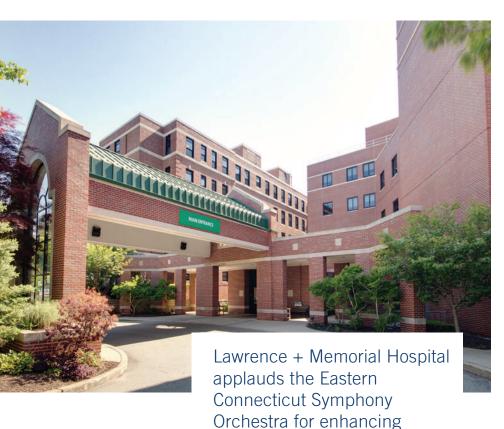


2021-2022 75TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

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# TOSHIYUKI SHIMADA ECSO Music Director & Conductor



Welcome to the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary season. On behalf of the entire ECSO, I want to thank you for joining us, whether you're a faithful subscriber or a first-time attendee.

After more than 600 days since our last performance in the Garde Arts Center, I am grateful to have the opportunity to lead our orchestra again, making beautiful music in person.

This is something I have learned cannot be taken for granted. Thank you to everyone who has made this moment possible: musicians, subscribers, donors, the Board of Directors, sponsors, medical experts, first responders, elected leaders, and friends and family that have brought us to this moment.

With a season full of orchestral favorites from composers like Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, and Prokofiev, we will celebrate getting back together for our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in spectacular fashion. To open our fall portion of the season, we will perform two iconic "5ths" – Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5* and Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 5*. We also welcome back to the stage Steinway Artist, pianist Eva Virsik to perform Beethoven's Triple Concerto in May. I am also delighted to announce that GRAMMY Award winner Jason Vieaux will join the ECSO with Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*, a performance that was originally planned for March 2020.

Just as importantly, we'll perform works by living composers as well as under-represented voices that are carrying the flame of tradition forward. We have three premieres, works from three women composers, three black composers, three Connecticut composers, and performances by two Coast Guard Band soloists. I can't wait to see you all in the hall again as we surround ourselves in the gorgeous sounds of live orchestral music!

Music has the power to unite people, and I am grateful that you have chosen us to share this power with you. I hope your attendance at each concert is an uplifting experience.

Yours in peace and music,

Toda Limba

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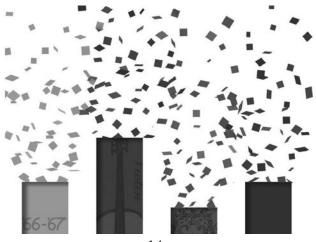


# Celebrate 75 Years with ECSO!

75th Season Kick-off Celebration Lyman Allyn Art Museum Sunday, November 7, 1pm - 4pm

75th Anniversary Gala Mystic Marriott Saturday, April 9, 6pm - 10pm

visit our website for more info ectsymphony.com



# CALEB BAILEY ECSO Executive Director



Welcome to the ECSO's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary season! What was already going to be a jubilant year for us takes on a different light as we reflect both on the hardships that we've all been through as well as the joys of re-experiencing facets of daily life that were interrupted with the pandemic.

Our mission is to "inspire, educate, and connect our communities through live orchestral music", which the ECSO has been doing since 1946, when we were founded by Music Director

Emeritus Victor Norman. After our February concert in 2020, there was to follow an 18-month period without the ability to perform large-scale symphonic works to live audiences. I would like to think we channeled some of Victor's can-do attitude in re-imagining what it is we have to offer our communities. Through many smaller chamber ensemble performances, online educational videos, a video performance of *Sleigh Ride*, and a celebratory Gala concert at Stonington Vineyards, we took our show on the road.

All the while, you - our loyal audience members, subscribers, and donors - have been there, albeit not in your usual seats. Throughout the pandemic, it became clear that while this would be a challenge, it would not be one that ended our 75-year streak. I am humbled to have seen our ECSO family band together and give through generous acts and contributions over the past year and a half.

I hope that the music you're about to hear brings you joy, expands your horizons, and takes you back to the place that only live orchestral music can.

Sincerely,

Cales Jan

# THE EASTERN CONNECTICUT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL 2021–2022

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Stephan Tieszen

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Marianne Vogel
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Kathryn Fausel
Lisa Gray
Tessa Sacramone
Gregory Tompkins
Heather Yanovitch (S)
Denise Chividian (S)

#### Violin II

Joan Winters (P)
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Pamela Knoecklein
Lydia Lee Villarreal
Cynthia Smith
Karen Stokke (LOA)
Ariana Straznicky
Jiuri Yu
Ann Gerrietts (S)

#### Viola

Michael Wheeler (\*)
Hannah Ross (AP) (LOA)
John Biatowas
Nicholas Citro
Amy Jones
Andrew Knebel
Carol Pearson
Steven Sergi

(P) Principal
(\*) Acting Principal
(AP) Assistant Principal
(NR) Non-Rotating
(S) Substitute
(LOA) Leave of absence

#### Cello

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#### Trombone

Terrence B. Fay (P) (LOA) Mark Weaver (\*) Wesley Mayhew (S)

#### Tuba

Gary Sienkiewicz (P)

#### **Timpani**

Kuljit Rehncy (P) (LOA) John Frascarelli (\*)

#### Percussion

Christopher Smith (\*) John Frascarelli (AP)

#### Harp

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#### Piano

Gary Chapman (P)

#### Librarian

John Biatowas

Personnel Manager Richard Dumas

Recording Engineer Kuljit Rehncy

# TOSHIYUKI SHIMADA - BIOGRAPHY

ECSO Music Director & Conductor



Toshiyuki Shimada is the Music Director and Conductor of the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra in New London, Music Director and Conductor of the Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes, and Music Director and Conductor of the New Britain Symphony Orchestra. He was Music Director of the Yale Symphony Orchestra of Yale University from 2005 to 2019. He is also Music Director Laureate of the Portland Symphony Orchestra in Portland, Maine, for which he

served as Music Director from 1986 to 2006. Prior to his Portland engagement he was Associate Conductor of the Houston Symphony Orchestra for six years. Since 1998, he has also served as Principal Conductor of the Vienna Modern Masters record label in Austria.

Recently, Maestro Shimada guest conducted the Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra in Istanbul, and the Lindenbaum Festival Orchestra which he conducted at the World Peace Day Concert at Korean DMZ and Jeju Island. He has also guest conducted the Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra in Istanbul, the Presidential Symphony Orchestra, the Bilkent Symphony Orchestra in Ankara, and Izmir State Symphony Orchestra, all in Turkey. He led a highly successful Russian tour of the Yale Symphony Orchestra, performing in the White Hall at Saint Petersburg, and the Great Hall of the Moscow Tchaikovsky State Conservatory with highly acclaimed reviews.

Maestro Shimada has collaborated with distinguished artists such as Itzhak Perlman, Emanuel Ax, Yefim Bronfman, Joshua Bell, and many others. In the Pops field he has performed with Doc Severinsen, Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, and Marvin Hamlisch. He has had the good fortune to study with many distinguished conductors of the past and the present, including Leonard Bernstein, Herbert von Karajan, Herbert Blomstedt, Hans Swarovsky, and Michael Tilson Thomas.

He is on the faculty of Connecticut College as Director of the Orchestral Program, and New York Conductors Workshop. He had been Associate Professor of Conducting with Yale School of Music and Department of Music until 2019. He has also taught at Shepherd Music School of Rice University. Maestro Shimada has received recognition from the State of Connecticut Legislature, the City of New London, the Portland Fire Department's Merit Award, the Maine Publicity Bureau Cultural Award, the Italian Heritage Society Cultural Award, and the ASCAP Award for innovating programs. He has had a number of state and city holidays named in his honor: Toshiyuki Shimada Day in New London, CT Toshiyuki Shimada Day in Houston, TX; Toshiyuki Shimada Week in Portland, Maine; and Toshiyuki Shimada Day in the State of Maine. In May 2006, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Fine Arts by Maine College of Arts.



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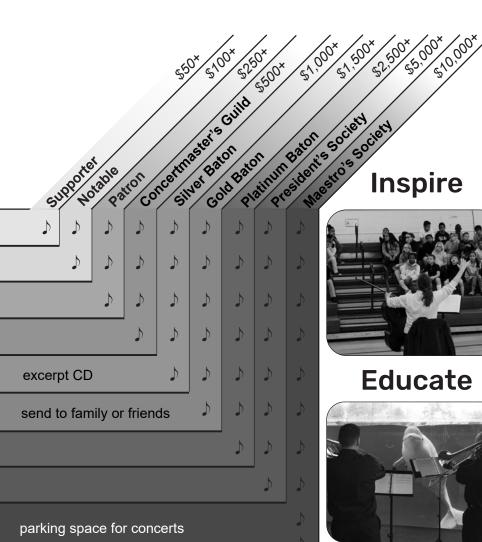
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# BEETHOVEN'S 5<sup>TH</sup> SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2021 – 7:30 PM

**Toshiyuki Shimada** Music Director & Conductor

Thomas Brown Trumpet

**SMITH** The Star-Spangled Banner

NAZAYKINSKAYA Fenix

**HAYDN** Trumpet Concerto in E-flat Major

Allegro Andante Allegro

THOMAS BROWN

INTERMISSION (20')

**BEETHOVEN** Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67

Allegro con brio Andante con moto Scherzo: Allegro Allegro – Presto

With thanks to the Donald C. & Dolores M. Gordon Stage Extension donors

# Thomas Brown Trumpet



Thomas Brown is the principal trumpet of the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra and leader of the Tom Brown 6 Jazz Band. A native of Sparta, Michigan, he was a member of the Chicago Civic Orchestra in 2001 and 2002. In 2001, Brown performed the Alexander Arutiunian Trumpet Concerto as the winner of the Brevard Summer Festival Concerto Competition. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1998 with a Bachelor of Music degree in trumpet performance and received a Master of Music degree from

Indiana University in 2001. Brown has studied with Charles Daval, John Rommel, Arnold Jacobs, and Adolph Herseth. In July 2002, he joined the United States Coast Guard Band.

He has performed at almost any type of venue you can think of: clubs, bars, churches, backyards, restaurants, grocery stores, empty parking lots, packed parking lots, gymnasiums, boats, helicopters, submarines, movie theaters, basements, living rooms, gardens, stadiums, and of course, concert halls. When not changing mouthpieces, Brown prefers to take in Renoir, work on his serve-and-volley, buy more mouthpieces, and stage epic snowball fights with his family.



