

The School of the Arts ~
Department of Music
and
The Town of Blacksburg

~ present ~

The Blacksburg Community Strings

And Chamber Orchestra

Conducted by
Åke-Eric Renqvist

~ with soloist ~
Bruce McGarvey, clarinet

Friday, October 26, 2007
8 o'clock p.m.
Recital Salon, Squires Student Center
Blacksburg, Virginia

Program

Canon for Strings (1997)Sean O'Boyle
(b. 1963)

Fantasia in F for Strings (1992)Tracey R. Rush
(b. 1955)

Suite in Five Moods for String Orchestra
(1960, 2000)John Raymond Howell
(b. 1936)
1. *Strolling*
2. *Wishing*
3. *Thinking*
4. *Longing*
5. *Insisting*

Intermission

Concerto in A Major for Clarinet
(K 622, Vienna, 1791)Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)
Allegro
Adagio
Rondo Allegro
Bruce McGarvey, *clarinet*

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Violin 1

Cheryl Prince, *concertmaster*
Ross Spoon
Michael Chacko
Biyuan Zhao

Violin 2

Olivia Pires, *principal*
Amy Nichols
Ravi Shenoy
Catherine Fendley
Adrian Grier
Jane Guo

Viola

John Howell, *principal*
Edie Carter

Violoncello

Dan Foster, *principal*
Robin Grier-Blake
Amy Schwartz

Contrabass

Anthony Riggs

Flute

Mary Walters
Vicki Walter

Bassoon

Dillon Meacham
Gail Senatore

Horn

Dale Osterndorf
Peter Morri

Program Notes

Bruce McGarvey studied clarinet with Gustav Katschka, Donald McGinnis, and Edward Marks, and played professionally for two years before injuries in an auto accident brought an end to his professional career. Twenty-five years later he was able to resume playing, plays the full range of clarinets and saxophones, and has played with the Blacksburg Community Strings, the Blacksburg Community Band, and the Summer Musical Enterprise productions of *Kiss Me, Kate* and *Bye Bye Birdie* as well as several performing organizations in Richmond. He now teaches clarinet and saxophone privately in Southwest Virginia, is an information development consultant for the software industry, and is working towards the Ph.D. degree in Clinical Psychology. He collects fine clarinets, and tonight is playing a Clarinet in A by Luis Rossi, internationally-known clarinet virtuoso and instrument maker in Santiago, Chile.

The Blacksburg Community Strings and Chamber Orchestra is beginning its ninth season, its eighth under the baton of conductor Åke-Eric Renqvist. The ensemble was founded in 1999 to provide opportunities for students, community string players, and active or retired professionals to share their love of music and serve the community through concerts, special events, and community activities. The orchestra welcomes string players from the New River and Roanoke valleys interested in joining, including young players who are taking lessons on their instruments and community members who haven't rosined a bow in 20 years!

Before leaving his native Finland to retire in Virginia, conductor/violinist Åke-Eric Renqvist was awarded the distinguished title *Director Musices*, signed by the

President of Finland, in December, 1995. He received this honor for his teaching and his conducting of the North Kymi College of Music Symphony Orchestra and the Rauma Sinfonietta for thirty years. During his 29 years as violist with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra the orchestra made many recordings and concertized all over the world. He taught at the Helsinki Conservatory and served as Director of a private music school. He completed his studies in violin at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki and studied conducting with Premysl Charvat, principal conductor of the National Opera in Prague.

Our list of living composers this evening is, if not completely international, close to world-wide. **Sean O'Boyle**, born in the North of England to Irish parents, has become one of Australia's most versatile composers and conductors. His works have been performed by all the major Australian orchestras and many North American orchestras. For the 2000 Sydney Olympics he composed ABC's Olympic Theme Music, and behind the scenes supervised the recording of the national anthems of all participating countries. He has special interest in music for children, and in the music of Aboriginal composers.

Midwesterner **Tracey Rush** was born in Wisconsin and now lives and works in Dubuque, Iowa, where she founded the Northeast Iowa School of Music and the Dubuque Community String Orchestra, for whom she composed the *Fantasia in F*. She has served as Composer-in-Residence and as principal violist for the Dubuque Symphony, as Chair of the Iowa Composers' Forum, and founded Fountain Park Music Publishers, which by no coincidence at all is the publisher of John Howell's *Suite in Five Moods*. Her orchestral works have been commissioned and performed by several major regional orchestras.

John Howell is a founding member of the Blacksburg Community Strings and a member of the Music Faculty at Virginia Tech, where he conducted *The New Virginians* for 14 years and now conducts the *Early Music Ensemble*. He has also played with the Roanoke Symphony, the Lynchburg Symphony, and the Southwest Virginia Chamber Orchestra, and in a previous life toured with John Denver, Johnnie Mathis, Henry Mancini, and Warner Brothers and Decca recording artists, *The Four Saints*. He has been a musical arranger for over 55 years, and an occasional composer most recently four anthems commissioned by Covenant Presbyterian Church and premiered in 2001. He has also been active in the New River Valley's *Summer Musical Enterprise* since its founding in 1992. The *Suite in Five Moods* grew out of counterpoint exercises written when he was a member of the USAF Band and taking composition lessons at the Catholic University of America.

Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, written for Anton Stadler in Vienna, may be his last completed composition, written just a few weeks before his untimely death in late 1791, and shows a mastery of melody and harmony unusual even in his other mature works. It was also one of several late works he wrote that included the clarinet, an instrument itself only recently recognized as a brand new and valuable addition to orchestral and solo literature, several of those pieces incorporating Masonic symbolism. Stadler, a fellow Mason, and his brother Johann were the first clarinetist to be employed at the Imperial Court, the first to be appointed to the Imperial Wind Band, and the first to be appointed to the court orchestra. Anton favored an instrument known as the "basset clarinet," a regular clarinet with an extended low range, and it was for this instrument that Mozart wrote both the Quintet K581 and this Concerto. The Stadler brothers also played and Mozart also wrote for bass horns, true alto clarinets in F.

— John Raymond Howell