Coming Together Again in 2021-22

Eduardo Leandro
Guest Conductor

Deborah Wong, Violin

FATE and TRIUMPH
Saturday, November 13, 2021

Saturday, December 18, 2021
No Place Like Home
For the Holidays

Ariadne Greif, Soprano
Phillip Bullock, Baritone

Elinor Ruferzen
Guest Conductor

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As the year 2021 ends the Board of Trustees, musicians and staff extend gratitude for your ongoing support and attendance at our concerts. It is just wonderful to be Coming Together Again.

We are excited to introduce two guest conductors to Bridgeport. In November, Brazilian-born Eduardo Leandro will conduct our orchestra through an evening of Fate and Triumph. December’s No Place Like Home for the Holidays program will be under the baton of conductor and clarinetist Elinor Ruzeizen, a native of Israel.

November’s program includes a stunning violin solo by our own Deborah Wong. Deborah’s contributions to the orchestra are many – as concertmaster, soloist and supporter of the Board’s efforts. Her acclaimed talent and commitment are valued and well respected by GBS, and beyond.

In December, arias of great operas will highlight people coming together, and of course, there will also be some seasonal surprises.

During this season of thanksgiving, light and hope we are pleased to share with the community. In October, we brought Dvořák to Bridgeport’s Bassick High School and introduced the students to our music – the response was amazing! The November food drive for the Bridgeport Rescue Mission is a longstanding tradition spearheaded by former Trustee and friend of GBS, Ms. Lisa Tasi. As always, special seating options are available for students, their families and those less fortunate who may find peace and comfort in our music.

Our December concert is dedicated to Jean Halaby Moffitt. The Board of Trustees appreciates Jean’s decades of service as Trustee and multi-term service as President of the Board. Jean’s leadership, generosity and graciousness will always be remembered with the utmost respect and gratitude.

On behalf of the entire GBS family, we wish you, your families and friends a peaceful holiday season.

Christine M. Kudravy
President
“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything.”

– Plato

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Fate and Triumph
Eduardo Leandro, Guest Conductor
Deborah Wong, Violin

The Doris and Herbert Harrington Pre-Concert Talk
hosted by Dr. Frank Martignetti

Jessie Montgomery
b. 1981

Starburst (2012)

Sergei Prokofiev
1891-1953

Violin Concerto No. 1 in D major (1917-23)
Op. 19
I. Andantino
II. Scherzo, vivacissimo
III. Moderato, allegro moderato

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven
1780-1827

Symphony No. 5 in C minor (1804-08)
Op. 67
I. Allegro con brio (C minor)
II. Andante con moto (A♭ major)
III. Scherzo – Allegro (C minor)
IV. Allegro – Presto (C major)

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November’s Guest Conductor:
EDUARDO LEANDRO

Eduardo Leandro is a conductor and percussionist who seeks to bridge the gap between both worlds by applying his extensive experience in new music to his interpretation of earlier orchestral repertoire, bringing “new” music’s freshness and excitement to classical and romantic pieces, while also bringing orchestral music’s lyricism and centuries-long appeal into his performances of contemporary music.

He conducts the New York New Music Ensemble, a group with over 40 years of history commissioning and premiering music from over one hundred composers. He regularly performs with the New York University Symphony Orchestra, and has conducted Camerata Aberta in Brazil, Talea and Sequitur Ensembles in the United States, Ensemble Lemanic in France, and the New Music Ensembles in the conservatories of Geneva and Lausanne. He recently served as the music director for the premiere of “The Scarlet Professor”, an opera composed by Eric Sawyer and produced by the Five Colleges Consortium. He has conducted chamber music concerts at Radio France in Paris, in Milan and Torino with MDI and Sentieri Musicali, at Pacific Rim Music Festival in California, and at Festival Archipel in Switzerland.

He is an Associate Professor at Stony Brook University and artistic director of its Contemporary Chamber Players, conducts the Stony Brook Symphony Orchestra, teaches doctoral seminars related to the understanding and performance of contemporary music, and teaches percussion at the masters and doctoral levels. He has been a guest lecturer at the Peabody Conservatory and Yale University, regular faculty at Yellow Barn Summer Festival in Vermont, and faculty at several festivals in Brazil and in the U.S.A.. He previously taught at the Haute École de Musique de Genève and directed the percussion program at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

As a percussionist, Eduardo Leandro has performed as soloist and with ensembles in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. In the U.S. he performs regularly
with the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, having appeared with Steve Reich Ensemble and Bang on a Can All Stars among others. He is part of the Percussion Duo Contexto, ensemble in residence at the Centre International de Percussion in Geneva for ten years, having premiered and recorded dozens of works. He continues to perform as a soloist and chamber musician, commissioning new pieces and helping discover what this exciting group of instruments has to offer.

