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Music Director & Conductor

2022-2023

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For more information, please visit ectsymphony.com/your-support or call our office at 860.443.2876.



Eastern Connecticut
Symphony Orchestra

Toshiyuki Shimada
Music Director & Conductor

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A Welcome Message

Welcome to the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra's 76th season. On behalf of the entire ECSO, I want to thank you for joining us, whether you're a devoted subscriber or a first-time attendee.

Our season program is as diverse as it can be. We will present music spanning 230 years, including classical and contemporary repertoire. From Mozart to the newest big band music, to pieces that depict various places on earth, they are all represented in our concerts.

The highlights of the season include:

1. Tribute to the people of Ukraine (November) by featuring two Ukrainian composers, along side with Russian master Dmitri Shostakovich who suffered under the Stalin Regime.
2. Sharing the stage with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Chorus (March) singing Brahms' *A German Requiem*, a choral masterpiece. A long overdue occasion.
3. The Earth Day concert (April) celebrating music from diverse backgrounds to close out our season. Featuring repertoire by African American female composer Nkeiru Okoye, Iranian Canadian composer Iman Habibi, and Swiss-born Jewish master Ernest Bloch. And in celebration of Earth Day, we perform Debussy's *La mer* that depict the wonders of the ocean. It serves as a nice bookend to our season as we opened with Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* (October), which highlights the splendor of the countryside.
4. Return of New London Big Band with a new program, paying homage to American music. The orchestra will perform music by Leonard Bernstein, John Harbison, and George Gershwin.

We will also showcase our principal brass players in two British masterworks. Gary Sienkiewicz, principal tuba, performs Vaughn Williams' *Tuba Concerto* in February. Matthew Muehl-Miller, principal horn will share his rendition of Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* alongside tenor Gene Stenger in March.

Finally, we welcome three distinguished performers whose appearance was delayed because of the pandemic. Grammy award-winning cellist Sara Sant'Ambrogio performs Elgar's *Cello Concerto* (October), Igor Pikayzen plays Shostakovich's mighty *Violin Concerto No. 1* (November) and Vyacheslav Gryaznov brings life to Rachmaninoff's majestic *Piano Concerto No. 3* (February.)

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 connects you to something joyous.

Yours in peace and music,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Toshiyuki Shimada". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Toshiyuki Shimada



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Greetings from Caleb, ECSO Executive Director



On behalf of the ECSO, we are all ecstatic to be here with you in the concert hall for our 76th season! Without the support of our subscribers, donors, and concertgoers, we would not have made it through one of the most difficult times in history for performing arts organizations. With gratitude, we will thank you through performances that aim to inspire and uplift, as well as provoke thought and deepen your connection with music.

As highlighted by Toshi in his note, we have an exciting lineup of music planned, exploring themes of place, identity, nature, and the composers who created these works. Just as important as the composer's intent and the quality of performance that we strive for in our orchestra is how the music impacts and resonates within you. We hope that each concert becomes a memorable and meaningful experience for you as a listener as well as another significant part of our storied history.

One of my favorite aspects of doing this work is that I get to hear firsthand accounts of our music's impact, both on and off stage. Once again, I look forward to another year of hearing and seeing our mission "to inspire, educate, and connect our communities through live orchestral music" in action.

We are truly humbled that this community continues to support this orchestra generously and enthusiastically. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you again for making the time in your life to be a part of the ECSO family in whatever capacity you choose.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Caleb Bailey". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Caleb Bailey
Executive Director

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Toshiyuki Shimada

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, Music Director and Conductor of the New Britain Symphony Orchestra and has been Music Director of the Yale Symphony Orchestra of Yale University since 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.



Maestro Shimada has been a frequent guest conductor with a number of international orchestras, including the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, L'Orchestre National de Lille in France, La Orquesta Filharmónica de Jalisco (Guadalajara, Mexico), the Slovak Philharmonic; the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra in Vilnius, the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Prague Chamber Orchestra, NÖ Tonkünstler Orchestra in Vienna, and most of the major symphony orchestras of the Republic of Turkey, including the Presidential Symphony Orchestra, Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra, Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic, Bilkent Symphony, and Izmir State Symphony Orchestra. In North America, he has guest conducted the Knoxville Symphony, the Houston Symphony, the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra, the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, the San José Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Pops Orchestra, the Pacific Symphony Orchestra, the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, and many other US and Canadian orchestras. He has performed in distinguished concert halls of the world such as Carnegie Hall, Great Hall of the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, Boston Symphony Hall, Vienna Musikverein, Auditorium Fondazione Cariplo Milano and Sala São Paulo.

He has collaborated with distinguished artists such as Itzhak Perlman, Andre Watts, Peter Serkin, Emanuel Ax, Yefim Bronfman, Idil Biret, Peter Frankl, Janos Starker, Joshua Bell, Hilary Hahn, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Cho-Liang Lin, Sir James Galway, Evelyn Glennie, and Barry Tuckwell. In the Pops field he has performed with Doc Severinsen, Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, and Marvin Hamlisch.

Maestro Shimada 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 was a finalist in the 1979 Herbert von Karajan conducting competition in Berlin, and a Fellow Conductor in the Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute in 1983.

Consistently recognized as an integral and beloved member of every community he joins, Maestro Shimada has received the Portland Fire Department's Merit Award, the Maine Publicity Bureau Cultural Award, and the Italian Heritage Society Cultural Award. He has had a number of state and city holidays named in his honor: Toshiyuki Shimada Day in Houston, TX; Toshiyuki Shimada Week in Portland, Maine; Toshiyuki Shimada Day in the State of Maine; Toshiyuki Shimada Day in New London, CT; and Toshiyuki Shimada Week in the State of Connecticut. In May 2006 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate degree in Fine Arts by Maine College of Arts.

He records with the Naxos and Albany Records, and the Vienna Modern Masters label, and currently has eighteen compact discs on those labels. He also records for Capstone Records, Querstand-VKJK (Germany), and his "Music from the Vatican" with the Prague Chamber Orchestra and Chorus is available through iTunes, Rhapsody, Apple and Spotify.

Maestro Shimada has a strong commitment to music education. He held a teaching position at Yale University as Associate Professor of Conducting with Yale School of Music and Department of Music from 2005 to 2019, and has been a faculty member of Rice University, Houston, Texas; the University of Southern Maine; and served as Artist Faculty at the Houston Institute of Aesthetic Study. He is on the faculty of the Annual New York Conductor's Workshop.

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Dvořák, Elgar & Beethoven

Saturday, October 22, 2022 - 7:30 pm

Toshiyuki Shimada
Sara Sant'Ambrogio

Music Director & Conductor
Cello

Dvořák

My Home Overture, Op. 62, B. 125a

Elgar

Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85

I. Adagio - Moderato

II. Lento - Allegro molto

III. Adagio

IV. Allegro - Moderato - Allegro, ma non troppo -

Poco più lento - Adagio

SARA SANT'AMBROGIO, cello

Intermission (20')

Beethoven

Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68
'Pastoral'

I. Allegro ma non troppo

II. Andante molto mosso

III. Allegro

IV. Allegro

V. Allegretto

Sara Sant'Ambrogio

Cello

Grammy Award-winning cellist Sara Sant'Ambrogio first leapt to international attention when she was a winner at the International Tchaikovsky Violoncello Competition in Moscow, Russia. As a result of her medal, Carnegie Hall invited Ms. Sant'Ambrogio to perform a recital that was filmed by CBS News as part of a profile about her, which was televised nationally. The New York Times described Ms. Sant'Ambrogio's New York recital debut as "sheer pleasure," saying "There was an irresistible warmth in everything Miss Sant'Ambrogio did."



Ms. Sant'Ambrogio has appeared as soloist with such orchestras as the Atlanta, Beijing Philharmonic, Boston, Budapest, Chicago, Dallas, Moscow State Philharmonic, Prague Chamber Orchestra, Osaka Century Orchestra (Japan), Royal Philharmonic, St. Louis, San Francisco, Seattle and Vienna Symphony; she has performed thousands of concerts on six continents at the world's major music centers and festivals including Aspen, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Hollywood Bowl, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Koncert Huset in Stockholm, Marlboro, Musikverein in Vienna, Ravinia, Orchard and Suntory Halls in Tokyo and Great Mountain Festival in Korea. Ms. Sant'Ambrogio is particularly excited to have finally performed in all 50 United States last season when she performed at the Juneau Jazz and Classics Festival in Alaska!!

Always looking to draw in new audiences and push the boundaries of classical music, Sara has performed with Sting and Joshua Bell in the production of "Twin Spirits," the story of the love affair between Clara and Robert Schumann. The Los Angeles Times wrote, "Joshua Bell and Sara Sant'Ambrogio played with lyrical restraint and lovely tone." Tracks from her solo CD "Dreaming" have been featured on multiple film soundtracks, including the opening title on the HBO award-winning documentary, "A Matter of Taste." Ms. Sant'Ambrogio has collaborated with the New York City Ballet in 7 highly successful sold out concerts at Lincoln Center performing the Bach Suites and was recently featured in the opening Fall Gala of the ballet performing the *Elgar Cello Concerto*. Sara has recorded with Tim McGraw on the #1 hit "Humble and Kind" and performed with Rufus Wainwright in the inauguration of a new concert series at the National Arts Club.

Ms. Sant'Ambrogio started her cello studies with her father John Sant'Ambrogio, who was principal cellist of the St. Louis Symphony, and at the age of 16 was invited on full scholarship to study with David Soyer at the Curtis Institute of Music where she received her high school diploma. Three years later, world renowned cellist Leonard Rose invited Ms. Sant'Ambrogio to study at The Juilliard School; within weeks of arriving, she won the All-Juilliard Schumann Cello Concerto Competition, resulting in the first of many performances at Lincoln Center.

