

QUEER URBAN ORCHESTRA
PRESENTS



Abra ca da bra!

E X P E R I E N C E M U S I C A L M A G I C

JULIE DESBORDES, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
IAN SHAFER, ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR

A L A K A Z A M

SATURDAY APRIL 16TH 8:00 P.M.



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presents

Abbracadabra!

EXPERIENCE MUSICAL MAGIC

Alakazam!

Julie Desbordes, conductor

The Fair Melusina, Op. 32
Overture

Felix Mendelssohn

Symphony No. 8 in F major, Op. 93
I. Allegro vivace e con brio
II. Allegretto scherzando
III. Temop di menuetto
IV. Allegro vivace

Ludwig van Beethoven

sponsored by Charles Lee

Intermission

Concerto in G for Piano and Orchestra:
A Walk Through an English Garden
I. Allegro vivo
II. Andantino
III. Animato

James Adler

James Adler, piano

Pelléas et Mélisande, Op. 80
I. Prélude
II. Fileuse
III. Sicilienne
IV. La mort de Mélisande

Gabriel Fauré

Mr. Adler plays a Yamaha piano.

Alakazam, presented by the Queer Urban Orchestra, is made possible in part with public funds from Creative Engagement, supported by the New York Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and administered by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council

Welcome!

Dear friends,

We're delighted to welcome you once again to Holy Apostles for the third installment in our "Abracadabra!" series. [Talk briefly about how the Faure and Mendelssohn apply to the magic theme]

We're especially pleased to be joined by renowned pianist and composer and friend (or rather spouse) of QUO James Adler. His beautiful concerto, expert musicality, and smiling face have been a welcome addition to our rehearsals.

This is an exciting time for QUO as we finally usher in the spring weather. [mention Beethoven/happy/spring] We're currently embroiled in preparations for another exciting collaboration with Katy Pyle and the Ballez Company, this time reinterpreting Tchaikovsky's Sleeping Beauty with queer themes, time travel, and an East Village protest in a production called "Sleeping Beauty and the Beast." The eight-performance run at La Mama begins in two weeks. Visit ballez.org for details and tickets. Right on the heels of that is our second QUOtets chamber concert of the year on May 14th, and Pride Month culminates with our second-ever pride Gay-La on June 25th, when we will be joined by women's choir Melodia. It's going to be a magical two-and-a-half months, and we hope you can share it with us.

[Maybe talk about timpani fundraising]

Julie Desbordes
Artistic Director, QUO

Andrew Berman
President, QUO

Queer Urban Orchestra

Julie Desbordes, Artistic Director

Ian Shafer, Assistant Conductor

1ST VIOLIN

Phong Ta,
concertmaster
Andrew Holland,
asst. concertmaster
Alice Buchanan
Sarah Deyoung
Brian Harrington
Nick Johnson
Reyenne Schiowitz
Navida Stein
Liann Wadewitz

2ND VIOLIN

Christopher Minarich,
principal
Alva Bostick,
section leader
Dan Bauman
Laura Flanagan
Andre Gillard
Holly Seefeldt
Jarred Small
Vasanth Subramaniam
James Teal

VIOLA

Marvin Li, *principal*
Thomas Lai,
asst. principal
Drew Acquaviva,
section leader
Seth Bedford
James Di Meglio
Mark Golanco
Frederick Hodges
Dan Makula
Mark Eric Rodriguez

CELLO

Bjorn Berkhout,
principal, sec. ldr.
Alex Humesky
Maia Levine
Richard Moy
Taiwo Omosowon
Bryanne Pashley
Peter Pearson
Jasmine Rault
Michael Shattner

BASS

Adrienne Lloyd,
principal, sec. ldr.
Rodney Azagra
Craig Klonowski

FLUTE

Craig Devereaux,
principal, sec. ldr.
Jenn Forese
Scott Oaks

PICCOLO

Scott Oaks

OBOE

Ian Shafer, *principal*
Alan Hyde
Christian Smythe
Bryan Tallevi

CLARINET

Fran Novak, *principal*
Travis Fraser,
section leader

BASSOON

David Lohman,
principal
Darcy Leon,
asst. principal
Charlie Scatamacchia,
section leader

FRENCH HORN

Eric Hayslett, *principal*
Steven Petrucelli,
section leader
Nathan Quist
Brandon Travan

TRUMPET

Ron Nahass, *principal*
Erin Kulick,
section leader

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principal, sec. ldr.
Jim Theobald

TUBA

Dan Perry

HARP

Mélanie Genin

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Andrew Berman,
section leader
Clint Arndt
Sean Foradori
Álvaro Rodas

Artistic Director, Julie Desbordes



Originally from Limoges, France, Julie Desbordes is a fast rising conductor known for her engaging style, energetic interpretations and emotional communication with her musicians and audiences. Currently Artistic Director of QUO (the Queer Urban Orchestra) in New York City, her recent international appearances as a guest conductor include concerts in Venezuela, Canada, Hong Kong and Macau. She is also Associate Conductor of Education and Outreach for The Chelsea Symphony (NYC).

