

University Symphony Orchestra
Locally Sourced

Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at 7:30pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University
College of Professional Studies / Department of Music presents

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Jeffrey Bell-Hanson, *conductor*

Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at 7:30pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Welcome to Lagerquist Concert Hall.
Please disable the audible signal on all watches and cellular phones for the duration of the concert.
Use of cameras, recording equipment and all digital devices is not permitted in the concert hall.

PROGRAM

Welcome, in person and virtually, to Lagerquist Concert Hall for our first concert performance of the 2022-2023 season. This season we will continue our commitment to presenting repertoire that represents our diverse musical culture, while we continue to perform familiar works. Tonight we highlight the work of two recognized giants among American composers, William Grant Still and Samuel Barber. If this great American repertoire is not local enough, we also present the work of an emerging composer whose biography is thoroughly intertwined with the history of this ensemble, Dr. Jerry Kracht, based on the music of another PLU composer, the late Lawrence Meyer.

Dr. Kracht's work was composed to celebrate the opening of this beautiful concert hall, an anniversary that came and went during the height of the recent pandemic. It also commemorates the premiere of a piece that has become PLU's theme song, *Processional of Joy*.

Fanfare, Fantasia, and Finale (On a Locally Familiar Tune)..... Jerry Kracht (b. 1947)
World premiere

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, op. 14Samuel Barber (1910-1981)
I. Allegro moderato
II. Andante
III. Presto in moto perpetuo
Svend Rønning, *violin*

INTERMISSION

Afro-American Symphony (Symphony No. 1)..... William Grant Still (1895-1978)
I. Longing-Moderato assai
II. Sorrow-Adagio
III. Humor-Animato
IV. Aspiration-Lento, con risolutione—Vivace

Program Notes

Jerry Kracht *Fanfare, Fantasia, and Finale (On a Locally Familiar Tune)*



This work was composed in 2013, intended for premiere in 2020. Unfortunately, 2020 arrived at the height of the pandemic, which forced two postponements until now. The following note, written by the composer, appears in the original score and explains:

Two significant anniversaries in the life of music at Pacific Lutheran University led to the creation of this score: the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening of Lagerquist Concert Hall and the Mary Baker Russell Music Center, and the fiftieth anniversary of the premiere of Lawrence J. Meyer's *Processional of Joy*, both musical milestones worthy of celebration in the year 2020. Such celebrations are highly anticipated by those of us who experienced the original events and came to appreciate their full significance through the passage of time.

I was on hand on March 16, 1970 to conduct the premiere of *Processional of Joy*, a festive academic march written for the inauguration of Eugene Weigman as ninth president of PLU. Its joyous strains were so effective that Dr. Weigman requested its reprise for Spring commencement that year, and again for the opening convocation the following Fall. And with that, the *Processional of Joy* became a fixture at PLU for virtually all academic celebrations to follow.

I was on hand, too, to conduct the University Symphony Orchestra in the concerts that marked the gala opening of Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center, February 3, 4 and 5, 1995. It is hard to express the excitement of that opening to anyone who was not part of it. Suffice it to say that for those of us there, it was the culmination of planning and work that had gone on for nearly a quarter-century—a beautiful new home for music at PLU, one that had been first envisioned around the same time as the *Processional of Joy*.

Composed to celebrate both these events, *Fanfare, Fantasia and Finale (On a Locally Familiar Tune)* is dedicated to PLU, the Department of Music, and the University Symphony Orchestra. The familiar tune, of course, is the *Processional of Joy*—its signature three-note figure first heard building gradually here in the low strings. Other, faster iterations of this motive spread throughout the orchestra as the short *Fanfare* builds on its mission of introduction and anticipation. Four pillar chords, beginning with the first chord of the piece, mark the *Fanfare's* progress. These are drawn from the very same first chords played by the University Symphony Orchestra in Lagerquist Concert Hall those many years ago, as it celebrated its new home with performances of Beethoven's opus 124, *The Consecration of the House*.

With the *Fanfare* complete, the *Fantasia* follows without pause. The mood changes from jubilant to nostalgic, with the tempo slower and the texture more transparent, Professor Meyer's three-note motive is easily heard here and there. Less obvious is the entire main melody of his *Processional of Joy* as it undergoes rhythmic stretching and re-harmonization in the strings. Other familiar snippets are heard throughout the orchestra. Eventually an accelerando leads to livelier music and additional new characterizations of the familiar materials, including a brief passage with walking bass-line and jazzy trumpet licks. A coda-like passage builds to a sudden stop and a return to the slow, nostalgic mood of before, played out here by solo oboe and horn, the strings offering a reflective response. Finally, three of the Beethoven chords, now heard in rhythmic succession, bring the *Fantasia* to an end, at the same time launching the *Finale*.

