

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

by DR. RICHARD E. RODDA



CARL ORFF

Born July 10, 1895 in Munich.

Died March 29, 1982 in Munich.

Carmina Burana, *Cantiones profanae* for Orchestra, Large and Small Chorus, Children's Chorus, Soprano, Tenor and Baritone Soloists

Composed in 1935–1936.

Premiered in Frankfurt on December 8, 1937, conducted by Bertil Wetzelsberger.

About thirty miles south of Munich, in the foothills of the Bavarian Alps, is the abbey of Benediktbeuren. In 1803, a 13th-century codex was discovered among its holdings that contains some 200 secular poems which give a vivid, earthy portrait of Medieval life. Many of these poems, attacking the defects of the Church, satirizing contemporary manners and morals, criticizing the omnipotence of money, and praising the sensual joys of food, drink and physical love, were written by an amorphous band known as "Goliards." These wandering scholars and ecclesiastics, who were often esteemed teachers and recipients of courtly patronage, filled their worldly verses with images of self-indulgence that were probably as much literary convention

as biographical fact. The language they used was a heady mixture of Latin, old German and old French. Some paleographic musical notation appended to a few of the poems indicates that they were sung, but it is today so obscure as to be indecipherable. This manuscript was published in 1847 by Johann Andreas Schmeller under the title, *Carmina Burana* ("Songs of Beuren"), "carmina" being the plural of the Latin word for song, "carmen."

Carl Orff encountered these lusty lyrics for the first time in the 1930s, and he was immediately struck by their theatrical potential. Like Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson in the United States, Orff at that time was searching for a simpler, more direct musical expression that could immediately affect listeners. Orff's view, however, was more Teutonically philosophical than that of the Americans, who were seeking a music for the common man, one related to the everyday world. Orff sought to create a musical idiom that would serve as a means of drawing listeners away from their daily experiences and closer to the realization of oneness with the universe. In the words of the composer's biographer Andreas Liess, "Orff's spiritual form is molded by the superimposition of a high intellect on a primitive creative instinct," thus establishing a tension between the rational (intellect) and the irrational (instinct). The artistic presentation of the deep-seated psychological self to the thinking person allows an exploration of the regions of being that have been overlaid by accumulated layers of civilization. To portray the connection between the physical and spiritual spheres, Orff turned to the theater. His theater, however, was hardly the conventional one. Orff's modern vision entailed stripping away not only the richly Romantic musical language of traditional opera, but also eliminating its elaborate stagecraft, costumes and scenery, so that it was reduced to just its essential elements of production. Orff's reform even went so far as to question the validity of any works written before 1935, including his own, to express the state of modern man, and he told his publisher to destroy all his music (i.e., Orff's)

which “unfortunately” had been printed. The first piece that embodied Orff’s new outlook was *Carmina Burana*.

Though *Carmina Burana* is most frequently heard in the concert hall, Orff insisted that it was intended to be staged, and that the music was only one of its constituent parts. “I have never been concerned with music as such, but rather with music as ‘spiritual discussion,’” he wrote. “Music is the servant of the word, trying not to disturb, but to emphasize and underline.” He felt that this objective was best achieved in the theater, but *Carmina Burana* still has a stunning impact even without its visual element. Its effect arises from the monumental simplicity of the musical style by which Orff sought to depict the primitive, instinctive side of mankind. Gone are the long, intricate forms of traditional German symphonic music, the opulent homogeneity of the Romantic orchestra, the rich textures of the 19th-century masters. They are replaced by a structural simplicity and a sinewy, electric muscularity that is driven by an almost primeval rhythmic energy. “The simpler and more reduced to essentials a statement is, the more immediate and profound its effect,” wrote Orff. It is precisely through this enforced simplicity that Orff intended to draw listeners to their instinctual awareness of “oneness with the universe.” Whether he succeeded as philosopher is debatable. Hanspeter Krellmann wrote in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, “The four aspects of Orff’s musical theater [tragedy of archetypes, visionary embodiment of metaphysical ideas, bizarre fantasy and physical exuberance] are usually intertwined; and it is apparent from the works that Orff’s main concern is not with the exposition of human nature in tragedy, nor with whimsical fancy, nor with the statement of supernatural truths, nor with joyous exultation. His intention seems to be to create a spectacle.” So what then is *Carmina Burana*: a set of ribald songs? a Medieval morality play? a philosophical tract? Perhaps it is all of these. But more than anything, it is one of the most invigorating, entertaining, easily heard and memorable musical creations of the 20th century.

