

UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

It was a dark and stormy night...

CONDUCTED BY


Wes Kenney

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 AND
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 7:30 P.M.

Griffin Concert Hall



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



Director's Note:

In the past 20 years the CSU Orchestra programs have tackled many symphonies including all 9 of Beethoven. Tonight's performance of the 5th is the second time in the past two decades and it is always a pleasure to teach the style and performance practice of this musical giant to a new generation. No doubt, for most of them, it will not be their last performance of this iconic work that takes us on a journey from darkness to light. Still, it is incredibly important that as a university we are teaching new ideas, approaches to music, and less known historical contexts. Important because a significant composer from the earlier part of the 20th century has not had nearly the opportunities as others because of gender and race. It is my hope that you'll agree that the voice of Florence Price deserves to be heard and frequently. In taking the opportunity to present her Symphony No. 3 to new players and audiences, we are a catalyst for many more opportunities from this point in history.

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

It was a dark and stormy night . . .

Thursday, September 23, 2022 | Friday, September 24, 2022

Florence Price

(1887-1953)

Symphony No. 3 in C minor, 1940

- I. Andante—Allegro
- II. Andante ma non troppo
- III. Juba
- IV. Scherzo. Finale

Ludwig van Beethoven

(1770-1827)

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op 67, 1807

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Allegro
- IV. Allegro—Tempo I—Allegro—Presto

PROGRAM NOTES:

Florence Price Symphony No. 3 in C minor

The influences in Florence Price's life can be heard throughout the four movements of her Symphony No. 3 in c minor. Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, she graduated with honors from the New England Conservatory in 1906 then returned to her birth home to educate African American students before racial strife forced the family to relocate to Chicago. In that city's classical music arena, Price thrived as both a performer and composer. Her first five years yielded three major works: Symphony No. 1 in E minor, *Ethiopia's Shadow in America*, and the Piano Concerto in One Movement. Frederick Stock, the Music Director of the Chicago Symphony took notice of the award winning First Symphony and programmed it for that ensemble in 1935.

There were three more symphonies to follow. Unfortunately, the 2nd symphony manuscript has been lost, but Nos. 3 and 4 have survived and with new editions of the parts have piqued the interest of contemporary conductors.

Price wrote in a letter prior to the 3rd Symphony's premiere: "It is intended to be Negroid in character and expression, [but] no attempt has been made to project Negro music solely in the purely traditional manner." Thus, in listening to the just over half hour score, one can hear the inspiration of spirituals and other melodies, but not direct quotes. As mentioned earlier, her life's experiences can help an understanding of her compositional approach. The first and fourth movements are in a Sonata Allegro procedure, but with many interesting variations. Could it be that during her time in Boston at the Conservatory that she was exposed to composers who were changing the way this so-called form was used? Certainly by 1940 her exposure would include the Soviet composers as well as Sibelius and Mahler. But Price's struggle to be heard during her career can be heard as well--that stormy key of c minor as well as her liberal use of almost "Debussyesque" ninth chords lending a dissonance and edge to the sound of her music. In fact, the slow opening of the first movement is the most dissonant of the entire work. It is interesting to note that she returns to that darkness to close the final movement scherzo. If pain can be a musical experience, Price is making the listener feel hers.

The first movement begins with a slow introduction before launching into the first main time announced first in the low strings. An eventual modulation into the major mode hearkens to the tune "Deep River" but sung by a trombone. Notice in this movement and throughout the work the use of the various orchestra choirs as separate entities. The second movement has a decidedly spiritual air to its character beginning with the opening woodwind choir and oboe lead. The melodies are tied to each other by using a three-note descending contour. The "Juba" of the third movement is drawn from a 19th century southern dance with stomping and body slapping. It is highly syncopated and gives the impression of a very sophisticated "ragtime" style. There are too slow sections offering a slithering type blues. Listen for the surprise solo instrument in the second slow section! It should be noted the three-note opening of the tune corresponds to the main theme of the opening movement.

