# HARRISBURG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Saturday, October 6, 2018 at 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, October 7, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.

Notes on the Program by DR. RICHARD E. RODDA

## Danzón No. 7 (2001)
## Arturo Márquez (b. 1950)

Arturo Márquez was born in 1950 in Alamos in the northwestern Mexican state of Sonora, where his father was a mariachi violinist. Arturo, Sr. introduced his son to music and when the family moved to Los Angeles in 1962, young Arturo was ready to begin studying violin and immersing himself in a variety of musical styles — "I spent my adolescence," he recalled, "listening to [Mexican singer] Javier Solis, sounds of mariachi, the Beatles, Doors, Carlos Santana and Chopin." By the time the family returned to Sonora when he was seventeen, he had started to compose and was ready to become director of the municipal band in Navojoa the following year. Márquez went to Mexico City in 1970 to begin his professional studies at the Conservatorio Nacional de Música, where he majored in piano and composition. From 1976 to 1979, he studied at the Institute of Fine Arts of Mexico with Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras, Hector Quintanar and Federico Ibarra, and a French government grant in 1980 enabled him to study in Paris with Jacques Castérède for two years; he then did his academic graduate work on a Fulbright scholarship at the California Institute of the Arts with Morton Subotnick, Stephen Mosko, Mel Powell and James Newton. Arturo Márquez, today one of Mexico's most respected musicians, has taught at the National University of Mexico, held a residency at the National Center of Research, Documentation and Information of Mexican Music, fulfilled commissions from the Organization of American States, Universidad Metropolitana de México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Festival del Caribe, Festival de la Ciudad de México, 1992 Seville World's Fair and Rockefeller Foundation, and received, among many distinctions, Mexico's National Prize for Arts and Sciences, the Austrian Embassy's Medalla Mozart, and the Gold Medal of Fine Arts of Mexico, the first musician so honored with the country's highest award for artists.

Márquez has composed nine works for varied instrumentation titled *Danzón*. In 1942, after a good-will visit to Cuba, Aaron Copland wrote his *Danzón Cubano*, and gave the following description of the form: "The popular Cuban dance style known as *danzón* has a very special character. It is a stately dance, quite different from the rhumba, conga and tango, and one that fulfills a function rather similar to that of the waltz in our own music, providing contrast to some of the more animated dances. The *danzón* is not the familiar hectic, flashy and rhythmically complicated type of Cuban dance. It is more elegant and curt and is very precise, as dance music goes. The dance itself seemed especially amusing to me because it has a touch of unconscious grotesquerie, as if it were an impression of 'high-life' as seen through the eyes of the populace — elegance perceived by the inelegant." Of his colorful and melodic *Danzón No. 7* (2001), commissioned by the Pan American Symphony Orchestra of Washington, D.C. and premiered by that ensemble on June 1, 2002 under the direction of Sergio Alessandro Bušlje, Márquez noted, "I discovered that the apparent lightness of the *danzón* hides a music full of sensuality and rigor, music of nostalgia and joy that our old folks live with, a world that we can still grasp in the dance music of Veracruz and the dance halls of Mexico City. *Danzón No. 7* is a tribute to the world that nurtured it. It tries to get as close as possible to the dance, to its nostalgic melodies and its monotonous rhythms, and is a personal way of expressing my admiration and feelings towards real Mexican popular music."

## Suite from *Háry János* (1925)
## Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967)

Throughout his life, Kodály was enthralled with the folk music of his native Hungary. While still in his twenties, he joined Béla Bartók, and the two set out across the countryside to capture the musical culture of the peasants armed only with a pad of manuscript paper and a primitive phonograph recorder. They collected more than 3,500 melodies, and became the most notable scholars in the field. Kodály's study of Eastern European folksong, published in 1937, is still the standard reference on the subject. As an educator, Kodály encouraged his composition students to explore folk culture, both to understand better the true nature of their land and to serve as the stylistic basis of their works. He devised a method of education founded on song and dance models that introduced native music and history to young children. In his own works, he strove to recreate the spirit of folk music that would open the riches of their heritage to his fellow Hungarians. His opera *Háry János* grew from this nationalistic philosophy.

