

October 16, 2022 - Classic Wines in New Bottles

Program notes by J. Michael Allsen

This concert, featuring the strings of the Arizona Philharmonic, is titled “Classic Wines in New Bottles,” and the bookends of the program are a pair of works in which a composer of one era interprets the music of an earlier era. In his *Capriol Suite*, Peter Warlock puts a distinctly 20th-century spin on several dance tunes of the late 16th century; and in the *Holberg Suite*, a 19th-century Romantic, Edvard Grieg, interprets dance forms of the early 18th-century Baroque. Following the Warlock suite, Myroslav Skoryk’s moving *Melody* is offered here in solidarity with Ukrainian people. Arizona Philharmonic concertmaster Katie McLin then performs Bach’s *Violin Concerto No. 2*. After intermission we present *Strum*, by the dynamic young American composer Jesse Montgomery.

Peter Warlock (1894-1930) *Capriol Suite*

Warlock composed this work as a piano duet in 1926, and later created versions for string orchestra (1926) and full orchestra (1928). He conducted the full orchestra version in its first performance in August 1929, at one of London’s “Proms” concerts. Duration 11:00.

Peter Warlock was the pseudonym—and alter ego—of Philip Heseltine, who was born into a wealthy British family. Expected to follow the family business as a stockbroker, Heseltine instead put together a varied career as a composer, music journalist and historian, and editor. The “Warlock” pseudonym, which he used almost exclusively for his compositions and writing from 1916 onwards, has sometimes been connected to a supposed interest in the occult, but Heseltine’s lifestyle also became more unorthodox, bohemian and ultimately self-destructive as he took on the Warlock persona. As an editor, he was responsible for publishing a great deal of unknown vocal music from the English Renaissance, and he also edited a widely-circulated British music journal, *The Sackbut*...though eventually lost this position, likely because of his combative musical criticism.



His writings also include biographies of his friend and mentor Frederick Delius and the Italian composer Carlo Gesualdo, as well as several books and articles on early music. Warlock's compositions were primarily vocal, with over 80 songs and some 30 choral works and pieces of vocal chamber music. By 1930, Warlock had few professional prospects, and was deeply depressed. He died at age 36, probably by suicide.

Warlock's best-known work today is one of his few instrumental pieces, the *Capriol Suite*. The name takes a bit of explanation. Warlock was fascinated by early music, and in 1925, dance historian Cyril Beaumont published an English translation of the 16th-century French dance manual *Orchésographie*. This 1589 book, written by an elderly French priest, Thionot Arbeau, was a how-to guide on all of the current dances. Like many instructional books of the time, it was written as a dialogue between a curious student and an all-knowing teacher. The omniscient expert is, of course, Arbeau himself, and the eager student, who asks all the right questions, is named Capriol. In the course of this book, Arbeau not only shows his student the steps to dozens of dances, he also helpfully provides Capriol with appropriate drum rhythms and dance tunes for most of the dances he describes. Incidentally, just like Peter Warlock, Thionot Arbeau is a pseudonym: the author's real name was Jehan Tabouret, and he rearranged the letters of his name into a *nom de plume*!

The six movements of the *Capriol Suite* are based upon Arbeau's sample tunes, which Warlock provides with sometimes surprising harmonizations that make them his own. The stately *Basse-Dance* that opens the set is a dance "full of virtue and decorum" Arbeau remembers from his youth, 50 years before. The *Pavan* is a dignified processional dance, and Arbeau actually provides a fully harmonized four-voice French song, *Belle qui tiens ma vie* (*Fair one, who holds my life*) as his musical example. Warlock retains the 16th-century harmonies, underlaid with a gently pulsing drum rhythm, but then repeats the tune, adding his own harmonic shadings. The *Tordion* that follows is a variant of the high-stepping *Galliard* that was one of the most popular dances of the 16th century. In *Bransles*, Warlock brings together several of Arbeau's tunes for some of the innumerable types of *Branle*: a vigorous circle dance. The calm *Pied-en-l'air* (*Foot in the air*) refers to one of Arbeau's standard dance moves. The wild closing movement, *Mattachins*, is a dance for young men with swords, who punctuate each phrase by clashing their weapons together.

Myroslav Skoryk (1938-2020)

Melody

This work was composed as part of a film score in 1982. Duration 4:00.

