



QUEER URBAN ORCHESTRA
presents

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

Ryan Roberts, oboe

Saturday, December 16, 2023 • 8:00 p.m.
Church of the Holy Apostles • 296 9th Ave.

David Bloom, Artistic Director
QueerUrbanOrchestra.org

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With its 2023-2024 season **Chosen Family**, Queer Urban Orchestra dedicates a full year to celebrating the liberating and healing power of kinship bonds rooted in friendship. QUO performs music written for and about friends, music that could only exist with the help of others. New and longtime friends join the orchestra, including Ariadne Greif, Ryan Roberts, Jordan Rutter-Covatto, and Youth Pride Chorus.

Timeless works of Elgar, Price, and Tchaikovsky meet new and recent works by Jessie Montgomery, Caroline Shaw, and Derek Weagle. The whole season is performed by an orchestra that is itself an ever-expanding chosen family on a mission to create safe space for expression and love.

From the Artistic Director

Dear friends,

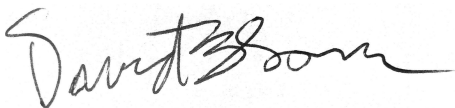
Welcome to the second concert of Queer Urban Orchestra's *Chosen Family* season! Thanks for choosing to escape the cold with warm friendship and music. Chosen family is as important to queer culture as just about anything, and is a fundamental building block of QUO's identity.

Tonight's program, *With a Little Help from Our Friends*, features music we can only play because of the help of others. Richard Strauss would never have considered writing the Oboe Concerto we get to play with the New York Philharmonic's own Ryan Roberts tonight (pinch me — is this a dream?!) were it not for a little nudge from an improbable friend. Florence Price's Fourth Symphony was assumed lost to the sands of time until a couple miraculously discovered the manuscript in a derelict home. Steven Stucky found new expressive possibilities in an obscure score by Henry Purcell nearly 300 years after it was written.

We all need our friends to make it across the finish line, and perhaps the only thing that feels better than our bff's having our backs is when *we* get to help *them*. As QUO wraps up a banner year of championing queer artistry in the greatest city on Earth, I hope you'll support our organization with a donation. We do a lot with a little, so gifts of any size make an outsized impact on our work. As we look forward to our 15th birthday next year, our ambitions for the impact we can have in our community are bigger than ever.

Thank you so much for being part of our chosen family, and happy holidays from all of us at QUO!

Lots of love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Bloom". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Bloom".

David Bloom
Artistic Director, Queer Urban Orchestra



David Bloom is a conductor equally at home in orchestral repertoire, opera, and new music, noted for his “dazzling precision and grace” (*San Francisco Chronicle*), “intelligence, elegance, and passion” (*Opera News*), “ferocious and focused” (*The New York Times*) performances, and “breathtaking and inspired programming” (*Shepherd Express*). He dedicates his work to collaborating with artists and communities to inspire creativity, empathy, and joy.

He is Co-Artistic Director of Contemporaneous, a 23-member New York-based ensemble he co-founded in 2010, and has been Co-Artistic Director of Present Music, Milwaukee’s long-running new music ensemble, since 2019. In 2023, he became Artistic Director of New York’s Queer Urban Orchestra and Principal Conductor of the orchestras at New York University, where he also teaches conducting.

In such venues as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, MoMA, and Park Avenue Armory, Bloom has guest conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic, American Composers Orchestra, Bang on a Can All-Stars, Jacaranda, The Crossing, NOW Ensemble, Ensemble Connect, Choir of Trinity Wall Street, and Kronos Quartet, among others, and worked with soloists Dashon Burton, David Byrne, Helga Davis, Isabel Leonard, Iarla Ó Lionáird, Courtney Love, Hila Plitmann, and Dawn Upshaw. Especially active as an opera conductor, Bloom has led productions for Opera Omaha, Beth Morrison Projects, Tri-Cities Opera, PROTOTYPE Festival, Teatro Grattacielo, Experiments in Opera, the American Opera Project, and more. In 2023, he conducted the premiere of Dylan Mattingly’s six-hour opera *Stranger Love* at Walt Disney Concert Hall, directed by Lileana Blain-Cruz. He makes his Washington National Opera debut in 2024.

