

A GRADUATE CONDUCTING RECITAL

By

LAUREN ELIZABETH KINGRY

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A PROJECT IN LIEU OF THESIS PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MUSIC

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Summary of Performance Option in Lieu of Thesis
Presented to the College of Fine Arts of the University of Florida
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Chair: Raymond Chobaz
Major: Music

This Master of Music Conducting Recital was performed on November 29, 2011 at 7:30pm in the University Memorial Auditorium. The program included works from the standard orchestral repertoire as well as select works chosen by the 2011-2012 Concerto Competition Winners. The recital was performed by the University of Florida Symphony Orchestra and included two pieces for instrumental soloists and orchestra, as well as two works for large symphonic orchestra.

The opening piece was Carl Maria von Weber's Overture to his opera *Der Freischütz*. The opera, usually translated as 'The Marksman,' recounts the German folklore of a young hunter who makes a deal with the devil. The young man is allowed seven magic bullets that are guaranteed to hit whichever target he chooses. *Der Freischütz* is classified as the first German romantic opera, one that would begin to reject its Italian counterparts and serve as a precursor to German nationalist music. The Overture was chosen for this performance because it truly showcases Weber's strong romantic qualities and grandiose orchestration. It foreshadows the drama that plays out in the opera and reflects the continuous shifting moods of the forest where the Marksman hunts.

Next on the program was the *Concerto for Saxophone and String Orchestra* by Swedish composer Lars-Erik Larsson which featured Joshua Bond, the winner of the undergraduate division of the annual Concerto Competition. As a student of Alban Berg, Larsson's compositional style exemplifies a complete understanding of twelve-tone technique while including late romanticism and neo-classical features as well. His *Concerto for Saxophone* was written for Sigurd Rascher and stands alone as a significant contribution to the art of saxophone performance in Sweden. The graduate winner of the concerto competition was Anna Feucht, a vocalist who artfully prepared the *Regnava nel Silencio* aria from Gaetano Donizetti's opera: *Lucia di Lammermoor*. In this scene, Lucia laments that she has just seen the ghost of a girl who was killed in a jealous rage. Donizetti masterfully illustrates her torment with dramatic ornamentations and embellishments as the soprano reaches a high D.

The final work on the program was the monumental *First Symphony* of Ludwig van Beethoven. While giving obvious homage to his two great influences, Haydn and Mozart, Beethoven still finds his own voice in style and form. The Symphony surprises the listener with a musical joke, as the first chord tonicises the subdominant of the home key, no other symphony had ever begun this way! The work continues to captivate listeners throughout with its seamless transitions, change in textures and timbres, and overall attention to detail. Beethoven gave the premiere, himself, when he was twenty-nine. Offering his first large orchestral work to the public was no easy task and while reviews of the Symphony have varied since its inception, the sounds spoke for themselves and have secured a place in history as the beginning signs of a revolutionist.

PROGRAM NOTES

Carl Maria von Weber began work on *Der Freischütz* in 1817, although it was not finished until 1821. Usually translated as ‘The Marksman’, it is considered the first German Romantic opera, one that would lead away from its Italian counterpart and serve as a precursor to German nationalist music. Friedrich Kind, the librettist, based his text upon the German folklore of a *Freischütz*, in which a marksman signs a contract with the devil. The devil allows him seven bullets which are to hit, without fail, whatever he wishes. The Overture foreshadows the drama of the opera and reflects the shifting moods of the forest. The opening chords illustrate the serene, sunlight peeking through the trees. Before becoming too complacent, a shuddering tremolo of the strings is heard as the basses and timpani emulate a mysterious tone meant to depict Samiel, the young marksman and his seven charmed bullets. The New York Times review exclaimed of the Overture: “good and evil clash in a symphonic development.”

Swedish composer Lars-Erik Larsson studied at the Stockholm Conservatory as a student of Alban Berg. He later moved to Vienna and Leipzig to study with Fritz Reuter. In 1947, Larsson became Director of Music of the Stockholm Conservatory and in 1961 he took the same position at Uppsala University. His composition style is eclectic, ranging from late Romantic to neo-classicism to techniques similar to Arnold Schoenberg’s twelve-tone technique. His Concerto for Saxophone and Strings was written for saxophonist Sigurd Rascher. The work is not only the first Swedish saxophone concerto, but stands as a significant contribution to the art of saxophone performance in Sweden.

