



QUEER URBAN ORCHESTRA

Your City, Your Orchestra

Saturday, October 19th - 8pm
Church of the Holy Apostles



Season 11

October 19, 2019

Julie Desbordes, Artistic Director

Alex Wen, Assistant Conductor

Yury Shadrin, Guest Pianist

Danse Macabre

Camille Saint-Saëns

Phong Ta, Violin

In the Hall of the Mountain King

Edvard Grieg

Malédiction

Franz Liszt

Yury Shadrin, piano

Alex Wen, Conductor

Intermission

Night on Bald Mountain

Modest Mussorgsky

Alex Wen, Conductor

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

John Williams

1. Hedwig's Theme

2. The Sorcerer's Stone

3. Nimbus 2000

4. Harry's Wonderous World

Queer Urban Orchestra

Violin I

Jonathan Bloomfield
Diego Diaz
Rachel Feldhaus
Brian Harrington
Nick Johnson
Farzaneh Sarafras
Reyenne Schiowitz
Dane Stalcup
Navida Stein
Phong Ta ‡§
Liz Taub
Yuki Yamada

Violin II

Klaudia Amenabar
Christian Balmaseda-
Lucca
Alva Bostick §
Jonathan Chang •
Laura Flanagan
Andre Gillard
Suzanne Lipkin
Ligia Sakurai
Holly Seefeldt
Tim Shin
Renee Slaw
Robert Wisotzkey

Viola

James Di Meglio §
Rebecca Fitton
Andrew Holland
Robert Rosenlund
Frazier Stevenson

Bass

Hanxiao Den
George Nicholson

Cello

Bjorn Berkhout •§
Alex Humesky
Germ Lynn
Steve McLure
Navin Manglani
Kate Penrose
Todd Porter
Michael Renner
Ed Szilard
Brittany Taylor

Flute

Craig Devereaux •§
Charles Lee
Scott Oaks

Alto Flute

Craig Devereaux

Piccolo

Scott Oaks

Oboe

Matthew Hadley •§
Brian Shaw

English Horn

Kevin Chavez

Clarinet

Travis Fraser §
Fran Novak •
Lianna Portnoy

Bass Clarinet

Travis Fraser

Bassoon

David Lohnman •
Stuart Potter

Contrabassoon

Norma Kerln

Horn

Lynn Caron
Steven Petrucelli §
Brandon Travan
Kyle Walker •

Trumpet

Ron Nahass •§
Ismael Pereira
Brian Wang

Trombone

Alex Arellano §
Ryan Gochee
Kevin Schmitt •

Tuba

Adam Rosenberg

Percussion

Clint Ardt
Andrew Berman •§
Alva Bostick
Brian Reynolds
Álvaro Rodas

Celeste and Piano

Nolan N. Dresden

Harp

Stephanie Babirak

Julie Desbordes, Artistic Director



Award-winning conductor **Julie Desbordes** leads ensembles in the Americas, Asia, and her native France. Recent guest conducting appearances have included performances with orchestras in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Venezuela and Cuba.

Mrs. Desbordes made her conducting debut at age 17 with l'Harmonie Municipale de Limoges, France. Since then, she has led diverse groups, from professional orchestras to community bands to youth ensembles.

She is the newly appointed Music Director of the Philharmonia Orchestra at Arizona State University, where she also teaches conducting. Previously based in New York and Baltimore, she led two groundbreaking orchestras in New York City: the Queer Urban Orchestra (QUO) and the Turtle Bay Youth Orchestra. With those ensembles, she presented innovative programs of traditional and new repertoire that attracted large, enthusiastic audiences. Prior to those appointments, she garnered praise for her work conducting other New York ensembles, among them, the Chelsea and Litha Symphonies.

While extremely grateful for her new position at Arizona State University, Mrs. Desbordes is sad to have to leave QUO after five wonderful years of music and meaningful collaborations. QUO will stay one of her most wonderful musical and human experiences, and the bonds created with the orchestra members are here to stay. She is forever thankful to be part of such a vibrant community, and will keep working actively towards LGBTQ+ rights and visibility wherever she goes.

