



QUEER URBAN ORCHESTRA
presents

TITANS

FEATURING
RAJNA SWAMINATHAN

Saturday May 10, 2025 **8:00 p.m.**
Saint Paul & Saint Andrew **263 W 86th St.**
David Bloom, Artistic Director QueerUrbanOrchestra.org

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From the Artistic Director

Dear friends,

Thank you for joining us tonight to revel in the emotional power of three radical orchestral works!

The Orchestra and I are particularly excited to welcome Rajna Swaminathan as both composer and soloist in her new work *Dwelling*, written specifically for QUO and commissioned by our very own Michael Shattner. In her piece, Rajna has invented and *invited* a completely new approach to orchestral playing wherein each musician is entrusted with a great many decisions. In the hands of our dizzyingly creative musicians, the results are thrilling.

Before the world knew him, Gustav Mahler completely remade a genre with his Symphony No. 1, originally titled *Titan*. In it, he tells the story of an archetypal character in four chapters: childhood enjoyment of nature, an adolescent dance at the village tavern, understanding mortality, and a tragic early death in battle. In the end, ultimate personal victory comes not when the hero ponders what life could have been, but by reconnecting with their love of nature.

When Lili Boulanger finished *D'un matin de printemps* in the year of her death at age 24. Like Mahler's hero, we focus tonight not on what her future could have promised, but on this boldly innovative music she did create in the life she led.

In QUO's 15 years, our focus on lifting up queer artistry has never been more important than it is today. We want you to know that we're here for you during this difficult time, and we are grateful beyond measure that you're here for us, too.

Much love,

A handwritten signature in dark 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



Titans

Season 16
May 10, 2025

David Bloom, Artistic Director
Derek Weagle, Associate Conductor

D'un matin de printemps (1917-1918)
(On a spring morning)

Lili Boulanger

Derek Weagle, Conductor

Dwelling (2025)

Rajna Swaminathan

- I. Immensity
- II. Stigmata
- III. Dissipation

Rajna Swaminathan — mrudangam and voice

World Premiere

Commissioned for Queer Urban Orchestra by michael shattner

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 1 in D major, "Titan" (1888)

Gustav Mahler

- I. Slow. Draggingly. Like a natural sound. — Always very leisurely
- II. Powerfully moving, but not too fast — Quite leisurely
- III. Solemn and measured, without dragging
- IV. Tempestuously moving

Queer Urban Orchestra

Violin I

Rafael Albertini
Amber Hansen Arney
Jen Doyle
Maia Gumnit
Brian Harrington
Andy Holland
Arielle Lubin
Richard Nguyen
Johann Palo
Thomas Purcell
Nic Salas
Nick Sharpsky
Dane Stalcup
Navida Stein
Phong Ta***
Liann Wadewitz
Trevor Wadleigh

Violin II

Jeanne Azzouni
Jonathan Balsano
alva bostick
Julia Case
Carla Eilo
Wiqar Farooqi
Peter Fifield
Andre Gillard
Mel Martini
Liam O'Brien
Ligia Sakurai
Holly Melissa Seefeldt
Tank Tan *+
Jessica Waddell
Bob Wei

Viola

Hringur Asgeir
James Di Meglio +
Karishma Gottfried
Noah Green *
DJ Husted
Hali Linn
Hilton Marcus
JohnMark Ofrasio
Haley Pearson
Mason Pilevsky
Nicholas Singletary
Jacob Szilagi
Nathan Threlkeld
Lauren Xue
Dustin Zuelke

Cello

Bjorn Berkhout *
Claire Hebert
Alex Humesky
Steve McLure
Navin Manglani +
Michael Richman
Nick Saunders
michael shattner
Rogerio Shieh
Caroline Troake
Michael Viljoen
Penglong Zhu

Bass

Jack Beal
Jared Chamoff *+
Roger Herr
George Nicholson
Andrew Op't Hof
Christian Palomares
Adrienne Schoenfeld
Hirokazu Yokoyama