Háry was a factual being who lived in Hungary early in the 19th century. His chief distinction was being a veteran of the Napoleonic wars, and the opera is based on the fantastic stories Háry wove around his experiences. "He is a peasant, a veteran soldier," wrote Kodály in the preface to the opera, "who day after day sits in the tavern, spinning yarns about his heroic exploits and, being a peasant, the stories produced by his fantastic imagination are an inextricable mixture of realism and naïveté, of comic humor and pathos. Yet he is by no means just a Hungarian Munchausen. Though superficially he appears to be merely a braggart, essentially he is a national visionary and poet. That his stories are not true is irrelevant, for they are the fruit of a lively imagination seeking to create, for himself and for others, a beautiful dream world." The episodes of the opera and the movements of the Suite are based on Háry's extravagant stories.

In the opera, Napoleon's wife, Marie Louise, falls in love with Háry, and takes him with her to Vienna. Napoleon learns of the liaison and declares war on Vienna. Háry, by his own unimpeachable word, defeats the French unaided. He returns to a hero's welcome at the imperial court in Vienna, where he rejects the further advances of Marie Louise in favor of the simple love of his childhood sweetheart.

For the American premiere of the Suite, Kodály supplied the following notes:

"According to a Hungarian superstition, if a statement is followed by a sneeze of one of the hearers, it is regarded as confirmation of the truth of the assertion. The *Háry János* Suite begins with a sneeze of this kind.

"No. II. The scene is laid in the imperial palace in Vienna, where the ingenious Hungarian peasant is amazed and enraptured by the famous Musical Clock with its little soldier figures in their brave uniforms appearing and disappearing at every rotation of the marvelous machinery.

"No. III. Háry and his sweetheart are longing for their village home and its quiet evenings, musical with love songs (an ancient Hungarian melody is used).

"No. IV. Háry, as general in command of his hussars, confronts the French army. He brandishes his sword, and lo! the French begin to fall before him like tin soldiers! First, two at a time, then four — eight — ten, and so on. Finally there are no more soldiers left, and Napoleon is forced to engage in person the invincible Háry. Háry's fantasy pictures a Napoleon made in the image of his own burly peasant imagination — an immensely tall and formidable Napoleon who, shaking in every limb, kneels before his conqueror and pleads for mercy. The ironical French Victory March is transformed into a dirge.

"No. V is an intermezzo in folk dance style.

"No. VI. An ironical march of triumph, in which Háry pictures the entrance of the emperor and the imperial court at Vienna; but it is not the Austrian reality — only a Hungarian peasant's way of imagining the rich happiness of the celebrated *Wiener Burg*."

## Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18 (1900-1901)
## Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

When he was old and as mellow as he would ever get, Rachmaninoff wrote these words about his early years: "Although I had to fight for recognition, as most younger men must, although I have experienced all the troubles and sorrow which precede success, and although I know how important it is for an artist to be spared such troubles, I realize, when I look back on my early life, that it was enjoyable, in spite of all its vexations and bitterness." The greatest "bitterness" of Rachmaninoff's career was brought about by his Symphony No. 1, a work that had such a disastrous premiere he forbade any other performances of the piece while he was alive. The total failure of the Symphony at its premiere in 1897 was a traumatic disappointment to him, one that thrust him into such a mental depression that he suffered a complete nervous collapse.

