

Bard College Music Program

Presents

The Bard College Community Orchestra

Music Director

Zachary Schwartzman

Associate Conductor

Erica Kiesewetter

May 9, 8:00 PM

Streamed from Olin Hall

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) | Concerto for Keyboard and String Orchestra, No. 4
in A Major, BWV 1055
Allegro
Larghetto
Allegro ma non tanto
<i>Gigi Hsueh, piano</i> |
| Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) | Rakastava: Suite for Strings, Kettle-drums, Triangle
The Lover
The Path of His Beloved
Good Evening...Farewell |
| Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) | Cello Concerto No. 1, Op. 107
Allegretto
<i>Grace Molinaro, cello</i> |
| Hendrik Andriessen (1892-1981) | Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Johann Kuhnau
Thema-Moderato
Grazioso ma tranquillo
Allegro con spirito
Molto moderato e espressivo
Sostenuto e espressivo
Grave e appassionato
Allegretto con eleganza |
| Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate (b.1968) | Chokfi': Sarcasm for String Orchestra and Percussion |

Violin I

Narain Darakananda *Concertmaster*
Aaron Kim
Ella Menees
Kathryn Aldous●
Hattie Wilder Karlstrom

Violin II

David Banoczi-Ruof *Principal*
Maeve McKaig
Mina Devore
Ruth Wallick
Sylvia Shablovsky

Viola

Weilan Li * *Principal*
Rowan Swain*

Cello

Sophia Jackson* *Principal*
Sabayo Matiku
Nick Scheel*

Bass

Tristen Jarvis^

Percussion

Oliver Pawelak
Matt Overbay*

Piano

Francis Huang*

Faculty Orchestra Coach

Kathryn Aldous

Manager

Greg Armbruster

Crew

Ella Menees

**Bard Conservatory Student*

●*Faculty*

^*The Orchestra Now*

A Note About COVID-19

As is no surprise to the viewing audience, this semester has brought many challenges in terms of playing live music. Due to campus COVID protocols, no outside guests are allowed on campus, so we sadly had to close the orchestra to our beloved community members, and eagerly await their return in safer times. We are pleased that we can present such a varied program featuring two of our concerto winners from last year, with all players safely masked and distanced. Although we very much look forward to a return to pre-COVID normal and inviting our beloved community members and college winds players to rejoin us, we are thrilled to have had a wonderful year of live music-making and community. This semester has been very challenging in terms of logistics and planning, and we would like to thank the following people for their extra efforts, without which the products of our work would have remained in a silent vacuum:

James Bagwell, Director Music Program

James Mongan, Music Program Coordinator

Greg Armbruster, Orchestra Manager

Marc Mancus, Conservatory Production Coordinator

Erika Nelson, Director of Digital Communications

Thomas Mark, Cariahbel Azemar, Christopher Connor, Jake Grover: Streaming and A.V.

The **Bard College Community Orchestra** is a diverse group of players including Bard College students, faculty and staff, local high school players, and community members of level 5 NYSSMA standard and higher. We are a full symphony orchestra and play a variety of repertoire. Past programs have included Tchaikovsky's "Little Russian" Symphony, Grieg's Peer Gynt Suite and Sibelius Finlandia. We also hold a solo competition for interested members of the orchestra who perform on our spring concert. Once a year we have readings of student composers, and are always open to new ideas. The orchestra meets on Monday nights in Olin Hall, and concerts are held in Frank Gehry's spectacular Fisher Center for the Performing Arts. Admittance is by audition. If you are interested in auditioning to join the BCCO, please contact Erica Kiesewetter at kiesewet@bard.edu.

PROGRAM NOTES

Concerto for Keyboard and String Orchestra, No.4 in A major, BWV 1055. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was a master of counterpoint and polyphonic textures. He wrote seven complete keyboard concertos. The A major Keyboard Concerto may have been arranged from a concerto for oboe d'amore he had written around 1723, whose range coincides perfectly with the soloist's melodic lines. Although we lack information about the early performance history of this concerto, the oboe d'amore version possibly dates from Bach's Cöthen or early Leipzig years. In the concerto, there is evidence of Bach's admiration for the new style of Vivaldi. In the joy-filled opening Allegro, the soloist's lines are frequently interrupted by a recurring passage that reflects the up-to-date Italianate style. The second movement is highly expressive and emotional with the use of sustained chromatic bass lines. Lastly, the third movement brings back joyful dance-like rhythms with more expansive melodic episodes.

