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OAKLAND EAST BAY SYMPHONY

OPENING NIGHT CONCERT

NOVEMBER 15, 2002 8:00PM
PARAMOUNT THEATRE, OAKLAND

Michael Morgan, *Music Director & Conductor*

with guest artist
Emil Miland, *cello*

PROGRAM

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

*Overture to Le Siège de Corinthe
(The Siege of Corinth)*

Jake Heggie (b.1961)

*“Holy the Firm” – Essay for
Cello and Orchestra (World Premiere)**

Emil Miland, *cello*

INTERMISSION

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Opus 43

- I. *Allegretto*
- II. *Tempo andante, ma rubato*
- III. *Scherzo: Vivacissimo*
- IV. *Allegro moderato*

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**“Holy the Firm” – Essay for Cello and Orchestra* by Jake Heggie made possible through the generosity of
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GUEST ARTISTS

Emil Miland, Cello

Cellist Emil Miland is acclaimed internationally for his performances of new and traditional repertoire as a soloist and chamber musician. He is "a rhapsodic kind of performer with whimsy, charm and humor in his artistic makeup, as well as all the soulful qualities one expects from a cellist" says Richard Dyer of *The Boston Globe*. Miland is an ardent champion of new work and has given the premieres of compositions written specifically for him by Giancarlo Aquilanti, Ernst Bacon, David Carlson, Andrew Frank, Andrew Imbrie, Lou Harrison, Jake Heggie, Robert Helps, Dwight Okamura and Tobias Tenenbaum. He has recorded Carlson's *Cello Concerto No. 1* with Stewart Robinson and the Utah Symphony (New World Records). He also appears on the RCA Red Seal recording "The Faces of Love: The Songs of Jake Heggie," performing with Frederica von Stade, Sylvia McNair and Zheng Cao.

Miland's recent performances include concerts with the Harmida Piano Trio, of which he is a founding member with violinist Dawn Harms and pianist Laura Dahl. In 2000, he was featured in concerts of Heggie's music at New York's Alice Tully Hall and San Francisco's Herbst Theatre.

For nine years, Emil Miland served as founding principal cellist of San Francisco's New Century Chamber Orchestra. During this tenure, he introduced Carlson's *Cello Concerto No. 2* and Lou Harrison's *Suites for Cello and Strings* (dedicated to him by the composer). In addition to teaching at UC Berkeley, he is a long-standing member of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra.

Miland was a member of the Oakland Symphony Youth Orchestra in his teens and performed Elgar's *Cello Concerto* at the Paramount Theatre with the late Denis de Coteau. He made his solo debut with the San Francisco Symphony at age 16 and that same year, was selected to perform in the Rostropovich Master Classes at UC Berkeley. During his student years, Miland was a recipient of the Charles P. Skene Aberdeen Award and the Henri Dutilleux Medaille d'Honneur. Following his studies, he received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts for a U.S. recital tour that featured his New York debut at Merkin Hall. His private teachers have included William Pleeth, Sally Kell, Milly Rosner, Margaret Rowell, Bonnie Hampton and Colin Hampton. While a student at the New England Conservatory, he studied with Laurence Lesser. Emil Miland makes his home in San Francisco.

Jake Heggie, Composer

The music of Jake Heggie is championed by some of the world's most noted performers, including Frederica von Stade, Renée Fleming, Jennifer Larmore, Susan Graham, Bryn Terfel, and Eugenia Zukerman. His first opera, *Dead Man Walking* (libretto by Terrence McNally; based on the book by Sister Helen Prejean), received its premiere at the San Francisco Opera in October 2000 to tremendous international acclaim, conducted by Patrick Summers and directed by Joe Mantello. A new production by director Leonard Foglia (co-commissioned by seven American opera companies) was seen this year at Opera Pacific (April), Cincinnati Opera (July), and most recently, New York City Opera at Lincoln Center (September/October). Future productions are scheduled for opera houses in Austin, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Adelaide (Australia), Germany and Canada. A live recording of the premiere was released by ERATO records and an orchestral suite of music from the opera was recently performed by the Dallas Symphony. Heggie's songs are performed internationally, and many can be heard on the RCA Red Seal recording "The Faces of Love." In addition to new song commissions, Heggie is composing his second opera - based on Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair* - for the Houston Grand Opera (2004), collaborating with playwright Heather McDonald and