Orff chose 24 poems from the *Carmina Burana* to include in his work. Since the

13th-century music for them was unknown, all of their settings are original with him. The work is disposed in three large sections with prologue and epilogue. The three principal divisions — *Primo Vere* (“*Springtime*”), *In Taberna* (“*In the Tavern*”) and *Cour d’Amours* (“*Court of Love*”) — sing the libidinous songs of youth, joy and love. However, the prologue and epilogue (using the same verses and music) that frame these pleasurable accounts warn against unbridled enjoyment. “The wheel of fortune turns; dishonored I fall from grace and another is raised on high,” caution the words of *Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi* (“*Fortune, Empress of the World*”), the chorus that stands like pillars of eternal verity at the entrance and exit of this Medieval world. They are the ancient poet’s reminder that mortality is the human lot, that the turning of the same Wheel of Fortune that brings sensual pleasure may also grind that joy to dust. It is this bald juxtaposition of antitheses — the most rustic human pleasures with the sternest of cosmic admonitions — coupled with Orff’s elemental musical idiom that gives *Carmina Burana* its dynamic theatricality.

The work opens with the chorus *Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi*, depicting the terrible revolution of the Wheel of Fate through a powerful repeated rhythmic figure that grows inexorably to a stunning climax. After a brief morality tale (*Fortune plango vulnera* — “*I lament the wounds that fortune deals*”), the *Springtime* section begins. Its songs and dances are filled with the sylvan brightness and optimistic expectancy appropriate to the annual rebirth of the earth and the spirit. The next section, *In Taberna* (“*In the Tavern*”), is given over wholly to the men’s voices. Along with a hearty drinking song are heard two satirical stories: *Olim lacus colueram* (“*Once in lakes I made my home*”) — one of the most fiendishly difficult pieces in the tenor repertoire — and *Ego sum abbas Cucaniensis* (“*I am the abbot of Cucany*”). The third division, *Cour d’Amours* (“*Court of Love*”), leaves far behind the rowdy revels of the tavern to enter a refined, seductive world of sensual pleasure. The music is limpid, gentle and enticing, and marks the first appearance of the soprano soloist. The lovers’ urgent entreaties grow in ardor, with insistent encouragement from the chorus, until submission is won in the most rapturous

moment in the score, *Dulcissime* (“*Sweetest Boy*”). The grand paean to the loving couple (*Blanzifor et Helena*) is cut short by the intervention of imperious fate, as the opening chorus (*Fortuna*), like the turning of the great wheel, comes around once again to close this mighty work.

Karl Schumann wrote of the universality of Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, “No individual destiny is touched upon — there are no dramatic personae in the normal sense of the term. Instead primeval forces are invoked, such as the ever-turning wheel of fortune, the revivifying power of spring, the intoxicating effect of love, and those elements in man which prompt him to the enjoyment of earthly and all-too-earthly pleasures. The principal figure is man, as a natural being delivered over to forces stronger than himself.”