He has conducted over 450 world premieres and collaborated with such composers as Donnacha Dennehy, Du Yun, inti figgis-vizueta, Michael Gordon, Judd Greenstein, Nathalie Joachim, David Lang, Tania León, Emma O’Halloran, and Julia Wolfe. In 2021, he conducted Present Music in the world premiere of Raven Chacon’s *Voiceless Mass*, which went on to win the 2022 Pulitzer Prize. davidbloomconductor.com



Musician/Educator/Wearer-of-Many-Hats **Derek J. Weagle** (*they/them*) is a Brooklyn-based artist and healer invested in the disruption of social and academic barriers around classical music, as well as the preservation of music-making as an act of joyful humanness. With a practice rooted in syncretism, Derek can be found equally comfortable in roles ranging from conductor to composer, performer to teacher.

They hold a B.M. in Music Education from UMass Lowell and an M.M. in Composition with a minor in Choral Conducting from New England Conservatory, as well as a Certificate in Sound Healing from the Sage Academy of Sound in Woodstock, NY. Current engagements include work as an independent Sound Healing Practitioner, Associate Conductor of the Queer Urban Orchestra, Artistic Director of the Adelphi University Vocal Ensemble, Founding Artistic Director of Bloom Sound Collective, Composer & Owner at Risanare Music, Board of Directors for the Refugee Orchestra Project.

Their work as a composer has received recognition both nationally and internationally, including the American Prize in Composition, the International Horn Society, and the International Composition Competition Harelbeke. For more information on Derek's artistic practice and services offered, see their website at www.derekjweagle.com.



RYAN ROBERTS is the solo English hornist of the New York Philharmonic where he has been recognized as a “pillar of the ensemble”, and praised for his “flawless poetry” and “beautiful”, “eloquent”, “exquisite”, “alluring solo playing” by the New York Times. Ryan also serves as principal oboist of the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra at Lincoln Center, and is a member of the oboe faculty at the Mannes School of Music and Bard College Conservatory of Music. Ryan has performed as guest principal oboe and English horn with many of the country's leading orchestras,

including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony, the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra, and the Ft. Worth Symphony Orchestra.

A passionate teacher, Ryan has worked with students in the US and abroad at The Juilliard School, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the Manhattan School of Music, the New World Symphony, Lynn University, and many others.

An award-winning soloist, Ryan received first prize at the International Double Reed Society's Young Artist Competition and the National Society of Arts and Letters' Woodwind Competition. In 2018, Ryan premiered Michael Torke's Oboe Concertino with the Albany Symphony and recorded the work for Albany Records.

During the summer, Ryan performs at the Marlboro Music Festival under artistic directors Mitsuko Uchida and Jonathan Biss. He has also been a guest artist at the Rockport Music Festival, and recently collaborated in recitals with the Gamut Bach Ensemble and Musicians from Marlboro at

the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society. His past recital engagements have included performances with the Pacifica Quartet and Emanuel Ax.

Before joining the New York Philharmonic, Ryan spent one season as a member of the New World Symphony under the direction of Michael Tilson-Thomas. As a Kovner Fellow graduate of The Juilliard School, Ryan studied with Elaine Douvas and performed frequently with the Juilliard Orchestra.

Ryan is also an accomplished pianist, and made his concerto debut at age 11. When he isn't busy making reeds, Ryan can be found practicing piano, rock climbing, surfing, or running on the beach with his 8-year-old Whippet named Malley.



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QUEER URBAN ORCHESTRA

David Bloom, Artistic Director
Derek Weagle, Associate Conductor

Saturday, December 16th, 2023 - 8:00pm

Church of the Holy Apostles, NYC

With a Little Help from Our Friends

Funeral Music for Queen Mary (1695, arr. 1992)

Henry Purcell,
arr. Steven Stucky

Derek Weagle — conductor

Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra (1945)

Richard Strauss

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Andante
- III. Vivace — Allegro

Ryan Roberts — oboe

— *Intermission* —

Symphony No. 4 in D minor (1945)

Florence Beatrice Price

- I. Tempo moderato
- II. Andante cantabile
- III. Juba. Allegro
- IV. Scherzo. Allegro

Please take a moment to silence mobile phones.

