BOSTON LANDMARKS ORCHESTRA

Summer Concert Series – Wednesday, August 24, 2022
7PM – DCR Hatch Shell

Pines of Rome &
William Dawson Symphony
The Virtuoso Orchestra

Boston Landmarks Orchestra
Christopher Wilkins, Music Director

Candide Overture — Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)

Negro Folk Symphony (Boston premiere) — William Dawson (1899–1990)

The Bond of Africa:
Adagio—Allegro con brio
Hope in the Night:
Andante—Allegretto (alla scherzando)
O Le' Me Shine, Shine
Like a Morning Star: *Allegro con brio*

INTERMISSION

Romanian Rhapsody in A major, op. 11, No. 1 — George Enescu (1881–1955)

Pines of Rome — Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936)

I pini di Villa Borghese
(The Pines of the Villa Borghese)

Pini presso una catacomba
(Pines Near a Catacomb)

I pini del Gianicolo
(The Pines of the Janiculum)

I pini della Via Appia
(The Pines of the Appian Way)

RUN TIME

This concert will run approximately **two hours** with a fifteen-minute intermission.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

CHRISTOPHER WILKINS was appointed Music Director of the Boston Landmarks Orchestra in the spring of 2011. Since then, he has expanded the orchestra's mission of making great music accessible to the whole community. He has also helped develop the orchestra's Breaking Down Barriers initiative, making accessibility a priority in all aspects of the orchestra's activities.

Mr. Wilkins also serves as Music Director of the Akron Symphony. As a guest conductor, Mr. Wilkins has appeared with many of the leading orchestras of the United States, including those of Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco. Previously, Mr. Wilkins served as Music Director of the Orlando Philharmonic, the San Antonio Symphony, and the Colorado Springs Symphony.

He has served as associate conductor of the Utah Symphony, assisting Joseph Silverstein; assistant conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra under Christoph von Dohnányi; conducting assistant with the Oregon Symphony under James DePreist; and was a conducting fellow at Tanglewood. He was winner of the Seaver/NEA Award in 1992.

Born in Boston, Mr. Wilkins earned his bachelor's degree from Harvard College in 1978. He received his master of music degree at Yale University in 1981, and in 1979 attended the Hochschule der Künste in West Berlin as a recipient of the John Knowles Paine traveling fellowship. As an oboist, he performed with many ensembles in the Boston area, including the Berkshire Music Center Orchestra at Tanglewood, and the Boston Philharmonic under Benjamin Zander.

BOSTON LANDMARKS ORCHESTRA

First Violin
Greg Vitale, *Concertmaster*
Colin Davis
Heidi Braun-Hill
Yumi Okada
Aleksandra Labinska
Stacey Alden
Tudor Dornescu
Paola Caballero
Lilit Hartunian

Second Violin
Paula Oakes, *Principal*
Rose Drucker
Clayton Hoener
Robert Curtis
Lisa Brooke
Piotr Buczek
Sheila Vitale

Viola
Kenneth Stalberg, *Principal*
Abigail Cross
Jean Haig
Don Krishnaswami
Noriko Futagami
Samuel Kelder

Cello
Melanie Dyball, *Acting Principal*
Francesca McNeeley
Jing Li
Jolene Kessler
Rebecca Thornblade

Bass
Robert Lynam, *Principal*
Barry Boettger
Kevin Green
John Shiu

Flutes
Lisa Hennessey, *Principal*
Mary Kay Robinson
Iva Milch

Piccolo
Iva Milch

Horn
Kevin Owen, *Principal*
Jane Sebring
Whitacre Hill
Nancy Hudgins
*Robert Marlatt
*Clark Matthews

Trumpet
Dana Oakes, *Principal*
Jesse Levine
Richard Kelley
*Andrew Sorg
*Mary-Lynne Bohn

Trombone
Hans Bohn, *Acting Principal*
Robert Couture
Donald Robinson
*Robert Hoveland
*Brian Diehl

