

The City of Slidell presents



A FAR CRY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Sunday, March 11, 2012 • 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Slidell's Heritage Park • Free Admission
(985) 646-4375 • www.slidell.la.us

“Ravishing...Hugely enjoyable.”
- *The Boston Globe*

“Phenomenally talented...
to say A Far Cry is a group to watch
is an understatement.
They are a group one must see.
- *Classical Voice of New England*

“The orchestra brims with personality,
or better, personalities...passionate
involvement...a sensational jam.”
- *The New York Times*

“A Far Cry has perfected a lush, sweet
sound that is achingly alive and emotional.”
- *Strings Magazine*

A FAR CRY

SLIDELL'S HERITAGE PARK PROGRAM, MARCH 2012

Johann Heinrich Schmelzer (c.1620–23 - 1680)
Balletto a 4 in G “Die Fechtschule” (The Fencing School)

Aria I
Aria II
Sarabande
Courente
Fechtschule
Bader Aria

Ottorino Respighi (1879 - 1936)
Ancient Airs and Dances, Suite No. 3

Italiana
Arie di corte
Siciliana
Passacaglia

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827) arranged for string orchestra by A Far Cry
String Quartet No. 11 in F minor, Op. 95 “Serioso”

Allegro con brio
Allegretto ma non troppo
Allegro assai vivace ma serioso
Larghetto espressivo - Allegretto agitato

Intermission

Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976)
Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge, Op. 10

Introduction and Theme
Variation 1: Adagio
Variation 2: March
Variation 3: Romance
Variation 4: Aria Italiana
Variation 5: Bourree Classique
Variation 6: Wiener Waltzer
Variation 7: Moto Perpetuo
Variation 8: Funeral March
Variation 9: Chant
Variation 10: Fugue and Finale

A FAR CRY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

A Far Cry stands at the forefront of an exciting new generation in classical music. According to the New York Times, the self-conducted orchestra “brims with personality or, better, personalities, many and varied.” A Far Cry was founded in 2007 by a tightly-knit collective of 17 young professional musicians – the Criers – and since the beginning has fostered those personalities, developing an innovative structure of rotating leadership both on stage and behind the scenes. By expanding the boundaries of orchestral repertoire and experimenting with the ways music is prepared, performed, and experienced, A Far Cry has been embraced throughout the world with more than two hundred performances across the United States, three albums, a powerful presence on the internet, and a European debut tour in 2012. The Criers are proud to call Boston home, and maintain strong roots in the city rehearsing at their storefront music center in Jamaica Plain and fulfilling the role of Chamber Orchestra in Residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Collaborating with local students through an educational partnership with the New England Conservatory, A Far Cry aims to pass on the spirit of collaboratively-empowered music to the next generation. Find out more at www.afarcry.org.

THE CRIERS:

VIOLINS:

Annie Rabbat
Ashley Vandiver
Ethan Wood
Jae Cosmos Lee
Jenny Ahn
Jesse Irons
Megumi Stohs
Miki-Sophia Cloud
Sharon Cohen

VIOLAS:

Bryan Florence
Frank Shaw
Jason Fisher
Margaret Dyer

CELLOS:
Courtenay Vandiver
Loewi Lin
Michael Unterman

BASSES:

Erik Higgins
Karl Doty
Program Notes

SCHMELZER

The first non-Italian to occupy the position of composer in Vienna, and to publish violin sonatas, Schmelzer exercised great influence in Austria. He was known for his manner of rapidly threading together very short contrasting sections of music.

Musikalische Malerei or “musical painting” creates a picture or a scene in the mind of the listener. The musical painter aims to create an experience as compelling and lifelike as the most vivid dream: musical painting need not represent only that which can be expressed in words or images (although many composers have attempted to do just that, often with delightful results). It is in this spirit that we wish to deliver this music to you.

Schmelzer’s Fechtschule (“fencing school” or “fight school”) depicts the activities of swordsmen in training. Fencing and dancing were intimately connected in this era. The positions of the feet, for instance, were common to both arts. Schmelzer explores this connection in his Fechtschule by alternating between “pure” dance music, and music that evokes combat. The Fechtschule movement is simultaneously a musical illustration of exciting swordplay and a vehicle for violinistic virtuosity. The closing “Bader Aria” is an instrumental song for the barber-surgeon who would have bandaged the participants—somewhat less-than-hygienically. - Notes by Benjamin Katz, November 2011

RESPIGHI

Critics and historians hold squarely mixed opinions about the music of Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936). The composer’s output was a mixed bag, sporadically evoking his own invention, while other times seemingly weighted down by the burden of emulating others or sheer effort. For large ensemble, his orchestral tone poems Pini di Roma (Pines of Rome) and Fontane di Roma (Fountains of Rome) are clear standouts, earning Respighi

a place in our collective musical history. Also revered are his works for smaller ensembles, particularly his *Trittico botticelliano* (Three Botticelli Pictures), and his *Antiche danze ed arie* (Ancient Airs and Dances), of which there are three Suites in various instrumentations, the third and final for string orchestra.

During his student days at the Liceo Musicale in Bologna, Respighi was introduced to early music—an interest that played into his own compositions more than once (in addition to *Ancient Airs and Dances*, his *Gli uccelli* [The Birds] adapts early keyboard works, each a musical portrait of a different fowl, for orchestra). The third Suite of *Ancient Airs and Dances* is based on lute songs by Besard, a piece for baroque guitar by Ludovico Roncalli, and lute pieces by Santino Garsi da Parma and additional anonymous composers.

In his early twenties, Respighi also had the opportunity to study in Russia briefly with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Noted for his tremendous talent for orchestration, Rimsky-Korsakov contributed to Respighi's undisputed ability to utilize the various "colors" of the instrumental palette.

BEETHOVEN

Of all composers, Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) appears to be the most ubiquitous. His name appears engraved in the stone of concert halls and printed on rock 'n' roll and disco albums, his image is captured in cheap figurine busts sold in music shops everywhere and was immortalized by Andy Warhol. Why is that? Certainly we could point to his legacy as the composer who tested the limits of musical forms, re-wrote the lexicon, and ushered the world out of the Classicalists into the environs of the Romantics. But doesn't it seem like there might be something more to it? Perhaps we connect so directly and acutely with Beethoven because he—more than the others—reminds us of ourselves and helps us stop amidst the business of life to remember what it is to be human with longings, disappointments, fury, and strivings. Bookending the years 1810-11, which saw the composition of his String Quartet "Serioso" in F minor, op. 95, he met and fell in love with his Immortal Beloved and said farewell to his most beloved patron and friend; love, loss, and invention.

Joseph Kerman described op. 95 as "an involved, impassioned, highly idiosyncratic piece, problematic in every one of its movements, advanced in a hundred ways." The quartet functions as a pivot point between the quartets of his early and middle periods and those of his so-called "late style." It also occupies an interesting position being written during a low volume composition period for Beethoven. Maynard Solomon notes, "For the first time in almost a decade, Beethoven had no major symphonic projects in progress or in the sketching stage," and that his "productivity slackened in 1810 and 1811, the only significant works completed being the String Quartet in F minor, op. 95; the Trio in B-flat ("Archduke"), op. 97; and the Incidental Music to Goethe's *Egmont*, op. 84."

BRITTEN

Many of us have had a very influential teacher or mentor, an individual who recognized our potential and strove to encourage its ultimate expression. For Benjamin Britten (1913-1976), that person was Frank Bridge. Britten commenced his composition studies with Bridge at the age of thirteen. Of the teacher who impacted his development more than any other, Britten said, "He really taught me to take as much trouble as I possibly could over every passage, over every progression, over every line... I, who thought I was already on the verge of immortality, saw my illusions shattered."

In 1937, conductor Boyd Neel commissioned Britten to compose a work for orchestra to be performed at the Salzburg Festival. Britten fulfilled the order in a matter of weeks, presenting Neel with his *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge*, based on a theme from Bridge's sublime *Three Idylls* for string quartet. After an arresting opening that demands the listener's attention, the lyrical theme emerges and travels through a breathtaking variety of iterations. Sadly, Frank Bridge faded from public consciousness after his death—but thanks to his student, he was immortalized beautifully, faithfully, and fondly.

Notes by Kathryn J. Allwine Bacasmot

Kathryn J. Allwine Bacasmot is a pianist/harpsichordist, musicologist, critic, and freelance writer. She received her Masters in Musicology at New England Conservatory with her thesis on Björk Guðmundsdóttir and aspects of the female experience in her fifth studio album, *Medúlla*.