The finale is rather phrenetic 6/8 scherzo also in the sonata-allegro manner, but with many innovative departures along the way. The main theme has a Celtic quality in its harmony and contours. A few short slow interludes interrupt the energy allowing the listener to catch one's breath before breaking forward again. However, after a final string flourish, the darkness returns to bring the work to a close.

— Notes by Wes Kenney

Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op 67, 1807

While completely commonplace today it is hard to overstate the shock the first listeners and musicians must have experienced when first encountering Beethoven's newest experiment in sound. At the time audiences already knew Beethoven as an innovative and unusual composer manipulating traditional forms and procedures. In 1804 after finishing work on the revolutionary Third Symphony (Eroica) Beethoven began creating what would become the first and third movements of the Fifth Symphony. 1807 saw the bulk of the work on the last three movements. The fourth movement took much drafting to plan for how light could triumph over darkness. Composing in vastly different styles, Beethoven finished the Fifth Symphony in 1808 while at the same time working on the Fourth and Sixth Symphonies, the *Appassionata* Piano Sonata, Fourth Piano Concerto, and the opera *Leonore*. The four hour long freezing cold concert of December 22, 1808 contained the premieres of not only the Fifth Symphony, but also the Sixth Symphony, Fourth Piano Concerto, and the Choral Fantasy.

How is one to begin a symphony in the first place? Mozart and Haydn laid out many models, be they using loud fanfares, slow dramatic introductions, or rocketing melodies. Beethoven disregards these models right from the beginning of the Fifth Symphony: the harmony does not clearly lay out C minor, and the opening rhythms and fermatas give little sense of tempo or stability. The notable four note opening motif, perhaps the most universally known incipit, launches us into a tempestuous and uncertain first section. This quickly gives way to a second more lyrical melody in the major mode. People at the time would have anticipated a shift in key for this second theme, but Beethoven takes us to an unexpected Eb major. The use of the major mode further disorients listeners on the repeat of the exposition (first section), where they might hear the first notes as now fitting into Eb major rather than c minor. At this point observers might notice that the movement is indeed in a traditional first movement approach: Sonata Allegro. After all of this major mode music the development winds down a path of minor keys adding to the dark and brooding nature of the movement. Rather than work out variations and ideas on the melodic figures, especially the beautiful second theme, he instead works out variations and argumentation using the opening rhythmic figure. The recapitulation follows as expected, repeating the first section of music. After this insistent and relentless rhythm and driving tempo Beethoven gives us a sudden moment to catch our breath and reflect: a solo oboe playing a short embellishment of the opening pitches. Beethoven should have set the second, or lyric, theme back into the home key of c minor but was unhappy with the sound of that melody in a minor key. He leaves this tune in the major mode but shifts the key so that the home note is C, but must now finish out the movement in

minor, as expected, rather than major. Beethoven uses one of his famous Codas to take us down from the heights of C major back into the depths of c minor.

The sweet lyricism of the second movement is a welcome relief and contrast after the *Sturm und Drang* of the first. This movement is mostly in the key of Ab Major. While this is not completely unexpected, it continues to reinforce Beethoven's use of key relationships by the interval of a third rather than by fifth. An elegant set of variations on two themes, Beethoven continues to explore rhythmic possibilities more than melodic. The first theme is a simple melody with sparse accompaniment. Listen as Beethoven varies the rhythms by adding more and more notes. You will still hear the four-note rhythmic motif that opened the symphony in this movement too, mostly in the louder Tutti sections.

The third movement contains many of the traditional elements of the Minuet and Trio, Beethoven accelerates the tempo of this movement to dizzying speeds. This had been his normal treatment of the movement since the Second Symphony, and he labels the movement *Scherzo*. The eerie and uncertain opening figure is quickly contrasted by a vigorous melody first stated by the horns. While it is a wonderful tune, you might pay more attention to the rhythm: Beethoven again brings back the opening idea of "ta ta ta taaa!" The movement is not solely brooding and dark as the music moves to a rustic Trio section in the major mode. The conclusion of this movement seems completely on the edge of oblivion. Out of the depths emerges a distant timpani fanfare. This call to arms brings the violins to start a slowly rising legato melody.

