

**The Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra**

2008-2009 Super Series • Program VI

**Christopher Wilkins**, *Music Director*

**The Artistry of André Watts**

**Saturday, February 28, 2009 8:00 PM**

**Bob Carr Performing Arts Centre**

**Daniel Hege**, *conductor*

**André Watts**, *piano*

***Le Tombeau de Couperin***

Prelude: Vif  
Forlane: Allegretto  
Menuet: Allegro moderato  
Rigaudon: Assez vif

Maurice Ravel  
(1875-1937)

**Symphony No. 5 in E-flat major, op. 82**

Tempo molto moderato—Allegro moderato—Presto  
Andante mosso, quasi allegretto  
Allegro—Misterioso—Un pochettino largamente

Jean Sibelius  
(1865-1957)

**INTERMISSION**

**Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, op. 58**

Allegro moderato  
Andante con moto—  
Rondo: Vivace

Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770-1827)

*Sponsored by Whit Cotten - Dedicated to Martha DeNeen Cotten*

Mr. Watts, piano



*Steinway is the official piano of the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra. S T E I N W A Y*

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artist  
biography



Daniel Hege

Now in his eighth season as Music Director of the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, **Daniel Hege** is recognized as one of America's finest young conductors, and has earned acclaim for his fresh interpretations

of the standard repertoire and his commitment to creative programming. In 2001, he finished his five-year tenure as Resident Conductor of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, where he worked closely with David Zinman and Yuri Temirkanov.

Mr. Hege first attracted attention when he won the post of Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Young Musicians' Foundation Debut Orchestra in Los Angeles. He served, concurrently, as Director of Instrumental Music the Orange County High School of the Arts and Assistant Conductor of the Pacific Symphony Orchestra. Since then, he has served as Music Director of the Chicago Youth Orchestra (where he was twice honored by the League of American Orchestras for innovative programming), Encore Chamber Orchestra of Chicago, Haddonfield Symphony Orchestra in New Jersey and Newton Mid-Kansas Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Hege has guest conducted leading orchestras including the Baltimore, Columbus, Colorado, Detroit, Houston, Louisville, Oregon, San Diego and Seattle Symphony Orchestras, the Rochester, Naples and Louisiana Philharmonics, and has won

acclaim abroad for his performances with the Leicester Orchestra of England, Singapore and St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestras, the Calgary Philharmonic, Auckland Philharmonia, and the Symphony Orchestra of Lima, Peru. He has guest conducted at the National Orchestra Institute, the National Repertory Orchestra, the Aspen and Grand Teton music festivals, and in most recent years, has regularly conducted opera and ballet performances.

Under Mr. Hege's artistic leadership, the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra performed a critically acclaimed concert to a sold-out audience at Carnegie Hall in April 2003. He oversaw the release of the SSO's live Classics Concert CD in 2000, the Holiday Pops release just two years later, and the SSO's July 2006 release, Big Band Bash. Other recordings include Done Made My Vow, a CD of works by Adolphus Hailstork with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Morgan State Choir; Violin Concertos by Black Composers of the 18th and 19th Centuries (Cedille), with violinist Rachel Barton Pine and the Encore Chamber Orchestra (nominated for a 1998 NPR Heritage Award); and The Gift, a collection of Christmas arrangements on Woodland Records with oboist Brad Smith.

Mr. Hege studied with Daniel Lewis of the University of Southern California and with Paul Vermel at the Aspen Music Festival and holds degrees in history and music from Bethel College and a masters degree in orchestral conducting from University of Utah.

A 2001 40 under 40 Honoree, Mr. Hege received an honorary doctorate in Humane Letters from Le Moyne College in 2004. He is active as a guest clinician and adjudicates various musical competitions nationally. He resides in Jamesville, NY with his wife, Katarina Oladottir Hege, and their three daughters.