In addition to her Tchaikovsky Medal, Ms. Sant'Ambrogio has won numerous international competitions, including The Whitaker, The Dealey, Artists International, Palm Beach Awards and the Naumburg Award with her ensemble the Eroica Trio. Ms. Sant'Ambrogio won a Grammy Award for her performance of Bernstein's Arias and Barcarolles and a NPR Best Debut Recording with Eroica. She has been profiled in Strings, Glamour, Gramophone, Vogue, Strad, Elle, Bon Appetit, In Fashion, Travel and Leisure, Detour and Fanfare magazines as well as The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, USA Today, and on CBS, ABC, PBS, USA and CNN networks. Ms. Sant'Ambrogio is the subject of a feature-length documentary, which has had hundreds of airings nationwide on PBS and international networks.

Ms. Sant'Ambrogio is a founding member of the Eroica Trio, which has toured extensively the US, Europe, Asia, Middle East, Australia and New Zealand. The trio opened the "Distinctive Debuts" series at Carnegie Hall, and that year represented Carnegie Hall and the United States as the official chamber music ensemble in concerts worldwide. While touring the globe, Eroica has released 9 celebrated recordings garnering multiple Grammy nominations.

While touring with all the beloved standards of the cello repertoire, Ms. Sant'Ambrogio is very excited to be giving the world premiere of Michael Bacon's Cello Concerto with conductor Alexander Micklethwait and the Oklahoma City Philharmonic in the 2019-2020 season as well as the release of her latest recording with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of the romantic masterpiece, *Elgar Cello Concerto*, a gorgeous new concerto written for her by the American composer Bruce Wolosoff and two of her own arrangements of Astor Piazzolla's sultry Oblivion and Libertango.

Ms. Sant'Ambrogio performs on a Johannes Gagliano cello, Napoli, ca 1800. Sara's CD's, photographs and tour information are available at her website www.sarasantambrogio.com, www.amazon.com, and on iTunes. Visit Sara on Facebook, search [sara.santambrogio1](#) and Instagram and join the fun!

Program Notes

Antonín Dvořák

My Home Overture, Op. 62, B. 125a

Born 1841 in Nelahozeves, Czech Republic

Died 1904 in Prague, Czech Republic

The score of the overture calls for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, triangle, and strings.



The legacy of Dvořák's *My Home* is entwined in Czech nationalism through both the composer's work developing a distinct Czech musical sound, and the work of its subject, the Czech nationalist playwright and actor Josef Kajetán Tyl. *My Home* is an overture to a play about Tyl's rather colorful life. His parents secretly married in 1808 against the wishes of his maternal grandfather, an established businessman. His maternal grandmother would not even communicate with him until she was informed that he was exceptionally gifted by one of his teachers. However, Tyl soon ran away from school to join a traveling theater troupe eventually becoming involved with Prague's Estates Theatre, one of the most important venues in Czech theatrical and musical history, which is most famous for hosting the premieres of two important Mozart operas, *Don Giovanni* and *The Clemency of Titus*. Tyl was even briefly a member of the Austrian parliament in 1848 before revolutions throughout Europe in that year led to his expulsion from there and the Estates Theatre because his ideas about Czech independence were considered too radical. Because he could not get a license to start a traveling theatre company, he joined one as an actor, but, in 1856, he fell seriously ill and tragically died in poverty at age 48.

On the other hand, Antonin Dvořák was the son of a village butcher in Bohemia within the Austro-Hungarian Empire (now the western part of the modern nation of Czech Republic). Dvořák was expected to succeed to his father's business, but as a child became a member of the village band and received musical training from the local schoolmaster. From when Dvořák was twelve years old, he was able to spend some time away from home as a child mainly to learn the German language and study music with Antonín Liehmann. In 1857 he became a student at the Prague Organ School, and from 1862-1871 Dvořák was a member of the Provisional Theatre Orchestra, eventually becoming principal violist. Afterward, Dvořák became organist at the church of St. Adalbert, and was able to devote more time to teaching music and composing. With the help of the major Nineteenth Century German composer Johannes Brahms, Dvořák was able to

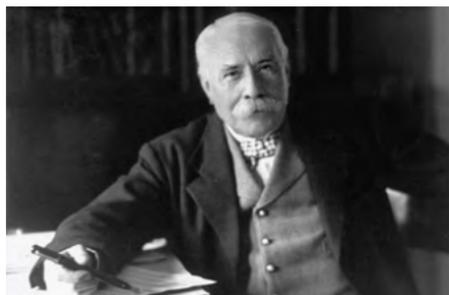
have his Moravian Duets printed by the Simrock publishing house. This led to his music gaining greater recognition and acclaim, and Dvořák became one of the leading composers of the Nineteenth Century, eventually teaching and performing abroad, including, most famously, for a couple of years during the 1890s in the United States. Unlike Tyl, despite his modest upbringing, Dvořák died at age 62 already with a reputation as one of the foremost composers of western classical music of his era.

The overture centers around the melodies of two important Czech songs: *In the Farmyard* (*Na tom našem dvoře*), which is a Czech folksong, and *Where is my Home?* (*Kde domov můj?*), a song for which Tyl wrote the lyrics and Frantisek Skroup added music. *Kde domov můj?* later became the national anthem of Czech Republic. The overture remains popular in Czech Republic today likely because of this quotation along with some interest in its relationship to Czech history.

- Saadya Chevan

Edward Elgar

Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85



Born 1857 in Broadheath, UK

Died 1934 in Worcester, UK

The score of the cello concerto calls for solo cello, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings.

Edward Elgar's *Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85*, his last notable work, is a cornerstone of the solo cello repertoire. In contrast with Elgar's earlier *Violin Concerto*, which is lyrical and passionate, the *Cello Concerto* is for the most part contemplative and elegiac.

In 1918, Elgar underwent an operation in London to have an infected tonsil removed, a dangerous operation for a 61-year-old man. Regaining consciousness after sedation, he asked for pencil and paper, and wrote down the melody that would become the first theme from the concerto.

The concerto had a disastrous premiere, at the opening concert of the London Symphony Orchestra's 1919–20 season on October 27, 1919. Apart from the concerto, which the composer conducted, the rest of the program was conducted by Albert Coates, who overran his rehearsal time at the expense of Elgar's. Lady

Elgar wrote, “that brutal selfish ill-mannered bounder ... that brute Coates went on rehearsing.” The critic of *The Observer*, Ernest Newman, wrote, “There have been rumors about during the week of inadequate rehearsal. Whatever the explanation, the sad fact remains that never, in all probability, has so great an orchestra made so lamentable an exhibition of itself... The work itself is lovely stuff, very simple – that pregnant simplicity that has come upon Elgar’s music in the last couple of years – but with a profound wisdom and beauty underlying its simplicity.”

The first movement is in ternary form with introduction. It opens with a recitative in the solo cello, immediately followed by a short answer from the clarinets, bassoons, and horn. An ad lib modified scale played by the solo cello follows. The viola section then presents a rendition of the main theme in Moderato, then passes it to the solo cello who repeats it. The string section plays the theme a third time and then the solo cello modifies it into a fortissimo restatement. The orchestra reiterates, and the cello presents the theme a final time before moving directly into a lyrical E major middle section. This transitions into a similar repetition of the first section. The slower first movement moves directly into the second movement.

The second movement opens with a fast crescendo with pizzicato chords in the cello. Then, the solo cello plays what will be the main motive of the Allegro molto section. Pizzicato chords follow. A brief cadenza is played, and sixteenth-note motive and chords follow. Then a ritardando leads directly to a scherzo-like section which remains until the end. The slow third movement starts and ends with a lyrical melody, and one theme runs through the entire movement.

The end flows directly into the finale. The fourth movement begins with another fast crescendo and ends at fortissimo. The solo cello follows with another recitative and cadenza. The movement’s main theme is noble and stately, but with undertones and with many key changes. Near the end of the piece, the tempo slows into a *più lento* (more slowly) section, in which a new set of themes appears. The tempo slows further, to the tempo of the third movement, and the theme from that movement is restated. This tempo continues to slow until it becomes stagnant, and the orchestra holds a chord. Then, at the very end of the piece, the recitative of the first movement is played again. This flows into a reiteration of the main theme of the fourth movement, with tension building until the final three chords, which close the piece.

- Paul E. Shannon D.M.D



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Ludwig van Beethoven

Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68 '*Pastoral*'



Born 1770 in Bonn, Germany

Died 1827 in Vienna, Austria

The score of '*Pastoral*' calls for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, timpani, and strings.

Beethoven's irascible nature often set him at odds with those who were closest to him: from his royal patrons to his housekeepers, and even his troublesome nephew. But in dealing with nature

he was always at peace. He admitted that his happiest moments were spent walking in the beautiful countryside surrounding Vienna. The many hours of communing with nature not only had the psychological effect of putting Beethoven at ease with himself and the world but also served as a catalyst in renewing his musical creative process. It is not at all surprising then to understand, in view of Beethoven's intense love of the cyclic beauty of the green world, that he would compose a symphony based on this theme. Written during the years 1807-1808, the *Sixth Symphony* received its first performance on December 22, 1808 in Vienna.

Beethoven himself gave the symphony its subtitle, "*Pastoral*", and even included programmatic notations as a heading for each movement. This work is perhaps the most spontaneous of the nine symphonies, as if Beethoven were simply recording dictation from nature. None of the heroic tensions or violent clashes heard in symphonies are found in this work. It was kept by the composer essentially as "pure", with fundamentally basic, elementary harmonies, as if Beethoven was reducing the world to its fundamentals.

I. "The Awakening of Joyful Impressions on arrival in the Country": The whole movement seems to be derived from the gentle opening theme, melodic fragments of which keep recurring with subtle variations of tonality and instrumental tone color. In essence the music is a series of variations on the "theme" of the movement subtitle: the joy and relaxation of that special solitude found in the countryside.

II. "Scene by the Brook": This movement Beethoven presents as a continuous flowing, murmuring and sunlit brook. The music unfolds in a series of beautiful free variations and concludes with a coda where Beethoven calls for his instruments to imitate the sounds of birds: a nightingale by the flute, a quail by the oboe, and the cuckoo by the clarinet.