director Michael Mayer. He is also at work on a new theater piece with Terrence McNally, to receive its premiere in the Bay Area in 2005. The composer is a frequent guest lecturer for university and high school students and is devoted to restoring music in elementary schools as part of a core curriculum. A graduate of UCLA and a resident of San Francisco, his teachers have included Joanna Harris and the late Ernst Bacon.

PROGRAM NOTES

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

Overture to *Le Siège de Corinthe* (*The Siege of Corinth*)

Rossini was superstitious. He never started anything on Friday the 13th. (Ironically, he died on Friday, November 13.) His librettist for *Maometto II*, the Duke of Ventignano, supposedly wielded the evil eye. So while writing the music to the Duke's text with his right hand, Rossini made horns with the index and little fingers of his left hand in an effort to ward off black magic.

The Duke's libretto was borrowed from Voltaire's *Mahomet, ou Le Fanatisme* (1742). The opera was a failure at its first performance in Naples on December 3, 1820. As originally staged, the opera had no overture, but when Rossini produced it in Venice in 1823, he supplied one. This production was also a failure.

Never one to waste good material, Rossini recast the entire opera as *The Siege of Corinth* for the Paris Opera three years later. His librettists this time were Luigi Balocchi and Alexandre Soumet, neither of whom practiced black magic. The story concerns a Greek girl, the daughter of the governor of Corinth, who, without knowing his identity, loves the Turkish Sultan, but chooses to die with her father when her lover lays waste to the city. Since the Greeks were fighting for their independence from the Turks at the time, and European Romantics had taken up their cause, the first performance of *The Siege of Corinth* on October 9, 1826 was a wild success.

The overture to *The Siege of Corinth* was lifted from the Venetian production of *Maometto II*, whose opening fanfares had been lifted from the overture to his own *Bianca e Falliero* (1819). Then comes a "Greek Funeral March," actually a theme stolen by Johann Mayr from a psalm setting by Benedetto Marcello. The Overture concludes with a rousing triumphant crescendo.

Jake Heggie, (b. 1961)

***"Holy the Firm"* – Essay for Cello and Orchestra (World Premiere)**

In April of this year, a friend in Texas sent me a collection of Annie Dillard's essays and stories (*The Annie Dillard Reader*). I cracked the book open on a plane ride from San Francisco to Orange County for a production of my opera, *Dead Man Walking*, in Costa Mesa. And there on the plane I read *Holy the Firm* for the first time. (While the story is only 30 pages long, reading it was an utterly transforming experience.) There in front of me, in black and white, was a highly personal exploration of all the spiritual anguish I feel so deeply on a daily basis. Mainly, how to accept the presence of a loving God in a world so absolutely fraught with terrible violence. The words got right under my skin and into my head and heart.

I was in a plane, reading about the fallout from a plane crash witnessed by Ms. Dillard in 1972, and still feeling so confused and confounded by the events of 9/11. When I arrived in Costa Mesa, I met

with Sister Helen Prejean (author of the book *Dead Man Walking*) for a panel discussion about our opera. I couldn't wait to talk to her about this book and the experience I was having. And it was in that discussion that the light bulb went on for the new composition for cello and orchestra.

The cello is such a human and vocal instrument: powerful and throaty, it can whisper or scream, seduce, soothe, or rebel. Pitted against a full orchestra, it seems incredibly vulnerable. It could easily be swallowed up and lost. It is this fragile balance and interplay, this constant struggle for individuality and the search for a meaningful expression of beauty that sets the tone for "*Holy the Firm*" - *Essay for Cello and Orchestra*.