Upcoming projects include conducting a new opera by Flo Menezes that involves large orchestra, chorus, and electronics; continuing to learn Ghanian drumming; a free improv collaboration with saxophonist Travis Laplante; and recording the music for mallet instruments by James Woods, all based on bird songs.

Eduardo Leandro was born in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, land of carnival, samba schools and rich musical culture. He attended the Sao Paulo State University, the Rotterdam Conservatory in the Netherlands, and Yale University. His conducting mentor and teacher was Gustav Meier, director of Greater Bridgeport Symphony Orchestra for over four decades. His percussion mentors were Robert van Sice and John Boudler.

When not working on music Eduardo can be seen taking pictures of birds, learning new languages, or making use of his commercial pilot’s license while flying his plane around the Eastern coast.
MEET OUR SOLOISTS: DEBORAH WONG, Violin

The first American born child to Shanghainese immigrants, violinist Deborah Wong graduated from the Juilliard School with both a Bachelors and Masters degree under the tutelage of the renowned Dorothy Delay.

In 2002, Deborah was invited to the concertmaster chair of the Greater Bridgeport Symphony by Gustav Meier, and has appeared as soloist with the orchestra on numerous occasions throughout her tenure. Ms. Wong has had a busy and varied career in the NY area and her violinistic abilities span a wide range of styles and activities . . . from chamber music to symphonies to cutting edge contemporary. In demand as a guest concertmaster she has performed in that position with the Oklahoma Symphony, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the American Composers Orchestra, the Westchester Philharmonic, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic, the Stamford Symphony, the Greenwich Symphony, the Ridgefield Symphony, the Connecticut Philharmonic and the American Symphony orchestras.

As appointed concertmaster to the Dance Theater of Harlem, she was hailed as “Splendid” by the New York Times for her solo performances the Meditation from Thais and Bach A minor As a soloist, she has performed with the Hudson Valley Philharmonic, the Brattleboro Bach Festival Orchestra, the Stony Brook Symphony, the North Country Chamber Players, the Civic Orchestra of New Haven, the American Chamber Orchestra and the Greater Bridgeport Symphony. As a chamber musician she is a member of the Atlantic String Quartet and the Hawthorne Piano Trio. With Adam Grabois, her duo cello partner, she has recorded Martinu, Kodaly, and Ravel Duos on Mr. Grabois’ own label, Reflex Editions. A champion of new music, Ms. Wong performs in New York with such groups as the Washington Square Contemporary Music Ensemble, Speculum, ISCM, and the New York New Music Ensemble. She has toured with the world with the renowned chamber orchestras, Orpheus and the Knights.
A dedicated teacher, she is on the faculty of the Weston Music Center and School of the Performing Arts, as well the Young Musicians Talent Workshop and is a registered Suzuki violin teacher and maintains an active private studio. In 2010 she was invited as a master teacher-performer to Panama, to work with the students at the Orquestra Juvenil de Nata. Ms. Wong has recorded for Deustche Gramophone, Elysium and CRI and New World Records. Ms. Wong joined the New York City Opera Orchestra in 2003 and resides in Westchester with her husband, Chris Finckel.

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The Greater Bridgeport Symphony gratefully acknowledges the music lovers listed here, who have contributed to this season’s Annual Fund Campaign, as well as other GBS contribution categories.

Each gift plays an important role in the continued success of GBS programs. By bridging the gap between expenses and ticket revenues, the Annual Fund provides critical support for all GBS activities, at concerts and in the community.

More than ever, GBS needs your support, so that we may continue to grow and thrive. Like all arts organizations, we are facing a difficult future. In the face of adversity, GBS has chosen to take bold action to keep culture in our region, and provide much-needed respite from the stresses of a world in pandemic.

We ask you to step up with us to preserve culture
as we step boldly into the future.

Please give generously!

Thank you for helping us make the music!
You may donate online at www.GBS.org, by calling the GBS office at (203)576-0263, or by mailing a donation to GBS at 446 University Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604

OUR GOAL THIS SEASON: $150,000
Raised to date: $42,173

The list on the following pages acknowledges monetary donations received since the publication of our last program journal in April 2021. Donations of $1,000 and above are recognized for a minimum of one season. If your listing in this program does not appear as you would like, please send a short email with the correction to mark@gbs.org.

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FATE AND TRIUMPH

In our season of “Coming Together Again,” tonight we pair opposites: fate and triumph. As so often happens, Beethoven provides metaphors for the challenges in life today, even as his music passes the two-century mark. Our guest conductor, Eduardo Leandro, expressed our times well when talking about Beethoven’s Fifth: “It’s about fate and faith. You can’t control what the world will do, but faith can see you through any crisis.” Enjoy the ride!

Jessie Montgomery
b. 1981

Starburst (2012)

It’s no exaggeration to describe Jessie Montgomery as a triple threat. This composer, mentor, and violinist is one of the brightest lights in the American contemporary music scene. Her parents were artists, and Montgomery grew up on the front lines of New York City’s artistic explosion, spending her formative years at performances, artistic gatherings, and demonstrations. With degrees from Julliard and N.Y.U., Montgomery’s singular artistic voice combines activism, education, and performance with jazz, folk music, African-American spirituals, and civil rights anthems.

