

JAMES VILLANI  
Music Director

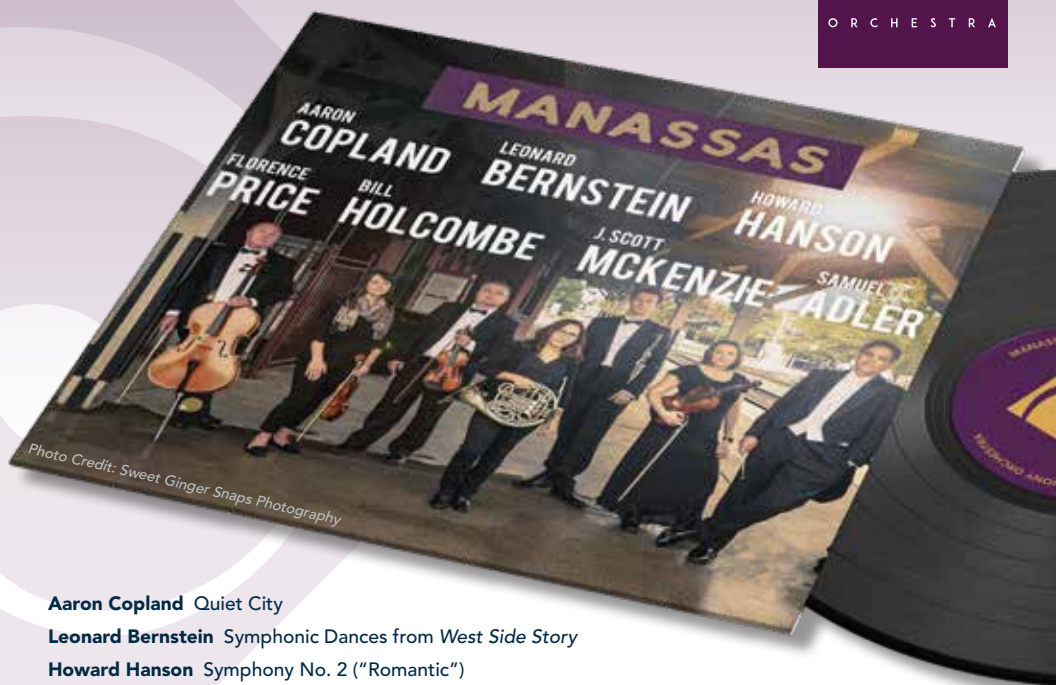
# HYLTON PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



MARCH 7, 2020 • 7:30PM



MANASSAS  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA



**Aaron Copland** Quiet City

**Leonard Bernstein** Symphonic Dances from West Side Story

**Howard Hanson** Symphony No. 2 ("Romantic")

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MANASSAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PRESENTS



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

DIANE BENNETT

Welcome to the Manassas Symphony Orchestra's concert *American Idols* under the baton of Music Director, James Villani. Tonight, we feature music from three of America's greatest composers, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein and Howard Hanson.

We hope you enjoy tonight's concert. It is through your support of the Manassas Symphony Orchestra that enables us to bring quality classical music to our community. We need your help to continue. Please consider purchasing an ad, becoming a corporate sponsor or individual donor. Information is available in this program or online at [www.manassassymphony.org/support](http://www.manassassymphony.org/support). MSO is a 501 (c) (3) non profit organization and your donation is tax deductible to the extent of the law.

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# ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR

JAMES VILLANI, MUSIC DIRECTOR



James Villani has been the conductor and music director of the Symphony since 2004. As a long-time strong advocate for continuing adult music education and volunteerism in the arts, Mr. Villani has been involved in community musical organizations since coming to Northern Virginia in 1986. He was associate conductor and clarinetist for the Reston Chamber Orchestra for 10 years, and has been involved with countless other area performances. He is an active judge and clinician for local music festivals and competitions. He

is a member of the League of American Orchestras and the Conductors Guild. Mr. Villani was a semi-finalist for The American Prize for Community Orchestra Conductors in 2010 and is currently a semi-finalist for the 2020 American Prize in Orchestral Programming / Vytautas Marijosius Memorial Award, Community Division.

