

Program Notes

Cantabile et Presto by Georges Enesco (1881 – 1955)

Georges Enescu (known in France as **Georges Enesco**) was a Romanian composer, violinist, conductor and teacher. Regarded as one of the greatest musicians in Romanian history, Enescu is featured on the Romanian **five lei** bank note. Pablo Casals described Enescu as "the greatest musical phenomenon since Mozart" and "one of the greatest geniuses of modern music". Queen Marie of Romania wrote in her memoirs that "in George Enescu was real gold". Yehudi Menuhin, Enescu's most famous pupil, once said about his teacher: "He will remain for me the absoluteness through which I judge others", and "Enescu gave me the light that has guided my entire existence." He also considered Enescu "the most extraordinary human being, the greatest musician and the most formative influence" he had ever experienced. Georges was his parents' eighth child, born after all the previous siblings had died in infancy. A child prodigy, he became the youngest student ever admitted to the Vienna Conservatory at the age of seven. In 1895, at the tender age of 14, he went to Paris to continue his studies at the Paris Conservatoire. He visited and conducted many orchestras in the US. A renowned violin teacher, Yehudi Menuhin is one of his well-known pupils. Today, Bucharest houses a museum in his memory; likewise, the Symphony Orchestra of Bucharest and the George Enescu Festival - founded by his friend, musical advocate, and sometime collaborator, the conductor George Georgescu - are named and held in his honor. Recently, Bacau International Airport was renamed George Enescu International Airport.

Most of Enesco's works were influenced by Romanian folk music including the Romanian Rhapsodies, the opera *Œdipe* and his suites for orchestra. He also wrote many chamber works. *Cantabile et Presto* was written in 1904 as one of the test pieces for the flute students at the Paris Conservatoire and endures today as a beloved work for flutists for its beautiful melodies and technically dazzling presto.

Selections from Eclectic Pieces by Fred Onovwerosuoke (b. 1960)

Award-winning composer Fred Onovwerosuoke ("Fredo," as most friends and colleagues call him) was born in Ghana to Nigerian parents. Onovwerosuoke grew up in both home countries and eventually naturalized in the United States. FredO's works have been featured in a variety of recordings, films, documentaries and radio, including Robert De Niro's film, *The Good Shepherd*, Niyi Coker's Pennies for the Boatman, IMI Chamber Players' *Dances & Rhapsodies: Works for Wind Quintet*, William Chapman Nyaho's CD, ASA, Hymes/Hollister's CD *African Art Music for Flute*, Peter Henderson's CD, *Twenty-Four Studies in African Rhythms for Piano*, among others. His book, *Songs of Africa: 22 Pieces for Mixed Voices* published by Oxford University Press has quickly become a favorite among choral directors across the United States and globally, and his *Twenty-four Studies in African Rhythms* is acclaimed as one of the most-demanded African-rhythm influenced piano studies known. (culled from www.fredomusic.com).

With the edition of his *Twelve Eclectic Pieces*, composer Fred Onovwerosuoke basically obliged a growing request to make some of his most familiar works available for alternative instruments. *Pende Lullaby* (No. 2 in the set) is based on a lullaby from

the Central Africa region. The *Rooster's Dance* (No. 8), appropriated from his *Six Sketches for Oboes and Piano*, is based on the African adage that in his brilliant plumes the recalcitrant rooster gloats of the sweet life of serial polygamy and domination, but forgets that, like the hen, he also is imperiled for the dinner table. *Ne Nkansu* (No. 12) is based on a healing chant among the Forest Peoples (aka, Pygmies), celebrating the power of the 'healing dance.'

