



SHEPHERD

CURRIER

ROUSE

BUNCH

BARBER

ASPECTS OF AMERICA

Oregon Symphony
Carlos Kalmar

ASPECTS OF AMERICA

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Total playing time: 75.26

Oregon Symphony

Conducted by **Carlos Kalmar**



Sean Shepherd (b. 1979)

Magiya (Magic)

“An exciting composer of the new American generation” (*The New York Times*), Sean Shepherd has quickly gained admiration and return engagements with major ensembles and performers across the U.S. and

Europe. From 2011–2013, he served two terms as the Daniel R. Lewis Composer Fellow of the Cleveland Orchestra. In recent years, Shepherd’s music has also been performed by the New York Philharmonic; the National, BBC, and New World symphony orchestras; and leading European ensembles, including Ensemble intercontemporain, the Scharoun Ensemble Berlin, the AskolSchönberg Ensemble, and the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group.

“In anticipation of my new piece for the National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America in its inaugural season and tour with the Russian conductor Valery Gergiev, my thoughts naturally drifted eastwards,” writes Shepherd in his program notes for *Magiya*. “In writing a piece to precede two pillars of the Russian repertoire, and to be performed also in cities in Russia, I immediately thought of so much music that I adore

in the great tradition of the Russian overture—from those of Glinka’s *Ruslan and Lyudmila* and Tchaikovsky’s *Romeo and Juliet* through those of Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, and many of the 20th century, including Shostakovich’s *Festive Overture*. I also find myself drawn to a specifically Russian sense of magic—or *magiya*—in the stories, folklore, and literature (old and new) of the country, a kind that often gets no explanation or justification; a ‘normal,’ everyday magic. When these tales find their way to the stage (as, for example, in Rimsky-Korsakov’s *The Golden Cockerel* and Stravinsky’s *Petrushka*), some of the most colorful and most exotic—and some of my favorite—music of the age is the result.

“*Magiya* is a celebration of a wonderful new orchestra and an exciting tour and is a humble nod to a brilliant musical tradition.”



Sebastian Currier (b. 1959)

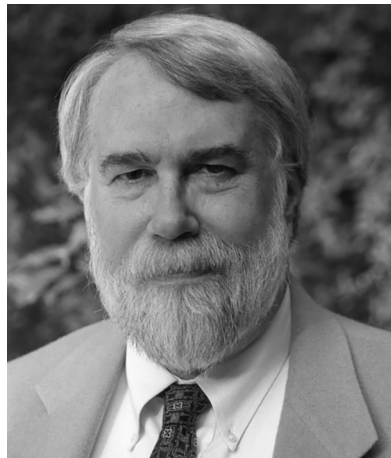
Microsymph

Heralded as “a distinctive voice” by *The New York Times*, Sebastian Currier’s music has been performed at major venues worldwide by acclaimed artists and orchestras, including Anne-Sophie Mutter, the Berlin Philharmonic, the

New York Philharmonic, and the Kronos Quartet.

In his program notes, Currier writes, “*Microsymph* is a large-scale five movement symphony that has been squeezed into only ten minutes. The result is a frantically paced, restless, quick-changing kaleidoscope of five highly compressed movements which are built from a whirl of diverse materials into an eclectic amalgam of ceaselessly changing sounds, colors, and ideas. [In] the first movement, *quickchange* . . . one idea races to the next. The *minute waltz* is as much about the minute as it is about the waltz . . . there are two layers: one a musical representation of the inner workings of a clock, the other a waltz. Though the *adagio* is only four minutes long, it seems truly expansive within the context of the other movements . . . The fourth movement,

nanoscherzo, is composed of layering similar to the *minute waltz* and the last movement, *kaleidoscope*, parodies the idea of a cyclic symphony, where themes from previous movements return, here increasing the feeling of compressed time. ”



Christopher Rouse (b. 1949)

Supplica (Supplication)

Pulitzer prize-winning composer Christopher Rouse is considered one of the most important and talented American composers working today. Currently a member of the composition faculty at Juilliard, Rouse

recently completed a three-year composer residency with the New York Philharmonic.

In an interview, Rouse once stated, “I’m interested in writing music that grips people and that won’t let them go. That’s why I never have movement breaks, in pieces with multiple movements; I always keep the music going, because I don’t want to let them go. But the first thing I need to do is get their attention and then, I hope, take them on a journey in sound that they find is emotionally appealing to them, or at least meaningful.”

