

# Camerata Sweden

Friday, April 11, 2003, 8 pm  
First Congregational Church

Terje Tønnesen, leader and violin soloist

## PROGRAM

Carl Nielsen Little Suite for Strings, Op. 1  
Praeludium: Andante con moto  
Intermezzo: Allegro moderato  
Finale: Andante con moto – Allegro con brio

Johan Helmich Roman Violin Concerto in F minor  
Allegro  
Larghetto  
Allegro  
Terje Tønnesen, violin

## INTERMISSION

Johan Svendsen Romance in G major  
for Violin and Strings, Op. 26

Ingvar Lidholm Music For Strings  
Allegro  
Molto adagio, espressivo –  
Coda: Allegro

This presentation of Camerata Sweden is sponsored by the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation.

Cal Performances thanks the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation  
and the Zellerbach Family Fund for their generous support.

Cal Performances receives additional funding from the National Endowment for the Arts,  
a federal agency that supports the visual, literary, and performing arts to benefit all Americans,  
and the California Arts Council, a state agency.

### Little Suite for Strings, Op. 1

Carl Nielsen (1865–1931)

Carl Nielsen was the seventh of 12 children born to a poor family in the small village of Sortelung on the Danish island of Funen. His father supported this ample brood by painting houses and playing cornet and violin for local social events, and young Carl started to fiddle with his father's instruments when he was still a toddler. Enough money was squeezed from the household budget by the time the boy was six to buy him a three-quarter size violin, on which he received instruction at home and from a local schoolmaster. Within a few years, Carl joined in his father's musical activities, evincing a special fondness for improvising variations and counter-melodies to dance tunes; his earliest extant composition is a polka for violin. At 13, Nielsen was apprenticed to a grocer, but that business soon went broke, so he auditioned for a military band in Odense, and was accepted to play cornet, bugle and trombone. In Odense, Nielsen picked up some musical theory, taught himself the piano, and played violin in readings of string quartets by Haydn, Mozart, and Onslow—his teen-age compositions, all for chamber ensembles of strings and piano, show the influence of these Classical models. By 1884, some affluent friends in Odense had recognized his talent, and they underwrote the cost of his education at the Copenhagen Conservatory, where he majored in violin, and also studied theory, piano, and, with Niels Gade, history. He completed the Conservatory's curriculum in 1886, but

continued as a student of his theory teacher, Orla Rosenhoff, while supporting himself as a free-lance violinist in Copenhagen by performing in chamber concerts and with the orchestra at Tivoli Gardens. He turned seriously to composition during that time—two pieces for string orchestra were given at Tivoli in 1887, and a string quartet was played by the Privat Kammermusikforening (“Chamber Music Society”) the following year. His first major success came with the premiere of the Little Suite for Strings by the Tivoli orchestra on September 8, 1888. The Copenhagen firm of Wilhelm Hansen confirmed Nielsen’s rise to notoriety by issuing the score in 1889. It was his first published composition—Opus 1.

Though the Little Suite is indebted in its form to the precedents of Classicism (Nielsen revered Mozart above all other musicians), it bears a harmonic richness and melancholy sentiment that speak of its composer’s time and characteristic musical language. The brief, opening movement follows a simple, three-part form (A–B–A) in which a sad, short, lyrical motive (played first by the cellos and, upon its return, by the violas) surrounds a rising strain in the violins. The second movement is in the old form of the minuet and trio, but its manner is that of the waltz. It exudes a certain rustic flavor in many of its pages, as if Nielsen had created a citified version of the country tunes that he so loved as a youngster. The Finale, the Suite’s most ambitious movement, begins with a slow introduction recalling the first theme of the opening movement before moving on to a traditional sonata form which shows the contrapuntal ingenuity that was to be such an important element of Nielsen’s mature style. A vivacious coda closes this delightful work.

#### Violin Concerto in F minor

Johan Helmich Roman (1694–1758)

Johan Helmich Roman is known, with considerable justification, as the “Father of Swedish Music”: he was the country’s first musical figure of international stature; he raised the level of music-making in Stockholm to an unprecedented excellence as court music director and organized the city’s first public concerts; he worked to create a musical style appropriate for setting the Swedish language and demonstrated the suitability of Swedish for church music; he translated and disseminated musical texts; he made known the music of composers from other countries; and he encouraged the foundation of a national conservatory.

