



Civic Orchestra of Tucson

PO Box 42764, Tucson, AZ 85733 | www.cotmusic.org
Contact: Dorothy Fitch, manager@cotmusic.org, 520-730-3371

Civic Orchestra of Tucson presents “Made in America” Free Concerts

TUCSON, AZ (November 13, 2018) — The Civic Orchestra of Tucson (COT) celebrates music by four American composers in its upcoming free concerts.

- Saturday, December 1, at 3:00 pm at Valley Presbyterian Church, 2800 S Camino Del Sol, Green Valley
- Sunday, December 2, at 3:00 pm at Christ Church United Methodist, 655 N Craycroft Rd, Tucson

The concerts open with **Jubilee**, by Ron Nelson, a resident of Scottsdale, AZ. Born in 1929, Nelson received his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from the Eastman School of Music. COT's Music Director Charles Bontrager describes this piece as “a bright, sparkling demonstration of music from the middle part of the 20th century that is totally accessible. Take lots of brass and percussion, add a rich lyrical section for strings, throw in an energetic fugue, and culminate with a grand chorale.”

Chiaroscuro (1984) was composed by Ellsworth Milburn, one of Bontrager's advisors during graduate school. Milburn was one of the founding members of the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, and this work was commissioned by the Houston Symphony. Milburn's widow will travel to Tucson to hear us perform this piece.

The piece reflects its name, an Italian art term referring to the use of bold contrasts between light and dark. The piece is filled with shimmering strings, prominent percussion (vibraphone, xylophone, glockenspiel, chimes, and a duet between timpani and tom toms), and some chords that look on the score to be quite dissonant, but instead create a mysterious aura of sound.

As a side note, Milburn spent time as keyboard player for Second City, the legendary improvisation theater troupe, and later, in the 1960s, became a cast member and Music Director of The Committee (a spin-off of Second City), located in San Francisco.

The **Four Dance Episodes from “Rodeo”** by Aaron Copland are “Buckaroo Holiday” (a spirited and energetic movement with unexpected rhythms), a quiet “Corral Nocturne,” a smooth “Saturday Night Waltz,” and a lively “Hoe Down.” The ballet was choreographed by Agnes de Mille and she danced the lead role in its premiere at the old Metropolitan Opera House on October 16, 1942, receiving 22 curtain calls.

The three-movement **Symphony No. 2, Opus 30, (“Romantic”)** was composed by Howard Hanson, who, for 40 years, was Director of the Eastman School of Music. It was commissioned by Serge Koussevitsky for the 50th anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1930. Music from this symphony is heard in the closing credits of the film *Alien* (without Hanson's permission), and John Williams used the symphony as a model for his music in the film *E.T.* You can hear how this symphony influenced Williams in his film scores.

Classical music lovers of all ages, as well as those who want to learn more about American music, are invited to attend these free concerts. No tickets are required.

The Civic Orchestra of Tucson is a 75-member, all-volunteer community orchestra dedicated to performing free concerts throughout the greater Tucson area since 1975. For more information about these free concerts, visit www.COTmusic.org or call 520-730-3371.

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The Civic Orchestra of Tucson's 2018-2019 season is supported in part by the Arizona Commission on the Arts, which receives support from the State of Arizona and the National Endowment for the Arts.