The late Myroslav Skoryk was one of Ukraine's leading contemporary composers. Born in Lviv, Skoryk spent most of his childhood in Siberia, where his parents were exiled by Soviet authorities after World War II. When his family was allowed to return to Ukraine in 1955, he studied at the Lviv Conservatory, and continued his studies at the Moscow Conservatory, where he was a student of Dmitri Kabalevsky. He spent over 20 years as an instructor at Ukraine's

National Music Academy in Kyiv. Skoryk's musical style was eclectic, drawing upon Ukrainian and many other folk styles, as well as bringing in influences from Western Jazz and Rock. He used this style in works ranging from piano miniatures to pieces for orchestra (including ten violin concertos), choral works, an opera (*Moses*, 2001), and nearly twenty film scores.

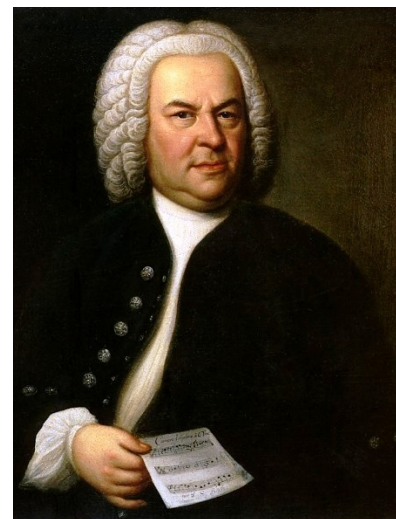


Skoryk wrote his most famous composition, the brief *Melody* (*Melody in A minor*) in 1982 for the film *Vysokyy pereval* (*The High Pass*). The film, set in western Ukraine in the years after the second world war, has a fairly typical Soviet political message, portraying Ukrainian nationalism as destructive and dangerous. Skoryk felt that his music could provide a more balanced emotional background. Ukrainians certainly seem to have understood this, and in the three decades since Ukraine formally declared its independence, Skoryk's *Melody* has become a patriotic symbol of the nation. And following the Russian invasion in February 2022, it has also been widely played around the world as a symbol of solidarity with Ukrainian people. The *Melody*, heard here in a version for string orchestra begins with a melancholy, folklike theme. This is developed in an agitated middle section, before a reprise of this theme, and a quiet conclusion that ends with a unison A.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Concerto No. 2 for Violin in E Major, BWV 1042

This concerto was probably composed between 1717 and 1723 at Cöthen. Duration 19:00.

One of Bach's most enjoyable positions was a six-year tenure (1717-1723) as the *Kapellmeister* (music director) at the Cöthen court of music-loving Prince Leopold von Anhalt-Cöthen. Leopold's musical establishment included a fine orchestra, and Bach was encouraged to create instrumental music in the latest style: at least half of the famous "Brandenburg" concertos were written for the Cöthen court, as well as his two surviving violin concertos, written for one of excellent soloists in Prince Leopold's orchestra.



Italians like Corelli and Vivaldi developed a concerto form that became the compositional blueprint for composers across Europe. The *Concerto in E Major*—the larger of

Bach's two violin concertos—follows the Italian plan, though Bach introduces a few innovations of his own. The opening *Allegro* is fairly typical, set as an alternation between relatively reserved writing for the soloist and *tutti* (“everyone”) repeating sections, known as *ritornellos* for the ensemble. However, the formal plan also bears some resemblance to contemporary opera arias: the opening music is repeated *verbatim* at the end, the two passages surrounding a long contrasting section in the center. Much of the *Adagio* is a series of free and lyrical variations above a repeating bass line. It is not a strict *chaconne* form, however, as there are several brief episodes where Bach dispenses with the bass altogether. The final movement (*Allegro assai*) is perhaps the most “Vivaldian” music of the concerto, with fairly strict alternation between solo and *tutti*, set in a sprightly *Gigue* rhythm.

Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)
Strum for String Orchestra

This work was initially composed in 2006 as a string quintet. Montgomery revised it as a work for string orchestra in 2012, and this version was premiered in Ann Arbor, Michigan in February of that year. Duration 7:00.