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Victoria S. Mueller Mathew H. Greene, Esq. 300 State Street, Suite 209 New London, CT 860-442-2252 victoria@muellergreene.com

# Polina Nazaykinskaya Composer



The music of award-winning composer
Polina Nazaykinskaya, a native of Togliatti,
Russia, has become a staple of orchestral and
chamber and solo repertory in the United
States, Russia, and Europe. Her first symphonic
poem *Winter Bells* is in high demand every
season by orchestras such as Minnesota
Orchestra and Russian National Orchestra
among others. Her latest symphonic poem

Fenix, commissioned by The Albany Symphony, is programmed for multiple performances in the 2021-2022 concert season. This season Ms. Nazaykinskaya's music will be performed by The Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, The Salina Symphony, The Florida Orchestra, Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes, and the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra. In Spring 2022, MorDance company will be premiering Polina's new ballet *Encounters* at Hunter College in New York City.

Polina's collaborators include internationally renowned choreographers Pascal Rioult, Jonah Bokaer, and Ulyana Bochernikova. Polina works closely with the world's leading conductors, such as Osmo Vänskä, Teodor Currentzis, Fabio Mastrangelo, Sarah Hicks, Toshiyuki Shimada, Lawrence Loh, and Hannu Lintu. Polina's compositions are actively performed by internationally acclaimed soloists such as trombonist R. Douglas Wright, violinist Elena Korzhenevich, and pianist Olga Kirpicheva.

With her larger chamber music works, Polina frequently turns to the tragedy of humanity's collective history, in particular the Holocaust. Her work *Haim* is performed annually around the world and has become an important ensemble composition of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Starting Fall 2021 Polina is named the Philharmonic Orchestra Conductor of the Greater Connecticut Youth Orchestras. Prior to her current position, she has led Youth Musical Theatre of UK, RIOULT Dance NY, University of Southern Mississippi Orchestra, and Russian Youth Symphony Orchestra.

# Polina Nazaykinskaya (cont.)

Over the past decade, Polina formed a creative alliance with award-winning pianist and librettist Konstantin Soukhovetski, with whom she has premiered many works of diverse genres, from solo piano to ballets. Currently, they are working on an opera, commissioned by Opera Mississippi to commemorate the company's 75th anniversary and to be premiered in 2023.

Polina's unique musical language embodies the diversity of multicultural education. She graduated from the Tchaikovsky Conservatory College in Moscow as a composition/violin double major, studying with Konstantin Batashov and Vladimir Ivanov, respectively. Polina earned her Masters' and Artist Diploma in composition at the Yale School of Music with Christopher Theofanidis and Ezra Laderman, and is a Doctorate Candidate at Graduate Center CUNY under the mentorship of Tania León. Polina's many honors and awards include the Charles Ives Scholarship from The American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans.

Polina is an Adjunct Lecturer of Composition at Brooklyn College Conservatory and a Teaching Artist at the Educational Center for the Arts in New Haven.

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**Fenix** (~10)

First ECSO Performance

#### POLINA NAZAYKINSKAYA

Born in Togliatti, Russia

The symphonic poem *Fenix* is an emotional journey through the darkness towards the light. As an artist and citizen, I'm drawn to the experience of overcoming adversity, surviving loss and, with the power of inspiration and spirituality, emerging from the ashes renewed, reborn, and ever more compassionate. I feel that right now we need very much the sense of sympathetic compassion among people, and music has the power and emotional intelligence to help us find a connection to our own hearts and to those around us. We are defined by our mortality yet it is the promise of soul everlasting that defines our humanity. *Fenix* (Spanish for Phoenix) is an ancient symbol of renewal that lends a powerful and poetic image to this catharsis: a majestic creature that spreads its wings and soars to new heights. I hope that my new symphonic poem *Fenix* will inspire the audience to look inward and find the renewal in their hearts.

—Polina Nazaykinskaya

# **Trumpet Concerto in E-flat Major**

(~13')

First performed by the ECSO on December 14, 1961; Victor Norman conductor, R. Clinton Thayer Jr., trumpet.

# FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Born March 31, 1732; Rohrau, Austria Died May 31, 1809; Vienna, Austria

The newspaper advertisement for the premiere of Haydn's *Trumpet Concerto* announced the soloist's "intention to present to the world for the first time, so that it may be judged, an organized trumpet which he has invented and brought-after seven years of hard and expensive labor-to what he believes may be described as perfection. It contains several keys and will be displayed in a concerto specially written for this instrument by Mr. Joseph Haydn, Doctor of Music." The soloist was Haydn's friend, the Austrian trumpeter Anton Weidinger who had joined the court opera in Vienna in 1792, where he began to experiment

24

with the keyed trumpet. The new instrument was ready by about 1795. After the premiere of Haydn's concerto in 1796, Weidinger demonstrated his instrument frequently in concerts in Vienna. In 1803 he made a concert tour in Germany, France, and England. Hummel, Neukomm, and others wrote new works for Weidinger. Although critics praised his playing, by 1820 his instrument was no longer popular, and he had to play to half-empty halls until his death in 1852.

Today the Haydn *Trumpet Concerto* is undoubtedly the world's best-known work for trumpet and orchestra. Before we are long into the concerto, Haydn writes music demonstrating what the new trumpet could do. The soloist plays not only the high-register virtuosic passages typical of baroque trumpet concertos but also lyrical lines in the low register and even chromatic passages, both of which were impossible on the old baroque trumpets.

Baroque trumpet concertos usually omitted the solo trumpet in second movements because it was common practice to change keys for the sake of tonal contrast and variety, and the natural trumpet could only play in one key. But Weidinger's instrument could play in any key and Haydn therefore wrote a lovely tune for the trumpet in the "different" key of A-Flat Major.

In the finale Haydn treats the trumpet in its traditional fashion with virtuosic fanfares and great bravura, but not without a nod to its new abilities with passages of lyric chromaticism. A new age of trumpet music had been born.

# Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67

(~31')

Composed between 1804 and 1808

#### **LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**

Born December 16, 1770, Bonn, Germany Died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

If there is one work that is universally recognized and loved by concert goers, then it must be the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven; in fact the opening motto theme has to be the most famous four notes in all of

music. For Beethoven, it was this work which made him known to the musical public outside of Germany, and it was this symphony which definitively launched the Romantic era in music.

The absolute logic of the composition is a marvel to behold. Massive, but compact, the symphony follows perfectly the course of its ideas allowing nothing alien or irrelevant to intervene; in other words, every note seems irrevocably right. The music in fact appears to have been written in one great sweep of inspirational fervor. We know, however, that such was not the case. Beethoven allowed the germinal ideas to gestate and simmer in his mind for some time before completing the symphony. Sketches of motives have been found dating as early as 1800 and 1801, with concentrated work on the score not beginning until 1804. The symphony was actually intended to follow the *Eroica* (No. 3) but Beethoven put it aside to work on yet another symphony, which became No. 4 in B-flat. He returned to the C-minor work in 1807 and completed it in early 1808. The premiere took place at the Theater an der Wien in Vienna on December 22 of that year.

Unlike the Eroica, Beethoven gave no indication of an underlying programme for the Fifth Symphony which would account for a work opening with a movement dominated by an almost savage rhythmic onslaught and ending with a finale of triumphant affirmation. Some have claimed that events in the composer's personal life may have prompted music of such emotional intensity: the bitter memories of his lost loves, Giulietta Guicciardi and Therese von Brunswick, certainly haunted him as did his ever increasing deafness, causing more than just passing thought of suicide. Beethoven's friend, Anton Schindler (a not always reliable source of information), claimed that the composer explained the first movement as Fate knocking at the door, implying a deeply anguished source of inspiration. Beethoven's pupil, Carl Czerny, on the other hand said that the four-note rhythm which envelops the opening movement was suggested by something as pastoral and unpretentious as the call of the yellow-hammer which Beethoven frequently heard on his walks in the parks in Vienna. This could well be the case, since in one of Beethoven's sketch books the motto theme is worked over in dramatic fashion on one page, for use in the C-minor symphony, whereas on the very next page the same motif is developed in a far more gentle manner for use in the first movement of the Fourth Piano Concerto.

Be that as it may, whatever the source of Beethoven's inspiration, this work could anticipate it and nothing composed since has been able to surpass it. The first movement is probably the most powerfully integrated movement in all of the symphonic literature. As a contrast to the furious opening movement, the Andante is far more congenial and relaxed. Beethoven has employed one of his favorite compositional devices – theme and variations: in this case variations on two related themes. The same motto which so dominated the first movement returns in the third movement. However, a change from duple to triple meter, causing a shift in rhythmic emphasis along with a slowing of the tempo, produces music of a more noble character. After a trio featuring gamboling string basses, the motto returns with yet another emotion – a suspenseful sense of uncertainty. This is a ploy created by the composer to produce one of the most fascinating passages in the symphony – a hushed and expectant throbbing by the orchestra leading to a tremendous crescendo ushering in the blazing and triumphal theme of the finale. The astonishing grandeur, spirit, and impetuosity of this last amazing movement compelled Beethoven, by the sheer power of the music, to increase his orchestration at this point by adding piccolo, contrabassoon, and three trombones. The motto theme is recalled (as the secondary theme) in a jubilant triplet rhythm and yet again as a shadowy echo of the third movement, only to be dispelled by the exultant main theme. A long and splendid coda reworks some of the previous musical material with even greater brilliance which ends the symphony with a repetitious succession of C-Major chords, as if Beethoven were reluctant to terminate this wild excitement which he had created.

—Paul E. Shannon, DMD

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# HEROIC CELEBRATIONS SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2021 – 7:30 PM

**Toshiyuki Shimada** Music Director & Conductor

**LØVLAND & GRAHAM** You Raise Me Up

**COLERIDGE-TAYLOR** Danse Nègre

from African Suite, Op. 35, No. 4

MYRON Bell Harbor

INTERMISSION (20')

**TCHAIKOVSKY** Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64

Andante – Allegro con anima

Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza

Valse (Allegro moderato)

Finale (Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace)

With thanks to the Donald C. & Dolores M. Gordon Stage Extension donors

# Tom Myron Composer



Tom Myron (b. 1959 Troy, NY) is an American composer and arranger active in the fields of live and recorded symphonic music. His work is heard regularly in major venues in the U.S., Canada and the U.K., including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, the National Theater of Quebec and the Royal Glasgow Concert Hall.