Also a leader in the El Sistema movement, she was a featured cast member in the documentary film, *Crescendo! The Power of Music*, directed by Jamie Bernstein (daughter of Leonard Bernstein), and is a frequent guest conductor at El Sistema programs internationally. In New York, she has taught and conducted hundreds of young musicians participating in El Sistema initiatives such as the Harmony Program and the Corona Youth Music Project.

As both a conductor and an educator, Mrs. Desbordes has years of experience developing new audiences for classical music. Beyond New York, in Taiwan each summer, she draws multi-generational audiences to her concerts as conductor of the Tainan Kaoshung Orchestra Festival. Similarly, in Baltimore, she directed community-oriented performances as part of her duties as Assistant Conductor of the Mid-Atlantic Symphony from 2017 to 2018.

Her success at engaging audiences arises from both her musical and curatorial abilities. When crafting concert programs, she creates titles and experiences that appeal to performers and listeners alike. When conducting from the

podium, she energizes those around her, rousing musicians to play from the heart and motivating audiences to become loyal followers.

Mrs. Desbordes holds Master and Bachelor degrees in conducting and trumpet performance from conservatoires in France and Canada. In 2020, she will complete doctoral studies in orchestral conducting at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore. Her conducting mentors have included Raffi Armenian, Gustav Meier and Marin Alsop.

Learn more about Julie Desbordes and hear recordings of her performances at www.JulieDesbordes.com.

Alex Wen, Assistant Conductor



Alex Wen is a conductor, violinist and violist. Wen is currently in his second season as Assistant Conductor of the Queer Urban Orchestra and his fifth season as Principal Conductor with the Golden Rose Opera. He has conducted performances of *La Bohème*, *Carmen*, *Suor Angelica*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and *Madama Butterfly* with Golden Rose Opera and has worked with the contemporary chamber opera company, Fresh Squeezed Opera, leading the New York premiere of Huang Ruo's *Bound* in 2019. Additionally, Alex has conducted performances with Rhymes With Opera, the Queens

College Orchestra, Queens College Opera, Litha Symphony Orchestra, and the New Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra. He has assisted and cover conducted for the Yonkers Philharmonic, the Sound Symphony, Massapequa Philharmonic, and Park Avenue Chamber Symphony.

Under the tutelage of Maurice Peress, Wen received his Masters degree in conducting at the Aaron Copland School of Music. From 2013-2015, he also managed the Queens College Conductors Workshop during which he assisted Maestro Peress and composers such as David Amram, Bruce Saylor, and George Tsontakis. As a selected participant of the 2019 Conductors Workshop at the acclaimed Cabrillo Festival for Contemporary Music, he worked under the guidance of Maestros Cristian Măcelaru and Octavio Más-Arocas. Wen holds a Bachelor of Music in viola performance from Azusa Pacific University (APU) where he also gained choral experience as an assistant conductor to the APU Chamber Singers. In that role, he prepared the orchestra and covered major rehearsals for occasions such as the National Collegiate Choral Organization's renowned conference. From 2010-2012, he was assistant conductor for the Celestial Opera Company in Los Angeles, where he has enjoyed performing on multiple film scores as a conductor and violist.

Yury Shadrin, Guest Pianist



Yury Shadrin is an internationally acclaimed pianist who has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and major venues across four continents.

Shadrin has appeared with leading orchestras in Argentina, Baltimore, Kalamazoo (Gilmore Festival), Miami, the Philippines, Venezuela, and Vietnam. Recent recital highlights include performances with Washington Performing Arts, Oberlin Conservatory, The Juilliard School, Eastman School of Music, China's Central Conservatory of Music, and Russia's Mariinsky Stars of the White Nights Festival.

Highlights of the 2019-20 season include performances at the historic Staatskapelle Berlin, the Steinway Series at Silo Hill, the Russian Embassy, and residencies at the Royal Conservatory of Ghent and London's Royal College of Music. Last season, Shadrin gave recitals throughout Europe, including Konzerthaus Berlin and other major halls in Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland, as part of Sir András Schiff's Building Bridges Tour.

Shadrin gained international recognition with his First Prize at the Rome International Piano Competition, Grand Prize at the Siberian Piano Competition, and honors at other international competitions. He graduated from the Moscow Conservatory, Oberlin Conservatory, Yale School of Music, and the Peabody Institute, where he continues to work closely with Leon Fleisher and serves as Artistic Director of the Baltimore International Piano Festival.