Composer and violinist Jessie Montgomery grew up on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and credits the neighborhood's unique artistic atmosphere and the musical, artistic, and activist activities of her own family for fostering a career that “merges composing, performance, education, and advocacy.” After her musical studies at the Third Street Music School Settlement, the Juilliard School and Princeton University, Montgomery remains active both as a performer and composer. As a violinist, she has performed with the PUBLIQuartet, the Providence Quartet, the Catalyst Quartet, the Silkroad Ensemble, the Sphinx Virtuosi, and her own ensemble. Since she was a teenager, Montgomery has been involved with the Sphinx Organization, devoted to fostering diversity in classical music performance, and which specifically promotes the development of young African-American and Latinx string players. She has gained an equally impressive number of credits as a composer, with commissions for the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Albany Symphony Orchestra, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and others.



Like many of her works, *Strum* has gone through a process of revision in several versions. Initially composed in 2006 as a string quintet, it was recast as a string quartet two years later. She refers to the 2012 string orchestra piece heard here as the “final version.” She provides the following description of the piece:

“Within *Strum* I utilized texture motives, layers of rhythmic or harmonic ostinati that string together to form a bed of sound for melodies to weave in and out. The strumming pizzicato serves as a texture motive and the primary driving rhythmic underpinning of the piece. Drawing on American folk idioms and the spirit of dance and movement, the piece has a kind of narrative that begins with fleeting nostalgia and transforms into ecstatic celebration.”

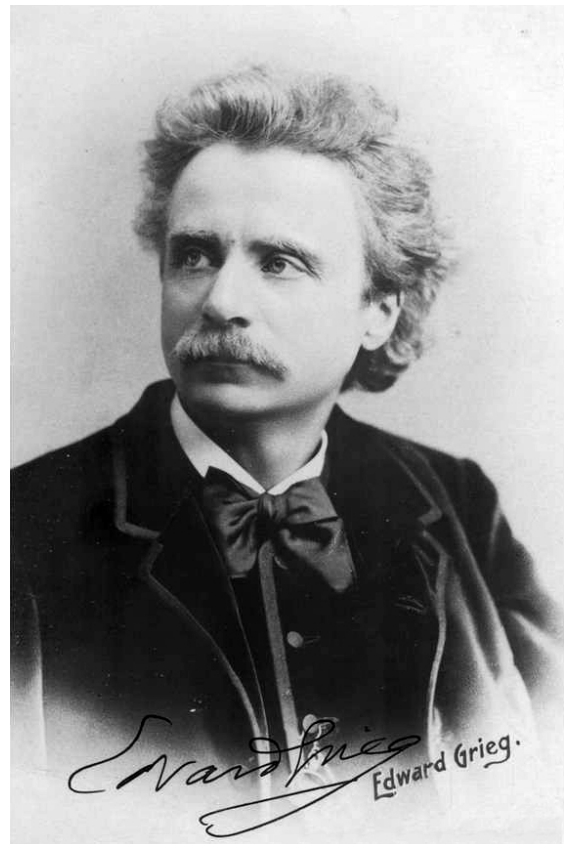
Strum begins quietly, with an ostinato (a repeating figure) played *pizzicato* by a single violin, supporting a more lyrical idea played by solo cello and then with violin. There are several changes of character, beginning with a more forceful dancelike idea. This is eventually combined with the cello theme, and the work slows briefly for a wistful cello solo. The extended closing section returns to the “spirit of dance,” with an angular theme set in shifting meters. The main theme makes one last appearance before the music accelerates into a wild conclusion.

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

From Holberg’s Time, Suite in Old Style, Op. 40

Grieg composed this work in 1884 for piano alone. In 1885, he orchestrated the suite, scoring it for string orchestra, and introduced it at concerts he conducted in Berlin. Duration 21:00.

Ludwig Holberg (1684-1754), a Dane, was the first great Scandinavian literary figure to gain attention throughout Europe. His witty plays were translated into most European languages, and admiring contemporaries nicknamed him the “Molière of the North.” Both Denmark and Norway claimed him as the forefather of their national literatures. (Holberg in fact spent some of his career in Grieg’s hometown, Bergen.) In 1884, the Norwegian government sponsored a series of lavish celebrations to mark the bicentennial of Holberg’s birth. Grieg responded to the bicentennial commission with two works. The first was a rather conventional *Holberg Kantate* for men’s chorus and baritone soloist. This was performed outdoors on December 3, 1884—in predictably foul weather—before the unveiling of a statue of Holberg in Bergen. The statue still stands in Bergen’s town square, but Grieg’s cantata was quickly forgotten, and Grieg himself withdrew it shortly afterwards. But the other Holberg piece proved to be more durable. For a concert that evening—indoors this



time—Grieg had produced a suite of piano pieces in “the old style” —the style of Holberg’s own time, modeled on the dance suites of Bach and other Baroque composers. Though Grieg dismissed it as a “*peruque* piece,” this set has a witty character that perfectly accords with the dry humor of Holberg’s plays. (A *peruque* was a particularly extravagant 18th-century powdered wig.)