Tom's compositions have been performed at the Kennedy Center and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and by the Portland Symphony Orchestra, the Eclipse Chamber Orchestra, the Atlantic Classical Orchestra, the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, the Topeka Symphony, the Yale Symphony Orchestra, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago's Public School Outreach Program, and the Lamont Symphony at Denver University. His *Violin Concerto No. 2*, in a performance by Elisabeth Adkins and the Eclipse Chamber Orchestra, has been featured twice on NPR's Performance Today.

Beginning this year, Tom's new arrangements of works by George Gershwin, including a symphonic setting of *Rhapsody in Blue*, will be published by Kalmus Signature Editions and distributed worldwide by Hal Leonard Music.

Tom's work with the hugely popular Quebecois traditional ensemble Le Vent du Nord can be heard on the CD, *Le Vent du Nord: Symphonique*, from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. His first string quartet *Käthe Kollwitz* can be heard on Albany Records CD 437.

*Bell Harbor* is the second of Tom's works to be performed by the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, following *Katahdin: Greatest Mountain* in 2010. To hear a wide selection of live, archived performances of Tom's music please visit his YouTube channel.

# You Raise Me Up

(~4')

Composed in 2002 First ECSO Performance

ROLF LØVLAND

**BRENDAN GRAHAM** 

Born April 19, 1955 Composer Born 1945 Lyricist

You Raise Me Up was originally performed by Norwegian-Irish duo The Secret Garden and has since been covered by over 100 other artists including Grammy award winning singer, songwriter, and actor Josh Groban and vocal group Il Divo. The Secret Garden consists of classically trained Irish violinist Fionnuala Sherry, who prior to forming the group played for 10 years with the Irish RTÉ Concert Orchestra, and Rolf Løvland, a Norwegian songwriter, producer, and keyboardist. The two of them originally met in 1994 and almost immediately began collaborating together on creating music for keyboard and violin.

A major breakthrough for the band came in 1995, when they won the Eurovision Song Contest with the song *Nocturne* (the second time a song by Løvland won the event). A notable element of *Nocturne* was that it was an almost entirely instrumental song, with brief sung sections at the beginning and end, thereby differentiating it from typical popular music featured at the contest. The song focuses on a central violin solo from Sherry; similarly *You Raise Me Up* is introduced by the sound of the violin. Nocturne's win ended a three year winning streak for Ireland at the contest. However, it was still viewed as a partial victory for Ireland given that Sherry was one half of the duo. Ironically Ireland retook first place at the contest the very next year, the country's seventh time and most recent time doing so, and the most wins achieved by any nation in the contest's history.

As the Secret Garden mostly releases instrumental music, it seems surprising that one of their most well known compositions is a vocal song. In fact, *You Raise Me Up* was originally written for keyboard and violin under the working title Silent Story while the duo was making demos for their album Once In A Red Moon. Record producers wanted to cut it from the album's lineup, but Sherry and Løvland insisted on recording it. Løvland recruited songwriter and novelist Brendan

Graham, another regular writer for Eurovision, to write lyrics and Irish singer Brian Kennedy to sing on the track. They also added the orchestral accompaniment common on many performances of the song.

You Raise Me Up became well known in America in 2003 after the then up and coming singer Josh Groban was convinced to record a cover of it. Groban also performed the song at the Super Bowl and Oprah Winfrey's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, further increasing its popularity. While the song may have had humble origins as an instrumental work, its uplifting melodic and lyrical themes have made it a standard of 2000s popular music.

—Saadya Chevan

# Danse Nègre from African Suite, Op. 35, No. 4 (~6)

Composed in 1899

First ECSO Performance

#### SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR

Born August 15, 1875; London, England Died September 1, 1912; Surrey, England

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was born in 1875 to Dr. Daniel Peter Taylor and Alice Martin. According to the 2011 biography of Coleridge-Taylor's life by Jeffrey Green, his father Dr. Taylor was originally from Sierra Leone and came to England to become a surgeon. He established a medical practice in the village of Croydon, a town less than 10 miles from the center of London. However, Dr. Taylor returned to Sierra Leone in 1875 because he faced significant financial hardship after the people of Croydon refused to patronize him because he did not have a white doctor supervising his work. When he departed England, Martin, who was 18, was likely unaware that she was pregnant with Coleridge-Taylor.

Martin raised Coleridge-Taylor with the assistance of her parents. Coleridge-Taylor's grandfather taught him to play the violin, and he demonstrated enough talent as a musician to be sponsored by a local silk merchant, Hebert Walters, to attend the Royal College of Music. Walters' support enabled Coleridge-Taylor's early success establishing himself as a pivotal British composer of the turn of the Twentieth Century.

Early in his career as a composer, Coleridge-Taylor met the African American poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar, who had traveled to England for a literary tour. Dunbar helped to introduce Coleridge-Taylor to the work of African American authors and musicians in the United States, and inspired him to write works based on the African diaspora experience and worldview. In 1896, Coleridge-Taylor and Dunbar presented a recital attended by the American ambassador to the United Kingdom that included the composer's settings of several of Dunbar's poems to music.

Danse Nègre, which is the final movement of Coleridge-Taylor's African Suite, is another work influenced by Dunbar, which he acknowledges by inserting a quote from his work in the score. The work's active rhythms and melodies are meant to evoke the spirit and celebratory atmosphere of an African dance. While Danse Nègre is the most prominent of Coleridge-Taylor's works meant to evoke perceptions of the exotic continent of Africa, this does not mean that he was in any way interested in leaving the blueprint for a black or African sound as his legacy. At the end of his life the composer was concerned about how his blackness might be perceived when future audiences heard and evaluated his work despite his success in British music. Only days before his death he confided to his wife Jessie that "When I die, everything will go wrong... when I die, the critics will call me a Creole."

—Saadya Chevan

Bell Harbor (~16)

Composed in 2020 World Premiere

#### TOM MYRON

Born November 15, 1959; Troy, NY

"We cannot speak of a piece of music without also speaking of some kind of journey." - Luciano Berio (1925 - 2003)

I wrote *Bell Harbor* in the Winter of 2020 during what I am sure we will all henceforth remember as "the great pandemic lockdown of '20-'21." In retrospect, its composition was very much a way for me to travel without ever actually leaving my studio.

The piece can be heard as both (or either) a short, one movement symphony, or as a sea picture in the tradition of Britten, Bridge, Carpenter and Debussy. I write "both" because I have always felt that there need not be any big distinction between music that avails itself of all the classic techniques of symphonic development (sometimes called "absolute music") and music that is illustrative or evocative of mood and geography (sometimes called "program music").

As a concrete example of what I mean, apply this line of thinking to the work's title. In a purely abstract sense "bell" and "harbor" are two words that I have always loved for their rich associations. When placed next to each other, the words form a nice, plausible sounding place name, an imaginary (or not) city by the sea. Further still, when the word order is reversed, the result is a sonically evocative noun. These many ways of looking at a piece of music (to paraphrase a great Connecticut artist) are always present and meant to be heard in my music.

Among the musical ideas at play in *Bell Harbor* are bell-like sounds orchestrated in a variety of ways coupled with sequences of short, singable original melodies meant to resemble sea shanties, marches and folk songs. A great deal of the rhythmic impetus for the work is derived from the Québécois clogging pattern of long, short-short, a sort of fast, steady galloping rhythm. Running underneath all of these musical ideas is a much slower three-beat, surging pulse that carries everything else along, like boats on the water.

If Debussy's *La Mer* is a type of Impressionist seascape, and Britten's *Four Sea Interludes* are a musical analogue to 35mm color photography, then *Bell Harbor* is an evocation in music of high definition cinematography. It contains both representation and abstraction soaring aerials of ships in motion on the water and skylines and highways by the sea, all intercut with abstract waves of pure light and color.

*Bell Harbor* is dedicated to my daughter Vivian on the occasion of her 22nd birthday.

—Tom Myron Florence, Massachusetts (2021)

# Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64

 $(\sim 45')$ 

Composed in 1888

Most Recent ECSO Performance: October 17, 2009, Garde Arts Center. Toshiyuki Shimada conducting.

#### PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Born May 7, 1840; Votkinsk, Russia Died November 6, 1893; Saint Petersburg, Russia

If Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky had been christened with the appellation given to his brother "Modost" by the state of the sta given to his brother, "Modest," he would have been far more aptly named. For modest he was, too much so at times, when it came to assess his creative output. Constantly in the process of self-analysis and besieged by doubts as to his worth as a composer, it is a wonder that some of his major works were not destroyed by the hand of their creator. We know that Tchaikovsky was proud of his Fourth and Sixth Symphonies, but Manfred he "hated," the Nutcracker was uncongenial and annoying, and the '1812' Overture was a source of embarrassment. His opinion of the Fifth Symphony was no more complimentary. In a letter to his patroness, Nadezhda von Meck, he referred to the symphony as a "failure" and found in it "something repellent, something superfluous, patchy and insincere, which the public instinctively recognizes." Despite this statement, the first performance of the symphony on November 17 and 24, 1888, produced enthusiastic responses from the audience, although the critics were (quite typically) unanimous in their condemnations. Tchaikovsky's own impression of the work was changed when Germany became a field of conquest for the new symphony. Even the critics were forced (reluctantly) to revise their first impressions, and ever since, throughout the music world, the Fifth Symphony has become one of the four or five most frequently performed works in the symphonic repertoire.

Although Tchaikovsky had confided the content of his *Fourth Symphony* in some detail to Madame von Meck, he only roughed out a brief program for the first movement of the *Fifth*: "Introduction. Complete resignation before Fate, or, which is the same, before the inscrutable predestination of Providence, Allegro (I) Murmurs, doubts, plaints, reproaches. (II) Shall I throw myself to the embraces of Faith? A wonderful program, if I could only carry it out."

The internal evidence which strongly suggests that the entire symphony conforms to an underlying "program" consists of the fact that the theme which opens the first movement, whether it be a "Fate" theme or a "Providence" theme, is recalled in each of the three succeeding movements.

The opening "motto" theme of the first movement gives way to a main theme, reminiscent of a sinister march, which undergoes some very serious and rhythmic development before subsiding at the end with a feeling of gloomy weariness. The beautiful theme of the Andante establishes an aura of tenderness, yearning and nostalgia which builds to great intensity, but is twice interrupted by hostile, almost violent outbursts of the motto theme, and concludes with a wistful pulsating motion. The third movement, a waltz, is never happy or carefree but seems to carry an undercurrent of veiled melancholy. The main theme is derived from a song that Tchaikovsky heard in Florence sung by a boy in the street. The Finale projects the motto theme in an emotional transformation. Now in the major key, it is no longer weary and foreboding, but self-confident, bold, assertive. The movement presses toward a victorious close with the motto theme reappearing in a triumphant march, and the main theme of the first movement returning at the very end as a majestic fanfare, played fff by the oboes and brass.