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Welcome to our Eleventh Season!

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I'd like to welcome you to the first concert of our 2019-2020 concert season: A Magical Farewell.

This concert is a very bittersweet moment for us, as it will be the last concert with Julie Desbordes as our Artistic Director. She has taken a teaching position in Arizona, and we couldn't be happier for her. QUO has matured greatly under her baton, and we are grateful that she is joining us for this one last concert. For five seasons she has inspired, encouraged and elevated our musical skills. She will certainly be missed.

But have no fear, we are currently in the process of filling Julie's big shoes. We expect our new Artistic Director to be in place by the next full orchestra concert. They will be shaping the season to come so it truly will be a season of surprises.

We continue to be an organization dedicated to promoting equality, understanding, acceptance and respect; values that we must never take for granted, particularly at a time when these qualities are seemingly under attack by people who hold real power.

We thank you for your continued support and we are looking forward to bringing you a season of exciting music and new adventures.

Bjorn Berkhout
President, Queer Urban Orchestra

Program Notes

Charles-Camille Saint-Saëns was born October 9, 1835 in Paris. A child prodigy pianist, Saint-Saëns gave his first recital at age eleven. He studied organ and composition at the Paris Conservatory, premiering his Symphony No. 1 in 1855. Saint-Saëns became organist at the Church of the Madeleine in Paris two years later, a professional association that lasted for two decades. Franz Liszt, with whom Saint-Saëns formed a lasting friendship and fond collegiality, considered him as the greatest organist in the world. From 1861 to 1865 he taught piano at the Niedermeyer School, where his pupils included Gabriel Fauré and André Messager.

After the Franco-Prussian War, Saint-Saëns assisted in founding the National Society of Music, which promoted performances of French orchestral works composed by promising young artists. In 1871, he wrote his first symphonic poem, *Le rouet d'Omphale* (*Omphale's Spinning Wheel*); another of his symphonic poems, *Danse macabre*, would become one of his most enduring compositional legacies. His opera *Samson et Dalila*, at first rejected in Paris for its portrayal of biblical characters on-stage, was eventually premiered (in German) at Weimar in 1877, with great support by Liszt. It was later staged in Paris in 1890 at the Théâtre Eden, subsequently becoming the most popular of his thirteen operas.

In 1878, Saint-Saëns suffered the loss of both his sons; three years later, he separated from his wife—the end of an increasingly unhappy and, as many historians posit, inauthentic marriage.

During the last decades of the century he undertook extensive tours across four continents, performing his five piano concerti and conducting his symphonic compositions. Saint-Saëns' Symphony No. 3 of 1886, dedicated to the memory of Liszt, made skilled use of the organ and two pianos. Late the same year, he completed *Le carnaval des animaux* (*The Carnival of Animals*) for small orchestra, a wonderfully imaginative program piece never performed during his lifetime. It has since won considerable popularity as a work for young people's concerts. In 1908, he became the first internationally-recognized composer to craft music for the new medium of film for the movie *L'Assassinat du duc de guise*.

Though he lived during the era of Wagner's considerable formal and harmonic influence, Saint-Saëns remained staunchly traditional. He upheld an outspoken conservative approach to French music that emphasized polished craftsmanship and a sense of form. In 1921, while traveling in Algiers, he passed away of a heart attack at the age of eighty-six; his remarkable life spanned Schumann, Berlioz, and Chopin to Gershwin, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg. *The Times* heralded Saint-Saëns as a generational genius in its obituary notice:

The death of M. Saint-Saëns not only deprives France of one of her most distinguished composers; it removes from the world the last representative of the great movements of music which were typical of the 19th century. [...] He was only two years younger than Brahms, was five years older than Tchaikovsky, six years older than Dvorak, and seven years older than Sullivan. He held a position in his own country's music certain aspects of which may be fitly compared with each of those masters in their own spheres.

