



Carthage

Department of Music  
presents

# "An American in America"

A Senior Recital by  
Nathan Larsen, Clarinet

Accompanied by Dr. Debbie Masloski

Featuring  
Samantha Whalen, Clarinet  
Adam Vande Ven, Clarinet  
Faith Wittmus, Bass Clarinet  
Alison Baker, Contrabass Clarinet

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Ushers Provided by Lambda Kappa Professional Music Fraternity

April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012  
3:30pm

H. F. Johnson Recital Hall  
Carthage College  
Kenosha, Wisconsin



Carthage Music Department  
2001 Alford Park Drive  
Kenosha, Wisconsin 53140  
262-551-5859

Program

"Overture" to *Candide* Leonard Bernstein  
(1918-1990)  
arr. Nathan Larsen  
(1990- )

Nathan Larsen, Clarinet  
Samantha Whalen, Clarinet  
Adam Vande Ven, Clarinet  
Faith Wittmus, Bass Clarinet  
Alison Baker, Contrabass Clarinet

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano Leonard Bernstein  
I. Grazioso, un poco piu mosso  
II. Andantino, vivace et leggier

Preludes for Piano George Gershwin  
(1898-1937)  
I. Allegro ben ritmato e deciso  
II. Andante con moto e poco rubato  
III. Allegro ben ritmato e deciso

"Promenade" (Walking the Dog) George Gershwin  
From the film *Shall We Dance* arr. Nathan Larsen

Nathan Larsen, Clarinet  
Samantha Whalen, Clarinet  
Adam Vande Ven, Clarinet  
Faith Wittmus, Bass Clarinet  
Alison Baker, Contrabass Clarinet

~ *Intermission* ~

Appalachian Spring Suite

Aaron Copland  
(1900-1990)  
arr. Nathan Larsen

I. Very Slowly  
II. Allegro  
VI. As At First/Doppio movimento  
VII. Calm and Flowing  
VIII. Moderato- Coda

Nathan Larsen, Clarinet  
Samantha Whalen, Clarinet  
Adam Vande Ven, Clarinet  
Faith Wittmus, Bass Clarinet  
Alison Baker, Contrabass Clarinet

Clarinet Concerto

Aaron Copland

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Arts degree in music with an emphasis in Instrumental Music Education.

Nathan is a student of Jennifer Woodrum.

## “An American in America”

I have a great passion for the music of American composers. Hence, the title of my recital, “An American in America,” is meant to call to mind George Gershwin’s “American in Paris.” I have a special fondness and appreciation for the music of Aaron Copland, which grew even stronger after completing a term paper for my Modernism class on three of his works, focusing on what makes his music “American”. This experience caused me to consider how I could extend what I learned through the writing of this paper into my Senior Recital. I talked with Jennifer Woodrum, my studio teacher, about a recital featuring American composers. We chose three pieces by three of the most influential American composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, and George Gershwin. In addition to this solo repertoire, I wanted to perform music for clarinet quintet by these composers. After an extended search for clarinet quintet repertoire and finding none, I decided to write my own arrangements of works by these composers.

Music Education majors can use the educational portfolio as their senior project. I felt that the portfolio did not allow me to highlight the one thing I have been doing constantly for 12 years, playing my clarinet. My educational portfolio brings to light certain aspects of my teaching experience, but it does not include my comprehensive music study. Therefore, my senior project incorporates my experiences preparing and offering this recital. The educational portfolio and this recital have provided me with an opportunity to combine both the performance and educational aspects of my education at Carthage.

I would like to thank Dr. Ripley for helping me with the arranging process; I would not have been able to do this without his help and guidance. I would also like to thank Jenny for her help in preparing all of this repertoire. Thanks also go out to Sammy, Adam, Faith, and Alison for playing my arrangements. Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for their support, both for this recital and throughout my four years at Carthage.

## Program Notes

### “Overture” to *Candide*

Leonard Bernstein’s comic operetta *Candide* was composed in 1955-56, based on the novella of the same name by Voltaire. The operetta premiered on Broadway December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1956 and was extremely unsuccessful. One critic called it “A really spectacular disaster.” Shortly after the premiere, Bernstein took the Overture and made it a concert work, which the New York Philharmonic premiered in 1957. Since then, it has become a standard piece in the orchestral repertoire. The piece is in sonata form, taking melodies from the operetta as its foundation. The lyrical melody is taken from the duet “Oh happy we”, while the codetta is based on material from the aria “Glitter and be Gay”. With its lyrical melodies and contrasting rhythmic motifs, the Overture to *Candide* is an exciting opener for all types of concerts.