Ms. Desbordes has a special passion for educational outreach, and is known for creating interesting programs that bring a wider and more diverse audience into concert halls. She served for many years as Site Director and Orchestra Director for New York's The Harmony Program (El Sistema USA), and in this capacity was named "New Yorker of The Week" by Columbia University. She was one of two finalists for the Directorship of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's El Sistema Youth Orchestra program (YOLA), and has been a featured guest at El Sistema programs nationwide, most recently in Los Angeles, Baltimore, Hawaii and Connecticut.

Julie is featured in an upcoming documentary about El Sistema USA by Jamie Bernstein (daughter of Leonard Bernstein) entitled "Crescendo! The Power of Music," to be released on Netflix in 2015. She also has been noted in El Sistema pieces by PBS, ABC and CBS.

Julie's love for music began from the moment she picked up the cornet at age 8 in her native France. Soon after, she was identified as a talent with the baton as well, leading to her winning conducting prizes including 1st Prize, 2nd named at the French National Conducting Competition in Paris (DADSM). She was named Co-Director of the Harmonie Municipale de Limoges at the age of 21.

Ms. Desbordes holds multiple degrees in both conducting and trumpet from each of the following: Conservatoire de Musique Limoges, Conservatoire de Musique Bordeaux and Conservatoire de Musique Montreal. Her conducting teachers include Raffi Armenian and Gustav Meier.

Assistant Conductor, Ian Shafer



Ian Shafer is a passionate, multifaceted musician. He has held positions as a conductor, an oboist, chamber music coach, and teacher. He made his public conducting debut at 13 years old, conducting the world premiere of his composition, *Beau Terre* for wind ensemble. In addition to the Assistant Conductor of QUO, he has been the Music Director of the Trappe Chamber Players, (PA); the Greater Philadelphia Honors Orchestra, the orchestras of the *Cresecndo*

Chamber Music Festival; the Winter-term Opera and Orchestras of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music; and the Assistant Conductor of the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra. Mr. Shafer was the cover conductor of Oberlin's Contemporary Music Ensemble and conducted *Ancient Voices of Children* at the "George Crumb Festival" while at Oberlin. Additionally, he prepared the cast and orchestra for the performance and recording of *Starbird*, an opera, by Henry Mollicone.

As an oboist, he enjoys a very active performance career as a freelance artist in New York and abroad. His playing has been described as, "sinuous, refined... and refreshing, with facility," ([Q]on Stage). This season, Mr. Shafer made his Carnegie Hall debut to a very enthusiastic crowd where he gave the world premiere of Mohammed Fairouz's *Locales* a work written for him on commission. He has also given the world premieres of several other works: *Elegy and Impromptu* by James Adler; *Layers of Earth*, by Lars Graugaard, to be released this spring on CD; *Langanaiich-Taragto*; a seven-minute improvised solo to Elizabeth Hoffman's digital score, which later expanded to *Improvisational Spirals* for oboe, dancer, and DJ premiered at the NYSoundCircuit; *Noor Al Salam* (Light of Peace) and *ResoNations* at two "Concerts for Peace" for the delegates of the United Nations.

Mr. Shafer is on faculty at the Manhattan School of Music in the Precollege divisions of Oboe performance, Music Theory and Ear-training. holds a M.M. in Oboe performance from NYU, and B.M. from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Composition and Musicology. He has worked with Robert Spano, Louis Lane, Jorma Panula, Alfred Gershfeld and Jonathan Coopersmith

Bio continued from previous page

for conducting and Bert Lucarelli, Ray Still, and Jonathan Kelly for oboe. He has studied composition with Richard Hoffmann, a former student of Arnold Schoenberg and has several compositions to his credit, *Fugue for Four Trombones*, which was premiered by members of the Chicago Symphony, *Dreams* for Woodwind Quintet, by the Sarasota Orchestra's wind quintet, and *Russian Games*, by the Oberlin Wind Ensemble.