Roman, born on October 26, 1694, in Stockholm, where his father was a violinist at the Swedish court, made his debut at age seven and joined the royal music household as an oboist and violinist 10 years later. By 1715, he had made such a strong impression upon King Charles XII and his sister, Princess Ulrika Eleonora, that he was sent to London, where he studied with John Pepusch (remembered for providing the music for *The Beggar’s Opera*, the rowdy smash hit of 1728 that eventually eroded the English taste for Italian opera and, with it, Handel’s success as an opera composer and impresario), befriended such notables as Handel, Giovanni Bononcini, Geminiani, and Ariosti, and worked as a violinist for the Duke of Newcastle. In 1721, after Ulrika Eleonora had ascended the throne of Sweden and then abdicated in favor of her husband, Frederick I (Charles XII had been killed during his invasion of Norway by a sniper), Roman was called home from London and made deputy director of music at court; six years later, he was promoted to director. Roman raised the musical standards at court significantly and organized the first public concerts in Stockholm in 1731. In 1735, after the death of his wife, he made a two-year tour through England, France, Italy, Austria, and Germany, returning with cases of the latest music from abroad and a revitalized dedication to raising musical life in Stockholm to rival that of the music capitals he had visited; he was elected to the recently founded Royal Academy of Science in 1740. Roman’s fortunes declined after the death of Ulrika Eleonora in 1741, when Adolf Frederick, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp, was elected heir to the throne by the newly empowered parliament and brought with him from Germany his own musical establishment. Roman, again widowed, also began having health problems at that time—most significantly a loss of hearing—and by 1745, shortly after he had composed the *Drottningholmsmusique*, a large suite in Handelian style, for the wedding of Adolf Frederick and Crown Princess Lovisa Ulrika of Prussia (sister of Frederick the Great), he was eased out of the court’s musical life. He retired to a family estate at Haraldsmåla, in southeastern Sweden near the town of Kalmar, and made the 200-mile trip back to Stockholm only once, in 1751, to supervise the music for the funeral of Frederick I and for the coronation of Adolf Frederick as the new king. Roman occupied the remaining years until his death, at Haraldsmåla in 1758, by translating works on music theory into Swedish and composing sacred music with Swedish texts.

Roman’s compositions—suites, sinfonias, concertos, solo and ensemble sonatas, songs, cantatas, occasional pieces and sacred music (including a “Swedish Mass”)—stand between two musical ages, observing the forms, styles, and conventions of the waning Baroque era while acquiring their lightness

of expression and engaging melodiousness from encroaching Classicism. Roman's four violin concertos are finely crafted pieces that show both his own skill on the instrument and his understanding of the contemporary musical idioms of Italy, Germany, and England. The Violin Concerto in F minor follows the customary three movements: an energetic Allegro in ritornello form, whose solo episodes separate the iterations of the orchestral refrain (ritornello means "return" in Italian); a delicate Larghetto with an austere single-line accompaniment; and a muscular closing ritornello-form Allegro.

#### Romance in G major

for Violin and Strings, Op. 26

Johan Svendsen (1840–1911)