# artist biography



André Watts

**André Watts** burst upon the music world at the age of 16 when Leonard Bernstein chose him to make his debut with the New York Philharmonic in their Young People's Concerts, broadcast nationwide on CBS-TV. Only two weeks later, Bernstein asked him to substitute at the last minute for the ailing Glenn Gould in performances of Liszt's E-flat Concerto with the New York Philharmonic, thus launching his career in storybook fashion. More than 45 years later, André Watts remains one of today's most celebrated and beloved superstars.

A perennial favorite with orchestras throughout the US, Mr. Watts is also a regular guest at the major summer music festivals including Ravinia, the Hollywood Bowl, Saratoga, Tanglewood and the Mann Music Center. Recent and upcoming orchestral engagements include appearances with the Philadelphia and Minnesota Orchestras, New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, and the St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Detroit, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Dallas, Seattle and National symphonies. Mr. Watts also made an eleven city East Coast tour with the Bergen

Philharmonic which included a performance at Carnegie Hall and was inducted into the Hollywood Bowl Hall of Fame on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his debut (with the Philadelphia Orchestra).

André Watts has had a long and frequent association with television, having appeared on numerous programs produced by PBS, the BBC and the Arts and Entertainment Network, performing with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center among others. His 1976 New York recital, aired on the program Live From Lincoln Center, was the first full length recital broadcast in the history of television and his performance at the 38th Casals Festival in Puerto Rico was nominated for an Emmy Award in the category of Outstanding Individual Achievement in Cultural Programming. Mr. Watts' most recent television appearances are with the Philadelphia Orchestra on the occasion of the orchestra's 100th Anniversary Gala and a performance of the Brahms Concerto No.2 with the Seattle Symphony, Gerard Schwarz conducting, for PBS.

Mr. Watts' extensive discography includes recordings of works by Gershwin, Chopin, Liszt and Tchaikovsky for CBS Masterworks; recital CD's of works by Beethoven, Schubert, Liszt and Chopin for Angel/EMI; and recordings featuring the concertos of Liszt, MacDowell, Tchaikovsky and Saint-Saens on the Telarc label. He is also included in the Great Pianists of the 20th Century series for Philips.

# programs notes

Program Notes provided by David R. Glerum,  
Music Director – WMFE-FM/NPR, Orlando

## **Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) – *Le Tombeau de Couperin:***

*Prelude: Vif*

*Forlane: Allegretto*

*Menuet: Allegro moderato*

*Rigaudon: Assez vif*

Maurice Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* was conceived as early as 1914 as an homage to not only Francois Couperin, but to eighteenth-century French music in general. It is a neoclassical masterpiece of instrumental virtuosity recalling and paying tribute to the sound and forms—the musical aesthetics—of a bygone era the composer always held dear. The clarity, logic, and elegance of the French Baroque represented for Ravel the heart of French civilization. Proud of his Gallic roots, the composer was protective of the French cultural heritage, which was being threatened by the outbreak of the First World War.

Filled with patriotic zeal, Ravel did his best to fulfill his civic duty by volunteering for the French military air corps. He was turned down owing to his underweight stature and delicate health, but eventually saw action as a transport driver. However, he was eventually discharged in 1916 when he came down with dysentery and had to be hospitalized. Ravel's convalescence in Paris was complicated by the sudden final illness and then death of his beloved mother. Coupled with his own failing health and mental anguish over the ravages of the War, his musical output was limited to little of any lasting value. *Le Tombeau de Couperin* was the only work of any real import to emerge from these difficult War years.

Ravel picked up on his original intention to further and sustain the historic tradition of French culture, perhaps to help him through this time of near-

hopelessness and despair. *Le Tombeau* gave him the means to express his appreciation for the sanity represented by the coherence and refinement of the French Baroque age. Composers of that era, Francois Couperin (1668-1733) among them, were accustomed to honoring in music recently deceased colleagues. They would pen a "tombeau," or "tombstone," and there is no doubt that Ravel was intensely aware of the association with the times. And so another profound layer of meaning was added to the work. When the first version of *Le Tombeau* was released as a piano suite in 1917, it was intended as a musical memorial with each of the six movements dedicated to a friend or acquaintance taken down by the War.

Notwithstanding the heavy inspirations of the work, *Le Tombeau de Couperin* was later scored for orchestra in 1919 and won popularity for its easy elegance and effervescent tone; it became irresistible as a *tour de force* of instrumental finesse. Ravel pulled from the piano suite the fugue and highly pianistic toccata, and happily decided on four catchy and lively dances. They include a bubbly *Prelude* with some dashing writing for the woodwinds, in particular the first oboist; a bittersweet and lilting *Forlane*, with swaying rhythms and adventuresome and piquant harmonies; a delicate and subdued *Menuet* with elegiac grace; and an energetic final *Rigaudon*—balanced with a stately middle section of decorative and melancholic beauty—and ending in notable boisterous high spirits. *Le Tombeau* was fittingly described by Donald N. Ferguson, "This Suite is a garland of musical flowers, grown from 17<sup>th</sup>-century seed in a 20<sup>th</sup>-century hothouse."

## **Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) – *Symphony No. 5 in E-flat major, op. 82***

*Tempo molto moderato—Allegro moderato—  
Presto*

*Andante mosso, quasi allegretto  
Allegro—Misterioso—Un pochettino largamente*

Jean Sibelius is the most widely acclaimed artist to have ever emerged from Finland. He is admired in America, England, Scandinavia and throughout

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# program notes

the world as one of *the* great composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sibelius benefited from a head start owing to the excellent classical education he received as a result of his family's comfortable financial circumstances (his father was a prosperous family surgeon). The boy from early on was grounded in piano studies and then at the age of only fourteen started lessons on the violin. Mastering the instrument became a mission, with the young musician writing, "The violin took me by storm and for the next ten years [from 1879-1889] it my dearest wish, my greatest ambition to become a great virtuoso."

Sibelius gave that wish his best effort. Although in 1885 going to Helsinki to study law, he soon changed course and dedicated four years as a violin student at the Institute of Music (now the Sibelius Academy), earning opportunities to perform several concertos, including the Mendelssohn. While there he formed a close bond with the internationally renowned composer and pianist Ferruccio Busoni, an influential mentor who steered the young musician to pursue further experience abroad in Europe.

Provided with a government grant, Sibelius spent a year in Berlin and then a year in Vienna where he studied both violin and composition. As late as 1891, the 25-year old auditioned and was turned down for a spot in the Vienna Philharmonic. But the time spent in Vienna yielded something of even greater value: Sibelius became intensely aware of his own "Finnishness" and of an inner imperative to write uniquely Finnish music. When he returned to his homeland in 1892, he took a position at the Institute and allied himself with the "Young Finns," a group of intellectuals and artists who united to free Finland of Russia's domination. As the preeminent composer of the nationalistic movement, Sibelius was called upon to write considerable music for concerts and theatrical presentations in celebration of Finnish identity.

For inspiration Sibelius turned to the myths, sagas, and folklore of his native country. The national epic, *The Kalevala*, served the composer as a particularly rich source of material. Several scores emerged from it, including such works as *Kullervo*, *En Saga*, and the *Lemminkäinen* tone poems. The four symphonic poems inspired by the tale *Lemminkäinen* (a hero from the *Kalevala*) were published under the title *Four Legends* and include "The Swan of Tuonela." These patriotic works greatly impressed the Finnish cultural establishment since they came at a time when the country was itself a Grand Duchy under Russia's control. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Finns hungered for independence and national sentiment escalated despite tsarist censorship. Sibelius made a powerful contribution to the protest movement by providing the music for several "historical tableaux." The intention was meant to benefit a national newspaper writers' pension fund. The music the composer wrote for the tableau "Finland Awakes!" struck such a powerful chord with his countrymen, that he decided to publish it as a separate work entitled, *Finlandia*. It was unveiled at a concert given by the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra in July of 1900—the symphonic poem became such a rallying cry of Finnish nationalism that its performance was subsequently banned by the Russian regime. It took awhile, but by 1918 the independence movement prevailed and the Russians left Finland.

Meanwhile, the Finnish people understandably came to regard Sibelius as a national hero and the government decided to reward him by electing him to the post of Professor of Music at the University of Helsinki. For political reasons the offer was withdrawn, but as compensation he was granted an annual salary with no stipulated responsibilities. This freed Sibelius up from all other concerns and financial responsibilities and allowed him to concentrate solely on composition.

Over the years Sibelius amassed a considerable and impressive body of works and so became a legendary figure in his own lifetime. In the quarter century spanning 1899 to 1924, he produced seven magnificent symphonies; a Violin Concerto; a String Quartet ("Intimate Voices") and other fine chamber compositions; several symphonic poems,

including *Pohjola's Daughter*, *Night Ride and Sunrise*, *The Bard* and *The Oceanides*; and a wide range of incidental music for the theater, including *Kuolema*, *Pelleas and Melisande*, *Belshazzar's Feast* and *The Tempest*. After this incredibly productive period, ending with the bleak tone poem *Tapiola* in 1926, Sibelius wrote very little in his final three decades. Why he fell steadfastly silent for such a long time, all the while perfectly able to create, remains one of the great-unanswered questions in music history.

Sibelius' symphonic works are unquestionably his greatest contribution to the repertoire. He broke with the tradition of late-Romanticism and modernity by finding and remaining true to his own individual voice. This voice is one of integrity and involves an original method of construction, generative in nature with themes that build upon and develop from succinct yet powerful ideas. These symphonies illustrate, as musicologist Harry Halbreich asserts, "the possibilities of emancipating the technique of development from its inherited forms, with a concision unequalled since the classics." Moreover, especially in the symphonies from the fourth onward, the composer embraced a contemplative and solitary world, linking questions of musical structure to a profoundly held belief in the mystical splendor of Nature. During the last half century of his life, Sibelius left the urban environs of Helsinki for the country seclusion of his beloved Järvenpää. There he found serenity and inspiration among the imposing and resinous pines and crystal clear lakes surrounding his idyllic forest-refuge.

With the period of the affirmative Fifth Symphony—performed in two earlier versions (1915 and 1916) in advance of the definitive score of 1919—Sibelius continued to withdraw to an even deeper meditative realm of "Northern" musical thought. Extending beyond the Fourth Symphony, during this "late-period" Sibelius was committed to the idea of drawing forth the essence of the natural world into a meditative music of mysticism and intuition. As he observed in May 1918, "I notice how my inner being has changed since the period of the Fourth Symphony. And these [new] symphonies of mine are more confessions of faith than are my other works."

The structure of the Fifth Symphony is in four movements, with the first two connected without pause: the opening *Molto moderato* fuses into an *Allegro moderato*. And while the two are distinct in mood—the first brooding and melancholic and the second more agitated and whirring — they are thematically related and perhaps best understood as a single gradually-stepped *accelerando* spread evenly over a broad span of musical time compressing into high drama as the tempo increases.

The following *Andante*, cast as a wistful theme introduced by flutes and pizzicato strings followed by a set of warmly rhapsodic variations, is in general calmer and more tranquil in mood; it is seasoned, however, with a few dashes of dissonant brass outbursts. Although on the surface the movement may seem innocuous and simple, one of its objectives is to lay forth the thematic elements for the finale.

