



BILLINGS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA & CHORALE

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Broadway Favorites with Doug LaBrecque

Anne Harrigan, *conductor*

Doug LaBrecque, *tenor*

Amy Logan & Susan Sommerfeld

Billings Symphony Chorale, Dr. Steven Hart, director

Jule Styne arr. Sid Ramin: *Gypsy Overture*

Elton John: "Circle of Life" from *The Lion King*

Cole Porter: "Begin the Beguine"

Leonard Bernstein: *Candide Suite*

"Westphalia Chorus"

"Life is Happiness"

"Bon Voyage" featuring Liz Riley of the Billings Symphony Chorale

"Money, Money, Money"

"What's the Use?" featuring Becci Larson and Gary Treglown of the Billings Symphony Chorale

"Universal Good"

"Make Our Garden Grow" featuring Bret Weston of the Billings Symphony Chorale

Harold Arlen: "Come Rain or Come Shine"

Harold Arlen: "Over the Rainbow" from *The Wizard of Oz*

Intermission

John Kander: "Wilkommen" from *Cabaret*

John Kander: "Mr. Cellophane" from *Chicago*

Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson: "Anthem" from *Chess*

Andrew Lloyd Webber: "The Music Of the Night" from *Phantom of the Opera*

Program Notes

November 7, 2009
By Chris Morrison

Tonight's program of Broadway and popular hits gets underway with the **Gypsy Overture**. *Gypsy*, based on the memoirs of strip-tease artist Gypsy Rose Lee, was a huge hit when it opened in 1959. The original production sported a score by Jule Styne, lyrics by a young Stephen Sondheim, and of course Ethel Merman (in her last stage role) as Rose, the stage mother who pushes vaudeville careers on her daughters. Sid Ramin put together the overture, based on Styne's tunes. Opening and closing with Rose's "I Had a Dream," the Overture features bits of "Everything's Coming Up Roses," "You'll Never Get Away From Me," and "Small World," with a raunchy trumpet solo playing some of the stripper music from "Rose's Turn."

Elton John was among the world's most successful musicians when the Disney Company hired him to create songs, with lyrics by Tim Rice, for its animated feature *The Lion King*. "**Circle of Life**" was one of three of those songs to receive Academy Award nominations in 1995, along with "Hakuna Matata" and the Best Song winner, "Can You Feel The Love Tonight." In 1997 the film – still the twenty-fifth highest-grossing feature of all time – was adapted into a Tony Award-winning musical directed by Julie Taymor. "Circle of Life," the first music heard in the film, opens with a chant as the sun rises. On Pride Rock, King Mufasa appears, and we hear how the circle of life "moves us all through despair and hope, through faith and love, till we find our place on the path unwinding." As the song nears its triumphant end, the animals bow to young Simba as he is raised in the air.

Cole Porter's "**Begin the Beguine**" was part of the 1935 Broadway musical *Jubilee*, but made little impact at first. When Artie Shaw and His Orchestra recorded his hit version in 1938, however, "Begin the Beguine" became a standard, with best-selling recordings by The Andrews Sisters, Mario Lanza, and even Julio Iglesias. The song reminisces about a once-passionate love: "When they begin the beguine" – the beguine is a ballroom dance similar to the rumba – "it brings back the sound of music so tender..." But "clouds came along to disperse the joys we had tasted," and it's only when they begin the beguine again that "you whisper to me once more, 'Darling, I love you!'"

In 1956 Leonard Bernstein, in collaboration with original librettist Lillian Hellman, turned Voltaire's famous 1759 novella *Candide* into an operetta. That first production was a dismal failure, but successful revivals in the 1970s helped establish *Candide* as one of Bernstein's most vital scores. The novella tells of a handsome and optimistic young man, Candide, through whose adventures Voltaire takes shots at religion, government, war, love, and other hot topics. In the Westphalian castle of the Baron Thunder-Ten-Tronck, four young people live in happiness: Candide, the illegitimate nephew of the Baron; the Baron's vain son Maximilian and beautiful daughter Cunegonde; and the servant girl Paquette. They sing of their idyllic situation in "**Life Is Happiness**." Candide and Cunegonde declare their love for one another, and the "**Westphalia Chorus**" tells ironically of how it has "gathered here in pride and glee to hail the lovely bride-to-be." Ironically, because Candide is just about to be caught up in a skirmish between the Westphalian and Bulgarian armies, as Cunegonde is attacked and her family killed.

