

*SHEPHERD SCHOOL
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA*

LARRY RACHLEFF, Music Director

Friday, April 30, 1999

8:00 p.m.

Stude Concert Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Prélude à "L'Après-midi d'un faune"

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

An American In Paris

George Gershwin
(1898-1937)

INTERMISSION

Amelia (Empire of the Sun)
(1998) (Premiere)

Arthur Gottschalk
(b. 1952)

La Mer

Claude Debussy

I. De l'aube à midi sur la mer.

Très lent—Modéré, sans lenteur

II. Jeux de vagues. Allegro—Animé—Assez animé

III. Dialogue du vent et de la mer. Animé et tumultueux

In consideration of the performers and members of the audience, please check audible paging devices with the ushers and silence audible timepieces. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

SHEPHERD SCHOOL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Jonathan Swartz,
concertmaster
Anne Huter
Gregory Ewer
Caroline Semanchik
Tor Johan Bøen
Azure Abuirmeileh
Colleen Jennings
Abigail Karr
Noel Martin
Martha Walvoord
Matthew Szemela
Matthew Horwitz
Gosia Leska
Jennifer Thompson
Alda Schwonke

Violin II

Maria Sampen,
principal
Mary Katrina Pierson
Yuel Yawney
Tammie Gallup
Ivan Hodge
Melinda Graves
Ari Maron
Jessica Gagne
Matthew Fuller
Kristi Helberg
Linling Hsu
Pamela Yu
Philip Estrera

Viola

Mai Motobuchi,
principal
Tawnya Popoff
Wilma Hos
Carol Gimbel
Eva Sheie
Miranda Sielaff
Yuko Watanabe
Christine Grossman
Sun-Young Lee
Karoline Schwartz

Viola (cont.)

Misha Galaganov
Daniel Kendis

Cello

Heath Marlow,
principal
Jing Li
Anthony Kitai
Sara Stalnaker
Emma Sponaugle
Daniel Saenz
Livia Stanese
Nathan Cook
Julia Kostenko
Laura Love
Claudia Hödl
Clara Lee

Double Bass

Jonathan Burnstein,
principal
Andrew Raciti
Juan Carlos Peña
Stephen Buckley
Dacy Gillespie
Hunter Capoccioni
Antoine Plante
Matthew Medlock

Flute

Martha Councell
Lisa Jelle
Caroline Kung
Lance Sanford
Caen Thomason-Redus

Piccolo

Lisa Jelle
Caen Thomason-Redus

Oboe

Monica Fosnaugh
Julie Gramolini
Yuh-Pey Lin
Omri Raveh
Rosemary Yiameos

English Horn

Monica Fosnaugh
Julie Gramolini
Yuh-Pey Lin

Clarinet

Carrie Budelman
Sharon Koh
Molly Mayfield
Rochelle Oddo
Alexander Potiomkin

Bass Clarinet

Carrie Budelman
Rochelle Oddo

Bassoon

Jenni Groyon
Shawn Jones
Damian Montaña
Amy Yang

Contrabassoon

Shawn Jones
Amy Yang

Horn

Kristina Crago
Jeffrey Garza
Miguel Garza
Austin Hitchcock
Eric Reed
Jeffrey Rogers
Shane Smith

Trumpet

David Dash
Thomas Hooten
Jamie Kent
Arthur Murray
Brian Seitz

Trombone

Paul Fleischman
Kathryn Giorgio
Karen Marston
Jeremy Moeller
Patrick Raichart

Bass Trombone

Karen Marston
Michael Palmer

Tuba

Jacob Cameron
Carson McTeer

Harp

Anastasia Jellison
Laurie Meister
Heidi O'Gara
Kathleen Wychulis

Celeste

Jason Hardink

Timpani and Percussion

John Andress
Andrew Buchanan
Marc Dinitz
Adam Green
Patrick Kelly
Trent Petrunia
Scott Pollard
Tobie Wilkinson

Orchestra Manager

Martin Merritt

Orchestra Librarian

Karen Slotter

Stage Assistants

Jacob Cameron
Thomas Hooten
Karen Marston
Andrew Raciti

Library Assistants

Jonathan Burnstein
Holly Butenhoff
Mary Katrina Pierson
Damian Montaña
Matthew Medlock
Ayëla Seidelman
Sara Stalnaker
Yuko Watanabe

WINDS, BRASS, PERCUSSION AND HARP LISTED ALPHABETICALLY.

