



MUSIC WESTERN
The University of Western Ontario

Faculty of Music

Information

UWO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA LOOKS TO THE PREVIOUS CENTURY

The UWO Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Maestro James McKay, turns its sights to the “Turn of the 20th Century” with its performance on **Sunday, February 3, 2002** in **Alumni Hall**. The three works on the program are all products of composers who lived or worked during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and present a pleasing contrast of musical forms.

Richard Strauss's (1864-1949) musical success came first as a conductor and then as a composer, and it was thanks to this experience that he developed his tremendous understanding of the subtleties of orchestration. His renown as a composer of opera and lieder came later in his life — it was his tone poems, a symphonic vehicle that he largely defined, that first established his reputation as composer. *Till Eulenspiegel* was a character of literature, a legendary prankster and rebel whose exploits first appeared in book form in the early 16th century. ***Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*** (*Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*) was the last of Strauss's three early tone poems with which he first made his mark. Strauss originally intended this work to be an opera, but the failure of another opera prompted him to re-work it as an orchestral piece. Till's roguish, sarcastic nature is easily discernible in the repeating themes of the horns and clarinets. The horn parts in fact are notoriously difficult. Strauss's father was one of the preeminent hornists of his day, and Strauss assumed, often in error, that if his father could play something, any horn player could!

Aaron Copland's life spanned almost the entire 20th century (1900-1990). He was long considered the premier American composer, a legacy that had humble beginnings in a correspondence course as a teenager, on writing harmony. The evolution of Copland's style mirrored the progression of 20th century society, with influences ranging from the burgeoning jazz movement, to Stravinsky's Neoclassicism, to the popular music of radio and movies. Towards the end of his active composing career, Copland's works reflected the serial techniques of Arnold Schoenberg's 12-tone school. His ***Concerto for Clarinet***, performed on this concert by UWOSO Concerto Competition winner **Rebecca Danard**, was premiered by Benny Goodman and the NBC Symphony in a broadcast performance in 1950.

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Rebecca Danard is in the fourth year of the Bachelor Music Performance program, and is a student of Jerome Summers. As well as being a winner in the Concerto Competition, she was also a winner in the 2001 London Music Scholarship Foundation Competition.

American-born but of Scandinavian heritage, **Howard Hanson** (1896-1981) was equally well-known and influential as composer, educator, and conductor. He championed American music and fostered the careers of numerous composers through his long association with the Eastman School of Music. His **Second Symphony** (the “*Romantic*”) was one of many important works commissioned by Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and received its premiere in 1930. Of this symphony, Hanson himself said, “The Symphony represents for me my escape from the rather bitter type of modern musical realism which occupies so large a place in contemporary thought. Much contemporary music seems to me to be showing a tendency to become entirely too cerebral. I do not believe that music is, primarily a matter of intellect, but rather a manifestation of the emotions. I have, therefore, aimed in the Symphony to create a work that was young in spirit, lyrical and romantic in temperament, and simple and direct in expression... I believe that there are essentially two types of music: warm-blooded music and cold-blooded music, and every possible admixture of the two. The Romantic is definitely warm-blooded music.”

The UWO Symphony Orchestra is one of the University’s showcase performing ensembles. Its range of repertoire is very broad, and it has an educational mandate to study and perform all representative works from the standard symphonic repertoire. The vast majority of its personnel are full time students in the Faculty of Music, but the ensemble is open by audition to other members of the university community. The annual Concerto Competition allows a select number of accomplished performers to present a full concerto at one of the four concerts given each season.

Tickets for this concert are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors, and can be purchased at the door. For more information on this or any Music Western event, call Public Affairs at (519) 661-3767.