Gigi Hsueh

Rakastava is one of many lesser-known works by Sibelius that does not get the same exposure as his symphonies. His music written for string orchestra is not trivial and is far more complex than the original choral work upon which *Rakastava* was conceived. He started composing for a men's chorus in 1894 using a selection from a set of Finnish folk poetry called *Kanteletar* and ultimately set it for strings. Even in this very potent form, it's clearly a Sibelius piece, with musical references to his Symphony No. 4 which was premiered in 1911. *Rakastava* is in three movements. The first song, *The Lover*, asks the question, "Where is my beloved?" It describes the joy the poet would feel if his beloved were approaching, and how nature's silence would come to life. The second song, *The Path of His Beloved*, is about showing the lover the flourishing of nature. The poet sees nature coming to life, but it's even more extravagant when it's with his beloved. Finally, in *Good Evening... Farewell*, the lovers embrace and kiss before the poet departs and bids goodnight to his beloved.

Aaron Kim

In order to understand the Shostakovich **Cello Concerto No. 1 in Eb Major**, it is important to first understand the composer, himself. Dmitri Shostakovich was born in 1906 in St. Petersburg, Russia, and quickly ascended to boast one of the greatest musical careers of the 20th century. He was raised in the footsteps of older Russian composers like Tchaikovsky, yet he drew upon a diverse range of influences, from his contemporaries Hindemith and Prokofiev to *Avant-Garde* champions such as Stravinsky, and even jazz. The composer's musical inspirations both shaped his creative approaches to composition and came to threaten his career... and his life.

While Shostakovich's style is grounded in older European traditions, his music is also strongly evocative of the harsh political realities in the Soviet Union. In 1928, Stalin enacted his first Five-Year-Plan, which tightened a controlling steel grip around Soviet culture, establishing new standards for art and greatly restricting what the state considered acceptable as music. This did not bode well for Shostakovich, who frequently incorporated newer musical concepts into his music, expanding the boundary of what classical music could encompass. Between 1930 and 1932, Shostakovich composed an opera entitled *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensky District*, inspired by the *Avant-Garde* movement. Then, in 1932, Stalin outlawed the *Avant-Garde* musical style. When Stalin attended a performance of Shostakovich's opera in 1936, he was outraged, prompting him to issue an official condemnation of the work and its composer. Shostakovich was then aggressively attacked by the Soviet press, and he withdrew the opera, along with his Symphony No. 4, which had yet to be premiered. A few years later, he nervously published his somber Symphony No. 5, which was an immediate success, both with the public and the authorities, and redeemed his shaken career.

In the mid-1940's, Shostakovich's music began to take on a starker, grimmer tone. Unfortunately for him, this evolution coincided with the beginning of the Cold War, when the country was brewing with strict nationalist policies. The Soviet government tightened its chokehold on composers, demanding they use "more accessible musical language." In 1948, Shostakovich was again disgraced by authorities for his newer, grimmer style, which was considered contrary to the new, fabricated norm. Amidst backlash, Shostakovich was forced to abandon his high-profile teaching positions, and he again retreated from the public eye. Stories still swirl through classical music circles of the composer keeping a packed bag near him wherever he went so that he could make a quick escape if the Soviet authorities ever came after him. But not even the Soviet regime could suppress Shostakovich's musical genius for long. He went on to produce and perform many more works, especially after Stalin's death in 1953, and even joined the Communist Party in 1960, though whether out of sincere communist beliefs or to further his career, we will never know.