A native of New Castle, Pennsylvania, Mr. Villani began playing clarinet in school at the age of 8. He honed his skills, as many in town did, in the back room of Al Colella's Shoe Store, where Mr. Colella taught a steady stream of clarinetists for decades while servicing the occasional shoe customer. Later, while in high school, Mr. Villani studied with Carl Marks, a noted faculty member at Duquesne University and Youngstown State University's Dana School of Music. Mr. Marks was himself a student of the legendary Daniel Bonade.

Mr. Villani received Bachelor's Degrees in Clarinet Performance and Music Education from Penn State University, where he studied with Smith Toulson and was a member of every major ensemble, from the marching Blue Band to the Symphony Orchestra. Among his PSU highlights were four major bowl games, playing tenor saxophone in Disney's All-American College Marching Band at the grand opening of the EPCOT theme park, and performing with the Pittsburgh Symphony under the baton of Michael Tilson Thomas.

He received a Master of Music in Conducting from Northwestern University, where he studied conducting with John P. Paynter and was a graduate assistant for the university wind ensembles. He had a rather unique opportunity for a conducting major -- playing bass clarinet in the top wind ensemble alongside classmates who are now members of top symphony orchestras, including the principal clarinetist of the Houston Symphony. Mr. Villani was also a student of Clark Brody, principal clarinetist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Fritz Reiner, and Alan Stout, a renowned contemporary composer.

Mr. Villani taught in the public schools of Chalfont, PA; East Palestine, Ohio; and at Stonewall Jackson High School in Manassas. Mr. Villani is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Northern Virginia Community College.



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## TONIGHT'S PROGRAM



### MANASSAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Saturday, March 7, 2020 • 7:30 p.m.

Merchant Hall of the Hylton Performing Arts Center

James Villani • Music Director

Mary Padilla • English Horn

Timothy Smith • Trumpet

Quiet City ..... Aaron Copland (1900-90)  
*Dedicated to the memory of our friend, Barry S. Traylor (1954-2019)*  
 MSO Principal Oboist 2005-11  
 Ms. Padilla and Mr. Smith

Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*..... Leonard Bernstein (1918-90)  
 Prologue (Allegro moderato)  
 Somewhere (Adagio)  
 Scherzo (Vivace e leggiero)  
 Mambo (Meno Presto)  
 Cha-cha (Andantino con grazia)  
 Meeting Scene (Meno mosso)  
 Cool Fugue (Allegretto)  
 Rumble (Molto allegro)  
 Finale (Adagio)

### **Intermission**

Symphony No. 2 in D-flat major, Op. 30 ("Romantic") ..... Howard Hanson (1896-1981)  
 Adagio - Allegro moderato  
 Andante con tenerezza  
 Allegro con brio

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 drink or gum is allowed in Merchant Hall. Patrons will be seated during appropriate pauses in the music.

# PROGRAM NOTES

BY STEPHEN C. FISHER.

**T**he iconic twentieth-century American composers on this concert were all children of immigrant parents, Copland's and Bernstein's coming from Russia, Hanson's from Sweden. The two older composers completed their studies in Europe, Copland studying with Nadia Boulanger and Hanson receiving advice from Ottorino Respighi. Bernstein received his training in this country, Copland being one of his mentors. Copland was a New Yorker, though some of his best-known scores are evocations of rural nineteenth-century America. By contrast, though he came from the Boston area, Bernstein will forever be identified with New York City, thanks to his memorable tenure as music director of the New York Philharmonic and to his numerous works evoking the city, including the musicals *On the Town*, *Wonderful Town*, and, above all, *West Side Story*. Hanson, born in Wahoo, Nebraska, studied in several places, including New York, where he worked with Percy Goetschius at the Institute of Musical Art (forerunner of the Juilliard School—another great melodist, Richard Rodgers, would do the same a few years later). He would settle in Rochester, New York, spending forty years building the Eastman School of Music into a world-renowned institution. Copland and Bernstein mixed the modernism of Stravinsky with (among other things) elements from their Jewish heritage and jazz and Latin music. Hanson thought that his music reflected “something of the broad prairies of my native Nebraska.” He chose a more Romantic orientation, as shown in the title he gave this symphony. Unsurprisingly his music sometimes reminds the listener of Sibelius, though his technique of building a long piece out of a few ideas that constantly recur in many combinations and variations suggests Richard Strauss.

