



THUNDER BAY  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

Paul Haas  
Music Director

SEASON 59.5

# The TBSO Presents All American

March 12, 2021 – 8:30 p.m.

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# All American

March 12, 2021 8:30 p.m.



## Three Preludes for String Trio

George Gershwin, arr. M. Stegner  
(1898-1937)

Allegro ben ritmato e deciso  
Andante con moto e poco rubato  
Allegro ben ritmato e deciso

Adora Wong, violin; Geena Salway, viola; Marc Palmquist, cello

## String Quartet, Op. 11

Samuel Barber  
(1920-1981)

Molto allegro e appassionato  
Molto adagio [attacca]  
Molto allegro (come prima)

Adora Wong and Madonna Lee, violins; Geena Salway, viola;  
Marc Palmquist, cello

## Scenes from the Bayou

Gina Gillie  
(b. 1981)

Morning on the Bayou  
Chasing Prey  
Bayou Boardwalk  
Cypress Trees  
Fire in the Sky

Sam Hughes, trumpet; Janelle Wiebe, horn; Erik Hongisto, trombone

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## Programme Notes

### Three Preludes

Composer: George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Arranger: Martin Stegner (b. 1967)

First performed (piano): 1926 at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City

First performed (string trio):

Length: Approximately 8 minutes

Three Preludes are three short piano pieces by George Gershwin, which were first performed by the composer at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City in 1926. Each prelude is a well-known example of early-20th-century American classical music, as influenced by jazz. They are rather unique in Gershwin's compositional output in that they were among very few pieces that were published in his lifetime. Countless pianists have learned and recorded these charming movements and many arrangements exist for solo instruments and small ensembles. Martin Stegner, a violist with the prestigious Berlin Philharmonic and a lover of jazz since his youth has made a stunning arrangement for string trio. In introducing his arrangement, Stegner wrote:

*"No other composer was able to combine the jazz music of the time with classical music like George Gershwin. I have tried to avoid noting too many phrasings - take the instructions loosely and rely on your jazz feeling. I dedicate this arrangement to my trio colleagues Atle Sponberg and Oyvind Gimse, with whom I always enjoy playing."*

## String Quartet, Op. 11

Composer: Samuel Barber (1920-1981)

Composed: 1935-6

First performed: 1936 by the Pro Arte Quartet in Rome (in provisional form)

Revised version first performed: 1943 by the Budapest Quartet in Washington, D.C.

Length: Approximately 17 minutes

Samuel Barber is regarded as one of the great American composers of the 20th century. In the years following his graduation from the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, Barber spent time travelling and composing in Europe under various stipends and grants. Between 1935 and 1937, he won the Prix de Rome and two Pulitzer Travel Scholarships and wrote this quartet with its famous slow movement while he was in Rome.

In the quartet, two fast movements surround the Adagio. The first presents three contrasting themes: the first frenetic, the second lyrical and hymn-like, the third playful and brief. The themes are stated, developed and then reprised, but in an unexpected way. Barber continues to develop each, expressing new possibilities even as he concludes the movement.

The beautiful second movement with its long lines, lyric intensity and heartfelt sincerity is better known in its orchestral arrangement and as such is one of the most recognizable and popular pieces in classical music (In 2006 a recorded performance of this work by the London Symphony Orchestra was the highest-selling classical piece on iTunes). Shortly after writing the string quartet, Barber met Arturo Toscanini, who convinced him to arrange the slow movement for string orchestra and later conducted the first performance in 1938. The musical form is an arch in which a very slow and extended melody built from stepwise motion uncoils over sustained chords that change with note-by-note reluctance, all of it building to a powerful climax which then recedes to the contemplative, grave tone with which it began, evoking a deep sadness in many who hear it.

Barber fiddled with the finale of this quartet for a number of years. After some amount of frustration, he quickly composed the original third movement for the premier, but ultimately scrapped it. The revised conclusion became a reprise of the beginning: Barber extracted a portion of the first movement's conclusion for the new finale and modified the first movement accordingly. The revised quartet therefore takes on a unique composite form. Rather than a three-movement work, it is often regarded as a two-movement work with the massive adagio rising out of the center of the single, interrupted "outer" movement.

## Scenes from the Bayou

Composer: Gina Gillie (b. 1981)

Composed: 2016

Commissioned by: Dr. James Boldin for his trio, Black Bayou Brass

Length: Approximately 14 minutes

*From Gina Gillie:* This piece is a collection of short programmatic scenes that portray various times of day, animals, and scenery at the lush Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana. The first movement, "Morning on the Bayou," begins in calm stillness as birds slowly wake and begin singing. Bird calls are imitated with trills and sixteenth notes that oscillate between two notes. A major tonality in 6/8 time pervades the middle section of the movement as all the wildlife in the refuge go about their morning. The movement ends with a slow, rhythmically augmented version of the opening as we settle in for the remainder of the day. Lunch time takes place in the second movement, "Chasing Prey," as a quick-paced predator pursues small prey in hopes of a meal. You can hear the winding path of the chase and draw your own conclusions at the end. "Bayou Boardwalk," the third movement, employs a sweet swing that pays tribute to Louisiana's rich jazz heritage. This music accompanies a stroll down a wooden boardwalk in the park, under the trees and by the lake. One of the many common sights in bayous of the south is the haunting Cypress tree. The fourth movement, "Cypress Trees," evokes the gauzy imagery of tangled roots, hanging moss, and tall canopies. A perpetual 8th-note ostinato runs through the movement, representing the mesmerizing calm of the water, while long sustained lines portray the mystic beauty of the tall trees. The day in the Bayou ends with a sunset: "Fire in the Sky." Strikingly vivid colors of pink, orange, and red flash across the sky in an end-of-day fanfare.

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