♪ ☆
Abracadabra! ☆
☆ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ☆

Soloist and Composer, James Adler



James Adler is a pianist who “can create whatever type of music he wants at the keyboard” (*Chicago Sun-Times*) and a composer who writes “with uncommon imagination” (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*).

Mr. Adler made his orchestral performing debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and has appeared in recital on the Orchestra's Allied Arts Piano Series and the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts Series. His appearances have brought him from Chicago's Grant Park, to London's Royal Albert Hall (broadcast

by the BBC), to Thessaloniki, Greece, to New York's Alice Tully Hall, Symphony Space, and the Paramount Theatre at Madison Square Garden.

His extensive list of compositions is headed by *Memento mori: An AIDS Requiem*. Performed worldwide, recorded by AmorArtis Chorale and Orchestra, and published by Alfred Music, *Memento mori* features a “range of expression [that] is expansive” and is “a unique, well-crafted, emotionally rich piece” (*American Record Guide*). Other compositions

Bio continued from previous page

include *Reflections upon a September morn* (poetry by Walt Whitman); *Monday's Child*, performed at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; *Daughters of Music*, recently commissioned by Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity Fort Worth Alumnae Chapter; *Carols of Splendour*, premiered at Carnegie Hall; *It's Gotta Be America*, commissioned for the Centennial Celebration of the Statue of Liberty; and *Canticle For Peace*, written for the opening of the 43rd session of the United Nations General Assembly. Mr. Adler is also the composer of *Concerto in G for Piano and Orchestra*, the children's "pOpera" *Herbie and Carnie: A Dinosaur*, the *Classic Rag-time Suite* for orchestra, numerous solo, chamber, and choral works, and the award-winning film score for *The Hat Act*.

As performer and composer, Mr. Adler can be heard on recordings from Albany Records, Capstone, Navona, and Ravello Records, including his newest release from Albany, *Introspections*. He is a member of the Department of Fine Arts at Saint Peter's University. James Adler was recently inducted as a National Arts Associate in the Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity.

www.adleroaksmusic.com

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Program Notes

Jakob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was born February 3, 1809 into a wealthy Jewish family in Hamburg, then an independent German state. His father was a banker and his grandfather a prominent German philosopher. Felix—and older sister Fanny—exhibited tremendous musical aptitude at an early age. The children were reared without traditional Jewish education and subsequently baptized, as father Abraham had renounced his traditional faith. Although he preferred the Bartholdy surname for his family, his son eventually adopted a combination of both last names.

Felix, like Mozart before him, was a bona-fide child prodigy. He took piano lessons in Paris by age seven and his first public concert was at age nine, leading to dozens of very successful adolescent works including string symphonies, quartets, a piano quartet, and the famous String Octet in E-flat major. He composed his overture to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at age 17 in 1826. This work is considered history's first concert overture—a piece not specifically written to accompany a staged performance but meant to musically evoke a literary or historical theme. As a teen, Felix met the very elderly Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Goethe was in awe of the young composer's talents and declared the "little man" a "miraculous" musical prodigy. Mendelssohn later wrote several works inspired by Goethe's poems.

Mendelssohn's family's considerable wealth afforded him many important connections with wealthy German patrons of art. In 1829, he arranged and conducted a Berlin performance of J. S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* that was the first-ever performance of the work outside of Leipzig since Bach's death in 1750. The remarkable success of Mendelssohn's undertaking was the central catalyst that led to a vigorous renaissance of Bach's music throughout Europe and the world. The 1830s brought Mendelssohn growing fame across the continent. He was in demand as a composer, pianist, and conductor. Many contemporaries, including Robert Schumann and Richard Wagner, recognized his talents; Queen Victoria and Prince Albert of England adored his music. Although married in 1837, Mendelssohn's romantic life is most scrutinized for an alleged affair with Swedish soprano Jenny Lind.

In 1843, Mendelssohn founded the Leipzig Conservatory. Within a few years, however, amidst growing health concerns, nonstop tours, and the death of Fanny, he suffered a series of strokes. Mendelssohn died

on November 4, 1847 at the age of 38. He left behind five full-scale symphonies, overtures, songs, concerti, copious chamber music, and many choral works.

Mendelssohn composed **The Fair Melusina** overture in 1834 as part of a commission for the London Philharmonic Society. The project was originally offered to Beethoven years earlier; he declined. Music historian Howard Posner writes:

Melusina was a water sprite who bore a curse that turned her into a serpent from the waist down every Saturday. She married a mortal knight after making him promise to stay away from her on Saturdays. The knight, of course, eventually got curious (in some versions of the story, it was because their children were deformed, and he suspected that another man was visiting Melusina on Saturdays and siring them) and broke his promise.