If you have heard Rouse’s music before, you may be surprised by *Supplica*. This work reveals an intimate glimpse into a distinctly different facet of Rouse the composer. It features a stripped-down orchestra, absent winds and the huge percussion battery often present in

Rouse's orchestral music. In the above quote, Rouse talks about capturing the audience's attention with the opening notes. With his more extroverted pieces, Rouse accomplishes this through extremes of volume, assertive rhythms featuring percussion and brass, and abrupt, almost violent juxtapositions.

Supplica departs from this approach; instead, Rouse draws us in through introspection and reflection, using hushed dynamics and slow-moving harmonies. In his own program notes, Rouse's remarks about the genesis of *Supplica* are deliberately opaque: "The title means, perhaps unsurprisingly, 'supplication' in Italian," he writes. "There is no doubt in my mind that this work has a strong relationship to my *Fourth Symphony*, completed earlier in 2013 . . . Both were works I felt an inner compulsion to write, but both also possess meanings for me that must

remain personal. This certainly does not mean that either piece is intended to be 'impersonal' – rather that what I hope will be heard as both an intimate and an impassioned communication in sound must mean to each listener what it will, without further intercession or guidance from me."



Kenji Bunch (b.1973)

Aspects of an Elephant

Portland native composer/performer Kenji Bunch has been hailed by *The New York Times* as "A composer to watch." Bunch's music, which combines vernacular American influences with techniques from his classical training

as a violist, blends wit, exuberance, lyricism, unpredictable stylistic infusions, and exquisite craftsmanship to create a new American musical vocabulary.

Bunch's compositions have been performed by over fifty orchestras and in premier venues on six continents. He is currently the artistic director of Fear No Music, one of Portland's leading new music ensembles.

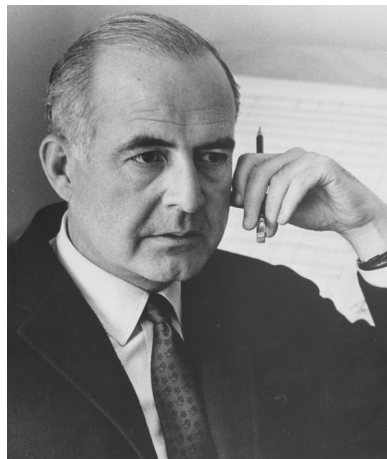
In his notes for *Aspects of an Elephant*, Bunch writes, "I drew inspiration from the timeless parable of the so-called Blind Men and the Elephant, of which various versions have appeared throughout Asia and Europe since the 13th century. I especially liked the version in Rumi's epic collection of sacred Islamic texts, *The Masnavi*. In this retelling, the men are not blind, but in a dark room with an elephant they can't see; each man holds a small

candle, which casts a faint light. They touch the mysterious beast in order to describe it to each other; naturally, they each come up with a very distinct impression of the elephant. For example, the man touching the tusk declares, 'The elephant is a spear!' while the man feeling a leg is convinced the elephant is a large tree. A heated argument ensues; each man believes his concept of the elephant is correct, and can't imagine any other version being remotely accurate. There are six musical variations representing the different descriptions of the elephant. In each variation I feature small groups of solo instruments.

"This conflict escalates almost to the point of violence until the men realize the combined light of their individual candles has now revealed the true nature of the elephant, and that they were all partially correct in their assessments.

"I find this story engaging for a number of reasons. Without going into detail, its relevance to today's deeply divided political climate is fairly obvious. Musically, it also seems to lend itself particularly well to the many different colors of the orchestra – which I feel is a compelling metaphor for a collection of diverse elements uniting to achieve a larger beauty. In addition to the different instrument families, I also feature some exotic percussion instruments, including five nested aluminum mixing bowls pitched low to high, of the kind you have in your kitchen. It sounds kind of like an Indonesian gamelan.

"*Aspects* is, if not officially a 'Concerto for Orchestra,' certainly a celebration of the orchestra, and particularly the musicians of the Oregon Symphony, to whom this work is dedicated."



Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

Souvenirs, Op. 28

Samuel Barber spent a lot of time in bars. In the early 1950s, Barber and his friend, pianist Charles Turner, liked to frequent the bar at the Blue Angel Club in New York City. Barber and Turner particularly enjoyed the clever

arrangements of Broadway tunes and popular songs performed by the bar's piano duo. In response to Turner's request for similar music from Barber, Barber composed *Souvenirs*, a six-movement suite for four-hand piano.

