

Programme Notes



Go West!

Fri 16 September 2022 • 20.30

PROGRAMME

conductor **Lahav Shani**

clarinet **Julien Hervé**

Aaron Copland 1900-1990

Four Dance Episodes from Rodeo
[1942]

- Buckaroo Holiday
- Corral Nocturne
- Saturday Night Waltz
- Hoe-Down

Aaron Copland

Clarinet Concerto [1947-49]

- Slowly and expressively
- Rather fast

Leonard Bernstein 1918-1990

West Side Story: Symphonic Dances
[1960]

- Prologue
- Somewhere
- Scherzo
- Mambo
- Cha-cha
- Meeting Scene
- Cool Fugue
- Rumble
- Finale

Most recent performances by our orchestra:

Copland Rodeo: Nov 2004,
conductor Jan Stulen

Copland Clarinet Concerto: Sep
2012, clarinet Andreas Ottensamer,
conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Bernstein West Side Story: Aug 2017,
conductor Lahav Shani

*Cover: Windmill silhouetted at sunset
in eastern Colorado. Photo Carol
M. Highsmith.*



Made in America

Strange things happen. For a long time the 'young' United States of America had looked towards Europe. European music, European norms, and European culture set the standard. Up to the end of the nineteenth century when a Czech composer would encourage Americans to look at their own culture, the things that made them unique.

In 1892 Antonin Dvořák travelled to New York to teach composition at the city's conservatoire. He taught the need for Americans to focus their eyes and ears more on their own inheritance. To set an example, and practise what he preached, he composed his symphony *From the New World*. And with the awakening awareness that Dvořák's words inspired, true American music began to be written. People suddenly dared to examine the richness of their own culture and history, and to mine these thematically and musically. Though not always wholeheartedly.

Wild West ballet

In fact, more than thirty years following the première of Dvořák's *New World* symphony, Aaron Copland was still hesitating about depicting one of the most significant, and internationally most recognised, features of American history in ballet form.

With its many cowboy ballads and famous tales of irredeemable outlaws, many Americans found the Wild West a huge source of inspiration and identity. But when, in 1938, Lincoln Kirstein, founder of Ballet Caravan, asked Copland to compose music for a ballet based on the Wild West, and the outlaw Billy the Kid in particular, the composer was less than enthusiastic. Copland had nothing but disdain for 'cowboy music' and wanted to take no risk that his future reputation could be compromised as a composer of such music. Fortunately Kirstein persevered, and eventually Copland came on board. With Billy the Kid, Copland had composed the first real American ballet. The ballet score put a sound to the Wild West that still resonates in modern composition.

A couple of years later, in 1942, Copland repeated the success with his ballet *Rodeo* by which he became the composer to

give a musical voice to the United States. The ballet had been commissioned through the Ballets Russes and their choreographer Agnes de Mille, who was eager to work with Copland after the success of *Billy the Kid*. The story is paper thin. A cowgirl falls in love with a cowboy and dresses in male attire to make an impression on him. This has no effect, and it is only when she reverts to skirts and her feminine charms that he succumbs. Well, ok, the feminist movement still had a long way to go. Copland quickly produced an orchestral suite of the lively ballet in which he made grateful use of cowboy ballads and folk songs. For example, the first movement is largely a variation of two folk songs: *He be a Buckaroo* and *Sis Joe*. In the third movement, traditional fiddle music plays an

the twentieth century was developing an important role in the United States. The choice was unsurprising, given that Copland was handed the commission in 1947 by Benny Goodman, who not only played jazz, but – as evidenced by his recording of Mozart's famous Clarinet Concerto – was also interested in classical music. Copland composed an atypical concerto for clarinet, harp, piano and string orchestra and departed from the usual three-movement structure. A slow, lyrical first movement is linked to a virtuoso, jazzy second movement by a cadenza for solo clarinet which introduces the material for the second movement. Despite this atypical structure the work quickly grew into one of the most important concertos to be written for the clarinet.