The story of *Lucia di Lammermoor* is based on Sir Walter Scott’s novel *The Bride of Lammermoor*. In *Regnava nel silenzio* (Act I, Scene 2), Lucia stands at the fountain in the park of Ravenswood Castle describing an encounter with the ghost of a girl who was slain in a jealous rage by one of her ancestors. She also mentions that the water had turned to blood. This aria is a fine example of Donizetti’s gift of using vocal ornament to dramatic ends, the embellishments vividly conveying the heroine’s unstable state. The first performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor* took place in Naples in 1835.

At the age of twenty-nine, a young Beethoven conducted the premiere of his first large orchestral work at the Hofburg Theater in Vienna on April 2, 1800. The First Symphony seems to bid farewell to the eighteenth century and welcomes the dawning of a new age. It serves as homage to Beethoven’s two great influences, Haydn and Mozart, and is dedicated to Baron Gottfried van Swieten. While the nods to his teacher Haydn are obvious, Beethoven finds his own language in style and form. At the first sounds, he rejects all listener expectations and begins on the wrong chord: the dominant to the subdominant. This is commonly referred to as a “musical joke” or “a comedy of manners,” which illustrates early on the composer’s daring musical experimentation. Reviews of the symphony have varied since its premiere. One critic stated, these are “the confused explosions of the outrageous effrontery of a young man.” Another exclaimed, “the astonishing success of this Symphony is a danger to musical art ... a prodigal use of the most barbarous dissonances and a noisy use of all the instruments.” Other critics praised the work, using the words “masterpiece” and “originality” again and again. The sounds of the symphony can speak for themselves, and its place in history will hold firm as the beginning signs of a revolutionist.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lauren E. Kingry is Associate Conductor and Graduate Assistant of the University of Florida Symphony Orchestra, under the supervision of Dr. Raymond Chobaz. She is seeking a Master of Music degree in Orchestral Conducting with a concentration in Music Education. Originally from Pensacola, Florida, Ms. Kingry holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education with an emphasis in instrumental performance also from the University of Florida. Before graduating with her Bachelor degree, she completed her student teaching internship in Naples, Florida, instructing middle school orchestral and choral classes, as well as elementary general music classes. As an educator, her interests include string pedagogy and techniques as well as conducting and rehearsal methods in the secondary music classroom.

While attending graduate school at the University of Florida, Ms. Kingry founded and directed the University of Florida String Ensemble with whom she gave numerous performances. In celebration of UF Homecoming 2011-2012, Ms. Kingry conducted the First Annual Swamp Symphony concert, which included the world premiere of three pieces. As Associate Conductor of the University Symphony, she conducted the Annual Concerto Competition winners in concerts in November 2010 and 2011. Her graduate conducting recital featured the 2011-2012 undergraduate and graduate concerto winners as well as Weber's Overture to *Der Freischütz* and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 1*. In the summer of 2011, Ms. Kingry was accepted to intern at the Ambrit International School in Rome, Italy, where she instructed general music classes to international students, ages three through third grade.

An avid performer, Ms. Kingry has held principal and section string bass positions in many ensembles, some of which include Ocala (FL) Symphony, Gainesville (FL) Chamber, Valdosta (GA) Symphony and Albany (GA) Symphony Orchestras. At UF, she has performed

with the University Symphony Orchestra, Wind Symphony, Clarinet Choir, Brazilian Ensemble: *Jacaré Brazil*, Steel Drum Ensemble: *The Sunshine Steelers* and countless other musical groups. Ms. Kingry has participated in operatic productions of *Carmina Burana*, *La Traviata*, Puccini's *Tosca*, and most recently, *Die Fledermaus*. Her professional memberships include NAFME: the National Association for Music Educators, Florida Music Educators Association, Florida Orchestra Association, American String Teachers Association and the College Orchestra Directors Association.