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JENNIFER JILL ARAYA

Jennifer Jill Araya is a cross-genre artist who relishes the neverending variety provided by her many and varied artistic pursuits. As a soprano, she is a frequent featured soloist with local orchestras, including the Springfield Symphony Orchestra and the Butler Philharmonic Orchestra, and she is a regular chamber music collaborator with *Les Fleurs de Lys*, a chamber trio specializing in French music from all time periods. As a

cellist, she is a tenured cello section member of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra. She also frequently performs as one half of the *Araya Duo* with her husband, Arturo Araya, who is also a cellist. As an audiobook narrator, she is a recipient of the 2022 Audie Award from the American Publishers Association, a 2022 Earphones Award from AudioFile Magazine, and is both a winner and a two-time nominee for the 2022 Amazing Audiobooks for Young Adults Award from the American Library Association. She is also a SOVAS Voice Arts Award Finalist and a three-time Independent Audiobook Award Finalist. Jennifer has narrated nearly 300 audiobooks in virtually every genre for a variety of audiobook publishers and producers, including Penguin Random House Audio, Simon & Schuster Audio, HarperAudio, Macmillan Audio, Blackstone Publishing, and Audible Studios. Jennifer’s training as an opera singer and orchestral cellist lend a musicality and depth of understanding to her narration that help bring authors’ stories to life. AudioFile magazine has commented that “Araya’s smooth musical voice is a pleasure to listen to,” calling her narrations “emotionally balanced,” “agile and buoyant,” full of “exuberance and compassion.” Regardless of whether Jennifer is narrating an audiobook, singing a French art song, or performing in the cello section of an orchestra, she always brings passion and grace to her performance as she creates new worlds through sound.

When she is not singing, narrating, or playing cello, Jennifer can be found hiking, biking, running, or generally exploring her home city of Cincinnati with her husband Arturo and their daughter. Jennifer is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where she studied voice with Mary Stucky and cello with Lee Fiser and Dan Culnan.



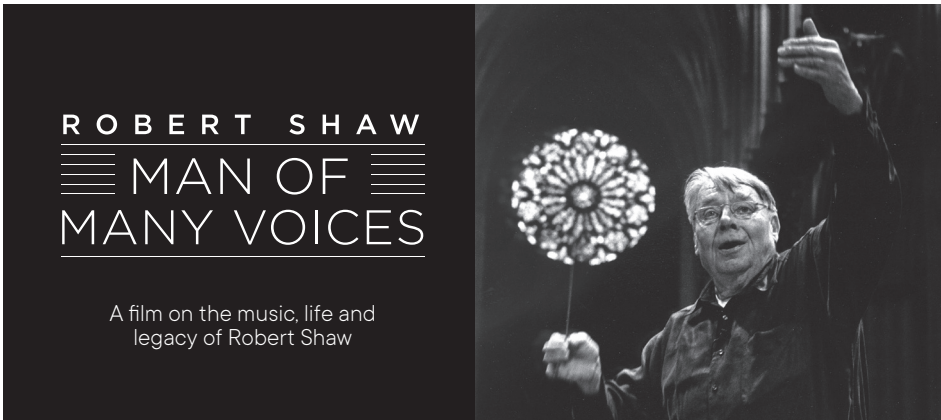
DANIEL STEIN

Tenor **Daniel Stein**, whose voice has been described as “warm and flexible,” is an avid concert performer. Most recently, he made his debut with the Filharmonie Brno as the orchestra toured in the US from the Czech Republic. Stein has performed as tenor soloist with many regional orchestras, including the Arizona Music Fest Festival Orchestra, Charlotte Symphony, Portland (ME) Symphony, Greensboro Symphony, Memphis Symphony, Winston-Salem Symphony, South Carolina Philharmonic, and numerous others.

His performed works include **Carmina Burana** (Orff), **Messiah** (Handel), **C-minor Mass** (Mozart), **Glagolitic Mass** (Janacek), **St. John Passion** (J.S. Bach), and **Elijah** (Mendelssohn) to name a few.

Equally comfortable on the operatic stage, Stein has sung leading roles with such companies as Asheville Lyric Opera, Opera Carolina, Opera Columbus, Dayton Opera, Greensboro Opera and Opera North (NH). Some of his favorite roles include Conte Almaviva (**Il Barbiere di Siviglia**), Theodore Lawrence (**Little Women**), Alfredo (**La Traviata**), and world premiere performances creating the roles of Alan Seymour in **Picnic** (Libby Larsen) and William in **The Flood** (Korine Fujiwara).