In 1952, Lincoln Kirstein, co-founder of City Center Ballet (now the New York City Ballet), asked Barber to orchestrate *Souvenirs* for a new ballet by George Balanchine. In a letter to his uncle, Barber wrote, "I ... have just finished a ballet score for Balanchine (the best choreographer) which gave me great pleasure to compose. Very light. A waltz, schottische, galoppe, tango, *pas-de-deux*, and two-step. Think of that coming out of your serious-minded West Chester Presbyterian nephew."

Barber had a nostalgic fondness for the Plaza Hotel; his mother had taken him to tea there as a child. In his own

program notes, Barber wrote, “One might imagine a divertissement in a setting of the Palm Court of the Hotel Plaza in New York, the year about 1914, epoch of the first tangos; ‘Souvenirs’ – remembered with affection, not with irony or tongue in cheek, but in amused tenderness.”

Each of *Souvenirs’* six dances was popular during the early 1900s, and Barber sets each dance in a different room or area of the Plaza. The *Waltz* takes place in the Plaza’s opulent lobby, where its music reflects the refinement of its surroundings, while the rambunctious *Schottische* bounces down the hallways of the third floor with a hopping melody in the strings and winds. The Plaza’s ballroom provides the intimate setting for the *Pas-de-deux*, with its erotically charged flute solo. All of the Palm Court’s hustle and bustle is captured in the witty *Two-Step*.

Barber labeled the *Hesitation Tango* “a bedroom affair,” and its atmospheric melody, a sinuous oboe/clarinet duet, evokes a forbidden tryst. The final *Galop* takes place the following afternoon. The melody, shared among various solo instruments, rushes forward in whirl of activity.

Oregon Symphony

With multiple Grammy nominations in recent years, the Oregon Symphony reaches an audience of millions beyond the Pacific Northwest through commercially released recordings and syndicated radio broadcasts. In his fifth album recorded live in Portland’s Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, Music Director Carlos Kalmar explores 20th- and 21st-century American music.

Throughout its 122-year history, major artists have worked with the ensemble, including Otto Klemperer, Erick Leinsdorf, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Georges Enesco, Igor Stravinsky, Aaron Copland, Vladimir Horowitz, Rudolf Serkin, David Oistrakh, Pablo Casals, Yo-Yo Ma, and Joshua Bell. Its most recent recordings released in SACD with the PENTATONE label garnered multiple Grammy Award nominations, including two for Best Orchestral Performance.

Carlos Kalmar

Jean Vollum music director chair

Carlos Kalmar has been the music director of the Oregon Symphony since September, 2003. Kalmar is also the artistic director and principal conductor of the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago, and has held those positions since 2000.

Kalmar, born in Uruguay to Austrian parents, showed an early interest in music and began violin studies at the age of six. By the time he was 15, his musical promise was such that his family moved back to Austria in order for him to study conducting with Karl Osterreicher at the Vienna Academy of Music. He has previously served as the chief conductor and artistic director of the Spanish Radio/Television Orchestra and Choir in Madrid, as well as the music director for the Hamburg



Symphony, the Stuttgart Philharmonic, Vienna's Tonkünstler Orchester, and the Anhaltisches Theater in Dessau, Germany

Kalmar is a regular guest conductor with many orchestras around the world. Recognized for his exquisite programming and musical finesse, Kalmar is known for creating uniquely cohesive concerts which have been acknowledged, worldwide, as significant presentations. A pioneer for contemporary music as well as traditional classical, it has been noted many times that Kalmar has a particular ability to captivate the attention of his listeners by presenting innovative ideas in concert halls.

Kalmar has recorded for the Cedille record label and is currently recording for Pentatone. The Oregon Symphony, under the direction of Carlos Kalmar,

has received two Grammy nominations for their work for PENTATONE. Kalmar's recordings have been lauded in many international CD magazines.

As music director of the Oregon Symphony Kalmar introduced the orchestra to New York audiences in a notable Carnegie Hall debut in 2011.

New Yorker magazine critic Alex Ross called the Oregon Symphony's Carnegie Hall performance under Kalmar "the highlight of the festival and one of the most gripping events of the current season." That verdict was echoed by Sedgwick Clark, writing for *Musical America*, who described the performance of Vaughan Williams' Fourth Symphony as "positively searing . . . with fearless edge-of-seat tempos . . . breathtakingly negotiated by all.