Transitioning to the fourth movement without pause (*attacca*) was a new idea, and the effect of moving from such eerie and ghostly music to music of profound triumph is incredibly moving. Five musicians have been patiently waiting on stage with nothing to play until this movement: Piccolo, three Trombones, and Contrabassoon expand the sonic experience of triumph by starting to play only at this movement that he transitions to C Major. The opening rhythmic motif will be quite present in the accompanying figures of this movement, but it will be most audible near the conclusion of the movement as the whole orchestra rejoices in unity at this unifying motif.

— Notes by Rob Stahly



WES KENNEY is celebrating his 20th season as Music Director of the Fort Collins Symphony and Director of Orchestras at Colorado State University. Last spring, he was honored by CSU in becoming the first University Distinguished Professor from the School of Music, Theater, and Dance. During his tenure the past 19 years the CSU Symphony, Sinfonia and opera orchestra has presented many firsts at the school most recently last spring when they presented Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe* Suite No. 2 and Revueltas' *Night of the Mayas*. Mr. Kenney has announced this season will be his last at CSU and has programmed the Symphony No. 3 by Gustav Mahler as a capstone to his career at this school.

Mr. Kenney's work with the all-professional Fort Collins Symphony garnered the 2020 American Prize in orchestral performance, professional orchestra division for a 2019 performance of the Shostakovich Symphony No. 9. He is also the 2007 Grand Prize Winner of the Varna (Bulgaria) International Conducting Competition, a multiple winner of the Ernst Bacon Memorial Prize for excellence in performance of American Music, an American Prize winner for best orchestral performance in the Youth Orchestra Division. Maestro Kenney was recently selected as Honored Artist of the American Prize National Nonprofit Competitions in the Performing Arts.

During the pandemic, Mr. Kenney and the Fort Collins Symphony performed the only live concert on July 4, 2020 in the United States, then kept the FCS musicians playing with streamed concerts throughout the 2020-2021 season.

In addition, Mr. Kenney is in his 10th season as music director with Denver Young Artist Orchestra, Colorado's premier youth orchestra. He has led that orchestra on two European tours and anchored two festivals at Carnegie Hall. This summer they will make their Debut at the Frank Gehry designed Disney Concert Hall, home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Mr. Kenney's guest conducting activities include Louisiana's Acadiana Symphony, the Alabama Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Colorado Symphony, Dubuque Symphony, Indiana's Lafayette Symphony, Long Beach Symphony, New Mexico Symphony, Richmond Symphony, Riverside Symphonia, Savannah Symphony, and the Virginia Symphony. International guest conducting includes performances with Bulgaria's Stara Zagora Opera Company, South Korea's Changwon Philharmonic, Hanoi's Vietnam National Symphony, the Lviv Philharmonic (Ukraine), Vidin (Bulgaria) State Philharmonic, and the Edinburgh Music Festival.

Since 2004 he has conducted productions of *Carmen*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Turn of the Screw*, *Barber of Seville*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Cenerentola*, *Rigoletto*, *Tosca*, *Otello*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Die Fledermaus*, *La Traviata*, *Il Trovatore*, *La Boheme*, *Pagliacci*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Falstaff*, *Turandot*, *Marriage of Figaro*, *Aida*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Tenderland* and more. In addition, he has conducted over one hundred fifty performances of *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, *The Firebird*, and many other dance works.

Named Educator of the Year by the Colorado Chapter of the American String Teachers Association in 2008, he has served as Guest Conductor with the Alabama, New Hampshire, New Mexico (twice), Minnesota, and Virginia All-State Orchestras. He was awarded the prestigious Carmen Dragon Conducting Prize in 1992. Now in its sixteenth year, Kenney is a founder of the CSU Summer Master of Music Education with an emphasis in conducting program. He has taught at the Conductors Institute at Bard College alongside Harold Farberman and Leon Botstein. He is also a past president of The Conductors Guild and is currently on the advisory board.