III. “Merry Gathering of Country Folk”: The scherzo of the symphony contains many impressionistic touches such as a peasant dancing and a rustic band, with music which is indeed merry and carefree. The happy gathering is soon interrupted however, by---

IV. “Thunderstorm”: A brief thunderstorm rolls over the countryside, bringing a halt to the festivities. Beethoven’s storm is vividly realistic with screaming wind, brilliant lightning flashes and rolling thunder. Piccolo, trombones and timpani, silent up until the moment, are used with ingenuity to create these naturalistic effects. The tempest soon subsides as thunder is heard fading into the distance and the music leads without pause into the last movement.

V. “Shepherd’s Song, Glad and Thankful Feelings After the Storm”: A shepherd’s call by the solo clarinet and then solo horn is taken up by the violins who make the principal theme out of it. With another set of free variations on this theme, similar to his first movement, Beethoven recreates the same placid and idyllic calm of a peaceful landscape. The theme is embellished with an embroidery of running figurative passages and at times is dissolved in these figurations, but its melodic curve is seldom obscured. The coda treats the same theme very quietly in the strings, and the movement ends with a restatement of the original shepherd’s horn call.

- Paul E. Shannon D.M.D



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Shostakovich & Sibelius

Saturday, November 19, 2022 - 7:30 pm

Toshiyuki Shimada
Igor Pikayzen

Music Director & Conductor
Violin

Silvestrov
arr. Gies

Prayer for the Ukraine

Shostakovich

Violin Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 77 (99)

I. Nocturne: Moderato

II. Scherzo: Allegro

III. Passacaglia: Andante - Cadenza (attacca)

IV. Burlesque: Allegro con brio - Presto

IGOR PIKAYZEN, violin

Intermission (20')

Skoryk

Melody

Sibelius

Symphony No. 7 in C major, Op. 105

(in one movement)

Adagio - Vivacissimo - Adagio - Allegro molto moderato - Vivace - Presto - Adagio -

Largamente molto - Tempo I

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 a forefront of a major musical career.” -- Moscow Times



2022 sees the release of Igor Pikayzen’s recording of the *Glazunov Violin Concerto* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra for Warner Music, as well as a CD of violin-piano fantasies with longtime collaborator, Tatyana Pikayzen. Upcoming and recent

appearances include debuts and re-engagements with Sinfonia Toronto, Filarmonica de Boca del Rio, Orquesta Sinfonica del Estado de Mexico, Istanbul Symphony, Sinfonica Nacional de Chile, Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfonica de Xalapa, National Symphony of Georgia, Zhejiang Symphony Orchestra, La Crosse Symphony amongst others. An avid recitalist, Mr. Pikayzen’s season includes 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.

Previous solo appearances include the Russian State Symphony Orchestra, Moscow Radio Symphony, Bucharest Philharmonic, Sinfonietta Veracruzana, Filarmonica di Bacau, Bialystok Philharmonic, 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. Mr. Pikayzen has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician in Carnegie Hall 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, LAuditori 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.

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Program Notes

Valentin Silvestrov

Prayer for the Ukraine (arr. Gies)

Born 1937 in Kyiv, Ukraine

Currently living in Berlin

The score of the *Prayer* calls for 2 flutes, oboe, 2 clarinets, bassoon, 2 horns, timpani, harp, and strings.

Valentin Silvestrov wrote *Prayer for the Ukraine* as part of his response to the 2014 Euromaidan protests against now-former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich. The Euromaidan demonstrators opposed a decision by President Yanukovich not to sign an agreement increasing economic ties with the EU, and instead strengthen trading relationships with Russia and its economic partners in the Eurasian Economic Union. Yanukovich has always been viewed, to say the least, as an extremely pro-Russian Ukrainian politician. As a result of the protests and an impending impeachment vote, Yanukovich fled Ukraine on February 22, 2014. Around the same time, Russia began its invasion and occupation of Crimea, a violation of international law. Since this time there have been Russian troops continuously occupying Crimea, which is Ukrainian territory, and Ukraine has been at civil war with Russian-supported breakaway regions in the far eastern portion of the country.

As a composer, Silvestrov has been an important figure in Ukrainian and Soviet music since the 1960s. He initially was known as an avant-garde composer who pushed the boundaries of Soviet limits on musical content that had been in place since the government sanctioned Stalinist ideas of Socialist Realist art from the 1930s. Silvestrov was even expelled from the Ukrainian Union of Composers in 1970 because of a protest act, a punishment that lasted for three years. During this time his music became more quiet and intimate as well as less political. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Silvestrov has been able to be more open about his politics in his music.

Prayer for the Ukraine is a prominent piece from the composer's recent composition of political music. The Prayer captures the hopes of the Ukrainian people for peace, territorial sovereignty, and the right to self-determination of their nation's future. Originally written for mixed choir a cappella, due to increased interest in Ukrainian music resulting from Russia's invasion of the country, the *Prayer* was transcribed in 2022 for full and chamber orchestras.



Regarding the current war, Silvestrov, who himself became a refugee this year as a result of the fighting, told *The New York Times* that “It’s very obvious that this is not a problem of Ukraine and Russia. It is a problem of civilization.” He has also expressed unease about the fact “that this misfortune needed to happen for [musical groups throughout the world] to begin playing my music.” *Prayer for the Ukraine* challenges us to be constantly aware of the issues the Ukrainian nation and people face as it goes through an earth-shattering invasion and war, and to support their rights to peace and self-determination.

- Saadya Chevan

Dmitri Shostakovich

Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 77 (99)

Born 1906 in St. Petersburg, Russia

Died 1975 in Moscow, Russia

The score of this violin concerto calls for solo violin, 3 flutes, piccolo, 3 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, celeste, and strings.

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 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

Myroslav Skoryk

Melody

Born 1938 in Lviv, Ukraine

Died 2020 in Kyiv, Ukraine

The score calls for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings.

Until his death in 2020 Myroslav Skoryk was one of the most well known Ukrainian composers, and his music continues to be played around the world. Skoryk's early work was praised by no less than Dmitri Shostakovich, the most famous composer of the Soviet period. Shostakovich told Skoryk in a letter about watching the film "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors", which Skoryk scored, that he had "listened with great delight to your amazingly beautiful music!" Skoryk's musical talents were first noticed by his great aunt Solomiya Krushelnitskaya, who was a famous international opera singer of the early 20th century. Skoryk initially studied at a music school in Lviv in 1945, but in 1947 he and his family were sent to Siberia for political reasons Skoryk was



able to study with Valentina Kantorova, a former student of Sergei Rachmaninoff.

The work *Melody* is his most famous composition, and it was written as part of the score for the 1978 Soviet World War II drama film “The High Mountain Pass” by director Volodymyr Denysenko. Parts of Denysenko’s film were censored by the Soviet government, so he asked Skoryk to compose the music in a way that conveyed the things he could not show on screen. The *Melody* is emblematic of how Skoryk rose to the occasion for this task, and has even been called the “spiritual hymn of Ukraine.” In May 2020, forty musicians from the orchestras of Lviv and Mariupol in Ukraine staged a virtual performance of *Melody* from their homes due to COVID-19 lockdown policies, indicating how beloved this work is in Ukraine. This virtual event was similar to many performances undertaken by orchestras around the world during this time, such as the Boston Pops’ performance of John Williams “Summon the Heroes” in that same month.

The *Melody* is one of the classic cinematic plaintive orchestral works for strings. The opening notes introduce a somber five note motif that is prominent throughout the duration of the piece. This motif is played by the various sections of the orchestra, sometimes sullenly and sometimes more forcefully, depending on the emotional character of the moment. Eventually after it crescendos and climaxes, the melody is repeated one more time, this time quietly and reflectively as a coda to the piece.

- Saadya Chevan



Jean Sibelius

Symphony No. 7 in C major, Op. 105

Born 1865 in Hämeenlinna, Finland

Died 1957 in Järvenpää, Finland

This symphony’s score calls for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, and strings.

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*. This is the composer’s last published symphony, and Sibelius lived for over 30 years after its composition. 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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New London Big Band Returns

Saturday, January 21, 2023 - 7:30 pm

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New London Big Band

Music Director & Conductor
Sean Nelson, Leader & Trombone

Bernstein

On the Town: Three Dance Episodes

Harbison

Remembering Gatsby (Foxtrot for Orchestra)

Gershwin
arr. Myron

The Man I Love

Intermission (20')

Nelson

Social Hour

Nelson

Brisket and Beans

Gershwin

Soon

Nelson

Meatspace

Debussy

Clair de lune

Juan Tizol

Keb-Lah

Gershwin

Embraceable You

Gershwin
arr. Nelson

Fascinating Rhythm

Nelson

Last Call

New London Big Band

Lead by Sean Nelson

Led by trombonist and composer **Sean Nelson**, the New London Big Band is a “full bodied and polished brassy big band” (Jazz Weekly) made up of 17 of the finest musicians in New England. Formed in 2016, they play monthly to sold out crowds at the Social Bar + Kitchen in New London, where they attract professional and amateur dancers from near and far.



Their album, *Social Hour*, released to critical acclaim on Summit Records, is “a smartly swinging young crew...their beat can’t be beat, and they know and show that swing

is the thing.” (Midwest Record) The album received airplay globally and charted on the jazz radio charts. The band performed an album release concert for a sold out audience at the famed Birdland Jazz Club.

The band wants to show the world that big band jazz is a vibrant and joyful sound that is not just for jazz aficionados. “Nelson...has assembled a youthful, sharp, hip 17-piece ensemble as dedicated as he is to the belief that big band sounds can provide a fine musical experience — one best served up live, where the groove and excitement of the arrangements and instrumental interplay can energize and pack a dance floor across generations.” (The Day of New London)

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Program Notes



Credit: Courtesy of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

Leonard Bernstein

On the Town: Three Dance Episode

Born 1918 in Lawrence, MA

Died 1990 in New York, NY

The score calls for flute, piccolo, oboe, English horn, 3 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, 2 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, percussion, piano, and strings.