Flute

Craig Devereaux +
Jenn Forese
Justin Lee *
Scott Oaks

Piccolo

Craig Devereaux
Jenn Forese
Scott Oaks

Oboe

Taemin Ahn
Jeanne Azzouni
Matthew Hadley +
Alan Hyde
Brian Shaw *

English Horn

Matthew Hadley
Christian Smythe

Clarinet

Jesse Langston
Fran Novak *
Daniel Olson +
Justin Zayarin

Bass Clarinet

Larry Bechhardt

E-Flat Clarinet

Daniel Olson

Queer Urban Orchestra

Bassoon

David Lohman *+
Kevin O'Brien
Mark Romatz

Contrabassoon

Mark Romatz

Horn

Grant Abelson
Lynn Caron +
Elizabeth Dejean
Bryan Jacobowitz
Lance Lucas
Eric Peterson
Wesley Richter
Kyle Walker *

Trumpet

Julia Cohen *+
Erin Kulick
Brandon Manning
Ron Nahass
Ryan Yacos

Trombone

Ryan Gochee *
Ryan McTernan *
Derek Weagle

Bass Trombone

Alex Arellano +

Tuba

Adam Rosenberg

Percussion

Andrew Berman +
Nolan N Dresden
Billy Jiang
Álvaro Rodas
Hannah Webster

Keyboards

Nolan N Dresden

Harp

Tiffany Wu

About QUO: The Queer Urban Orchestra

Queer Urban Orchestra (QUO) is the Northeast's only orchestra rooted in the LGBTQ+ community. Celebrating queer artistry from its membership to featured composers and performers, the orchestra promotes equity and empathy. QUO was founded in 2009 as New York City's first orchestra specifically serving the LGBTQ+ community. Since its inaugural concert, the orchestra's membership has grown to over 100 musicians, and the group's collaborations with the Danspace Project have resulted in praise from *The New York Times*.

The orchestra has premiered numerous works and has collaborated with Anthony Roth-Costanzo, Ariadne Greif, Ryan Roberts, Andrew Yee, Jasmine Rice LaBeija, Empire City Men's Chorus, Youth Pride Chorus, and Stonewall Chorale. Since 2023, QUO has been led by Artistic Director David Bloom and Associate Conductor Derek Weagle. Previous Artistic Directors have included Ian Shafer, Julie Desbordes, Nolan N Dresden, and Brandyn Metzko.

David Bloom, Artistic Director



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*), "lively and openly dancing" (*The New York Times*) presence on the podium, and his "breathtaking and inspired programming"

(*Shepherd Express*). He dedicates his work to collaborating with artists and communities to inspire creativity, empathy, and joy. He is Artistic Director of Queer Urban Orchestra, the only orchestra in the Northeast rooted in the LGBTQ+ community, Principal Conductor of the orchestras at New York University, Co-Artistic Director of Contemporaneous, and Principal Conductor of Present Music.

In such venues as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Walt Disney Concert Hall, MoMA, and Park Avenue Armory, Bloom has guest conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Washington National Opera, American Composers Orchestra, Opera Omaha, Tri-Cities Opera, and Beth Morrison Projects among others, and worked with such soloists as Dashon Burton, David Byrne, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Helga Davis, Isabel Leonard, Iarla Ó Lionáird, Courtney Love, Hila Plitmann, Dawn Upshaw, and Andrew Yee. He has conducted over 500 world premieres, including Raven Chacon's Voiceless Mass, which went on to win the 2022 Pulitzer Prize.

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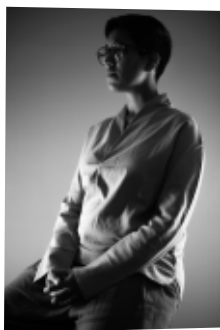
Derek Weagle, Associate Conductor



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. Derek will complete a certification in Biosonic Sound Repatterning from the Shift Network with Dr. John Beaulieu in December 2025 and an Artist Diploma in the Gabriela Ortiz Composition Studio at the OAcademy Music Conservatory as a member of a select cohort of twelve international artists in June 2026. Current engagements include work as an independent Sound Healing Artist, House Practitioner at Official Ritual, Founding Artistic Director of Bloom Sound Collective, Founder of the Khôra Consort, Associate Conductor of the Queer Urban Orchestra, Music Director of the Adelphi Vocal Ensemble, Music Director of the Adelphi Symphony Orchestra, Core Member of The Why Collective, Resident Music Director and Composer with Lucada Mélange, and the Refugee Orchestra Project Board of Directors. 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.

Rajna Swaminathan, Composer and Soloist



Rajna Swaminathan is an acclaimed mridangam artist, composer, and scholar. Rajna has been described as "a vital new voice" (*Pop Matters*), creating "music of gravity and rigor... yet its overall effect is accessible and uplifting" (*Wall Street Journal*). In her music and research, she explores the undercurrents of rhythmic experience and emergent textures in collective improvisation.

