



47th Season

Premier

Sunday, Oct 1, 2023 at 4:00 pm

Hochstein School of Music
Performance Hall

PROGRAM

Italian Serenade (1887) Hugo Wolf
(1860-1903)

Juliana Athayde *violin*
Jeanelle Thompson *violin*
Joshua Newburger *viola*
Ahrim Kim *cello*

Joys and Sorrows for solo piano Richard Danielpour
(1921-1992)

[SCMR commission and premier]

Prologue
Playtime I
Song Without Words (A Father's Love)
Prayer
Lullaby
Playtime II
Epilogue

Chiao-Wen Cheng *piano*

String Quartet in C minor, Op. 51 No. 1 (1873) . . Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Allegro
Romanze: poco adagio
Allegretto molto moderato e comodo
Allegro

Juliana Athayde *violin*
Jeanelle Thompson *violin*
Joshua Newburger *viola*
Ahrim Kim *cello*

PROGRAM NOTES

Hugo Wolf: *Italian Serenade*

Born in what is now known as Slovenia, Hugo Wolf had a difficult and unhappy life. He was dismissed from secondary school in Graz for being “wholly inadequate” and then persuaded his father to send him to the Vienna Conservatoire, where he made friends with the young Gustav Mahler and joined the pro-Wagner avant-garde alliance. However he clashed with the Conservatoire’s authorities and was dismissed for breach of discipline. He turned to teaching but his fiery temperament, depression and mood swings made him a less than ideal music teacher, although his charm and undoubted abilities as a composer brought him commissions and pupils. He tried his hand as a music critic for a short period, making many enemies, including Brahms, with his vitriolic reviews. Because of the hostility he encountered, he decided to give up being a critic and return to composing.

Wolf is best known as a masterful and prolific composer of art songs. With rare sensitivity to every aspect of the genre – the poetry, the melodic and harmonic intensity and sympathetic accompaniments – he achieved an exalted expressiveness that set him apart, even from Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms, as a gifted composer of *Lieder*. Although his focus was primarily on song, with more than 350 in his output, Wolf did venture into other genres, completing an opera, *Der Corregidor*, a symphonic poem, *Penthesilia*, and left several orchestral, choral, and chamber works unfinished.

The inspiration for the *Italian Serenade* seems to have come to Wolf from the novella by the German Romantic writer Joseph Eichendorff *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (From the Life of a Ne'er-Do-Well) and the related poem *Der Soldat* about the love of a soldier for a lady who lives in a castle. Central to its plot is an Italian serenade played by a small orchestra.... Its hero is a young musician, a violinist, who leaves his country home and his grumbling father to seek his fortune. He soon charms everyone with his gifts, or antagonizes them with his inconsequence. Wolf could hardly have found a more congenial or compelling self-portrait in all German literature.

The Serenade was composed for string quartet in the space of only three days (May 2-4, 1887), during a time when Wolf was immersed in setting a number of Eichendorff's verses for voice and piano. Wolf originally called his work simply *Serenade in G major*, but around 1890 began referring to it as his *Italian Serenade*. In 1892, he returned to the piece, and orchestrated it with the intention of adding to it two more movements to create a suite for concert performance. The following year he made sketches for a slow movement in G minor, but, already suffering from the emotional turmoil brought on by his impulsive personality and by the syphilis that would send him to an asylum in 1897, could not bring it to completion.

The essence of the delicious *Italian Serenade* is its antithesis of romantic sentiment and mocking wit, wrote Robert W. Gutman. The work's several sections, joined in a loose rondo structure, allow for the depiction of various moods and characters; the gossamer strains of the lilting serenade serve as the background and foil for the ardent entreaties of the suitor (in instrumental recitative) and the coquettish replies of the lady. The joining together of these contrasts representing the two stylistic poles of Wolf's musical speech within a single piece represents the pinnacle of his success as an instrumental composer, and it is much to be regretted that his short life and his sad last years deprived him of the chance to provide the musical world with further such works as this masterful miniature.

Richard Danielpour: *Joys and Sorrows*

Born in New York City on January 28, 1956, Richard Danielpour studied composition with Vincent Persichetti and Peter Mennin, as well as piano with Lorin Hollander, Veronica Jochum, and Gabriel Chodos, at the New England Conservatory and the Juilliard School, receiving his DMA in composition from Juilliard in 1986. From 1988 until 1990, Danielpour studied composition with Leonard Bernstein.