The prestige of composer, conductor, and violinist Johan Svendsen among 19th-century Norwegian musicians was second only to that of Edvard Grieg. Svendsen, born on September 30, 1840, in Christiania (now Oslo), was the son of a bandmaster in the Swedish army (Norway did not become independent of Sweden until 1905), who gave him his first instruction in music and taught him to play violin, clarinet, and flute. After playing clarinet in a regimental band as a teenager, Svendsen turned seriously to his instrument of choice, the violin, took some lessons on it in Christiania with F. Ursin, and joined the orchestra of the Norwegian Theater, which Henrik Ibsen was then directing. Participation in orchestral concerts, a meeting in 1859 with the violinist Ole Bull (then Norway's most famous musician), an experience conducting in Bergen when he was 20, and the organization of his own chamber orchestra in Christiania all set Svendsen firmly on a career path in music. He first intended to make his way as a violin virtuoso, and obtained a royal scholarship in 1863 to study at the Leipzig Conservatory with Ferdinand David, concertmaster of the Gewandhaus Orchestra and the recipient of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, but nerve damage to his left hand forced him to focus instead on conducting and composition; his future violin playing was confined to orchestra and chamber ensembles. By the time that he finished the Leipzig curriculum, in May 1867, Svendsen had become assistant conductor (to David) of the school's orchestra, and composed (under the tutelage of Carl Reinecke) a string quartet, a string quintet, and a string octet (which Breitkopf und Härtel published immediately upon his graduation), as well as the Symphony No. 1, which he conducted at his formal debut back home in Christiania in October. Edvard Grieg praised the work's "perfect balance of ideas and technique," its excellent orchestration ("among the best in existence"), and its harmonic mastery, as well as Svendsen's command of the orchestra; "God alone knows where he got it all from," Grieg marveled.

Svendsen spent the next five years building his reputation with successful performances of his compositions in Paris, Leipzig, Weimar, and elsewhere, and as a chamber and orchestral violinist. In May 1872, he was invited to participate in the orchestra assembled to perform Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the laying of the cornerstone of the Festival Theater at Bayreuth, where he and Wagner became mutual admirers and friends; Wagner stood as godfather when Svendsen's new wife, the daughter of a Jewish dentist in New York, converted to Christianity. Svendsen returned to Christiania in 1872 to become co-conductor with Grieg of the Music Society, and two years later he was granted an annual composer's stipend by the government. Despite his successes and a fecund period of composition in Christiania, Svendsen remained dissatisfied with Norway's provincial musical life, so in 1877, he obtained a leave from the Music Society and again set off to Europe's music capitals, conducting in Leipzig, composing in Rome, meeting Sarasate in London, and finally settling in Paris. By the time that he returned to Christiania in 1880, Svendsen had largely abandoned composition in favor of conducting. After leading the Music Society for three more seasons (which included the first Norwegian performances of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9), he was recognized as the preeminent Scandinavian conductor of the day with his appointment as director of the Royal Opera and Orchestra in Copenhagen. The city came to rival the great European capitals of music during his tenure, which lasted until ill health forced his retirement in 1908. He died in Copenhagen on June 14, 1911. Svendsen's compositions, many in the large forms advocated by his Leipzig teachers—two symphonies, concertos for violin and for cello, four Norwegian Rhapsodies, numerous orchestral works, chamber music, songs, choral numbers, arrangements of folk tunes—are a nice complement in the Norwegian repertory to the piano and vocal miniatures that Edvard Grieg was most happy writing. The tunefulness, harmonic style, and late-Romantic sensibility of Svendsen's felicitous compositional voice are heard in the Romance in G major for Violin, composed soon after he had returned to Christiania in 1880, which follows a spacious three-part form whose sweetly halcyon outer sections are pleasingly balanced by a more agitated central episode.

## Music For Strings

Ingvar Lidholm (b. 1921)

Composer and conductor Ingvar Lidholm was born on February 24, 1921, in Jönköping, the principal city in south-central Sweden, and trained in violin, piano, and conducting at the Royal Swedish Academy of Music in Stockholm. He left the Academy in 1943 to play viola in the Royal Theater Orchestra, but undertook private composition study with Hilding Rosenberg during that time. From 1947 to 1956, Lidholm conducted the Örebro Orchestra, about 100 miles west of Stockholm, but took time from his duties there for study trips to France, Switzerland, and Italy, for attendance at the Darmstadt summer courses on contemporary music, and for lessons with Mátyás Seiber in England. Since leaving the position at Örebro, Lidholm has been director of chamber music for Swedish Radio (1956–1965), professor of composition at the Royal Swedish Academy (1965–1975), and director of planning (1974–1979) and consultant for Swedish Radio (1979–1984). He was elected to the Royal Swedish Academy of Music in Stockholm in 1960, and served as its vice president from 1963 to 1969. His other honors include the Christ Johnson Prize (1958), the Koussevitzky International Recording Award (1965), the 1968 Salzburg Opera Prize for the television opera *Holländarn* (“The Dutchman”), the Alfvén Prize (1993), and the Rolf Schock Prize (1993). He was also awarded an honorary doctorate from Örebro University in 2002. Lidholm’s compositions include operas (two of which were written for television), orchestral pieces, piano and chamber works, and numerous scores for chorus and vocal soloists, with and without instrumental accompaniment. His *Music for Strings* of 1952, indebted to the influences of Bartók, Hindemith, and Stravinsky that he espoused during that early phase of his career, comprises a dramatic opening *Allegro*, a mournful central *Adagio*, and a tense closing section.