Although Saint-Saëns' good friend Liszt is credited as the inventor of the symphonic tone poem, he was the first French composer to utilize the form. Many of his fellow countrymen followed suit including Franck, Chausson, Duparc, and Dukas. **Danse macabre**, op. 40—the third of Saint-Saëns' four symphonic poems—was written in 1874. The work began as an art song based upon an old French superstition with text by poet Henri Cazalis. The vocal line was eventually replaced by solo violin; the piano by a full retinue of orchestral instruments. After twelve harp tones (striking midnight), the violin commences with a tritone—diabolus in musica—by way of scordatura tuning: the E string, specifically tuned down to an E-flat, creates a tritone dissonance with the neighboring A string.

*Zig, zig, zig, Death in a cadence,
Striking with his heel a tomb,
Death at midnight plays a dance-tune,
Zig, zig, zig, on his violin.
The winter wind blows and the night is dark;
Moans are heard in the linden trees.
Through the gloom, white skeletons pass,
Running and leaping in their shrouds.
Zig, zig, zig, each one is frisking,
The bones of the dancers are heard to crack?
But hush! of a sudden they quit the round,
They push forward, they fly; the cock has crowed.*

Of the piece's program, historian Richard Freed writes:

The image of Death as a fiddler appears in the works of several composers, but in none is it more effective than in this piece. The orchestra strikes midnight, Death tunes up, then begins his waltz; a second theme on the xylophone evokes the skeletal celebrants, who become more and more energetic until, with the cock's crow, they disperse and vanish.

Danse macabre was first programmed by the New York Philharmonic in 1901 under the baton of Walter Damrosch (Initial reactions to the symphonic poem's premiere in 1875 were surprisingly adverse; critics complained of "horrible screeching from solo violin" and "hypnotic repetition," not to mention their distaste of xylophone). Several transcriptions for piano exist including a solo

arrangement by Liszt, a version for piano four hand by Guiraud, a version for two pianos by the composer himself, and another solo piano version by Horowitz.

Scandinavian composer **Edvard Grieg** was born June 15, 1843 in Bergen, Norway. As a young boy he studied piano with his mother, Gesine Hagerup; at the age of fifteen Grieg began formal musical training at the Leipzig Academy, inspired by the new traditions of Robert Schumann and Felix Mendelssohn. Travel to Copenhagen in 1863 introduced Grieg to a fellow Norwegian artist and nationalist, composer Rikard Nordraak. His own fascination with traditional Norwegian music piqued, Grieg began collecting and arranging folk tunes from across his homeland. Within the subsequent forty years, Grieg would become the hallmark ambassador of Norwegian culture, a proudly celebrated figure a la Williams Shakespeare to Great Britain or George Washington to the United States.

While abroad in Rome during the late 1860s, Grieg and his wife, cousin Nina Hagerup, met playwright Henrik Ibsen and piano virtuoso Franz Liszt. These two men became tremendous allies in Grieg's growing success; Ibsen's dramatic masterpiece *Peer Gynt* led to one of Grieg's most well-known orchestral works and Liszt's enthusiasm for Grieg's violin concerto and piano concerto pushed him onto the continental— and global—stage (according to Grieg himself, Liszt handily sight-read the entire piano concerto manuscript, albeit with a rushed first-movement tempo).

Despite chronic illness caused by an attack of pleurisy at a young age, Grieg toured northern Europe and England several times through the 1880s. In 1885 he built his now-landmarked home, Troldhaugen, near his birthplace, and before the turn of the century he and his wife presented a private concert for Queen Victoria of England.

Grieg's health and advancing age limited his output in the first years of the 20th century. However, remarkably, he chose to make nine gramophone recordings of his piano works in Paris in 1903. At this time he also made live-recording player piano rolls; all of these artifacts survive today.

A late-life friendship blossomed with Australian composer Percy Grainger, a man Grieg considered "a genius that we Scandinavians cannot do other than love." His advancing pleurisy and a related heart condition hospitalized Grieg in 1907. He died shortly, at age sixty-four. Nearly 40,000 Norwegian countrymen paid their respects at his funeral.