—Paul E. Shannon, DMD



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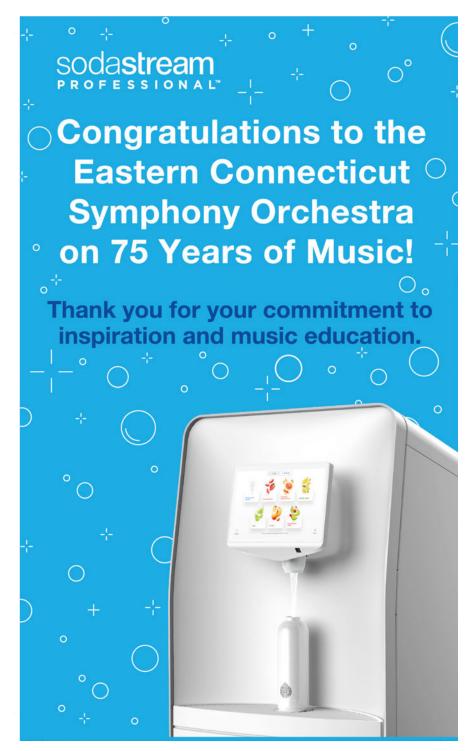
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# SYMPHONIC FANTASY SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 2022 – 7:30 PM

Toshiyuki Shimada Igor Pikayzen Music Director & Conductor

Violin

**BUZOVKINA** 

Imitation of Life

SHOSTAKOVICH

Violin Concerto No. 1 in A minor

Nocturne: Moderato Scherzo: Allegro

Passacaglia: Andante – Cadenza Burlesque: Allegro con brio – Presto

IGOR PIKAYZEN

INTERMISSION (20')

**SIBELIUS** 

Symphony No. 7 in C major, Op. 105

(in one movement)

Adagio; vivacissimo; adagio; allegro molto mod-

erato; vivace; presto; adagio; largamente

With thanks to the Donald C. & Dolores M. Gordon Stage Extension donors

# **Igor Pikayzen**Violin



Award-winning Russian-American violinist Igor Pikayzen is confidently establishing himself as one of the most prodigious and in-demand soloists of his generation. Praised on four continents by critics and audiences alike for his "astounding technical ability" and a "majestically lush tone", Igor Pikayzen "surely is at the forefront of a major musical career" (Moscow Times).

Since his concerto debut at the age of 8, with Mozart's *Violin Concerto #2* and the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, Pikayzen has appeared as a soloist with major orchestras

spanning Europe, Asia, North and South America. Highlights of the 2021-22 season include solo appearances with Filarmonica de Boca del Rio, Sinfonia Toronto, Orquesta Sinfonica del Estado de Mexico, Orquesta Sinfonica de Xalapa, Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony of Georgia, debut recitals at the Dame Myra Hess series in Chicago, the Gina Bachauer series in Salt Lake City, recitals in Denver and Washington D.C. as well as a return to New York's prestigious Bargemusic series. 2022 also sees the release of two new albums: a recording of fantasies for violin & piano with Tatyana Pikayzen and the *Glazunov Violin Concerto* on Sony Classical.

Previous solo appearances include the Russian State Symphony Orchestra, Moscow Radio Symphony, Bucharest Philharmonic, Sinfonietta Veracruzana, Sinfonica Nacional de Chile, Filharmonica di Bacau, Bialystok Philharmonic, Istanbul State Symphony, Stamford Symphony, Czestochowa Philharmonic, Izmir Symphony, Ridgefield Symphony, Tbilisi Opera Orchestra, Yokohama Sinfonietta, Kielce Philharmonic and countless others under the batons of Lior Shambadal, Łukasz Borowicz, Brett Mitchell, Gürer Aykal, Toshi Shimada, Jorge Mester, Daniel Huppert, Hobart Earle, Jerzy Salwarovski, Roman Revueltas, Enrique Batiz, Thomas Rösner, Vakhtang Matchavariani, Christopher Lyndon-Gee, Alexander Platt and Emil Tabakov. In the last three seasons alone, he has given debuts and returned to Carnegie Hall

## Igor Pikayzen (cont.)

and Alice Tully Hall in New York City, Tchaikovsky Hall and Minor Hall in Moscow, Teatro Llago in Frutillar, Congreso Nacional in Santiago, Eslite Performance Hall in Taipei, President Hall in Ankara, Flagey and Le Bozar in Brussels, Gates Performing Arts Center in Denver, L'Auditori in Barcelona, Le Bourget in Montreal, Centro Nacional de las Artes in Mexico City and Cadogan Hall in London, to name just a few.

Grandson of the legendary Soviet violinist Viktor Pikayzen, Igor was born in Moscow, Russia. After receiving his Bachelor's Degree from Juilliard, as well as a Master's Degree and Artist Diploma from the Yale School of Music, he was the recipient of the coveted Enhanced Chancellor Fellowship while working on his DMA at the CUNY Graduate Center where he was also on the faculty of Brooklyn Conservatory. Pikayzen is the 1st prize winner of the 2015 Edition of the International Violin Competition Luis Sigall in Viña del Mar, Chile as well as the Wronski International Violin Competition in Warsaw, in addition to being a silver medalist at the Szeryng and Kloster-Schöntal international violin competitions. Mr. Pikayzen shares his time between New York, Denver and Westport, CT, where he launched an annual summer music festival, Edelio. In 2019 he was announced as the new Professor of Violin at the Lamont School of Music at the University of Denver.

# Ekaterina Buzovkina Composer



Ekaterina Buzovkina was born in 1994 in Moscow. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Music Theory and a Master's degree in Composition from the Ippolitov-Ivanov State Musical Pedagogical Institute. Her works include compositions for piano, chamber ensemble, Russian folk ensemble, chorus, chamber orchestra, orchestra of Russian folk instruments, and symphony orchestra. Ekaterina is a multiaward-winning composer. Competitions have

included the International Composition Competition of the Winter International Arts Festival in Sochi (2015, 2nd prize and 2016, 1st prize), Malta International Composition Competition, (3rd prize in both 2016 and 2017), Maurice Ravel International Composition Competition (Finalist, 2016 and 2018), All-Russian Composition Competition "International Rostrum of Composers" (2019, 2nd prize), The First All-Russian Composition Competition Partitura (Score) in the nomination "Symphony orchestra" (2020, Laureate).

Music by Ekaterina Buzovkina has been performed in the halls of Moscow International House of Music, Moscow Tchaikovsky State Conservatory, Moscow Glinka Museum, Palazzo Castelmur in Switzerland, Gnesin Russian Academy of Music, Yaroslavl State Philharmonia, Organ Hall of Sochi Philharmonia, the Concert Hall of Moscow Cathedral Chamber, as well as Culture television channel and Orpheus Radio in Moscow.

#### PROGRAM NOTES

#### **Imitation of Life**

 $(\sim 12')$ 

First ECSO Performance, U.S. Premiere

#### EKATERINA BUZOVKINA

Born October 21, 1994; Moscow, Russia

This composition is a symphonic drama that tells the story of a person who faces difficult life circumstances that they can not change. These circumstances could be life failures, diseases, epidemics, wars, or natural disasters. During such a time, a person often feels fear, panic, uncertainty, or hopelessness and seems to forget their "own voice". They feel incapable of resisting, looking for a way out, using their "voice" against what I would call an indifferent time machine of life.

The violin solo, present in the exposition and coda sections, plays an important role in the narrative. In the exposition, the solo is barely perceptible, it echoes the melodies of other instruments with repetition. This leitmotif runs through almost all of the entire piece. As the orchestra comes to the middle section, instrument groups imitate each other. This is the cycle of collisions in life, indifferent to existence itself. The culminating point at the beginning of the recapitulation



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is overcoming fear and despair. The person begins to look for a way out, to resist. They seem to want to stop this soulless machine. A new melody appears in the coda - a violin solo, that no longer repeats any of the instruments around them. This solo could represent the person transforming into a symbol of resistance. However, the coda is open to your own interpretation. The audience can decide for themselves how the transformation will turn out.

-Ekaterina Buzovkina

#### Violin Concerto No. 1 in A Minor

 $(\sim 40')$ 

First ECSO Performance

#### **DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH**

Born September 25, 1906; Saint Petersburg, Russia Died August 9, 1975; Moscow, Russia

Twentieth Century Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich wrote his Violin Concerto shortly after the second denunciation of his work by Stalin's government in 1948. In the late and post World War II years Shostakovich's musical output did not correspond with the type of music the government wanted him to compose, so it released a statement known as the Zhdanov Decree denouncing Shostakovich and several of his contemporary countrymen.

In the context of this denunciation, Shostakovich understood that some of his late war works had gone too far in straying from Soviet government musical standards. Shostakovich also realized that he had given openings to government members interested in removing him from prominence in the Soviet musical world or even arresting him and sending him to a prison camp. While he did compose his first violin concerto during this period, its existence was kept secret. The concerto did not premiere until 1955, one year after Stalin's death, and was first performed by the Leningrad Philharmonic with Soviet violinist David



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Oistrakh (1908-1974), a musician who, similar to Shostakovich, never defected from the Soviet Union unlike many of their counterparts in the 1960s and 1970s.

The *Violin Concerto No. 1* uses a rather unconventional movement order for a concerto and requires the player at several points to perform extremely challenging and virtuosic passages including the solo cadenza in the second half of the third movement. The concerto's first movement is a nocturne, which underscores how different from the norm this work is. Many standard violin concertos of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries open with a happy fast movement. This movement is mostly brooding and meditative. Although it is played at a moderate tempo, the lack of any speed standard to the form makes it seem slower than usual.

The second movement is a scherzo featuring the DSCH motif in the violin part. This is a set of notes Shostakovich used in several of his works that form the first letter of his first name and first three letters of his last name when read in the German language. The end of the third movement features a challenging extended solo violin cadenza also including the DSCH motif that leads immediately into the fourth movement with its rather boisterous orchestral introduction. Oistrakh called the last movement "a joyous folk party." The concerto makes significant demands on its violinist who must play for almost its entire length. As a result in rehearsals Oistrakh even had to ask Shostakovich to remove the violin from introducing the fourth movement resulting in its orchestral introduction, to "wipe the sweat off my brow."