He is one of the most gifted composers of his generation - a composer whose distinctive American voice is part of a rich neo-Romantic heritage with influences from past composers like Britten, Copland, Bernstein, and Barber, along with current composers like Adams, Rouse, and Schwantner. Danielpour has commented that "*music [must] have an immediate visceral impact and elicit a visceral response.*" This visceral element can indeed be heard throughout Danielpour's oeuvre: expansive, sweeping, romantic gestures; energetic rhythmic accentuations; contrasting stylistic characters; arresting, introspective, melodic beauty; rich, enticing orchestrations; and brilliantly juxtaposed, yet cohesive harmonic angles. His list of over 160 commissions includes some of the most celebrated artists and institutions of our day.

As a devoted mentor and educator, he has also had a significant impact on the younger generation of composers. He writes:

"The greatest gift that I can give a student is to listen to them, see who they are at that moment, and never treat any student like another. They're all individuals, and the extension and the bringing forth of their uniqueness is why we sit with them.

It's why we listen to them. It's why we encourage them, and it's why we train them. This is what Boulanger was all about. She was an amazing teacher because she understood what was intrinsically powerful and personal about each student. Those who listen well and with great care and attention are the best mentors."

He has received a Grammy Award, the Charles Ives Fellowship, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts & Letters, a Guggenheim Award, the Bearn's Prize from Columbia University, two Rockefeller Foundation Fellowships, and The Berlin Prize from the American Academy in Berlin. He served on the composition faculty of the Manhattan School of Music from 1993 to 2017. In 2017 Danielpour accepted the position of Professor of Music at the Herb Alpert School of Music at UCLA. He is also a member of the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music where he has taught since 1997 and chaired its composition department.

Joys And Sorrows is a multi-movement suite for piano that was commissioned to evoke a sense of the joys and sorrows that come as a result of caring for a child with special needs. Richard Danielpour writes:

"This work was written to remind us of the need for compassion in our lives for our loved ones and especially for those whose disability deprives them of the life so many of us enjoy.

Each of the movements in the suite is a "snapshot" in sound, reflecting the different psychic and emotional moments that arise in watching a child who lives in this "bubble of limitation." So much of this cycle, particularly the three inner movements, is an evocation of the deep and abiding love that parents have for their children, but more specifically in this suite, the love that a father would likely have for the child in whose honor this work is written."

Joys and Sorrows was composed between the months of February and May 2022.

Brahms: *String Quartet, Op. 51*

Brahms never wanted the reputation of "Beethoven's heir" that the musical public, and some of his friends, foisted on him. Though he composed constantly from the age of twenty, he was wary of offering works in the two genres that Beethoven had made signally his own — the symphony and the string quartet. As with the symphony (he held back his first until he was forty-three), Brahms spent many years working on string quartets before he was ready to introduce one to the world, claiming at one point to have written and destroyed no fewer than twenty quartets before bringing out the one in C minor.

In 1866 Brahms played part of a "string quartet in C minor" to his friend and confidante Clara Schumann, along with some movements from his *German Requiem*. If this was an early version of the present C-minor quartet, it took him another seven years to finish it to his satisfaction. In 1868 he played both Opus 51 quartets for another friend, the scholar Hermann Deiters, but still withheld them from publication. Occasionally he would let a group of friends read through the work, then he would take the music back and continue polishing. Finally in 1873 he decided it was ready; in September he sent it to his publisher, and the Hellmesberger Quartet gave the première in Vienna on December 11.

The key of C minor (the same key he used for his first symphony) and the tense, strenuous manner are reminiscent of Beethoven, but this is clearly a work of Johannes Brahms. One of the most remarkable features of the work is the way he has saturated every part of the score with the principal musical motifs — hardly a note is superfluous, not derived

from the principal figures of the piece. A generation later, Arnold Schoenberg wrote a famous essay, “Brahms the Progressive,” hailing a composition that has no filler, but is “totally thematic” to the smallest details.

The first movement is darkly stormy both in its driven opening theme and in its second subject which offers no relaxation. The middle movements are less complex in structure, but still melancholy or fatalistic in mood. The third movement, normally a place for vigorous dance styles and hints of folk elements, is here subdued, tenuous in character, with a colorful shift to the major key for the middle section. The third movement ends in F minor. Brahms opens the finale with a recollection of the first movement’s principal motif, now starting on F so that it links the movements in the most natural manner. The thematic material of the finale is largely derived from that of earlier movements, with hints of an expected move to a C major resolution – never realized. The movement closes with a grim, tragic, C minor cadence which can be heard as the final answer to the opening statement from the very beginning of the quartet.

Notes compiled by Eric Zeise from text by Rob Barnett,
Elizabeth Dalton, Richard Danielpour, Steven Ledbetter.