As the *Finale* begins, timpani, chimes and orchestra bells awaken new, rapid fanfares and a cavalcade of familiar *Joy* tunes that eventually march headlong into a briefly pretended fughetta. Here the main *Joy* theme combines with a closing motive borrowed from the Beethoven *Consecration* in a happy coincidence of compatibility. Unison strings then make one last majestic statement of PLU's most familiar tune and a brief coda races to the end. A balloon burst punctuates the close, replicating the acoustical designer's first sound-test of the newly completed hall. I was there that day too, to hear that glorious report—the reverberation and broad smiles that followed signaling the beginning of new life for music at PLU. Congratulations to us all—past, present and future!

Jerry Kracht, Emeritus Professor of Music, PLU

Editor's note: Dr. Kracht was Conductor of the University Symphony Orchestra and Professor of Clarinet from 1967 to 2001. Since his retirement he has become an increasingly prolific and much-performed composer of works for ensembles both large and small.

Samuel Barber *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, op. 14*

After graduating from the Curtis Institute of Music in 1934, Samuel Barber quickly began composing, establishing a repertoire that was Romantic yet distinctly modern. Barber's style prior to 1940 was clearly rooted in a nineteenth-century Romantic tradition. Later works would include more modern, dissonant elements. Yet even this work, composed in 1939, foreshadows that modernist turn in the strikingly dramatic style of the third movement, a *moto perpetuo* that holds considerable challenge for soloist and orchestra alike.



Movement one's theme is tender and serene, announced at the beginning by the solo violin, with a moderate tempo. The violin soon has a dialogue with the horns and piano, which is contrasted with Scotch snaps from the flute and oboe. The tender moments in the movement are contrasted with other passages, some menacing, some dramatic. The second movement begins and ends in a manner perhaps just as tender as the first movement, with a section of rising drama in between. The third movement is quite fast, featuring a short introduction from the timpani, followed by a theme in the solo violin in triplets. This movement is more dramatic compared to the first two movements, with little of the tenderness that characterizes the first two.

Note provided by Henry Hossner and Jeffrey Bell-Hanson

William Grant Still *Afro-American Symphony (Symphony No. 1)*



William Grant Still's biography outlines a path that would be familiar to many musicians today. Out of the necessity to make a living his activities spanned boundaries of genre and crossed social, ethnic, and even color lines. Yet for the period between the two world wars, his success was nothing short of remarkable. We can assume that he paid a daily price for his ambition to transcend the traditional barriers placed before him. The symphony being performed tonight is exemplary of the legacy of his effort and sacrifice. Even so, as good as this music is, it might have been lost to history but for the efforts of his family, principally his daughter Judith, to promote his music and keep his legacy alive in the American musical canon.

While he appears to have simply followed the opportunities available to him early in his career—mostly working in the theater and in popular genres—his ultimate purpose was clear. He was dedicated to the goal of codifying and uplifting the profound African American influence in our musical culture. This was not his project alone. It had begun perhaps nearly a century earlier among black and even some white musicians. One of the most successful examples from the late nineteenth century was a choir from Fisk University in Nashville, the Fisk Jubilee Singers. The group became internationally known for their choral interpretations of African American spirituals. Still, however, turned away from spirituals as the basis for his concert music, drawing instead on the rich heritage of the blues. His belief was that the blues offered a purer reflection of the African American experience. As a result, his music is full of modal shifts, descending melodic lines, irregular phrases, and especially, a dialogic character.

It is, therefore, fitting that the composer provides us with a program for the four movements of the symphony in the form of poems by Paul Laurence Dunbar, a late nineteenth and early twentieth-century poet whose parents had been enslaved. Dunbar became widely recognized for his large collection of poems in a vernacular dialect, and an even larger body of poetry and prose in standard English. Examples of both are included in Still's selections for each of the four movements.

I. Longing

'All my life long twell de night has pas'
Let de wo'k come ez it will,
So dat I fin' you, honey, at last',
Somewhah des ovah de hill.'

II. Sorrow

'It's moughty tiahsome layin' 'roun'
Dis sorrer-laded earfly groun'
An' oftentimes I thinks, thinks I
Twould be a sweet t'ing des to die
An' go 'long home.'

III. Humor

‘An we’ll shout ouah halleluyahs,
On dat mighty reck’nin’ da.’

IV. Aspiration

‘Be proud, my Race, in mind and soul.
Thy name is write on Glory’s scroll
In characters of fire.
High mid the clouds of Fame’s bright sky
Thy banner’s blazoned folds now fly,
And truth shall lift them higher.’