-Saadya Chevan

### Symphony No. 7 in C major, Op. 105

 $(\sim 21')$ 

First ECSO Performance

#### **JEAN SIBELIUS**

Born December 8, 1865; Hämeenlinna, Finland Died September 20, 1957; Ainola, Järvenpää, Finland

Jean Sibelius' *Seventh Symphony* is the culmination of his work as an eminent symphonist of the turn of the Twentieth Century. While the symphony was originally premiered in 1924 under the title *Symphonic Fantasy*, when it was published in 1925 Sibelius gave it the title of

Seventh Symphony. Although this is the composer's last published symphony, surprisingly Sibelius did live for over 30 years after its composition. However, beginning in the late 1920s, much of Sibelius' published music consisted of revisions to his previous work. During the 1930s, Sibelius stated multiple times he was composing an Eighth Symphony and even promised the opportunity to premiere it on several occasions to Serge Koussevitsky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Sibelius is suspected to have destroyed the manuscript of the Eighth Symphony before his death, potentially as early as the late 1930s.

What makes Sibelius' *Seventh Symphony* unconventional is its single movement structure. Rather than follow a standard or nonstandard pattern of symphonic movements as he does in his other symphonies, Sibelius places various tempo markings throughout the symphony's score that enable the conductor and orchestra to transition between various fast and slow sections without pause or obvious shifts in tempo. This is an example of Sibelius' use of metric modulation.

Perhaps the most stunning portion of the symphony is its ending: a seemingly shimmering coda featuring the trombones prominently that the conductor Simon Rattle claims is in fact "almost like a scream. It's the most depressed C-Major in all of musical literature." This follows up on a section a few minutes earlier where the orchestra crescendos to the loudest volume it reaches during the symphony, but then all of a sudden every instrument except the strings cuts out reducing the volume. Although the other instruments come back and try to crescendo again, the effort ultimately fails and the symphony returns to some of the earlier brooding themes we've heard. This unconventional ending and Rattle's description of this section of the symphony is critical to understanding the overall scope of the Sibelius' *Seventh Symphony* and its place as a late work in the composer's output. It exists for the sake of breaking new ground in music even if its composer could not bring himself to compose more symphonies.

—Saadya Chevan



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# ELECTRIC ROMANCE SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2022 – 7:30 PM

Toshiyuki Shimada Joshua Thomas Music Director & Conductor

Saxophone

**ROVAN** Scattering

for orchestra and interactive electronics

FUCHS Rush (Concerto for Alto Saxophone

and Orchestra)
Evening
Morning

JOSHUA THOMAS

SHOSTAKOVICH Waltz No. 2

INTERMISSION (20')

**PROKOFIEV** *Romeo and Juliet*: Suite No. 2, Op. 64

The Montagues and the Capulets

Juliet, the Young Girl Friar Laurence

Dance of the Five Couples Romeo and Juliet Before Parting Dance of the Antilles Girls Romeo at Juliet's Tomb

With thanks to the Donald C. & Dolores M. Gordon Stage Extension donors

# Joshua Thomas Saxophone



Saxophonist Joshua Thomas has built a robust, multi-faceted career based on the foundations of high musical standards, a love of performance and education, and engaging interaction with audiences.

Since winning a coveted position as a full-time musician in the United States Coast Guard Band in 2000, he has performed hundreds of concerts around the world as a featured soloist, chamber musician, and a member of large ensembles. Away from the military,

Thomas is active in performance and education. He is a member of the New London Big Band and the new music ensemble, the Bassless Trio. Thomas is currently on faculties at Eastern Connecticut State University, Connecticut College and the Hartt School community division.

A proponent of new music, Thomas has commissioned and premiered over 50 new works, from concertos, to electro/acoustic and unaccompanied works, to chamber music. Currently, he leads Smart Repertoire, a commissioning consortium that cultivates new works for intermediate level saxophonists.

Thomas received his Bachelor of Music Education at Michigan State University, Master of Music in performance at Louisiana State University, Master of Arts in music theory at Connecticut College, and Doctorate of Musical Arts in performance at the University of Hartford's Hartt School of Music.



# Joseph Butch Rovan

Composer



Joseph Butch Rovan is a composer, media artist, and performer on the faculty of the Department of Music at Brown University, where he helped develop the Music & Multimedia Composition (MMC) program. From 2013-16 he was chair of Music and from 2016-19 he was the inaugural faculty director of the Brown Arts Initiative.

Prior to his work at Brown, Rovan was a *compositeur en recherche* with the Real-Time Systems Team at the Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique Musique (IRCAM) in Paris, as well as a faculty member at both Florida State University and the University of North Texas, where he directed CEMI, the Center for Experimental Music and Intermedia. Rovan worked at Opcode Systems before leaving for Paris, serving as Product Manager for Max, OMS and MIDI hardware.

Rovan received his Ph.D. in Music from the University of California at Berkeley, where he studied with Richard Felciano, Olly Wilson, and Jorge Liderman. He has received prizes from the Bourges International Electroacoustic Music Competition, first prize in the Berlin Transmediale International Media Arts Festival, and his work has been performed throughout Europe and the U.S. His interactive installation *Let us imagine a straight line* was featured in the 14th WRO International Media Art Biennale, Poland, and his work *of the survival of images*, for custom GLOBE controller, video and sound, is included on the Computer Music Journal DVD *Sound and Video Anthology*. His music appears on the Wergo, EMF, Circumvention, and SEAMUS labels.

Rovan's research includes new sensor hardware design and wireless microcontroller systems. His research into gestural control and interactivity has been featured in IRCAM's journal *Resonance*, *Electronic Musician*, the *Computer Music Journal*, the Japanese magazine *SoundArts*, the CDROM *Trends in Gestural Control of Music* (IRCAM 2000), and in the book *Mapping Landscapes for Performance as Research: Scholarly Acts and Creative Cartographies* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). In 2019 he was awarded a patent with collaborator Peter Bussigel for a new electronic musical instrument design.

# **Kenneth Fuchs**

Composer



Renneth Fuchs' fifth Naxos recording with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by JoAnn Falletta won the 2018 GRAMMY® Award in the category Best Classical Compendium. He has composed music for orchestra, band, voice, chorus, and various chamber ensembles. With Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lanford Wilson, Fuchs created three chamber musicals, The Great Nebula in Orion, A Betrothal, and Brontosaurus, which Circle Repertory Company originally presented in New York City. Fuchs' operatic monodrama Falling Man (text by Don

DeLillo, adapted by J. D. McClatchy) was presented at the National September 11 Memorial & Museum in commemoration of the 15th anniversary of 9/11. His music has achieved significant global recognition through performances, media exposure, and digital streaming and downloading throughout North and South America, Central and Eastern Europe, Asia, and Australia.

The London Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of JoAnn Falletta, has recorded five albums of Fuchs' music for Naxos American Classics, which have earned four GRAMMY® Award nominations.

Kenneth Fuchs serves as Professor of Composition at the University of Connecticut. He received his bachelor of music degree in composition from the University of Miami (cum laude) and his master of music and doctor of musical arts degrees in composition from The Juilliard School. Fuchs's composition teachers include Milton Babbitt, David Del Tredici, David Diamond, Vincent Persichetti, and Alfred Reed. His music is published by the Hal Leonard Corporation, Edward B. Marks Music Company, Theodore Presser Company, and Yelton Rhodes Music, and it has been recorded by Albany, Cala, and Naxos Records.



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# Scattering, for orchestra & interactive electronics (~13')

World Premiere; Composed in New London, CT

#### JOSEPH BUTCH ROVAN

Born November 14, 1959 Resides in New London, CT

Scattering is a symphonic overture about the connectedness of things. Its title is inspired by William Meredith's beautiful poem, "Examples of Created Systems," which sits on our living room bookshelf. I have often reflected on the complicated logic behind the poem's central concept: the perceived systems—of stars, islands, prisons, relationships—whose "fair scattering of matter" guides our always imperfect understanding of the world. Who made these systems, and then "flung them there," Meredith asks, "in a sowing motion suggesting that random is beautiful?"

That existential question informs the composition at many levels. The first is performance. The gesture of sowing or scattering is implied in conducting, the system of signs a conductor creates to evoke sound. To harness that unique gestural energy, I built a custom instrument for the conductor's left hand that tracks movement, direction, and acceleration. I call the instrument TOSHI (The Orchestra-Synthesis Human Interface), in honor of ECSO's dynamic conductor, Toshi Shimada. At critical points in the exposition, Toshi's gestures produce a scattering of live electronic sounds that both comment on the orchestra and foretell what is to come.

The question of connections also informs the score. *Scattering* was conceived as the novel coronavirus became a global pandemic and as the killing of George Floyd gave rise to a world outcry against racial injustice—both circumstances showing us, with differing intensities, the connectedness of humanity across time and space. My piece alludes to these historic events in two musical subjects that derive like cryptograms from their names: "COVID – 19" translates into one pitch set (C-G-Ab-Eb-D-C#-A), and "George Floyd" into another (G-E-G-D-G-E F-A-G-B-D). Together they provide the overture's melodic material. What's in a name? On the one hand, the wild energy of contagion; on the other, sorrow, loss, and longing. The deeper connection between them is revealed as the piece concludes in a double canon — a fair scattering of musical matter that represents one of composition's oldest created systems.

—Joseph Butch Rovan

# Rush (Concerto for Alto Saxophone & Orchestra) (~14') First ECSO Performance

#### KENNETH FUCHS

Born July 1, 1956 Resides in Mansfield, CT

Rush (Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra) was commissioned by Ryan Janus, then principal saxophonist of the United States Air Force Academy Band (located at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs), and a consortium of thirty-seven saxophonists and ensemble conductors throughout the United States. Mr. Janus is an expert classical and jazz musician and through his commissioning projects has formed several consortia to support the creation of saxophone concerti by leading composers.

*Rush*, composed in versions for both orchestra and band, is comprised of two movements, each about seven minutes in duration, connected by an extended cadenza for the saxophone soloist.

The first movement (*Evening*), which begins with a short cadenza that introduces the thematic material of the work, is a rhapsodic Adagietto with transparent textures. The second movement (*Morning*), which begins with an extended cadenza that introduces blue notes into the harmonic language, is cast in the form of a jazz-inflected passacaglia. The full ensemble begins the Allegro section with a series of syncopated chords. The soloist then intones the passacaglia theme proper. The ensemble interjects a series of syncopated chords, and the soloist then intones the passacaglia theme. The ensemble takes up the theme and with the soloist weaves an elaborate tapestry of ten variations based on the theme and the syncopated chords. The soloist concludes the concerto with a bravura display.

