

*Landscapes*, the 2011-12 season of the award-winning Quincy Symphony Orchestra Association begins at 3 p.m. Sunday, October 9 with *Natural Wonders*. Led by conductor Bruce Briney, the concert taps into the wonder of nature through diverse themes such as local literature, flowering love and global peace.

A highlight of the evening will be the performance of “Life on the Mississippi” by Hannibal native Carolyn Birney Hopkins.

Hopkins was born in Ralls County, Mo., and grew up in the former Garth home on Fifth Street in Hannibal. She composed tone poems, solos for string instruments and music for ensembles and orchestras. In 1934 she composed “Life on the Mississippi: Tone Poem.” She conducted the piece in an informal setting on Feb. 7, 1935 at the Cincinnati Conservatory. This is the only known performance of the composition prior to the Oct. 9, 2011 performance by the Quincy Symphony Orchestra.

Inspiration for the composition likely came from Hannibal’s 1935 celebration of the centennial of Mark Twain’s birth. The Fall Festival included daily concerts, and all of the selections were composed by current and performed by Hannibal artists. Carolyn Birney (before marriage) was involved in a number of the musical tributes to Mark Twain and conducted performances of many of her compositions at that time.

During World War II Birney worked in Washington D.C. There she met Ralph Joseph Hopkins, a Clarksburg, W.Va. native. The couple married in Hannibal in 1943 and later retired to the family home on Fifth Street. Carolyn Birney Hopkins taught music at many area high schools and colleges. She died in 1979.

Hopkins’ family and the Mark Twain Museum have collaborated with the Quincy Symphony Orchestra Association to bring this local manuscript to production. Several of Hopkins’ descendants will attend the *Natural Wonders* Concert. Hannibal’s Tom and Becky will also be on hand to greet concert-goers.

The concert will also spotlight a contemporary local composer, William Camphouse of Perry, Ill., with the production of “Before the Frost”-- a freely adapted orchestra setting of the Irish tune “The Last Rose of Summer.” The lyrics speak in simile, likening a rose’s final burst of autumnal color and eventual withering to that of a love lost. Camphouse performs with the Sangamon Valley Symphony Orchestra as principal trumpet, is a member of the Quincy Community Concert Band, is a published composer and serves as clinician and guest conductor at musical events throughout the Midwest.

Continuing on this floral note, the QSO will perform Gustav Mahler’s “Blumine” (flower piece), a work with a mysterious past. Mahler introduced “Blumine” as a movement of his Symphony No. 1 in 1889, but the symphony was not a success. He revised the score and it received audience approval. However, after three German performances, Mahler dropped the Blumine movement of his symphony and it fell into obscurity. It was rediscovered in the Yale University archives in 1966.

The concert also includes Michael Abels’ *Global Warming*. This work is not about climate change but rather celebrates the international relationships that developed after the Berlin wall fell. Abels said, “I was intrigued by the similarities between folk music of divergent cultures, and decided to write a piece that celebrates these common threads as well as the sudden improvement in international relations that was occurring.”

Continuing with our landscape theme, the orchestra will perform *Mysterious Mountain* by Alan Hovhannes. This appropriately titled manuscript features crescendos, decrescendos and giant melodic arcs that act as metaphors for the mountains and natural wonders that inspired Hovhannes.

Aaron Copland’s popular orchestral suite *Appalachian Spring* will wrap up *Natural Wonders*. Originally written as a ballet and later adapted for orchestral performance, Appalachian Spring is one of the most inspiring and enduring works of the past century. The work celebrates the pioneer spirit of the 1800s and the American ideal: open fields and endless possibilities.

The QSOA is grateful for the support from the corporate community, including our season sponsor, Knapheide Manufacturing Company. The Silver Baton Concert Sponsors for *Natural Wonders*

are the Quincy Herald-Whig and WGEM. Special thanks go to the Mark Twain Museum in Hannibal, Mo. All concerts are partially supported by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

Tickets will be available at the door or in advance at Sturhahn Jewelers, 2801 Broadway, Quincy or the Mark Twain Museum, 120 N. Main, Hannibal. Individual tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for senior citizens. Children 18 and younger are admitted free to all concerts.

Season tickets may be purchased at the concert and offer a great discount over single ticket prices. The season ticket includes 10 events for \$60 for adults and \$50 for senior citizens. Flexi-tickets are also available and include six general tickets to be used all at once or throughout the season at any QSOA event. Call 222-2856 or visit [www.qsoa.org](http://www.qsoa.org) for more information.

~Sandi Terford