At the request of fellow Norwegian Henrik Ibsen, Edvard Grieg wrote incidental music to Ibsen's 1867 five-act play *Peer Gynt* in 1875. The music premiered with an 1876 production of the play in Christiania (now Oslo). Grieg was uncertain he

could handle the project; in a letter to a friend, he wrote "there is no possibility of having it finished by autumn. It is a terribly unmanageable subject." Nevertheless, Grieg toiled away and subsequently crafted one of his finest works. His wife recalled "the more he saturated his mind with [Ibsen's] powerful poem, the more clearly he saw that he was the right man for a work of such witchery and so permeated with the Norwegian spirit."

Despite the public and critical acclaim of the music, Grieg never cared for the work as incidental accompaniment to dramatic action. He shortly thereafter crafted two orchestral suites of four movements each. These were published in 1888 and 1891, respectively, and quickly became some of his most well-known output. A fifth movement of the second suite originally existed but was redacted by the composer.

The final movement of the first suite, opus 46, is entitled *I Dovregubbens hall*, or "In the Hall of the Mountain King." In Ibsen's play, this music takes place in Act II, scene vi; the title character Peer Gynt, in a fantastical dream, enters a formidable, cavernous lair to stand before the troll king, Dovregubbens. A "tremendous uproar" of the king and his court ensues.

Troll courtiers:

*Slay him! The Christian man's son has seduced
the fairest maid of the Mountain King!
Slay him! Slay him!*

*May I hack him on the fingers?
May I tug him by the hair?
Ho, hey, let me bite him in the haunches!
Shall he be boiled into broth and fed to me?
Shall he roast on a spit or be browned in a stewpan?*

Mountain King:

Ice to your blood, friends!

Ibsen's play is a viciously biting social satire; Grieg's music is no different. Of this portion of the drama's music he wrote, "I have written something that so reeks of cowpats, ultra-Norwegianism, and 'to-thyself-be-enough-ness' that I cannot bear to hear it, though I hope that the irony will make itself felt."

The first New York Philharmonic performance of *Peer Gynt Suite No. 1* took place in March 1918. Independent movements from the same suite were frequently programmed in the subsequent year, owing to the considerable popularity of Grieg's music. Artists ranging from Duke Ellington to Electric Light Orchestra to The Who have crafted renditions of music from melodies of *Peer Gynt*; the principal tune from "In the Hall of the Mountain King" can be heard in K-Pop boy

band SF9's "Jungle Game" and animated series "The Adventures of Sonic the Hedgehog," as well as countless films, television commercials, and video games.

Hungarian piano virtuoso, composer, and conductor **Franz Liszt** was born on October 22, 1811. His father, an administrative assistant to Prince Nicholas Esterhazy, played the cello and taught Franz piano. By age six Liszt was recognized as a child prodigy; by the age of nine he was composing, improvising, and appearing in concerts. Father and son traveled to Vienna, where Antonio Salieri immediately became a champion of Liszt's precocious talents: upon hearing the boy play, he offered composition lessons free of charge. At age twelve, Liszt sought admission to the Paris Conservatory; he was denied on the grounds that he was a foreigner.

After his father's death in 1826, teenaged Liszt lost interest in music to such a degree that he began to question his profession. He began to read profusely, particularly books on art and religion. In 1833, Liszt met and fell in love with the Comtesse Marie d'Agoult, who inspired him to return to composition. Bolstered by new works and a return to public performances, Liszt's reputation quickly grew. He soon befriended and found the respect of the era's greatest musical minds including Frederic Chopin, Robert Schumann, Hector Berlioz, and perhaps most notably, Richard Wagner (who later embroiled himself in a scandalous affair with Liszt's daughter, Cosima).

After his tempestuous relationship with Marie d'Agoult ended (which produced three children), Liszt met another noblewoman, Princess Carolyne zu Sayn-Wittgenstein. Her influence on him was dramatic: she strongly encouraged him to stop touring in order to teach and compose. While living in Weimar, Germany, Liszt invented what would become known as the *symphonic poem*—an orchestral work that depicts extramusical source material such as a poem, legend, or painting. This new musical form, as well as the techniques of thematic transformation, cemented Liszt's reputation as a teacher and music academic.