The New York Philharmonic first played the overture in 1845, conducted by Ureli Corelli Hill.

Ludwig van Beethoven was born on December 17, 1770 in Bonn, Cologne (then of the Holy Roman Empire). Fascinated by music at an early age, Beethoven first studied piano with his father and later with composer-conductor Christian Gottlob Neefe. As a young adult he moved to Vienna to further learn of composition with Joseph Haydn and began his storied career. Many of Beethoven's most beloved works were written during the last two decades of his life, including the **Symphony no. 8 in F Major**, Op. 93, composed in 1812.

Beethoven's eighth symphony, although less well-known than many of his other symphonies, is a magnificent early-Romantic work. The composer dotingly referred to the piece as his "little symphony in F," distinguishing it from the larger and longer Symphony no. 6, also in F major. A light-hearted and characteristically jovial orchestral work, the eighth symphony is generally well-received by audiences yet rarely garners the fervent applause of its neighboring, odd-numbered siblings. Composer-pianist Carl Czerny and playwright George Bernard Shaw both asserted that although musically stronger than the seventh symphony—"in all subtler aspects the Eighth is better" (Shaw)—the work lacked a recognizable Beethovenian dramatic gravitas contemporary audiences had come to expect.

The symphony is in a traditional four-movement format; however, its weightiest movement is last rather than first—one of many signals that Beethoven was rapidly turning away from conventional compositional form. The work is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings. At approximately

26 minutes in duration, it is Beethoven's shortest symphony.

Within the first movement (in a jaunty 3/4) lies a rare moment of *fff* (*fortississimo*) dynamics marking the onset of the recapitulation of original thematic content. This bombast is counterbalanced with tranquil closing measures. The second movement—widely believed to be a tongue-in-cheek parody of the metronome—is marked *allegretto scherzando*. Although there is no empirical proof of this story, Johann Maelzel did indeed invent his time-marking device in the early 1810s. It is more likely that Beethoven's inspiration for this movement came from Haydn's "Clock" Symphony, no. 101. The third movement hearkens back to a then-already obsolete form, the *minuet*. Plentiful *sforzandi* markings make the movement stylistically similar to the rest of the work, providing "good-humored, thumping accents." The symphony ends with a sonata-rondo fourth movement, complete with a very extensive coda and unexpected modulation from the lowered second scale degree to home tonic (F). Tchaikovsky declared this movement "one of the greatest symphonic masterpieces" of all Beethoven compositions. The work was premiered in 1814 in Vienna, conducted by the composer.

Symphony no. 8 in F Major, op. 93 was first performed by the New York Philharmonic in November 1844, conducted by George Loder.

James Adler (see bio on pages 7 and 8), provides these notes on his **Concerto in G for Piano and Orchestra: A Walk Through an English Garden:**

While visiting England during the Spring of 1980, I was invited to spend some time visiting a friend in Kent. He had just composed a harp concerto and while he played parts of it for me, I was intrigued by its playfulness and joyous tonality, and immediately decided to compose a piano concerto for myself, embodying these features. My then-concert manager in London suggested that I compose something "suitable for out-of-doors."

This might explain the generous use of glockenspiel in the concerto, mindful of those out-of-doors summer evening concerts. As I looked through some music, I was taken by a haunting English medieval harp tune: angular, modal, and dramatic. This became the impetus (and tune) for the second movement. By now, some might be asking why "A Walk through an English Garden" is used as a subtitle. Kent is known to travelers as "The Garden of England"—a fitting designation for a work born in Kent.

The work is in three movements, performed without interruption. The first is marked allegro vivo in 4/4 meter. The feeling is decidedly tonal, youthful, with a song inside. The second movement, andantino, is scored for oboe, clarinet, piano solo, and strings in 5/4 meter. The strings set the mode (pun, notwithstanding), the oboe plaintively announces the medieval theme, and the piano enters un poco sostenuto. The third movement actually starts slowly in 4/4, coming out of the second movement's mode. Increasing in tempo, the piano hints at the first movement's theme, bursting into the 2/4 animato. Bright, tonal, rhythmic and jazzy describe these proceedings. The piano solo in arpeggiation fashion provides a Charleston-like dance with jazzy commentary from the orchestra.

It is a personal and professional joy to collaborate with Maestra Julie Desbordes and the wonderful members of QUO. You do me and my music proud! It is my hope that you receive as much joy from this performance as we have in bringing it to you.