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY MUSIC APPLIED FACULTY

Violin

Ron Francois
Leslie Stewart

Viola

Margaret Miller

Cello

Alice Yoo

Bass

Forest Greenough

Guitar

Jeff Laquatra

Flute

Michelle Stanley
Megan Lanz

Oboe

Pablo Hernandez

Clarinet

Wesley Ferreira

Saxophone

Peter Sommer
Dan Goble

Bassoon

Cayla Bellamy

Trumpet

Stanley Curtis

Horn

John Mcguire
Deaunn Davis

Trombone

Drew Leslie

Tuba/Euphonium

Stephen Dombrowski

Percussion

Eric Hollenbeck
Shilo Stroman

Harp

Kathryn Harms

Piano

Bryan Wallick

Organ

Joel Bacon

Voice

Nicole Asel
Tiffany Blake

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA

WES KENNEY, Conductor

ROBERT STAHLY, Graduate Teaching Assistant

Violin I

Jessica Rosado,
concertmaster
Landon Fennell,
asst. concertmaster
Matthew Dinsmore +
Mary Fox
Madison Kubala
Leslie Sawyer +
Danica Smith +
Isabella Ulate

Violin II

Annie Smith**
Rhea Chan*
Lola Kern +
Devon Mayes
Tim Patawaran
Emily Spear +
Leslie Stewart +

Viola

Ethan Buell**
Percy Slovt*
Angel Bustillos
Margaret Miller +
Madelyn Reynolds
Emily Rowe
Cheryl Hite +

Cello

Avery Smith**
Robert Stahly*
Laurel Ave
Cameron Edwardo
Kylie Erickson
Ashleigh Haliw

Cello (cont.)

Alex Koster
Jimmy Olson
Grace Stuewe
Kristin Weninger

Bass

Cristian Mazo**
Zachary Niswender**
Hunter Allen
Thomas Hasler
Max Johnson
Annie Scott

Flute

Eden Ainscough
Merritt Jones
Fran Lujan
Jenna Moore

Oboe

Sarah Veldhuizen
Pablo Hernandez+

Clarinet

Bradley Irwin
Alfredo Ramirez
Andrew Rutten

Bassoon

Michael Coffey
James Scott
Kyle Thomas

Horn

Ayo Derbyshire
Leah Dunphey
Jake Elam
Rachel Nieves
Rachel Richardson
Erin Wilson

Trumpet

John Pirillo*
Enzo Barrett
Kris Usrey

Trombone

Joseph Raby*
Bryce Medlyn
Shae Mitchell

Tuba

Zach Hollingsworth*

Percussion

Colin Ferry
Ben Kitchen
Thomas Landewee
Jarred Premo
Maya Reno
Derek Summers

Harp

Kathryn Harms+

Celesta

Jialin Wu

** Principal

* Assistant Principal

+ Guest Performer

CSU WIND SYMPHONY

Troublesome Fire!

Conducted by Rebecca Phillips
Guest artist Eric Hollenbeck, percussion

world premieres of works by James M. David and Kevin Poelking

October 6, 7:30 p.m. | Griffin Concert Hall



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

SHOW YOUR CSU RAMS PRIDE.



Your Pride Should Go Where You Do.

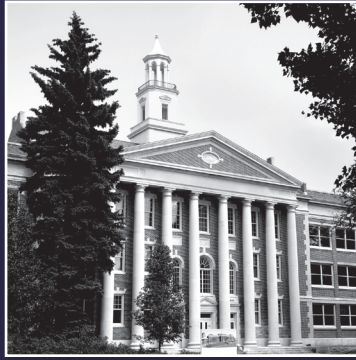
Show your pride year-round with our exclusive CSU Visa®

Debit Cards, free with any FNBO Checking Account.

Visit us online, or stop by a branch to open your account today.



fnbo.com/csu



FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF
SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE EVENTS

PLEASE VISIT:
WWW.CSUARTSTICKETS.COM



UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS **SEASON SPONSOR**