STRING SEATING CHANGES WITH EACH CONCERT.

PROGRAM NOTES

Prélude à "L'Après-midi d'un faune" Claude Debussy

The label "impressionist" was first applied to Claude Debussy in 1887 when the young composer submitted his inaugural orchestral work, **Printemps** (Spring), to his instructors at the Academie des Beaux-Arts, and was warned to "guard himself against this vague impressionism," as it is "one of the most dangerous enemies of truth in works of art." He would face this attitude many times in his career, but Debussy possessed a revolutionary conviction which, in the words of Pierre Boulez, "awakened modern music." Conventional forms of organization, i.e. thematic statement, development, and recapitulation, to Debussy's ears communicated only the voice of tradition rather than that of the composer. In critical writings, he claimed that the symphony had reached its climax with Beethoven and those who attempted to follow "respectfully repeat[ed] the same forms, but with much less power." In a love-hate relationship with the music of Wagner, Debussy revered the open-ended, improvisatory nature of **Parsifal**, but openly mocked it as comically melodramatic. Although Debussy frequently made reference to extra-musical ideas, they were a springboard for his imagination to engage in a discourse and not meant to dictate any real-time narrative chronology to his work. He believed that music, above the other arts, should achieve a state of freedom from all literal representation and explore the "mysterious correspondences between Nature and Imagination." This freedom included liberation from the restraints of traditional form.

Reflecting the structure of Mallarmé's sensual poem, **L'Après-midi d'un Faune** (*The Afternoon of a Faun*), Debussy's **Prélude** (1892-1894), his first internationally recognized work, hints at a vague ternary form, but is void of the tonal guideposts found in traditionally organized music. It hinges instead on a reoccurring flute motif, representing the changing dream-state of the faun, which spills into perpetually evolving variations. This does not, however reflect Wagner's use of the leitmotif, as with each appearance, the theme itself is varied. Although originally conceived as the beginning of a large-scale work which was to include a reading of the poem, the music is not narrative. In Debussy's own words, the music evokes "the overall impression of the poem, for if the music followed too closely it would wheeze like a cab-horse racing a thoroughbred for the Grand Prix." Simply stated, this is not program music in the tradition of his predecessors; there are no themes to convey the faun's actions, but rather colors that reflect feelings.

— Note by Karen Marston

An American In Paris George Gershwin

The son of poor Russian immigrants living in Manhattan at the turn of the century, George Gershwin had no childhood exposure to music and never received formal academy training, a fact that would later fuel the criticism of his colleagues. He was already twelve years old when his parents purchased an upright piano, but he quickly exhibited innate improvisatory abilities and an ear for jazz. A contradiction to the widely held conception that he lacked any skill to score his music, in his early twenties Gershwin

spent two years working with composer Edward Kilenyi and produced an extensive notebook on the art of orchestration. After contributing many songs to other composers' productions, Gershwin wrote his first musical, **La La Lucille** (1919), and gained fast notoriety with the release of Al Jolson's recording of **Swanee**. His rising success in popular music led Paul Whiteman, a violinist interested in promoting "symphonic jazz," to commission **Rhapsody in Blue** (1924). Because of Gershwin's perceived inexperience, Ferde Grofé orchestrated the score, and later claimed the work as his own composition. Publicly correcting his colleague, Gershwin would not again accept assistance in orchestrating his music.

An American in Paris was commissioned by Walter Damrosch and premiered by the New York Philharmonic under his baton on December 13, 1928. Although the audience enthusiastically cheered, Gershwin, forever struggling for the respect of his peers, was crushed by the negative response of the New York critics. Metropolitan violinist Allan Langley went so far as to publish the essay "The Gershwin Myth," attempting to prove that the composer had covertly solicited assistance in scoring the work. Though he would battle these attitudes throughout his career, his memorable melodies and eclectic style ensured that he was, and is, an audience favorite.