Leonard Bernstein's musical *On the Town* premiered in 1944 at the height of American involvement in World War II. In 1943 Bernstein, at the time, a young wunderkind of American symphonic music was approached by choreographer Jerome Robbins (who later contributed the choreography to Bernstein's musical *West Side Story*) with the idea of creating a ballet about three sailors on a 24 hour shore leave in New York, a plot that would reflect the wartime experience in the city. This ballet, titled *Fancy Free*, premiered in April 1944. The set designer Oliver Smith suggested to Bernstein and Robbins that it be turned into a full length Broadway show, and recruited his friend Paul Feigay as a co-producer. Finally, Bernstein recruited his friends Betty Comden and Adolph Green to write the book, at the time they were members of a comedy troupe that Bernstein admired. The entire production team for *On the Town* consisted of artists in their mid-20s, and they aimed to create a musical for the World War II-period that had a military theme and plot while also being very lighthearted. Bernstein later claimed that "there was not a note of *Fancy Free* music in *On the Town*" although he acknowledged that it was possible to find similarities because of the thematic material used in both.

An innovative element of the musical was the decision to use a, for the time, racially diverse cast. The female lead was Japanese American ballet dancer Sono Osato. Osato had already experienced multiple periods of unemployment during the war resulting from the now-unilaterally criticized internment and exclusion policies that the United States employed primarily against Japanese Americans in the name of World War II defense policy. Her ballet troupe had toured Mexico, where she could not travel due to Japanese Americans being banned from leaving the United States on grounds of espionage concerns, and the western United States, where she was not allowed to go because it was considered a military exclusion zone. Further, the production team cast six African American actors as a fully integrated part of the chorus; everyone was playing various New Yorkers

and sailors going about their business, and even held hands during the dance numbers without regard for race. Nine months into the musical's original run, conductor Everett Lee was recruited to take over as music director, becoming the first African American ever to serve in such a role on Broadway.

Since its premiere *On the Town* has been a classic musical about what it means to be in New York. Song lyrics like “New York, New York, a helluva town. The Bronx is up, and The Battery’s down. The people ride in a hole in the ground” portray the massive, fast paced, and rugged nature of the city’s environment to a visitor. It is certainly one of Bernstein’s most impressive early works, and the musical and its derivative works continue to be commonly performed works by Bernstein today.

- Saadya Chevan

John Harbison

Remembering Gatsby (Foxtrot for Orchestra)

Born 1938 in Orange, NJ

This score calls for 3 flutes, piccolo, 3 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, soprano saxophone, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, piano, and strings.



John Harbison is a contemporary composer known for music that bridges the gap between jazz and classical genres. Harbison wrote *Remembering Gatsby* in 1985 on a commission from conductor Robert Shaw and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. The work is based on sketches he wrote for an opera adapting the novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Harbison’s uncle in fact, had been a member of college theater troupe the Triangle Club at Princeton University with Fitzgerald, and Harbison himself grew up near Princeton, New Jersey in an environment similar to the one the novel attempts to portray. Fourteen years later, in 1999, the Metropolitan Opera commissioned Harbison to write the full opera based on *The Great Gatsby*. This was a dream come true for Harbison who had early in his career wanted to become an opera composer until the two operas he wrote in the late 1970s did not succeed.

The novel *The Great Gatsby* is about the interactions between its protagonist Nick Carraway, who narrates the story, with the mysterious millionaire Jay Gatsby and his former lover Daisy Buchanan. Fitzgerald’s prose paints a portrait

of class and society in New York City and its wealthy Long Island suburbs in the 1920s. *Remembering Gatsby* opens in the composer's words with a passage that portrays "Gatsby's vision of the green light on Daisy's Dock." The main part of *Remembering Gatsby* is setup as a foxtrot dance "first with a kind of call to order, then a twenties tune I had written for one of the party scenes." This dance is led by a soprano saxophone, and also features muted brass instruments prominently. Finally, *Remembering Gatsby's* concludes with a recap of some of the motives we've heard, making references to the telephone bell and automobile horns sounds elucidated in the novel's text, which comment on the immense technological progress that was astounding for the era. According to Harbison in the era *The Great Gatsby* was written his father was attempting to make a living as a show-tune composer, and he states that "this piece may also have been a chance to see him in his tuxedo again."

George Gershwin

The Man I Love (arr. Myron)

Born 1898 in New York, NY
Died 1937 in Los Angeles, CA

The score calls for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, piano, celeste, harp, and strings



Credit: Getty Images

The song "The Man I Love" was originally featured in George and Ira Gershwin's 1927 musical *Strike Up the Band*. George Gershwin is well known to American audiences today for writing many tunes that have become a part of the Great American Songbook, which refers to the popular American songs of the early Twentieth Century including works by Gershwin such as "I Got Rhythm," "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," and "It Ain't Necessarily So." Gershwin also composed classic orchestral works such as *Rhapsody in Blue* and *An American in Paris*. His older brother Ira Gershwin was a talented lyricist, who wrote many of the lyrics to George Gershwin's songs including all three mentioned above; this has led to the authorship of many of the brothers' musicals being referred to as by "The Gershwins." After his brother's death, Ira Gershwin continued to write lyrics for songs by composers including Jerome Kern and Kurt Weill.

The initial 1927 preview run of the musical *Strike Up the Band* took place in Philadelphia, and was well-received by critics, but not by audiences. As a result, it was not produced on Broadway that year. A revised version of *Strike Up the Band* was produced on Broadway in 1930, a production that was ultimately performed 191 times, but this version cut the "The Man I Love" from its songs. In spite of

this decision the song has become a classic part of the Gershwins' oeuvre.

The original 1927 version of *Strike Up the Band* is a political satire. To make the 1930 version more appealing to audiences its political elements were slightly dumbed down and book writer Morrie Ryskind replaced the original dark ending with a happy one. The musical's plot is about how Horace J. Fletcher, the owner of an American cheese company convinces the President of the United States to go to war with Switzerland on account of the country sending a telegram protesting a new 50% tariff on imported cheese. The tariff of course benefits Fletcher's company, but places the Swiss, who in the 1920s as today were well known for their cheese production, at a disadvantage. The 1930 version turns the war scenes into a dream sequence. Within the musical, the song "The Man I Love" is setup as a duet where Fletcher's daughter, Joan, complains to reporter James Townsend about how he does not want to go to war over cheese, a food he does not like, but would be fine with going to war over a food like pie, and how the man she loves would not have such poor taste.

- Saadya Chevan

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Actions Speak Louder

Kodály & Rachmaninoff

Saturday, February 18, 2023 - 7:30 pm

Toshiyuki Shimada	Music Director & Conductor
Vyacheslav Gryaznov	Piano
Gary Sienkiewicz	Tuba

Mozart	Symphony No. 32 in G major, K. 318 I. Allegro spiritoso II. Andante III. Tempo primo
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Kodály	Dances of Galánta
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Vaughan Williams	Tuba Concerto in F minor I. Prelude: Allegro moderato II. Romanza: Andante sostenuto III. Finale - Rondo alla Tedesca: Allegro
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GARY SIENKIEWICZ, tuba

Intermission (20')

Rachmaninoff	Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 30 I. Allegro ma non tanto II. Intermezzo: Adagio III. Finale: Alla breve
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VYACHESLAV GRYZANOV, piano

Vyacheslav Gryaznov

Piano

Russian concert pianist Vyacheslav Gryaznov, arranger and composer, is the author of more than 40 concert arrangements. He has gained a reputation as one of the most remarkable young arrangers working today. In 2014 Gryaznov signed a publishing contract with Schott Music, the youngest Russian in their history to do so.

His most recent 2021 recording of westerh transcriptions on the Master Performers label is joining his album of Russian Transcriptions on the Steinway & Sons label, released in 2018 as a part of his 1st prize at the New York Concert Artists Worldwide Audition (2016). The new album is available worldwide on all major streaming platforms.



He graduated with honors from the Central Music School of the Moscow State Conservatory where he studied with Professor Manana Kandelaki. He proceeded with undergraduate studies at the Moscow Conservatory (class of Professor Yuri Slesarev), once again completing his degree with honors. He continued at the Moscow Conservatory as a postgraduate student and was on the teaching faculty of the Moscow Conservatory's Piano Department. In

2018 he completed Yale University's Artist Diploma program under the Yale School of Music's Professor Boris Berman. He is an artist of the Moscow Philharmonic and is an Artist-in-Residence with The Drozdoff Society in the United States.

Gryaznov received prizes and scholarships from the foundations of Vladimir Spivakov, Yuri Bashmet, Mstislav Rostropovich (the Neuhaus Grant) and Yamaha Scholarship. He has participated in numerous international festivals, including Dialogue of Cultures in Vilnius, Art Masters in Switzerland, Russian Music in the Baltics in Kaliningrad and Vilnius, Musical Kremlin in Moscow and Bryansk, Festival de Musique de Wissembourg in France, and others.

The first Russian president awarded a prize to Gryaznov, who has won numerous awards in prestigious international competitions in Moscow, Italy, Ukraine, Denmark, Georgia and Japan, including six first and grand prizes. The pianist has performed in the USA, Italy, Denmark, France, the UK, Croatia, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Georgia, Armenia, Poland, the Baltic states, Africa, many cities in Japan, and throughout Russia. His NHK video recordings are shown on Japanese TV on a regular basis. In Russia, the pianist's recordings are often played on Orpheus radio.

Gary Sienkiewicz

Tuba

Gary Sienkiewicz, tuba, is a native of Northampton Massachusetts and holds a Master of Music degree from Yale University and a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Massachusetts. He is principal tubist with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, the Hartford Brass Ensemble, the Clarion and Berkshire Brass as well as the Worcester Brass Consort. In addition to the Eastern Connecticut Symphony, Gary has also played with many orchestras throughout New England including the New Haven Symphony, Hartford and Springfield Symphonies, the Rhode Island Philharmonic, the Vermont and Waterbury Symphonies and the United States Coast Guard Band. He has also recorded three compact discs with the Albany Symphony Orchestra and has shared the stage with such stars as Ray Charles, Dave Brubeck, Doc Severinson, Judy Collins and The Who. His



playing is known for its sensitivity and has been described as “Impressive” by the Albany Times Union and “Shining” by the New London Day. Mr. Sienkiewicz has been teaching at the University of Connecticut since 1990, where he plays in the Faculty Brass Quintet and leads the tuba/euphonium ensemble.