Tuba
Donald Rankin, *Principal*

Timpani
Jeffrey Fischer, *Principal*

Percussion
Robert Schulz, *Principal*
Craig McNutt
Piero Guimaraes
Greg Simonds

Harp
Hyunjung Choi, *Acting Principal*

Piano
Bonnie Anderson

Organ/Celeste
Barbara Lieurance

Personnel Manager
Kevin Owen

Acting Librarian
Katie Nakanishi

Maestro Zone Conductor
Damali Willingham

Oboe
Andrew Price, *Principal*
Alessandro Cirfici

English Horn
Laura Shamu

Clarinet
Jan Halloran, *Acting Principal*
Margo McGowan

Bass Clarinet
Amy Advocat

E-Flat Clarinet
Hunter Bennett

Bassoon
Naho Zhu, *Principal*
Gregory Newton

Contrabassoon
Stephanie Busby

* = offstage musicians

PODIUM NOTE

By Christopher Wilkins

> *To render my works properly requires a combination of extreme precision and irresistible verve, a regulated vehemence, a dreamy tenderness, and an almost morbid melancholy.*
>
> Hector Berlioz

A lot has to come together for great orchestras to do what they do.

It starts with the composers. Many of the greatest composers learned what orchestras can do by conducting them: Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Wagner, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Mahler. Leonard Bernstein—conducting composer or composing conductor—belongs on that list too.

On October 15, 1956, the New York Philharmonic announced that Bernstein would become the orchestra's Co-Principal Conductor, together with Dmitri Mitropoulos. Two weeks later, Bernstein's operetta ***Candide*** had its tryout performances in Boston. A month after that, it opened on Broadway.

It's hard to imagine how Bernstein got through the fall of 1956. On some level, the pressure was beneficial. After all, he's the one who said, "To achieve great things, two things are needed: a plan and not quite enough time." But still. While composing the score to *Candide*, he was preparing to lead the Philharmonic, guest conducting around the world, coping with sudden international stardom, making plans for his televised Young People's Concerts, and performing as a pianist, both classical and jazz. He was also working furiously on another project: *West Side Story.*

Bernstein was certainly blessed with tremendous facility, and a great capacity for work. But his most exceptional trait was his versatility. He moved comfortably from Broadway to Carnegie Hall, from La Scala Opera House—where he conducted a production starring Maria Callas—to Lewisohn Stadium—where he performed alongside Louis Armstrong.

Eclecticism was Bernstein's brand. One of the miracles of *West Side Story* is its fusion of styles: mambo, cha-cha, waltzes, Broadway ballads… a bebop fugue. But for stylistic range and heterogeneity, *Candide* is in a class by itself. The show is a dizzying potpourri of musical types thrown into the Bernstein blender: waltz, polka, ländler, tango, gavotte, barcarolle, hornpipe, Hungarian march, Bachian chorale, Gounod-style showpiece, music for storms and earthquakes, instrumental battle scenes, and a Spanish Inquisition *auto da fé* for full chorus.

All this suited Bernstein perfectly. Or more likely, he chose Voltaire's satire in the first place because it gave him an opportunity to be all over the map. The story takes us to Lisbon; Paris; Cadiz; Buenos Aires; Suriname; and Venice; before returning to Candide's home of Westphalia, in northwest Germany. Bernstein invented stylistic parodies for each of these locales. He took delight in making *Candide* an 18th century pastiche—a tongue-in-cheek, overstuffed-museum-show of a musical.

The overall mood of *Candide* is glee. True, the characters experience appalling misfortune at every turn: abduction; war; sex trafficking; earthquake; poverty; the loss of a buttock; and the imminent threat of being burned at the stake. But, in the spirit of Voltaire, the telling of the tale is all wit and hilarity. You might think of Monty Python's "Always look on the bright side of life."

The **Overture to *Candide***is a medley of tunes from the musical—as almost every other Broadway overture is—but it is built according to classical principles and in sonata form—as no other Broadway overture is. It begins with a four-note ascending fanfare in the brass and snare drum. This is the Westphalian Fanfare. Like the three-note whistle call of the Jets that opens *West Side Story*, Bernstein makes use of the Fanfare throughout the show. It is answered by a cheeky descending scale in woodwinds, from the Act I music of the legendary philosopher Dr. Pangloss's lessons in life:

Once one dismisses

The rest of all possible worlds,

One finds that this is

The best of all possible worlds.