—©2003 Dr. Richard E. Rodda

Camerata Sweden is one of Sweden’s leading chamber orchestras, with a distinctive profile in performing as a *camerata*—an orchestra without a conductor. Its artistic unity is created collectively on the basis of mutual sensitivity and deeply felt musical intentions. The musicians are selected from the best of Scandinavian players.

Camerata Sweden has performed with James Galway, Barbara Bonney, Barbara Hendricks, and Barry Tuckwell, among other distinguished artists. The ensemble celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1999. In Sweden, it is known as *Camerata Roman*, in honour of Johan Helmich Roman (1694–1758), “Father of Swedish music,” who lived not far from the orchestra’s residence in southeast Sweden.

The orchestra’s intense mode of expression appeals to all kinds of audiences—from the classical concert halls to Sweden’s main rock festival in Hultsfred. Thanks to its high standards, Camerata Sweden tours all over Sweden and has been chosen to represent the country abroad, with performances in the United Kingdom (four times), Germany, Poland, the Baltic States, the United States, Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina. The orchestra has recorded extensively, focusing on Scandinavian composers. Since 1993, it has released 11 CD recordings, including many of the great classics. Camerata Sweden also appears regularly on Swedish television and radio.

Camerata Sweden’s music director, Levon Chilingirian, was appointed in 1997, together with associate director Terje Tønnesen.

Levon Chilingirian (music director) has become known throughout the world as the leader of his own string quartet, the Chilingirian Quartet. He was born to Armenian parents on the island of Cyprus, and started to play the violin at the age of five. There is a long tradition of music in the family, and Chilingirian’s uncle, the famous violinist Manoug Parikian, was one of his teachers.

Chilingirian formed his quartet in 1971. It has toured in more than 40 countries on six continents, and is one of the most famous and widely travelled string quartets in the world. The ensemble regularly gives concerts in the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Wigmore Hall in London, as well as in other large concert halls in Europe, including the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Tonhalle in Zurich, and the Musikverein in Vienna. The group has made a number of coast-to-coast tours of the United States and Canada since its debut in New York in 1976. Concert tours have also included appearances in Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and Central and South America. The Quartet has made many recordings, featuring both classical works and new music by composers such as Arvo Pärt and John Tavener. Since 1986, the Chilingirian Quartet has been the ensemble-in-residence at the Royal College of Music in London, where Levon Chilingirian is a professor and violin teacher. He is also much in demand as a soloist and has performed with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, among others. Chilingirian plays a Stradivarius violin from 1729. In the New Year’s Honors List for 2000, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire for services to music.

Terje Tønnesen (associate director and soloist) was born in Oslo in 1955. He made his debut at age 17 in a performance the Norwegian press described as "so dazzling that it was almost unparalleled." After studying with Max Rostal in Switzerland, he returned to Norway and founded the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra. Tønnesen is the music director of the Orchestra, which is today one of the foremost string ensembles in the world, having made a number of recordings and appeared with artists such as Mstislav Rostropovich, James Galway, and Maurice André.

Terje Tønnesen was awarded the Grieg Prize and the Critics' Prize in Norway, and has won numerous international competitions. His recordings have received extensive praise from the international press. He has been described as one of the most creative people in Norwegian music and he is always taking on new challenges. Tønnesen recently made a recording with the jazz guitarist Terje Rypdal (ECM). He is also the first concertmaster of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra.