



Mission Chamber Orchestra of San José

26th Season

Two Tales of Love and Bravery

Saturday, April 15, 2023

7:30 PM

De Anza College Visual & Performing Arts Center

Cupertino, California

Program

Leonore Overture No. 3, op. 72b

Ludwig van Beethoven

Ghost of the White Deer
Concerto for bassoon and orchestra
West Coast premiere

Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate

Rufus, Olivier, Jr., bassoonist

- Intermission -

Symphonic Variations
on an African Air, op. 63

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

Symphony No. 1

Peter Boyer

No still or video photography is permitted during the performance.

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Mission Chamber Orchestra of San José

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About the Artist



Rufus Olivier, Jr.

Rufus Olivier is the Principal Bassoonist with the San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Ballet. At the age of 21, he became a bassoonist with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra before moving to his current positions with the Opera and Ballet.

Mr. Olivier has been guest soloist with numerous orchestras throughout the United States, Japan, and France, has premiered new works for the bassoon, and was featured in live radio recitals in Los Angeles.

He is a founding member of the Anchor Chamber Players, the Midsummer Mozart Orchestra, and the Stanford Wind Quintet. He has recorded many movie, video, CD and TV soundtracks including Disney's *Never Cry Wolf* and San Francisco Opera's Grammy-nominated CD *Orphée et Eurydice*. He was awarded a Grammy for the soundtrack *Elmo in Grouchland*.

Prior to arriving in the Bay Area, Mr. Olivier performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra under Neville Marriner and the Goldofsky Opera Tours. He studied with David Briedenthal of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and is on the music faculties of Stanford University and Mills College. In 1993 Mayor Frank M. Jordan awarded Mr. Olivier the Seal of The City and County of San Francisco, in recognition of his "Exemplary Accomplishment On The Occasion of Black History Month." In 2005 Rufus was the featured subject of the lead story in the *International Musician*, a publication that reaches musicians in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Program Notes

Leonore Overture No. 3, op.72b **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**



The son of an overworked mother and an alcoholic father who was a musician in the court band of the elector of Cologne, Beethoven spent an unhappy childhood. In 1781 Beethoven left school to devote full time to music: organ, piano, violin and viola. From 1783 on he was

employed in various posts to help support the family. He had to struggle against poverty and ill health, and in 1801 realized he was becoming deaf. During the remainder of his life he tried various cures, none of which improved his hearing. In 1802, he wrote his famous *Heiligenstadt Testament* declaring his depression from his deafness and his struggle against the world and his fellow man. He confessed, “*I would have been at the point of ending my life. The only thing that held me back was my art. It seemed impossible to leave the world until I had produced all the works that I felt the urge to compose.*”

While Beethoven is best known for the nine symphonies, sixteen string quartets, concertos, Masses, and numerous piano works he wrote, he wrote only one opera, and it was a struggle for him. The opera, *Fidelio*, was first completed and performed in 1805. (Beethoven wanted its title to be *Leonore, oder Der Triumph der ehelichen Liebe*, but two other operas bearing titles with the name Leonore in them were produced around the same time, so *Fidelio* was chosen for the title.) What is known today as the *Leonore Overture no. 2* was the original overture to the opera. When Beethoven revised and shortened the opera in 1806, he provided a new overture, now known as *Leonore Overture no. 3*. Since this overture was considered too dramatic and drew attention away from the less dramatic opening scenes of the opera, Beethoven revised the overture again for a planned 1808 performance in Prague that never took place (*Leonore Overture no. 1*). Finally, in 1814, when *Fidelio* was produced again, Beethoven wrote a completely new overture (known as *Fidelio Overture*), discarding the material from the three previous overtures that were thematically similar.

The overture begins with a loud chord which quickly fades, followed by a slowly descending passage, representing Leonore's second-act descent down the prison stairs to her husband's cell. As she views her husband in the dim light, she is aghast at how aged and shriveled he appears (the music increases and decreases in volume three times.) Directly following this is a melody, played by clarinets and bassoons, from a gloomy aria sung by Florestan in the opera. After a quiet back-and-forth between the violins and solo flute, there is a huge outburst by the full orchestra that quiets down just before the change to a faster tempo and the presentation of the main theme of the overture in a faster tempo.

