

Violin

Joseph Morag,
concertmaster
Samuel Chen, principal
Tristan Francia Aniceto
Laura Bedol
Kimberly Bill
Sabrina Bradford
Xue Chen
Jessica Emery
Zachary Hamilton
Wan-Chun Hu
Annie Hyejeong Jeong
Tae-eun Kim
Benjamin Kronk
Mia Laity
Inna Langerman
Brian Lee
Jiaxing Li
Jessica Livermore
Casey Mink
Myles Mocariski
Jesse Munoz
Claire Niederberger
Olivia Ren
Aiko Jimena Richter
Hannah Schwalm
Amanda Simensky
Duoli Sun
Jamie Jiwon Sun
Abigail Tucker

Viola

Alexander Wong, principal
Joseph Burke
Jacob Davis
Megan DiGeorgio
Katelyn Hoag
Elaine Kelly
Alex Lee
Rachel Mooers
Alexandra Sophocleus
Sebastian Stefanovic
Jasper Zientek

Cello

Victor Minke Huls,
principal
Ellen Gira,
assistant principal
Emily Carroll
Seohee Choi
Diane Chou
Bryant Gozali
Jesse Munoz
Kevin Maa
Joseph Rubano
Mark Serkin
Claire Marie Solomon
Amy Tcheupdjian

Bass

Douglas Aliano, principal
Jordan Calixto
Hayden Joyce
Dominic Kenny
Graham Kolle
Austin Lewellen
Brain McAnally

Flute

Viola Chan
Evan Fojtik
Hilary K. Jones
Evan Pengra Sult

Oboe

Victoria Chung
Timothy Daniels
Lana Mayu Isom
Mitchell Kuhn

Clarinet

Artemis Cheung
Matthew Griffith
Colin Roshak
Ryan Toher

Bassoon

Jonathan Gibbons
Nicholas Hooks
Alec Saleh
Blair Shepperd

Horn

Natalie Fritz
Daniel Kitchens
Scott Leger
Jessica Pinkham
Emily Schaefer
Drew Truskowski

Trumpet

Michael Chen
Steven Cunningham*
Steven Franklin
Alexander Schwarz
Jingyuan Wang

Trombone

Taylor Blanton
Brian Wendel

Bass Trombone

Daniel Pendley*
Simon Wood

Tuba

Dan Honaker
John S. Caughman V*

Percussion

Laurin Friedland
Davi Martinelli de Lira
Matt Richards
Nick Sakakeeny
Robert Schroyer*
Logan Seith*
Maurice Watkins*
Alana Wiesing

Harp

Taylor Ann Fleshman
Elise Kolle

Piano

Milena Gligic

Mandolin

Karl Mitze*
Nick Montopoli*

Orchestra Manager

Aaron Muller

*Corigliano only



Photo: Geoff Shell

David Alan Miller

Photo: Gary Gold

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John CORIGLIANO

Symphony No. 1

Michael TORKE

Bright Blue Music

Aaron COPLAND

Appalachian Spring
– Suite

National Orchestral
Institute Philharmonic

David Alan Miller



John Corigliano (b. 1938) • Michael Torke (b. 1961) • Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Orchestral Works

**John Corigliano (b. 1938):
Symphony No. 1 (1988)**

Historically, many symphonists (Berlioz, Mahler and Shostakovich, to name a few) have been inspired by important events affecting their lives, and perhaps occasionally their choice of the symphonic form was dictated by extra-musical events. During the 1980s and '90s I lost many friends and colleagues to the AIDS epidemic, and the cumulative effect of those losses, naturally, deeply affected me. My *First Symphony* was generated by feelings of loss, anger and frustration.

A few years ago, I was extremely moved when I first saw "The Quilt", an ambitious interweaving of several thousand fabric panels, each memorializing a person who had died of AIDS, and, most importantly, each designed and constructed by his or her loved ones. This made me want to memorialize in music those I have lost, and reflect on those I am losing. I decided to relate the first three movements of the symphony to three lifelong musician-friends. In the third movement, still other friends are recalled in a quilt-like interweaving of motivic melodies.

