

# LANSING SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

TIMOTHY MUFFITT • MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## BERNSTEIN, COPLAND to be FEATURED in LSO'S MASTERWORKS 3: AMERICAN JOURNEY

**October 13, 2008 – Lansing, MI –** The Lansing

Symphony is preparing to showcase the works of three

American composers in its next **MasterWorks performance**

– **“American Journey” on Saturday, November 1, 2008 at**

**8 p.m. at the Wharton Center’s Cobb Great Hall.** Guest



Conductor David Rayl will lead the orchestra in its annual choral concert, featuring the MSU Choral Union, MSU Chorale and State Singers. On the program: Schuman’s *New England Triptych*, Copland’s *Old American Songs* and Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms*. (More about individual works and composers below – read on!)

**Single tickets range from \$10.00 - \$43.00, depending on seating.** Four-concert MasterWorks Sampler subscriptions are also available, starting at just \$38.00. First-time subscribers save 25% on their order. **Tickets are available by calling (517) 487-5001 or online at [www.LansingSymphony.org](http://www.LansingSymphony.org).**

The concert will open with *New England Triptych*, an orchestral work by William Schuman (1910-1992). The piece is based on three short choral works - “Be Glad Then America,” “When Jesus Wept” and “Chester” - written by William Billings (1746-1800), often considered the first truly “American” composer. To highlight this connection, Rayl will preface each movement with the work on which it is based.

Next on the program will be *Old American Songs*, a collection by Aaron Copland (1900-1990), whose works like *Appalachian Spring* and *Rodeo* helped to define a distinctly “American” style of music in the mid-twentieth century. *Old American Songs* is a collection of songs that includes such truly American tunes as “Simple Gifts,” “Zion’s Walls” and “At the River.” Some arrangements will be performed by full chorus, others by just the men, others by women only, and some will feature MSU Assistant Professor of Voice Rod Nelman. Mr. Nelman, a bass-baritone, has worked with leading singers in the world of opera for more than 18 years, including performances with the New York City Opera, Long Beach Opera, Pittsburgh Opera Theater, Washington Opera, the Florentine Opera, and Glimmerglass Opera. This will be his first performance with the Lansing Symphony Orchestra. The ten selections from *Old American Songs* to be performed range in origin from Shaker hymns to political campaigns to children’s lullabies.

Wrapping up the all-American lineup is Leonard Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms*. His extensive career with the New York Philharmonic and works like *West Side Story* and *Candide* only touch on the greatness that Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) achieved as a pianist, conductor and composer during his lifetime. His *Chichester Psalms* was commissioned by the Dean of Chichester Cathedral for the Three Choirs Festival, an event that brings together musicians from the cathedrals of Chichester, Salisbury and Winchester. The three movements take their text from six psalms and will be sung in Hebrew, featuring the voice of a boy treble in several places. The twenty-minute piece ranges in emotion from wild praise to gentle prayer to lamentation and finally to a beautiful chorale calling for peace in a troubled world. Abhijit Raj Das, a seventh grader at Kinawa Middle School in Okemos and a member of the MSU Children’s Choir, will join the Lansing Symphony for this performance.

David Rayl is Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Michigan State University, where he conducts the MSU Chorale and Choral Union, directs the graduate program in choral conducting and serves as Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in Music. Previously, David Rayl was Director of Choral Activities at the University of Missouri-Columbia and Music Director of the Quad City Mozart Festival. David Rayl has appeared as a guest conductor with the



Missouri Chamber Orchestra, the Jefferson City Symphony and the orchestra of the Carlos Gomes Conservatory in Belem, Brazil. He has prepared choruses for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the Kansas City Symphony and has led the LSO in performances of Haydn's *Creation*, Brahms's *Schicksalslied* and Mozart's *Grand Mass in C-Minor*.

**MasterWorks 3: American Journey is generously sponsored by Fifth Third Bank.**

The Lansing Symphony Orchestra was established in 1929. More than 20,000 people attend LSO concerts each year, and more than 50,000 listeners are able to hear broadcasts of the Orchestra's concerts by NPR affiliate WKAR-FM Radio. The Symphony's highly acclaimed education programs reach 15,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade in five counties. More information can be found at [www.LansingSymphony.org](http://www.LansingSymphony.org).

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