

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

School of Music

presents

**Symphony Orchestra
Honors Concert**

Foster Beyers, *director*

Kim Souther, *DMA conductor*

Thomas O'Keefe, *MM conductor*

Anna Fenn, *flute*

Etienne Zhou, *piano*

Meghan Willey, *soprano*

Sunday, April 30, 2023

2 pm

Concert Hall



There will be one 15-minute info-rmission.

Patrons are reminded to turn off all pagers, cell phones, personal computers, and any other electronic devices.

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Program

Prelude to Act III
from *Lohengrin* Richard Wagner
(1813-1883)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in A Major, S. 125 Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)

Etienne Zhou, *piano*
Foster Beyers, *conductor*

Flute Concerto Jacques Ibert
(1890-1962)

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro scherzando

Anna Fenn, *flute*
Kim Souther, *conductor*

Info-mission

Foster Beyers discusses Mahler's Symphony No. 4

Symphony No. 4 in G major Gustav Mahler
(1860-1911)

- I. Bedächtig, nicht eilen
- II. In gemächlicher Bewegung, ohne Hast
- III. Ruhvoll, poco adagio
- IV. Sehr behaglich

Meghan Willey, *soprano*

Presentation of Awards

Nimrod Edward Elgar
from *Enigma Variations* (1857-1934)

Thomas O'Keefe, *conductor*

Program Notes

Prelude to Act III of Lohengrin **Piano Concerto No. in A Major**

Richard Wagner
Franz Liszt

The music of Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt are just as stylistically intertwined as their lives and families later became. Liszt conducted the 1850 premiere performance of Wagner's opera Lohengrin in Weimar and remained a champion of Wagner's music throughout his life. After a tumultuous extramarital affair, Liszt's daughter Cosima married Wagner (who was only 2 years younger than his father-in-law). Both composers are interred in Bayreuth, Germany where they spent their later years near the opera house Wagner built expressly for performances of his four-opera tetralogy *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.

The prelude to the third act of Lohengrin is the second most frequently performed excerpt from this opera, the first being the famous wedding march ("here comes the bride") which immediately follows this prelude. The opening to the third act depicts the festivities surrounding the imminent marriage of Elsa and a mysterious and handsome knight whom we later find out is named Lohengrin, the son of the Grail Knight Parzival. It is Lohengrin's father that will be the subject of Wagner's final opera some thirty years later.

Liszt's Second Piano Concerto dates from 1861, more than ten years after the premiere of Lohengrin. The work is in six sections, played without a break. It features themes which evolve and interconnect in a process of thematic transformation. This is a very similar process to that which Wagner later used in his operas. Although Liszt was known as a piano virtuoso without parallel, he did not perform the solo part for the premiere of this concerto in Weimar. This honor was given to his student, Hans von Bronsart for whom the concerto is dedicated.

- Notes by Foster Beyers

Flute Concerto

Jacques Ibert

Jacques Ibert (1890-1962) was born in 1890 and as a young boy learned violin and piano. After school, he enjoyed a career teaching lessons, freelancing as an accompanist, and playing piano for the cinema. He was a student at the Paris Conservatoire. He served as a naval officer in the First World War, but won the Prix de Rome prize soon after his return in 1919.

Ibert wrote the flute concerto for the famous flautist, Marcel Moyse. The concerto features intense technical difficulties for the flute as well as many opportunities for the soloist to be in conversation with instrument families and soloists.

The first movement, Allegro, is lively and playful. The soloist hands the melody several times to different instrument families within the orchestra, who in turn hand it back to the soloist. The theme is tossed back and forth until a second, more lyrical and slow theme develops. The respite is brief, and the excited sixteenths return to end the movement. The second movement, Andante, is dreamy and lyrical and inspired by the composer's travels to Italy.

Program Notes *continued*

The movement ends peacefully, with a sigh. The third movement asserts its presence with bold, syncopated chords and a technically challenging solo, clearly inspired by both cinema and jazz. There are dramatic pauses and *rallentando*. A new theme emerges as the orchestra plays a delicate accompaniment to a lyrical melody. Like the first movement, the slow section dissipates, and the original, skittery theme returns to end the work with grandiosity.