An American in Paris is in three large sections, marked by the appearance of new thematic material. Around a dozen distinct, tuneful motifs gradually spin out of the initial statement in the woodwinds and strings, and are subsequently the subjects of endless combinations of contrapuntal layering. Texture and style are in constant flux, but this repetition of tuneful melodic material imparts an instant sense of familiarity, and the work possesses continuity unlike that of traditionally organized music. Ironically, constructing such a piece is in itself an orchestrational achievement as its success relies, at least partially, on clever textures. Of particular interest is his use of instruments in non-traditional roles, such as bringing the tuba out from under the orchestra to emerge as a soloist and introducing actual taxi horns to evoke the sound of the Paris streets. The music, like that of Debussy, is not a chronological narrative, but rather the impressions of a tourist as he/she walks through the city and experiences its distinct culture.

— Note by Karen Marston

Amelia (Empire of the Sun) Arthur Gottschalk

Conductor Larry Rachleff commissioned this work for the Shepherd School Symphony Orchestra in 1991. In thinking about forms for a short orchestral piece, I first entertained the notion of an overture. As I thought more, and as ideas began to coalesce, I found myself thinking more and more about the nature of overture as short tone poem.

The specifics of the tone poem were provided through conversations with choreographer Michele Brangwen, who was interested in staging a balletic work concerning the life and achievements of aviation pioneer Amelia Earhart. I began to think of her accomplishments and the mysterious nature of her disappearance in terms of an adventure film of the 1930s. The result is both an homage to Amelia Earhart and an homage to the epic film music of the era, an attempt to capture both the spirit and the milieu of the character and the times.

Technically, the piece is built upon the conflict between the notes B and C, and is structured as a main exposition (in C/B) followed by a contrasting thematic area (in G/F) with a short recapitulation of the main area, a third area combining both elements, and a climactic coda in which C and B struggle mightily for the last time and finally settle in favor of B. The piece is intended to showcase the remarkable talents and musicality of the Shepherd School Symphony Orchestra and its conductor, to whom the piece is dedicated.

— Note by the composer

Arthur Gottschalk is currently Associate Professor of Composition and Theory at The Shepherd School of Music.

La Mer Claude Debussy

In 1903, when Debussy began work on **La Mer (The Sea)**, he was enjoying a vacation with his wife of four years, Rosalie (Lily) Texier. In 1905 at its premiere under the baton of Camille Chevillard, he was living in Eastbourne, England, with Emma Bardac, vocalist and former lover of Fauré, and facing a tumultuous divorce. Likening its conflicts and qualities to that of the human condition, Debussy found a great escape from his troubles in the sheer open space of the sea and called on its power to spark his imagination. Like **Prelude à "l'Après-midi d'un Faune,"** he evokes rather than narrates his subject, but here takes a further step away from tradition, separating his work from the established French Symphony by referring to the movements as "Symphonic Sketches." Although many have attempted to squeeze this music into various standard forms, Jean Barraque coined the only term non-exclusive enough to fit: open. On a small scale, simple phrase structures can be detected, but overall, there is a constant flow of new material, none of which is treated developmentally. *De l'aube à midi sur la mer* (From dawn to noonday on the sea), presents a disorienting succession of textures based on open fifths, scored both vertically and horizontally, from which all consequent material flows. Motifs must struggle to emerge from the texture, which is at one point so dense that there are seven rhythms and three patterns of dynamics sounding simultaneously. *Jeux de vagues* (Play of the waves) reflects the light studies of the Impressionist painters, with trill-blurred outlines and heterophonic scoring. A total dissolution of formal musical structure, commentator Douglas Green suggests that the movement is "a coherent flow of short moments merging from one to the next." Also visually influenced, *Dialogue du vent et de la mer* (Dialogue of the wind and sea) transports the audience into a study of color and space. The opening statement, homage to Debussy's musical mentor César Franck, later returns with a high A-flat harmonic voiced in the strings. Whether the listener detects its sound, the height imparts sheer vastness to the texture and is a pure example of orchestral impressionism.

— Note by Karen Marston