Starburst was commissioned in 2012 by the Sphinx Organization, which champions promising young Black and Latinx string players. "This brief one-movement work for string orchestra,” Montgomery writes, “is a play on imagery of rapidly changing musical colors. Exploding gestures are juxtaposed with gentle fleeting melodies in an attempt to create a multidimensional soundscape. A common definition of a starburst, 'the rapid formation of large numbers of new stars in a galaxy at a rate high enough to alter the structure of the galaxy significantly,' lends itself almost literally to the nature of the performing ensemble that premiered the work . . . and I wrote the piece with their dynamic in mind."
1917 marked a turning point in Russian history. As a result of that year’s February Revolution, Tsar Nicholas II abdicated the throne. Following the October Revolution, the Bolshevik Party gained power. In the midst of this turbulence, Sergei Prokofiev experienced a surge of compositional productivity. Throughout 1917, he composed six pieces of music, including tonight’s Violin Concerto No. 1.

While the concerto was not well-received upon its Paris premiere, it gained popularity in Russia after violinist Joseph Szigeti used it in his touring repertoire. Szigeti later wrote that he was drawn to the concerto due to its “mixture of fairy-tale naivety and daring savagery in a lay-out texture.”

This juxtaposition of “fairy-tale naivety” and “daring savagery” is evocative of the early twentieth century musical landscape. Just four years before Prokofiev wrote the first violin concerto, Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring premiered to general scandal in Paris. When compared with the lush musical romanticism of the previous century, Stravinsky’s ballet seemed outrageous.

Prokofiev’s work speaks to both styles – the “daring savagery” of contemporary music and the “fairy-tale naivety” of nineteenth-century romanticism.

“Glowing beams shoot through this realm’s deep night, and we become aware of immense shadows, which rise and fall, close in on us, and wipe us out but not the ache of unending longing, in which every pleasure that has surged in sounds of celebration sinks and goes under, and only in this ache—the love, hope, joy (self-consuming but not destroying) that wants to burst our breast with a full-voiced harmony of all passions—do we live on as delighted visionaries!”

So wrote German author E. T. A. Hoffmann when he described Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5 in the General Musical Journal in 1810.
Hoffman, who also described the piece as “one of the most important works of the time,” was the first of many to ascribe iconic status to the fifth symphony. *Symphony No. 5*, also called “the Fate Symphony” is most famous for its iconic four-note opening phrase, which is echoed throughout the piece’s and is often described as evoking “fate knocking on the door.”

It is hard to overstate the Fifth Symphony’s impact on popular musical culture. From Chuck Berry to *Saturday Night Fever*, the “fate theme” seems ubiquitous. Despite this near-omnipresence, the symphony stakes an emotional claim on audiences. The first movement, with its layers of attention-grabbing phrases, will demand your attention; the subsequent music will keep you hooked until the very end.

Hoffman, again, puts it best:

*How this wonderful composition, in a climax that climbs on and on, leads the listener imperiously forward into the spirit world of the infinite! No doubt the whole rushes like an ingenious rhapsody past many a man, but the soul of each thoughtful listener is assuredly stirred, deeply and intimately, by a feeling that is none other than that unutterable portentous longing, and until the final chord—indeed, even in the moments that follow it—he will be powerless to step out of that wondrous spirit realm where grief and joy embrace him in the form of sound.*

All through this iconic symphony, Beethoven leads the listener in ever-closing arcs, moving into major keys, providing glimmers of hope, until finally, triumph is achieved.
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Jaime Thorne, Susan Spaulding Principal Chair
Jamie Marci
Marjie Seymour Callaghan
Renee Redman

TRUMPET
Ken Tedeschi, principal
John Charles Thomas

TROMBONE
Scott Cranston, principal
Nicole Jean

BASS TROMBONE
William Whitaker

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Daniel Green, principal

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Megan Sesma, principal

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**Again this season, the James Musto Principal Timpani Chair, is the gift of Doc Hermaly and Dr. Elizabeth Beirne.**
No Place Like Home for the Holidays
(especially this season!)