One of only a few women who play the mridangam professionally, Rajna received her creative foundation on the instrument from her father, P.K. Swaminathan, and

mrudangam legend Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman. Through extensive experience performing in the Karnatik music and bharatanatyam scenes, an affinity for various streams of South Asian film/popular music, and deep collaborative work in New York's jazz and creative music scene, Rajna developed experimental approaches to improvising on the mrudangam, piano, and voice.

Rajna's orientation as an improviser-composer blossomed through a search for resonance and fluidity among musical forms and aesthetic worlds. Her ensemble RAJAS has been a prominent medium for her expansive compositions, which involve a lattice of rhythmic, textural, and modal approaches. The ensemble's sound has been described as "unlike any other on the scene" (*New York Times*), and their debut album, *Of Agency and Abstraction* (Biophilia Records, 2019), received much critical acclaim. A new record with RAJAS, titled *Apertures* was released on Ropeadope in April 2023.

Rajna's scholarly work also intersects with her musical study and informs her creative curiosities. She was recently appointed as Assistant Professor of Music (Integrated Composition, Improvisation, and Technology) at UC Irvine's Claire Trevor School of the Arts. She holds a PhD in Music (Creative Practice and Critical Inquiry) from Harvard University, and degrees in Anthropology and French from the University of Maryland, College Park. Her dissertation, titled *Time, Virtuosity, and Ethics Otherwise: Queer Resonances for Diasporic Play*, catalyzes a creative dialogue between artistic and academic engagements with uncertainty and openness in geography, archive, and embodiment.

In addition to her work with RAJAS, Rajna has composed for JACK Quartet, Del Sol Quartet, violinists Jennifer Koh and Lucia Lin, among others. Recent commissions include the Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Sawdust, Chamber Music America New Jazz Works, and fellowships with the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music. Rajna performs extensively in ensembles led by Ganavya Doraiswamy, Amir ElSaffar, Vijay Iyer, and Aakash Mittal. Her interdisciplinary work has included collaborations with playwright Anu Yadav, visual artist Zahyr Lauren, the Ragamala Dance Company, dancer/choreographer Mythili Prakash, and poets Mahogany L. Browne, Sarah Kay, and Jon Sands.

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Program Notes

Lili Boulanger: *D'un matin de printemps* (1918)

In her brief life, **Lili Boulanger** (1893-1918) composed large choral works with orchestra, an opera, works for piano, song cycles and became the first woman to be awarded the Prix de Rome in 1913. Born into a musical family and growing up in a musical neighborhood, the 9th *arrondissement* of Paris, the Boulanger family's friends included composers Charles Gounod and Gabriel Fauré. The composer Maurice Ravel, conductor and composition teacher Paul Vidal and counterpoint teacher Georges Caussade were neighbors. The prestigious music school The Paris Conservatoire was also located here.

Lili Boulanger's musical lineage can be traced back several generations. Lili's paternal grandfather was a cellist with the Chapelle Royale and her grandmother a famous opera singer with Opéra Comique, her father Ernest Boulanger had success as an opera composer and taught singing at Conservatoire. Lili's mother was Russian Princess Raissa Myschetsky who'd come to Paris to study singing with Ernest and married him in 1878. She was 19, he was in his 60's. Lili's older sister, Nadia, was born in 1887. Raissa was a dominant force in shaping her daughters' musical education and lives. When their father died in 1900, responsibility for earning a living fell on Nadia's shoulders. Raissa, although her aristocratic title was very dubious, had an image to maintain. Nadia began her career as an educator and became one of the twentieth century's greatest music teachers, shaping the artistry of Aaron Copland, Elliott Carter, Virgil Thompson, Astor Piazzola and Quincy Jones among many others.

In this musically privileged environment, Lili's prodigious gifts were evident early on. She began studying piano and violin. As Nadia embarked on her musical education attending classes at the Conservatoire, Lili would accompany her to her lessons, absorbing knowledge vicariously. As Nadia's abilities advanced on organ, an organ was installed in the Boulanger's house and of course Lili learned too, in addition to the harp and cello. When Nadia began her composition studies, Lili followed quickly in her footsteps studying composition with Vidal and counterpoint privately with Caussade in 1909, who would become her mentor. She formally enrolled at the Paris Conservatoire in 1912 becoming a pupil of Gabriel Fauré. From then on, Lili's focus was composing.