About the Soloist

Violinist **Svend Rønning** enjoys a varied career as an artistic director, chamber musician, concertmaster, educator, and soloist. He is Chair of the String Division at PLU, where he is Professor of Music and violinist in the Faculty String Ensemble. His prior teaching appointments have included faculty positions at the Eastern Music Festival, the Shenandoah Conservatory, and the University of Virginia. One of the most active performers in the Puget Sound, Dr. Rønning serves as Concertmaster of Symphony Tacoma as well as performing frequently as soloist, recitalist, chamber musician and recording artist. He is also Artistic Director of the Second City Chamber Series, Tacoma's award-winning producer of chamber music concerts and chamber music educational programs. Additional activities have included period instrument performance with the Puget Sound Consort, Tacoma's ensemble for early music. Svend Rønning has appeared in venues around the world, including the Aspen Music Festival, Eastern Music Festival, Harkness Park Summer Concerts, Jerusalem Winter Classics, Methow Music Festival, Pacific Music Festival, Spoleto U.S.A. and the Wintergreen Music Festival. He has served as Concertmaster of various orchestras including the Charlottesville Symphony, the San Jose Symphony, the Spoleto U.S.A. Chamber Orchestra, and the Tacoma Opera Orchestra. As soloist, he has appeared with numerous orchestras, including the Arctic Chamber Orchestra, the Charlottesville Symphony, the Olympia Symphony, the Prague Radio Symphony, Orchestra Seattle, and the Symphony Tacoma. His repertoire includes more than twenty of the standard violin concertos as well as concertos by Alban Berg, Jerry Kracht (written for him), Walter Ross (written for him), and Miklós Rózsa. Other notable solo appearances include recitals at the Conservatorium of Music, Hobart, Australia, Duke University, Ithaca College, the University of Colorado at Boulder, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In addition to performing and teaching violin, Dr. Rønning enjoys teaching courses to non-major undergraduates at PLU, among them “Music in Film,” “The Music of Scandinavia” and “The Arts and Society” which he developed for PLU's International Honors Program and has taught both at PLU and at the University of Oxford. He has also lectured on the Music of the United States at Hedmark University College in Norway. Svend Rønning is a native of the Pacific Northwest and studied violin at PLU with Ann Tremaine. He subsequently earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Yale University, where he studied with Syoko Aki, Sidney Harth, and Jaap Schröder. He is pleased to collaborate with Dr. Bell-Hanson and the University Symphony Orchestra on the maestro's favorite violin concerto by Samuel Barber this evening.

About the Conductor

Jeffrey Bell-Hanson is in his twenty-first season as Music Director of the PLU Symphony Orchestra and Professor of Music. He is a familiar presence in the Pacific Northwest as a conductor, clinician, adjudicator, and orchestral educator. Each year he works with school orchestras at all levels throughout the region and beyond, bringing to them the perspective of his long career as a conductor and scholar. He is a past national president of the College Orchestra Directors Association. Dr. Bell-Hanson has conducted orchestras and wind ensembles throughout the United States and in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, including the West Bohemian Symphony Orchestra, the Olympia Symphony, the Marquette Symphony Orchestra, the Vratza Philharmonic, and the Philharmonia Bulgarica. His long career on the podium and as a teacher has also included faculty appointments in Kansas, Louisiana, and Michigan, where he won recognition for excellence in teaching both from Michigan Technological University and the State of Michigan. He has served as music director of both the Hutchinson Symphony Orchestra in Kansas and, for fourteen years, the Keweenaw Symphony Orchestra in Michigan.

University Symphony Orchestra
Jeffrey Bell-Hanson, *conductor*

Flute

Katherine Gunter
Blake Leahy*
Kade Levien, *piccolo*

Oboe

Kyler Garcia*
Hope Alayna Bales©

Clarinet

Caitlin Collins*
Curtis Ganung, *bass clarinet*
Brooklyn Sudnikovich-Eddy

Bassoon

Tyler Woo*
Rorie Millward*

Horn

Ben Birmingham*
James Gibson
Ashley Lopez-Mora
Claire Calabrese

Trumpet

Jacob Boseley*
Jonathan Holder
Kurtis Sacksteder

Trombone

Sabien Kinchlow-McConnaughey*
Cody Nutter
Jakob Johnson, *bass trombone*

Tuba

Cassidy Stanhope

Percussion

Evan Nakanishi*, *timpani*
Quinn Rasmussen*
Cole Strichertz
Ben Helgeson
Andrew Sims

Keyboard

Henry Hossner

Tenor Banjo

Storm Tucker©

Harp

Margeret Betts©

Violin I

Naomi Southard*
Joy Han
Mya Sullivan
Cora Beeson
Marley Cochran

Violin II

Justin Singh*
Gabriel Casey-Aguinaga
Joan Fort
Kyla Rivera
Stan Piddubny
Jayla Albenesius

Viola

Abbie Foulon*
Noatak Post
Virginia Arthur
Alyson Rake
Marilyn Willis
Taren Massey
Fay Ballerino

Violoncello

Madelynne Jones*
Marisa Robbins
Jeffrey Buetow
Nathaniel Bratcher
Elliott Capron
Salese Clark©

Double Bass

Campian Roberts*
Lexi Castillo
Madeline Cline
Taya Lovejoy
Declan Long

*Section Principal/Co-principal
©Community member

Lexi Castillo, *librarian*

www.plu.edu/symphony

The members of the PLUSO wish to acknowledge the contributions of the following individuals and firms for their roles in creating the space in which we rehearse and perform:

Mary Baker Russell • George Lagerquist • Professor Emeritus David Robbins • Architects Zimmer Gunsul Frasca of Seattle Acousticians Kirkegaard and Associates in Chicago • Absher Construction of Puyallup • Fritts Organ Company