

# Simple Gifts

**FEBRUARY 18, 2012**  
**8 pm • Prelude 7:15 pm**

**Chelsea Tipton II**  
guest conductor

 **Merrill Lynch**  
The Iles Group



## FUN FACTS ABOUT THE PROGRAM

### **Gershwin: *Cuban Overture***

- *Cuban Overture* is a symphonic overture or tone poem for orchestra composed by American composer George Gershwin.
- Originally titled *Rumba*, this piece was a result of a two-week holiday Gershwin took to Havana.
- Gershwin was inspired by the music he heard on the capital's streets. As a result, the work is rich in the flavor, color and animation of the island of Cuba.
- Gershwin was 7 years old when he published his first song, which earned him \$5.
- In his spare time, Gershwin was said to have played tennis with Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg.

### **Copland: *Appalachian Spring***

- *Appalachian Spring* is a modern score composed by Aaron Copland and has achieved widespread and enduring popularity as an orchestral suite.
- Known as the *Shaker Melody*, *Shaker Song* and the *Shaker Hymn*, the music Copland based his ending variations on was called *Simple Gifts*. This same song is widely recognized as *Lord of the Dance*.
- Singer Jewel recorded her own version of *Simple Gifts* in 2009 on her studio album *Lullaby*.
- Copland wrote *Appalachian Spring* for dancer Martha Graham, who was commissioned to choreograph the ballet and danced the leading role. That is why the subtitle is "Ballet for Martha."
- Famous for his American musical sound, *Appalachian Spring* has a "frontier" theme and is set in western Pennsylvania. It has a quirky, playful rhythm with odd beats and accents that reflect inflections in American speech.
- Copland won the Pulitzer Prize in May 1945 for *Appalachian Spring*. He received many awards and over 30 honorary degrees during his career.

### **Bernstein: *West Side Story Symphonic Dances***

- This suite contains orchestral music from the musical *West Side Story*.
- *The Dances* include themes from *Somewhere*, *Mambo*, *Cha-Cha* and *Rumble*.
- Bernstein attended Harvard, where he met Aaron Copland. According to Bernstein, Copland became "his only real composition teacher."

### **Marquez: *Danzon No. 2***

- This contemporary Mexican piece expresses a dance style called Danzon, an important part of Veracruz's folklore. Marquez got his inspiration for this piece while visiting a ballroom in Veracruz.
- Due to its popularity, *Danzon No. 2* has been nicknamed the "second national anthem" by the Mexican people.
- Composed in 1994, *Danzon No. 2* is based on the music of Cuba and the Veracruz region of Mexico. The piece was commissioned by the National Autonomous University of Mexico.