Then the violins launch the brilliant main theme, a rhythmically charged idea from the music for the battle between Westphalian forces and the Bulgarian army. Strings and woodwinds exchange playful variants; the brass introduce a new martial figure; winds and xylophone respond exuberantly; and brass and timpani pound out the battle scene's main march music. Bernstein himself wrote the militaristic lyric to the choral prayer that precedes the conflict in Act I. It is cringe-worthy, in the brazen tradition of Voltaire: "*Sieg, heil,* Westphalia!"

Further developments of the main theme settle down into the cuddly duet of our young and perfectly happy pair, Candide and Cunegonde. "Oh, Happy We" has a nursery-rhyme catchiness about it:

Soon, when we feel we can afford it,

We'll build a modest little farm.

We'll buy a yacht and live aboard it,

Rolling in luxury and stylish charm.

The reprise of the opening music marks the overture's Recapitulation. For the coda, Bernstein turns at first to "Glitter and Be Gay," Cunegonde's vainglorious answer to Gounod's Jewel Song from *Faust*: "Ha! observe how bravely I conceal the dreadful, drea(head)ful shame I feel!" Then it's back to the battle music; an outburst of "Oh, Happy We" from the horns; and one final joke: the last two bait-and-switch chords.

William Levi Dawson's *Negro Folk* Symphony (1934) is the Great American Symphony. That's my contention anyway. *Great:* it's an astounding work composed with imagination, purpose, and consummate skill. *American:* it draws on numerous traditions native to this land, speaks forcefully to our history, and considers the promise of America. *Symphony:* it makes masterful use of the resources of a large orchestra, developing diverse musical ideas on a grand scale, and unifying them into a cohesive and satisfying whole. What other American symphony does all this so well? I can't think of one.

How is it possible then that tonight marks the work's **Boston premiere**? (Mark Churchill and Symphony Pro Musica gave the New England premiere in November of 2021.) Answering that question would go a long way toward explaining what has ailed American orchestras in the years since Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra gave the first performance of the *Negro Folk Symphony* 88 years ago.

In 1930, Dawson joined the faculty at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. In a remarkably short time, he built the choir into a nationally recognized ensemble. After just two years there, he was invited to perform with his choir for the opening of Radio City Music Hall in New York. There he met conductor Leopold Stokowski, still nine years away from his silver screen debut in Walt Disney's *Fantasia.* Someone told Stokowski that Dawson had composed a symphony, and the maestro requested a score. For three years, Dawson heard nothing. Then, out of the blue, a telegram:

HAVE JUST CONDUCTED NEW VERSION YOUR SYMPHONY IN REHEARSAL AM VERY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT IT PLEASE WIRE ME TITLE…

CONGRATULATIONS ON WONDERFUL SYMPHONY YOUR FRIEND

Leopold Stokowski

Stokowski led three performances of the *Negro Folk Symphony* at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia in November of 1934, then took it to Carnegie Hall. Pitts Sanborn, writing in *The New York World-Tribune*, reported:

Mr. Dawson's Negro Folk Symphony took the house by storm… the immediate success of the symphony gave rise to [no] doubts as to its enduring qualities. One is eager to hear it again, and yet again.

And in the *New York American*, Leonard Liebling declared:

The whole production impresses me as the most distinctive and promising American symphonic proclamation which has so far been achieved.

Note that Mr. Liebling didn't say, "Black American"; he said, "American." I believe the statement still holds.