In addition to his duties at the University of Connecticut, Mr. Sienkiewicz also teaches at Smith College. He has taught at the College of Saint Rose as well as Mount Holyoke College, the University of Massachusetts and Deerfield Academy. He also has given many master classes throughout Connecticut and Massachusetts. Gary has had the privilege of studying with some of the world's great brass musicians including Toby Hanks, Warren Deck, Steve Norrell and Chester Schmitz.

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Program Notes

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Symphony No. 32 in G major, K. 318

Born 1756 in Salzburg, Austria

Died 1791 in Vienna, Austria

This symphony's score calls for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings.

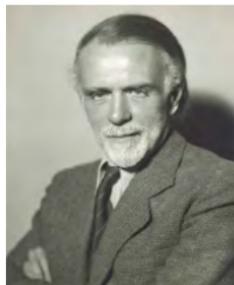
The autograph score for Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Symphony in G major*, which is now in the collection of the New York Public Library, is dated April 26, 1779. We know from this date that Mozart completed this symphony in Salzburg shortly after his disastrous final trip to Paris as a young adult. While in Paris, Mozart had failed to make significant inroads to the musical culture there, and his mother, who had accompanied him, passed away. The symphony is commonly referred to as Mozart's thirty-second although in Mozart's lifetime the symphony and catalog numbers we use to identify his works did not exist.



This symphony reflects the redefinition of the symphony from being a short, usually three movement work, no more than 10-15 minutes long, that would precede an opera performance, to a lengthier abstract stand-alone concert work. While its length is more in line with an opera overture, the style makes it a more memorable piece than a common opera overture. The transformation of symphonies to the concert works we are familiar with today was led by Mozart and his contemporaries, "classical period" composers like the Haydn brothers and Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf. It is believed that the symphony may have been used as a prelude to at least one or two of Mozart's operas and perhaps the work of another composer. Musicologist Alfred Einstein (a Twentieth Century expert on Mozart's works who should not be confused with the great scientist Albert Einstein) thought that it might have been composed as a prelude to *Zaïde*, an opera Mozart ultimately abandoned prior to completion.

Although the idea of using an entirely unrelated type of orchestral work that we associate today with long run times may seem an odd thing to program immediately before an opera performance, it is important to remember that at the time audience members normally clapped, entered and exited the auditorium, and talked out loud to each other for the duration of a performance. This would of course be considered extremely rude by today's standards, but using a longer overture allowed people who preferred to arrive later to an opera to find their seats before the singing began.

- Saadya Chevan



Zoltán Kodály

Dances of Galánta

Born 1882 in Kecskemét, Hungary

Died 1967 in Budapest, Hungary

This piece's score calls for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, percussion, and strings.

Dances of Galánta consists of a series of dances musically composed in the style of Hungarian folk music. It was written in 1933 as part of celebrations for the anniversary of the merger of the cities of Buda and Pest into the modern Hungarian capital of Budapest. The title *Dances of Galánta* refers to the town and district of Galanta, an area that Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály lived in for seven years as a child when it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; he explained when writing the piece that he had fond memories of the town from childhood. Although Galanta became part of Czechoslovakia in 1919, and later Slovakia in 1993 (admittedly under the Nazis it was made part of Hungary), it always had a significant Hungarian population; according to Slovakia's 2021 census, 27.72% of the town's over 15,000 residents identified as Hungarian.

Zoltán Kodály and his more famous colleague Béla Bartók were crucial to establishing modern Hungarian ethnomusicology. They performed comprehensive studies and transcriptions of Hungarian folk music and demonstrated how it interplayed with music created by the Romani people (the European ethnic group commonly referred to as Gypsies), which had been labeled as Hungarian music in the Nineteenth Century in works of composers such as Johannes Brahms and Franz Liszt. Kodály and Bartók both composed music that was based on Hungarian music they documented in an effort to change music in Hungary by creating pieces that would more realistically reflect the music of their ethnicity.

In the case of *Dances of Galánta*, the composer derived its musical themes from a series of books of Hungarian dances that were published in Vienna around the year 1800. One of these books consisted of dances written by the Romani people of Galanta. *Dances of Galánta* is reminiscent in its title and Hungarian folk source material of Bartók's *Dance Suite*, which had been written ten years earlier in 1923 for a similar celebration by the city of Budapest (the ECSO most recently performed Bartók's *Dance Suite* in the 2016-2017 season). The piece is structured in the verbunkos style of music; these were folk tunes that were used in Eighteenth Century Hungary for purposes of recruiting people into the Hapsburg emperors' armed forces until conscription was introduced in the Nineteenth Century. The Dances are structured in Rondo form, at the beginning

of the piece a musical theme is gradually introduced by various instruments in the orchestra, with the full theme finally being played by a solo oboe. The orchestra goes on to play a series of variations on that theme for the duration of the piece.

- Saadya Chevan

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Tuba Concerto

Born 1872 in Gloucestershire, UK

Died 1958 in London, UK

This concerto's score calls for solo tuba, 2 flutes, piccolo, oboe, 2 clarinets, bassoon, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, timpani, percussion, and strings.



Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Concerto for Tuba and Orchestra* is the earliest concerto written for solo tuba. It was premiered on June 13, 1954 by the London Symphony with the orchestra's principal tubist, Philip Catelinet, as soloist. According to Catelinet, after the first time he played the piece, which was in the presence of the composer and his wife, Crispin, the family's rather tiny cat, was fascinated by the instrument, and crawled so far into the bell of the tuba that he was out of sight from his human onlookers. The appearance of the tuba in a soloistic role rather than the instrument relegated to an orchestral back corner reflects a shift in the use of tuba within orchestral music that was led by Twentieth Century American and British composers; it made the tuba a more prominent instrument in ensembles. Catelinet later wrote in his recollection of the concerto's premiere and events leading up to it that when he was asked to play this solo part he thought that the idea was a little ridiculous because "The tuba was too often connected by the public with what was humorous and ludicrous to be considered seriously a possibility on a concert platform." He even asked his wife not to attend the performance out of the fear that the concerto would be a flop, and then, when it was well received, his hometown newspaper published an article mocking this decision.

When the tuba was invented in 1835 it was mainly used by composers to emphasize orchestral bass lines, the lowest notes in their pieces. For example, the Tuba part of Antonin Dvořák's *New World Symphony* is infamous for calling for the tuba to only play during a couple of moments in the second of its four movements. It is arguable that any tubist who participates in a performance of this symphony is being paid in part for their patience to sit around and watch the other players perform. Vaughan Williams' concerto takes the tuba to a much more prominent role as an orchestral instrument, demonstrating its melodic and

virtuosic properties through setting it at the front of the ensemble.

The three movements of the concerto follow a standard classical fast-slow-fast pattern. The piece opens with a march, and almost immediately the tuba joins into the musical fray providing a mellow contrast to the more flustered playing of the orchestra. At the conclusion of the movement the tubist plays a solo cadenza showcasing the entire range of the instrument; Vaughan Williams allowed for two of the higher parts of this cadenza to be omitted from the premiere performance, although today, given advances in tuba players' technique, the concerto can also be performed as originally written. The second movement is lyrical and focuses on the tuba's higher range, demonstrating the player's capabilities to play a folk-song like musical line. The finale is a rondo, featuring arpeggios and trills alternating between various key notes within the scale from the tuba player, and also provides another tuba solo cadenza at the end. It is a rapid and nimble conclusion to this unique concerto.

- Saadya Chevan

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 30



Born 1873 in Oneg, Russia

Died 1943 in Beverly Hills, California

This piece's score calls for solo piano, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings.

The prospect of an American concert tour was the stimulus for Rachmaninoff to begin work on his *Third Piano Concerto* in 1909, finishing it barely in time before his departure. As he had little time to “get it into

his fingers” before the journey, as he later said, he took along a “dummy” piano on the ship and practiced during the voyage. The new concerto was premiered on November 28 with the Symphony Society of New York, conducted by Walter Damorsch. Two months later, the composer was again soloist in the work, this time with the New York Philharmonic under the conductor at the time, Gustav Mahler.

Years later in his “Recollections,” Rachmaninoff spoke fondly of Mahler's devotion to the concerto and his tirelessness in working for perfection long past the hour for the musicians' dismissal. “He was the only conductor whom I considered worthy to be classed with Nikisch. He touched my composer's heart straight away by devoting himself to my concerto until the accompaniment,

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which is rather complicated, had been practiced to the point of perfection, although he had already gone through another long rehearsal. According to Mahler, every detail of the score was important, an attitude which is unfortunately rare among conductors.”

Following the New York performances of the *Third Concerto*, Rachmaninoff went on tour with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, playing the new work in Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York again, Hartford and Buffalo, as well as in Boston. So successful was the tour, with Rachmaninoff performing not only as piano soloist but also as conductor of some of his own works, that he was offered a post of conductor of the Boston Symphony, a position he declined because it would interfere with his composing and keep him away for too long from his native Russia.

The *Concerto No. 3* has never become quite as popular as the *Second Concerto*, partly because its themes do not create that lush immediate appeal as those of the later work, and also because of its enormous performance difficulties, often leaving the soloist both emotionally and physically drained. But Rachmaninoff showed a new grasp of musical materials in writing this concerto. A definite unity is attained through the extended working out of various episodes and the reappearance of the important themes throughout the work. The main theme of the opening movement occurs again in both the second and the third movements, and the second theme from the first movement also plays a part in later developments. The idiom is typically Rachmaninoff; in fact, many of the motives bear a distinct resemblance in color, contour, and rhythmic pattern to the *Second Symphony*, which was finished only a year before the concerto. The work is truly symphonic in character, rather than being merely a virtuoso piece for the piano. But the virtuosity is there none the less. The piano is seldom silent, and, in speaking, uses every resource of the keyboard.