Elinor Rufeizen, Guest Conductor
Joanna Mongiardo, Soprano
Jean Bernard Cerin, Baritone

The Doris and Herbert Harrington Pre-Concert Talk
hosted by Dr. Frank Martignetti

Gioachino Rossini
1792-1868
La gazza ladra overture (1818)

Carl Maria von Weber
1786-1826
from der Freischütz, Act II (1821)
“Kommt ein schlanker Bursch gegangen “

W. A. Mozart
1756-1791
from Don Giovanni, Act II (1787)
“Meta di voi qua vadano”

Giacomo Puccini
1858-1924
from la Bohème, Act II “Musetta’s Waltz,”
“When m’en vo” (1893-95)

Johann Strauss II
1825-1899
from die Fledermaus, Act I (1874)
“So muss allein ich bleiben “
Pyotr Ilich Tchaikovsky
1840-1893
Waltz of the Flowers
from the Nutcracker Suite (1892)

Mykola Leontovych
1877-1921
Carol of the Bells (1914)

Franz Schubert
1797-1828
Ave Maria (1825)
Op. 52, No. 6, D.839

Franz Lehár
1870-1948
The Merry Widow (1905)

Franz Xaver Gruber
1787-1863
Stille Nacht (Silent Night) (1818)

I N T E R M I S S I O N

Felix Mendelssohn
1809-1847
4th Symphony in A major Op. 90 (1833-34)
Op. 90
I. Allegro vivace
II. Andante con moto (D minor)
III. Con moto moderato (A major)
IV. Saltarello, Presto

Tonight’s concert is dedicated to

JEAN HALABY MOFFITT
GBS President 2015-2019 and 2020-2021
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and refrain from using lighted screens during the performance.
Recording in any form is strictly prohibited.
Elinor Rufeizen is an Israeli conductor and clarinetist, graduated from The Juilliard School with a master’s degree in orchestral conducting studying with mentors Alan Gilbert and David Robertson. She made appearances at Alice Tully Hall, Kaufman Music Center, Peter Jay Sharp Theatre, Severance Hall, Cité de la Musique and Yellow Barn Chamber Music Festival. She is a recipient of the Bruno Walter Memorial Scholarship, Charles Schiff Conducting Award for Outstanding Achievement, Morse Teaching Fellowship award and scholarships given by the American-Israel Cultural Foundation.

Elinor conducted the Dallas Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, The Juilliard Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lyon, Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, Haifa Symphony Orchestra, Hagalil Orchestra among other ensembles.

She worked with musicians such as Emanuel Ax, Daniil Trifonov, Susan Graham, members of the Ébène, Kronos, Juilliard and Cleveland Quartets, and collaborated with living composers Jörg Widmann, Shulamit Ran, Steven Stucky, Steven Mackey, Philippe Hersant and Andrew Norman.

Season 2021-22 includes her residence as a conducting fellow with the Dallas Opera, her conducting debut with the Greater Bridgeport Symphony and returning to be a cover conductor for St. Louis Symphony and New Jersey Symphony. Elinor was recently a finalist for RNCM Mills William Junior Fellowship, finalist of Orchestre National de Lyon assistant conductor position and a finalist of Staatstheater Darmstadt Erste Kapellmeister. She was chosen a semi-finalist at the Siemens-Hallé International Conductors Competition.
2020 and finalist of St. Louis and Dallas Symphonies assistant conductor positions.

Elinor worked as an assistant conductor for John Adams, Barbara Hannigan, Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider, Xian Zhang and Marin Alsop. She had masterclasses with Gianandrea Noseda, Matthias Pintscher, Louis Langrée and David Zinman, and was invited to participate at the Tanglewood Music Festival in 2018.

As a clarinetist, she has a Bachelor’s degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music, being mentored by Franklin Cohen, former principal clarinetist of the Cleveland Orchestra. She won the CIM (Cleveland Institute of Music) Concerto Competition on her freshman year and was invited to study at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris with Philippe Berrod, principal clarinetist of Orchestre de Paris. She continued her conducting training at the Buchman-Mehta Music Academy in Tel-Aviv, Israel.
MEET OUR SOLOISTS:
JOANNA MONGIARDO, Soprano

Soprano Joanna Mongiardo, recognized for her effortless coloratura and spellbinding charisma on stage, is in high demand for both operatic and symphonic repertoire in the US and abroad. Recent engagements include her return to the New York City Opera as La Prima Elfe in Respighi’s *La campagna sommersa*, a return to Boston Midsummer Opera as Adina in *L’elisir d’amore*, her NY solo recital debut at Opera America, and soloing in Handel’s *Messiah* at David Geffen Hall with the National Chorale. Ms. Mongiardo also recently sang with Novus NY in a solo recital of music by Bernstein, Mahler and Foss; and later rejoined them to sing Mahler’s *4th Symphony*. In the fall of 2019, Ms. Mongiardo returned to New York City Opera for their 75th Anniversary Concert and Teatro Grattacielo for Respighi’s rarely performed *La bella addormentata nel bosco*. In late 2021, she will make her Greater Bridgeport Symphony debut in an evening of operatic highlights, and rejoins the National Chorale as the soprano soloist in *Messiah*.

Ms. Mongiardo has had great successes in lesser performed works including Cinna in Mozart's *Lucio Silla* with Odyssey Opera and in the title role of Flotow's *Martha* with Boston Midsummer Opera. Past engagements have included a role debut as Rossini’s *Semiramide* with Opéra Nice Côte d’Azur, her Dallas Opera debut as Brigitta in Tchaikovsky’s *Iolanta*, joining the Metropolitan Opera for their production of *Manon* and a return to the Back Bay Chorale for Mozart’s *Mass in C minor*.

