

philosophy." I don't know that the truth in his thought is absolute, but I do hope that the great music in our concert leaves you in a holiday mood even if it doesn't provide you a particularly high revelation (of course I would be really pleased if it did). I also hope that you have a great holiday season.

Enoch Moser

Program Notes

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born December 16, 1770 Bonn, Germany
Died March 26, 1827 Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 9, Op. 125 Choral Symphony "Ode to Joy"

Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* was a long time in the making. In 1793 the 23 year-old composer wrote to a friend that he was interested in writing music to Shiller's epic poem, "An die Freude" ("Ode to Joy"). Over the years Beethoven continued to search for a way to fulfill that interest. In 1822, twenty-nine years after the letter to his friend, Beethoven finally found a place for the poem- in the final movement of his Ninth Symphony.

In February 1824 Beethoven completed the work, concluding a year and half of concentrated effort. The première of the Symphony took place in Vienna on May 7, 1824. Beethoven, now totally deaf, was seated on the stage with his back to the audience and could not hear the tumultuous applause at the end of the performance. One of the singers graciously turned him around so he could observe and enjoy the incredible response his music evoked.

Beethoven's parents were alcoholics and very poor. Consequently, he had little general education, had trouble expressing himself, and in adulthood seemed boorish in the aristocratic company he kept. He did manage to study piano, organ, violin and viola, and at age fourteen he became assistant to his teacher as court organist in Hanover. In 1787, it is believed, he met Mozart in Vienna and may have had some lessons from him.

In his thirties, his hearing began to leave him and by mid-forties he was profoundly deaf. This personal crisis left him isolated and eccentric. Remarkably, however, it was during his deaf years that he produced his greatest works. As his hearing became less and less, his works became more and more intimate and revealing. Beethoven was the dominant composer of the nineteenth century. His approximately 600 surviving works include 9 symphonies, 5 piano concertos, 1 violin concerto, 16 string quartets, 10 violin and piano sonatas, 32 piano sonatas, 5 cello sonatas, 2 masses, 1 opera, and 200 song settings.

Randall Thompson

Born April 21, 1899 New York City
Died July 9, 1984 Boston, Massachusetts

Frostiana

For many years Robert Frost taught at Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts. In 1958 Amherst, the city, organized a celebration of its 200th anniversary and commissioned Randall Thompson to set some of Frost's poems to music. Thompson fulfilled that commission in June and July 1959, while in Gstaad, Switzerland. The resulting work, *Frostiana: Seven Country Songs*, was first performed at Amherst Regional High School on October 18, 1959. That performance, given by a Bicentennial Chorus made up of choir singers from throughout the Township, was conducted by the composer and Robert Frost was present.

***Frostiana* includes settings of seven poems: 1. *The Road Not Taken*; 2. *The Pasture*; 3. *Come In*; 4. *The Telephone*; 5. *A Girl's Garden*; 6. *Stopping by Woods*; and 7. *Choose Something Like a Star*.**

Beautiful melodies and some dazzling word painting characterize *Frostiana*. For example, in *Choose Something Like a Star*, the soprano repeats six times "Oh, Star", holding the second word on a high D for 9 beats, thus providing an aural star for the rest of the chorus to address.

Randall Thompson, most notable for his choral music, composed works that gained significant popularity. His highly regarded choral works are very expressive, a result he achieves with wonderful simplicity.

He had a distinguished career both as a composer and as a pedagogue. He studied at Harvard and later with the composer Ernst Bloch. He taught at a number of universities and colleges and was director of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia in 1939-1941. After that he joined the faculty of Princeton and, subsequently, Harvard.

John Rutter

Born 1945 London

Gloria

John Rutter composed *Gloria* under a commission from the *Voices of Mel Olsen* in Omaha, Nebraska. Rutter conducted the première on his first visit to the U. S. in May 1974.

Rutter's setting of *Gloria* is, in large part, based on Gregorian chant. The text, in Latin, is drawn from the *Ordinary of the Mass*. The work has three movements structured roughly like those of a traditional symphony.