Cast in free, large-scale A-B-A form, the first movement, *Apologue: Of Rage and Remembrance*, is highly charged and alternates between the tension of anger and the bittersweet nostalgia of remembering. (An apologue is an allegorical narrative usually intended to convey a moral.) It reflects my distress over a concert-pianist friend. The opening (marked "Ferocious") begins with the nasal open A of the violins and violas. This note, which starts and finishes the symphony, grows in intensity and volume until it is answered by a burst of percussion. A repeat of this angry-sounding note climaxes, this time, in the entrance of the full orchestra, which is accompanied by a slow timpani beat. This steady pulse – a kind of musical heartbeat – is utilised in this movement as the start of a series of overlapping *accelerandos* interspersed with antagonistic shatterings of antiphonal brass. A final multiple acceleration reaches a peak climaxed by the

violins in their highest register which begins the middle section (B).

As the violins make a gradual *diminuendo*, a distant (offstage) piano is heard, as if in a memory, playing the Leopold Godowsky transcription of Isaac Albéniz's *Tango* (made in Chicago in 1921), a favourite piece of my pianist-friend. This is the start of an extended lyrical section in which nostalgic themes are mixed with fragmented suggestions of the *Tango*. Little by little, the chattering brass motives begin to reappear, interrupted by the elements of tension that initiated the work, until the lyrical "remembrance" theme is accompanied by the relentless pulsing timpani heartbeat. At this point, the lyrical theme continues in its slow and even rhythm, but the drumbeat begins simultaneously to accelerate. The tension of a slow, steady melody played against a slow, steady *accelerando* culminates in a recapitulation of the multiple accelerations heard earlier in the movement, starting the final section (A).

But this time the accelerations reach an even bigger climax in which the entire orchestra joins together playing a single dissonant chord in a near-hysterical repeated pattern that begins to slow down and finally stops. Unexpectedly, the volume of this passage remains loud, so that the effect is that of a monstrous machine coming to a halt but still boiling with energy. This energy, however, is finally exhausted, and there is a *diminuendo* to *piano*. A recapitulation of the original motives along with a final burst of intensity from the orchestra and offstage piano concludes the movement, which ends on a desolate high A.

The second movement (*Tarantella*) was written in memory of a friend who was an executive in the music industry. He was also an amateur pianist, and in 1970 I wrote a set of dances (*Gazebo Dances* for piano, four hands) for various friends to play, and dedicated the final, *tarantella*, movement to him. This was a jaunty little piece whose mood, as in many *tarantellas*, seems to be at odds with its purpose. For, the *tarantella*, as described in

Grove's Dictionary, is a "South Italian dance played at continually increasing speed [and] by means of dancing it a strange kind of insanity [attributed to tarantula bite] could be cured." The association of madness and my piano piece proved both prophetic and bitterly ironic when my friend, whose wit and intelligence were legendary in the music field, became insane as a result of AIDS dementia.

In writing a *tarantella* movement for this symphony, I tried to picture some of the schizophrenic and hallucinatory images that would have accompanied that madness, as well as the moments of lucidity. This movement is formally less organised than the previous one, and intentionally so – but there is a slow and relentless progression toward an accelerated "madness". The ending can only be described as a brutal scream.

The third movement (*Chaconne: Giulio's Song*) recalls a friendship that dated back to my college days. Giulio was an amateur cellist, full of that enthusiasm for music that amateurs tend to have and professionals try to keep. After he died several years ago, I found an old tape recording of the two of us improvising on cello and piano, as we often did. That tape, dated 1962, provided material for the extended cello solo in this movement. Notating Giulio's improvisation, I found a pungent and beautiful motto which, when developed, formed the melody played by the solo cello at this point in the symphony. That theme is preceded by a *Chaconne*, based on twelve tones (and the chords they produce), which runs through the entire movement. The first several minutes of this movement are played by the violas, cellos, and basses alone. The *chaconne* chords are immediately heard, hazily dissolving into each other, and the cello melody begins over the final chord. Halfway through this melody a second cello joins the soloist. This is the first of a series of musical remembrances of other friends (the first friend having been a professional cellist who was Giulio's teacher and who also died of AIDS).

In order to provide themes for this interweaving of lost friends, I asked William M. Hoffman, the librettist of my opera *The Ghosts of Versailles* to eulogise them with short sentences. I then set those lines for various solo instruments and, removing the text, inserted them into the

symphony. These melodies are played against the recurring background of the *chaconne*, interspersed with dialogues between the solo cellos. At the conclusion of the section, as the cello recapitulates Giulio's theme, the solo trumpet begins to play the note A that began the symphony. This is taken up by the other brass, one by one, so that the note grows to overpower the other orchestral sonorities. The entire string section takes up the A and builds to a restatement of the initial assertive orchestral entrance in the first movement. The relentless drumbeat returns, but this time it does not accelerate. Instead, it continues its slow and sombre beat against the *chaconne*, augmented by two sets of antiphonal chimes tolling the twelve pitches as the intensity increases and the persistent rhythm is revealed to be that of a funeral march.