In recent seasons Ms. Mongiardo has brought the “energy and charm [of] her delicious Blonde" (*ForumOpera Magazine*) to more than 30 performances of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, including productions at Grande Théâtre de Genève, Opéra Nice Côte d’Azur, and Deutsche Oper am Rhein. A gifted comedienne, her Rosalina in *Il Re* with Teatro Grattacielo was named “Best Individual Performance of 2011” by Das Opernwelt Jahrbuch, with Opera Today writing, “Joanna Mongiardo, who has a voice of impressive size and warmth, as well as a technique with ornament...also has a putty face, capable of expressing several emotions at once and making fun of herself while expressing them.” Opera News raved, "As the besotted Rosalina, lyric coloratura Joanna Mongiardo scored a triumph, effortlessly negotiating the fiorature, extended trills and stratospheric high notes."
As an ensemble member of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Ms. Mongiardo performed numerous lead roles including Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Oscar in *Un ballo in maschera*, Nannetta in *Falstaff*, and Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*. In the US, her turn as the title character in the 50th Anniversary production of *The Ballad of Baby Doe* at Central City Opera was praised by Opera News: “Petite, with a theater-filling smile, Mongiardo radiated warmth through her unforced, pearly-fresh timbre.” Re engagements at Central City have included Eurydice in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Thérèse in *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*. Debuts as Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* with both Madison Opera and Dayton Opera, and Anne Trulove in *The Rake’s Progress* with Toledo Opera were similarly praised, with Opera Magazine raving, “Mongiardo’s sunny lyric sound surely won all hearts.”

Ms. Mongiardo has graced concert stages from Bellingham, Washington, to Shanghai, China, and has performed her signature *Carmina Burana* with more than 15 orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, and Oratorio Society of New York. Additionally, she has performed works by Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and Schumann with such prestigious orchestras as: Pittsburgh Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Oregon Symphony, and the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México, under the batons of Charles Dutoit, Philippe Auguin, Jonathan Darlington, John Fiore, Leopold Hager, Neemi Jarvi, JoAnn Falletta and Carlos Miguel Prieto.
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MEET OUR SOLOISTS:
JEAN BERNARD CERIN, Baritone

Praised for his “burnished tones and focused phrasing,” baritone Jean Bernard Cerin has charmed audiences throughout the United States, France, Austria, and his native Haiti. On the concert stage, Jean Bernard has appeared with leading early music ensembles throughout the United States including Cleveland’s Les Délices, American Bach Soloists in San Francisco, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society’s Gamut Bach Ensemble, Piffaro Renaissance Wind Ensemble, Louisville’s Bourbon Baroque, Night Music, and the Philadelphia Bach Festival.

On the operatic stage, Jean Bernard has portrayed villains, buffoons, and heroes with the Aspen Opera Theater Center, Brevard’s Janiec Opera Company, Center City Opera Theater in Philadelphia, and Opera Philadelphia among others. Favorite roles include Mozart’s Don Giovanni and Papageno as well as Benjamin Britten’s Tarquinius from The Rape of Lucretia.

An avid recitalist and chamber musician, his engagements have taken him to venues such as the Kimmel Center, the Kennedy Center and Library of Congress in Washington D.C., Beethovenhaus in Baden bei Wien, Boston’s Jordan Hall and the Met Museum in NYC among many others.
Program Notes for December 18, 2021

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Opera highlights in tonight’s concert sing themes of reunification. Guest conductor Elinor Refuizen also had “Coming Together Again” on her mind while choosing the pieces in tonight’s concert. “I wanted to bring together the music of Vienna and Italy,” she said. Across the geographic divide between these two nurseries of Classical music, many bridges are built. Tonight’s concert culminates with the German composer Mendelssohn’s portrait of Italy.

Gioachino Rossini
1792-1868

La gazza ladra overture (1818)

La gazza ladra, or “The Thieving Magpie,” is an Italian melodrama in two acts. Rossini wrote the entire opera semiseria in great haste, reportedly tossing pages of manuscript wet with ink out of the window of a locked room on top of La Scala, so that copyists could prepare the parts just hours before the premiere. Rossini’s obvious energy can be felt in this overture. Even in the delicate ¾ time of the flute passages, the playfulness of the libretto’s central action – the theft of a silver spoon by a bird – is perfectly suited to the ebullience of the composer. The opera ends happily, with the falsely-accused silver thief, Ninetta, being saved from the firing squad and reunited with her family.
Carl Maria von Weber  
1786-1826

From Act II of *der Freischütz*  
“Kommt ein schlanker Bursch gegangen”  
(1821)

In this aria from *The Freeshooter*, a libretto filled with magic bullets, holy hermits, and sales of souls, the heroine Agathe is teased by her servant Ännchen about her love for the marksman Max. Agathe is beset with bad omens after a painting of one or her ancestors falls from the wall. Ännchen attempts to cheer her with her song:

*If a slim young man comes along,*
*With fair hair or dark hair,*
*Bright-eyed and with red cheeks –*  
*Oh! It’s worth looking at him!*  
*Of course you lower your eyes demurely*  
*After the fashion of bashful girls;*  
*But secretly you look up again,*  
*When the young man is not looking.*  
*If you do exchange glances,*  
*Well, what harm is there in that?*

Max soon arrives and dispels the images of the handsome young stranger, but the two have many trials yet to face. In the end, Agathe and Max are wed and all is well, with all joining in a prayer of thanks.