In the main part of the overture, twice the music comes to a halt and an offstage trumpet is heard, representing the arrival of the Prime Minister. A third time the music almost comes to a halt, and a *Presto* (very fast) section begins with just three first violins playing rapid scale passages, joined a few seconds later by a few second violins, then violas, then cellos and basses leading to an entrance by the rest of the orchestra in a very loud rendition of the overture's main theme. This is Beethoven at his most thrilling! The glorious ending confirms Beethoven's conviction in justice and freedom.

- Notes by Emily Ray

Ghost of the White Deer

Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate (b. 1968)



Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate is a classical composer, citizen of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma and is dedicated to the development of American Indian classical composition. His *Washington Post* review states that "Tate is rare as an American Indian composer of classical music. Rarer still is his ability to effectively infuse classical music with American Indian nationalism."

Tate is Guest Composer/Conductor/Pianist for San Francisco Symphony Currents program *Thunder Song: American Indian Musical Cultures* and was recently Guest Composer for Metropolitan Museum of Art's

Balcony Bar program *Home with ETHEL and Friends*, featuring his commissioned work *Pisachi (Reveal)* for String Quartet.

Recent commissions include *Shell Shaker: A Chickasaw Opera* for Mount Holyoke Symphony Orchestra, *Ghost of the White Deer*, Concerto for Bassoon and

Orchestra for Dallas Symphony Orchestra, *Hózhó (Navajo Strong)* and *Ithánali (I Know)* for White Snake Opera Company. His music was recently featured on the HBO series *Westworld*.

His commissioned works have been performed by the National Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony and Chorus, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Oklahoma City Philharmonic, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, South Dakota Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Ballet, Canterbury Voices, Dale Warland Singers, Santa Fe Desert Chorale and Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival.

Tate has held Composer-in-Residence positions for *Music Alive*, a national residency program of the League of American Orchestras and New Music USA, the Joyce Foundation/American Composers Forum, Oklahoma City's NewView Summer Academy, Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation and Grand Canyon Music Festival Native American Composer Apprentice Project. Tate was the founding composition instructor for the Chickasaw Summer Arts Academy and has taught composition to American Indian high school students in Minneapolis, the Hopi, Navajo and Lummi reservations and Native students in Toronto.

Mr. Tate is a three-time commissioned recipient from the American Composers Forum, a Chamber Music America's Classical Commissioning Program recipient, a Cleveland Institute of Music Alumni Achievement Award recipient, a governor-appointed Creativity Ambassador for the State of Oklahoma and an Emmy Award winner for his work on the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority documentary, *The Science of Composing*.

In addition to his work based upon his Chickasaw culture, Tate has worked with the music and language of multiple tribes, such as: Choctaw, Navajo, Cherokee, Ojibway, Creek, Pechanga, Comanche, Lakota, Hopi, Tlingit, Lenape, Tongva, Shawnee, Caddo, Ute, Aleut, Shoshone, Cree, Paiute and Salish/Kootenai.

Tate earned his Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from Northwestern University, where he studied with Dr. Donald Isaak, and his Master of Music in Piano Performance and Composition from The Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with Elizabeth Pastor and Dr. Donald Erb. He has performed as First Keyboard on the Broadway national tours of *Les Misérables* and *Miss Saigon* and been a guest pianist and accompanist for the Colorado Ballet, Hartford Ballet and numerous ballet and dance companies.

Mr. Tate's middle name, Impichchaachaaha', means "his high corner" and is his inherited traditional Chickasaw house name. A corner is a small hut used for the storage of corn and other vegetables. In traditional Chickasaw culture, the corner was built high off the ground on stilts to keep its contents safe from foraging animals.

Ghost of the White Deer is a romantic and dramatic bassoon concerto which tells the legend of two young Chickasaw Indians in love. In this concerto, the bassoon

depicts all aspects of the characters, specifically the timbre and calling of the sacred white deer.

The story is as follows:

A brave and young Chikasha warrior, Blue Jay, fell in love with Bright Moon, the daughter of a Minko (Chief). The Minko did not like the young man, so he created a price for the bride that he was sure Blue Jay could not pay.

"Bring me the hide of the White Deer," said the Minko. The Chikasha believed that all white animals were magical. "The price for my daughter is one white deer," the Minko laughed. He knew that an albino deer was very rare and would be very hard to find. White deerskin was the best material to use in a wedding dress, and the best white deer skin came from the albino deer.