The **introduction to the first movement** is a three-minute paragraph of remarkable construction. A solo horn begins, playing **the work's motto**. Dawson writes that this theme is "symbolic of the link uniting Africa and her rich heritage with her descendants in America." Dawson biographer Gwynne Kuhner Brown ventures that this sad, majestic line comes from the Negro spiritual, "Go Down, Moses," where the text is, *"Egypt's land."* In his library, Dawson had an arrangement of "Go Down, Moses" by Nathaniel Dett, about whom we have spoken a great deal in these notes over the past several seasons. It shows the pitches and rhythms the same way Dawson's motto has them, including the rhythm of the "Scotch snap." In poetry, this rhythm is called a trochee: one accented syllable followed by one unaccented (as in "Daw-son"). You don't find this rhythm much in the music of Brahms or Tchaikovsky. It has a distinctly New World sound, and is a defining characteristic of the entire symphony.

Dawson's use of "Go Down, Moses"—referring to the land where the Israelites were enslaved—links the symphony to the African American experience in the New World. He explained the connection in material distributed at the Carnegie Hall performance in 1934:

This symphony is based entirely upon Negro folk music. The themes are taken from what are popularly known as Negro spirituals, and the practiced ear will recognize the recurrence of characteristic themes throughout the composition.

This folk music springs spontaneously from the life of the Negro people as freely today as at any time in the past, though the modes and forms of the present day are sometimes vastly different from the older creations.

The horn motto uses a pentatonic scale—the black notes of the piano—typical of African-derived melody. Low brass and woodwinds answer the motto with a phrase built out of trochee rhythms. They use a diatonic scale—the white notes of a piano—of European derivation. The strings now answer with a lament using the chromatic scale—black and white notes together—typical of the music of the 1930s, of Hollywood, and the post-

Romantic age. In thirty seconds, the music has embraced three distinct cultures: African; European; and New World.

The main section of the first movement, *The Bond of Africa*, begins with a pop in the violins, and, once again, the solo horn, announcing the principal subject. The theme is energetic, restless, and unpredictable. The answer in the solo trumpet and woodwinds sounds new, but it is actually the *"Egypt's land"* phrase sped up. Immediately, we are aware of Dawson's gift to develop material by varying it: extending; contracting; speeding; slowing; upending; or enfolding it… countless ways to make conversation out of musical thoughts. These are essential skills of a master symphonist.

A dizzying sequence of rhythmically charged motives pours forth. Some seem like fresh ideas, though on closer examination, they are mostly variants of the main material. A crescendo builds gradually; the music slows for a moment to give emphasis to a statement (in canon) of the first subject; and then, powerfully syncopated chords alternate with timpani blows. While woodwinds chatter away, the violins repeat the four-note motto over and over again. The music tumbles playfully into the second theme, given first by the oboe. It is a quick version of the Negro spiritual, "Oh, m'litt'l' soul gwine a shine lik' a star."

Now the strings present a thrilling new idea, *pianissimo* at first. It is all rhythm and exuberance. Dawson writes that the theme "suggests the rhythmical clapping of the hands and patting of the feet." There is nothing like it in European music; it is rooted in African-derived dances developed in the American south. When the full orchestra repeats it, the brass add exclamation marks. (It's worth knowing, listening to the brass writing throughout, that Dawson was an outstanding orchestral trombonist.) Once again, he develops the motives, providing a connection to the closing of the first main section of the movement, where his principal themes come together with combustible energy.

The strings cascade to the lowest register of cellos and basses, and the motto reappears, this time given out by the full trombone section, followed by horns, in canon. This is the **Development section** of Dawson's sonata form structure: the first subject reappears in constantly changing form; triple-time outbursts in brass and percussion puncture the texture; blocks of slow melody alternate with quick rhythmic cells. The activity is so stimulating, and the mood so heady, that you are likely to miss the fact that, with the return of the motto—full force over repeated blows in the timpani—the **Recapitulation**, returning us to the material of the opening, is already underway. As we reexperience the original ideas, they are never the same. Dawson's writing is unfailingly dynamic and inventive. With trumpets blaring out the main subject, the first movement roars to its conclusion—a finish as thrilling as any in all of American symphonic music.