In addition to her musical disciplines, Lili had a rich social life as a teenager. Her diaries tell of parties, dancing, a passion for cycling and the numerous theater outings, operas and concerts she attended including the weekly salons and musical dinners held by her mother Raissa in their home. On April 29, 1912, Lili writes excitedly, "For the first time, things by me were played —

the chorus *Les Sirènes*...and *Renouveau* as a vocal quartet...this number was encored — everyone was very kind...completely overwhelmed."

Lili's life was full and swiftly moving forward, however all this was against the backdrop of chronic illness and severe pain. At age two, Lili contracted bronchial pneumonia which weakened her immune system leading to intestinal tuberculosis (probably what is known as Crohn's disease now). It was a disease causing acute abdominal pain, inability to eat, fever and exhaustion among other symptoms, resulting in her death at the age of 24. In a letter, late in her life, as her health declined, Lili writes of her frustration, "I feel discouraged...not because of the suffering, ...but because I understand that I would never be able to have in me the feeling that I have done what I would like to do...my efforts cannot be sustained."

In 1910 Lili announced that she wanted to win the Prix de Rome. The prestigious award was established for musical competition in 1803. Her father won in 1835, other winners included Claude Debussy and Hector Berlioz. And for years it was a competition only opened to men. But in 1903 the French government declared that "women artists, of French nationality and unmarried, more than fifteen years of age and less than thirty, can from now on take part..." Lili had witnessed her sister Nadia's four attempts to achieve this goal, placing three times in the finals. And was well aware of the sexism that surrounded the competition. Lili, with the help of Caussade's almost daily tutelage began to direct all her energies to meeting the demands of a rigorous competition with very formal guidelines. Winning the Prix de Rome could launch a composer's career. Plus, it came with a generous stipend and several years stay at the Villa Medici in Rome where composers would devote themselves to composing in the community of other artists.

The format of the Prix de Rome required composers to write a chorus and a vocal fugue, written on a text/subject chosen for the candidates. Six students moved to the finals where the requirements became more prescribed: in three weeks compose a 15–20-minute cantata for three voices, again on a chosen text that depicted a love triangle, compose in a studio without a piano, reside at the Palace of Compiègne during those weeks, isolated from the world and only meeting other competitors for meals and recreation. All this culminated in a semi-public performance of the cantata, rehearsed and conducted by the composer.

Lili's cantata *Faust et Hélène*, with a prescribed story written by Eugène Adenis, was a mash up of the Faust and Mephistopheles struggle via Goethe and the Greek myth of Helen of Troy. But her music rose above the weak story and Lili won an impressive 31 out of 36 votes giving her first prize, the Prix de Rome. The news rocked the music world. Critics praised the cantata for its poetry, adept colorful orchestrations and dramatic handling of the love

triangle. Debussy lauded her, "Lili Boulanger is only nineteen, but her experience in a wide variety of compositional techniques makes her seem much older." But other critics were vicious. New York Times writer James Gibbons Huneker comments, "When a hen whistles there is consternation in the coop; but when a hen whistles Wagner then the critical roosters look askance. The particular hen in this case was Lili Boulanger....[proves] that France must have been singularly barren of original composers."

Reaping the rewards of first prize, the music publishing company Ricordi gave Lili a contract which in turn gave her a regular income and publicity. In March 1914 Lili arrived in Rome, ready to devote herself uninterrupted to composing. And to enjoying an active social life, in between bouts of incapacitating illness. These last eight years were filled with astonishing productivity as Lili worked at a fever pitch to realize all her musical visions. The famous dramatist Maurice Maeterlinck requested her to compose the music for his libretto, *La princesse Maleine*, a haunting fairy tale set during wartime, mirroring the outbreak of World War I in Europe. Unfortunately, the opera was never finished. Her large choral settings of Psalms 24, 129 and 130 (aka *Du fond de l'abime — From the Depths of the Abyss*) reflect the collective grief from the ravages of war. And more intimate works such as *Dans l'immense tristesse* for voice and piano, echo deep personal despair.