This is just the beginning of Candide's adventures. He just manages to escape the Inquisition in Portugal only to find Cunegonde in Paris, now a rich and popular prostitute. Candide kills two rivals for her affections, and he and Cunegonde board a ship for South America. Pirates attack, and Cunegonde is taken prisoner. The action then moves from the legendary city of El Dorado to Cartagena, where, in "**Bon Voyage,**" the Governor (who has swindled Candide and provided him a boat full of holes!) and its citizens wish Candide well in his trip to rescue her. He finds himself in Venice at carnival time. There is much gambling and cheating about, described in "**Money, Money, Money.**" Candide finds all his old companions there – Paquette a prostitute, Maximilian the Chief of Police, and Cunegonde working the gamblers. The characters describe their situations in "**What's the Use?**" They all wind up on a farm near Venice, their illusions of "**Universal Good**" shattered, replaced by a more realistic view of life. As Candide asks Cunegonde to marry him, they meditate on this in "**Make Our Garden Grow.**"

Next is "**Come Rain or Come Shine,**" with music by Harold Arlen and lyrics by Johnny Mercer. Originally part of the 1946 musical *St. Louis Woman*, the song has been recorded by greats ranging from Tommy Dorsey and Dinah Shore to Billie Holiday and Judy Garland. Mercer once described it as "a really simple way of saying 'I love you' ... the way a guy in a saloon would feel it." The first time Arlen played the tune for Mercer, the lyricist immediately came up with an opening line, "I'm gonna love you, like nobody's loved you." But then he paused, not knowing where to go next. Arlen suggested "Come hell or high water," to which Mercer replied, "Of course, why didn't I think of that – 'Come rain or come shine.'"

Another of Harold Arlen's classic melodies is "**Over the Rainbow.**" With lyrics by E.Y. Harburg, "Over the Rainbow" was written for the famous 1939 movie *The Wizard of Oz*. The winner of the Academy Award for Best Song, "Over the Rainbow" has been ranked the greatest movie song of all time by The American Film Institute. Everyone knows the story of Dorothy (Judy Garland), who dreams that she has been transported from her Kansas home to the Land of Oz. In the company of a Scarecrow, a Tin Man, and a Cowardly Lion – and pursued by the Wicked Witch of the West – she tries to find her way to the Wizard who can help her get home. Early in the film, Dorothy, having gotten in trouble when her dog Toto bit Miss Gulch, sings to herself, dreaming of a better place "somewhere over the rainbow."

The second half of tonight's program opens with a song from *Cabaret*. The winner of eight Academy Awards in 1972, the film *Cabaret* was directed by Bob Fosse and stars Liza Minnelli and Michael York. Loosely based on the 1966 musical by John Kander and Fred Ebb, the film is set in early 1930s Berlin and tells the story of singer Sally Bowles, her relationship with student Brian Roberts, and their mutual interest in the playboy Max von Heune, all in the context of the growing power of the Nazi Party. "**Willkommen**" is sung in the film by Joel Grey as the Master of Ceremonies: he invites the patrons to "Leave you troubles outside!" as the seedy world of the Kit Kat Klub, and its Cabaret Girls, are introduced.

Kander and Ebb also created the songs for the musical, and 2002 film, *Chicago*. Set during Prohibition, this satire tells of two murderers, Velma Kelly and Roxie Hart – their friendship, their stay in Cook County Jail, and their mutual desire for fame, abetted by the less-than-scrupulous lawyer Billy Flynn. "All That Jazz" and "Razzle Dazzle" are among the highlights of

Chicago. So is “**Mr. Cellophane**,” sung by Roxie’s “unimpressive, undistinguished” husband Amos, who initially takes the rap for Roxie’s crime and sings of how he is, like cellophane, practically invisible to the world: “...’Cause you can look right through me, walk right by me, and never know I’m there...”

In 1984 two of the members of the popular Swedish band ABBA, Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson, joined forces with lyricist Tim Rice to create *Chess*, a musical that takes on the Cold War via a romantic triangle between American and Russian chess players and a woman who manages one and falls in love with the other. While some found its political content heavy going, *Chess* won a number of awards, and its songs “One Night in Bangkok” and “I Know Him So Well” became worldwide hits. “**Anthem**” is heard at the end of Act I, sung by Anatoly, the Russian chess player, who seeks asylum, telling a gathering of reporters that “my land’s only borders lie around my heart.”

Our evening of American classics concludes with “**The Music of the Night**” from the longest-running Broadway musical of all time, *The Phantom of the Opera*. With music by Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyrics by Charles Hart, *Phantom* tells the story of a mysterious, disfigured composer and magician who lives in the bowels of the Paris Opera and has developed an obsession with singer Christine Daaé. In “The Music of the Night,” the Phantom has lured Christine to his lair under the Opera House. He serenades her, inviting her to “let the dream begin, let your darker side give in, to the power of the music that I write, the power of the music of the night.”