



AMERICAN CLASSICS



Peter
BOYER

Symphony No. 1

Silver Fanfare

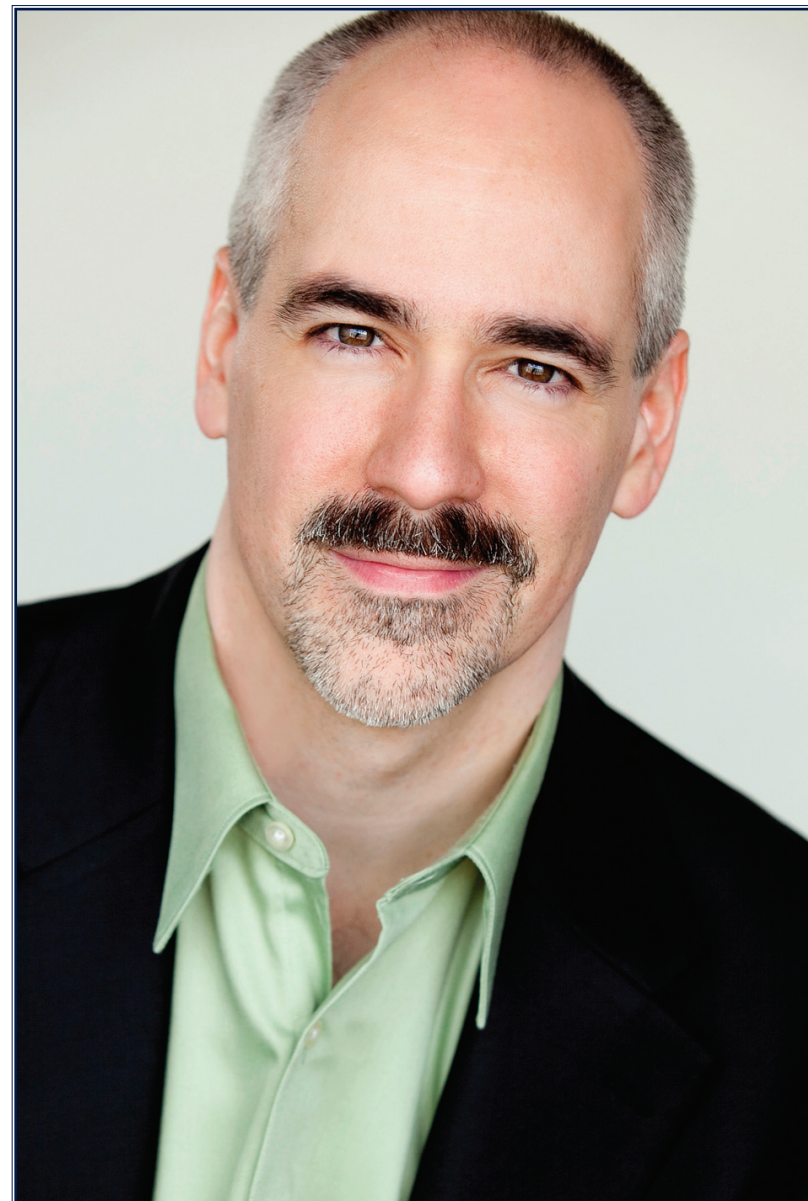
Festivities

Three Olympians

Celebration Overture

**London Philharmonic
Orchestra**

Peter Boyer



Peter Boyer (b. 1970)

Silver Fanfare • Festivities • Three Olympians • Celebration Overture • Symphony No. 1

The five works included on this recording represent a cross-section of my orchestral music composed over a period of some 15 years, from one of my earliest commissions to my most recent. I have been fortunate to receive many opportunities to compose for the orchestra, and the works included here reflect both the varied circumstances of their commissions, and my ongoing interest in the orchestral medium. Often I have received invitations to compose music for celebratory concerts, and three of the works included here were created for such occasions.

Silver Fanfare was composed as the first movement of the six-movement work *On Music's Wings*, which was commissioned for the 25th anniversary season (2003-04) of the Pacific Symphony, in Orange County, California. The "silver" of its title refers to the silver anniversary of that orchestra. Though the 30-minute *On Music's Wings* calls for vocal soloists and choirs in addition to the orchestra, *Silver Fanfare* is for orchestra alone, and was designed as a virtuoso orchestral "curtain-raiser" which could be performed separately. Carl St.Clair conducted its première with the Pacific Symphony in Costa Mesa, California on June 13th, 2004.