Biographical Notes

Juliana Athayde, appointed concertmaster of the RPO in 2005, has made numerous solo appearances with the RPO, including several premieres, and with orchestras across the country. She has also appeared as guest concertmaster with several orchestras. A passionate educator, Ms. Athayde is Associate Professor of Violin at the Eastman School, and serves on the faculty at music festivals across the U.S. She has also held visiting faculty positions at the Cleveland Institute of Music and at Cornell University. Ms. Athayde holds a B.M. from University of Michigan, as well as M.M and A.D. degrees from Cleveland Institute of Music where she was the first graduate of the CIM’s Concertmaster Academy.

A versatile musician and educator, Taiwanese pianist **Chiao-Wen Cheng** has performed as soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician in major venues throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia, and has won numerous piano competitions and awards. Since 2019, Cheng has been an Artist-Faculty Piano Collaborator at the Perlman Music Program. In 2022, she was hired as the Collaborative Pianist for the U.S. premier of Tan Dun’s trombone concerto. Cheng’s solo engagements include concerto performances as well as solo recitals in major venues. She began piano lessons with her aunt at the age of four. She completed her bachelor’s degree at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where she received a Van Cliburn Scholarship. She completed her master’s degree at Peabody Institute, Johns Hopkins University, where she received a full scholarship. Cheng holds a doctoral degree from the Eastman School of Music, where she was a student and teaching assistant of Barry Snyder. At Eastman, she was also the recipient of a graduate assistantship as a collaborative pianist and large ensemble pianist. Currently she is an Assistant Professor of Collaborative Piano at the Eastman School of Music and Principal Keyboardist of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra.

Cellist **Ahrim Kim** is an accomplished soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral leader who joined the RPO as principal cellist in the fall of 2015. She was awarded the Cassado Prize at the Gaspar Cassado International Cello Competition in Japan and top prizes in numerous

other competitions. She was a member of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra for the 2014–15 season as acting principal cellist, has performed as soloist with top orchestras, and as chamber musician in a number of festivals. Since 2016, she has been teaching orchestral repertoire for cello at the Eastman School of Music and coaching chamber music at the Bowdoin International Music Festival. Born in Seoul, South Korea, Kim began her cello studies at the age of six. She moved to the U.S. in 2002 and studied cello through Juilliard's Pre-College Division for young musicians. She holds a master's degree in cello performance from the New England Conservatory of Music, where she also earned her bachelor's degree under the tutelage of Laurence Lesser and Natasha Brofsky. Kim was awarded the Arthur Foote Award from the Harvard Musical Association as the cellist of the Klimt Trio.

Joshua Newburger is the newly appointed principal violist of the RPO. Formerly assistant principal violist of the Pacific Symphony, Josh has performed as a guest principal with the Fresno Philharmonic and the Santa Barbara Symphony, and subbed in the sections of the LA Phil, San Diego Symphony, Colorado Symphony, and Buffalo Philharmonic. During his time in the Los Angeles area Josh recorded for numerous feature films and television productions, so he can be heard on the soundtracks for many movies and TV series. He has toured extensively throughout the US, Europe, and Asia as a member of the Verbier Festival Chamber orchestra, and a guest musician with Ivan Fischer's Budapest Festival Orchestra. He was twice selected as the assistant principal violist of the New York String Orchestra and studied as a fellow at the Music Academy of the West and the Verbier Festival. Josh received his Bachelor's degree in violin from the New England Conservatory. Under the guidance of Rochester native and Eastman alum Michael Klotz, Josh found his voice with the viola and ultimately obtained his Master's degree in viola from Yale, where he studied with Ettore Causa.

Jeanelle Thompson, newly appointed principal second violin of the RPO, has dedicated herself to symphonic music for nearly two decades. Her commitment to orchestral performance has taken her to many of the world's most prestigious stages. Jeanelle's love for orchestral music began at the age of 9 when she joined the community orchestra in her hometown of Safford, Arizona. Seven years later, she made her solo debut with the Phoenix Symphony. Inspired by her early experiences onstage, Jeanelle went on to earn her undergraduate degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music where she was awarded the Dr. Jerome Gross Prize in Violin. While in school she was a member of the Canton Symphony Orchestra and attended the Aspen Music Festival, Brevard Music Center, Perlman Music Program, and the Verbier Festival. Jeanelle has since performed as a substitute with the Cleveland Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and the Minnesota Orchestra. She has appeared as guest concertmaster with the Bangor Symphony, the Brevard Music Center orchestras, the Cleveland Institute of Music Orchestra, the Lexington Bach Festival, and the Youngstown Symphony. As a music educator, Jeanelle served on the Cleveland Institute of Music's Preparatory Chamber Music faculty from 2018-2022 and maintains a private studio.

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