The Shostakovich Cello Concerto No. 1 was composed in 1959 for the composer's friend, the legendary cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, who memorized it in just four days and premiered it on October 9th, 1959. The piece draws upon a wealth of musical inspirations, from folk melodies to virtuoso lines to the D-Eb-C-B motif, which returns and cycles repeatedly throughout the piece. This four-note motif can also be notated as DSCH-- Shostakovich's musical signature! The first movement is centered around another four-note motif: G-Fb-Cb-Bb, which changes octaves and keys as it recurs throughout the movement. The movement also features a rich but demanding technical palette for the performer, including thumb position double-stops, fast eighth-note runs, broad leaps in the left hand, and harmonics. In heightened episodes throughout, a haunting solo French horn echoes the cello soloist with the central G-Fb-Cb-Bb motif (performed on piano in this concert due to COVID restrictions). The piece weaves melodic outbursts through a frame of suppressed staccato marches, crashing from *piano* to *forte* and swelling everywhere in between, opening with soft staccato before giving way to virtuoso outbursts, changing so fast it keeps listeners and performers alike on the edge of their seats. Powerful, resonating with dissonance and atonality, it defied state sanctions of the day. This concerto displays Shostakovich at his best as he puts his career and life on the line to shatter old, restrictive conventions and showcase the full power of his craft.

Grace Molinaro

Variations and Fugue on a theme by Johann Kuhnau. Dutch composer Hendrik Franciscus Andriessen (1892 - 1981) was a renowned organist whose skill in improvisation was remarkable. His brother Willem was also a composer (and pianist) and his children became musicians: composers Jurriaan Andriessen and Louis Andriessen, and flautist Heleen Andriessen. Over the course of his career, Hendrik Andriessen produced a large number of compositions in virtually every genre, while holding various positions as teacher, director of two conservatories, and cathedral organist. During World War II, he refused to collaborate with the Nazi occupation, which resulted in his being banned from official musical activities and imprisoned for six months. Given his immersion in the Catholic liturgical organ repertoire, it is not surprising that many of Andriessen's compositions were influenced by French Romantic and post-Romantic music. This tendency is less apparent in the work we will perform, which was premiered on June 26, 1936, and conducted by Bertus van Lier, to whom the work is dedicated.

The theme is borrowed from the closing minuet in *Clavier-Übung II, Part VI* by Johann Kuhnau (1660-1722), who was Bach's predecessor at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig. While some variations adhere closely to the theme, others are only loosely based on it, or use one element as a starting point for an original exploration of its musical implications. The finale consists of a freely composed fugue (whose subject is vaguely derived from the theme), and concludes with a coda in which the opening two measures make a fleeting appearance. Andriessen provided the following notes about the work for a performance by the Concertgebouw in 1938: "The variations for string orchestra arose from admiration for the rich content of the theme. The work is composed in an old style; in each variation, a certain, always different side of the theme, or part of the theme, is musically considered." The **Kuhnau Variations** are an active part of the repertoire for many string orchestras in Europe, and we are pleased to give this attractive work by Andriessen a performance in the United States.

Zachary Schwartzman

We are pleased to present the East Coast premiere of **Chokfi'** by Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate, a member of the Chickasaw Nation living in his native Oklahoma. Trained as a classical musician, Mr. Tate's music integrates elements of native music with European classical forms and instruments. His works have been performed by the orchestras of Dallas, San Francisco, Detroit, and Minnesota among many others. He has received commissions and grants too numerous to mention here, and in addition to working with his own language, has worked with the music and language of over twenty other tribes, and is currently engaged in teaching composition to North American Indian high school students.

This particular piece is scored for strings and percussion, with the maracas and bongos especially mimicking traditional tomtoms and jingling tortoise shell anklets worn by native women dancers. The **Chokfi'** is a traditional character in the form of a trickster rabbit, and one can hear the rabbit's antics in the composition. The most touching moment of the piece is the appearance of a Muscogee Creek hymn, first in the distance and then gradually warming up the stage in a beautiful moment of connection and inclusion. We are thrilled to be able to bring to the Bard campus a work by a First Nations composer. Mr. Tate was generous to coach us on the piece via Zoom, which was incredibly inspiring to all, and we hope that our performance is an appropriate tribute to this inspiring composer and his people.