Festivities was commissioned by conductor Gerard Schwarz and the Eastern Music Festival in celebration of its 50th anniversary season in 2011. I'd been a great admirer of Mr. Schwarz's work for many years, and some of my earliest exposure to many works of the American orchestral repertoire came about through the landmark recordings he conducted with the Seattle Symphony. As such, I was delighted to receive his invitation to be one of five American composers to write short works for this anniversary. Focusing on the idea of a festival brought to mind the term "festivity," which is defined as "the celebration of something in a joyful and exuberant way" – an apt description for this work. Gerard Schwarz conducted its première with the Eastern Festival Orchestra in Greensboro, North Carolina on July 9th, 2011.

The first of the works on this recording to be composed, **Celebration Overture** was one of my earliest orchestral commissions, for the inaugural season of the Henry Mancini Institute, a professional training program for outstanding young musicians, which at that time was a summer institute in the Los Angeles area. I conducted its première with the Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra in Long Beach, California on August 16th, 1997. This was the first of my works to be played by one of the major American orchestras, with the Dallas Symphony's January 2002 performance, for which I made some revisions to the work.

A number of my works have reflected my interests in mythology and history, and **Three Olympians** for string orchestra is one. It was commissioned by the Conductors Institute, Harold Farberman, Artistic Director, for performance by its 30-plus conductors at Bard College in the summer of 2000. As an alumnus of the Conductors Institute myself, I was delighted at this invitation. The request was for a work that had three contrasting movements or sections, which would call for different aspects of technique from the conductors.

The word "Olympians" in the title is not to be understood in the modern-day "athletic" sense of the word, but in the ancient Greek sense: an Olympian was a resident of Olympus, the home of the Greek gods. The three which inspired the music in this case – Apollo, Aphrodite, and Ares – were all children of Zeus, but each had a different mother. Apollo is the most multi-faceted of these three, the god of reason and intelligence, music, prophecy, medicine, and the sun. For me, Apollo meant "classical" harmony and phrasing, and a great deal of energy. Aphrodite was the goddess of love and beauty, which to me clearly called for lyrical melody. Ares was the god of war, which to me translated as relentless rhythm, as well as a chance to exploit some of the more menacing effects of which strings are capable.

Symphony No. 1

Having received numerous orchestral commissions for works celebrating specific occasions or dealing with historical subjects, I had long contemplated undertaking a symphony – a rather daunting challenge for any contemporary composer. Specifically, I was interested in attempting a non-programmatic, multi-movement symphony. Commissions of this nature are rare, so I was pleased when the Pasadena Symphony Association offered me this opportunity, along with a residency for the 2012-13 season.

As this invitation offered me freedom from any particular program or structure, I began composing with no pre-conceived formal plan, but simply sketched material to see where it would lead 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. During the period of sketching, I contemplated a four-movement form, but eventually settled on a three-movement structure. Many twentieth-century composers wrote three-movement symphonies, including Sibelius, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, Britten, and Hanson; but in particular the first symphonies of Copland (his *Symphony for Organ and Orchestra* of 1924) and Bernstein (his *Jeremiah* Symphony of 1942) were of interest to me.

The structure of the first movement, *Prelude*, contains aspects of both arch form and variation form (rather than 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. 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 second section doubles the tempo of the first, and develops the theme in various ways, leading to a dissonant climax, out of which the cellos emerge playing a single note. This leads to the third and final section, in which the theme is developed further, in a more serene manner.

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. The movement employs a classical "scherzo–trio–scherzo" structure, in which the trio is somewhat slower and more lyrical.

The third movement, by far the longest of the three, is based primarily on a single theme, a long lyrical melody first stated by horns, bassoon, and cellos. 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 quiet 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.

This commission was funded by members of the Board of Trustees of Claremont Graduate University: Priscilla and Ferdinand Fernandez, Michael J. Johnston, Michael Rossi, and Megan Scott-Kakures. Additional project funding was provided by Donald P. and Caroline Baker. It was premiered by the Pasadena Symphony under my direction on April 27th, 2013. I have dedicated this work to the memory of Leonard Bernstein, whose work has had a profound influence on me in countless ways. I am humbled and grateful that the Bernstein family has accepted this dedication.

Peter Boyer

London Philharmonic Orchestra



Recognized today as one of the finest orchestras on the international stage, the London Philharmonic Orchestra was founded in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham. Since then, its Principal Conductors have included Sir Adrian Boult, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt and Kurt Masur. In 2007 Vladimir Jurowski became the Orchestra's Principal Conductor and in 2008 Yannick Nézet-Séguin was appointed Principal Guest Conductor.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra has been performing at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall since it opened in 1951, becoming Resident Orchestra in 1992. It also has flourishing residencies in Brighton and Eastbourne, and performs regularly around the UK. Each summer it plays for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, where it has been Resident Symphony Orchestra for 50 years. The Orchestra also regularly tours abroad: highlights of the 2013-14 season include visits to the USA, Romania, Austria, Germany, Slovenia, Belgium, France and Spain.