The composition is in three parts and the entire work is based on a four-note, thematic motif, which first appears in its barest form in measure 20. The motif outlines the struggle between a major and minor third. This is key to the harmonies I use in just about everything I write, and to my melodic construction. Different permutations of the motif are explored in each part of the work.

The first part is the longest of the three, and goes the deepest into the spiritual struggle of Ms. Dillard's story. It is the struggle to believe in and find beauty in a texture that is constantly interrupted by aggression and violence. There is an impetus in this movement to find a waltz-like simplicity. However, it is always short-lived.

The first part goes right into the second section, in which the plane crash of the story is represented by a very slow, quiet and almost surreal chromatic collapse in the strings. If you've ever been in a terrible accident, you might have experienced the feeling that everything was suddenly going in slow motion. The cello then enters and plays a very simple and direct song: a remembrance of what has been lost, and the struggle to let it go and move on.

The third part is an expression of hope and joy: that perhaps love will ultimately redeem the world. All of the thematic material from the first two parts is combined in this last section, and at one point it is all played simultaneously.

Michael Morgan first talked to me about this commission a year ago, and we were set on a cello concerto. But, as the piece took shape, I realized that it is not a concerto in the traditional sense of a virtuoso showpiece. In this work, the cello moves in and out of the texture of the full orchestra. Sometimes, it is plainly leading. Other times, it is forced along and then swallowed completely. This is not to say that the solo cello part is not difficult, for it is. Moreover, all that I've written for the soloist is only possible because I knew I had the great luxury writing for one of the finest cellists anywhere: Emil Miland. We have collaborated on many new compositions and performed together extensively. Since I am essentially a composer for the voice, I have always been most attracted to instrumental playing that truly sings. This is what most excites me about writing for Emil. This new composition is dedicated to him.

~*Holy the Firm* Program Note by Jake Heggie

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) **Symphony No. 2 in D major, Opus 43**

The Second Symphony would not have been possible without Baron Axel Carpelan. It was he who provided funds for the composer and his family to travel to Italy in 1901. There, in a rented villa, Sibelius wrote most of the symphony. "Now I am again completely a man of imagination," he wrote to a friend. "Nothing disturbs me."

Returning to Finland, his teaching duties kept him from finishing the Symphony. Finally, in October 1901, he wrote, "I was now able to devote myself entirely to composing. I devoted all my strength to completing my new symphony. By the end of the year the work was ready."

Sibelius conducted the first performance on an all-Sibelius program in Helsinki on March 8, 1902. He dedicated the work to Baron Carpelan.

Two years later Ferruccio Busoni invited Sibelius to conduct the Second Symphony in Berlin. "It was like setting a match to gunpowder," wrote Adolf Paul. "I have seldom seen such enthusiasm as on its conclusion. Proper ovations to Sibelius from both the orchestra and the audience. Time after time, he was called out to receive the applause of the audience. I need not tell the Finnish public how he conducted the work. But the Philharmonic Orchestra played it brilliantly, with swing, fire, and enthusiasm."

Various patriotic associations haunted early performances of the Second Symphony - Finland at the time was dominated by Russia. The Finnish conductor Georg Schnéevoigt, a friend of the composer, provided the following program for the work in 1924: "The first movement depicts the quiet, pastoral life of the Finns, undisturbed by thoughts of oppression. The second movement is charged with patriotic feeling, but the thought of brutal strife brings with it timidity of the soul. The third portrays the awakening of national feeling, the desire to organize defense of their rights, while in the finale, hope enters their breasts and there is comfort in the anticipated coming of a deliverer."

Ten years later, Sibelius supplied a rebuttal: "My symphonies are music conceived and worked out in terms of music and with no literary basis. I am not a literary musician; for me music begins where words cease."

Louis Biancolli writes, "Instead of introducing full themes and then pulling them apart for separate development, Sibelius gives out fragments of themes, juggles them adroitly, and then pieces them together in a final integration. The method at times involves, as in the Finale, a constantly postponed climax that is steadily building, but never quite ready, that is interrupted by other material, yet is so much the more overpowering when at last it arrives."

Program Notes by Charley Samson, copyright 2002