Born on May 12, 1845 in the south of France, **Gabriel Urbain Fauré** ultimately became one of the principal European composers of his generation, his musical style influencing many 20th-century musicians. His most recognized works are his *Pavane for a Dead Princess*, *Requiem*, piano nocturnes, and songs. At the age of nine, already displaying considerable musical ability, Fauré was sent to study music in Paris where he began training to become a church organist and choirmaster. His teachers included organ virtuoso Camille Saint-Saëns, who became a lifelong friend.

Upon graduation in 1865, Fauré earned a modest living as organist and teacher. Much later in life he accepted posts as organist of the Église de la Madeleine and Director of the Paris Conservatoire (1905), which left him little time for continued composition. He annually retreated to the countryside over summer holidays to concentrate solely upon his writing. Tragically, Fauré suffered from increasing deafness in his later years. He died of pneumonia on November 4, 1924 at age 79. His music is considered to be a significant bridge between the waning Romantic style and burgeoning jazz, atonal, and Neoclassical trends of the early 20th century. **Pelléas et Mélisande**, Op. 80 is a suite derived from incidental music for Maurice Maeterlinck's play of the same name. Fauré was the first of four leading composers to write music inspired by Maeterlinck's drama; Debussy, Schoenberg and Sibelius followed in the first decade of the 20th century. Fauré's version was written for the London production of

Program notes continued from previous page

Maeterlinck's play in 1898, first orchestrated by former pupil and composer Charles Koechlin and later by Fauré himself. The suite was commissioned in 1898 by Mrs. Patrick Campbell for the play's first production in English, in which she starred with Johnston Forbes-Robertson and John Martin-Harvey. Debussy had first been invited to compose the music, but he was already composing an independent, operatic version of the play.

The play, a symbolist drama of creation and destruction, centers upon the forbidden love of the title characters; both perish by the end of the story. It premiered in May 1893 in Paris. Critics panned the work—it was jarringly adversative to French realism—but the playwright and his colleagues approved. Fauré's four-movement suite premiered in 1901 and in a revised version (with added *Sicilienne*) in 1909. The New York Philharmonic first performed the work in 1920, conducted by Walter Damrosch and subsequently by Aaron Copland, Lorin Maazel, and George Szell.

Notes by Dr. Aaron Patterson

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About QUO

Founded in July 2009, the Queer Urban Orchestra (QUO) is a musical organization dedicated to the promotion of fine arts in the New York City metropolitan area whose membership is open to all adult musicians regardless of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. QUO strives to entertain and educate members and audiences alike through performances of classical and contemporary music, promoting equality, understanding, acceptance, and respect.

Come play with us

Play an instrument? Come and join QUO! Membership is open to all adult musicians regardless of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Chat us up after the concert or email us at **membership@queerurbanorchestra.org**.

About Our Home

Church of the Holy Apostles

QUO has made its home at the Church of the Holy Apostles since 2010, but Holy Apostles has been welcoming LGBT groups and parishioners since the beginning of the gay rights movement in New York. “I know of few New York City GLBTQ organizations which did not have a home at some point in their history at the Church of the Holy Apostles,” says Father Rand Frew, 12th Rector of Holy Apostles.

When QUO violinist Joey Plaster discovered that the Gay Activists Alliance had its headquarters at Holy Apostles in the early seventies, we reached out to Fr. Frew for more information. He shared: “The annual Pride March was announced in the bulletin and verbally, and people were encouraged to take part for the expansion of human rights. The Chelsea Gay Association met at Holy Apostles. The late Vito Russo’s documentary, groundbreaking film *The Celluloid Closet* was first previewed and shown at Holy Apostles with commentary by Mr. Russo. The New York City Gay Men’s Chorus rehearsed and performed at Holy Apostles.”

QUO is just one of several groups at Holy Apostles that spread a message of equality and acceptance through music. We’re happy to share this space with fellow LGBT music performing groups such as The Stonewall Chorale and the Empire City Men’s Chorus.



photo by Carlos Restrepo

Director's Circle

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The members of the **Queer Urban Orchestra** for providing refreshments

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Liann Wadewitz for program printing

In Memoriam

QUO joins the Lesbian & Gay Big Apple Corps, the Philadelphia
Freedom Band, and our friends in the Lesbian and Gay Band
Association worldwide in mourning the passing of clarinetist
Daniel A. Katzin (1984-2015).

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PRESENTS



JULIE DESBORDES, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
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