Erica Kiesewetter

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Music Director **Zachary Schwartzman** has conducted around the United States, in Brazil, England, Bosnia, and Mexico. His orchestral performances have been featured on NPR, including a national broadcast on "Performance Today." In 2004, he received a career development grant from the Bruno Walter Memorial Foundation. He has served as Assistant Conductor for the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Opera Atelier (Toronto), Berkshire Opera Festival, Opéra Français de New York, L'Ensemble orchestral de Paris, Gotham Chamber Opera, Oakland East Bay Symphony, Connecticut Grand Opera, and Opera Omaha, among others. He was Associate Conductor for two seasons with New York City Opera, as well as Conductor in their VOX series, and has been Associate/Assistant Conductor for fifteen productions at Glimmerglass Opera, where he conducted performances of *Carmen* and the world premiere of Jeanine Tesori's *A Blizzard on Marblehead Neck*. Mr. Schwartzman's credits as Assistant Conductor include recordings for Albany Records, Bridge Records, Naxos Records, and a Grammy-nominated world-premiere recording for Chandos Records. He has been Music Director of the Blue Hill Troupe since 2004 and Assistant Conductor for the American Symphony Orchestra since 2012. He has appeared as both Assistant Conductor and Conductor at Bard Summerscape and the Bard Music Festival at The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts. He was recently appointed Resident Conductor of The Orchestra Now (TÖN) and Music Director of the Bard College Community Orchestra (BCCO). In addition to degrees in Piano Performance and Orchestral Conducting, he earned a B.A. in East Asian Studies from Oberlin College.

Violinist and conductor **Erica Kiesewetter** is well-known to Bard audiences as the former concertmaster of the American Symphony Orchestra, founding member of the Bardian Ensemble, and performer at the Bard Music Festival since its inception. She is a continuing associate professor in the College, director of orchestral studies at the Conservatory, and professor of orchestral practice for The Orchestra Now (TÖN). In 2016, she was appointed associate conductor of the Bard College Community Orchestra (BCCO). Her most recent performance on campus was conducting the world premiere performance of faculty member Erica Lindsay's "Adagio" with the Bard College Conservatory Orchestra, in October at the Fisher Center.

Gigi Hsueh is a graduating senior in the Bard Conservatory of Music dual-degree program majoring in violin performance and computer science. She began studying both the violin and piano at the age of six with her father, who is a jazz musician. She was a winner of the Steinbach Taiwan Piano Competition and Baroque Piano Music Competition in Taiwan in 2006 and 2007, respectively. She also performed as a soloist with the LaGuardia Symphony Orchestra in 2015. As a violinist, she has performed at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and around the world on various orchestra tours. In 2012, she was invited to perform at First Lady Michelle Obama's luncheon at the United Nations General Assembly. In 2013 and 2014, she won the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Young Musicians' Competition with her chamber group. In addition to her music life, Gigi is a residence advisor and an athlete on the swim team. She also enjoys yoga and hiking in the Hudson Valley. After graduation, she will be a software engineer at Etsy and is very excited to start her next chapter in New York City.

Grace Molinaro is finishing her second year at Bard College, majoring in cello performance and Middle Eastern Studies. She has had the privilege and pleasure of studying with Raman Ramakrishnan, of the Horszowski Trio, in the Music Program for the past two years. She has also had the honor of participating in studio classes with Bard Conservatory cello teacher Peter Wiley throughout the 2020-'21 school year. Beginning fall 2021, Grace will matriculate into the Bard Conservatory of Music dual-degree program. Grace began playing cello at the age of nine. She hails from the Washington, D.C. area, where she studied with Benjamin Wensel of the U.S. Army Strings. She was section leader of the Falls Church High School Chamber Orchestra for two years and participated in Virginia's All-District X Orchestra for five consecutive years, where she served as the principal cellist in 2019. She is a member of the Ictus Quartet, formed through the Arlington (VA) Philharmonic's Crescendo youth chamber music program, and has performed in pops concerts with the Arlington Philharmonic. Participating in intensive summer programs, including the National Suzuki Summer Institute, she has worked with cello teachers from all over the country, along with esteemed members of U.S. military orchestras. In 2017, she won an Honorable Mention in the U.S. Army Band's Young Artist Competition. She has been the principal cellist in the Bard College Community Orchestra and was one of the winners of the Bard Music Program Concerto Competition in Fall 2019. She also plays in the Bard College Conservatory Orchestra. Notable venues where she has performed include the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater and the Fisher Center's Sosnoff Theater at the Bard College. Outside of classical music, she enjoys improvising duets with friends and jamming with family. She also composed and directed a score for her high school's production of *Arabian Nights*, partially inspired by the Arabic Maqamat musical system.