In 1917 Lili wrote **D'un matin de printemps (One Spring Morning)**, a radiant hope filled composition for full orchestra. According to Nadia, *D'un matin de printemps* along with its companion piece the somber *D'un soir triste* (Of a Sad Evening) were the last pieces that Lili wrote in her own hand. In 1918, as Lili was dying, too weak to hold a pencil her final piece *Pie Jesu* was transcribed by Nadia, "dictated note by note, line by line...the work which had conceived within her." Lili Boulanger died March 15, 1918, and was buried in Montmartre. Europe was still at war.

D'un matin de printemps envisions the sparkle of spring. Violins whisper a tissue thin rhythmic pattern that is passed around to other sections of the orchestra throughout the piece. The flutes enter with a playful melody that rises and falls like birds in flight. Violins take up a new theme, passing it along to the winds, especially the bassoon and piccolo. The mood is light and refreshing, the hope and joy of springtime. Mystery creeps into the middle section as strings swell upward and haunting solos emerge for two violins and one cello. Moving towards the end in a climactic burst of colors and rhythmic textures, the horns and trumpets give a hint of Paul Dukas' *Sorcerer's Apprentice* (think Mickey Mouse in his wizard hat and errant broomstick). The final moments portray an exuberance for life, the strings race skyward, the harp cascades down and the spring morning culminates with one short chord.

Influenced by Debussy and Fauré Lili Boulanger's music was steeped in the French Late Romantic traditions. However, her innovations with ambiguous harmonic structure and rhythmic patterns contributed to the early Modern 20th century sounds. Possessing a tremendous skill in choral writing and an innate sense for dramatic storytelling, Lili understood the balance between vocal and instrumental, never relegating the piano or orchestra to a mere accompaniment. One can only imagine if she'd lived longer the contributions she might have made to opera and the new evolving world of music theater.

— Navida Stein

Gustav Mahler: Symphony No. 1 in D major (1899)

The background: The end of the 19th century was a period in European history marked by the rising power of the middle class. Emboldened by a second industrial revolution that created an influx of wealth and status, they sought to emulate the status of the old aristocracy by establishing institutions that blended art and leisure. This led to a proliferation of public museums and theaters that catered to a demand for art as revolutionary and progressive as the times themselves. It was in this environment that Mahler composed his **Symphony No. 1**.

In later performances, Mahler experimented with rebranding the work as *Titan: a symphonic poem in the form of a symphony*. He removed an additional movement titled *Blumine* and instead settled on a standard four movement work simply titled *Symphony No. 1*. Evidently, Mahler struggled to identify exactly what this work was — tone poem or symphony?

Though the specifics of the work's programmatic elements were now obscured, the powerful impact of the work's symphonic structure remain. Mahler is an exceptional musical architect. He uses clearly defined materials infused with poetic meaning. In Mahler, every instrumental line, every note, can be heard and is important to the musical structure. It is this clarity of function and form that gives Mahler both a poignant beauty when soft, and a teeth-shattering quality when loud.

The materials Mahler uses are often quotations or allusions to his own works and others including Schubert, Wagner, and Beethoven. These quotes and allusions are the equivalent of today's cinematic 'easter eggs'; there for film enthusiast to discover and discuss on their YouTube channels.

But these easter eggs, though a joy to find and interpret, are not essential to understand what Mahler has done. One can feel Mahler's intent and design behind the music without discovering them. In part, this is because of Mahler's convincing use of progressive tonality, a technique where the music is organized between competing key structures instead of just one. In the

case of *Symphony No. 1*, the keys are D major (the paradise key) and F minor (the infernal key).

These two keys represent competing visions of a world that was, is, or could be. One key area can usurp authority from the other only to be swallowed up again by the former. All other keys areas, like lesser powers, must align themselves accordingly.

The music: The first movement, in homage to the opening of Beethoven's 9th *Symphony*, begins with an all-encompassing 'A', played in the strings in seven different registers before a primal fourth descends A to E, which represents an awakening of nature while outlining the V chord in D major. But almost immediately there is a problem. The third pitch to be introduced in the symphony is the problem tone 'F', the note that transforms D major to D minor. The tone darkens the skies while inviting the keys associated with F into the symphony. Already the confrontation has begun.

D major eventually responds in the distance, like cavalry. Soon, the earth awakens on an ascending and chromatic line that is allied with D minor, as if the problem tone F has infected the whole of the world leaving it cold and icy. As it recedes, the descending fourth transforms into a simple tune in D major played by the cellos, blossoming like the fresh buds of spring as the symphony enters the exposition proper. The whole of the first movement continues this 'world building'. As Mahler famously said: "*A symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything.*"

As the development section begins, the cellos play a gentle 'call' in the key of D major. The sounds of nature do not respond, but merely continue, almost unaware. Then in the absence of a true response, the line darkens to D minor followed by the ominous entrance of the F in the low strings and tuba, punctuated by the pulsations of a bass drum. The icy chill has returned.

