

Fall 10-12-2010

Marshall University Music Department Presents
the Marshall University Symphony Orchestra, Dr.
Elizabeth Reed Smith, conductor, in a program of,
Bodacious Bs

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DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

presents

Marshall University Symphony Orchestra

Dr. Elizabeth Reed Smith, conductor

in a program of

Bodacious Bs

**Tuesday, October 12, 2010
Smith Recital Hall
8:00 p.m.**

This program is presented by the College of Fine Arts through the Department of Music, with the support of student activity funds. For more information about this or other music events, please call (304)696-3117 or view our website at www.marshall.edu/cofa/music.

Program

Overture to Egmont, Op. 84 Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

First Essay for Orchestra Samuel Barber
(1910-81)

Symphony No. 2 in B minor Alexander Borodin
(1833-87)

- I. Allegro; Animato assai
- II. Scherzo: Prestissimo
- III. Andante
- IV. Finale: Allegro

Acknowledgments: Dr. Vicki Stroeher, Dr. Edwin Bingham, Dr. Jeffrey Pappas, Levi Billiter

Program Notes

German-born composer Ludwig van Beethoven spent his life under the dictates of demanding patrons, and yet he found innovative ways to escape the limitations they imposed upon him by furthering the language of Haydn and Mozart to suit his own needs. Indeed, his compositional development throughout his life reflects an expansion of form, harmony and instrumentation, giving rise to broader musical expression.

Beethoven was commissioned in 1809 to compose an overture and incidental music to *Egmont*. Naturally he was drawn to *Egmont's* subject: the struggle for freedom. Goethe's play depicts the Spanish inquisition. Count Egmont sees the injustice of the Spaniards' actions and pleads for tolerance from the Spanish King. Egmont is arrested and sentenced to death, but dies knowing that a rebellion is in progress and the people will soon be saved from tyranny.

The Overture to *Egmont* begins in a serious mood. The darkness of the opening symbolizes oppression of the spirit. Soon the tempo accelerates, leading into an allegro section featuring a melody in the cellos. We hear the hero's noble defiance as he goes into battle. The tyrant motive from the beginning of the work develops throughout the Overture, becoming more rhythmic and dark until we hear Egmont's execution. The work ends triumphantly in the major key, with prominent brass, high strings, and piccolo.

Notes by Brittany White

American Samuel Barber was one of the most honored and well-respected composers of the twentieth century. Encouraged to pursue his love for music at an early age, Barber honed his skills at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, showing exceptional potential in piano, cello and voice (Barber had a brief career as a baritone shortly after graduating from the Curtis Institute.) His experience as a singer no doubt influenced Barber's lyrical compositional style as well as his output; almost two-thirds of his works are for voice.

In 1937, conductor Arturo Toscanini commissioned Barber to write

a work to be performed by the NBC Symphony Orchestra, and *First Essay for Orchestra* premiered November 5, 1938. Like its literary counterpart, this "essay" is relatively brief, has a logical thread throughout, and is fairly elaborate. There are essentially two sections to this work. The first is slow, broad, and lyrical, with the low strings introducing a mournful theme that is picked up by the violins. As this section progresses, there is a layering effect, as the original thematic material is tenderly reiterated by different voices in the orchestra - French horn, then bassoon, clarinet, oboe and flute. The trumpets take over the theme, and it is as if the clouds have parted and the sun is brightly shining. There is a dramatic slowing of tempo as the timpani and brass introduce a regal variation, then - quietly - the low strings return to restate the original theme. Brass and low strings alternate the musical phrases, conveying tension and contemplation, then a solo French horn sounds the theme one last time.

This segues into the second section of the piece - a brighter, livelier three-four tempo, with a very short, energized phrase introduced by the violins, repeated and varied by the upper woodwinds and punctuated by pizzicato low strings. The original theme is still here - sometimes in short bursts, other times in broad, sweeping figures played by the brass. Then Barber slows the gallop to a canter and we return to the very broad figures of the first section of the piece. Most of the orchestra drops out as the trumpets play variations of the original theme, sounding like a half-remembered dream. The work ends - plaintively, poignantly, inconclusively - with only violins and piano, playing one last haunting fragment of the original refrain.

Notes by Michael Sidoti

A chemist and physician by profession, Alexander Borodin was trained as a cellist, married a pianist, and pursued music as a lifelong avocation. Rimsky-Korsakov, another of the nationalist "Russian Five" composers, told of Borodin interrupting his composing to run next door and check his laboratory for chemicals burning or boiling over. His musical compositions were few; his scholarly papers many.

The Second Symphony, his most monumental work, was composed off and on from 1869 to 1875, with several interruptions, including an extended period of time working on an opera, *Prince Igor*. Borodin

never finished the opera, but incorporated ideas from it into the *Second Symphony*. For this reason Borodin's biographer nicknamed it the Heroic Symphony.

The first movement of the symphony, according to Borodin, evokes a gathering of Russian warrior heroes. It opens with a low fanfare motif juxtaposing major and minor thirds, which then alternates with a bright brassy tune. The cello section first presents the lyrical melody of the slower middle section, and the movement ends with a return to the Russian fanfare.

The Scherzo, in the unusual meter of 1/1 (108 measures to the minute!), relies on relentless quarter notes passed from instrument to instrument for its drive and energy. A contrasting middle section is vaguely Oriental in character, with a theme introduced by the oboe. The movement is in the classical ABA scherzo form - in that respect, the most traditional of the four movements. The Scherzo is also the only movement not directly inspired by Borodin's operatic undertakings.

The third movement depicts the recitation of a Slavic *bayan* (a mythical bard) accompanied by a *gusli*, a type of zither. A serene melody first stated by a solo horn is interwoven with a descending fourth tune and material that recalls the major and minor thirds of the first movement. The movement segues into the final movement by means of a held note in the second violins.

The exuberant Finale suggests a feast of triumphant heroes, and owes much of its character to the frequent alternation of triple and duple meter. Throughout the movement, as indeed throughout the entire symphony, Borodin plays with irregular phrase lengths and seemingly unrelated keys.

Notes by Elizabeth Reed Smith

Orchestra Personnel

Violin I

Lindsay DiFatta, concertmaster
Abby Holmes
Angela Scoulas
Molly Page
Chun Hyo-Jung
George Beter
Samuel Bauserman

Violin II

Janet Bromley, principal
Megan Hunt
Olivia Hay
Kelcey Perkins
Michael Wilcoxon

Viola

Tim Feverston, principal
Aaron Caviani
Jame C. McCumbee

Cello

Ezgi Karakus, principal
Dean Pauley
Ronnie Thompson

Bass

Rebecca Harrison, principal
Ethan Howard
Jeff Smith
Dustin Moraczewski

Flute

Brittany White, principal
Emily Crabtree

Piccolo

Shey Dillon

Piano

Élider DiPaula

Oboe

Cassandra Chapman, principal
Emily Cline

English Horn

Cassandra Chapman

Clarinet

Christa Fry, principal
Tim Cline

Bassoon

Edwin Bingham, principal
Kay Lawson

Horn

Billy Holderby, principal
Kristen Bobuk
Melinda Kelle
Nicholas Bragg

Trumpet

Briana Blankenship, principal
Dylan Elder
Natasha Vance

Trombone

John Galloway, principal
Andrew O'Neal

Bass Trombone

John Bruce

Tuba

Adam Phillips

Timpani

Levi Billiter

Percussion

Stephanie Boothe, Anna Maria Firth,
Daniel Miller