W. A. Mozart  
1756-1791

From Act II of *Don Giovanni*  
“Meta di voi qua vadano”  
(1787)

At this stage of the opera, Don Giovanni is disguised; several other characters, peasants, are searching for him. The disguised Don Giovanni joins the search party and suggests that the searchers split into two groups, one of which includes himself. While this piece describes the physical separation of two groups, in this scene both the peasants and the noble Don Giovanni are united in a common goal. Their motives, however, differ; while the peasants seek to find Don Giovanni and capture him for his crimes, Don Giovanni seeks to avoid detection.
Giacomo Puccini  
1858-1924  
From Act II of *la Bohème*, Musetta’s Waltz  
“Quando m'en vo” (1893-95)

Puccini’s lush harmonies and instrumentation are the perfect vehicle to tell the tale of former lovers Musetta and Marcello, as they pretend they are not still madly in love. Near the end of Act II, on Christmas Eve, Musetta, feigning indifference and telling tales of her her sex appeal, successfully making Marcello insanely jealous. This being grand opera, love reigns triumphant, all is forgiven, and they are a couple once more.

Johann Strauss II  
1825-1899  
From Act I of *die Fledermaus*  
“So muss allein ich bleiben” (1874)

In this farcical storyline, Eisenstein pines to his wife Rosalinde about going off to prison, while secretly planning one last night on the town. Rosalinde has plans of her own, though; once Eisentein is gone, she can meet her lover. Both feign sorrow as the parting moment comes, yet the closing words of the aria hearken toward a happy reunion. In the end, after numerous misunderstandings, the two really do reconcile, blaming all their troubles on champagne.

Pyotr Ilich Tchaikovsky  
1840-1893  
*Waltz of the Flowers*  
from the Nutcracker Suite (1892)

“It’s awfully fun to write a march for tin soldiers, a waltz of the flowers, etc.,” Tchaikovsky told friends, even as he faced turmoil in his personal life. *Waltz of the Flowers* is one of Tchaikovsky’s last compositions (along with his *Symphony No. 6*). He had just
returned from a successful tour of New York (where he conducted at the opening of Carnegie Hall), Philadelphia and Baltimore. After creating some of his finest and most joyous work, he died of cholera; many at the time said the disease was self-induced, to avoid the scandal of a relationship with an aristocratic man. Whatever the truth, the joy of The Nutcracker Suite, and in particular *Waltz of the Flowers*, lives on.

**Mykola Dmytrovych Leontovych**

1877-1921

**Carol of the Bells** (1914)

One of the iconic songs of Christmas was actually written to celebrate the coming of spring. *Carol of the Bells*, originally commissioned by the conductor of the Ukrainian Republic Choir, was based on a Ukrainian folk chant celebrating the new year, which in pre-Christian Ukraine happened in April. When the Gregorian calendar was adopted in the Ukraine, the chant, with its memorable four note in a minor key, moved with new-year celebrations from April to January. Lyricist Peter J. Wilhousky rearranged Leontovych’s original composition *Shchedryk* for the NBC radio network’s symphony orchestra in the early 1930s, and with inclusion of words — “Hark, how the bells . . . “ — it has become a holiday classic.

**Franz Schubert**

1797-1828

**Ave Maria** D.839, Op. 52, No. 6 (1825)

This hymn, universally used in Christian service settings, was written as one of seven songs which set to music *The Lady of the Lake*, a narrative poem by Sir Walter Scott in 1810. The words “Ave Maria” (the Latin prayer, which translates to “Hail Mary”) were used in “Ellen’s Third Song,” where she prays for guidance during a Scottish clan war. Aside from that one mention of “Ave Maria,” the rest of the original German words used in Schubert’s version of "Fräulein am See" have been largely forgotten, supplanted by the text of the Latin prayer. The
simple, plaintive quality of Schubert’s music fits the humble, supplicative prayer so well that they are now almost inseparable. The beauty of the melody and words has inspired countless artists to record the prayer, which has become beloved by people of all faiths.