-Paul E. Shannon, DMD



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Britten & Brahms

Saturday, March 18, 2023 - 7:30 pm

Toshiyuki Shimada

Gene Stenger

Matthew Muehl-Miller

Sarah Joyce Cooper

Eliam Ramos

Music Director & Conductor

Tenor

Horn

Soprano

Bass Baritone

Britten

Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, Op. 31

I. Prologue

II. Pastoral

III. Nocturne

IV. Elegy

V. Dirge

VI. Hymn

VII. Sonnet

VIII. Epilogue

GENE STENGER, tenor

MATTHEW MUEHL-MILLER, horn

Intermission (20')

Brahms

A German Requiem, Op. 45

I. Blessed are they who bear suffering

II. For all flesh, it is as grass

III. Lord, teach me

IV. How lovely are thy dwellings

V. You now have sadness

VI. For here we have no lasting place

VII. Blessed are the dead

SARAH JOYCE COOPER, soprano

ELIAM RAMOS, bass baritone

with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Chorus

Gene Stenger

Tenor



Hailed as an “impressive tenor” (The New York Times) who sings with “sweet vibrancy” (The Cleveland Plain Dealer) Gene Stenger is one of the country’s most called upon Bach specialists who is also heralded for his performances of oratorios by Handel, Haydn, Mendelssohn, and Mozart.

Gene’s 2022-2023 season includes solo debuts with both the Helena Symphony (Handel’s *Messiah*), and Canticum Novum (Bach’s *Mass in B Minor*) and returning solo appearances with the Buffalo Philharmonic (Mozart’s *Coronation Mass*), Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra (Britten’s *Serenade*), Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra (Handel’s *Messiah*), Colorado Bach Ensemble (Handel’s *Messiah*, & Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*), Baldwin Wallace University’s Bach Festival (*Mass in B Minor*), the Handel Society of Dartmouth College (Britten’s *Serenade*, & Mozart’s *Coronation Mass*), TENET Vocal Artists (Bach’s *Magnificat*, & *Easter Oratorio*), and Bach Vespers at Holy Trinity New York (BWV 62, 243, 126, & 249).

Stenger’s 2021-2022 season featured solo debuts with the Portland Symphony (Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*), New Haven Symphony (Handel’s *Messiah*), Eastern Connecticut Symphony (Summer Concert Gala), the Providence Baroque Orchestra (Bach’s *Magnificat*, & Schütz’s *Musikalische Exequien*), and the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum (Monteverdi’s *Vespers*). Gene made return appearances as a soloist with the Virginia Symphony (Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9*), the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra (Handel’s *Messiah*), Bach Society of St. Louis’s Bach Festival (*Mass in B Minor*), the Charlotte Bach Festival (*Ascension Oratorio*), the Handel Society of Dartmouth College (*Haydn’s Creation*), the GRAMMY® nominated True Concord Voices & Orchestra (Bach’s *Mass in B Minor*, Haydn’s *Paukenmesse*, Close-Up Recital Series), Bach Collegium at St. Peter’s New York (Handel’s *Messiah*), and Bach Vespers at Holy Trinity New York (BWV 60, 92, 181, & 249).

Originally from Pittsburgh, PA, Gene holds degrees from Yale University’s School of Music, and Institute of Sacred Music, Colorado State University, and Baldwin Wallace University Conservatory of Music. He currently resides in New Haven, CT, where he serves as instructor of voice at Yale University.

Matthew Muehl-Miller

Horn

A native of Charleston, Illinois, french horn player Matthew Muehl-Miller has been praised by the press as “especially fine” (The Day), “with rock-solid horn playing” and “... played with golden honey tones” (South Coast TODAY).



Having previously served as principal horn of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Matt has also performed with the Louisiana Philharmonic, New World Symphony, Rhode Island Philharmonic, New Bedford Symphony, and Boston Philharmonic among others. Past summer engagements include appearances at various music festivals: Tanglewood Music Center, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Round Top Festival, the National Repertory Orchestra, and the Aspen Music Festival. He was also heard at many concert halls across the nation, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Meyerson Symphony Center, and Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.

Currently, Matt is the principal horn of the Coast Guard Band and the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra. He also serves as the fourth horn at Springfield Symphony Orchestra. He teaches at Eastern Connecticut State University and the University of Rhode Island.

Matt began his horn studies in fifth grade with Kazimierz Machala at the University of Illinois, and he spent a summer at Interlochen Center for the Arts. Matt was accepted to The Juilliard School and completed his bachelor's degree as a student of Julie Landsman. In between schooling, Matt won positions with New Haven Symphony, Hartford Symphony, Springfield Symphony, and Syracuse Symphony. He later furthered his studies and earned his master's degree at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University under the guidance of William VerMeulen.

When he is not working, Matt enjoys being a father in addition to playing board games with friends. He loves dogs and enjoys reading.

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Sarah Joyce Cooper

Soprano



Soprano Sarah Joyce Cooper has been hailed for her “meltingly beautiful” (Opera News) singing and “alluring” (Don & Catharine Bryan Cultural Series) stage presence. This spring, Ms. Cooper looks forward to making her debut with Tri-Cities Opera in Binghamton, NY as a resident artist. She will appear as Clorinda in Rossini’s *La Cenerentola* and as Sally in the new opera *Stone Soup*, by Joe Illick. She will later appear with the Cape Cod Chamber Orchestra in a performance of Barber’s

Knoxville: *Summer of 1915*. In addition to several other solo recitals, Ms. Cooper looks forward to returning to MassOpera to perform in its *Mirror Cabaret* show, featuring scenes from *Little Women* and *Roméo et Juliette*.

Previous performances include *La Charmeuse* in *Thaïs* (Maryland Lyric Opera), *Juliette* in *Roméo et Juliette* (Opera Western Reserve), *Violetta* in *La Traviata* (MassOpera), *Mimi* in *La Bohème* (Opera Theater of Cape Cod/ Boston Opera Collaborative), *Micaëla* in *Carmen* (Prelude to Performance), *Zerlina* in *Don Giovanni* (Boston Opera Collaborative), *Pamina* in *Die Zauberflöte*, and *Countess* in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Savannah Voice Festival). Ms. Cooper has also appeared as a soloist with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, the Maryland Lyric Opera Orchestra, and the Radcliffe Choral Society at Harvard University. In 2019, she was invited to perform as a soloist with the Du Bois Orchestra in the historic world premiere of Florence Price’s long-lost cantata, *Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight*. Ms. Cooper was also recently invited to join the roster of Convergence Ensemble, an organization of established musicians and performers committed to “exceptional quality music experiences for audiences... throughout New England.” In 2020, Ms. Cooper performed as a soloist in *A Concert for Equity in the Arts*, a critically-acclaimed, live-streamed benefit concert for the Sphinx Organization, hosted by world-renowned bass, Morris Robinson.

As a competition winner, Ms. Cooper earned first place in both the Coeur d’Alene Symphony Young Artists Competition and the Westminster Choir College Voice Scholarship competition in 2016. In 2018, she earned first place in the The American Prize Competition for Opera and Operetta and second place for Art Song. That same year, she made her Carnegie Hall debut as a top prize-winner in the Talents of the World International Competition, performing arias alongside soloists from the Bolshoi Theater and La Scala

Opera in the Talents of the World International Festival. Ms. Cooper has also received awards from the George London Foundation and Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and was nominated for a study grant from the Sarah Tucker Foundation. Most recently, she was awarded first place in the 2021 International Rocky Mountain Music Festival, based in Toronto, Canada.

Ms. Cooper completed her Bachelor's Degree in French at Princeton University, where she first began to develop the foundation for her "mastery of French style" (Opera News) while conducting research for her undergraduate thesis on sacred themes in the *mélodies*, romances, and cantiques of Gabriel Fauré. She earned her Master of Music Degree in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy from Westminster Choir College, where she received the Gwynn Moose Cornell Endowed Award, given to the student who shows the most promise for a career in vocal performance.

In addition to performing, Ms. Cooper serves as volunteer Executive Assistant for Help!ComeHome!, a 501c3 organization dedicated to meeting the needs of under-served communities throughout the US in Jesus' Name. Ms. Cooper is a regular volunteer with the organization, offering both her musical and administrative skills to further its mission. In June 2018, she planned, programmed, and performed in *A Nod to Our Neighbors*, a benefit concert and the first major fundraiser for Help!ComeHome!

In her free time, Ms. Cooper enjoys gardening, playing cello, and being active outdoors. A former competitive gymnast, she was awarded top prizes at the annual Massachusetts State Championship meet while competing for the Gymnastics Academy of Boston.

Eliam Ramos

Bass Baritone



Eliam Ramos has a rich full lyric bass-baritone voice. He began his training and graduated from the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico. He made his professional debut in 2011 as Il Commendatore in the opera *Don Giovanni* from W. A. Mozart with Teatro de la Ópera de Puerto Rico, directed by the tenor Antonio Barasorda. Since then

his artistic engagements have included the role of Balthazar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, the Fauré *Requiem*, and a Gala of Zarzuela for the Puerto Rico Symphonic Orchestra. Other notable performances include the Mozart *Requiem* with the Puerto Rico Philharmonic Orchestra, Luis Nogales in the zarzuela Luisa Fernanda, Don Pedro in the zarzuela *El Barberillo de Lavapies*, a pirate in the operetta *Cofresí* by Rafael Hernández, and also various concerts, recitals, master classes, and opera summer programs. Ramos has also participated in several opera and zarzuela ensembles. As part of the Opera Workshop of the Conservatory in Puerto Rico, he performed the role of The Superintendent in the opera *Albert Herring* by Benjamin Britten, Der Tod in *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* by Victor Ullman and the Priest in *Die Zauberflöte* by W.A. Mozart.

In 2013 he made his way to New York City and with the Brooklyn College Opera Workshop, performed the role of Lord Sidney in Rossini's *Il Viaggio a Reims* and Sparafucille and Monterone in Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Eiam also sang the role of Ben in *The Telephone* by Gian-Carlo Menotti. Additional New York operatic appearances consist of the role of El Prior in the zarzuela *La Dolorosa*, the Gala of Zarzuela at the Centro Español de Queens and an Opera and Ballet Concert in Astoria, Queens.