Liszt's great fame did not come without difficulty and detraction: he lost two of his children to illness and found himself at the opposite side of a tremendously polarized musical and philosophical debate with Johannes Brahms, the highly respected and revered early-19th century traditionalist. When the princess left him in 1863, he vowed to live a solitary existence and moved to Rome to become a monk. He continued, however, to compose and later established the Royal National Hungarian Academy of Music in Budapest. Some of his most progressive music was written in the last years of his life, including stunningly dissonant and inventive compositions that foreshadowed developments by Ravel, Debussy, and Scriabin decades later. By his death in 1886 at the age of seventy-five, Liszt had composed over 700 works including piano works

inspired by his Hungarian heritage, over fifty *Lieder*, dozens of programmatic solo and ensemble pieces, thirteen symphonic poems, and one opera as well as many peerless transcriptions of orchestral literature for solo piano.

From a *Hyperion Records* recording's liner notes, by Leslie Howard (1998):

We do not know if Liszt ever heard his Concerto for Piano and Strings—the so-called *Malédiction*—even in rehearsal, and yet, on the evidence of surviving manuscripts, he spent some time over a period of years getting the work into its very satisfactory final shape. Nor do we know why he wrote on this occasion for strings only, since all his other works with solo piano of the same period, whether performed, published, completed or not, are all for symphony orchestra including trombones and percussion. This powerful single-movement piece is among Liszt's earliest efforts at finding a way forward for the sonata principle; although its outlines conform to the general pattern of exposition (with the obligatory second subject and codetta), development and recapitulation, its narrative is susceptible to almost operatic changes of scene, mood and tempo.

The New York Philharmonic has only performed *Malédiction* twice: in 1971 with Pierre Boulez and 1980 with Zubin Mehta. The work's unofficial title roughly translates as "under a curse"; it was given this nomenclature by the musicologists who discovered it in 1915. No other title is written on the original. Historians date the work to 1833-34; penned when Liszt was only twenty-two years old, barely four years after Berlioz's groundbreaking *Symphonie fantastique*.

Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky was born March 9, 1839 into a wealthy rural, landowning family. As a young boy he studied piano with his mother and learned folk tunes heard from serfs toiling on the family's estate. His parents wished for him to be a military officer; while he eventually became a cadet and was commissioned into an elite imperial regiment, he resigned two years later. Despite his disinterest in military life, the commission introduced him to a lifelong friend: army doctor and amateur composer Alexander Borodin.

With the Russian emancipation of the serf class in 1861, Mussorgsky's family lost significant income. He attempted a career in the civil service, but his wish was to find success as a composer and musician. Just five years earlier, composer Alexander Dargomizhsky introduced Mussorgsky to like-minded artists Cesar Cui and Mily Balakirev. The men, along with Borodin and naval officer Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakoff, created a loose alliance known as the "Moguchaya Kuchka" ("the mighty handful"), or "The Mighty Five." They all had very definite ideas about what Russian music should be, yet none of them had formal musical training. The group held three core beliefs:

Russian music should express the Russian soul.

Russian music should be written in a Russian (i.e. non-Western) way.

Instead of a form determining the nature of the musical materials, the materials should shape the forms – bottom-up, rather than top-down.

Mussorgsky learned composition mainly by trial and error. Almost immediately, he found an original sound, even among Nationalist composers. This has been attributed to the fact that he alone of all the Kuchka grew up in the country, away from city life. Encouraged by Balakirev and music critic Victor Stasov, Mussorgsky began several ambitious opera projects: an *Oedipus* (1858-61), a *Salammô* (1863-66); and most notably *The Marriage* (1868), based on Gogol. He completed none of them, but all bore fruit in later works, either by providing thematic material Mussorgsky re-used.

In 1867, Mussorgsky composed *St. John's Night on Bald Mountain* (usually called *Night on Bald Mountain*), depicting a coven of witches and demons gathering for a black sabbath. While Berlioz and Liszt took inspiration from similarly dark ideas earlier in the 19th century, Mussorgsky's "shattering dissonance" and "wild cries" were completely novel. Mussorgsky revised the work at least twice in attempts to fit it into unrealized projects – *Mlada* (1872, a group opera by the Kuchka never completed) and his own unfinished opera, *Sorochintsi Fair*.