A few months later, Grieg wrote to a friend to say that he had completed a string orchestra version of the “poor Holberg suite,” concluding that “it may sound quite good.” Orchestrating a piano piece is sometimes a tricky business, but Grieg managed it beautifully. The opening *Prelude* is probably the most “pianistic” of the five movements, but Grieg transformed it from an improvisatory-style keyboard piece to a movement that has the drive and energy of a Baroque concerto movement. Most of the remaining movements are based upon the standard dances of the Baroque dance suite. The *Sarabande*—considered a fairly risqué dance in Holberg’s time—is here transformed into a tranquil interlude, with attractive contrasting music for solo strings. The *Gavotte* was among the most popular of Baroque dances—a lively duple-meter dance with strong accents—and Grieg captures its spirit perfectly. For contrast, he inserts a rustic *Musette*, imitating the sound of a country bagpipe. The longest section of the *Holberg Suite* is a lovely *Air* that evokes the unhurried development of Bach’s slow movements. The closing movement is a *Rigaudon*, a spirited Baroque dance of peasant origins. Grieg inserts a brief moment of seriousness at the center, but closes with a reprise the brisk *Rigaudon* theme.

PROGRAM

PETER WARLOCK

Capriol Suite

Basse-Dance

Pavan

Tordion

Bransles

Pied-en-l’air

Mattachins

MYROSLAV SKORYK

Melody

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Concerto No. 2 for Violin in E Major, BWV 1042

Allegro

Adagio

Allegro assai

INTERMISSION

JESSIE MONTGOMERY

Strum for String Orchestra

EDVARD GRIEG

From Holberg's Time, Suite in Old Style, Op. 40

Prelude

Sarabande

Gavotte and Musette

Air

Rigaudon

BIOGRAPHIES

PETER BAY - conductor

Peter Bay became Music Director and Conductor of the Austin Symphony Orchestra in 1998 and is also Conductor of the Big Sky Festival Orchestra (MT) and Arizona Philharmonic.

Maestro Bay has appeared with over eighty different orchestras including the National, Chicago, St. Louis, Houston, Dallas, Baltimore, New Jersey, North Carolina, San Antonio, Tucson, West Virginia, Colorado, Hawaii, Sarasota, Fort Worth, Bochum (Germany), Carinthian (Austria), Lithuanian National, and Ecuador National Symphonies, the Minnesota and Algarve (Portugal) Orchestras, the Louisiana, Buffalo, Arizona, Rhode Island and Boca del Rio (Mexico)



Philharmonics, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Eastman (Postcard from Morocco) and Aspen (The Ballad of Baby Doe) Opera Theaters, and the Theater Chamber Players of the Kennedy Center. Summer music festival appearances have included Aspen and Music in the Mountains (CO), Grant Park and Ravinia (IL), Round Top (TX), OK Mozart (OK) and Skaneateles (NY). In June 2018 he led fully staged performances of Leonard Bernstein's Mass as part of the Bernstein100Austin celebration.

Peter is the primary conductor for Ballet Austin. For Austin Opera he has conducted *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *La Traviata*, *Turandot*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *La Bohème*.

Other positions held by Bay have included Music Director of the Erie Philharmonic,

Annapolis Symphony Orchestra, Breckenridge Music Festival (CO), Britt Festival Orchestra (OR), Hot Springs Music Festival (AR), and posts with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and Richmond Symphony. Bay and the ASO with pianist Anton Nel released a critically acclaimed Bridge CD of Edward Burlingame Hill's music. With the Richmond Symphony he recorded the U.S. premiere of Britten's *The Sword in the Stone* for Opus One Records, and with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Voices, featuring the percussion ensemble NEXUS. He is conductor for Christopher Cross' *Secret Ladder* album and Hanan Townshend's soundtrack to the 2016 movie *The Vessel*.

