CONCERT PROGRAM
Friday, November 11, 2016, 10:30am
Saturday, November 12, 2016, 8:00pm
Sunday, November 13, 2016, 3:00pm

Leonard Slatkin, conductor
Olga Kern, piano

LEONARD SLATKIN
(b. 1944)

Kinah (2015)
Karin Bliznik, trumpet and flugelhorn
Heidi Harris, violin
Frederick Zlotkin, cello

BARBER
(1910–1981)
Piano Concerto, op. 38 (1962)
Allegro appassionato
Canzone: Moderato
Allegro molto

Olga Kern, piano

INTERMISSION

COPLAND
(1900–1990)
Billy the Kid Ballet-Suite (1939)
The Open Prairie —
Street in a Frontier Town —
Mexican Dance and Finale —
Prairie Night (Card Game at Night) —
Gun Battle —
Celebration (after Billy’s Capture) —
Billy’s Death —
The Open Prairie Again

GERSHWIN/
arr. Bennett
(1898–1937)
Porgy and Bess: A Symphonic Picture for Orchestra (1935/1942)
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

These concerts are part of the Wells Fargo Advisors Orchestral Series.

These concerts are sponsored by Steinway Piano Gallery.

Leonard Slatkin is the Monsanto Guest Artist.

Olga Kern is the Mr. and Mrs. Whitney R. Harris Guest Artist.

The concert of Friday, November 11, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Ann S. Lux.

The concert of Saturday, November 12, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Michael F. Neidorff.

Pre-Concert Conversations are sponsored by Washington University Physicians.

Large print program notes are available through the generosity of Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum, and are located at the Customer Service table in the foyer.
The son of distinguished Hollywood studio musicians, Leonard Slatkin is a quintessentially American artist. During his long career—including seventeen stellar seasons as music director of the St. Louis Symphony—he has faithfully championed 20th- and 21st-century American composers with sensitive, lucid interpretations. His recordings of works by Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland, and George Gershwin with the St. Louis Symphony not only secured our orchestra’s global reputation but also elevated the discourse about American music in general. This program features works by these three American icons, prefaced by an intensely personal composition by Slatkin himself.
LEONARD SLATKIN
*Kinah*

A SON’S ELEGY  *Kinah*, which means “elegy” in Hebrew, is Leonard Slatkin’s symphonic tribute to his late parents, Felix Slatkin and Eleanor Aller. Felix was concertmaster of the 20th Century Fox orchestra; Eleanor was principal cello of the Warner Brothers orchestra. They were scheduled to perform Brahms’s *Double Concerto*—a piece they enjoyed practicing at home but had never played together in public—when tragedy struck. Between rehearsal and the concert, Felix Slatkin suffered a heart attack and died.

In December 2015, a week before his late father’s 100th birthday, Slatkin presented the world premiere of *Kinah*, a single-movement exploration of grief, memory, love, and renewal. Motivic shards, based on four notes from the slow movement of the fateful Brahms concerto, pierce Slatkin’s atmospheric textures. The themes are fragmentary, evanescent. They reflect a partnership cut short.

At 72, Slatkin is now 25 years older than his father was when he died. *Kinah* negotiates the distance of loss, the immediacy of grief, the revelations of time. “This is an elegy to my parents,” Slatkin wrote, “easily the most personal piece I’ve written.” At the premiere last December, his brother, Frederick Zlotkin, played the offstage solo cello part on an instrument that belonged to their mother.

**Born**  
September 1, 1944, in Los Angeles

**First Performance**  
December 6, 2015, in Detroit, the Detroit Symphony with Leonard Slatkin conducting

**STL Symphony Premiere**  
This week

**Scoring**  
4 horns  
trumpet  
flugelhorn  
percussion  
harp  
piano  
celeste  
solo violin  
solo cello  
strings

**Performance Time**  
approximately 12 minutes

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SAMUEL BARBER
Piano Concerto, op. 38

FIRST IN FORM Although he toiled over an earlier, unpublished piano concerto for more than three years while attending the Curtis Institute, Samuel Barber didn’t attempt the form again for more than three decades. In 1959, the final year of his forties, he accepted a commission for a piano concerto honoring the upcoming centenary of the music publisher G. Schirmer, Inc.

Inspired by the muscular virtuosity of his chosen soloist, John Browning, Barber began working on the concerto the following spring. To reacquaint himself with the form, he pored over contemporary scores by Boulez, Copland, Webern, Berg, and Schoenberg. He finished the first two movements in 1960, but the finale remained in flux until only two weeks before the premiere, in September of 1962. Barber incorporated technical advice from both Browning and Vladimir Horowitz, who persuaded him that the third movement was unplayable at the original tempo. The piano concerto earned Barber a Pulitzer Prize in 1963 and a Music Critics Circle Award in 1964. Browning made it his signature piece; by 1969 he had performed it nearly 150 times. In 1991 he recorded it with the St. Louis Symphony, led by Leonard Slatkin.

AARON COPLAND
Billy the Kid Ballet-Suite

A COWBOY BALLET The first of Aaron Copland’s so-called “cowboy ballets,” Billy the Kid was commissioned in 1938 by Lincoln Kirstein, for Ballet Caravan and the dancer Eugene Loring, who also wrote the scenario. Its subject was the legendary outlaw William Bonney: tragic hero, violent misfit, and icon of the vanished Old West. Copland’s music is a study in radical simplicity. At once immense and intimate, it evokes the vast expanses of the wild frontier and the raucous diversions of its inhabitants.

“I felt it was worth the effort to see if I couldn’t say what I had to say in the simplest possible terms,” the composer wrote. “As I see it, music
that is born complex is not inherently better or worse than music that is born simple.”

