Symphony Tacoma presents

That’s a “Wrap”
Saturday, February 27 | 7:30 pm

Daniel Partridge, principal horn
Sandon Lohr, assistant principal horn
David McBride, third horn
Larry Vevig, fourth horn

Der Freischütz Fantasie-Quartet
Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826)
Arr. by A. E. Harris

Horn Quartet No. 1 (2015)
Gina Gillie
I. Slow and legato – Allegro

Quartet in B-flat for Four Waldhorns, op. 38
Friedrich Constantin Homilius (1813–1902)
I. Alla marcia
II. Andante
III. Presto

Fanfare for Barcs (1989)
Kerry Turner

Six Horn Quartets
Nikolai Tcherepnin (1873–1945)
I. Nocturne
II. Ancienne chanson allemande
III. La chasse
IV. Un chant populaire russe
V. Un Choral

Videography: Seago Media
Video Editing: Seago Media
Sound Mixing: Bill Levey
Recording Location: University Place Presbyterian Church

PERFORMANCE SPONSORS
**Daniel Partridge, principal horn**
Mr. Partridge is principal horn of Symphony Tacoma and the Vancouver (WA) Symphony and also plays regularly with the Oregon Symphony, Portland Opera, Oregon Ballet Theater and Chameleon Winds. He earned a PhD in music theory from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY). Mr. Partridge teaches horn at Portland State University and Clark College and is also the manager of music editorial at Oregon Catholic Press. He is raising two daughters with his wife, Katie.

**Sandon Lohr, assistant principal horn**
Originally from Pullman, WA, Mr. Lohr studied horn performance at Carnegie Mellon University and the New England Conservatory before returning to the Northwest to join Symphony Tacoma. He also plays with other groups in the region, including the Boise Philharmonic and the Spokane Symphony.

**David McBride, third horn**
Mr. McBride is a native of Seattle and attended Western Washington University where he earned a Bachelor of Music degree in composition. He earned his Masters Degree from New England Conservatory, graduating Summa cum Laude. He lived in Chicago, Boston, Germany and the Netherlands before returning to the Pacific Northwest and beginning his horn career in earnest in the mid-90s. Besides Symphony Tacoma, he has appeared with Pacific Northwest Ballet, Seattle Symphony, Northwest Sinfonietta to name a few.

**Larry Vevig, fourth horn**
Mr. Vevig has played with Symphony Tacoma since 1988. He also works as a support engineer for Flowroute, a communications firm in Seattle. His music journey began in the fifth grade with the trumpet, eventually evolving to the horn in middle school. “The band director said he needed another horn player so I figured what the heck!” Mr. Vevig also plays with Olympia Symphony Orchestra and often finds himself rehearsing or playing six nights a week.

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Carl Maria von Weber
(1786–1826)

Der Freischütz Fantasie-Quartet
Arr. by A. E. Harris

One of the most important representatives of early German romanticism, Weber is credited with creating the genre of German Romantic opera (Italian having been the predominant operatic language until then). His operas were hugely influential on subsequent generations of German composers, including Giacomo Meyebeer and Richard Wagner, and his piano music influenced Frederic Chopin and Franz Liszt. Der Freischütz, premiered in 1821, is considered by many to be the first great German-language opera. The Fantasie-Quartet on this program highlights two important themes from the opera: the mysterious slow introduction, evoking the supernatural elements of the story, and the rousing “Hunter’s Chorus” which, in the opera itself, features four hunting horns and men’s choir to convey a rustic out-of-doors character.

Friedrich Constantin Homilius (1813–1902)

Quartet in B-flat for Four Waldhorns, op. 38

Not much is known about Homilius but that he was born just outside Dresden and migrated to St. Petersburg, Russia as a young man, where he spent most of his career as a horn player in a military band while composing and teaching. He wrote this horn quartet around 1835, a relatively early piece not only in terms of his own compositional output but also with regard to the technical development of the horn. The designation Waldhorn literally means “forest horn” in German and indicates that Homilius was still writing for the valveless natural (hunting) horn. The piece addresses several familiar topics in which horns were then used, including marches and hunting calls. The first movement is a vigorous march, full of snappy sextuplets and dotted rhythms. The second movement is song-like, with lovely sustained notes in the accompanying voices, and features the third horn and first horn in a soloistic dialogue. The final movement, like the finales of all four of Mozart’s Horn Concertos, is in a rollicking 6/8 that evokes the origins of the instrument as a hunting horn through the topic of La chasse (“the chase”).

Nikolai Tcherepnin
(1873–1945)

Six Horn Quartets

For this program, we are presenting five of the six quartet movements, short but effective character pieces that were published in 1910. Tcherepnin was a native Russian who moved to Paris in 1921 after the Bolshevik revolution. The set is written in a traditional manner; despite the musical experimentation happening elsewhere in Europe, these short pieces are very tonal and draw upon the by-then familiar tropes of horn writing. The beautiful, song-like Nocturne starts the set, showcasing the deep bass tones of the fourth horn, which anchors the ensemble. The second movement, which translates as “ancient German song” is pastoral in nature; it often features the horns in pairs, using a device called horn fifths to mimic pairs of alphorns high in the mountains. The third movement draws on the familiar topic of the chase and features the third and fourth horn with the melody at the beginning while the first and second horn provide a rhythmic motor element. The fifth movement is a popular Russian song: with the tune presented starkly at the outset, by first horn alone and then taken up in turn by all four voices, one can easily imagine the barren beauty of the Russian steppes. The work ends with a setting of the famous Lutheran chorale tune, “Wachet auf” (“Wake, O Sleeper”) written by Philipp Nicolai in 1599 and famously set by J.S. Bach in his cantata of the same name. It is a fitting benediction for a marvelously crafted set of miniatures.
Gina Gillie  
**Horn Quartet No. 1 (2015)**