Eventually, by the end of the development section, there is a great push to rid the symphony of F allowing the recapitulation to return the symphony to D major. But even in this triumphant conclusion of the 1st movement, just as D major seems to be in charge, the music is briefly diverted by a modulation to F major letting us know that despite D major winning the first movement, the danger is far from over.

The inner movements, though not as outwardly dramatic, continue the D/F conversation. The second movement was likely influenced in character by Hans Rott's *Symphony in E minor* from 1880, a composer who Mahler held in high esteem but is little known today. It is firmly anchored in D major, but with a trio section anchored in F major.

The third movement in D minor takes the well know tune Frere Jacques but transforms it into a surreal funeral march beginning with an eerie solo double bass. Near the end of the movement, the music steps to the key of Eb minor. This key has no outward allegiance to either of the two competing key structure. It feels like a wrong turn has been taken. Perhaps the symphony realizes it has reached a dead-end before turning reluctantly back to D minor.

It is not until the 4th movement that the true fury of the problem tone is unleashed. F, now anchored by its own F minor tonic, threatens to devour the symphony in its rage. The movement opens with a brutally orchestrated German augmented sixth above the dominant C chord, an allusion to the augmented triad that begins the 4th movement of Beethoven's *9th Symphony*. The violins perform frantic and virtuosic flourishes over a prolonged passage of dominant harmony. The effect is as if some demonic herald is preparing for the arrival of a tyrant in a new and terrifying age. Finally, a fateful resolution in F minor jolts the symphony into a path darker than anything that has come before.

Seemingly now in control of the symphony, F minor makes a strategic retreat and allows its allied key of Db major to relax the mood. But Db is not a key that can redeem the symphony. It is too close to the F, and a half step away from the key of true salvation. It is a paradox: a beautiful place, but the wrong place. The symphonic world, still governed by key structures allied with F remains confrontational and chaotic as the movement battles with itself.

Ultimately, this symphony will find its redemption, but it will take a massive effort to wrestle control away from the key of F minor. There is a premature attempt to correct the 'off world' of F. This forced modulation, preceded by a thematic reference to Wagner's 'grail music' from his opera *Parsifal*, is quite unlike anything that had occurred in the symphonic literature before. It wrenches control of the symphony through sheer force of will from F back to D major. Mahler himself alluded to this modulation, noting that if there is anything truly great about this symphony it is surely this moment.

However, the triumphant passage in D recedes too quickly, as if it was not yet sufficiently earned. The music calms and by doing so, inadvertently allows the problem tone to return. Ultimately F minor again threatens the symphony as an astringent viola gesture reawakens the beast. This time, however, D major is quicker to notice. As in the first movement, the F is once again forcefully pushed out of the symphony as D major triumphantly and redemptively returns bringing the symphony to its conclusion.

Final thoughts: The brief modulation from D to F in the recap of the first movement is an intriguing musical idea. It functions like an unresolved issue, almost unnoticed and buried under a surface of joy and prosperity. It seems harmless, but as musical time moves forward, and the key structures of F

usurp the symphony, this moment does not seem so harmless after all.

Mahler, perhaps because he knew his Jewish roots kept him from being considered a true equal in Germanic Society, seems to have been innately aware how threatening certain societal forces underneath the surface of a culture could be, particularly when they manage to become the dominant line of cultural thought. As Mahler noted: *"I am thrice homeless, as a native of Bohemia in Austria, as an Austrian among Germans, and as a Jew throughout the world. Everywhere an intruder, never welcomed."*

— Bjorn Berkhout



Join us June 21 for our Annual Pride Gala
with special guest Todd Almond

Thank you!

Rajna Swaminathan's *Dwelling* was commissioned for Queer Urban Orchestra by michael shattner, to uplift queer voices in love, peace and power:

You are seen.

You are loved.

You have a right to exist.

Glory in your queer soul.

Make your queer art and transform the world.

Tonight's performance of *Symphony No. 1* is sponsored by Navin Manglani.

David Bloom's photo by Jiyang Chen

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