Rush was composed from December 2011 through June 2012 in Mansfield Center, Connecticut.

-Kenneth Fuchs

**Waltz No. 2** (~4')

First ECSO Performance

#### **DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH**

Born September 25, 1906; Saint Petersburg, Russia Died August 9, 1975; Moscow, Russia

Dmitri Shostakovich is the most famous composer who lived and worked in the Communist Soviet Union. Shostakovich's life and work is inextricably tied to how the government of his home country perceived him, and he probably would have been a very different composer had he lived in a different country. During his life his work underwent two official denunciations by the Stalinist government. Unlike many other victims of Stalin's disfavor, who were often sent to gulag camps in Siberia, Shostakovich was never arrested by the Soviets, perhaps because the government tended to assume he was a "village idiot" rather than a political threat. He died a natural death in 1975.

Four years later in the United States, Russian musicologist Solomon Volkov published *Testimony*, which he alleged was Shostakovich's memoirs based on a series of meetings he had with the composer from 1971-1974. *Testimony* portrayed Shostakovich as secretly being extremely bitter and disgruntled about living and working under the communist government in the Soviet Union despite becoming a party member in 1960. While Volkov's claims of having access to the composer during the end of his life are impossible to verify, other posthumous portrayals of the composer by his family members and the additional discovery of potentially subversive "desk drawer" compositions that he never published, suggest that *Testimony* is a nearly if not entirely faithful portrayal of Shostakovich's dissatisfaction with living in Soviet Russia.

BEST OF READERS' CHOICE! 2021-2020-2019-2018-2017-2015

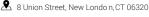
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The Waltz No. 2 is the most famous movement of the composer's Suite for Variety Orchestra (which in the past was often mistakenly referred to as the Suite for Jazz Orchestra No. 2). The Suite was written shortly after Shostakovich regained favor with the government after its first denunciation of his work in 1936. The suite's various movements are meant to evoke various types of dances and marches while also trying to impart a modern Soviet sound to the music. Stalin actually banned the performance of American jazz music in 1932, but it was acceptable for Soviet composers to imitate the sounds of a jazz orchestra by adding nonstandard instruments to a symphony orchestra such as saxophone, which plays the opening solo in the walz. This was because the Soviet government wanted to encourage the performance of music that was homegrown and thereby possible to brand as reflective of Communist and Party values. The Waltz No. 2 is classic Shostakovich, it is outwardly bombastic and seemingly Soviet in character, yet there is also a playfulness and perhaps a little sarcasm in the music that seems to knowingly poke fun at the reality of Soviet life of the 1930s.

—Saadya Chevan

#### Romeo and Juliet: Suite No. 2, Op. 64

(~30')

Most recent ECSO performance: October 22, 2005

#### **SERGEI PROKOFIEV**

Born April 23, 1891; Sontsivka, Ukraine Died March 5, 1953; Moscow, Russia

It took over ten years of frustration and humiliation for Prokofiev before his ballet *Romeo and Juliet* was to be acclaimed in his native USSR. In 1934, the Kirov Theatre expressed an interest in staging a ballet by Prokofiev who suggested the subject of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The Kirov decided against the project but the following year Prokofiev signed a contract with the Bolshoi Theatre and he proceeded to compose the music during the summer. However, much to Prokofiev's chagrin, the Bolshoi declared the music impossible to dance to and promptly broke the contract. Having been turned down by both theaters, Prokofiev then experienced further disappointment by being widely criticized for changing Shakespeare's original tragic scenario into a happy ending. He had reasoned that "living people can dance, the dying

cannot." But he later changed his mind, and when working with his choreographers decided that indeed a tragic ending could be expressed in dance. Newly composed music was then added to the score to reflect the change.

Without any immediate prospect for a performance of the ballet, Prokofiev, hoping to save some of the score, arranged two suites from the ballet and these were performed in Moscow in 1936 and Leningrad in 1937. Another offer to stage the complete ballet was tendered by the Leningrad Ballet School, but this too, like others, was withdrawn and so the premiere of *Romeo and Juliet* was not in the USSR at all but in Czechoslovakia at the Brno Opera in 1938. The Kirov Theatre finally mounted the work in January of 1940, but its major triumph did not come until December of 1946 when it was produced in Moscow by the Bolshoi Theatre. Prokofiev himself conducted the American premiere of the Second Suite in March of 1938 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. It consists of seven movements.

- 1. The Montagues and the Capulets. The slow introduction is taken from Act I, but the main body of the movement features the "Dance of the Capulet Knights" from the Act II ballroom scene.
- 2. Juliet, the Young Girl. Again from the Second Act, the music portrays the shifting emotions of the young girl, flirtatious, graceful and thoughtful as she is asked to contemplate marriage to Count Paris.
- 3. Friar Laurence. The solemn music sets the mood of Romeo in Friar Laurence's cell waiting for the arrival of Juliet for their marriage.
- 4. Dance of the Five Couples. From the opening of the Second Act, the orchestral strings simulate the sound of plucked lutes or guitars with an overlying melody in the oboes and flutes.
- 5. Romeo and Juliet Before Parting. The scene describes the lovers' farewell after their marriage night as tremulant strings, clarinet, oboe, flute and horns accompany the last tender embrace of the ill-fated couple.
- 6. Dance of the Antilles Girls. Soft woodwind solos with muted

strings and solo violin accompany the maids who dance before the sleeping Juliet.

7. Romeo at Juliet's Tomb from the final scene of the ballet, including Juliet's funeral procession and the arrival of Romeo at the tomb. Beginning softly, the music rises to a shuddering climax in the trombones, but the end comes quietly in high muted strings against a foreboding throb deep in the orchestra.

—Paul E. Shannon, DMD

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# SPRING STRINGS SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2022 – 7:30 PM

Toshiyuki Shimada Jason Vieaux Music Director & Conductor

Guitar

**HAYDN** Symphony No. 75 in D Major

Grave - Presto Poco adagio

Menuetto & Trio: Allegretto

Finale: Vivace

**RODRIGO** Concierto de Aranjuez

Allegro con spirito

Adagio

Allegro gentile JASON VIEAUX

Jason Vieaux appears by arrangement with Jonathan Wentworth Assoc. Ltd. www.Jwentworth.com

WALKER Lyric for Strings

INTERMISSION (20')

**BIZET** Symphony No. 1 in C Major

Allegro vivo Andante: Adagio Scherzo: Allegro vivace Finale: Allegro vivace

Soloist sponsored by: Marti & John Bradshaw

With thanks to the Donald C. & Dolores M. Gordon Stage Extension donors

# **Jason Vieaux**Guitar



Grammy-winner Jason Vieaux, "among the elite of today's classical guitarists" (Gramophone), is described by NPR as "perhaps the most precise and soulful classical guitarist of his generation".

Jason recently made his debuts for Domaine-Forget Festival, Carmel Bach Festival, Wolf Trap, and made returns to San Francisco Performances,

Caramoor, Ravinia, and Philadelphia Chamber Music Society. Other recent venues include the National Gallery of Art, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, the 92Y, Seoul Arts Center, and Shanghai Concert Hall. Jason Vieaux has performed as soloist with over 100 orchestras, including Cleveland, Toronto, Houston, Nashville, and Orchestra of St. Luke's.

In March 2021, Jason Vieaux performed the premiere recording of a new solo work, *Four Points of Light* composed for Jason by jazz legend Pat Metheny for his new album Road To The Sun. Jason performed the live recording of Jonathan Leshnoff's Guitar Concerto with Nashville Symphony in 2019 (Naxos). Jason's passion for new music has also fostered recent premieres from Jeff Beal (House of Cards Symphony, BIS, 2017), Avner Dorman, Vivian Fung, Mark Mancina, Dan Visconti, and many more. Slated for Summer 2021 release is a new solo Bach recording on Azica. Of his Grammy-winning 2014 solo album Play, The Huffington Post declared that Play is "part of the revitalized interest in the classical guitar."

Vieaux's multiple appearances over the years with Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Music@Menlo, Strings Music Festival, Eastern Music Festival, etc., have forged his reputation as a top chamber musician. Regular collaborators include the Escher String Quartet, Grammywinning mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke, violinist Anne Akiko Meyers, harpist Yolanda Kondonassis, and accordion/bandoneon virtuoso Julien Labro.

As a teacher, Vieaux co-founded the guitar department at the Curtis Institute of Music in 2011, and has taught at the Cleveland Institute of Music for 25 years. Jason's online Guitar School has subscribers from over 30 countries.



# Symphony No. 75 in D Major

(~21')

First ECSO Performance

#### FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Born March 31, 1732; Rohrau, Austria Died: May 31, 1809; Vienna, Austria

For the majority of his career as a composer Franz Joseph Haydn worked primarily for the Austro-Hungarian Esterházy family. As one of the richest families in the Austro-Hungarian empire whose wealth often rivaled or exceeded that of the Habsburg monarchs, the Esterházys were able to continuously employ Haydn throughout his lifetime even after he became famous via independent commissions. Although it was written for performance by the Esterházy family's private orchestra, the *Symphony No. 75* is a piece that was written around the time when Haydn started to gain broader recognition by being able to compose for audiences outside the Esterházy court. Shortly after its composition,

Haydn renegotiated his contract with Prince Niklaus Esterházy to allow him to compose symphonies for patrons other than the family. Therefore, this is one of the last symphonies in Haydn's catalog that is written exclusively for nobles.

The theme from the 75th Symphony is one of three themes from Haydn's symphonies (along with those from Haydn's 47th and 62nd) that his contemporary Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote in a notebook during the 1780s. The writer Charles Rosen has suggested that Mozart did so because he intended to conduct these three Haydn symphonies. Mozart and Haydn had a very good friendship, and in the 1780s they became two of the most successful published composers of their time especially after the firm Artaria released editions of six string quartets that each composer had written, which today are still considered foundational works of the genre. As their success and building off each other's work indicates, the period in which this piece was composed marks the end of the era when music composers almost exclusively wrote for nobility and began writing for the general population and growing middle class.

