IGOR STRAVINSKY
Symphony of Psalms
I. (Psalm 38, verses 13 and 14)
II. (Psalm 39, verses 2, 3, and 4)
III. (Psalm 150)
Oakland Symphony Chorus
Lynne Morrow, Director

SAMUEL BARBER
Nicole Joseph, soprano
James Toland Vocal Arts Competition – 2014 Winner

INTERMISSION

JOHN ADAMS
The Dharma at Big Sur
(Generously supported by The Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation)
I. A New Day
II. Sri Moonshine
Tracy Silverman, electric violin

MAURICE RAVEL
La Valse

TRACY SILVERMAN,
electric violin
NICOLE JOSEPH,
soprano

MICHAEL MORGAN,
music director and conductor

We are very pleased to sponsor tonight’s fine concert.

It’s not just about your money. It’s about your life!
bellinvest.com

FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2016, 8 PM
PARAMOUNT THEATRE, OAKLAND
The Oakland Symphony Chorus enriches our community through high quality musical performances and educational workshops that raise appreciation and understanding of choral music, while providing opportunities for people who love to sing. Established in 1958, Oakland Symphony Chorus is one of the East Bay’s finest choirs, and a premier resource for continuing education in the choral arts. The Chorus performs regularly with its partners, Oakland Symphony and Oakland Symphony Youth Orchestra, as well as with a variety of other Bay Area orchestras.
TRACY SILVERMAN, ELECTRIC VIOLIN

Auded by the BBC as “the greatest living exponent of the electric violin,” Tracy Silverman’s groundbreaking work with the 6-string electric violin defies musical boundaries. The world’s foremost concert electric violinist, Silverman was named one of 100 distinguished alumni by the Juilliard School.

Formerly first violinist with the innovative Turtle Island String Quartet, Silverman has contributed significantly to the repertoire and development of what he calls “21st century violin playing.” His work has inspired several major concertos composed specifically for him, including Pulitzer winner John Adams’ The Dharma At Big Sur, premiered with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the gala opening of Walt Disney Concert Hall in 2003 and recorded with the BBC Symphony on Nonesuch Records with Adams conducting. Legendary “Father of Minimalism” Terry Riley’s The Palmian Chord Ryddle, was premiered by Silverman with the Nashville Symphony in Carnegie Hall in 2012, and recorded by Naxos Records. Kenji Bunch’s Los Angeles Times his own,” wrote Mark Swed of the New York Times Anthony’s John von Rhein hailed Silverman’s “fleet agility and tangy “blazing virtuosity” and the New York Times’ Anthony Tommasini admired his “fleeting expressiveness.” Inspiring, Silverman is in a class of his own,” wrote Mark Swed of the Los Angeles Times.

NICOLE JOSEPH, SOPRANO

Soprano Nicole Joseph received her Master’s and Specialist Degrees in Voice from the University of Michigan, and her Bachelor’s Degree in Voice from Pacific Lutheran University. Opera credits include Gretel (Hansel & Gretel), Papagena (Magic Flute), Lauretta (Gianni Schicchi), Susanna (Figaro), and Musetta (La Bohème).

In the 2015-2016 season, Ms. Joseph is pleased to be making her debut with Kentucky Opera as Beatrice in Jake Heggie’s Three Decembers. As a concert soloist in the Detroit area, Nicole has performed with Motor City Lyric Opera, Flint Symphony, Oakland University, Detroit Chamber Winds & Strings, and Southern Great Lakes Symphony. Nicole has also performed with the McCall SummerFest, Siletz Bay Music Festival, Walla Walla Symphony, Portland Chamber Orchestra, Victoria Bach Festival and the Rye Chamber Music Series in New York. As a member of the Austin-based choral group Cantus, Nicole was a featured soprano on their 2015 Grammy award-winning recording Sacred Spirit of Russia, and was also heard singing to critical acclaim the role of Mary/Carrie Kipling in John Muehleisen’s Pietà.

In 2014, Ms. Joseph was the First Place Winner of the inaugural James Toland Vocal Arts Competition and winner of a scholarship grant from the Career Bridges Foundation. She was also the Second Place Winner in the National Bel Canto Vocal Foundation Competition in 2009 and First Place winner in 2013, a Michigan District Winner in the 2010 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Second Place Winner in the 2013 Nicholas Loren Vocal Competition, a semifinalist and People’s Choice award winner in the 2014 American Traditions Competition, and a finalist in the 2014 Harold Haugh Light Opera Competition.