Copland for advice in preparation for his dissertation, the latter replied: '...don't try to prove too much. Composing in this country is still pretty young no matter how you look at it.'

Broadway hit

It was precisely this lack of tradition that enabled Bernstein, as George Gershwin before him, to balance on the edge between various genres. He suffered the misfortune of composing in 1957 a work that would be celebrated for an eternity, the musical *West Side Story*. A modern interpretation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the unforgettable melodies of Bernstein and sharp lyrics of Stephen Sondheim made the work an unrelenting success. The first production of the musical alone ran for over seven hundred performances on Broadway. Although Bernstein was very happy with the achievement, the success of *West Side Story* thwarted his work as a serious composer. He remained the eclectic musical composer always wanting to compose his first symphony. Finally, in 1960 he brought *West Side Story* to the concert hall in the form of his *Symphonic Dances*, an instrumental depiction of the drama of the two lovers from rival New York gangs. The eight different dances, which flow one into the other without interruption, not only follow the story told in the stage and film musical, but also demonstrate the compositional coherence of the entire work, with the tritone as its most important motif (the recognisable opening to the song *Maria*). It was as though Bernstein wanted to underscore the point that he had totally mastered his craft.

Paul Janssen

Bernstein suffered the misfortune of composing in 1957 a work that would be celebrated for an eternity, the musical West Side Story

important role, and in the final movement *Hoe Down*, the Texan fiddle tunes romp through the score. Copland made clever use of a number of familiar fiddle tunes (especially *Bonnyparte* and the old Scottish dance *McLeod's Reel*, brought over by migrants) and transformed them into a swirling dance with an identity of its own.

Jazz clarinet

Another work with an identity of its own is Copland's *Clarinet Concerto*, which features not cowboy ballads but jazz, which at the beginning of

As early as his student days at Harvard, Leonard Bernstein paid a lot of attention to American music. He graduated with a dissertation entitled *The absorption of race elements into American music*, in which he rightly argued that it wasn't nineteenth century composers who occasionally borrowed from folk music in western forms who inspired the new American Music, but composers such as his lifelong friend Aaron Copland and Charles Ives who represented the true spirit of the still-young nation. When Bernstein asked

Lahav Shani - chief conductor

Born: Tel Aviv, Israel

Current position: chief conductor Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra; music director Israel Philharmonic Orchestra

Before: principal guest conductor Vienna Symphony Orchestra

Education: piano at the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music Tel Aviv; conducting and piano at the Academy of Music Hanns Eisler Berlin; mentor: Daniel Barenboim

Breakthrough: 2013, after winning the Gustav Mahler International Conducting Competition in Bamberg

Subsequently: Staatskapelle Berlin, Berlin State Opera, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Staatskapelle Dresden, Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2016

Photo: Oscar Seijkens



Photo: Marco Borggreve

Julien Hervé - clarinet

Born: Mantes-la-Jolie (France)

Position: solo clarinetist Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra (since 2008)

Education: Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique, Paris, with Pascal Moraguès, Paul Meyer, Alain Damiens, Jean François Verdier and Jean-Noël Crocq

Awards: First Prize Kraków International Chamber Music Competition 2003, Adami Classical Music Revelation 2005, Victoire de la Musique 2020

Solo-appearances: with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Les Siècles, Les Dissonances, the Orchestre de Chambre de France and many other orchestras and ensembles

Ensembles: Het Collectief, Calliopée Ensemble, Les Siècles, duo with pianist Jean Hisanori Sugitani

Initiatives: founder and artistic director of the Rotterdam Chamber Music Society and the International Chamber Music Festival of Thèze (France)