As a reminder, recording of any type of tonight's program is strictly prohibited.

Violin I

Phong Ta†+
Rafael Albertini
Ashley Amaladhas
Belinda Bauer
Kira Bordelon
Andy Holland
Andro Kim
Arielle Lubin
Mari Rubio
Dane Stalcup
Navida Stein
Liz Taub
Shang Young

Violin II

Kevin Tan*+
Jonathan Balsano
Alva Bostick
Julia Case
Jon Chang
Kevin Chau
Peter Fifield
Andre Gillard
Josh Li
CoryAnn Pitts
Andres
Rodriguez-Aponte
Ligia Sakurai
Holly Melissa
Seefeldt
Jessica Waddell
Bob Wei

Viola

Noah Green*
James Di Meglio+
Sawyer Goldsmith
Marion Lederer
Bennett Mahler
Mason Pilevsky
Nicholas Singletary
Jacob Szilagi

Cello

Bjorn Berkhout*
Navin Manglani+
Rogerio Shieh
Barbosa
Alex Humesky
Lucie le Blanc
Kate Penrose
Nicholas Saunders
Michael Shattner
Brittany Taylor
Michael Viljoen
Penglong Zhu

Bass

Jared Chamoff+
Andrew Op't Hof
Hirokazu Yokoyama

Flute

Justin Lee*
Craig Devereaux+
Scott Oaks
Aero Roper

Piccolo

Craig Devereaux

Oboe

Alan Hyde
Heath Koch

English Horn

Matthew Hadley*+

Clarinet

Daniel Olson*+
Travis Fraser
Alice Petre

Bass Clarinet

Johann Palo

Bassoon

Jennifer Bouck**
Kevin O'Brien

Contrabassoon

Norma Kerlin

French Horn

Kyle Walker*
Ser Konvalin^
Lynn Caron+
Bryan Jacobowitz
Chris Jones

Trumpet

Julia Cohen*
Ron Nahass+
Ryan Yacos

Trombone

Alex Arellano*+
Nick Denton
Ryan McTernan

Tuba

Adam Rosenberg

Harp

Liann Cline

Piano

Nolan N Dresden

Percussion

Andrew Berman+
Nolan N Dresden
Heath Koch
Álvaro Rodas
Sami Smith
Hannah Webster

† - Concertmaster
* - Principal
** - Acting Principal
^ - Asst. Principal
+ - Section Leader

About the Music

Henry Purcell, orch. Steven Stucky: *Funeral Music for Queen Mary* (1695, arr. 1992)

Queen Mary II of England found her cousin, William of Orange, repugnant. Her sister, the future Queen Anne (Olivia Coleman's character in *The Favorite*), likened his visage to that of the monster in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Rotten teeth aside, it can't have helped that, at 5'11", Mary soared five inches above William, who was 12 years her senior. Nevertheless, she was forced to marry him when she was 15, and by all reports, she eventually warmed to him. In the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Parliament removed Mary's father, King James II, from the throne and installed the monarch duo known to history as William and Mary with a single objective: to save England from James' move toward Catholicism.

Mary played an important role in government and made cracking down on sex offenses by soldiers an important part of her agenda. William was often away in battle, during which time she would run the empire on her own and even weigh in on William's military decisions. Six years into her reign, she contracted smallpox and died in December of 1694 at the age of 32. Her funeral in March of the following year was one of the largest in royal history. William, heartbroken and in denial, could not bring himself to attend. For the occasion, England's preeminent composer, Henry Purcell (1659-1695), was commissioned, and he wrote for voices, four flauts (the long ones with slides that are often depicted adorned with banners), and basso continuo.

