

The Renaissance

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**MANSFIELD
SYMPHONY**

Robert Franz
Music Director

**Candide
a Paris
April 18,
2009
8:00 PM**

From Music Director Robert Franz:

“OK, time for another confession. I found this Suite from Bernstein’s opera, *Candide* and thought to myself how much fun it would be to perform. I love the music from this show, and this was just the right amount of music to perform in a concert setting. The problem was that I didn’t understand the story, so I listened to the opera in all of its three versions. After paying very close attention and listening as closely as I could, I thought to myself, I still don’t get it! So, I went to buy the original novella by Voltaire that the opera is based on, read it and the light bulb went off. It started to make sense. Well, I wanted to help you through the same process, so here’s key: the only way that this narration works is if you don’t ask too many questions! Putting a whole in this story is as easy as skeet shooting at the side of a barn. Just enjoy the zany path that these loveable and confused characters take in front of you.

Now in the classical world, there is lots of debate over whether or not *Candide* is an opera or a musical. The truth is that Leonard Bernstein faced questions like this about a lot of music that he wrote. Bernstein had a way of using an American sound in a classical way and melding the two. The work is sung in English and requires the agility of an operatically trained singer. The “arias” are tuneful and that can throw people. The truth is that I don’t have the answer from which category the work fits into... I just think it’s terrific music and I can’t wait to share it with you!”

Candide a Paris
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Symphony No. 31 *Paris*
Leonard Bernstein, Suite from *Candide*

Overture to *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO*
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
1756-1791

The Marriage of Figaro is one of the oldest operas in the standard repertoire and one of the most youthful in spirit. When Pierre de Beaumarchais's play, on which the opera is based, was published in 1782, its unflattering portrait of the aristocracy understandably caused an uproar and horrified Louis XVI. Like any scandal, it proved irresistible and must have spread rapidly, because Mozart's opera to Lorenzo da Ponte's libretto was premiered only four years later.

As is customary for most opera overtures of the eighteenth century, this one contains no music from the opera itself. Nevertheless, the overture captures the spirit of the opera with its opening bars, a sequence of rapid notes on the strings scurrying like whispering conspirators. They are answered by the whole orchestra with festive trumpets, and these alternating moods continue throughout the ebullient overture.

SYMPHONY No. 31 IN D MAJOR, K.297, "PARIS"
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
1756-1791

In 1777 Mozart set out with his mother on a grand tour of Germany and France, ending up in Paris where his mother suddenly died. The trip turned into a financial disaster as well: no court appointments; few substantive commissions; and, because of his long absence, dismissal from his post with the Salzburg court orchestra. As for the Parisians, they mostly ignored him, while he repaid them in kind.

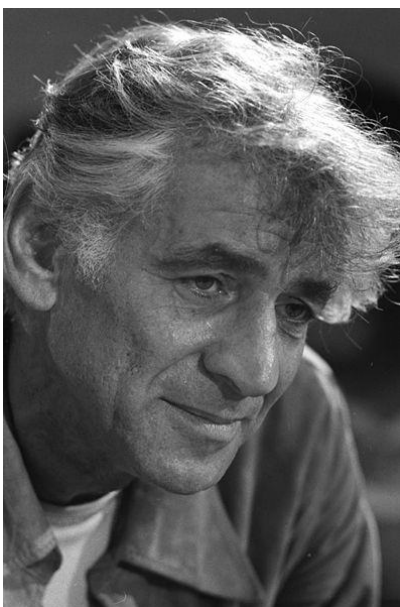
To conform to Parisian taste, the "Paris" Symphony has only three movements. It opens with a pompous theme, which immediately contrasts with a dainty lyrical one, the two alternating throughout the movement. The graceful *Andante* heard today is a replacement for the original one, which did not please Le Gros, who found it too long and with too many modulations. The finale contains one of those Haydnesque surprises. It opens with whispering strings, but suddenly bursts forth with a grand *tutti* that elicited surprise and thunderous applause at the premiere.

Suite from *CANDIDE*
Leonard Bernstein
1918-1990

Candide's plot follows the adventures of four disciples of the philosopher of optimism, Dr. Pangloss, in the court of the Baron of Westphalia (a backwater). Pangloss, despite millennia of evidence to the contrary, maintains that this is the "best of all possible worlds." his four students are: Candide, the Baron's bastard son; Cunegonde, his legitimate daughter; Maximillian (Max), his legitimate son; and Paquette, a serving girl attached to Max. After war destroys Westphalia, the four are scattered to the winds, Cunegonde and Max presumed dead. A true Panglossian believer, Candide sets out to seek a better fortune.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart



Leonard Bernstein