- Notes by Kim Souther

Symphony No. 4 in G Major

Gustav Mahler

An Austrian Jewish composer and conductor, Gustav Mahler is best known for his ten symphonies and various songs with orchestra, each one consisting of different elements of Romanticism. He studied piano and composition at the Vienna Conservatory before moving on to start his conducting career. He was named the director of numerous groups throughout his life including the Vienna Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and the New York Philharmonic. His music, emotionally charged and subtly orchestrated, was not well-known until much after his death when he was considered to be a key figure in the development of 20th century compositional techniques.

Mahler's *Symphony No. 4*, which is popularly called *Ode to Heavenly Joy*, is the last symphony in the tetralogy known as the "Wunderhorn symphonies." The group of four symphonies quoted themes from "Das Knaben Wunderhorn" (The Youth's Magic Horn), which was an anthology of German folk music. The Fourth Symphony is harmonious and full of innocence. It is also the first symphony that Mahler did not provide programmatic descriptions so the audience could understand music for music without a specific story. Mahler wrote "I know the most wonderful names for the movements, but I will not betray them to the rabble of critics and listeners so that they can subject them to banal misunderstandings and distortions." He called it a humoresque in six movements but later trimmed it down to four movements, which would end up being his last symphony without the intense nature and size of his works yet to come.

The first movement opens with four flutes and sleigh bells, which is a combination also heard in the last movement. A friendly melody in the first violins is heard before a more folk-like melody is introduced in the cello section. The development is more complex in its polyphonic textures. The second movement opens as a gentle scherzo, similar to the speed of the first movement. Mahler's wife, Alma, said that his inspiration for this movement was a painting by Arnold Böcklin titled "Self Portrait with death playing the Fiddle." There is a solo violin part in which the instrument is tuned higher than usual to give a ghostly atmosphere. This movement is a combination of death and jollity. The third movement consists of two contrasting ideas, which Mahler was inspired to write by church sculptures he had seen that had their arms "closed in eternal peace." The last movement is marked "Very comfortably, featuring a child (represented by the soprano) singing a naive vision of Heaven and preparation of a feast." The music is strophic and verses are separated by interludes. The movement ends with a soft solo harp, closing with a sustained note from the double basses.

- Notes by Geneva Maldonado

Soloist Biographies

Etienne Zhou is a dynamic classical pianist from China, with a passion for captivating audiences through his performances across Asia, Europe, and North America. Zhou's repertoire spans solo, concerto, piano duet, and piano 8-hands, and he has graced the stages of prestigious venues such as The Bradshaw Hall, England, Hongkong Cultural Center, Shenzhen Concert Hall, and many others.

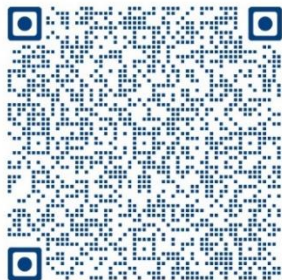
Zhou's musical journey began with scholarships that supported his Bachelor's degree studies in China before he ventured to England to hone his craft at the esteemed Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, where he was awarded *Distinction* in his Master's degree. Currently, Zhou is pursuing his doctoral studies at JMU with a full scholarship, under the guidance of Dr. Eric Ruple and Dr. Gabriel Dobner, pushing the boundaries of his artistry.

Anna Fenn, originally from Manassas, Virginia, has been pursuing her passion for music as a Music Performance major and is also majoring in Economics with a concentration in Quantitative Economics. A fourth-year senior, Anna has earned several honors, including being named the First Place Winner of the Mid-Atlantic Flute Convention Collegiate Soloist Competition and a member of the 2022 National Flute Association Collegiate Flute Choir. She has been a member of the Symphony Orchestra for the 2022-2023 academic year and has also been a member of the JMU Wind Symphony and the 2020 pit orchestra for the JMU production of *Sideshow*. Her dedication to academic excellence is equally impressive, having been awarded the 2023 Faculty Award for Academic Excellence in Economics. Anna plans to continue with her academic studies by pursuing a Master of Science in Data Analytics.