Kirstein gave Copland an assortment of cowboy songs, and he wove at least six of them into his score: “Great Granddad,” “Git Along Little Dogie,” “The Old Chisholm Trail,” “Goodbye, Old Paint,” “The Dying Cowboy,” and “Trouble for the Range Cook.” In 1940 Copland extracted a concert suite from the ballet.

Copland wrote his own summary of *Billy the Kid*:

The ballet begins and ends on the open prairie. The first scene is a street in a frontier town. Cowboys saunter into town, some on horseback, others on foot with lassoes; some Mexican women do a *jarabe*, which is interrupted by a fight between two drunks. Attracted by the gathering crowd, Billy, a boy of twelve, is seen for the first time, with his mother. The brawl turns ugly, guns are drawn, and in some unaccountable way, Billy’s mother is killed. Without an instant’s hesitation, in cold fury, Billy draws a knife from a cowhand’s sheath and stabs his mother’s slayers. His short but famous career has begun. In swift succession we see episodes in Billy’s later life—at night, under the stars, in a quiet card game with his outlaw friends; hunted by a posse led by his former friend, Pat Garrett; in a gun battle. A celebration takes place when he is captured. Billy makes one of his legendary escapes from prison. Tired and worn out in the desert, Billy rests with his girl. Finally, the posse catches up with him.

**GEORGE GERSHWIN**

*Porgy and Bess: A Symphonic Picture for Orchestra*

**AN AMERICAN FOLK OPERA** Until his death at 38, from a brain tumor, George Gershwin cranked out music like a Jazz-Age Mozart. *Porgy and Bess*, his self-described “American folk opera,” contains some of his most enduring melodies. Although his brother Ira helped out with some lyrics, the opera’s librettist, DuBose Heyward, who also wrote the novel on which it was based, supplied many of its greatest lines. “Summertime,” the opening aria, might be the most recognizable melody in
20th-century musical theater. Pulsing through all three acts, the languorous lullaby is the opera’s lifeblood. Gershwin began writing it in 1933, a full two years before the show’s premiere.

For *Porgy and Bess*, Gershwin adopted an African-American musical vernacular, with a South Carolina accent. Hoping to make the music sound as authentic as possible, he lived on an island outside of Charleston while composing the score. He and Heyward stipulated that all the major roles go to black performers, a brave and unprecedented move in an era of strict racial segregation.

In a 1926 essay, Gershwin defined the “voice of the American soul” as “jazz that is the plantation song improved and transferred into finer, bigger harmonies.” The “American soul,” he wrote, “is black and white ... all colors and all souls unified in the great melting pot of the world.” But despite this ethos of assimilation, Gershwin doesn’t make all his Americans sound alike. In *Porgy and Bess*, the black characters express themselves in operatic recitative—declamatory, poetic, quasi-musical speech—whereas the white characters are confined to drab, prosaic spoken dialogue.

**AN ORCHESTRAL SNAPSHOT** In 1942, five years after Gershwin’s death, his associate Robert Russell Bennett arranged a medley for orchestra, at the request of the conductor Fritz Reiner. The resulting work, *Porgy and Bess: A Symphonic Picture*, is based on Gershwin’s original orchestration, with a few tweaks for the concert-hall, such as the removal of piano. In addition to the aforementioned “Summertime,” Bennett’s symphonic medley incorporates the tunes for “It Ain’t Necessarily So,” a dope dealer’s bluesy ode to skepticism, and “Bess You Is My Woman Now,” Porgy’s touching paean to his errant beloved. Other featured tunes are “A Woman Is a Sometime Thing,” “I Got Plenty of Nuttin’,” “Picnic Parade,” and “O Lawd I’m On My Way.”

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**Born**
September 26, 1898, in New York

**Died**
July 11, 1937, in Los Angeles

**First Performance**
September 30, 1935, in Boston

**STL Symphony Premiere**
March 18, 1987, Richard Holmes conducting

**Most Recent STL Symphony Performance**
August 5, 1995, Harvey Felder conducting

**Scoring**
2 flutes
piccolo
2 oboes
English horn
2 clarinets
bass clarinet
2 alto saxophones
tenor saxophone
2 bassoons
4 horns
3 trumpets
3 trombones
tuba
timpani
percussion
2 harps
banjo
strings

**Performance Time**
approximately 24 minutes
LEONARD SLATKIN
MONSANTO GUEST ARTIST

St. Louis Symphony Conductor Laureate Leonard Slatkin is music director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestre National de Lyon. He also maintains a rigorous schedule of guest conducting and is active as a composer, author, and educator. He founded the STL Symphony Youth Orchestra in 1970.

During the 2016-2017 season he tours the U.S. and Europe with the ONL, conducts overseas with the WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne and San Carlo Theatre Orchestra in Naples, and serves as chairman of the jury and conductor of the 2017 Cliburn Competition.

Slatkin has conducted virtually all of the leading orchestras in the world. He served as music director of the STL Symphony from 1979 until 1996, and has also held posts with the New Orleans Symphony, the National Symphony, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

OLGA KERN
MR. AND MRS. WHITNEY R. HARRIS GUEST ARTIST


Kern opened the Baltimore Symphony’s 2015-2016 centennial season with Marin Alsop. Other season highlights included returns to the Royal Philharmonic with Pinchas Zukerman, Orchestre Philharmonique de Nice with Giancarlo Guerrero, Rochester Philharmonic and San Antonio Symphony, a month-long tour of South Africa for concerts with the Cape and KwaZulu Natal philharmonics, an Israeli tour with the Israel Symphony, and recitals with Renée Fleming in Carnegie Hall and Berkeley.