Two contrasting themes serve as the basis for the concluding *moto perpetuo* finale. The *Allegro molto* begins with a cascade of whirring whisps voiced in the strings. Then Sibelius brings in a droning bell-like theme intoned by a choir of four horns. This often referred to "swan theme" is the musical and "hymn-to-nature" idea that forms the symphony's essence. Sibelius was never more inspired, as evidenced in this observation from his 1915 diary: "At ten to eleven today saw 16 swans. God, what beauty! They circled over me for a long time. Disappeared into the solar haze like a gleaming, silver ribbon. Their call the same woodwind type as that of cranes, but without tremolo. That of swans closer to trumpet... a low refrain, reminiscent of a child sobbing. Nature's mysticism and life's lament."

It is hard to find a symphony with as stunning a close as the Sibelius Fifth. The final pages treat the "swan theme" in ostinato fashion, sounded over and over as a mighty apotheosis, leading toward a climax folding back on itself in the form of a commanding silence. Seemingly freed from any temporal boundary, the work then closes with the tremendous majesty of six irregularly spaced chords finally falling in unison on the keynote. All is then right. All is then affirmed.

# program notes

## Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) – Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, op. 58:

*Allegro moderato*  
*Andante con moto*—  
*Rondo: Vivace*

Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto was composed and first performed during the two Napoleonic occupations of Vienna in 1805 and 1809. This was a time of harsh conditions, with heavy taxation, restricted freedoms and diminished food supplies. For most people one would think that such circumstances would be disheartening. But for Beethoven, ever the undaunted libertarian, these years proved to be one of the most inspired and productive periods of his life. Friends reported that his work ethic was so strong and his drive to create so intense that he threw himself into composition at the expense of all worldly concerns. He was oblivious as to dress, had little patience for social discourse, and was thrown out of residences almost as soon as he moved in—all in favor of complete and utter dedication to art. It was not uncommon for Beethoven to work on multiple scores simultaneously during this time. For example, the completion dates of the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies were so close that their numbers were reversed when they received their premieres on the same gargantuan concert that included the Fourth Concerto. The fecundity and sheer volume of Beethoven's output during these years is remarkable. From *Fidelio*, which was reaching the end of rehearsal when Napoleon entered Vienna in 1805, to the music for *Egmont*, completed just after the second invasion, Beethoven managed to amass the following catalogue: the "Appassionata" and "Les Adieux" Sonatas, op. 57 and op. 81a; the Violin Concerto; the Fourth and "Emperor" Piano Concertos; the op. 59 String Quartets; the *Leonore No. 3* and *Coriolan Overtures*; the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Symphonies; the op. 70 Piano Trios; and numerous smaller songs, chamber works, and

piano compositions. That one man was able to produce so many masterworks in a span of less than five years is truly a stunning accomplishment.

One of the many projects of the Napoleonic years, the Fourth Piano Concerto seems to have been composed simultaneously with the Fifth Symphony. The two are even comparable in their incorporation of a basic rhythmic motive—three brief notes followed by an accented one—although the roads then traveled by the works lead in different directions. Very little is known about the specific circumstances of the Fourth's composition, but its early performance history is documented and interesting. The first performance was a private one and was arranged by longtime patron Prince Lobkowitz. After returning to Vienna shortly after Napoleon left in 1805, the Prince promoted two concerts presented in March of 1806. Both featured music exclusively by Beethoven and included the generally well-received Fourth Piano Concerto.

However, because opportunities for public concerts were few and far between in such financially stressed times, Beethoven had to wait almost another two years before he could present his Fourth to the general public. It was performed with Beethoven at the keyboard on December 22, 1808 in the Theater-an-der-Wien. The work was part of a four-hour plus program that also included the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, the *Choral Fantasia*, and three movements from the Mass in C major. (Aside from performances of Wagner operas, can you imagine such a program being scheduled today?) Although the Theater was frigid cold and the performances were sometimes rough, Beethoven's interpretation seems to have been impressive and moving. German composer and music critic, J.F. Reichardt witnessed the proceedings and wrote: "He played with astounding cleverness and in the fastest possible tempi. The *Adagio*, a masterly movement of beautifully developed song, he sang on this instrument with a profound melancholy that thrilled me."