Finally, the march rhythm starts to dissolve, as individual choirs and solo instruments accelerate independently, until the entire orchestra climaxes with a sonic explosion. After this, only a solo cello remains, softly playing the A that opened the work, and introducing the final part (*Epilogue*).

This entire section is played against a repeated pattern consisting of waves of brass chords. Against this, the piano solo from the first movement (the Albéniz/Godowsky *Tango*) returns, as does the *tarantella* melody (this time sounding distant and peaceful), and the two solo cellos, interwoven between, recapitulate the entire dialogues. A slow *diminuendo* leaves the solo cello holding the same perpetual A, finally fading away.

John Corigliano

Michael Torke (b. 1961): Bright Blue Music (1985)

In my last two pieces I employed the technique of breaking up and reassembling the sixteenth-note pulse in 4/4 time, in the context of a single general sweep from beginning to end. I wanted to continue this development in *Bright Blue Music*, but I felt unsettled about the language needed to employ these ideas.

Inspired by Wittgenstein's ideas that meaning is not in words themselves but in the grammar of words used, I conceived of a parallel in musical terms: harmonies in themselves do not contain any meaning, rather, musical meaning results only in the way harmonies are used. Harmonic language is then, in a sense, inconsequential. If the choice of harmony is arbitrary, why not then use tonic and dominant chords – the simplest, most direct, and – for me – the most pleasurable? Once this decision was made and put in the back of my mind, an unexpected freedom of expression followed. With the simplest means, my musical emotions and impulses were free to guide me. The feeling of working was exuberant; I would leave my outdoor studio, and the trees and bushes seemed to dance, and the sky seemed bright blue.

That bright blue colour contributed towards the piece's title, but in conjunction with another personal association. The key of the piece, D major (from which there is no true modulation), has been the colour for me since I was five years old.

Bright Blue Music continues the compositional development of my past two pieces, but does so with a newfound freedom and lyricism, and a new language: tonality. *Bright Blue Music* was composed between July 18th and September 1st 1985, under the commission of the New York Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Michael Torke

**Aaron Copland (1900-1990):
Appalachian Spring – Ballet Suite (1945)**

Aaron Copland occupies an unassailable position in the music of the United States of America. The son of Jewish emigrants from Poland and Lithuania, he was born in Brooklyn in 1900 into circumstances comfortable enough to allow him the study of music. He took lessons from Goldmark, a distinguished emigrant from Vienna, and in 1920 went to Paris, where he studied with Nadia Boulanger, the first of her American pupils. In Europe he

was able to meet a number of the leading young composers of the day and to see performances by Dyagilev's Ballets Russes. At the same time he was feeling his way towards a characteristically American style of composition, that should be as clearly recognisable as the national style of the late 19th-century Russian composers.

In 1924 Copland returned to America, where his compositions began to attract interest. At the same time he continued to maintain contact with musical trends in Europe and with expatriate American composers. He organised important series of concerts of contemporary American music, which he did his utmost to publicise through his writing and lecturing, the second activity intermittently at Harvard. During the course of an exceptionally active career, he exercised a strong influence over a younger generation of composers, without in any way fostering an exclusive nationalism. His achievements won him awards of all kinds, at home and abroad, from the Pulitzer Prize in 1945 to the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1970.

His popular ballet *Appalachian Spring* was commissioned by the Coolidge Foundation for Martha Graham and first staged at the Library of Congress, Washington, in 1944. The composer arranged the orchestral suite from the ballet in 1945. Copland explains that the ballet depicts a pioneer celebration in spring around a newly built farmhouse in the Pennsylvania hills in the early part of the 19th century. The future bride and the young farmer who is to be her husband go through the emotions, joyful and apprehensive, aroused by their new domestic partnership. Mature experience is represented by older neighbours, while a revivalist preacher and his followers remind the couple of the vagaries of human fate, before leaving them to enjoy their new house in peace. If the first ballet, *Billy the Kid*, had stressed the opposition between the outsider and society, *Appalachian Spring* breathes reconciliation, its conclusion based on the Shaker song *'Tis the gift to be simple*.

Keith Anderson