The original work was written for brass ensemble, timpani, percussion, organ and choir. Dr. William H. Sylvester, at the College of New Jersey, did the transcription for concert band that you will hear today.

John Rutter received his first musical education as a chorister at Highgate School. He went on to study music at Clare College, Cambridge, where he wrote his first published compositions and conducted his first recording while still a student.

Rutter's musical creations include both large and small-scale choral works, orchestral and instrumental pieces, a piano concerto, two children's operas, music for television, and unique works for such groups as the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble and the King's Singers. His most recent larger choral works, *Requiem* (1985), *Magnificat* (1990) and *Psalmfest* (1993) have been performed many times in Britain, North America, and a growing number of other countries. He co-edited four volumes in the *Carols for Choirs* series with Sir David Willcocks, and, more recently, he edited the first two volumes of the new *Oxford Choral Classics* series, *Opera Choruses* (1995) and *European Sacred Music* (1996).

From 1975 to 1979 he served as the Director of Music at Clare College. While there, his choir performed in a number

of broadcasts and recordings. After giving up the Clare post to provide more time for composing, he formed the Cambridge Singers, a professional chamber choir primarily dedicated to recording. Rutter now divides his time between composing and conducting. He has guest-conducted or lectured at many concert halls, universities, churches, music festivals, and conferences in Europe, Scandinavia, North America and Australasia. In 1980 Westminster Choir College, Princeton made him an honorary Fellow, as did the Guild of Church Musicians in 1988. In 1996 the Archbishop of Canterbury recognized his contribution to church music by conferring a Lambeth Doctorate of Music upon him in.

Leroy Anderson

Born June 29, 1908, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Died May 18, 1975, Woodbury, Connecticut

A Christmas Festival

In *A Christmas Festival* Anderson includes the following familiar carols: *Joy to the World*, *Deck the Halls*, *Good King Wenceslas*, *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*, *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*, *The First Nowell*, *Silent Night*, *Jingle Bells*, and *O Come, All Ye Faithful*.

Leroy Anderson was an American composer, arranger and conductor. His first attempt at composition was a string quartet which he wrote at the age of twelve. He studied piano at the New England Conservatory of Music and composition at Harvard with Walter Piston and Walter Raymond Spalding. After graduating from Harvard, he served on the faculty of Radcliffe College and directed the Harvard University Band, for which he made many transcriptions and arrangements. In 1935, he became the permanent orchestrator for the Boston Pops Orchestra under Arthur Fiedler.

As a composer, he specialized in light music for the standard orchestra, work which brought him renown in art- and popular-music circles. His works achieve their appeal through infectious melodies, popular dance rhythms, and novel orchestral effects that often relate to the titles (for example, *The Syncopated Clock* and *The Typewriter*). He was particularly successful in creating descriptive program notes. He was fluent in eleven languages, especially those of Scandinavia.

Johann Sebastian Bach

Born March 21, 1685, Eisenach, Germany

Died July 28, 1750, Leipzig, Germany

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

***Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* is based on a famous melody by Johann Schöp. This ever-popular chorale occurs at the end of Bach's *Cantata No. 147-Be Thou Cheerful, O My Spirit*. He also used this melody in two other of his chorales (BMV 233 and 365).**

Undoubtedly, the Bach name is the greatest in the history of music. The Bach family provided the world with seven generations of musicians between 1560 and 1800. Johann Sebastian Bach was a member of the fourth generation and, with approximately 200 musical ancestors, could reasonably be expected to have some degree of musical talent. Indeed, Bach's father taught him to play violin at a young age.

Bach's mother died when he was nine, and his father died a year later. After the death of his parents, Bach was cared for by his older brother, an organist who studied with Pachelbel. The older brother taught Bach some keyboard basics, but was so jealous of his rapid progress that Johann Sebastian had to secretly pursue self-instruction.