Blue Jay went to his beloved, Bright Moon. "In one moon's time, I will return with your bride price and we will be married. This I promise you." Taking his best bow and his sharpest arrows, Blue Jay began to hunt.

Three weeks went by. Blue Jay was hungry, lonely, and scratched by briars. Then, one night during a full moon, Blue Jay saw a white deer, who seemed to drift through the moonlight. When the deer was very close to where Blue Jay hid, he shot his sharpest arrow. The arrow sank deep into the deer's heart. But instead of sinking to his knees to die, the deer began to run. Instead of running away, he charged straight toward Blue Jay, with his red eyes glowing and his horns sharp and menacing...

A month passed and Blue Jay did not return as he had promised Bright Moon. After months of waiting, the tribe decided that he would never return. But Bright Moon never took any other young man as a husband, for she had a secret. When the moon was shining as brightly as her name, Bright Moon would often see the white deer in the smoke of the campfire, running, with an arrow in his heart. She lived believing the deer would finally fall, and Blue Jay would return.

The concerto is a continuous work, delineated by the sections entitled:

Prelude

Laughing Minko

The Forest

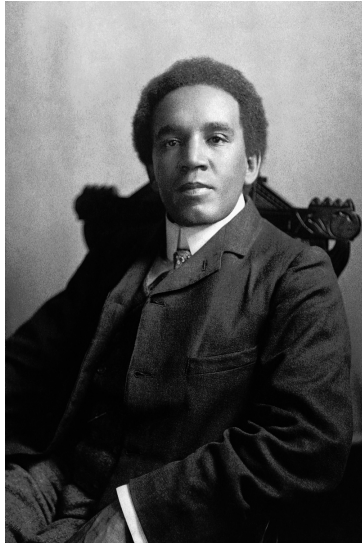
Shared Dreams Dawn/Sunrise

Out of the Ashes

Ghost of the White Deer

- Notes by Jerod Tate

Symphonic Variations on an African Air, op.63
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)



Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was a British composer and conductor. Born in London of Sierra Leonean and English parents, he was part of the English musical renaissance of the 1880's. Coleridge-Taylor achieved so much success that he was referred to by white New York musicians as the "African Mahler" during three tours of the United States in the early 1900s. In the USA, he became increasingly interested in his paternal racial heritage. Coleridge-Taylor participated as the youngest delegate at the 1900 First Pan-African Conference held in London, and met leading Americans through this connection, including poet Paul Laurence Dunbar and scholar and activist W.E.B. Du Bois.

In 1904, on his first tour to the United States, Coleridge-Taylor was received by President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House, a rare event in those days for a man of African descent.

He married a British woman, Jessie Walmisley, and both of their children had musical careers. Their son Hiawatha adapted his father's music for a variety of performances. Their daughter Avril Coleridge-Taylor became a composer-conductor.

He was particularly known for his three cantatas on the epic 1855 poem *The Song of Hiawatha* by American Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Coleridge-Taylor premiered the first section in 1898, when he was 22. Coleridge-Taylor's greatest success was undoubtedly his cantata *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, which was widely performed by choral groups in England during Coleridge-Taylor's lifetime and in the decades after his death. Its popularity was rivaled only by the choral standards Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. Coleridge-Taylor also composed chamber music, anthems, and the *African Dances* for violin, among other works. The *Petite Suite de Concert* is still regularly played. He set to music one poem by his namesake Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Legend of Kubla Khan", rhapsody, op.61.

Coleridge-Taylor was greatly admired by African Americans. In 1901, a 200-voice African-American chorus was founded in Washington, D.C., named the Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Society. Public schools were named after him in Louisville, Kentucky, and in Baltimore, Maryland. Lists of Coleridge-Taylor's 86 compositions and recordings of his work and of the many articles, papers and books about

Coleridge-Taylor's life and legacy are available through the Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Foundation and the Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Network.

He died of pneumonia at age 37. The inscription on Coleridge-Taylor's carved headstone includes four bars of music from the composer's best-known work, *Hiawatha*, and a tribute from his close friend, the poet Alfred Noyes, that includes these words:

“Too young to die: his great simplicity, his happy courage in an alien world, his gentleness, made all that knew him love him.”