The symphony's first movement begins with a short grave section, one of the slowest speeds in classical music. This is contrasted by the rest of the first movement, which is at presto speed, one of the fastest tempos in music. The second movement contains a theme and variations based on a slow and passionate melody focused in the string section. The third movement is in a minuet and trio style dance, which was the standard symphonic third movement of Haydn's time. It almost paints a picture of the grand rooms and facades of the Esterházy palaces and the pomp of noble life. The fourth movement is a simple rondo in an ABA form, a format where one section is presented followed by another section and then in the case of this movement, a grander and more lyrical recap of the first theme.

-Saadya Chevan



### Concierto de Aranjuez

 $(\sim 22')$ 

First ECSO Performance

#### **JOAQUÍN RODRIGO**

Born November 22, 1901; Sagunto, Spain Died July 6, 1999; Madrid, Spain

Toaquín Rodrigo was born on November 22, 1901, the Roman Catholic feast day of Saint Cecilia, the patron saint of music. A diphtheria outbreak that occurred when he was age three left him almost sightless, and as a result he was sent to a school for blind children where he was encouraged to develop his interests in music and literature. By adulthood, he had already premiered several pieces of music that were well received by the public. He travelled to Paris to study with Paul Dukas, where he befriended fellow Spanish composer Manuel de Falla. In 1938 while travelling from Spain to France, Rodrigo was dining with Spanish guitarist Regino Sáinz de la Maza who suggested to him that he should write a concerto for guitar and orchestra. Concierto de Aranjuez premiered two years later with Maza, its dedicatee, as soloist. The concerto is well known for its distinct Spanish-sounding rhythms. It pushed guitarists to what was thought to be the limit of guitar playing abilities during that period and was even initially considered unplayable by some guitarists including Andrés Segovia. There is a rumor about the concerto's second movement that it mourns Rodrigo's wife Victoria's miscarriage in spring 1939. However, in a 1943 letter to Maza, Rodrigo wrote that the movement's theme came to him in his apartment in the Latin Quarter of Paris circa November of 1938. He described it as "singing inside my head, all at once without any hesitation."

Aranjuez, a town about 30 miles south of Madrid and the concerto's namesake, is well known for hosting a summer palace of the Spanish royal family including a set of breathtaking gardens. An entry in a diary written by Victoria states that she and Rodrigo took a day trip to Aranjuez in 1933 shortly after marrying and moving to Madrid. The palace had only recently been opened to the public by the Second Spanish Republic, marking the town's transition to focusing on tourism over entertaining the royal family. Rodrigo's decision to name his guitar concerto after Aranjuez created an association between the composer

and the town through the rest of his life; his tomb is located there, and the association between the concerto and the palatial gardens has attracted music lovers to the town.

—Saadya Chevan

## **Lyric for Strings**

 $(\sim 7')$ 

First ECSO performance

#### **GEORGE WALKER**

Born June 27, 1922; Washington, D.C. Died August 23, 2018; Montclair, NJ

Dr. George Walker was a major African American composer of the Twentieth and early Twenty First Centuries. He accomplished many firsts in his lifetime including becoming the first African American composer to win the Pulitzer Prize for music in 1996 with his composition *Lilacs*. As a child Dr. Walker was a musical prodigy and began attending Oberlin Conservatory at age 14 to study piano, its

youngest student ever admitted at the time. He then became the first African American student of the Curtis School of Music where he studied with Rudolf Serkin. He also studied in Paris with Nadia Boulanger, one of the Twentieth Century's most influential music teachers who mentored many famous American composers. Boulanger encouraged Dr. Walker to pursue composition, allegedly saying to him "You're a composer.. just keep going."

After realising that there was limited interest from audiences to hear the performances of a black classical pianist, Dr. Walker earned a doctoral degree from the Eastman School of Music, again



becoming the first African American to do so. He had a successful teaching career at several American institutions including Smith College, the University of Colorado, Peabody Conservatory, the University of Delaware and Rutgers University.

The Lyric for Strings is Dr. Walker's most popular piece and also one of his early musical works, composed while he was still a student at the Curtis Institute. Dr. Walker originally wrote it as a movement for his First String Quartet. Later, it was orchestrated for a larger string orchestra under the title Lament and then renamed to Lyric for Strings. While composing the string quartet, Dr. Walker's grandmother, who he was extremely close with, died. In her lifetime she had escaped from slavery after having her first husband taken from her when he was sold to a different slaveholder. Given the place she had in his family, Dr. Walker decided to write and include the quartet's movement in her honor. In 2018, approximately four months before his death, Dr. Walker told the journalist Dennis Polkow regarding the importance of his grandmother's death to the composition of the Lyric for Strings "I wanted her to be remembered in a way that no one could ever remember her because most people would not have seen her. No one would have known what a remarkable person she was because she was...almost an unseen part of the family...with her passing it meant a disintegration of our family."

—Saadya Chevan

### Symphony No. 1 in C Major

 $(\sim 27')$ 

First ECSO Performance: November 10, 1959; Victor Norman conducting; Willimantic

#### **GEORGES BIZET**

Born October 25, 1838; Paris, France Died June 3, 1875; Bougival, France

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century following the symphonies of Hector Berlioz, the composition of the symphony by French composers went into a rapid decline leaving only three works in this form to survive and be performed with any regularity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the *Symphony in C* (1855) of Bizet, the *Symphony No. 3 in C-Minor* of Saint-Saens (1866) and the *Symphony in D-Minor* of Caesar Franck (1888). Surprising

about this fact is that whereas the Franck and Saint-Saens symphonies are works by mature composers, the Bizet is a student work, coming from the pen of a 17-year-old. Bizet was a student in 1855 at the Paris Conservatory, and the symphony was written in the fall of that year within the space of one month. The work was never performed during Bizet's lifetime and eventually in 1933, along with other Bizet manuscripts, was donated to the library of the Conservatory. The first performance finally took place in 1935 with Felix Weingartner conducting. The United States premiere was by the New York Philharmonic in 1940. Its winsomeness has made it a popular work, not only in the concert hall. It has proved to be a very effective ballet piece as well.

Bizet's admiration for Beethoven manifests itself in the first movement by a fine, authoritative opening statement. This first theme is then effectively offset by a graceful theme by the oboe. Bizet, the Romantic colorist, is heard in his delightfully nostalgic use of woodwinds and French horn. The second movement projects an almost Middle Eastern flavor with an exotic, sinuous melody played by the solo oboe over pizzicato strings. The third movement, allegro vivace, shows Bizet's mastery of technics, even at his tender age, by producing a bustling scherzo with the lightness and piquancy of a minuet. Even the trio is ingenious with its drone bass accompaniment. The last movement, also allegro vivace, is full of verve and jocular spirits. It rounds off a symphony by a composer, brimming with youthful exuberance but with a clear sense of his musically brilliant future.

—Paul E. Shannon, DMD





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# JOYFUL DANCES SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2022 – 7:30 PM

**Toshiyuki Shimada** Music Director & Conductor

Amy Ward ButlerCelloEva VirsikPiano

**BEETHOVEN** Triple Concerto in C major, Op. 56

Allegro Largo

Rondo alla Polacca AMY WARD BUTLER

**EVA VIRSIK** 

INTERMISSION (20')

**PRICE** Dances in the Canebrakes

Nimble Feet Tropical Noon

Silk Hat and Walking Cane

**BEETHOVEN** Symphony No. 9 in D Minor

Finale

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#### Amy Ward Butler Cello



New Jersey-based cellist, Amy Ward Butler counts herself very fortunate to have had as teachers Orlando Cole in Philadelphia, and Steven Doane and Paul Katz at the Eastman School of Music. At Tanglewood, she played for Yo-Yo Ma in a variety of master classes, including a rare chance to perform "Schelomo" with the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra. Ms. Butler has been a member of the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra and has performed in the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Harrisburg Symphony, the

Philadelphia Orchestra and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra.

Besides her position as principal cellist with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, Ms. Butler is also the principal cellist of the Reading Symphony Orchestra, a founding member of the Tapestry Cello Ensemble and the cellist for the Paper Mill Theater in New Jersey. She performs with the Montclair Orchestra and the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, as well as a wide variety of small ensembles throughout northern New Jersey.

With the Tapestry Ensemble, Ms. Butler is grateful to get to share her multi-layered cello ensemble arrangements and original compositions as the group tours throughout the east coast. She plays on a Raffaele and Antonio Gagliano cello made in Napoli in the early 1800's.

## Eva Virsik Piano



Internationally acclaimed pianist and Steinway Artist Eva Virsik has appeared as a recitalist and orchestra soloist throughout Europe, the United States, and Asia. In Europe she performed in major cities throughout Germany, France, Austria, Russia, Greece, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia,

with such orchestras as the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra in Germany, the National Orchestra of Lille in France, leading orchestras in the Czech Republic and all the major orchestras of Slovakia, including the Slovak Philharmonic, Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, the State Philharmonic Košice, the Slovak Sinfonietta, and the Slovak Chamber Orchestra. In the United States, she has toured along the East Coast, appearing in Portland, Boston, Washington, D.C. and New York City, where she debuted at Carnegie Hall (Weill). Her performances in Asia include a recital in Ankara, Turkey, and in 2018 she made her Far East debut in South Korea at the Shinyoung hall in Seoul, followed by the Tri-bowl Cultural Center recital in Incheon. Her appearances at international festivals include the "Russian Winter" - a tour that crossed the Arctic Circle, the Festival of Contemporary Music "Berolina Concerts" in Germany, the Bratislava Music Festival "BHS" in Slovakia, the summer festival in Karlsbad, Czech Republic, Arkady Music festival in Maine, among others. She was also heard in chamber series with the Portland String Quartet, DaPonte String Quartet and many other instrumental groups.

Eva Virsik recorded for permanent archives and was heard live on radio and television networks such as SWR - ARD radio in Germany, on the Berlin Radio both as a guest with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra and solo from the Robert Schumann house in Zwickau, as well as on the Czech radio and frequently on RTVS, the largest radio and television network in Slovakia. Upon first coming to the United States she was invited to Boston for a live performance on WGBH radio "Morning Pro Musica" series lead by the iconic Robert J. Lurtsema, and her orchestra performances were televised via PBS and aired on the Maine Public Broadcasting and Connecticut Broadcasting networks. Her album Piano Encores received a rave review from the Washington Post critic Patrick Rucker in the classical magazine Fanfare.

