

Cinematic Choral Classics

Thursday, November 16 – 8 pm

Sean O’Loughlin, conductor

Kokopelli & Òran, choirs (Scott Leithead & Kathleen Luyk, Music Directors)

ORFF

Carmina Burana: “O Fortuna” (3’)*

MOZART

Requiem, K.626: “Confutatis”/”Lacrimosa” (arr. Süßmayr) (5’)*

SCHUBERT

“Ave Maria,” D 839 (5’)*

RÓZSA

Ben-Hur: A Choral Suite (15’)*

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op.125 “Choral”: Ode to Joy (Schiller) (6’)*

INTERMISSION (20 minutes)

DOYLE

Henry V: “Non nobis domine” (4’)*

WILLIAMS

Empire of the Sun: “Exsultate Justi” (5’)*

GOLDSMITH

The Omen: “Ave Satan!” (5’)*

E. BERNSTEIN

Airplane! (5’)*

WILLIAMS

Saving Private Ryan: Hymn to the Fallen (6’)*

WILLIAMS

Amistad: "Dry Your Tears, Afrika"

(4')*

WILLIAMS

Jurassic Park

(6')*

program subject to change

*indicates approximate performance duration

Tonight's concert is more or less split into two parts. Before the intermission, the music (with one notable exception explained below) is by classical masters – composers of the past whose music was selected by film-makers as particularly suitable to their movies. The second half is entirely devoted to original scores written specifically for the films in which the music was used, by some of the most legendary soundtrack composers ever.

The thrilling and powerful "**O Fortuna**" is a plea to the unfeeling power of Fate, and is used to open and close the mammoth ***Carmina Burana*** composed about 80 years ago by German composer **Carl Orff** (1895-1982). Its ominous yet stirring music has been used in *Excalibur*, *The Omen*, and other fantasy and science fiction settings, and was even used as entrance music by the Rolling Stones on one of their tours.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) never quite finished his ***Requiem*** – he died at 36 years old, with significant parts still incomplete. A requiem is a mass for the dead, so it was a fitting part of the soundtrack of the Academy Award-winning film *Amadeus* – a fictionalized account of Mozart's relationship with less talented composer Antonio Salieri. The "**Confutatis**" and "**Lacrimosa**" are the concluding parts of the Sequence of the *Requiem*, in which is described the fate of the wicked, and the hope of salvation for the just.

"Hail, Mary" is a famous prayer, known in Latin as "**Ave Maria**." There are likely hundreds of musical settings, but the one by **Franz Schubert** (1797-1828) is arguably the most famous. Like Orff's "O Fortuna," Schubert's lovely melody has worked its way into a number of films, but perhaps its use in Walt Disney's 1940 *Fantasia*, as the setting for the candlelight procession that follows the devil's dance sequence, is one that sticks most in the memory.

Most "classical" composers are known for their concert works; most film scorers are known by the film titles for which they wrote music. But many composers have sought success in both spheres, though few are known for both. In that rare company is **Miklós Rózsa** (1907-1995), one of the most famous of the "golden age" Hollywood composers. Among his three Oscars for Best Score was the music he wrote for the epic 1959 film ***Ben-Hur***. Tonight's suite features four segments from the score.

The jubilant, life-affirming music of the final movement from **Ludwig van Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*** has worked its way into any number of Hollywood films. Beethoven (1770-1827) laboured over the

symphony for years, as for him its setting of Friedrich Schiller's ode "To Joy" was a declaration of his faith in humankind, and a plea for love among all people. Its use in Stanley Kubrick's dystopian *A Clockwork Orange* was downright sinister, but mostly, it has been used to underscore moments of triumph in films such as *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, *Cruel Intentions*, *Dead Poets Society*, and *Die Hard*.

We begin our second half – original music for specific movies – with Shakespeare. Kenneth Branagh shot to international fame by adapting, directing, and starring in the title role of **Henry V**. His friend **Patrick Doyle** (b. 1953) got his first big break by composing the music. In a long, unbroken tracking shot, Branagh – as the titular king – carries a young man who has fallen in the Battle of Agincourt. As he walks the scene widens to take in the bloody aftermath of the fight. All the while, Doyle's setting of the prayer "**Non nobis Domine**" ("Lord, not to us but to Your name give glory") is sung.

John Williams (b. 1932) is, unquestionably, the reigning king of film composers. He has received an incredible 41 nominations for Academy Awards, winning five times, and on several occasions, competed against himself for Best Score when multiple movies for which he wrote the soundtrack were nominated in the same year. Now 85, he shows no signs of slowing down.

We hear excerpts from four of the films directed by Steven Spielberg for which John Williams wrote the music. "**Exsultate Justi**" ("Blessed are the forgiven") is a setting of Psalm 32, which Williams scored for the 1987 film *Empire of the Sun*, in which a young English boy (played by a very young Christian Bale!) in Japanese-occupied China during World War Two struggles to survive.

The singing in the **Hymn to the Fallen** is wordless – an ethereal use of choral voices and orchestra from another World War Two film by Spielberg, *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), a film which begins with the momentous D-Day invasion of France on June 6, 1944.

There are words to "**Dry Your Tears Afrika**," however, though they were originally written in French. Ivory Coast poet Bernard Binlin Dadié wrote "Sèche des pleurs" in 1967, a poem about slaves returning to Africa, seeking to heal the wounds of colonialism. The poem was translated in the African language Mende, and it is this version which John Williams set to music for use in the 1997 Spielberg movie *Amistad* – a dramatized account of real events in which captured Africans aboard a slave ship revolted against those who were transporting them to the United States.

For a while, *Jurassic Park* (1993) reigned as the biggest-grossing movie of all time. Steven Spielberg's summer blockbuster which brought dinosaurs back to life, and made them cool again in the process, made for great escapist fun. It also contained one of John Williams' best film scores, capturing the majesty, mystery, danger, and spectacle needed to do justice to the striking visuals.

The 1976 horror movie *The Omen* has already been mentioned, as it used Orff's "O Fortuna" as part of its score. But there was a lot of original music as well, composed by legendary Hollywood film scorer **Jerry Goldsmith** (1929-2004). The story of loving parents who only come to realize they are raising the child of Satan too late, the movie has ample room for all manner of scary, unusual choral music. Such is

the case with “**Ave Satani**” (“Hail, Satan”). Used as the movie’s theme song, the piece was actually nominated for an Academy Award as Best Song from a movie – one of the few times a song in a foreign language (in this case, Latin) has been so nominated.

Another Hollywood legend, **Elmer Bernstein** (1922-2004) was one of the most versatile composers of film music. He could write rousing westerns (his music for the original version of *The Magnificent Seven* is a standard by which western scores are measured), period dramas (*The Age of Innocence*), and also set the stage for outrageous comedies (*Trading Places*, *Animal House*). In the latter category is the over-the-top spoof of disaster flicks, ***Airplane!*** (1980).

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