OAKLAND SPIRIT ORCHESTRA

Oakland Spirit Orchestra is an ensemble that features talented kids from Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary, Lafayette Elementary, West Oakland Middle School, Westlake Middle School, Oakland Community Charter, Claremont Middle School, McClymonds High School, and Oakland School for the Arts. The aim of Oakland Spirit Orchestra is to uplift the spirits of the world with kindness and music. Oakland Spirit Orchestra’s repertoire is its own unique mix of popular tunes, world music, classical favorites, and jazz. The young musicians of the Orchestra are not only playing music, they are creating it, too. The kids construct their own arrangements, write their own music, and improvise. Oakland Spirit Orchestra’s founding director, Alison Bailey Streich, is thrilled to introduce you to Oakland Spirit Orchestra and hopes you enjoy the show!

VIOLIN
Alishia Kelly
Leilani Walker
Sofia Parcia
Leanna Seymore
Zalika Bryan
Emma Price

CLARINET
Cristian Guido
Amandla Davis

TRUMPET
Ronald Ario
Dezmen Nelsen
Nautica Reed-Gregg

BASS
Aquarius Gibson

PIANO
Jordan Miller

DRUMS
Jeremiah Bennett
James Miller

Narah Bhakta
Precious Durst
Ortis Ward
Joy Pope
Bre King
Aaron Gonzalez
Orchestra gave the American première.
Six days later, Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony
Ernest Ansermet in Brussels on December 13, 1930.
postponed, so the first performance was conducted by
38 and 39, and all of Psalm 150.
he chose three of the Psalms of David: parts of Psalms
in which the two elements should be on an equal footing,
Stravinsky put it. “I had had the psalm symphony
idea in mind for some time, and that is what I insisted
Stravinsky planned “a choral and instrumental ensemble
in which the two elements should be on an equal footing,
neither of them outweighing the other.” For his text,
he chose three of the Psalms of David: parts of Psalms
38 and 39, and all of Psalm 150.
The planned première with the Boston Symphony was
postponed, so the first performance was conducted by
Ernest Ansermet in Brussels on December 13, 1930.
Six days later, Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony
Orchestra gave the American première.

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981)
K

38 and 39, and all of Psalm 150.

The planned première with the Boston Symphony was
postponed, so the first performance was conducted by
Ernest Ansermet in Brussels on December 13, 1930.
Six days later, Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony
Orchestra gave the American première.

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981)

A symphony of some length” was conductor Serge
Koussevitzky’s request of Stravinsky for the 50th
anniversary season of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.
Stravinsky’s publisher wanted “something popular,”
specifically an orchestral piece without chorus. As Stravinsky put it, “I had had the psalm symphony
idea in mind for some time, and that is what I insisted
on composing.”

Stravinsky planned “a choral and instrumental ensemble
in which the two elements should be on an equal footing,
neither of them outweighing the other.” For his text,
he chose three of the Psalms of David: parts of Psalms
38 and 39, and all of Psalm 150.

The planned première with the Boston Symphony was
postponed, so the first performance was conducted by
Ernest Ansermet in Brussels on December 13, 1930.
Six days later, Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony
Orchestra gave the American première.

The Dharma at Big Sur
JOHN ADAMS (b.1947)
The Dharma at Big Sur was commissioned for the
opening of Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles.
The first performance was given by the Los Angeles
Philharmonic, conducted by its music director, Esa-
Pekka Salonen, with electric violinist Tracy Silverman,
on October 24, 2003.
In his program note, Adams writes: “The Dharma at
Big Sur is in two parts, each dedicated to a West Coast
composer who had been both a friend and an inspiration
to me, Lou Harrison and Terry Riley. The first part,
‘A New Day,’ is a long rhapsodic reverie for the solo
violin, an ‘endless melody’ that soars above the stillness
of an orchestral drone with its quietly pulsating gongs
and harps and distant brass chords…. The orchestra,
so long in the background, surges up and takes over the
melody from the soloist. After a delicately cacophonous
shower of tintinnabulations from the harps, piano,
samplers and tuned cowbells, the tempo takes on a
defined pulse…. The solo violin juggles a jazz-infused
melody that gradually expands in scope and tessitura.
This is ‘Sri Nrsinghini,’ a tip of the hat to Terry Riley,
not only the composer of In C and A Rainbow in Curved Air,
but also a master of Indian raga singing.