The *Symphonic Variations on an African Air* were written in 1906 and based on the African-American song “I’m troubled in mind.” In 1904 Coleridge-Taylor had made a setting of this song in his *Twenty-four Negro Melodies*, and during the fall and winter of 1905-06 he composed the *Symphonic Variations on an African Air*, premiered in 1906 in London, England.

The trombones introduce the theme at the beginning of the work after an introductory timpani roll. Throughout the variations, the theme appears transformed by mood, in fragmented form, or sometimes as the bass line. Moods include dance-like, military (using brass and snare drum), playful, soulful (when the melody is in the English horn), and romantic, while the ending is bold and somewhat majestic. The characteristics of the theme are also changed by its introduction in triple meter to a change to duple meter. And, for the most part, the variations flow seamlessly from one to the next. These variations are an interesting example of what might have come from his pen decades later had he not passed away at such a young age.

Symphony no. 1
Peter Boyer (b. 1970)



Grammy-nominated **Peter Boyer** is one of the most frequently performed American orchestral composers of his generation. His works have received over 600 public performances by more than 200 orchestras, and tens of thousands of broadcasts by classical radio stations around the United States and abroad. He

has conducted recordings of his music with three of the world's finest orchestras: the London Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Boyer's major work *Ellis Island: The Dream of America*, for actors and orchestra, has become one of the most-performed American orchestral works of the last 15 years, with over 250 performances by more than 100 orchestras since its 2002 premiere.

Boyer has received commissions from several of the most prestigious American institutions and ensembles, including the Kennedy Center for the National Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra for the Boston Pops, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra for the Cincinnati Pops, the Pacific Symphony, and "The President's Own" United States Marine Band, which commissioned and premiered a fanfare for the Inauguration of President Joe Biden. Other orchestras which have performed Boyer's music include the Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Houston Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Nashville Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, and Phoenix Symphony. He served as Composer-in-Residence of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra and the Pasadena Symphony.

In addition to his work for the concert hall, Boyer is active in the film and television music industry. He has contributed orchestrations (orchestral arrangements) to more than 35 feature film scores from all the major movie studios, for leading Hollywood composers including James Newton Howard (*Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them 1, 2 & 3*, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay—Part 2*, *The Huntsman: Winter's War*, *Red Sparrow*, *The Nutcracker and the Four Realms*), Michael Giacchino (*Jurassic World*, *Inside Out*, *Star Trek*, *Up*, *Cars 2*, *Mission: Impossible III*, *Super 8*), Thomas Newman (*Finding Dory*, the James Bond film *Skyfall*), the late James Horner (*The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Living in the Age of Airplanes*), Alan Menken (*Mirror*

Mirror), Mark Isham (*Dolphin Tale*, *The Conspirator*), Heitor Pereira (*Minions*), Harry Gregson-Williams (*Arthur Christmas*), and Aaron Zigman (*Wakefield*, *The War With Grandpa*). Boyer also was an orchestrator for *Pixar in Concert*, which has been performed by major orchestras worldwide, and for *Titanic Live* (Horner). Boyer has arranged music for two Academy Awards (Oscars) telecasts, and composed music for The History Channel. His music has appeared in documentary films, short films, and — through the A&E Networks Production Music Library — a wide variety of television programs.

Boyer was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1970, and began composing at the age of 15. His first major composition was a large-scale Requiem Mass in memory of his grandmother, composed while only a teenager. He was named to the first All-USA College Academic Team, comprised of “the 20 best and brightest college students in the nation,” by *USA TODAY* in 1990. Boyer holds degrees from Rhode Island College (B.A.), which awarded him an honorary doctorate in 2004, and The Hartt School at the University of Hartford (M.M., D.M.A.), which named him Alumnus of the Year in 2002. He also studied privately with John Corigliano, and completed the Film and Television Scoring program at the USC Thornton School of Music, where his teachers included the late Elmer Bernstein. Boyer holds the Helen M. Smith Chair in Music at Claremont Graduate University. He resides in Altadena, in the San Gabriel Foothills just north of Los Angeles.

A commission for a first symphony is a special opportunity for any composer. I have been fortunate to receive numerous commissions for orchestral works, many of which have focused on historical or mythological subjects, or were composed to celebrate specific occasions. While each of these projects has been creatively fulfilling, for several years I have contemplated the challenge of creating a purely musical symphonic work on a somewhat large scale, and this commissioning project provided that opportunity.