In summer 2012 the London Philharmonic Orchestra performed as part of The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant on the River Thames, and was also chosen to record all the world's national anthems for the London 2012 Olympics. The Orchestra broadcasts regularly on television and radio, and has recorded soundtracks for numerous blockbuster films including *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. It has made many distinguished recordings over the last eight decades and in 2005 began releasing live, studio and archive recordings on its own CD label.

For more information, please visit www.lpo.org.uk.

Peter Boyer

Peter Boyer is one of the most frequently performed American orchestral composers of his generation, with over 300 performances of his works by more than 100 orchestras. 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. His music has received numerous national broadcasts in the U.S. and abroad, and he has garnered seven national awards for his work.

Conductor Keith Lockhart chose Boyer for the Boston Pops 125th anniversary commission honoring the legacy of John, Robert, and Ted Kennedy. The premiere of Boyer's *Kennedy Brothers* in 2010, narrated by Robert De Niro, Morgan Freeman, and Ed Harris, was attended by members of the Kennedy family, and received extensive media attention. The Boston Pops also telecast the work, performed it at the Tanglewood Music Festival with narrator Alec Baldwin, and released its recording.

Orchestras which have performed Boyer's music include the Dallas Symphony, Nashville Symphony, Pacific Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Kansas City Symphony, Virginia Symphony, and Hartford Symphony, among many others. In recent seasons, Boyer has served as Composer-in-Residence of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra (2010-11) and the Pasadena Symphony (2012-13).

Boyer's major work *Ellis Island: The Dream of America* for actors and orchestra, which celebrates the historic American immigrant experience, has been his most successful composition to date. Premiered in 2002, the work has received over 150 live performances by more than 60 orchestras, making it one of the most-performed American orchestral works of the last decade. Boyer's recording of this work on the Naxos label (8.559246) was nominated for a GRAMMY® Award for Best Classical Contemporary Composition.

In addition to his work for the concert hall, Boyer is active in the film and television music industry. He has contributed orchestrations to more than 20 film scores by top Hollywood composers, including Thomas Newman, James Horner, Michael Giacchino, Alan Menken, Mark Isham, and Harry Gregson-Williams. Boyer has twice arranged music for the Academy Awards telecasts, and composed music for The History Channel.

Boyer was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1970. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Rhode Island College, and Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from The Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford. He then studied privately with composer John Corigliano in New York, and moved to Los Angeles to study film and TV scoring at the USC Thornton School of Music, where his teachers included the late Elmer Bernstein. Boyer has taught since 1996 at Claremont Graduate University, where he holds the Helen M. Smith Chair in Music.

For more information, please visit www.PropulsiveMusic.com.

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including funding provided by the Helen M. Smith Chair in Music.
Special thanks to Gregory Cox, Ursula Kleinecke-Boyer, and Stephen Boyer.**

Peter Boyer conducting
the London Philharmonic Orchestra
at Abbey Road Studios

Photo: Benjamin Ealovega



Peter
BOYER
(b. 1970)

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|---|--|-------|
| 1 | Silver Fanfare (2004) for orchestra | 4:11 |
| 2 | Festivities (2011) for orchestra | 5:55 |
| | Three Olympians (2000)
for string orchestra | 14:18 |
| 3 | I. Apollo | 4:59 |
| 4 | II. Aphrodite | 5:37 |
| 5 | III. Ares | 3:42 |
| 6 | Celebration Overture
(1997, rev. 2001) for orchestra | 6:40 |
| | Symphony No. 1 (2012-13)
for orchestra | 24:11 |
| 7 | I. Prelude | 6:54 |
| 8 | II. Scherzo/Dance | 6:08 |
| 9 | III. Adagio | 11:09 |

London Philharmonic Orchestra

Guest Leader: Simon Blendis

Peter Boyer

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A more detailed version of the booklet notes
can be accessed at www.naxos.com/notes/559769.htm

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Peter Boyer is one of the most frequently performed American orchestral composers of his generation, widely admired not least for his GRAMMY®-nominated *Ellis Island: The Dream of America* (Naxos 8.559246). The composer writes, “The five works included on this recording represent a cross-section of my orchestral music. *Three Olympians* reflects my interest in mythology and history. Often I have received invitations to compose music for celebratory concerts, and three of the works included here – *Silver Fanfare*, *Festivities* and *Celebration Overture* – were created for such occasions.” *Symphony No. 1* is a lyrical and rhythmically charged work, dedicated to the memory of Leonard Bernstein.

www.naxos.com

Playing
Time:
55:14