Mussorgsky began working on a Stasov suggestion: an epic work depicting the life and times of Russia's de facto regent during the end of the 16th century. This opera would become Mussorgsky's masterpiece, *Boris Godunov*. He completed a version in 1869 and submitted it to the Mariinsky Theater; it was initially rejected because no role had been written for a prima donna. Mussorgsky immediately began significant revisions. He resubmitted a new version in 1872. The theater accepted it and premiered the opera in 1874, to magnificent public acclaim.

In 1865, following his mother's death, Mussorgsky began to drink heavily. His addiction was compounded by the loss of a close friend, artist and architect Victor Hartmann. The Imperial Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg displayed over four hundred paintings and sketches by Hartmann as a memorial tribute. Mussorgsky assisted in organizing the exhibit and was so deeply moved by the event that he began sketches of what would become his monumental piano opus, the ten-movement *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Sadly, in 1880, he lost his government sinecure; his behavior, always a bit eccentric, quickly degenerated into the erratic. He was evicted for failure to pay rent and shortly thereafter, suffering from seizures, was admitted to the hospital. He died a month later in March 1881 at the age of 42.

Musicologist Steve Schwartz avows "Mussorgsky's music challenged the hegemony of German and Italian music in the Nineteenth Century and lay outside the standard Brahms-vs.-Wagner fight. He opened up a new musical

path and a new aesthetic attitude. [...] Patronized by the Nineteenth Century, the composer became a hero to the Twentieth."

Night on Bald Mountain (Ночь на лысой горе), also known as *Night on the Bare Mountain*, is actually a series of compositions by Modest Mussorgsky. Inspired by Russian literature and legend, Mussorgsky composed the symphonic poem on the theme of a witches' sabbath occurring on St. John's Eve, which he completed on that very night, in June of 1867.

Mussorgsky's mentor, Miliy Balakirev, refused to perform or support the work. Frustrated, Mussorgsky attempted to salvage what he considered worthy material and recast *Mountain* for vocal soloists, chorus, and orchestra into two subsequent projects: *Mlada* (1872), and *The Fair at Sorochyntsi* (1880). These iterations, too, proved unfruitful. *Night on Bald Mountain* was never performed in any form during Mussorgsky's lifetime.

In 1886, five years after Mussorgsky's death, fellow Russian nationalist and gifted orchestrator Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov published an arrangement of the work, described as a "fantasy for orchestra." Some musical scholars consider this version to be an original composition of Rimsky-Korsakov, albeit one based on Mussorgsky's last version of the music, for *The Fair at Sorochyntsi*. It is through Rimsky-Korsakov's version that *Night on Bald Mountain* finally found success and notoriety. Premiering in Saint Petersburg in 1886, the work became an instant favorite. The piece found its greatest exposure, however, in the Walt Disney animated film *Fantasia* (1940), featuring an arrangement made and conducted by Leopold Stokowski, based on Rimsky-Korsakov's version, set to an animated depiction of the phantasmagoric midnight orgy held by Savic deity Chernobog and his minions.

Mussorgsky's tone poem was not published in its original form until 1968.

Night on Bald Mountain made its NYP premiere in February 1920 under the baton of Josef Stransky. It has subsequently been programmed over sixty times. Part of the main theme from the symphonic poem can be heard in the castle chase scenes in *The Wizard of Oz*; a disco adaptation can be heard in *Saturday Night Fever*, aptly titled "Night on Disco Mountain."

In a career that spans five decades, **John Williams** has become one of America's most accomplished and successful composers for film and for the concert stage. He has served as music director and laureate conductor of one of the country's treasured musical institutions, the Boston Pops Orchestra, and he maintains thriving artistic relationships with many of the world's great orchestras, including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Mr. Williams has received a variety of prestigious awards, including the National Medal of Arts, the Kennedy Center Honor, the Olympic Order, and numerous

Academy Awards, Grammy Awards, Emmy Awards and Golden Globe Awards. He remains one of our nation's most distinguished and contributive musical voices.