The highlights of past seasons include Virsik's performances in Europe,

#### Eva Virsik (cont.)

notably with the Slovak Sinfonietta and conductor Oliver von Dohnányi, recitals at the Mozarthaus in Vienna, and return engagements at the Mirbach Palace series in Bratislava, including also a piano duo performance with pianist and conductor Alexei Kornienko. She was the featured artist at the Robert Schumann Festival in Elmira, New York. At the events of the United Nations in New York, she performed for President Ivan Gašparovič, and President Andrej Kiska, the two previous heads of Slovak Republic. Virsik appeared several times also under the baton of her husband, conductor Toshiyuki Shimada - with the Orchestra of Southern Finger Lakes, Portland Symphony Orchestra, and Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra. In May 2021 she inaugurated the #60 Limited Edition Lang Lang Black Diamond Steinway piano with a gala recital at the new concert hall opening ceremony in Starý Klíž, Slovakia. Her concert dates in 2021/22 include solo and orchestra performances in Austria, Slovakia, Hungary and USA, including performance at the United Nations in New York and with the New Britain Symphony Orchestra in Connecticut.

Eva Virsik was born in Bratislava, now the capital of Slovakia, where she debuted on Slovak Television at the age of four and was winning local piano competitions from age six. At fourteen, she won the first prize at the all-state Czechoslovak youth competition and at the Virtuosi per Musica piano competition. Upon winning at age fifteen the first prize at the international Smetana Competition and a Prize of the Czech Music Critics, she played her orchestra debut with West Czech Symphony Orchestra conducted by Libor Pešek, and was featured at the Rudolfinum Hall in Prague and the Reduta Hall in Bratislava. She further studied with the distinguished pianists Yakov Zak and Stanislav Neuhaus at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, where she completed eight years of study and earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree. She is a silver medal laureate of the Maria Callas Piano Competition in Athens, Greece (1981). Eva Virsik has taught at German Music Universities in Frankfurt and Freiburg, the Academy of Music in Bratislava, at Bowdoin College, and the University of New Haven. She appeared in recitals at many major music institutions, including Yale University, and held master classes and piano courses in the United States, Asia, and Europe, most recently at the Marmara University in Istanbul. Eva Virsik was honored by the Slovak-American Cultural Center for her representation in performing arts (2010, New York), and by General Frank J. Grass with the Coin of Excellence (2012, Washington, D.C.).

#### Triple Concerto in C major, Op. 56

(~33')

First ECSO Performance

#### **LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**

Born December 16, 1770; Bonn, Germany Died March 26, 1827; Vienna, Austria

eethoven's *Triple Concerto* is an unusual work for the time it Dwas composed in because rather than featuring a single solo instrument it showcases three instruments that typically perform concertos solo. This makes the players collaborate in a manner not often seen in orchestral music. They must work together and create a unified sound while also accounting for the orchestral backing. What makes this task easier is that Beethoven arranged the concerto so the soloists introduce and play most of the thematic material in its music while the orchestra serves to back up their performance. Allegedly Beethoven was originally commissioned to write the concerto for the archduke Rudolf who he taught. The Archduke wanted to perform as a soloist, but in a less demanding setting because he would be backed by the two other soloists. However, as the concerto requires the three instrumentalists to collaborate together, it might be more challenging than many solo concertos. The concerto was only performed once in 1807 during Beethoven's life and it is unclear who the soloists were for that performance.

The concerto can be quite challenging even for seasoned performers. One of the most infamous recordings of this piece, a record from the 1960s featuring conductor Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic alongside three Soviet soloists was later named by critic Norman Lebrecht as one of "20 Recordings that Never Should Have Been Made." David Oistrakh, the violinist on the recording said "It's a dreadful recording and I disown it utterly...I demanded an extra take. 'No, no,' he [von Karajan] replied, 'we haven't got time, we've still got to do the photographs.' To him, this was more important than the recording. And what a nauseating photograph it is, with him posing artfully and the rest of us grinning like idiots."

The concerto begins with an orchestral introduction and then introduces the three soloists in the order cello (which introduces most of the

thematic material in each movement), violin, and piano. The first movement is one of the longest Beethoven had written at this point in his career giving ample time for him to introduce and cause all sorts of musical development on its themes. The second movement contains an extended passionate duet between violin and cello that the piano later joins, adding quiet arpeggios to the mix. Afterwards the cello immediately introduces the third movement, a lively polonaise in which the three instruments play various snippets from a theme introduced by the cello that contrast and mesh with each other.

—Saadya Chevan

#### **Dances in the Canebrakes**

(~9')

First ECSO Performance

#### FLORENCE PRICE

Born April 9, 1887; Little Rock, AR Died June 3, 1953; Chicago, IL

Florence Price is increasingly recognized for her role as a major American composer of the Twentieth Century. She was the first African American woman to have her compositions played by major American orchestras, most notably the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which premiered her *First Symphony* in 1933 and performed many of her musical works throughout the 1930s. Price's arrangement of the spiritual *My Soul is Anchored in the Lord* was the final song performed by Marian Anderson in her iconic 1939 concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to an integrated audience after she had been refused the opportunity to perform at the Daughters of the American Revolution's segregated Constitution Hall.

Dances in the Canebrakes was originally written as a suite for solo piano in 1953 just before Price's unexpected death from a stroke in 1953. William Grant Still, an African American composer who was her contemporary, who in his own career also broke significant racial barriers in music, arranged the piece for orchestra shortly after Price's death. Dances in the Canebrakes reflects Price's style as a musically conservative composer for the time period she lived in; her style is more in line with that of mid to late European Romantics than her white contemporaries who famously experimented with styles such as

serialism. The piece's three movements combine southern folk song with American ballroom dances of the late 19th Century, most notably the cakewalk.

The first movement, titled *Nimble Feet*, opens at a moderate pace focusing on the main theme played by the string instruments with regular interjections from the woodwinds. This theme is light and airy, perhaps giving the sense of dancers in a large room moving quickly through their steps. The second movement, *Tropical Noon*, is a little slower and more relaxed, the accompaniment while still moving the piece along at a tempo that elicits dance-like movement also gives off the more relaxed feeling that comes with the middle of a hot day. In the third movement, *Silk Hat and Walking Cane*, the opening theme, which is played in different variations by parts of the orchestra throughout the movement, descends down the musical scale in a slightly broken manner. It might be a musical reflection of the movement's title drawing the listener's ears from the top of the imagined silk hat that a ball attendee appears to be wearing steadily towards the bottom of the walking cane they hold.

-Saadya Chevan

#### Finale from Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125 (~24')

First ECSO Performance: March 20, 1976; Victor Norman conducting; New London High School

#### **LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**

Born December 16, 1770; Bonn, Germany Died March 26, 1827; Vienna, Austria

As early as 1793, the 23-year-old Beethoven had intentions of setting to music the *An die Freude* (*Ode to Joy*) of Friedrick von Schiller, the German poet and dramatist. In 1812, he again considered using verses from the poem in a choral overture. Then in 1822, he finally found the vehicle to employ these significant verses – as a choral finale to his *Ninth Symphony*. Some have thought that this choral ending to an instrumental symphony was an inevitable outcome of the struggle in the three preceding movements, leading from D-minor to a paean of joy in D-major. However, Beethoven's sketches and notes prove that this was not the case.

The famous theme to which the composer set Schiller's text can be traced back to a 1794 song, *Gegenliebe* (*Mutual Love*), and then used again in the *Choral Fantasia* of 1808. But even as late as 1823, a year after Beethoven had decided to link this theme with the *Ode to Joy* he had misgivings and wrote out a new subject as the main theme for his finale, labeling it Finale Instromentale; a clear indication that a purely instrumental close to the symphony was still a possibility. This somber theme was eventually used in the finale of the *A-Minor String Quartet*, *Op. 132*, lending credence to the theory that the first three movements of the *Ninth* would have led to a concluding movement of tragic character had not Beethoven finally decided on his joyous choral ending.

Having decided to close the symphony with a choral finale, Beethoven was not content to create a sudden transition from the sublime Adagio to the ecstatic expression of Schiller's Ode to Joy. He needed a new and dramatic path to lead to the introduction of the human voice for the very first time in a symphony. His solution was a masterstroke of invention. The finale opens in a burst of anger followed by a restless recitative for low strings. Then the composer quotes the principal themes of the earlier movements, each one being rejected in turn; but from this rejection there gradually emerges the now famous theme which will dominate this last movement. The opening storm returns along with the recitatives, but this time sung by the human voice, as the baritone proclaims, not Schiller's, but Beethoven's own words -"Oh Friends, not these sounds! Rather let us sing notes that are more pleasant and more joyful." With this transition now accomplished, the composer allows Schiller's Ode to unfold with chorus and soloists in a series of continuous variations on the hymn of joy. The text of the Ode portrays joy almost as a sanctifying gift from God with the power to unify all of nature and mankind and inspiring Beethoven to some of his most exalted music. He has given wings to Schiller's text with a movement that builds in exultation and then culminates in a coda of sweeping power and excitement.

—Paul E. Shannon, DMD

#### ECSO EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

The mission of the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra is to inspire, educate, and connect our communities through live orchestral music. Education is a particularly important component of our mission, and listed below is a description of some of our



#### The Eastern Connecticut

programs.

Symphony Youth String Ensemble and Youth Orchestra both meet weekly from September through mid-May. The String Ensemble and the Youth Orchestra are directed by Kathleen Anderson. Both groups are afforded opportunities to interact with ECSO musicians, including hands-on coaching from ECSO Music Director and Conductor Toshiyuki Shimada and exclusive invitations to ECSO rehearsals.



The Music in the Schools Program sends musical groups into schools in Norwich, New London, Groton, and other area towns. Over 23 programs are presented during the school year.

The Annual Instrumental **Competition** attracts musicians up to the age of 25 with no minimum age requirement. The finalists perform for an audience free of charge at Evans Hall on the Connecticut College campus. Another panel of three judges chooses the first place winner who receives \$2,000 and the opportunity to perform with the ECSO in a subscription concert.



#### ECSO EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

The ECSO's Young People's Concerts provide the unique, experiential opportunity for third, fourth, and fifth grade students in the region to attend a live symphonic concert. Each year, we provide two performances at the Garde Arts Center to over 2,000 students. The performances feature the full symphony orchestra



conducted by our Music Director, Toshiyuki (Toshi) Shimada. As arts funding remains in flux due to budgetary constraints at the state and national level, non-profit orchestras have been increasingly instrumental in providing unique live music experiences for students.

**Our High School Usher Program** gives students the opportunity to work with Garde ushers at ECSO concerts, receive community service credit, and listen to the concerts free of charge.





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