Kalmar lives in Portland, Oregon, with his wife, violinist Raffaella Kalmar, and their two sons, Luca and Claudio.



Carlos Kalmar

The Oregon Symphony

Carlos Kalmar, *Jean Vollum music director chair*

Violin

Sarah Kwak, *Janet & Richard Geary concertmaster chair*

Peter Frajola, *Del M. Smith & Maria Stanley Smith associate concertmaster chair*

Erin Furbee, *Harold & Jane Pollin assistant concertmaster chair*

Chien Tan, *Truman Collins, Sr. principal second violin chair*

Inés Volgar Belgique, *assistant principal second violin*

Fumino Ando

Keiko Araki

Clarisse Atcherson

Lucia Atkinson*

Margaret Bichteler*

Lily Burton*

Ron Blessinger

Lisbeth Carreno

Ruby Chen

Emily Cole

Julie Coleman

Dolores D'Aigle

Eileen Deiss

Gregory Ewer

Jonathan Dubay

Daniel Ge Feng

Lynne Finch

Laura Ha

Paloma Giffin Hébert*

Hae-Jin Kim*

Nelly Kovalev*

Shin-young Kwon

Ryan Lee

Andrea Oh*

Samuel Park

Vali Phillips

Deborah Singer

Viola

Joël Belgique, *Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund principal viola chair*

Charles Noble, *assistant principal*

Jennifer Arnold^

Kenji Bunch*

Silu Fei

Leah Ilem

Brian Quincey

Ningning Jin

Kim Mai Nguyen*

Hillary Oseas*

Lisa Rensberger*

Viorel Russo

Martha Warrington^

Cello

Nancy Ives, *Mr. & Mrs. Edmund Hayes Jr. principal cello chair*

Marilyn de Oliveira, *assistant principal*

Kenneth Finch

Trevor Fitzpatrick

Antoinette Gan

Kevin Kunkel

Gayle Budd O'Grady

Bass

Jon McCullough-Benner, *principal*

William Clay, *principal**

Nina DeCesare

Don Hermanns

Jeffrey Johnson

Christopher Kim*

Jason Schooler

Flute

Martha Long, *Bruce & Judy Thesenga principal flute chair*

Alicia DiDonato Paulsen, *assistant principal*

Zachariah Galatis

Piccolo

Zachariah Galatis

Oboe

Martin Hébert, *Harold J. Schnitzer principal oboe chair*

Karen Wagner, *assistant principal*

Kyle Mustain

English Horn

Kyle Mustain

Clarinet

James Shields, *principal*

Todd Kuhns, *assistant principal*

Mark Dubac

Bass Clarinet

Todd Kuhns

Bassoon

Carin Miller Packwood,
principal

Evan Kuhlmann, *assistant
principal*

Adam Trussell

Contrabassoon

Evan Kuhlmann

Horn

John Cox, *principal*

Joseph Berger, *associate
principal*

Graham Kingsbury,
assistant principal

Mary Grant
Alicia Waite

Trumpet

Jeffrey Work, *principal*

David Bamonte, *assistant
principal, Musicians of
the Oregon Symphony*
Richard Thornburg
Trumpet chair

Doug Reneau

Trombone

Daniel Cloutier, *principal**

Robert Taylor, *associate
principal*

Charles Reneau

Bass Trombone

Charles Reneau

Tuba

JáTtik Clark, *principal*

Timpani

Jonathan Greeney,
principal

Sergio Carreno, *assistant
principal*

Percussion

Niel DePonte, *principal*

Michael Roberts,
assistant principal

Sergio Carreno
Gordon Rencher*

Harp

Jennifer Craig, *principal*

**Piano & Celeste (Bunch
& Barber)**

Monica Ohuchi*

Piano & Celeste (Currier)

Carol Rich*

Piano (Currier)

Douglas Schneider*

* guest musician

^ not heard on this
recording

Acknowledgments

PRODUCTION TEAM

Producer **Blanton Alspaugh** | Recording engineer **John Newton**
Mixing & mastering engineer **Mark Donahue**

Liner notes **Elizabeth Schwartz** | Orchestra photo **Leah Nash**
Design **Joost de Boo** | Product management **Kasper van Kooten**

This album was recorded live at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, Portland, Oregon, in 2016 (Rouse) and 2017 (Barber, Bunch, Currier, and Shepherd).

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PENTATONE TEAM

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A&R Manager **Kate Rockett** | Head of Marketing, PR & Sales **Silvia Pietrosanti**



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