

**Civic Orchestra of Tucson**  
**Program Notes**  
**December 4 and 5, 2021**

Welcome to “Made in America, Part II” — a program designed to entertain, enlighten, inspire, and perhaps stretch. But mostly, to celebrate our American musical roots.

**Overture to “Candide”**

1956 witnessed the Broadway premier of Bernstein’s operetta, based on the 1759 novella of “Candide” by Voltaire. While this comic operetta has experienced reasonable success (college and university theater production departments love it), of greater interest in my mind is its musical creator, Leonard Bernstein.

The Bernstein entry in Wikipedia begins:

**Leonard Bernstein** (August 25, 1918 – October 14, 1990) was an American conductor, composer, pianist, music educator, author, and humanitarian. Among the most important conductors of his time, he was also the first American conductor to receive international acclaim. According to music critic Donal Henahan, he was “one of the most prodigiously talented and successful musicians in American history.”

Soon after his time at Harvard and at the tender age of only twenty-five, “Lenny” was appointed Assistant Conductor of the New York Philharmonic (1943) and thus began his amazing ascent to the very highest echelons of the international conducting world.

In 1957 Bernstein was appointed Music Director of the New York Philharmonic, a post he held until 1969. In 1957 he created “West Side Story,” for which the composer is perhaps most widely known by the general population. If you have been waiting to eagerly see WSS again, you will be happy to know that a production given new life by Steven Spielberg is due to open in theaters around the country on December 10, 2021.

There is so much to say about Leonard Bernstein that one barely knows where to begin. An ending is easy. This conductor twice had the extraordinary (!) privilege of working and studying with the Maestro. The first occasion was perhaps in 1974 at the Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music and revolved around a production by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra of Beethoven’s “Missa Solemnis, Opus 123.” The second, at the National Cathedral in Washington, D. C. in 1982, centered on a celebration of Stravinsky’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The anchor for the event was Bernstein conducting for TV the “Symphony of Psalms.” (See America Celebrates Stravinsky – the Paley Center for Media.)

Life changing events for this then young conductor.

Candide is scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 4 clarinets (including E Flat and Bass), 2 bassoons and contra bassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion and harp plus the full complement of strings.

**“Salus . . . esto”**

Referring to the aforementioned College–Conservatory of Music, this younger conductor arrived to begin studies in the fall of 1972 and as part of his graduate assistantship duties was assigned to Dr. Ellsworth Milburn as the graduate student conductor of the C–CM Contemporary Music Ensemble. A “new” music trial by fire and immersion into mostly American creations of the middle half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Milburn left C–CM in 1975 for a position at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University in Houston, but our student/mentor relationship continued to evolve. Nearly 10 years later I had the great honor to begin the annual commissioning of works for the Springfield (MO) Symphony Orchestra and in celebration of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, asked Milburn to create our first commission. “Salus . . . esto” was given birth.

The words of the title are the first and last of the motto of the state of Missouri, “Salus populi suprema lex esto” (“Let the well-being of the people be the supreme law”). As part of the commemorative aspect of the piece, the name of the city of its premier – “Springfield” – occurs in Morse code in several of the rhythms.

The work is in one movement, divided into five sections: Andante con moto; Scherzando; Adagio; Scherzando; Andante con moto. This arch-like shape allows for returns of musical material in varied ways; the first and last sections are similar, as are the second and fourth, with the middle being unique. The basic melody which emerges in the solo clarinet in the first section is derived from the opening “pyramid” in the brass. The full range of orchestral colors and dynamics is exploited, and the harmonic language, while centered on the pitch “E”, spans the musical extremes of tonality and atonality, consonance and dissonance.

“Salus . . . esto” is scored for 3 flutes (Piccolo), 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, multiple percussion, harp, piano/celesta and strings.

### **“The Cowboys” Overture**

As the other slice of our comfortable musical bread in this our first half musical sandwich, John Williams provides something to hum on your way to the lobby as you prepare for the main course.

John Williams (b. 1932) is the most prolific and widely honored living composer of film music and the most Oscar-nominated man alive. But what of Cowboys?

Williams inscribed this in the score:

“The Cowboys” was a film directed by the very talented Mark Rydel and featured John Wayne, probably Hollywood’s quintessential cowboy.

“The movie required a vigorous musical score to accompany virtuoso horseback riding and calf roping, and when my friend André Previn heard fragments of the score, he suggested that a concert overture lay hidden within the film’s music. Several years slipped by, and each time I saw the indefatigable Previn he would ask, ‘Have you made an overture of Cowboys yet?’

“He kept this up until 1980, when I finally worked out the piece and played it at a Boston Pops concert. Both the orchestra and the audience seemed to enjoy the music to such an extent that it has been part of our repertoire ever since.

“I am especially delighted that this edition has finally been made available, and I hope that interested people will find genuine pleasure in this music.”

Cowboys is scored for 3 flutes (2 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets one doubling on E Flat clarinet, 2 bassoons and contra bassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, multiple percussion, harp, piano/celeste, and the full complement of strings.

*Notes by Charles Bontrager*

### **Symphony No. 9, Opus 95 in E minor**

“From the New World,” Dvořák’s last symphony, ranks as his most popular. (That being said, please go to YouTube or your local record store or download his 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> symphonies. They are both quite wonderful!) The title, added at the last minute by the composer, refers to the United States. During a visit shortly after Dvořák’s 51<sup>st</sup> birthday, the composer fell under the spell of America’s abundant natural beauty, which recalled to him an earlier desire to compose a work based on Longfellow’s “Song of Hiawatha.”

Dvořák completed his Symphony No. 9 on May 24, 1893. It premiered in Carnegie Hall in December, 1893. That month in the New York Herald, Dvořák refuted speculation that he had used negro themes throughout the symphony:

“I borrowed not a single one of these melodies. I wrote my own themes, applying characteristics of Indian music and developing them by the use of modern rhythms, harmonies, counterpoint, and orchestral color.”

**I. Adagio: Allegro molto**

The syncopated main theme is suggested in horns and lower strings in the introduction. The horns present the theme which is taken over by the woodwinds. Flutes and oboes provide a transition to the second main theme, voiced first in flutes and then violins.

**II. Largo**

This movement is built around a distinctive spiritual-like melody for English Horn carrying above harmonies in the strings. Flute and oboe entertain brief asides before the main melody returns and the movement ends on hushed chords.

**III. Molto vivace**

Flute and oboe resound with the vivacious first theme of the Scherzo, to be answered by the clarinet. A milder second theme emerges from flute and oboe. There are two trios, one in E Major and another in C. the opening section repeats, followed by a coda in which the main theme of the first movement sounds in the horns and builds before it dies away.

**IV. Allegro con fuoco**

A brief introduction precedes the finale, in which horns and trumpets blare forth the movement's main theme, sounding against chords in the rest of the orchestra. After a transition, clarinets introduce the second theme, in triplets, against tremolo strings. These two themes plus, the main theme of the slow movement, part of the Scherzo, and the syncopated subject of the first movement, all appear in the development. A recapitulation of the beginning of the movement leads into a coda which reminisces along Scherzo themes.

*Dvořák notes by Jana Lyn Main, from a November 4, 1995, performance of the work by the Bremerton Symphony. conducted by Charles Bontrager.*