Meghan Willey is a native of Fairfax, Virginia. Currently, she is a senior pursuing a bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance at James Madison University under the tutelage of Dr. Carrie Stevens. While at JMU, Meghan has sung roles in several JMU opera productions including Anne Trulove in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* and Phyllis in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe*. She also covered for *Queen of the Night* in JMU's online production of *The Magic Flute* during COVID-19. In addition to performing in opera productions, Meghan has also participated in many national and local vocal competitions. This year, Meghan is competing in the NATS National Student Auditions Classical Division. Last year, Meghan was a finalist in the CS Music National Competition in Chicago. She also placed 1st in the 2022 Sue Goetz Ross Competition in Bethesda and third in the 2021 NATS National Student Auditions Classical Division. Currently, Meghan works as the Director of Music at Manor Memorial United Methodist Church in New Market, VA. She is also a young artist with Opera Roanoke.

Research Survey

Please scan this QR code to take part in a research study on audience engagement by Kimberly W. Souther. This study has been approved by the IRB, protocol #23-4079. Your feedback is greatly appreciated!



List of Ensemble Members

Members are listed alphabetically by section

Violin I

Aidan Coleman
Johnny Park
Jonathan Petrini
Sierra Rickard
Patrick Shaughnessy*
Rachel Tan
Khalil Turner

Violin II

Briana Clark
Jonathan Colmenares
Louanna Colon
Alexandra Goodell
Aidan Hall
Adeline King
Thomas O'Keefe^

Viola

Kamryn Cajohn
Madeleine Gabalski^
Katie Hayes
Ana Mooney
Hannah Rahrig
Franklin Villalta

Cello

Christopher Hall
Julia King
Alison Lilly
Vikram Lothe
Danny Postlethwait
Jessi Sfarnas
Kim Souther^
Malia Walton

Bass

James Adkison-Piccirello
Tina Battaglia
John Foley
Ruben Garcia
Nicholas Greer-Young^
Alex Haldane
Frankie Sellars

Flutes

Ariel Collins
Anna Fenn
Jakob Knick
Becky Needham

Oboes

Will Slopnick
Mekhi Tyree
Andrew Welling

Clarinets

Blaine Edwards
Geneva Maldonado
Gregorio Paone

Bassoons

David Kang
Tony Russo

Contrabassoon

Michael Ross

Horns

Jacob Andersen
Ainsley Hanson
Michael Parlier
Jacob Taylor

Trumpets

Olivia Ellsworth
Jocelyn Moyer
Max Parrish

Trombones

Nikhil Argade
Alex Mizroch

Bass Trombone

Teague Jenkins

Tuba

John Kelley

Keyboard

Ashlyn Craig

Percussion

Blaze Benevides
Michael Dolese
Brian McDermott
Jonathan Ramirez
Shelby Shelton^

Key

*Concertmaster

^Principal

JMU School of Music Diversity Statement

Difference in identity enriches our community, fosters artistic and intellectual growth, and is vital to creating thriving venues for expression in a global world. In addition to welcoming all individuals and perspectives regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, socio-economic status, or citizenship status, we wish to make the following acknowledgements and affirmations, adapted from Americans for the Arts:

- In the United States, there are systems of power that grant privilege and access unequally such that inequity and injustice result. We resolve to educate ourselves, keep vigilant watch, and act to bring an end to systemic oppression.
- Cultural equity—which embodies values, practices, and policies that ensure all people have access to, and are represented in, the arts—is critical to the sustained engagement of music in society.
- Acknowledging and challenging our inequities and working in partnership is how we will make change happen.
- Everyone deserves equal access to a full, vibrant creative life, which is essential to a healthy and democratic society.
- The prominent presence of musicians in society can challenge inequities and encourage alternatives.



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Dear Patron,

Thank you for attending today's performance. The JMU School of Music educates the most talented students from around the world to shape the fabric of society. We are ecstatic to return to our stages to showcase the talent and hard work of our students and faculty.

Scholarship contributions help young musicians blossom into mature artists. With your support, we will be able to offer our talented students more financial help in pursuing their goals. If you are interested in supporting our students' passion and dedication, please consider contributing to the Music Scholarship Fund at James Madison University.

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