, in which pairs of instruments appear consecutively with brilliant passage. As for the structure of the work, the first and the fifth movements are written in a more or less regular sonata form. The development of the first movement contains fugato section for brass; the exposition in the finale is somewhat extended, and its development consists of a fugue built on the last theme of the exposition. Less traditional forms are found in the second and third movements. The main part of the second movement consists of a chain of

independent short sections, by wind instruments consecutively introduced in five pairs (bassoons, oboes, clarinets, flutes and muted trumpets). Thematically, the five sections have nothing in common and could be symbolized by the letters a, b, c, d, e. A kind of "trio" - a short chorale for brass instruments and side-drum - follows, after which the five sections are recapitulation in a more elaborate instrumentation. The structure of the third movement is likewise chain-like; three themes appear successively. These constitute the core of the movement, which is enframed by a misty texture of rudimentary motives. Most the thematic materials derives from the "Introduction" to the first movement. The form of the fourth movement - "Intermezzo interrotto" - could be rendered by the letter symbols "ABA - interruption - BA." The general mood of the work represents - apart from the jesting second movement - a gradual transition from the sternness of the life - assertion of the last one.

Introduzione: Andante non troppo - Allegro vivace. The tonal center of this movement is F. As Bartók said in his explanation, this movement was written in Sonata form with a slow introduction. From the introduction, Bartók shows as the two most important elements in this movement, the 4th interval in the first line and the Parlando style. The slow introduction comes from his opera *Bluebeard's Castle*. Bartók uses the idea from the opening of *Bluebeard's Castle* to represent the idea of dark to light, then returning to darkness.

Presentando le Coppie (Presenting the Couples): Allegro scherzando. The tonal center of this movement is D. *Giuoco Delle Coppie* was the subtitle in 1943, but Bartók changed it to *Presentando le Coppie* (Presenting the Couples or Game of the Couples) in 1944. The tempo marking Allegro Scherzando tells us this movement is a kind of orchestral Scherzo, a ternary form with a Trio in the middle.

Elegia: Andante, non troppo. This was composed in Chai form with prelude and postlude with the tonality of C-sharp. The movement begins with a night music-like prelude. In the composer's words this "constitutes the core of the movement, which is enframed by a misty texture of rudimentary motifs" - "night music." Once again, Bartók uses the darkness idea from *Bluebeard's Castle*.

Intermezzo interrotto: Allegretto. As Bartók explained, this movement is A-B-A-Interruption-B-A form, and the tonality is in B. It begins with a four-note introduction: B, A-sharp, E, F-sharp. For the interruption section, according to the composer's son, Peter Bartók, while *Concerto for Orchestra* was in progress Bartók heard a broadcast of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony; he found the so-called "Crescendo theme" so ludicrous that he decided to burlesque it in his own work. In David Cooper's book *Bartók: Concerto for Orchestra*, Cooper mentions the viola theme that proceeds this Shostakovich quote could have come from the aria "Da geh' ich zu Maxim" from the Hungarian operetta composer Franz Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe* (The Merry Widow). After the interruption section, the second and first themes come back and end this movement.

Finale: Pesante - Presto. This movement is in Sonata form, and the tonality is back in F. There are two principal ideas in this movement: the first is perpetual motion and the second is fugue. The whole movement opens with a four-measure horn call as the first theme, which plays

a major role in the exposition. The exposition is full of the first theme with the accompaniment in perpetual motion. A short fugue using the first theme as the subject appears and is followed by the inversion of the first theme. Bartók uses the inversion of the first theme throughout the development. Bartók shortens the recapitulation by not repeating everything from the exposition.

After the Boston premiere, the enthusiastic applause from the audience showed how successful the premiere was. *Concerto for Orchestra* became Bartók's first successful work in the United States and started to bring him much deserved recognition. His music influenced many composers after him, including Olivier Messiaen, Benjamin Britten, and Witold Lutoslawski. Béla Bartók has become one of the most important composers of the twentieth-century.

Notes by Chun-Ming Chen

Performers' biographies

Thomas R. Rochon became the eighth president of Ithaca College on July 1, 2008. He holds a doctorate and a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Michigan, where he graduated with high distinction. Prior to his selection as the president of Ithaca College, Rochon served as executive vice president and chief academic officer of the University of St. Thomas, a master's comprehensive university in Minnesota, where he oversaw the university's six schools and colleges and, with the chief administrative officer, shared responsibility for the \$150 million university budget. He worked to develop the academic vision of each unit and to set strategic directions; reorganized academic programs to create the School of Engineering; and helped launch a capital campaign centered on endowment support of students and faculty. An engaged civic leader, Rochon championed a university effort to strengthen community service and partnership activities in Minneapolis-St. Paul, leading to

Carnegie Foundation classification for community engagement. Along with his administrative responsibilities, he was a tenured professor in St. Thomas's political science department.

Rochon has an extensive history of accomplishments as an educator and academic administrator. Before his position at St. Thomas, as executive director of the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) program at the Educational Testing Service (ETS), Rochon was responsible for determining program policy under the oversight of the board and the ETS vice president for graduate and professional education. He guided the addition of analytical writing to the test, the first use of an essay in the GRE program; he also developed and implemented a program to empower universities to create their own test prep courses for graduate programs. He has held positions in the top leadership at prominent universities: dean of the School of Politics and Economics at Claremont Graduate University and assistant master of Dean Mathey College at Princeton University. He also held the post of assistant professor in the politics department at Princeton University for seven years.