Such a hyper-emotional attitude was not unusual at the turn of the 20th century for the Russian aristocracy of which Rachmaninoff was a member. Melancholia was virtually a way of upper-class life at the time, as the Russian critic and composer Leonid Sabaneiev described: "The famous Moscow restaurants, the no-less famous Gypsy choruses, the atmosphere of continuing dissipation in which perhaps there was no merriment at all, but on the contrary, the most genuine, bitter and impenetrable pessimism — this was the milieu. Music there was a terrible narcosis, a sort of intoxication and oblivion, a going-off into irrational places.... It was not form or harmoniousness or Apollonic vision that was demanded of music, but passion, feeling, languor, heartache. Such was Tchaikovsky's music, and such also the music of Rachmaninoff developed into." After the failure of his First Symphony, Rachmaninoff was mired in exactly such an emotional abyss as Sabaneiev described, and he showed little inclination of ever climbing out. His family, alarmed at the prospect of the brilliant young musician wasting his prodigious talents, expended their own capabilities to help him, and then sought out professional psychiatric counsel.

An aunt of Rachmaninoff, Varvara Satina, had recently been successfully treated for an emotional disturbance by a certain Dr. Nicholas Dahl, a Moscow physician who was familiar with the latest psychiatric discoveries in France and Vienna, and it was arranged that Rachmaninoff should visit him. Years later, in his memoirs, the composer recalled the malady and the treatment: "[Following the performance of the First Symphony,] something within me snapped. All my self-confidence broke down. A paralyzing apathy possessed me. I did nothing at all and found no pleasure in anything. Half my days were spent on a couch sighing over my ruined life. My only occupation consisted in giving a few piano lessons to keep myself alive." For more than a year, Rachmaninoff's condition persisted. He began his daily visits to Dr. Dahl in January 1900. "My relatives had informed Dr. Dahl that he must by all means cure me of my apathetic condition and bring about such results that I would again be able to compose. Dahl had inquired what kind of composition was desired of me, and he was informed 'a concerto for pianoforte,' which I had given up in despair of ever writing. In consequence, I heard repeated, day after day, the same hypnotic formula, as I lay half somnolent in an armchair in Dr. Dahl's consulting room: 'You will start to compose a concerto — You will work with the greatest of ease — The composition will be of excellent quality.' Always it was the same, without interruption." Almost like a movie script from the Hollywood where Rachmaninoff eventually settled, the good doctor's unusual cure worked. "Although it may seem impossible to believe," Rachmaninoff continued, "this treatment really helped me. I started to compose again at the beginning of the summer." In gratitude, he dedicated the new Concerto in C minor to Dr. Dahl.

Rachmaninoff wrote the second and third movements of his rehabilitative Concerto in the summer and early autumn of 1900 in Italy, Novgorod and Moscow; this incomplete version was heard at a charity concert in Moscow on October 14th, with the composer at the keyboard and Alexander Siloti conducting. The opening movement was composed by the following spring, and the premiere of the finished work was given on October 14, 1901 with the same two principals and the orchestra of the Moscow Philharmonic Society. The C minor Concerto was the first orchestral work to carry the name of Rachmaninoff into the world's concert halls. (His ubiquitous C-sharp minor Prelude of 1892 had been a piano-bench and recital favorite for a decade.) Other advances in Rachmaninoff's life soon followed — many successful musical compositions, an appointment as the opera conductor of the Moscow Grand Theater, and a triumphant career as a concert pianist. There always remained buried away in his

innermost thoughts, however, those ghosts of self-doubt and insecurity that Nicholas Dahl could never have totally exorcised from the dour composer's psychological constitution.

The C minor Concerto begins with eight bell-tone chords from the solo piano that herald the surging main theme, which is announced by the strings. A climax is achieved before a sudden drop in intensity makes way for the arching second theme, initiated by the soloist. The development section, concerned largely with the first theme, is propelled by a martial rhythm that continues with undiminished energy into the recapitulation. The second theme returns in the horn before the martial mood is re-established to close the movement.

The *Adagio*, a long-limbed nocturne with a running commentary of sweeping figurations from the piano, contains some beautiful concerted instrumental writing. The finale resumes the marching rhythmic motion of the first movement with its introduction and bold main theme. Standing in bold relief to this vigorous music is the lyrical second theme, one of the best-loved melodies in the entire orchestral literature, a grand inspiration in the ripest Romantic tradition. (Years ago, this melody was lifted from the Concerto by the tunesmiths of Tin Pan Alley and fitted with sufficiently maudlin phrases to become the popular hit *Full Moon and Empty Arms*.) These two themes, the martial and the romantic, alternate for the remainder of the movement. The coda rises through a finely crafted line of mounting tension to bring this work to an electrifying close.