Franz Lehár  
1870-1948  
**The Merry Widow** (1905)

Lehár’s lilting melody evokes a vision of the Vienna of the Habsburgs almost as pictorially as *The Blue Danube Waltz*. The waltz has made its way into the soundtracks of countless movies, perhaps most notably in Hitchcock’s *Shadow of a Doubt* in 1943. Lehár himself was born in the kingdom of Hungary (now Slovakia), but an early career in the army brought him to Vienna, where he began to write operettas, the most successful of which was *The Merry Widow*, performed at Theater an der Wien at the end of 1905. The waltz itself plays a role in the story, when the widow Hanna takes pity on Danilo, who, on having been snubbed by Hanna, waltzes by himself at an embassy ball. Two acts later, the couple finally declare their love for each other.

Franz Xaver Gruber  
1787-1863  
**Stille Nacht (Silent Night)** (1818)

The quintessential Christmas carol *Silent Night* was the result of a broken organ. On Christmas Eve in 1818, the organ at St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf bei Salzburg, Germany, had ceased to function, causing great anxiety for the parish. How could Christmas mass be celebrated without great music? The answer was found in simplicity; the assistant pastor, Fr. Joseph Mohr, had written a Christmas poem a few years earlier, and asked Franz Gruber to set it to music for voice and guitar only. Together, Mohr and Gruber sang *Stille Nacht* that night, with Mohr on guitar, and the choir repeating the last two lines of each stanza. The gentle beauty of the melody and words has transcended time. In perhaps one of the most poignant moments in Western history, it was the tune *Stille Nacht*, floating across No Man’s
Land in France on Christmas Eve 1914, that inspired the English Tommies across the barbed wire to respond with the version they’d grown up with, *Silent Night*. Armed only with the warmth of the fellowship inspired by *Stille Nacht/Silent Night*, the enemy combatants emerged from their trenches, shook hands and traded stories, and for a moment, heavenly peace descended on a field of battle.

**Felix Mendelssohn**
1809-1847

*4th Symphony in A major*, Op. 90
(1833-34)

“This is Italy! And now has begun what I have always thought . . . to be the supreme joy in life.”

So wrote a young Felix Mendelssohn upon arriving in Italy. From 1829 to 1831, he experienced the Grand Tour of Europe. Like many men of his social class, Mendelssohn travelled to refine his cultural sensibilities. Unlike many of his peers, however, Mendelssohn also used his travels to inspire his compositions. The products of this tour – the Third (“Scottish”) and Fourth (“Italian”) Symphonies and the *Hebrides* overture – attempted to convey the various cultures and sights Mendelssohn encountered in his travels.

The first movement begins with a lively theme that some musicologists speculate is meant to recall an urban landscape. Indeed, Mendelssohn visited the great cities of Rome, Naples, and Venice in his travels, so the theory is valid. Other scholars, by contrast, have speculated that the first movement is meant to evoke the Italian countryside, with its rolling hills and lush vegetation. Either way, in the author’s own words: *this is Italy!*

The second, more subdued movement, is said to be based on Mendelssohn’s impression of a Catholic religious procession he encountered while visiting the city of Naples. During his Neapolitan excursions, Mendelssohn wrote that “in Naples, the music is most inferior.” Perhaps this Naples-inspired second movement was the composer’s attempt to rectify the city’s “inferior” musical landscape.
The third movement is a minuet, a courtly dance which was popular in the eighteenth century. While this courtly style may have been intended to recall the “high culture” of Renaissance Florence, its steady and constant rhythmic pulse is also reminiscent of sections of Berlioz’s *Harold in Italy*, an 1834 composition based on Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* which, like Mendelssohn’s *Fourth Symphony*, was inspired by the composer’s travels in Italy.

The fourth and final movement is grounded on lively Italian folk dances. The tarantella, a type of Tuscan folk music and dance, was already a well-known musical form in Europe by the time Mendelssohn reached Italy. His fourth movement is intended to evoke both this quintessentially Italian dance and the *saltarello* music Mendelssohn encountered in Rome. During his travels in Rome, Mendelssohn wrote that the city’s orchestras were “unbelievably bad.” Despite his negative reaction to both Roman and Neapolitan interpretations of European classical music, however, Mendelssohn used local folk styles to inspire his own composition.

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MEET OUR MUSICIANS:
DENISE CHIVIDIAN, Violin

When Denise Chividian was five years old, her mother found her sitting in front of the radio in their home in Bucharest, crying. Her mother worried, was she hurt? No, Denise told her; it was the music – Beethoven’s Violin Concerto – so beautiful it made her cry. That was the beginning of the path that led her to a violin stand at GBS today, as well as with many other Connecticut ensembles.

Though not musically inclined themselves, Denise’s parents knew this was something Denise needed in her life. In Communist Romania, life was hard, but music was valued, so much so that even 1st-graders had to audition for music classes. Playtime is a luxury when school lets out at 3 and music school then runs from 3 to 7. Auditions all along the way led to the big one: trying out for the George Enescu Conservatory in Bucharest. Out of 300 students, 14 were chosen, including Denise and her future husband, Edward, whom she met at the audition and a short time later as a stand partner. Denise credits all of her success to excellent teachers. After six years, Denise graduated with dual Master’s Degrees in Music Performance and Music Education.