For all of that, it was the **second movement, *Hope in the Night*,** that prompted such an ovation from the Carnegie Hall audience that Stokowski was moved to gesture for the members of the Philadelphia Orchestra to stand… mid-symphony. *Hope in the Night* begins with three strokes in the gong, standing for "the Trinity," in Dawson's words, "who guides forever the destiny of man." The long journey begins with left-right walking rhythms in strings and harp, and then a great lament in the English horn—one of many nods in the work to Dvořák and his *New World Symphony*. A quicker section follows, lighter in mood. Dawson commented on this moment: "The children, unmindful of the heavy cadences of despair, sing and play; but even in their world of innocence, there is a little wail, a brief note of sorrow." That note of sorrow develops through a dramatic buildup, with trumpets and trombones intoning the motto. The solo string quartet recalls fragments of the English horn tune (again, à la *New World Symphony*), and we return as if to the beginning of the movement, with all music freshly reworked. The quicker music Dawson associated with children broadens unexpectedly into a pronouncement of "Oh, m'litt'l' soul gwine a shine lik' a star" in horns and trumpets. What began playfully in the first movement is now heavily burdened—the shining star more dark than light. The moment assumes a central position in a movement titled *Hope in the Night.* Cellos resume the lament as if mid-sentence, building to the apex of the movement: a full-throated statement of the lament, beginning pointedly on a major chord. Bells ring out. Reacting to this moment, an audience member wrote to Dawson, "I enjoyed every minute of the performance, but for me, when the church bells began to ring—well, I had to sit down, to keep from falling." The close of the movement is arresting. Joseph Horowitz writes that "this culminating three-fold groundswell is the original inspiration that shocked audiences." The stroke of a gong— recalling the Trinity, and often signifying death in symphonic music—sets in motion each of the three great "groundswells." As string tremolos expand and contract, the music takes its long final breath.

Out of this darkness, the **third movement** emerges as a ray of light. Oboe, bassoon, and clarinet take turns singing the spiritual, **O Le' Me Shine, Shine Like a Morning Star!** The strings offer a gentle companion theme. Then, in sequence, tuba, horns, trombones, and trumpets each quote a phrase from another Negro spiritual:

Hallelujah!

Hallelujah, Lord!

I've been to the river

And I've been tried;

I've been down into the sea

And I've been baptized.

Again, Dawson creates a movement honoring both classical convention and his own heritage. The Development section begins with solo clarinet recalling the "O Le' Me Shine" melody. The contrapuntal writing is nimble; nothing is formulaic. As Joseph Horowitz writes, "his symphony's developmental panache defies any impression of decorum. As symphonies go, its energies are wild and uninhibited."

Dawson made significant changes to the symphony after visiting six West African countries in 1952–53. Some of the changes concerned specific rhythms or percussion instruments, like the addition of the *adawura,* an African clave. But most of the revisions involved removing conventional tropes and forms, replacing them with music more in keeping with "a distinctively African American aesthetic that privileges the rhetorical power of rhythm and timbre," in the words of Gwynne Kuhner Brown.

Dr. Brown reports that the original ending to the third movement was "completely conventional." The revised ending is anything but. It is an accretion of the movement's characteristic rhythms, motivic patterns, and instrumental colors, leading to a brief, powerful timpani solo, booming out the interval of a falling fourth. As a closing gesture, this is decidedly non-Western. In Western music, the usual closing interval is a falling fifth: "THE END." That's how the Beethoven Ninth ends. But as a distillation of what has come before, Dawson's timpani cadenza is brilliant. It leaves off with a tense silence hanging in the air; and then—as if to leave no doubt about the originality and clarity of the composer's vision—the entire orchestra hammers those same timpani notes in unison, and it's over.

George Enescu was a violin virtuoso, and one of the most gifted musical prodigies of musical history. Pablo Casals described him as "the greatest musical phenomenon since Mozart." He also knew the orchestra from the inside out, as he was a highly accomplished and successful conductor. He made his American conducting debut in 1923 in Carnegie Hall, with the Philadelphia Orchestra, while Leopold Stokowski was its Music Director—eleven years before the Dawson premiere. In 1936, he was one of the frontrunners to succeed Arturo Toscanini as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic.