Commissioned by John Hargreaves, this work is intended to stand alongside a great pillar of the horn quartet repertoire, the Sonata for Four Horns (1952) by Paul Hindemith. Like the Der Freischütz Fantasy that began the program, Gillie’s work starts slowly and mysteriously. A sinuous melody, based on the twelve notes of the chromatic scale, begins the work. She does not treat this tone row serially, as Arnold Schoenberg might have, but rather harmonizes it with lush, romantic chords after its initial presentation. The brooding introduction then gives way to an energetic march, replete with a cascading sextuplet figure (twice as fast as those heard in the Homilius quartet) that gets passed among the four players. Material from the slow introduction returns in the guise of the ongoing march toward the end of the movement, effectively unifying the two formal sections of the piece. The movement ends with a real flourish: the first horn has a “rip” (horn jargon that means glissando) up to one of the highest notes available on the instrument. We are especially pleased to include this work on the program because it showcases a local Tacoman composer and educator (Gillie teaches at Pacific Lutheran University).

Kerry Turner  
**Fanfare for Barcs (1989)**

The finale of this program was written by one of the most well-known contemporary composers for horn. Turner was born in 1960 and has had an illustrious performing career, especially in Europe where, with three other expatriate Americans living and working there, he founded the American Horn Quartet (AHQ), one of the premiere horn ensembles worldwide. This fanfare was written for the AHQ to commemorate their success at the Fourth International Philip Jones Brass Chamber Music Competition in Barcs, Hungary. It is vigorously rhythmic and highly syncopated. The four parts are often independent of one another, the various dovetailing and over-layering of motivic material making the coordination of the performance tricky.

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THE HISTORY OF THE HORN AND THE HORN QUARTET AS AN ENSEMBLE

This program loosely follows the technical development of the horn from its origins as an over-the-shoulder coiled length of flared brass cylinder (for signaling across the forest during the hunt) to the assemblage of sinuous tubing and valves that defines the modern instrument. Once the hunting horn was removed from the outdoors and brought into the concert hall, the ability of the horn player to manipulate the sound of the natural horn with the hand in the bell made it the most flexible of the brass instruments in terms of tone color (timbre), balance, and pitch selection. It was the first brass instrument to be regularly incorporated into standard concert orchestration and can be found throughout the works of J.S. Bach, G. F. Handel, and Joseph Haydn. These valveless horns most often appeared in pairs until the mid-1800s when four horns became the standard instrumentation for symphonic literature (although Hadyn’s experimental Symphony no. 31 of 1765 was dubbed “Mit dem Hornsignal” because it was scored for four horns).

A mechanical piston valve to change the pitch for trumpets and horns was first patented in German around 1815, but was bulky and inefficient and was not fully adopted until further refinements were made in the 1830s. Like any new technology, it had its share of early adopters (Wagner, for example) and curmudgeonly hold-outs (Brahms famously continued to write for natural horns well into the 1890s). And also like any new technology, there were many design styles conceived to utilize the new valves. In various guises, however, fully chromatic horns were available and in use by the mid-1800s. Older hand horn techniques...
continued to inform performance practice well into the early 20th century, however.

Two leading ways of constructing the horn coil, called the “wrap” (which inspired the name of this concert), emerged around the turn of the 20th century: a model by Fritz Kruspe was patented in 1900 in Germany and a model by Carl Geyer, a German-born American, was in production by around 1910. These two styles of wrapping the “double” horn were taken up by most horn makers worldwide. Much like the Mac vs. PC debate in the computer world, many horn players today not only have fierce allegiances to the Kruspe vs. Geyer methods of horn wrapping but also to the metal used (nickel-silver vs. brass horns) and whether the horn should be lacquered (shiny finish) or unlacquered (matte finish). For those keeping track at home, our Symphony Tacoma section uses mostly handcrafted German-made Geyer-wrapped yellow brass horns: Daniel Partridge plays a Ricco Kühn 393X triple horn, Sandon Lohr plays a Hans Hoyer 802 double horn, David McBride plays an Alexander 103 double horn (a modified Kruspe wrap), and Larry Vevig plays an Engelbert Schmid double horn.

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The development of the horn quartet as a stand-alone ensemble matches, to some degree, the technological developments of the instrument itself. In the days before the telephone, pairs of horns were commonplace as signaling instruments when used outdoors, especially for the hunt, and were similarly deployed in symphonic contexts, often lending a rustic element to the concert hall. German and Italian operas of the early 1800s, such as those by Carl Maria von Weber and Giaochino Rossini, respectively, used four horns to take advantage of a larger tonal palette. Some of the first true horn quartet writing comes from these operas. By the 1830s, four horns was the standard instrumentation in the concert orchestra as well, and composers such as Robert Schumann and Franz Schubert were writing works for horn quartet and men’s chorus.

Like a string quartet, the horn quartet has the full range of a four-part choir, from bass to soprano voices. Because of this, and with the examples of the four-horn chorales of Weber’s Der Freischütz (1821) and Rossini’s Semiramide (1823)—and Schumann’s slightly later but celebrated Konzertstück for Four Horns, op. 86 (1949)—composers began to write standalone horn quartets by the middle of the nineteenth century. The later twentieth century, however, began a golden age for original compositions for this ensemble. Paul Hindemith’s Sonata for Four Horn (1952) is a seminal work and elevated the ensemble to truly virtuosic levels. Later horn quartet works by Michael Tippett, Carlos Chávez, Frigyes Hidas, Kerry Turner, and Tacoma’s own Gina Gillie build on the new level established by Hindemith’s work.

— Program notes written by Daniel Partridge

ABOUT SYMPHONY TACOMA

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