The version of *Funeral Music for Queen Mary* we hear tonight was transcribed and elaborated by Steven Stucky (1949-2016), who was a Pulitzer Prize-winning composer and a widely respected figure in music, holding residencies with both the Los Angeles and New York Philharmonics and teaching positions at Cornell and Juilliard. Stucky chose three parts of the Purcell — a solemn march, the anthem *In the Midst of Life We Are in Death*, and a polyphonic canzona — and strung

them together for woodwinds, brass, percussion, and (aside from harp) no strings.

“In working on the project,” Stucky wrote, “I did not try to achieve a pure, musicological reconstruction but, on the contrary, to regard Purcell’s music, which I love deeply, through the lens of three hundred intervening years. Thus, although most of this version is straightforward orchestration of the Purcell originals, there are moments when Purcell drifts out of focus.” The result is a work that is as much Stucky’s as Purcell’s, with the full heft of the ensemble occasionally threatening to overpower the original through the mists of time. Perhaps Stucky’s most satisfying insight is his return to the opening march to end the work.

Richard Strauss: Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra (1945)

In May 1945, American Sergeant John de Lancie found himself sitting in the Bavarian alpine home of the already legendary composer Richard Strauss (1864-1949). An oboist back at home, de Lancie knew Strauss’ orchestral and operatic music for the oboe very well and found the courage to ask whether Strauss would ever consider writing an oboe concerto. The composer answered simply and decisively, “no.”

In 1940, Fritz Reiner had appointed a 19-year-old de Lancie to the post of principal oboe of the Pittsburgh Symphony, which he held until enlisting in 1942 and becoming an intelligence officer. As the Nazis fell, the US Army quickly occupied Germany, taking over any properties they deemed necessary and giving residents only minutes to vacate. De Lancie learned that another officer had granted the 80-year-old Richard Strauss permission to stay in his home in the same area de Lancie was stationed, so the young oboist paid the sage composer a visit. Defying the Army’s non-fraternization policy, the two developed a friendship, conversing at length over the ensuing days in their common language of French. Strauss, who avoided the Nazis in his resort village and went to great lengths to protect his Jewish daughter-in-law, must have been happy for the companionship.

Though the matter of the concerto was dropped after de Lancie popped the question, the idea evidently took root in Strauss' still vibrantly creative mind, and four months later, de Lancie was surprised to learn that Strauss was publishing an oboe concerto. Strauss made sure to grant the right to the American premiere to his unlikely friend, but when de Lancie started his new job with the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1946, he was a section oboist, not the principal, and was not able to play the work. De Lancie later served as principal in Philadelphia for 23 years, but his only public performance of the concerto was with the orchestra at Interlochen Academy in 1964.

Strauss' concerto is the crown jewel of the oboe repertoire, and indeed its merits transcend the narrow context of oboe music. The composer is well known for his towering music for large orchestras, including the operas *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Salome* and the tone poem *Also sprach Zarathustra*, which opens both Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* and Greta Gerwig's *Barbie*. His Oboe Concerto is much more intimate, cast for a small orchestra in a traditional three-movement form and focusing on the lyrical qualities of the oboe. The first movement, featuring cozy duets between the oboist and solo flute, clarinet, and viola, moves seamlessly into a nostalgic second movement. In the final movement, the oboe lets loose a sparkling virtuosity with a youthful playfulness that its octogenarian creator never lost.

Florence Beatrice Price: Symphony No. 4 in D minor (1945)

Florence Beatrice Price (1887-1953) penned her monumental Fourth Symphony in 1945, the same year that Strauss and de Lancie's chats more or less accidentally resulted in a work that was immediately preserved in perpetuity with a handsome published score. Price's symphony, by contrast, was not only unpublished, it only narrowly escaped permanent obscurity. Such a fate befell her Second Symphony, which was never performed and remains lost without a trace.

Price was born in Little Rock, Arkansas to a businesswoman and the city's only Black dentist. She played her first piano recital at age four, graduated

from high school as valedictorian at age 14, and went on to study piano, organ, and composition at New England Conservatory in Boston. In the 1920s, despite her past university teaching posts in Arkansas and Georgia, she was denied admission to the Arkansas Music Teachers Association because of the color of her skin, and after a white child was allegedly killed by a Black man in Little Rock, white residents made threats on the life of Price's youngest daughter. The family fled to Chicago, where Price's husband later became violent towards her.