Ramos' international performances have been the title role in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* in Spain, Leporello in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in Israel and the title role of Hans Werner Henze's *El Cimarrón* in Mexico.

Mr. Ramos will be featured in several productions of *La Bohème* in the fall season of 2022. He sang Schaunard with Soo Theatre in Michigan. He will cover Marcello at Opera in Williamsburg. This season, he will be a resident soloist with Her Dimmock's "Bach in Baltimore". He will sing Bah Cantata 182 Cantata 2, and Cantata 112. Mr. Ramos also is engaged with The Metropolitan Opera Guild to sing Germont's arias in Verdi's *La Traviata* on October 19. A busy New York artist, Eiam is always singing concerts and recitals.



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Program Notes

Benjamin Britten

Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, Op. 31

Born 1913 in Suffolk, UK

Died 1976 in Suffolk, UK

The *Serenade* calls for solo tenor, solo horn and strings.



Benjamin Britten wrote the *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* in early 1943, shortly after he and his lifelong partner and lover, tenor Peter Pears, had returned to the UK from the US. They had been living there for three years. Britten and Pears left the UK in 1939 for several reasons: as pacifists they did not want to become involved in World War II; at that time it was increasingly apparent that the UK would be engaged in war shortly. Britten was also experiencing poor treatment from both the press and performers at premiers of his work, and finally they had several friends who had found success in America, including the composer and Britten's mentor Frank Bridge, poet W. H. Auden, and novelist Christopher Isherwood. Britten and Pears were eventually compelled to return to the UK due to criticism in the press of Britten's absence as being disloyal; the BBC was not even broadcasting his music. Both ultimately registered as conscientious objectors, and the joint and individual recitals they gave throughout the UK were considered by the government to be "morale-raising."

Returning to the United Kingdom marked a period in the composer's life when he began to embrace his British heritage. The *Serenade* is one of two key vocal pieces Britten wrote during the rest of the Second World War that draws inspiration from classic British literature; the other is the opera *Peter Grimes*, which is one of the most culturally important operas in English ever written. Both of these pieces were written for Pears to take a leading role in their ensembles. The texts of the serenade are from the work of several important English poets of the 15th-19th Centuries including Alfred Lord Tennyson, William Blake, and John Keats.

The *Serenade* is eight movements long, consisting of a prologue, the six songs, and an epilogue. The prologue is a horn solo that calls on the player to use natural harmonics, a challenging technique that makes the instrument sound amateurish at times. The solo prologue is meant to evoke innocence and nature. The strings begin the second movement pastoral, almost immediately joined by the tenor at the higher end of his range, and then the horn imitating the tenor's

melody. The third movement contains a shimmering motif in the strings that is contrasted with by the tenor's accent on the word "dying" from the Tennyson poem "Nocturne." The fourth movement is somber and dark, reflecting its text's title of "Elegy," a poem that is a memorial to the dead. The fifth movement brings the tenor and the strings into prominence, with the tenor chanting the prayers contained within this anonymously written "Dirge." The sixth movement contrasts plucked strings playing in beats of two with a horn that subdivides the strings' meter into additional divisions of three. The seventh movement, the final one that includes the orchestra and tenor, is similar to the third movement, but here, the poetry of Keats contextualizes death not as a threat, but as a soothing end. Finally, the epilogue is an exact repeat of the prologue, the only difference being that the horn player performs off-stage.

- Saadya Chevan

Johannes Brahms

A German Requiem, Op. 45



Born 1833 in Hamburg, Germany

Died 1897 in Vienna, Austria

A German Requiem calls for solo soprano, solo baritone and mixed chorus. It is scored for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, harp, and strings.

Brahms' *A German Requiem*, a work which occupied him over a period of ten years, was his largest opus in scope, and proved that he was a master in writing an extensive work for chorus, orchestra and soloists. In composing the Requiem, Brahms, despite his basically conservative and Classical outlook, struck out into new paths with his conception of this large scale choral masterpiece. Whereas other great composers, such as Mozart, Berlioz and Verdi, set their music to the time-honored and traditional Latin Requiem text, Brahms selected his own texts from the German Bible, thus creating a different emphasis on the philosophical concept of death. The sung portions of the Tridentine Latin Rite Requiem are prayers for the faithful departed, with frequent (and now outmoded) references to judgment, hell fire and punishment. The texts that Brahms selected, however, offer words of consolation for the living to help reconcile their thoughts to the fact of suffering and death. Each of the seven movements displays a different sentiment: consolation, patience, hope, joy, grief, trust and redemption, but the underlying emotion common to them all is the promise of the their Beatitude: "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted."

With consummate artistry and skill, Brahms has composed music which illuminates, underlines, and highlights the texts with a most beautiful sense of devotion and sincerity. He carefully varied the orchestration in each movement to produce a tonal color in keeping with the spirit and feeling of the thought expressed. Thus, in the first movement that opens with the words “Blessed are they that mourn,” Brahms has created a dark hue by omitting violins, clarinets and trumpets, and by emphasizing the sound of violas and cellos. The second movement funeral march, employing the full orchestra, is noteworthy for its unique use of a relentless triplet rhythm given to the timpani, creating an almost sinister tone to the music. The third movement opens somberly in D minor with the voice of the baritone solo, but it concludes with a powerful double fugue on the words, “But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God and no torment shall touch them.” Brahms’ use of symbolism here is remarkable. An unquenchable faith in the resurrection is profoundly represented by a persistent and unyielding pedal- point on a low D underlying the entire fugue. The central fourth movement is like a graceful and gentle trio to the entire work.

Often excerpted, it is generally known in the English translation as “How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place.” The orchestral and choral colors are here all warm and translucent. The fifth movement was added to the *Requiem* by Brahms after the première performance in Bremen. It was a dedication to the memory of his mother who had died a few years previously. The mood here is one of warm consolation as sung in a floating melodic line by the soprano soloist, with the chorus gently accompanying on the words of Isaiah-“As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort You.” The sixth movement is a vision of the Last Judgment, using the same text from I Corinthians as did Handel in *Messiah*-“the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.” A dramatic baritone recitative leads to another sweeping double fugue for the chorus, balancing that of the third movement and yet surpassing it in dramatic excitement and grandeur. The seventh and final movement mirrors the gentle mood of peaceful consolation heard in the opening movement, and in fact quotes directly from its musical fabric so that the two sections end identically, thus forming an ideal framework to the entire work.

—Paul E. Shannon, DMD



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Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 22, 2023 - 7:30 pm

Toshiyuki Shimada
Shirley Kim

Music Director & Conductor
Cello

Mendelssohn

Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage, Op. 27

Bloch

Schelomo: Rhapsodie Hébraïque

SHIRLEY KIM, cello

Intermission (20')

Okoye

Voices Shouting Out

Habibi

Jeder Baum spricht (Every Tree Speaks)

Debussy

La mer

I. From dawn to noon on the sea

II. Play of the Waves

III. Dialogue of the wind and the sea

Shirley Kim

Cello



Shirley Kim is the winner of the 2022 Instrumental Competition. She is currently pursuing her master's degree in orchestral performance at the Manhattan School of Music with Alan Stepansky. Prior to studying at the Manhattan School of Music, Shirley completed her undergraduate studies at the Eastman School of Music with Steven Doane and Rosemary Elliot.

At Eastman, Shirley served as principal cellist of the Philharmonia and was part of the honors quartet.

An avid chamber musician, she was selected as the recipient of the 2021 Celentano chamber award for excellence in chamber music at Eastman. Her other notable chamber prizes include 2nd prize at the MTNA chamber competition and 1st prize at the Pasadena Conservatory of Music Chamber Competition in 2017.

Shirley is a Los Angeles native. She began the cello at age four with Nancy Yamagata at the Colburn School and studied with Dr. Richard Naill in her high school years. She served as principal cellist of the Colburn Youth Orchestra in 2017, and in 2016, she was the prizewinner of their 2016 concerto competition in which she performed Lalo's *Cello Concerto* at the LACMA's Bing Theater.

Shirley has performed in venues such as Walt Disney Concert Hall, Zipper Hall, and the Morgan Library Museum. During the summers Shirley has attended Music Academy of the West, Sarasota Festival Orchestra, Heifetz International Music Festival, Chautauqua Festival Orchestra, Bowdoin International Festival, and Orford Musique. Shirley enjoys hiking and cooking in her free time.

Program Notes



Felix Mendelssohn

Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage, Op. 27

Born 1809 in Hamburg, Germany

Died 1847 in Berlin, Germany

The piece calls for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 2 horns, 3 trumpets, tuba, timpani, and strings.

Felix Mendelssohn's *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* overture is based on two poems by the eminent German Romantic period author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The poems are *Meeresstille* (Calm Sea) and *Glückliche Fahrt* (Prosperous Voyage). Written in 1828, the overture is the best, but not the only, known setting of these poems. In 1815, Ludwig van Beethoven wrote choral settings of the two poems, and Franz Schubert composed a lied to the text of *Meeresstille*. However, Mendelssohn's purely orchestral interpretation of them is the best known. In 1821, a twelve year-old Mendelssohn, who was a musical prodigy had traveled from his family's estate in Berlin to Weimar to meet Goethe, and in a letter home he recounted that the author was very impressed with his talent saying that "Every afternoon Goethe opens the piano saying, 'I haven't heard you at all today, give me a little noise,' and then he will sit down beside me and when I am finished I ask for a kiss or take one. You cannot imagine his kindness and friendliness." It would make sense that Mendelssohn wrote the piece with a memory of the shared affection each of them had for the other's art.

At the time Mendelssohn composed *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*, overtures were only starting to be performed as stand-alone concert works rather than always being attached to an operatic or theatrical performance. Although the poems were written independently of one another they easily tell a connected story arc. The poem *Calm Sea* pictures the threat sailors face with a sea that is completely still and free of wind, meaning that a sailing ship cannot move in the water, and sits in the ocean until mother nature grants it a reprieve. Mendelssohn has the orchestra playing slowly here, the tempo marking is *adagio*. *Prosperous Voyage's* section in the overture is introduced by a solo flute and provides a contrast, describing how the movement of the wind and water enables a boat to sight land as the cloud and the crew is excited for the impending conclusion to their current voyage, allowing them to trade the various goods they are hauling for cash and new cargo.