Daniel earned his D.M.A. from The Ohio State University, his M.M. from University of North Carolina Greensboro, and his B.M. from Wright State University. A 2020 (rescheduled to 2021 due to COVID) National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Professional - Performs Intern alumnus, he currently serves as Assistant Professor of Instruction in Classical and Musical Theater Voice and is Coordinator of Opera Theater at Ohio University. He resides in Athens, OH with his wife and 3 daughters and their dog. To learn more about Daniel visit www.danielcstein.com.



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MICHAEL ROEMER

Michael Roemer is a versatile and accomplished musician with an extensive background in both vocal and instrumental performance. As a baritone singer, pianist, organist, and choral director, he has showcased his talents across a variety of musical genres and settings.

Michael has performed with several prestigious organizations, including the Chicago a cappella, Lyric Opera of Chicago Chorus, and the Canton Symphony Orchestra. He has also participated in a range of arts festivals, including the Oxford Lieder Festival and the Art Song Festival in Ohio.

In addition to his performing career, Michael has also served as a music director and vocal coach for several organizations. He was the music director of St. Paul's Catholic Church of North Canton, Ohio for five years and will serve as the director of Statesboro Youth Chorale. As a vocal coach, Michael has worked with students of all levels in opera, music theater, and art song for the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Walsh University, Deerfield High School, and North Park University.

Michael is originally from Wisconsin, where he received his Bachelor's of Music degree from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and his Master's degree in Music from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He currently resides in Statesboro, GA with his wife, Dr. Jennifer D'Agostino, who is a lecturer in voice at Georgia Southern University, and his two sons, Henry and Charlie.



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for sharing your talents with us.**

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THE YEARS

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Bruckner *Psalm 150*
Poulenc *Gloria*

2007

Beethoven *Sym. No. 9*
Bizet *Les vicci fm Carmen*
Mussorgsky *Coronation Scene*
fm Boris Godunov
Verdi *Va pensiero fm Nabucco*
Verdi *Anvil Chorus fm Il*
Trovatore
Verdi *Grand March/Triumphal*
Scene fm Aida

2008

Haydn *Lord Nelson Mass*
Vivaldi *Gloria*
Bennett *Many Moods of*
Christmas

2010

O'Connor, *Americana*
Symphony
Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*
Copland *Old American Songs*

2011

Verdi *Requiem Mass*
w/ WSU Trumpet Ensemble

2012

Orff *Carmina Burana*
Baritone Soloist

2013

Georges Bizet, *Carmen*

Orchestral Fireworks
M. Logan, *My Soul's Been*
Anchored in the Lord
Tchaikovsky, *1812 Overture*

Freedom!
Wilhousky, *Battle Hymn of*
the Republic
Key, *The Star Spangle Banner*
Gould, *When Johnny*
Comes Marching Home
Glass, *The Cival War, Interlude I*
Williams, *Dry Your Tears*
Harris, *Symphony No.6,*
"Gettysburg"
Copeland, *Down a Country Lane*
Copeland, *Lincoln Portrait*
w/Dramatic readings of the
Cival War and the Gammon
House Family
Two Brothers
Soon ah Will be Done
Lift up the Flag

2014

Faure *Requiem*
w/Shawn Dawson, Organ

2015

The Choral Grandeur of Mozart
Coronation Mass in C major,
k. 317
Alleluia
A Musical Everest
Mahler *Symphony No. 2*
"Resurrection"

2016

Symphony at Sea
Vaughan Williams,
A Sea Symphony

2017

The Human Requiem
Johannes Brahms

2018

Mendelssohn
Elijah, Op. 70
w/Wittenberg Choir
and Chorale

2019

Bethoven's 9th - Ode To Joy

2020

Carmina Burana -
Cancelled Covid

2021

The Pirates of Penzance,
or The Slave of Duty

2022

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Bach

2023

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