Mr. Williams has composed the music and served as music director for more than one hundred films. His 40-year artistic partnership with director Steven Spielberg has resulted in many of Hollywood's most acclaimed and successful films, including *Schindler's List*, *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*, *Jaws*, *Jurassic Park*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, four *Indiana Jones* films, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Amistad*, *Munich*, *Hook*, *Catch Me If You Can*, *Minority Report*, *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence*, *Empire of the Sun*, *The Adventures of TinTin*, and *War Horse*. Their latest collaboration, *The BFG*, was released on July 1, 2016. Mr. Williams has composed the scores for all seven *Star Wars* films, the first three *Harry Potter* films, *Superman: The Movie*, *JFK*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, *Far and Away*, *The Accidental Tourist*, *Home Alone*, *Nixon*, *The Patriot*, *Angela's Ashes*, *Seven Years in Tibet*, *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Rosewood*, *Sleepers*, *Sabrina*, *Presumed Innocent*, *The Cowboys*, and *The Reivers*, among many others.

He has worked with many legendary directors, including Alfred Hitchcock, William Wyler and Robert Altman. In 1971, he adapted the score for the film version of *Fiddler on the Roof*, for which he composed original violin cadenzas for renowned virtuoso Isaac Stern. He has appeared on recordings as pianist and conductor with Itzhak Perlman, Joshua Bell, Jessye Norman and others. Mr. Williams has received five Academy Awards and 50 Oscar nominations, making him the Academy's most-nominated living person and the second-most nominated person in the history of the Oscars.

Born and raised in New York, Mr. Williams moved to Los Angeles with his family in 1948, where he studied composition with Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. After service in the Air Force, he returned to New York to attend the Juilliard School, where he studied piano with Madame Rosina Lhevinne. While in New York, he also worked as a jazz pianist, both in nightclubs and on recordings. He returned to Los Angeles and began his career in the film industry, working with a number of accomplished composers including Bernard Herrmann, Alfred Newman, and Franz Waxman. He went on to write music for more than 200 television episodes for anthology series *Alcoa Premiere*, *Kraft Suspense Theatre*, *Chrysler Theatre* and *Playhouse 90*. His more recent contributions to television music include the well-known theme for NBC Nightly News ("The Mission"), the theme for what has become network television's longest-running series, NBC's *Meet the Press*, and a new theme for the prestigious PBS arts showcase *Great Performances*.

In addition to his accomplishments in film and television, Mr. Williams has composed numerous works for the concert stage, among them two symphonies, and concertos for flute, violin, clarinet, viola, oboe and tuba. His cello concerto was commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and premiered by Yo-Yo Ma at Tanglewood in 1994. Mr. Williams also has filled commissions by several of the world's leading orchestras, including a bassoon

concerto for the New York Philharmonic entitled *The Five Sacred Trees*, a trumpet concerto for the Cleveland Orchestra, and a horn concerto for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. *Seven for Luck*, a seven-piece song cycle for soprano and orchestra based on the texts of former U.S. Poet Laureate Rita Dove, was premiered by the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood in 1998. At the opening concert of their 2009–2010 season, James Levine led the Boston Symphony in the premiere Mr. Williams' *On Willows and Birches*, a concerto for harp and orchestra.

In January 1980, Mr. Williams was named nineteenth music director of the Boston Pops Orchestra, succeeding the legendary Arthur Fiedler. He currently holds the title of Boston Pops Laureate Conductor which he assumed following his retirement in December 1993, after 14 highly successful seasons. He also holds the title of Artist-in-Residence at Tanglewood.

Program notes by Dr. Aaron Patterson

Mr. Williams notes from Gorfaine/Schwartz Agency, johnwilliams.org
BOO!

Special Thanks

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Charlie Scatamacchia for outreach.

Alex Wen for orchestra preparation.

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 LGBTQ 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 LGBTQ music performing groups such as The Stonewall Chorale and the Empire City Men's Chorus.



Photo Credit: Mạnh Dũng Nguyễn

About QUO

Founded in 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.

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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

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Join us for our 2019-2020 Season

December 8: QUOtets Chamber Concert

Sunday afternoon at 4 pm

February 22: QUO Concert

Featuring the debut of our new Artistic Director
and the winner of QUO's annual Concerto Competition
8 pm at the Church of the Holy Apostles, 296 Ninth Avenue

April 25: QUO Concert

Featuring a new work commissioned
through our Composition Contest
8 pm at the Church of the Holy Apostles, 296 Ninth Avenue

June 20: Our Annual QUO Gayla

8 pm at the Church of the Holy Apostles, 296 Ninth Avenue