“The easygoing roll of the rhythm gives way to a more
insistent throb, producing a dance-like effect like a
gigantic, pulsing gamelan. The solo violin flies high
and swoops down like a seagull moving in a windstorm.
The brass instruments, so quiet and reserved at the
beginning of the piece, now fill the acoustic space with
great surging walls of resonance. Low tuned gongs mark
the inner structure of the music as it vibrates over and
over on one enormous, ecstatic expression of ‘just B’.”

La Valse
MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

It is not subtle—what I am undertaking at the
moment,” Ravel wrote to a friend in 1908. “It is a
Grande Valse, a sort of homage to the memory of the
great Strauss. You know my intense sympathy for this
admirable rhythm and that I hold la joie de vivre as
expressed by the dance in esteem.” The original sketches
for Ravel’s homage to the younger Johann Strauss were
titled simply Vienna.

The impetus to finish the piece came from Sergei
Diaghilev, the director of the Russian Ballet, who
asked Ravel to compose another ballet for him.
Ravel had already written Daphnis and Chloe for the
Russian impresario.

By 1919 Vienna had become La Valse, subtitled “A
Choreographic Poem.” Ravel provided stage directions
in the score: “Drifting clouds give glimpses, through
rifts, of couples waltzing. The clouds gradually scatter,
and an immense hall can be seen, filled with a
whirling crowd. The light of chandeliers bursts forth.
An Imperial Court about 1855.”

Recalling the piece later, Ravel wrote: “I had intended
this work to be a kind of apotheosis of the Viennese
waltz, with which was associated in my imagination an
impression of a fantastic and fatal kind of devils’ dance.”

However, Diaghilev found La Valse impossible to choreograph, much less finance. Ravel took this as a
criticism of his music. Five years later, impresario and
composer met in Monte Carlo. When Ravel refused
Diaghilev’s handshake, Diaghilev challenged Ravel to
a duel. Fortunately, mutual friends intervened and
the duel was cancelled. The two men never met again.

Since Diaghilev refused to perform La Valse as a ballet,
Ravel introduced the work as a concert piece in Paris
in 1920. La Valse remained in the concert hall until
1928, when Ida Rubinstein, herself a former member
of Diaghilev’s company, produced the music as a ballet.
That same year, Bronislava Nijinska choreographed it.

- Program Notes by Charley Samson, copyright 2016.
Symphony of Psalms

1. (Psalm 38, verses 13 and 14)

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and with Thine ears consider my calling: hold not Thy peace at my tears. Do not be silent. For I am a stranger with Thee: and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength: before I go, and am no more.

2. (Psalm 39, verses 2, 3 and 4)

I waited patiently for the Lord: and He inclined unto me, And heard my calling: He brought me out of the horrible pit, out of the mire and clay: And set my feet upon the rock, and ordered my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even a thanksgiving unto our God.

3. (Psalm 150)


It has become the time of evening when people sit on their porches, rocking gently and talking gently and watching the street; and the standing up into their sphere of possession of the trees, of birds’ hung havens, hangers. People go by; things go by. A horse, drawing a buggy, breaking his hollow iron music on the asphalt; a loud auto; a quiet auto; people in pairs, not in a hurry, scuffling, switching their weight of aestival body, talking casually, the taste hovering over them of vanilla, strawberry, pasteboard and starched milk, the image upon them of lovers and horsemen, squared with clowns in hueless amber.

The dry and exalted noise of the locusts from all the air at once enchants my eardrums. On the rough wet grass of the backyard my father and mother have spread quilts. We all lie there, my mother, my father, my uncle, my aunt, and I, too am lying there.

They are not talking much, and the talk is quiet, of nothing in particular, of nothing at all in particular, of nothing at all. The stars are wide and alive, they seem each like a smile of great sweetness, and they seem very near.

All my people are larger bodies than mine, … with voices gentle and meaningless like the voice of sleeping birds. One is an artist, he is living at home. One is a musician, she is living at home.

- James Agee