At age fifteen, Bach walked 200 miles to sing in the prestigious Mettenchor, a choir school run by Benedictine monks at Lüneburg. Free from his brother's domination, he could now involve himself with a full-time study of music.

After mastering the violin and clavier, he devoted himself to mastering the organ. At age 18 he accepted a position as an organist but devoted most of his time to composition.

He held a number of positions before becoming musical director for Prince Leopold at Cöthen. With two wives he sired a total of 20 children several of whom became musicians of note. In 1723, Bach became cantor and music director of St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, a position he held until his death.

In his later years Bach had trouble with his eye sight (cataracts) and in 1749, following eye surgery (by the same surgeon who later did a similar operation on Handel), he became totally blind. In 1750 his sight returned but soon thereafter he died following a stroke. Like Mozart, he was buried in an unmarked grave. His remains were found in 1894.

Though Bach was quite a prolific composer, only a handful of his works was actually published in his lifetime. While living, his fame was associated mostly with his talent as an organist.

Bach perfected the art of polyphony and brought the era of Baroque music to its culmination. Most of his music was composed for the church and includes 208 cantatas, oratorios, masses, orchestral works and chamber works. According to Wagner, Bach's compositional skills were the "most stupendous miracle in all music." The credibility of that observation is enhanced by the frequency with which Bach's works are performed as well as the exhaustive research that continues into his life and works.

In 1950, Wolfgang Schmieder published a catalog of Bach's works, entitled *Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis*. In this catalog, the works are numbered and prefixed by the initials BWV.

Gene Egge

Born December 31, 1927 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

A Musical Christmas Card

Gene Egge wrote this piece for band and choir especially for this concert. It demonstrates the great versatility of Gene's compositional and arranging talents and brings a lot of holiday cheer to our program.

Composer, arranger and conductor, Gene Egge began writing music when he was 14 years old.

He served in the Air Force Band Program for nearly 30 years as percussionist, trombonist, arranger and conductor, culminating his career as director of the Air Force Jazz Ensemble, The Airmen of Note, in Washington, DC.

After retiring from the USAF he continued to perform as percussionist with the Norfolk Symphony, the Richmond Symphony and the Peninsula Symphony. He was percussionist with the Bolshoi Opera when they performed at the Kennedy Center, and also performed with many musicals staged in the area.

He later played drums with the Hot Mustard, reknowned dixieland band recognized as the best dixieland band on the East Coast by Globe Magazine.

He has recorded with such stellar notables as Frank Sinatra, Jr, Bud Brisbois, Damita Jo, John Gary, Sue Raney, Helen

Forrest,, Billy Daniels, Faye Reis, James Darren, Della Reese, the Four Freshman and Sarah Vaughn.

Gene studied arranging and composition with Hank Levy at Towson State University in Maryland.

George Frideric Handel

Born February 23, 1685 Halle, Germany

Died April 14, 1759 London, England

Hallelujah Chorus from *Messiah*

***Messiah* is an oratorio for solo voices, choir, and orchestra to a text arranged from the Bible by Charles Jennens. It was first performed in Dublin on April 13, 1742 and scored an immediate success. The three parts of the oratorio tell the events of Jesus' life and death and several individual pieces have become famous in their own right, including the *Hallelujah Chorus*, which ends the second part. *Messiah* was Handel's most popular oratorio and today is one of the most frequently performed of all oratorios.**

George Frideric Handel was a German composer who settled in England. He lived from 1685 until 1759 and was a violinist and harpsichordist, the latter of which he was quite reputed. He composed operas, oratorios, church music, chamber music, orchestral music, harpsichord music, concerti grossi, organ concerti, cantatas, sonatas, and coronation anthems. In his late years he became blind but continued composing with the assistance of an amanuensis. His remains are interred in Westminster Abbey, where a memorial tableau showing him poring, pen in hand, over a page from *Messiah* commemorates one of England's best-loved composers and his best loved work.

Program Notes by Enoch Moser

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