His **Romanian Rhapsody No. 1** is by far his most popular work, though he came to resent its fame, believing it stole too much attention away from what he considered to be better, more representative works. His two Romanian Rhapsodies are modeled on the Hungarian Rhapsodies of Liszt: orchestrations of folk tunes and dances, sequenced and developed to create contrast, always building to a rousing conclusion. Enescu claimed that the work was "a few tunes thrown together without thinking about it." But in fact, the care he took with the orchestration, his precisely notated ornamentation, the details he created to give the impression of improvised spontaneity—all of that speaks to the meticulousness with which he worked it out.

The piece begins with halting boy-girl exchanges between clarinet and oboe. When a second clarinet and a second oboe join in, the strings do too, plus a harp, who imitates the sound of the cimbalom. Everybody engages in a bit of showing off. Then the full orchestra gives a complete run of the tune. A slower, highly ornamented dance follows. It includes a courtly second section, a little bit faster; then the entire second tune repeats. A slow *accelerando* leads to a flute solo introducing a new dance tune. The excitement of competitive dancing is in the air. The music accelerates and builds to a frenzy, wherein the violin writing is so virtuosic and ingenious, that only someone of Enescu's proficiency on the instrument could have devised it. There are also amusing touches to suggest that this is the domain of amateur performers: a pair of trumpets is anxious and enters too soon; a solo flute comes in a bar too late; musicians constantly interrupt each other; and the whole of it breaks off unexpectedly toward the conclusion, when oboe and clarinet disrupt the proceedings to move front and center one last time. The interruption is brief, however, and soon the full orchestra careens to a finish so exuberant, it's hard to fault the public for loving this music so much.

Ottorino Respighi's orchestrations are so virtuosic, they come to mind first with this composer—before the tunes, harmonies, or rhythms. The enormous popularity of ***Pines of Rome*** is also attributable to the vividness of its tone painting. Respighi was one of the great musical portrait and landscape artists of all time.

In the **first movement**, we hear the cries of children playing amongst **The Pines of the Villa Borghese**. Muted trumpets and small drums accompany their mimicking of marching soldiers. They shout out children's play songs that Respighi learned from his wife Elsa, who recalled singing them herself in the Villa Borghese as a child. To represent the shrill voices of young children, only the high instruments play in this movement. There are no string basses, no trombones or tuba, no contrabassoon.

Suddenly, the children all fall down, slipping on descending scales in the piano and harp. Respighi thrusts us into a world in perfect opposition to the bright gardens of the first movements: the subterranean caverns of the catacombs. Here, below the roots of the **Pines Near a Catacomb**, live the denizens of the deep: bass clarinet, low horns, and basses. A distant trumpet intones a Gregorian chant from the Sanctus portion of the Mass. We become aware of the murmuring of monks, their chanting echoing through time. Gradually the music builds to a climax with thundering sounds from the organ—impersonated tonight by the worthy Nord Piano 2.

As the chanting fades, the quiet stroke of a low gong transports us to the **Pines of the Janiculum**, with its hilltop view of domes, bell towers, and Roman pine trees. A solitary clarinet contemplates the midnight scene, illuminated by the full moon. Soft winds blow through the pines. A actual nightingale sings—the first use of recorded sound in an orchestral score; a hushed thrill hangs in the air.

As dawn approaches, we hear hints of a march tune carried on a light wind, coming through the Roman mists, indistinctly at first. Gradually, a vision of the past glories of Rome comes into view. It is the army of the ancient Roman Consul. Roadside pines flank the approaching buglers, drummers, soldiers, and centurions. Their instruments, weapons, and uniforms gleam in the light of the rising sun. One of the most powerful crescendos in musical history is upon us, as the Roman Army marches inexorably toward Capitoline Hill along the **Pines of the Appian Way**.

Audience Survey (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfIAgExtLqGKBL2DnraaxICw3japnL5Ooqt84E44rQeYr574A/viewform?usp=sf_link)

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