Selections from Republic Suite (1958 – 59) by JH Kwabena Nketia (1921 – 2019)

Prof. Nketia is world-renowned as a musicologist and composer. He is to African music what Bartók is to Western music. His concept and interpretation of time and rhythmic patterns in Ghanaian and other African folk music led to revolutionary changes in African music notation, and became standard for researchers and scholars around the world. He studied music in London then the US and taught music in Ghana, UCLA, Harvard, Swarthmore, Michigan State, University of Brisbane in Australia, the China Conservatory of Music, University of Pittsburgh and the University of Kansas in Lawrence. Although he was for a long time primarily known as a scholar, he also composed. Nketia's compositions include over 55 works for solo instruments and ensembles, 30 Sankudwom (art songs for voice and piano) and 20 choral pieces. Aside from the 12 pedagogical pieces in *African Pianism* transcribed on the computer by Gyimah Labi and published in 1994, most of Nketia's scores have not yet been published. *Republic Suite* was written between October 1959 and February 1960, right after Nketia's first trip to the United States in 1958-59 studying at Juilliard and also at Columbia University where he studied composition with Henry Cowell. Premiered at the Republic Day Concert, July 1, 1960, in the Great Hall of the University of Ghana, *Republic Suite* was performed by Nketia on piano with flutist Charles Simmons for a select audience that included the new President of Ghana, Kwami Nkrumah. Nketia crafted his piece to commemorate aspects of Ghana's independence from Great Britain and subsequent struggle to establish an effective government. Each movement is programmatic in nature. Because the audience was composed of Ghanaians, he included a number of tunes that are "common knowledge" to most of his countrymen. *Republic Suite's* U.S. premiere was at the Rockport College Keyboard Festival at the State University of New York in 1976.

- Movement 4 - The fourth movement represents the violent clashes between the Ashanti people during their fight for independence. It is based on a traditional folk tune of the Ashanti, "I Won't Sleep Tonight." The form of the movement is A-B-A'.
- Movement 5 - The fifth movement represents the unification of Togo. Togo had German, British and French territories. The music is suggestive of pre-independence conflict and resolution. For example, because the German Togolese wanted to join Ghana instead of the rest of Togo, a referendum was needed. This movement is based on the music tradition of the Ewe, a people who lived next to French Togo. The prominent bell pattern of much of their music is heard in the piano in the middle section, mm. 46-75. Although the form of this movement is clearly A-B-A (the opening 40 bars return exactly as in the beginning to close out the movement), this movement is the most rhythmically complex of all the movements with the rhythmical divisions of bars alternating frequently between triple and duple meter. Also helpful

is to understand how one's part relates to what Nketia calls the "timeline," an externalized basic pulse of the music. The bell pattern in the piano part of the middle section of the fifth movement is an example of a timeline. To realize the polyrhythmic nature of this section, the flutist must relate his/her part's changing "points of entry" to the basic pulse of the bell pattern, something native African musicians learn to do with practice.

The Lotus Pond (2001) by Gamal Abdel-Rahim (1924 – 1988)

Gamal Abdel-Rahim came from a musical family—his mother sang and played piano in the Oriental style, and his father played the nay (flute), oud (lute), and violin, taught music privately and was appointed as a music supervisor to the Egyptian Ministry of Education. His father also registered the invention of a Boehm flute that was capable of playing the three-quarter tones that are found in many characteristic Arabic modes known as maqam (maqamat = plural).

Gamal studied piano as a young age then studied history at Fouad University (now Cairo University). In 1950, he went to Germany on an Egyptian government grant to study musicology at the Musikhochschule of Heidelberg where he decided to focus on composition, studying with Harald Genzmer, a well-known pupil of Hindemith.

Gamal returned to a post 1952 revolution Egypt, free from British occupation and renewed nationalism emphasizing Egyptian cultural identity. He met his wife, pianist Samba El-Kholy (who this piece is dedicated to) in 1958 and they married in 1959, having one daughter, a violinist, who along with her husband, a cellist, became leading interpreters of Rahim's string music.

The Cairo Conservatory of Music first opened in 1959, with Gamal appointed to teach theory and harmony and later composition. In 1987 he traveled with his wife to teach at the University of South Florida in Tampa. His contributions to the Egyptian cultural scene are recognized with numerous prizes and awards.

Known as the "Bartok of Egypt," Abdel-Rahim's music contains many beautiful ornamented solo lines and exotic non-Western harmonies based on Arabic modes (maqamat). The Lotus Pond has been popular among Egyptian instrumentalists for decades and is published by International Opus now for the first time with the solo part appropriate for flute, oboe or violin.