In 1994, he was one of two conductors selected to participate in the Leonard Bernstein American Conductors Program. He was the first prize winner of the 1980 Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Young Conductors Competition and a prize winner of the 1987 Leopold Stokowski Competition sponsored by the American Symphony Orchestra. In July 2012 and January 2020, he appeared in *Solo Symphony*, a choreographic work created for him by Allison Orr of Forklift Danceworks, and was inducted into the Austin Arts Hall of Fame in May 2016.

KATHERINE McLIN - Violinist

Katherin Mc Lin enjoys an extremely varied and prolific performing career as a concerto soloist, recitalist, and chamber and orchestral musician. Since her debut with the Oregon Symphony at the age of 15, she has made well over 100 appearances as soloist with orchestras across the country on repertoire spanning three centuries, including the recent world premiere performance of Lera Auerbach's *Twofold Dreams*, a double concerto for violin and piano with the composer at the piano. Engagements in 2022 include Beethoven Triple Concerto (ProMusica Chamber Orchestra, OH), Brahms Violin Concerto (West Valley Symphony Orchestra, AZ), Mozart Concerto No. 4 (Uruguay National Symphony), and Piazzolla *Four Seasons* (PCO).

As a member of the McLin/Campbell Duo with pianist Andrew Campbell and frequent chamber music collaborator with colleagues around the world, Katherine McLin performs extensively throughout the United States and abroad. She is a frequent guest artist at summer chamber music festivals, appearing in recent years at the Interharmony Music Festival



(Italy), Saarbarg Chamber Music Festival (Germany), Festival of the Black Hills (SD), Chintimini Festival (OR), and Rocky Ridge Music Festival (CO), to name a few. She has also been a featured performer in numerous national and international conferences.

Since 2007, Katherine McLin has held the position of Concertmaster of the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra in Columbus, Ohio, with Music Director David Danzmayr (who also serves as Music Director of the Oregon Symphony) and Creative Partner and Principal Guest Artist concert violinist Vadim Gluzman. With 37 core musicians commuting from sixteen states, including current or former principals from orchestras such as the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, San Antonio, Grant Park, and Columbus Symphony Orchestras, ProMusica maintains a deep commitment to the creation of and championing of new works. Additionally, she has served as Concertmaster of the Brevard Music Festival Orchestra, the Michigan Sinfonietta, and the Aspen Sinfonia Orchestra, as well as Principal Second Violin of the Michigan Opera Theater Orchestra.

Katherine McLin appears on 19 compact disc recordings under the Summit, Centaur, and Opus One labels. Her live and recorded performances have been broadcast on NPR's Performance Today, NYC's WQXR, and local television and radio stations throughout the country.

A committed and passionate teacher, Katherine McLin is in her 25th year as Professor of Violin at Arizona State University. She was awarded the Evelyn Smith Professorship in Music at ASU in 2016, an endowed position that recognizes a faculty member who demonstrates outstanding leadership in their field. In 2004, she was awarded the Distinguished Teacher Award for the College of Fine Arts at ASU, chosen from over 170 faculty, and was a finalist for the 2007 university-wide ASU Professor of the Year award.

Katherine McLin received her doctorate in violin performance from the University of Michigan as a student of Paul Kantor. She holds additional performance degrees from Indiana University and Oberlin Conservatory, and for three years was an orchestral fellowship recipient at the Aspen Music Festival. Her former teachers include Franco Gulli, Josef Gingold, and Kathleen Winkler. She plays on a 1734 Sanctus Seraphin violin, on loan from an anonymous foundation.



MUSICIANS

Violin I

Katherine McLin, *Concertmaster*
Bonnie Teplik, *Associate Concertmaster*
Priscilla Benitez
Jisu Choi
Michael DiBarry
Spencer Ekenes

Allison Parks

Violin II

Luke Hill, *Principal*

Kristin Garson, *Associate Principal*

Cristina Alasu

Claire Gordon

Meghan Ruel

Viola

Jacquelyn Schwandt, *Principal*

Elizabeth Hanson

Samara Humbert-Hughes

Emma Strub

Grace Wills

Cello

Ruth Wenger, *Principal*

Thomas D. Hoisch

Barbara Metz

Claudia Vanderschraaf

Contrabass

Nathaniel de la Cruz, *Principal*

Nathan Benitez

Harpsichord

Chuck Sedgwick