- Saadya Chevan

Ernest Bloch

Schelomo: Rhapsodie Hébraïque

Born 1880 in Geneva, Switzerland
Died 1959 in Portland, Oregon



The piece calls for solo cello, 3 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, celeste, 2 harps, and strings.

Ernest Bloch's *Schelomo* is a psychologically and musically deep work for cello and orchestra. It is one of Bloch's works that he loosely defined as being musically "Jewish." Bloch later wrote in *Musica Hebraica* in 1938 that "In my works termed 'Jewish' I have not approached the problem from without, by employing melodies more or less authentic, or 'Oriental' formulae, rhythms or intervals... No! I have but listened to an inner voice, deep, secret, insistent, ardent, an instinct much more than cold and dry reason, a voice which seemed to come from afar beyond myself, far beyond my parents. This entire Jewish heritage moved me deeply; it was reborn in my music. To what extent it is Jewish, to what extent it is just Ernest Bloch, of that I know nothing. The future alone will decide."

Bloch composed *Schelomo* during World War I because he wished to write music that could properly express the despair he felt at the destruction occurring in Europe (Bloch lived in Switzerland, which was neutral throughout the war). However, he was particularly interested in the idea of composing music based on the Biblical Book of Ecclesiastes, the despairing tone of which he felt suited the music he wanted to create for this moment. The name *Schelomo* is a transcription of the name Solomon as it is written in the original Hebrew texts of the Bible, and prevailing Jewish tradition holds that the Book of Ecclesiastes was written by King Solomon at the end of his life.

Bloch originally intended to compose *Schelomo* for voice and orchestra. However, he did not understand Hebrew and did not feel that translations in the languages he knew, French, English, and German would adequately enable him to convey the emotion of Ecclesiastes. He realized that setting *Schelomo*'s solo part as an abstract plaintive melody with a cello would work well when he was visited by cellist Alexander Barjansky in Autumn of 1915. Barjansky's playing impressed Bloch so much that he performed for the cellist and his wife, Katya, who was a sculptor, some of his sketches for Jewish pieces including *Schelomo*. The interchange appears to have been quite inspirational for all present; Katya Barjansky began a sculpture titled King Solomon, while Bloch afterwards adapted his sketches to be applicable to a fully instrumental ensemble, creating the piece we know today.

- Saadya Chevan



Nkeiru Okoye

Voices Shouting Out

Born 1972 in New York, NY

The piece calls for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings.

American composer Nkeiru Okoye (pronounced KEAR roo oh KOY yeh) wrote *Voices Shouting Out* in 2002 as her response to the September 11, 2001 attacks. It is structured as a march, and rather than composing a piece focusing on the solemnity of the post-9/11 moment, which was Okoye's initial inclination, the piece we hear today is meant more as a work of affirmation. *Voices Shouting Out* expresses the hope that the nation should move forward in unity after such tragic, devastating, and dramatic acts of terror were committed within its major cities. *Voices Shouting Out* allows the percussion section of the orchestra the opportunity to play many unique sounds, opening with a percussive ensemble with interjections from plucked strings and the woodwind section. This leads to a standard three part structure where the first part contains various themes, most prominently two serious and sharp themes played by most members of the orchestra. The second part is slower and more lyrical, giving a breath of fresh air and relaxation to the proceedings. The third part is a recap of the themes of the first part.

Okoye was born in New York to an African American mother and Nigerian father. She grew up in both Nigeria and the U.S., although primarily in Long Island, and began composing music at age 13. She earned degrees from Oberlin Conservatory of Music and Rutgers University. At Rutgers she studied with composer Noel DaCosta. She was the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a major award given to young and midcareer artists with significant talent. Within the United States she is a leading African American female composer, and in her own words calls herself "An activist through the arts." Okoye's musical compositions tend to bridge all styles of music although she is best known for composing within the classical music genre, writing pieces that tend to draw on pop and African American/West African styles of music. Many of the classical music commissions she receives from artistic organizations are for works related to African American historical and cultural topics, which have led to the production of her well known opera, *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed that Line to Freedom* and composition of her orchestral suite *Voices Shouting Out*.

- Saadya Chevan

Iman Habibi

Jeder Baum spricht (Every Tree Speaks)

Born 1985 in Iran

The piece calls for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, and strings.



Commissioned in celebration of the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth, *Jeder Baum spricht* is an unsettling rhapsodic reflection on the climate catastrophe and is written in dialogue with Beethoven's 5th and 6th symphonies. The piece shifts focus rapidly and attempts to achieve its goal time and time again through different means, only to be faced with similar obstacles. Like much of Beethoven's music, this piece accompanies an unspecific narrative and imagery and ends with a sense of resolve, one that I hope can drive our collective will towards immediate impactful change. Beethoven perceived nature as an image of the divine, if not divinity itself. *Jeder Baum spricht durch dich* (every tree speaks through you) is a phrase I encountered in his writings, leading me to wonder how Beethoven, clearly an activist himself, would have responded to today's environmental crisis. Given that both the 5th and 6th symphonies were likely, at least in some capacity, inspired by nature, I am hoping that *Jeder Baum spricht* can allow us to listen to these monumental works with a renewed perspective: that is, in light of the climate crisis we live in and the havoc we continue to wreak on the nature that inspired these classic masterpieces.

- Iman Habibi



Claude Debussy

La mer

Born 1862 in Paris, France

Died 1918 in Paris, France

The piece calls for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 cornets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, 2 harps, and strings.

La mer, completed in 1905, is structurally the composer's most ambitious work for orchestra and is one of the most difficult to analyze. In depicting the ever-changing aspects of the sea, the play of the waves, the gales and the surging

waters, Debussy is more a spiritual mystic than a descriptive painter. What the composer presents is a vision of the sea as perceived in a trance, a sea of dreams, of strange visions and voices. It is a sea of shimmering luminescence, but one viewed, as it were, through an eerie and dimly lighted scrim.

When he was a child, Debussy experienced the Mediterranean at Cannes and became fascinated by the sea. In a letter of 1903 he stated, “You may not know that I was destined for a sailor’s life and that it was only quite by chance that fate led me in another direction. But I have always held a passionate love for her (the sea). You will say that the ocean does not exactly wash the Burgundian hillsides—and my seascapes might be studio landscapes; but I have an endless store of memories and to my mind, they are worth more than the reality, whose beauty often deadens thought.” He even claimed that the sight of the sea itself fascinated him to such a degree that it paralyzed his creative faculties, and thus he composed most of *La mer* away from the seashore—in Paris where it also received its first performance on October 15, 1905 at the Concerts Lamoureux.

Debussy left no program for the work other than the three subtitles of the movements: “From Dawn til Noon on the Sea”; “Play of the Waves”; and “Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea.” The music moves with no special developmental form, but is rather a richly imaginative, exotically colored and delicately nuanced collage of tonal lights, shadows, and sounds. A subtle unity in the work is created by the use in the third movement of some thematic material originally heard in the first section.

- Paul E. Shannon, DMD



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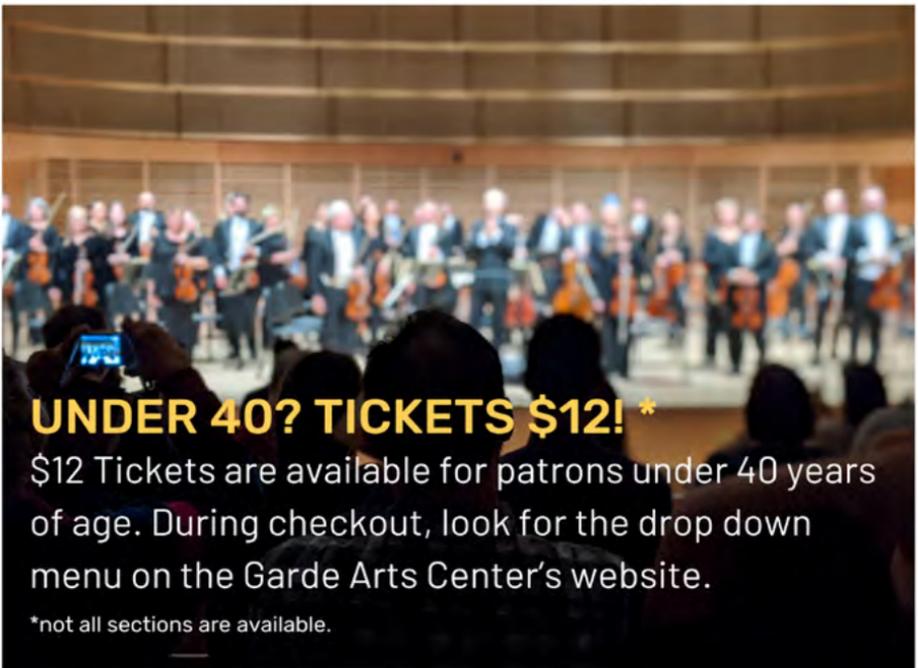


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Music Glossary

Tempo

Grave	Very, very slow and solemn
Largo	Broad and slow
Lento	Slow and calm (but not as slow as Largo)
Adagio	Slowly, leisurely
Andante	In a walking tempo, moderately slow
Maestoso	Majestically
Moderato	In a moderate tempo
Allegretto	Moderately fast
Allegro	Quick and bright
Vivace	Lively and fast
Presto	Very fast
Prestissimo	As fast as possible

Modifiers

Accelerando	Gradually increase the tempo
Allargando	Gradually slower and broader
A tempo	In the original speed
L'istesso tempo	In the same beat speed
Meno Mosso	Less motion (a little slower)
Mezzo	Medium or moderately
Molto	Very
Piu Mosso	More motion (a little faster)
Poco	A little
Romanza	Generally short and lyrical
Rondo	A movement where the main subject is played at least three times
Rubato	Not in a strict tempo
Scherzo	A vigorous, light, or playful composition
Sostenuto	Sustained
Attacca	Attached
Cadenza	Extended section for soloist alone