**I**n 1939 **Aaron Copland** wrote incidental music for a play by Irwin Shaw called *Quiet City*. When the play closed after two performances, Copland salvaged some of the music for a concert piece, altering the scoring from a small ensemble with piano to English horn, trumpet, and strings. While *Quiet City* does not call for the kind of display found in a concerto from the two wind instruments, they carry most of the musical interest while the strings provide background and punctuation. The work is a single movement, mostly in a slow tempo but with some sections in slower ones. It begins quietly, builds to a climax, and concludes with a return of the quiet beginning.



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## PROGRAM NOTES *CONTINUED*

**B**y contrast with Shaw's play, the groundbreaking musical *West Side Story* was an enormous success from its opening and continues to be one of the most performed of all American shows, thanks in large part to **Leonard Bernstein's** marvelous score. The original 1957 orchestration was produced by a team of Bernstein, Sid Ramin, and Irwin Kostal. In 1961 Bernstein created the *Symphonic Dances* from the theatrical version, dedicating it to Ramin. It is not a suite of the most popular items—in fact, such hits as "Tonight," "I Feel Pretty," and even the big dance number "America" are missing. Bernstein rather chose to develop some of the material from the show in a symphonic fashion, giving it a more elaborate orchestration than was possible in a Broadway pit. As he had used several recurrent musical ideas in the original score, it was easier to do this than it would have been with a more conventional show.

The *Symphonic Dances* consists of a series of linked sections played without interruption. The Prologue leads to a section marked Scherzando that energetically develops the same material. "Somewhere" is the longest lyrical section in the piece. The Scherzo and Mambo are lively, while the graceful Cha-Cha and the quiet Meeting Scene, both based on "Maria," provide some relaxation. "Cool" and the Fugue build up to the climactic Rumble, after which the music fades to a quiet ending recalling "Somewhere."

**H**oward Hanson's First Symphony of 1923, titled "Nordic," established him as a significant composer of orchestral music. When legendary conductor Serge Koussevitzky commissioned a series of works by prominent composers for the fiftieth anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1930, it was natural for him to include Hanson in the group. The results included the Stravinsky *Symphony of Psalms*, Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major, and Hanson's "Romantic" Symphony, as well as works by Roussel, Prokofiev, Hindemith, and Copland. Understanding the importance of the commission, Hanson spent over two years working on the symphony (April 1928–July 1930). The time was well spent.

A figure of three rising notes dominates the slow opening section, starting in the woodwinds, with the strings and brass joining as the music builds up and then dies away. Trumpets and horns begin a fanfare that opens the main body of the movement, which has a dramatic, plunging principal theme. A more lyrical section follows, leading to a beautiful second theme played in a slower tempo in the strings with solo horn. The material is developed, and the themes return in order. The second theme brings the movement to a peaceful close.

PROGRAM NOTES *CONTINUED*

The second movement begins where the first movement left off, with a theme in the woodwinds that could be a continuation of the material we have just heard; Hanson marks the movement “with tenderness.” Later material from the introduction of the first movement enters and is developed at some length; when this section winds down, the opening theme of the movement returns in the strings.

A cheerful fanfare opens the finale, which contains many references to the earlier movements. At its climax the main and second themes of the first movement return complete in the full orchestra and the symphony ends with a reminiscence of the main theme of the second movement.

Hanson had worked on the symphony during a stay at the National High School Orchestra Camp at Interlochen in 1928, its first summer. Interlochen tradition holds that he composed the second theme of the first movement in one of the faculty cabins there. Whatever the truth of that, Hanson offered Interlochen the use of the theme soon after the symphony was premiered, and it has been a part of Interlochen concerts ever since. (Hanson was less happy when the theme was appropriated for the 1979 film *Alien*.) Hanson would compose five further symphonies and a great array of other music, including major contributions to the literature for symphonic band, but the Second Symphony is the work for which he is best remembered. As the symphonies of Charles Ives, written earlier, only became generally known long after they were composed, Hanson’s work has held a place in the repertory longer than any other American symphony.

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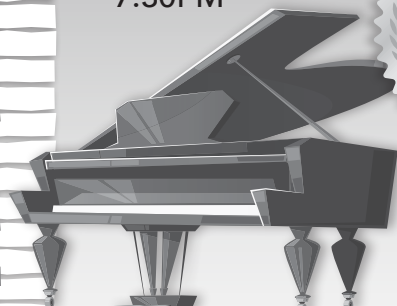
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