She and Edward married, secured full-time positions with the Bucharest Symphony, and toured Europe together, always under the watchful eye of their government. Many of their fellow musicians took the opportunity to defect while in the West. Finally having had his fill of the oppressive life behind the Iron Curtain, Edward defected and made his way to New Jersey. Denise and their son wanted to follow, but were hampered in their efforts. The government proposed an easy answer to her problem: get a divorce, which could be arranged in 24 hours, and stay in Romania. After a year and a half, the Red Cross intervened and persuaded the Romanian government to allow the the minor child (and his mother) to reunite with his father. One more hurdle loomed: getting her beloved – and valuable – violin out of the country. Denise found a counterfeiter who could work in reverse; he changed the violin-maker’s name to a cheap off-the-shelf brand, so the authorities wouldn’t confiscate the instrument. The family made it over the border: mother, son – and violin. Denise still plays that same violin in concert today.

Now living in New Jersey, the couple found careers in music elusive. Edward worked at a bank for a long while, until both Denise and Edward auditioned
for Richard Schleh and the Connecticut Grand Opera and were accepted. Denise describes the feeling of being lost in her new country, up until the moment she and Edward got back on stage; then it felt like home again, a peaceful feeling. “The stage is my happy place,” she says. Moving up together, they both played for the Greater Bridgeport Symphony and then the New Haven Symphony. They worked together until Edward’s death 22 years ago. Denise has been with GBS for over 25 years. She taught at Fairfield University for seven years, and has been a private teacher of violin for decades in Southport. She is proud of all of her students, some of whom – like J. D. Gersen, Assistant Conductor of the New York Philharmonic – have gone on to successful careers in music.

Of her time with GBS, she fondly recalls the direction of Gustav Meier – “an honor to work under his baton.” Denise loves the talent and enthusiasm of Maestro Jacobsen, and lauds him for energizing the orchestra.

Classical music faces challenges in the United States because, “Life moves so fast now that people don’t have time for Classical music,” she says, though she is encouraged by the quality of musical education offered to students in our area. Of her many years with GBS, she can’t pick out just one special time. “Every moment on stage is special.”
DECEMBER 18 PERFORMERS

VIOLIN 1
Deborah Wong, concertmaster
Nina Crothers, asst. concertmaster
Denise Chividian
Edita Orlinyte
Corinne Metter
Claudia Hafer Tondi

VIOLIN 2
Dilyana Zlatinova, principal
Yen Ling Chen, assistant principal
Meridith Bryant
Chie Yoshinaka
Kathleen Dorfman
Amy Griswold

VIOLA
Chiu-Chen Liu, principal
Ah-Young Sung, assistant principal
Amy Selig
Susan Kaufman

CELLO
Nicholas Hardie, principal
Carlo Pellettieri, assistant principal
Cheryl Labrecque
Sarah Shreder

BASS
Kevin Huhn, principal
David Uhl

FLUTE
Jennifer Berman, principal
Elizabeth Kitson

OBOE
Tamar Beach Wells, principal
Janet Rosen

CLARINET
Kathryn Taylor, principal
Julie Asuma Levene

BASSOON
T. D. Ellis, principal
Jackie Joyner

HORN
Robert Hoyle,
Susan Spaulding Principal chair*
Emily Boyer
Marjie Seymour Callaghan
Kathryn Twombly

TRUMPET
John Charles Thomas, principal
Michael Flynt

TROMBONE
Jordan Jacobsen, principal
George Sanders

BASS TROMBONE
Garrett Mendez

TUBA
Adam Crowe

HARP
Kaitlin Stern, principal

TIMPANI
Barbara Freedman,
James Musto III Principal Chair**
*The Susan Spaulding Principal Horn Chair is the gift of Al and Sarah, Rich Dart, Ann DeQuattro In memory of Anthony L. DeQuattro, Anthony DeQuattro and Sue Spaulding, Barbara Freeman, BrassPlus Music, Marjorie Seymour Callaghan, Joseph & Josephine Cannata, Glenn & Deborah Gemma, The Gospers, Robin Kenna, Sydney Kenna, Vicki Kenna, Katie, Ryan & Brayden Kennedy, Becky LaBombard, Bob and Marianne Laska, Christopher Little, Janet and Jim Little, Robert Levin, Jill Pellett Levine, Thomas Little, The Mancini Family, Jaime and Frank Marci, Kat and Peter Niedman, The Razza Family, Janet C. Rosen, George Spaulding, Kim Spaulding, Trevor Spaulding, Kathy Sumrow, Jaime Thorne, Barbara Tramontana, Kathryn and Kenneth Twombley, Debbie Wong, and a percussion friend, in honor of longtime GBS hornist Susan Spaulding

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