Like so many masterpieces in the history of music, Beethoven's Fourth Concerto then lapsed into a long period of neglect. The Third and Fifth ("Emperor") Concertos gained favor at the expense of the Fourth which was not heard again

until Felix Mendelssohn played and conducted the work with his Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra on November 3, 1836. The great Robert Schumann was present at that performance and wrote, "I have received a pleasure from it such as I have never enjoyed, and I sat in my place with moving a muscle or even breathing—afraid of making the least noise." Almost 175 years later, the Fourth Concerto is now generally acclaimed as one of Beethoven's most popular, on even par with the magnificent "Emperor" Concerto. This season alone in Orlando, the Fourth was programmed three times: in November 2008 with the Kirov Orchestra ("Festival of Orchestras"); in November 2008 with the UCF Symphony Orchestra ("St. Luke's Lutheran Concert Series"); and tonight's performance with the Orlando Philharmonic and pianist, André Watts.

In the oeuvre of Beethoven's piano concertos, the Fourth is significant in that it represents a major advance in style over Beethoven's earlier efforts. It is generally accepted that this concerto is more poetically overt in Romantic feeling. While the composer wrote all four to be performed with himself at the keyboard, he constructed the first three for the most part to demonstrate the soloist's virtuosity at the instrument. The Fourth is different, though, in that the emphasis is now clearly on the music's expressive qualities, notwithstanding a still extremely demanding and formidable solo part. Composed between 1804 and 1806, it is generally regarded as the first completely "Beethovenian" concerto, eschewing the spirit of Mozart that permeates the First and Second Concertos and a good part of the Third. Commenting on the nature of the Fourth Concerto, musicologist Milton Cross wrote, "[Here] the piano concerto once and for all shakes itself loose from the 18th century. Virtuosity no longer concerns Beethoven at all; his artistic aim here, as in his symphonies and quartets, is the expression of deeply poetic and introspective thoughts."

For the longest time Classical tradition mandated that concertos were to start with an orchestral exposition of themes. In his first three concertos Beethoven respectfully followed suit. But here

Beethoven asserts his own voice and breaks ranks with a five-note hushed, understated and sublime piano statement of the principal theme; its repeated notes bring to mind the openings of the Fifth Symphony and the Violin Concerto, both of which date from the same period. Following the pensive, chordal opening by the solo piano, and the answer and elaboration from the orchestra, the first movement *Allegro moderato* emerges as a genuine dialogue. The character throughout is supremely lyrical and is of give-and-take; the movement unfolds not as a contest with the orchestra but rather as a partnership. Beethoven even keeps the trumpets and drums on hold until the final movement so as to assure the solo instrument a weight more in line with the forces of the tutti.

In the *Andante*, piano and strings (the rest of the orchestra is kept silent) move from a point of stark opposition to peaceful acquiescence. Relatively short in duration and a real gem, this slow movement is one of the great spiritual experiences in all music. It is heartening to hear the seemingly dour, inflexible, and stern octaves of the orchestra gradually calmed and melted into harmony by the quiet insistence of the gentle pleading of the piano. The well-known simile of Franz Liszt comparing this music to Orpheus calming the Furies and taming the wild beasts seems appropriate (even if Liszt probably didn't make the comparison). Sir George Grove offered this accolade on the sublime second movement, calling it "one of the most original and imaginative things that ever fell from the pen of Beethoven or any other musician."

The final movement *Rondo: vivace* follows without pause from the *Andante* with strings continuing with a light and good-natured main theme sustaining the quiet of the preceding movement's ending. The piano then comes back into the picture with a graceful episode before the full orchestra—with the trumpets and drums reinstated—proclaiming the theme in full voice. With brilliant writing for the soloist and sparkling and joyous writing for the orchestra, the *Rondo* perfectly brings this glorious artistic creation to a satisfying conclusion.



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# The Artistry of André Watts

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