After a divorce in 1931, Price finally turned in earnest to composing, and the 1930s became her most productive period. Even during the Chicago Black Renaissance, a person of her gender and race was expected at most to write small parlor works, but she didn't wait around for someone to ask her to write the vast orchestral works she dreamed of. She took the initiative herself and produced symphonies, concertos, suites, and tone poems, drawing on her knowledge of the repertoire and her sensibilities as an organist to paint on the large canvas of a symphony orchestra.

With the world's eyes on Chicago's World Fair in 1933, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra did its part in covering up the nation's gross injustices against Black Americans by premiering Price's First Symphony, marking the first time a major American orchestra performed a work by a Black woman. Important as the landmark was, it was the only time Price heard her music performed by such an ensemble. Like the rest of her symphonies, there was no commission for her First. She wrote it on spec, submitting it to a competition (which it won) and tirelessly advocating for a premiere and additional performances.

Some scholars speculate that Price wrote her Fourth Symphony in anticipation of a planned trip to Europe, where she hoped to promote her music, but she was never able to make the trip. The symphony remained unperformed and was presumed lost after her sudden death in 1953. Fast forward to 2009: a couple was starting to renovate a collapsing, abandoned property in St. Anne, Illinois that happened to be Price's former summer home. There they found piles of handwritten music that bore the name Florence Price, miraculously dry and unblemished. After a little Googling,

they learned who she was and got in touch with archivists at the University of Arkansas, where some of her papers were kept. The find — which included the Fourth Symphony, three concertos, and many other works — was the most significant discovery in the history of American music, if not classical music writ large. In 2018, 63 years after the score was completed, the world premiere of Price's Fourth Symphony took place in Arkansas.

The symphony opens with an expansive and profound first movement, with taught march rhythms and expressive melodies vying for prominence. Midway through the movement, a quotation of the Negro spiritual *Wade in the Water* emerges. The tune is so natural to the fabric of Price's music, which is steeped equally in the idioms Western classical and traditional Black music, that it could easily be missed. A lovely second movement demonstrates Price's deft orchestration with luscious colors unfolding effortlessly.

The third movement takes the form not of a scherzo (she saves that for her brilliant finale), but of a Juba dance, a form that enslaved people brought from the African Kingdom of Kongo to the American South. The traditional Juba features body percussion — slapping and patting the arms, legs, chest, and cheeks — making it practical on plantations where slaves were forbidden to possess instruments like drums. The movement, the last of Price's several Juba dances, is brimming with spirited syncopations, whimsical melodies, and delightful percussive sounds like sandpaper blocks and an Indigenous American frame drum. It makes one hope for more Price discoveries soon.

- Program notes by David Bloom

Concert Program Assembled by Nolan N Dresden

Cover Art by Nathan Threlkeld

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Everyone at the Queer Urban Orchestra would like to wish you the

**Happiest Holiday Season
to You and Yours.**

No matter what you celebrate,
when you celebrate,
or how you celebrate,
we hope you have a beautiful festive season,
surrounded by the ones you love.

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.

James Adler
That Star in the Picture

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Featuring QUO's own Fran Novak, Clarinet;
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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.

QUO: The Queer Urban Orchestra would like to thank the following donors for their continued support. Any donation to QUO is tax deductible as we are a 501(c)(3) certified organization. With your generous support we are able to keep music on our stands and instruments in our hands.

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March 16th, 2024 - Briefly Gorgeous

8:00pm, Church of the Holy Apostles

- Music by Yee, Shaw, Beethoven, & more
- Featuring Andrew Yee, Cello

May 11th, 2024 - We were Together. I Forgot the Rest.

8:00pm, Church of the Holy Apostles

- Music by Parola, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, & more
- Featuring the Empire City Men's Chorus

June 15th, 2024 - Doubtless Magick

8:00pm, Church of the Holy Apostles

- World Premiere by QUO's Derek Weagle & More
- Featuring Jordan Rutter-Covatto, Countertenor

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COMPASS



Leonard Gottlieb

Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker

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