Antarctica for alto flute and recorded sound (2005) by Elizabeth Brown (b. 1953)

Elizabeth Brown combines a composing career with a diverse performing life, playing flute, shakuhachi, and theremin in a wide variety of musical circles. Her chamber music, shaped by this unique group of instruments and experiences, has been called luminous, dreamlike and hallucinatory. Brown was born in 1953 in Camden, Alabama, where she grew up on an agricultural research station. After receiving a master's degree in flute performance from The Juilliard School in 1977, she started composing in the late 1970's. Brown teaches shakuhachi at Columbia University and Bard College, and teaches theremin at Bard as well. She is married to visual artist Lothar Osterburg. Brown began studying shakuhachi in 1982 and its music has been a major influence on her musical language. She is celebrated both here and in Japan for her compositions combining eastern and western sensibilities. Brown's music has been heard in Japan, Russia, Colombia, Australia, South Africa and Vietnam as well as across the US and

Europe. A Guggenheim Fellowship recipient and Juilliard graduate, she has received grants, awards and commissions from Orpheus, St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, Newband, The Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, Kamratōn, the Barlow Foundation, the Asian Cultural Council, the Japan/US Friendship Commission, Music from Japan, Meet the Composer, the Electronic Music Foundation, Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival, the Cary Trust, and NYFA, among others.

Program note by the composer: During the winter of 2004-05, Sara Wheeler's book *Terra Incognita: Travels in Antarctica* was my bedtime reading. I started to dream about Antarctica, and this music was born in those dreams. I chose alto flute because of its range and timbre, and the taped portion consists of natural sounds recorded in my Brooklyn studio. From Sara Wheeler's book: "The Landscape was intact, complete, and larger than my imagination could grasp. It was free of the diurnal cycle that locked us earthlings into the ineluctable routine of home. It didn't have famines or social unrest. It was sufficient unto itself, untainted by the inevitable tragedy of the human condition."

Fanmi Imèn, Poem for Flute and Piano by Valerie Coleman

Born in Louisville, Kentucky, Valerie Coleman began music studies at 11 and made a hobby of composing. By 14, she had already written three full-length symphonies and had won local and state flute competitions. Coleman is the founder of Grammy-nominated wind quintet Imani Winds, an ensemble widely recognized for their significant contributions to the chamber music repertoire. Coleman's chamber works have taken their place in standard wind repertoire and received honors such as her UMOJA being listed as one of the "Top 100 American Chamber Works" by Chamber Music America. Her music has been heard on internationally syndicated radio shows including NPR's Performance Today and All Things Considered, Minnesota Public Radio's St. Paul Sunday among others. She has been featured composer for Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, a composer fellow for the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and composer teaching artist for Young Audiences of New York.

Fanmi Imen was commissioned by the National Flute Association for the 2018 High School Soloist Competition. **A note by the composer:** "The title, *Fanmi Imen*, is Haitian Creole for Maya Angelou's famous work, *Human Family*. Both the musical and literary poems acknowledge differences within mankind, either due to ethnicity background, or geography, but Angelou's poetic refrain: "we are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike," reaffirms our humanity as a reminder of unity. Within the flute and piano parts are motifs representing cultural differences, that come together to form a tapestry, united through tempi, and quasi cadenza-like transitions. The work begins and ends with a patriotic American feel, to symbolize and recognize the contributions immigrants have made towards the building of a nation as a whole. The work includes harmonies and thematic material that represent French flute music blending with an underlying pentatonicism found in Asian traditions, a caravan through Middle Eastern parts of the world that merge with Flamenco music within the Quasi-Cadenza, and an upbeat journey southward into Africa with the sounds of Kalimba (thumb piano). Here, the flute imitates the thumb piano as it playfully taps out a tune that spells out a morse code message of U-N-I-T-Y within the rhythm. The many twists and turns come together to create a sound that symbolizes a beautifully diverse human race. Performers are encouraged to embrace the cultural 'nods' through their interpretations."