**Pines of Rome**

Instrumentation: piccolo, 3 flutes, 3 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, 6 bucinne, percussion, timpani, harp, piano, celeste, organ, strings

Duration: 23 minutes in four movements.

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**THE COMPOSER** – OTTORINO RESPIGHI (1879-1936) – As much as any composer of historical note, Respighi was and is defined mostly by his influences and inspirations. He was an enthusiastic scholar of old Italian forms and was particularly drawn to the music of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. While much of Respighi’s legacy reflects these anachronistic musicological obsessions, it was the landmarks and moods of the city where he died that provoked his most lasting and impactful scores.

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**THE HISTORY** – As muses go, Rome is hard to beat. There is an enduring richness to life in that timeless place and Respighi’s desire to capture that epochal breadth yielded a trio of works that stand as some of the finest examples of tone-painting in the repertoire. All three parts of the “Roman Triptych” (Fountains of Rome, Pines of Rome, Roman Festivals) receive regular attention in modern concert halls, but it is the centerpiece that holds the position of highest esteem with today’s audiences. Pines of Rome was written in 1924 and premiered that same season in its namesake city. Two years later it was heard in New York and there has not likely been a year since when it has not appeared on the season program of an American orchestra. Respighi’s own advice on how to experience his masterwork suggests we remember that the “century-old trees which so characteristically dominate the Roman landscape become witnesses to the principal events of Roman life.” In this way, Pines reports on humanity from the perspective of a natural (non-human) observer and, from that slightly alien remove, describes the pulse of the Eternal City with the colors of omnipotence. Through the eyes of the trees, we visit Rome both geographically and temporally through the music, with the movements depicting four places and four times of day. We see children at play at the Villa Borghese, shadows over a catacomb entrance, a hillside calmed by birdsong and the march of an ancient army.

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**THE WORLD** – Vladimir Lenin died in 1924. Also that year, MGM was founded in the United States, George Mallory vanished on Mount Everest, E. M. Forster published *A Passage to India* and Greece proclaimed the Second Hellenic Republic.

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**THE CONNECTION** – *Pines of Rome* has not been performed by the CCSO since 2016. John Giordano was on the podium.