Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra
Filippo Ciabatti, conductor

Charlie Johnson ’19, trombone

Funded in part by the Roesch Family Fund in support of Instrumental Ensembles and the Stephenson Fund for Student Ensembles.

Sat • November 10, 2018 • 8 pm
Spaulding Auditorium • Dartmouth College
Program

Approximate duration: 120 minutes

Overture to Candide
Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

Romance for trombone and orchestra
William Grant Still (1895-1978)

Intermission

Symphony No. 5
Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Part I

Stürmisch bewegt, mit größer Vehemenz (Moving stormily, with the greatest vehemence).

Part II
Scherzo. Kräftig, nicht zu schnell (Strong, not too fast).

Part III
Adagietto. Sehr langsam (Very slow).

Rondo-Finale. Allegro—Allegro giocoso. Frisch (Fresh).

Program Notes

Overture to Candide
Leonard Bernstein

Leonard Bernstein was born in Lawrence, MA, on August 25, 1918, and died on October 14, 1990, in New York. He wrote the music for Candide, an operetta based on Voltaire’s satirical novella, in 1956; it premiered on December 1 of that year as a Broadway musical with Tyrone Guthrie directing and Samuel Krachmalnick conducting. The score calls for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, tenor drum, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, glockenspiel, xylophone, harp, and strings.

Just six weeks after the musical’s opening on Broadway, Bernstein conducted the Overture to Candide as a stand-alone work with the New York Philharmonic; since then it has remained one of the most popular concert-openers in the orchestral repertoire, especially in the United States. Despite its ubiquity, the Candide overture never sounds tired, and with all of Bernstein’s music, it takes on special significance this year, the centenary of his birth.
After a striking fanfare built on the interval of the minor seventh, the Overture launches into a revue of a handful of themes from the operetta: first a jaunty tune in the strings and woodwinds answered by a sunny bit of march-like music from the brass, then, after the commotion subsides, some contrasting lyrical material introduced by the violas. All of these themes are then restated, but this time while the shorter transitions lend some extra brevity, the lighter orchestration allows for solo moments from woodwinds and violin. In the final pages, a syncopated codetta based on the aria “Glitter and Be Gay” accelerates towards the finish, as all the previously heard themes flash by in playful repartee.

William Grant Still

*Romance* for trombone and orchestra

William Grant Still was born on May 11, 1895, in Woodville, Mississippi; he died December 3, 1978, in Los Angeles. He composed his *Romance*, originally for alto saxophone and piano, in 1954, completing an arrangement for saxophone and chamber orchestra shortly afterward. The work was published twelve years later, with a dedication to noted German-American saxophonist Sigurd Raschèr. Performed tonight is Douglas Yeo’s trombone transcription of the solo part. In addition to solo trombone, the score calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, and trombones, glockenspiel, harp, and strings.

Among the most important figures in the history of American art music is William Grant Still. Known during his lifetime as the “Dean” of African American composers, Still was the first black American to conduct a major US orchestra, the first to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra, the first to have an opera performed by a leading company, and the first to have an opera performed on national television.

Still was born in rural southwestern Mississippi to two schoolteachers. His father died just three months later, and Still’s mother moved with him to Little Rock, AR, where he was raised and where his stepfather first kindled his interest in classical music. He began violin lessons at age 15, and soon taught himself to play the oboe, clarinet, saxophone, viola, cello and double bass. Still pursued degrees at Wilberforce University and the Oberlin Conservatory, studying composition there with George Whitefield Chadwick, and later with Edgard Varèse. In 1916, Still began a long and fruitful career as an arranger of popular music, working for W. C. Handy, James P. Johnson, Paul Whiteman and Artie Shaw. As a composer, Still achieved his first and greatest success with his Symphony No. 1, the “Afro-American,” which synthesizes blues melody with unique chromatic harmonies and an inventive approach to orchestration. Several of his mature works directly confront the brutality of white supremacy in the United States, such as the choral-orchestral ballad *And They Lynched Him on a Tree*.

Up until the 1950s, Still’s *Afro-American Symphony* was the most widely performed symphony by any American composer, but his music was largely forgotten during the last decades of his life. Despite a modest revival of musicological interest in Still’s compositions since the 1990s, a glance at the concert programs of any major US orchestra today betrays a scarcity of American composers of any kind, and the near-total absence of black composers in particular. It is up to us to consider why, in this so often self-congratulatory post-civil rights era United States, the music of the “Dean of African-American Composers” is performed less often than during the depths of Jim Crow segregation.

The single-movement *Romance* opens with a broad, lyrical theme from the solo trombone; while this melody avoids the explicitly bluesy evocations of black popular music so essential to Still’s earlier works, its pentatonic gist alludes to the older folk spirituals famously imitated by Dvořák in the Largo from his Ninth Symphony. After a more chromatic,
impressionistic transitional passage, fragments of a secondary subject appear in the minor key, with meditative interjections from solo woodwinds. But just as this gloomier atmosphere seems to have settled, an unexpected modulation, prepared by bassoons and horns and consummated by a prudently placed glockenspiel chord, delivers the return of the first theme, now soaring, proud.

**Symphony No. 5**

**Gustav Mahler**

Gustav Mahler was born in Kalischt (near Iglau), Bohemia, on July 7, 1860, and died in Vienna on May 18, 1911. He wrote his Fifth Symphony in 1901-02, repeatedly revising its orchestration in 1904 and 1911. The work premiered on October 18, 1904, in Cologne. The score calls for 4 flutes (3rd and 4th also piccolo), 3 oboes (3rd also English horn), 3 clarinets (3rd also bass clarinet and E-flat clarinet), 3 bassoons (3rd also contrabassoon), 6 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, tam-tam, triangle, whip, glockenspiel, harp and strings.

To the Viennese elite at the turn of the twentieth century, Mahler’s public reputation was as a conductor first, a Jew second, and a composer (very distantly) third. At the helm of both the Vienna Court Opera and the Vienna Philharmonic, Mahler and his commanding perfectionism at the podium had built up a strong company of singers and instrumentalists, but also riled up the scandal-hungry muckrakers among the Viennese press. Emboldened by the proto-Nazi rhetoric of Vienna’s new Christian Socialist mayor, Karl Lueger, conservative critics routinely denounced Mahler’s insensitivity towards famous musicians in bluntly anti-Semitic terms. In dire need of some distance from the limelight, Mahler stepped down from his position at the Philharmonic in the spring of 1901. But with the Hofoper directorship still consuming nine months of his working year, summer remained the only time Mahler could put down the baton and focus on writing music. That summer, each day spent alone in his composing hut in the pine forest above his newly built lakeside villa on the Wörthersee, Mahler completed eight new lieder and began work on his fifth symphony.

By the end of the following summer, the Symphony No. 5 was finished; its purely instrumental character and its formal prioritization of subjective affect over teleological allegory signaled simultaneously a partial return to the world of his First Symphony and the beginning of a wholly new period of his symphonic career. But just as Mahler’s music entered its middle period, another chapter of his personal life began—between starting and finishing the Fifth Symphony, he had met, courted, and married Alma Schindler. Though theirs would prove to be a deeply unhappy union, largely due to Mahler’s forbidding Alma to realize her own ambitions as a composer, it may have borne one of history’s best-known musical love letters, in the form of the Fifth Symphony’s delicate *Adagietto*. This movement, together with the *Rondo-Finale* which follows it, forms Part Three of Mahler’s overarching structure for the five-movement symphony; an expansive Scherzo alone makes up the middle part, while Part One represents the first two movements, opening with the famous *Trauermarsch*.

Declaring the outset of this funeral procession is the solo trumpet, whose gravely insistent triplets are taken nearly verbatim from the first movement of Mahler’s Fourth Symphony. All forces now summoned to the programmatic bier, the march sets off, with a hushed lament in the violins and cellos. But the trumpet call returns with all its dour fanfares, and again the march follows, but broadened and developed, with bittersweet woodwinds joining the strings. After a third appearance of the fanfare, a sudden change of tempo announces the first trio; a wild expression of anguish in B-flat minor, this material will become a focus of the second movement, but for now the pangs subside with a gradual return to the tempo of
the opening. Again the trumpet returns, now reaching skyward in hope, only to crash down in stony despair. A third, more passionate, statement of the marching threnody follows, with a momentary allusion to one of Mahler’s *Kindertotenlieder (Songs on the Death of Children)*, composed concurrently with this work. A second trio takes the form of a quietly sinister dance in the strings, and a final appearance of the trumpet fanfare soon disintegrates, leaving only the solo flute’s ghostly echo.

The second movement offers a fierce inversion of the preceding *Trauermarsch*. To be played “with the greatest vehemence,” its primary material is an urgent A minor theme closely related to the first trio from the first movement, contrasted with some more lyrical secondary episodes in the moderate tempo of the march, some of which directly quote the preceding movement. Common to all of these passages is a “sighing” motif which, introduced in the first movement, is now developed into new themes and accompanying figures, but always retains its basic structure of a wistful upward leap (most often a ninth) followed by a downward step. From those intervals an optimistic march sets off in A-flat major, but the chorale-like gesture which follows proves too eager, and furious development of the earlier themes ensues. Suddenly the brass chorale returns, in a broad and magnificent D-major revelation of the symphony’s eventual tonal trajectory, but this vision too dissipates, and the movement trails off in a shadowy murmur.

With just strings and harp, the beloved *Adagietto* follows, its title’s diminutive suffix a reference to its duration, and not to the tempo, marked *molto Adagio*. Structurally the simplest movement of the symphony, it may be the most beautiful, with a breathless F-major main theme which is carried off through harmonically distant gestures of yearning before its vulnerable reprise and diminuendo into silence.

Without pause, a solo horn call begins the *Rondo-Finale*, and is answered in turn by the bassoon, oboe, and clarinet with a series of brief motives: kernels of themes to come. From those few seeds a marvelous contrapuntal garden blooms, the musical material constantly reinventing itself as section is pitted against section in fugal tournaments. Between these lively exchanges, the main theme of the *Adagietto* reappears, sped up to provide a gracious and affable foil to the happy commotion. At last, the great chorale of the second movement returns in all its radiant glory, but even this revelation is swept away by the coda’s irrepressible mirth. With a mischievous slide down the whole-tone scale, the symphony ends in a fit of laughter.

A sprawling *Scherzo* for the third movement seems wholly unconcerned with the angst of Part One, and features the solo horn throughout in a cheery spree of dance episodes, from country Ländlers through sophisticated waltzes, with spacious echoes of more serious material near the middle. The coda throws all this music together, whirling to the finish in a madcap jamboree.
About the Artists

Filippo Ciabatti, conductor, a native of Florence, Italy, is the Music Director of the Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra and the Interim Music Director of the Dartmouth Glee Club. With opera director Peter Webster, Ciabatti has created the Dartmouth Opera Lab. In October 2018, the first production featured Grammy Award winning baritone Daniel Belcher and soprano Amy Owens.

During the summer of 2018, Ciabatti was invited to be a Conducting Fellow at the Aurora Music Festival in Stockholm, under the direction of Jukka-Pekka Saraste. During the festival, he conducted Hannah Kendall’s 2017 composition, “The Spark Catchers” in a concert that also featured legendary cellist Mischa Maisky in the Konserthuset Stockholm.

In 2018–2019, he leads the Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra in an Italian tour in collaboration with the Orchestra Toscana dei Conservatori in prominent venues and festivals, including the Puccini Days in Lucca. He also makes his debut with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra.

In 2017-2018, Ciabatti conducted Madama Butterfly at Opera North, Hansel and Gretel and Don Giovanni (directed by Nathan Gunn) at the Lyric Theatre at Illinois. In 2016, he conducted Tosca at Opera North (NH), directed by Russell Treyz, and Britten’s Midsummer Night’s Dream at the Lyric Theatre at Illinois, directed by Christopher Gillett. In 2015, he made his South American debut conducting the Universidad Central Symphony Orchestra in Bogota, Colombia, where he also taught masterclasses in orchestra and Italian opera. With La Nuova Aurora Opera, he conducted full productions of Handel’s Rodrigo (2015) and Purcell’s King Arthur (2016).

As a pianist and vocal coach in Italy, Ciabatti has worked for the Cherubini Conservatory, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and Florence Opera Academy. He has played for masterclasses of Renée Fleming, Nathan Gunn, William Matteuzzi, Donald George, and Isabel Leonard.

Charlie Johnson ’19 (trombone) is the principal trombonist of the Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra. As a dual Computer Science and Music major, he has devoted much of his time at Dartmouth to the study and performance of trombone music, having performed as principal trombonist of the DSO and lead trombonist of the Barbary Coast Jazz Ensemble for his four years. Additionally, Johnson has performed with many other campus groups, such as the Dartmouth College Gospel Choir and various student-led organizations.

Outside of music, Johnson pursues his Computer Science degree, looking forward to a career in software development, and acts as an executive board member of his fraternity, Alpha Chi Alpha. He would like to take this moment to thank the many people who have been a part of his development as a trombonist and person: teachers and colleagues Jerry Schauer, Matthew Vaughn, Blair Bollinger, Gabe Langfur and James Tobias; his trombonist colleagues at Dartmouth, Fisher Katlin and Topher Colby; and most importantly his loving family, which has always supported him through his musical and academic endeavors.

The Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra (DSO) is the resident orchestra of the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth College. Comprising primarily Dartmouth students, and performing during the fall, winter and spring terms, its powerful performances have made it a major hit with area music lovers, who appreciate not having to travel to the city to enjoy a quality evening at the symphony.
Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra

Filippo Ciabatti, conductor
Leslie Sonder, librarian
Grant Cook ’19, Neerja Thakkar ’19, Sophie Huang ’21, managers

**Violin**
Neerja Thakkar ’19
*Katie Wee ’19
Zoe Yu ’19
Marshall Peng ’20
Nicole Tiao ’20
Bryan Shin ’20
Mike Zhu ’20
Elliott Tang ’21
Hanlin Wang ’21
Sophia Chang Stauffer ’22
John Cho ’22
Ida Claude ’22
Anna Kolln ’22
Kimberly Tan ’22

**Cello**
Ellen Smalley ’19
Richard Lu ’20
Kyle Bensink ’21
Sherrina Hwang ’21
Amy Tsai ’21
Claire Deng ’22
Owen Eskandari ’22
Elaine Young ’22

**Bass**
Paul Horak TH ’94

**Viola**
Benjamin Lee ’19
Michelle Wu ’20
Raymond Hsu ’21
Anaïse Boucher-Browning ’22
Jehan Diaz ’22
Katie Hoover ’22
Marcia Cassidy F
Leslie Sonder F

**Flute**
Laura Jeliazkov ’18
Sophie Huang ’21

**Clarinet**
Grant Cook ’19
Diana Ge ’19
Ryan Ding ’20
Allen Yang ’20
Emily Chen ’21

**Bassoon**
Sydney Zhou ’19

**Horn**
Michael Huang ’20

**Trumpet**
Sriram Bapatla ’20
Ian Hou ’22

**Trombone**
Charlie Johnson ’19
Fisher Katlin ’19

**Percussion**
Ethan Trepka ’22

* = Concertmaster
F = Faculty
TH = Thayer School of Engineering
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Handel Society of Dartmouth College

Tue • November 13 • 7 pm

100-voice chorus performs the Brahms Requiem, a masterwork revealing the composer’s deepest feelings about life and death, with guest soloists and full orchestra.

Dartmouth Youth Wind Ensemble

Sat • January 19–March 3

Free performance: March 3 • 1:30 pm

Upper Valley middle school musicians learn alongside Dartmouth student musician mentors in a fun, inspiring program. To sign up, see “Hop Ensembles” on our website.

For tickets or more info, call the Box Office at 603.646.2422 or visit hop.dartmouth.edu. Share your experiences! #HopkinsCenter

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