### *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano*

Bernstein’s *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano* was started in September 1941 while on a trip to Key West, Florida and completed the following February. The work premiered in April 1942 with Bernstein himself on the piano and David Glazer on the clarinet. These two had been roommates during the summer of 1940, at the Boston Symphony’s Tanglewood institute. Shortly after its premiere, the sonata was published, which turns out to be Bernstein’s first published work. The first movement, *Grazioso*, echoes Paul Hindemith’s neoclassicism, which Bernstein was exposed to as a student at Tanglewood, yet the melody remains uniquely American. The second movement, *Andantino—Vivace e leggier*, starts slow, but quickly develops into the *vivace e leggier*. With its jazzy rhythms and unique time signature, 5/8 and 7/8, this movement seems to foreshadow Bernstein’s Broadway hit, *West Side Story*.

### *Preludes for Piano*

George Gershwin's *Three Preludes for Piano* were originally composed as a piano solo, which was first performed by the composer in 1926. Gershwin originally planned to write 24 preludes for this group of works. The number was reduced to seven in manuscript form, and was further decreased to five in public performance. The number was further decreased to three in 1926, when the work was published. These preludes have been arranged for a wide variety of solo instruments with piano accompaniment, including clarinet. The first movement begins with a five note blues motif, which reappears throughout the entire movement. The syncopation and use of the blues scale give this movement a strong jazz feel. The second movement is referred to as "a sort of blues lullaby" by the composer himself. The subdued melody weaves in and out of steady quarter note baseline. The second section is initiated by a change of key as well as tempo. The final movement begins with a dramatic introduction before the melodic material is introduced as a call and response of sorts, the question in the minor mode, and the answer in major. This call and response is used to shape the entire movement which ends in a flourish, in the major mode.

### *Promenade (Walking the Dog) from the film Shall We Dance*

*Rhapsody in Blue* may be one of Gershwin's most well known orchestral pieces, but he was also well known for his film scores, including the 1937 film, *Shall We Dance*. *Walking the Dog* was Gershwin's last orchestral work. It was written for a dog walking scene that takes place on a ship in the movie. It is said that Gershwin sat down at the piano and improvised the tune on the set while the scene was taking place. The work was not published until 1960, when it was issued as a piano solo under a different title, *Promenade*. The piece begins with an eight bar vamp, which consists of the chord progression that will accompany the jazzy tune of the A section. The B section displays a more lyrical melody, with its dotted-note theme. The A section returns and walks off into the distance.

### *Appalachian Spring Suite*

Throughout his career, Aaron Copland composed music for all genres. One genre in which he excelled was that of the ballet. *Appalachian Spring* is one of those ballets. The ballet premiered in 1944 with Martha Graham, who commissioned the work, dancing the lead role. The original scoring is for a thirteen-piece chamber orchestra. In 1945, Copland rearranged the ballet as an orchestral suite, preserving most of the original score. The orchestral suite is broken into eight sections. The first movement is marked Very Slow by the composer, and is the introduction of all the characters. The second movement, Allegro, is a scene of elation of the coming spring as well as the coming wedding. The sixth movement, which is reminiscent of the first movement, is a transition between the Bride's solo dance, and the seventh movement, which depicts scenes of daily activity for the Bride and her Husband. In this movement, the Shaker melody "Simple Gifts" is heard. Here Copland takes the melody and transforms it in many different variations. In the final movement, Moderato, the Bride takes her place among her neighbors. The prayer-like melody gives closure to the ballet, leaving the couple "quiet and strong in their new house." In 1945, Aaron Copland won the Pulitzer Prize for Music for this work, and it is considered his most well-known composition.

### *Concerto for Clarinet*

Well-known clarinetist Benny Goodman commissioned Copland to write a clarinet concerto. Copland was given free reign, and in 1948 he completed the work. The work was first premiered by Goodman on November 6<sup>th</sup> 1950 on an NBC radio broadcast. The piece is written in a very unusual form, two movements that are connected by a clarinet cadenza. The first movement, written in A-B-A form, is slow and expressive. The lyrical melody depicts a vast landscape of rich harmonies and textures. The cadenza not only gives the soloist an opportunity to display his/her virtuosity, but it also introduces the Latin-American jazz themes that dominate the second movement. The overall form of the second movement is a free rondo, with many side motifs that are resolved in the coda. This fusion of North and South American themes can be attributed to the fact that he wrote most of the piece in Rio de Janeiro. The jazz elements of this second movement were specifically written for Goodman's jazz talent. The infusion of the jazz idiom into this work gives this piece a truly American sound.