Instrument: Julien Hervé is a Buffet Crampon Artist

Agenda

Sat 17 September 2022 • 20.30

conductor **Tarmo Peltokoski**

piano **Lahav Shani**

Gershwin Rhapsody in Blue

Strauss Don Juan

Sibelius Symphony no. 7

Thu 29 September 2022 • 20.15

Fri 30 September 2022 • 20.15

conductor **Lahav Shani**

violin **Hillary Hahn**

Widmann Con brio

Dvořák Violin Concerto

Brahms Symphony no. 1

Fri 30 September 2022 • 17.00

piano **Lahav Shani**

violin **Igor Gruppman** and **Hed Yaron**

Meyerson

cello **Emanuele Silvestri**

horn **David Fernández Alonso**

Dvořák Piano Trio 'Dumky'

Brahms Horn Trio

Sat 8 October 2022 • 20.30

conductor **Bertie Baigent**

Wagner Meistersinger Overture

Rachmaninoff Vocalise

Dvořák Largo from Symphony no. 9

Bizet Carmen: Suite no. 1

Ravel Boléro

Fri 14 October 2022 • 20.15

conductor **André de Ridder**

piano **Daniil Trifonov**

Barber Adagio for Strings

Bates Piano Concerto

Roukens Symphony nr. 1

'Kaleidoscopic'

Sun 16 October 2022 • 10.30

Music for Breakfast 1

Chamber music by **Pärt**, **Ter Veldhuis**,

Martinů and **Ravel**

Musicians

Chief Conductor

Lahav Shani

Honorary Conductor

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Principal Assistant Conductor

Bertie Baigent

First Violin

Igor Gruppman,

leader

Marieke Blankestijn,

leader

Quirine Scheffers

Hed Yaron Meyerson

Saskia Otto

Arno Bons

Mireille van der Wart

Cor van der Linden

Rachel Browne

Maria Dingjan

Marie-José Schrijner

Noëmi Bodden

Petra Visser

Sophia Torrença

Hadewijch Hofland

Annerien Stuker

Alexandra van

Beveren

Koen Stapert

Second Violin

Charlotte Potgieter

Cecilia Ziano

Frank de Groot

Laurens van Vliet

Tomoko Hara

Elina Staphorsius

Jun Yi Dou

Bob Bruyn

Letizia Sciarone

Eefje Habraken

Maija Reinikainen

Sumire Hara

Wim Ruitenbeek

Babette van den Berg

Melanie Broers

Viola

Anne Huser

Roman Spitzer

Maartje van Rheeden

Galahad Samson

Kerstin Bonk

Lex Prummel

Janine Baller

Francis Saunders

Veronika Lénártová

Rosalinde Kluck

León van den Berg

Olfje van der Klein

Cello

Emanuele Silvestri

Joanna Pachucka

Daniel Petrovitsch

Mario Rio

Gé van Leeuwen

Eelco Beinema

Carla Schrijner

Pepijn Meeuws

Yi-Ting Fang

Double Bass

Matthew Midgley

Ying Lai Green

Jonathan Focquaert

Robert Franenberg

Harke Wiersma

Arjen Leendertz

Ricardo Neto

Flute

Juliette Hurel

Joséphine Olech

Désirée Woudenberg

Flute/Piccolo

Beatriz Da Baião

Oboe

Remco de Vries

Karel Schoofs

Hans Cartigny

Anja van der Maten

Oboe/Cor Anglais

Ron Tijhuis

Clarinet

Julien Hervé

Bruno Bonansea

Jan Jansen

Clarinet/ Bass Clarinet

Romke-Jan Wijmenga

Bassoon

Pieter Nuytten

Lola Descours

Marianne Prommel

Bassoon/ Contrabassoon

Hans Wisse

Horn

David Fernández

Alonso

Wendy Leliveld

Richard Speetjens

Laurens Otto

Pierre Buizer

Trumpet

Giuliano

Sommerhalder

Alex Elia

Simon Wierenga

Jos Verspagen

Trombone

Pierre Volders

Alexander Verbeek

Remko de Jager

Bass Trombone

Rommert Groenhof

Tuba

Hendrik-Jan Renes

Timpani/ Percussion

Randy Max

Danny van de Wal

Ronald Ent

Martijn Boom

Adriaan Feyaerts

Harp

Charlotte Sprenkels