For any contemporary composer, the decision to title a work “symphony” is a rather daunting one, given the rich and diverse legacy of masterworks in this genre. That decision also raises a number of questions which must be answered: How long a work? In how many movements? Should it be “program music” or “absolute music”? Should the work’s structure and style be based, to some extent, on the symphonies of the standard repertoire? And if so, *which* symphonies, from which era(s), and *which* features of those works should serve as models? Having never before undertaken a symphony, this was my first time confronting these questions. In grappling with them, I realized that any attempt to compose a work meriting comparison with the symphonic masters was doomed to failure, and it would be unrealistic to set the bar that high for myself. However, I did wish to make an attempt at the genre.

The freedom from any specific program offered by this commission led me to decide that I would not impose any particular plan on the work from the outset, but

would simply start composing material and see where it led me. I did feel that there were two common elements of past symphonies which I wanted to include: a *scherzo* and a lyrical slow movement. Months of sketching led me to an initial sense that the work would be in four movements, and I composed extensive material that was intended for a fourth finale movement. However, as I continued work on the *Adagio* third movement, its length grew, and I realized that a final variation of its theme was leading to a grand conclusion, making a separate final movement superfluous. So I discarded the incomplete finale material, and settled on a three-movement plan.

The structure of the first movement, “Prelude,” contains aspects of both arch form and variation form (and does not employ the sonata form characteristic of first movements of many classical symphonies). This movement is based primarily on a single theme, which is introduced immediately by the second violins. This eight-bar *andante* theme is modal (mixolydian) in character, and has a certain tonal ambiguity. The first section of the movement is a *fugato*, with subsequent entrances of the theme occurring in the first violins, cellos, and woodwinds. The theme contains a built-in modulation, with the result that each subsequent entrance is pitched a fourth higher than the previous (B-E-A-D-G). The first section gradually reaches a climax, and the second section begins with a doubling of the tempo, and new fanfare-like material played by the brass. In this section, the main theme is developed, now at the double tempo, and sometimes in canon; the fanfare material also recurs. This leads to a dissonant climax and a sudden pause, out of which the cellos emerge playing a single note. Then begins the third and final section, marked to be “suddenly more serene.” Violas and harp introduce a gentle accompanying figure, then violins play further variants of the main theme in canon, again in modal harmony. Woodwinds take up the accompanying figure, and a solo horn plays the full theme over sustained strings to end the movement.

The second movement is entitled “Scherzo/Dance,” which is descriptive of its character. Here I wanted to combine the energy, phrasing and structure of a classical European *scherzo* with more “American-sounding,” unusual rhythmic patterns. Whereas the phrasing of a Beethovenian *scherzo* typically consists of twelve fast notes (3+3+3+3), my rhythmic pattern employs *thirteen* fast notes (3+3+3+2+2). Though the “extra” note creates an asymmetry, the larger groupings of phrases are indeed symmetrical, and the music clearly has a dance-like quality. (As I was composing this, I continually wondered, “Can I make thirteen groove?” I hope the answer is yes.) The movement employs a classical “scherzo–trio–scherzo” structure, in which the trio is somewhat slower and more lyrical. Long stretches of *tutti* playing here test the players’ stamina, particularly of the winds and brass.

Like the first movement, the third movement, by far the longest of the three, is based primarily on a single theme: a rather long lyrical melody first stated by horns,

bassoon, and cellos. This theme was the very first music I composed when I began sketching the symphony. In subsequent statements, more instruments take up the theme, and it grows in intensity. The next section explores darker harmonic colors, and solo woodwinds offer commentaries on the theme. A series of repetitions of a decorated theme fragment leads to a *tutti* climax, and a brief dialogue for trumpet and horn. Then the strings, divided into fourteen parts including a solo quartet, play the entire theme, joined by harp and celesta. After a soft pause, a new accompanying figure begins in clarinets and harp, growing in just a few bars to include the full orchestra. In this final section, the tempo is still slow, but the rapid accompanying notes (six per beat) make it *feel* fast. The formerly gentle theme is now exclaimed joyfully, first by violins and horns, and then by the full orchestra, leading to a declamatory, affirmative ending.

I have dedicated this score to the memory of Leonard Bernstein, whose work has had a profound influence on me in countless ways.

- Notes by Peter Boyer

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