

Montgomery Philharmonic

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Montgomery Philharmonic 2013 - 2014 Concert Season – A Confluence of Culture Music of North America – February 27, 2014

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Howard Hanson – *Serenade for Flute, Harp, and Strings, Opus 35*

This piece is unique in that it was a marriage proposal gift from Howard Hanson to his wife, Margaret Elizabeth Nelson. He said that he could not find the words to express his love for her, so he wrote the piece. It is described as the perfect wedding present – ardent, romantic, and lovely. Along with these wonderful attributes, the piece has a strong rhythmic pulse and also a beautiful flowing scale that Hanson created especially for it.

The piece was premiered in 1945 by Georges Laurent and the Boston Symphony Orchestra with Serge Koussevitzky conducting. This serenade, along with Griffes' *Poem* and Kennan's *Night Soliloquy*, are now the major American contributions to literature for classical flute with orchestra.

About Howard Hanson

Howard Harold Hanson was an American composer, conductor, educator, music theorist, and champion of American classical music.

As a composer, Hanson was the first winner of the Prix de Rome in Music for both *The California Forest Play* and his symphonic poem *Before the Dawn*. The award included 3 years' residency in Italy, so he wrote four pieces while living there, including his first symphony. He always called these years his formative years as a composer because he was allowed to compose without the distraction of teaching. His works were commissioned by organizations all over the world, most notably the Boston Symphony, UNESCO, Richard Nixon's inauguration, and 20th Century Fox.

Hanson made his debut as a conductor with the New York Symphony Orchestra upon his return from Italy. This performance caught the attention of George Eastman and in 1924 Hanson was chosen to be the director of the Eastman School of Music. Hanson held the position for 40 years and, during his tenure, the school became one of the most respected music schools in the United States with an improved curriculum and a well-respected faculty. Hanson's students include some composers, and band and orchestra directors who have become legendary in the United States.

While at Eastman, he established the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, which was composed of principal players from the Rochester Symphony playing alongside students at the Eastman School of Music.

- **Born:** October 28, 1896, Wahoo, NE
- **Died:** February 26, 1981
- **Education:** California Institute of the Arts
- **Spouse:** Margaret Elizabeth Nelson (m. 1946)
- **Compositions:** *Merry Mount*, *seven symphonies*, *Lux aeterna – Symphonic Poem for Orchestra with Viola Obligato*, *Fantasy-Variations On a Theme Of Youth*, and *Mosaics* for orchestra, several choral music pieces, five works for concert band with *Dies Natalis* and *Chorale and Alleluia* being the most famous, *Concerti for Piano, Organ, and Viola*, and several works for chamber ensembles and piano.
- **Parents:** Hans Hanson, Hilma Hanson
- **Education:** Northwestern University, Luther College, Institute of Musical Art

Instrumentation – solo flute, harp, violin 1, violin 2, viola, cello, and double bass.

Artifact –

<http://www.wnyc.org/story/206422-howard-hanson/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pulitzer_Prize_for_Music



1. Music of Howard Hanson, Vol. 1 - Gerard Schwarz & Seattle Symphony Orchestra

2. Hanson: Organ Concerto, Fantasy Variations, Nymphs and Satyr Ballet Suite - Daniel Spalding, Gabriela Imreh, Joseph Jackson & Philadelphia Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra

3. Light In the Corner - Kate Steinbeck & Byron Hedgpeth



1. Serenade, Op. 35

2. Howard Hanson: Organ Concerto; Fantasy Variations; Nymphs and Satyr; Summer Seascape; Pastorale; Serenade

3. Howard Hanson: Symphony No. 4; Suite from Merry Mount; Lament for Beowulf

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