Rachmaninoff once wrote, "I try to make music speak simply and directly that which is in my heart at the time I am composing. If there is love there, or bitterness, or sadness, or religion, these moods become part of my music, and it becomes either beautiful or bitter or sad or religious." The heart of a true Romantic beat beneath the stern exterior of this man; his music is a direct link to the great traditions of the 19th-century masters.

## Four Dances from *Estancia*, Op. 8a (1941)
## Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)

Alberto Ginastera, Argentina's most famous and widely performed composer, was the outstanding creative figure in South American music following the death of Villa-Lobos in 1959. Ginastera's career was divided between composition and education, and in the latter capacity he held posts at leading conservatories and universities in Argentina and at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. His musical works, many written on American commissions, include three operas, two ballets, six concertos, eleven film scores, eight orchestral works, various vocal and choral compositions, and much music for chamber ensembles and piano. Ginastera traveled extensively to oversee the presentation of his scores and to adjudicate major musical competitions, and for his contributions to music he was honored with many awards, including memberships in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Ginastera divided his works into two stylistic categories. The first ("Nationalism") includes his music before the mid-1950s, which displays overt influences of Argentine musical traits and themes. He modeled the rhythms and melodies of these works on the folksongs and dances known as *musica criolla*, though he seldom used literal quotations. This nationalistic music is imbued with the symbolism of the indigenous peoples, the pampas and the "*gauchesco*" tradition, for which he became the leading musical spokesperson. Ginastera's second style ("Neo-Expressionism") began around 1958 and encompassed most of his later compositions, works characterized by such modernist devices as polytonality, serial writing, use of quarter-tones and other micro intervals, and an extension of instrumental resources. All of this technical jargon might sound rather imposing, but these techniques lend the music a power of expression reinforced by expert craftsmanship that is always tantalizing to the ear and cogent in its expression. Ginastera's later works bear a strong affinity with the expressionism of Schoenberg and Berg, which was itself an extension of the great European Classical-Romantic tradition. Ginastera's compositions mark him as one of the most important members of the international community of composers and demonstrate the manner in which he was able to combine the melodic and rhythmic

resources of the folk music of his native Argentina with the compositional idioms of the great modern masters.

Lincoln Kirstein, director of the American Ballet Caravan, became familiar with Ginastera's first ballet, *Panambi*, during the company's tour of South America on 1941. Recognizing the young composer's genius, Kirstein commissioned from Ginastera *Estancia*, a stage work for the Ballet Caravan with a scenario based on Argentine country life. Though the company was disbanded the following year before it had performed the new work, a suite of dances from the score was given on May 12, 1943 at Buenos Aires' Teatro Colón which confirmed Ginastera's position as a leading figure in Argentine musical life. (The full ballet was not staged until 1952, at the Colón.) In extracting the suite from *Estancia*, Ginastera omitted the songs for baritone based on texts from the great epic poem of the "gauchesco" literature, *Martin Fierro*, and several pastoral scenes. Except for the gentle second dance, *Danza del trigo* ("*Dance of the Wheat*"), the symphonic suite, comprising *Los trabajadores agricolas* ("*The Workers of the Land*"), *Los peones de hacienda* ("*The Cattle Men*") and *Danza final: Malambo* ("*Final Dance: Malambo*"), is brilliant and driving, largely built on short, recurring rhythmic and melodic patterns that accumulate enormous energy.

The preface to the score notes, "The deep and bare beauty of the land, its richness and natural strength, constitutes the basis of Argentine life. This ballet presents various daily aspects of the activities of an 'estancia' (Argentine ranch), from dawn to dusk, with a symbolic sense of continuity. The plot of the ballet shows a country girl who at first despises the man of the city. She finally admires him when he proves that he can perform the most rough and difficult tasks of the country."