Rochon came to Ithaca College with a distinguished record of scholarly research. His work focuses on contemporary European politics and social movements in Europe and the United States. He is the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including research grants from the National Science Foundation and the American Philosophical Society, as well as the Susan Louise Dyer Peace Fellowship at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace at Stanford University. Rochon was also a Fulbright lecturer at Kobe University in Japan. His 1998 book, *Culture Moves: Ideas, Activism, and Changing Values*, received a Distinguished Scholarship Prize from the American Sociological Association and was named by Choice an outstanding academic book of 1998. He has given periodic lectures and seminars on Dutch politics for embassy personnel of the U.S. Department of State and has served on numerous advisory and other boards, including the President's Advisory Board of the Universidad Anáhuac México Sur in Mexico City.

Since childhood Rochon has been an avid baseball card collector. He developed an interest in older cards, including those dating from the 1880s, and is an active user of the eBay online auction site.

Born in Chicago, **Jeffery Meyer** (DMA, MM, SUNY Stony Brook; BM, Lawrence Conservatory) began his musical studies as a pianist, and shortly thereafter continued on to study composition and conducting. He is presently the director of orchestras at the Ithaca College School of Music, as well as the founder and artistic director of the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in St. Petersburg, Russia. In the 2008-09 season, he assumed the position of artistic director of the Water City Chamber Orchestra, which has quickly become Wisconsin's most innovative and exciting chamber orchestra.

Called "one of the most interesting and creatively productive conductors working in St. Petersburg" by Sergei Slonimsky, in recent concert seasons, he has been seen conducting, performing as piano soloist and chamber musician, as well as conducting from the keyboard in the United States, Canada, Russia, and throughout Europe and Asia. In 2007, he made his Glinka Hall conducting debut in the final concert of the 43rd St. Petersburg "Musical Spring" International Festival, featuring works by three of St. Petersburg's most prominent composers, and in 2009, he conducted the opening concert of the 14th International Musical Olympus Festival in St. Petersburg. He has appeared with ensembles such as the Milwaukee Symphony, Syracuse Symphony, Philippine Philharmonic, Cayuga Chamber Orchestra and the Orchestra Sinfonico "Haydn" di Bolzano e Trento. As a pianist, he performs frequently as part of the piano-percussion duo "Strike", which released their first album on Luminescence Records in 2010. He has been broadcast on CBC Newfoundland, has recorded and performed with the Philadelphia Virtuosi (Naxos), and has been heard as a soloist at the Aspen

Festival. During the 2001-2002 academic year he lived and studied in Berlin and Leipzig as the recipient of a DAAD grant in music. He has been distinguished in several international competitions (2008 Cadaqués Conducting Competition, 2003 Vakhtang Jordania International Conducting Competition, 2003 Beethoven Sonata International Piano Competition) and was recently a prizewinner in the Tenth International "Antonio Pedrotti" Conducting Competition.

He holds a DMA in Piano Performance from SUNY Stony Brook where he studied with Gilbert Kalish.

ITHACA COLLEGE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Jeffery Meyer, conductor

Violin I

Natalie Brandt
concert master
Will Downey
Charles Palys
Aimee Lillienstein
Bryn Digney
Kristin Bakkegard
Sadie Kenny
Isaac Shiman
Sarah Weber
Shena Griffith
Emily Frederick
Samantha Hecht
Margaret Dagon
Madeleine Wething
Derek Voigt
Kate Goldstein

Violin II

Matteo Longhi*
Alyssa Jutting
Misako Sakurai
Gabriella Colkett
Jenna Trunk
Jason Calhoun
Christopher Sforza
Jessica Chen
Claire Wilcox
Austin Schlichting
Chris Mattaliano
Sarah Hoag
Alexas Esposito

Viola

Zach Slack*
Kathleen Stevens
Meghan Seidner
Michael Capone
Stephen Gorgone
Joshua Labman
Jennifer Meckler
Marissa Ledet
Violet Goncarvos
Maxwell Aleman
Jackie Timberlake

Cello

Allie Rehn*
Phil Abbott
David MacLeese
Thillman Benham
Peter Volpert
Brooks Griffith
Katie McShane
Hannah Whitehead
Meredith Genarro
Evan Hong
Tristan Rais-
Sherman
Daniel Frankhuizen
Jeremy von Deck
Ben Sharrin

Bass

Kyle Kresge*
Sara Johnson
Samuel Verneuille
John Romey
Benjamin Dows
Matthew Minter
David Barton
Casey Georgi

Flute

Emily Wespiser*
Amelia Baran
Andrea Reges

Oboe

Jamie Davis-Ponce*
Julia Perry
Jennifer Dodge

Clarinet

Brianne Remaley*
Sarah Koop
Michael Colletti

Bassoon

Noah Wolfinger*
Margaret Oswald
Mehgan Kininger

Lauren Jurcynski

Saxophone

Seval Kanik*
Rachel Perry

Horn

Tyler Ogilvie*
Drew Welkie
Maureen Preston
Elizabeth Teucke
Megan Carpenter

Trumpet

Ethan Urtz*
Brian Binder
Chris Tolbert
Emily Waltz

Trombone

Mark Neville*
Alicia Aubin
Michael Nave

Tuba

Joe Wenzel*

Timpani

Andrew Boynton*

Percussion

Julia Ross*
Benjamin Berry
Darren Lin
Elayne Harris

Harp

Myra Kovary**
Deette Bunn**

Graduate Assistants

Jesse Livinston
Chun-Ming Chen

* principal

** guest artist