Mozart to Mahler

Violin Concerto  Serioso Quartet  Adagietto

Eric Jacobsen  Mira Wang
Conductor  Violin

eSubscription Release

Saturday
March 13, 2021

Recorded at
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GBS has aimed to make these eSubscription concerts as much like a live concert as possible.

Naturally, we all miss seeing each other at The Klein, but rest assured that GBS is planning a full season next year, which gives all our friends the greatest music in the world, whether in the concert hall or in the comfort of home.

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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.**

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Acclaimed conductor and cello virtuoso Eric Jacobsen is now in his seventh season as Music Director of GBS. After a year-long nationwide search in 2013-14, Jacobsen was named Music Director of the Greater Bridgeport Symphony, the fifth conductor in an illustrious lineup: Saidenberg, Perlea, Iturbi and Meier. Eric’s first concert with GBS on December 14, 2013 was threatened by a freak snowstorm, that nearly scuttled the performance, and only about 250 people braved the weather to attend. Eric’s optimistic spirit did more than make the best of a bad situation; improvising with limited resources, he conducted a smashing concert that confirmed in the minds of audience and musicians alike that he was the right person to fill the shoes of outgoing Music Director Gustav Meier. He made his debut as GBS Principal Conductor at the Barnum Festival Skyblast Concert at Seaside Park in Bridgeport in June 2014, concluding with a bang – the 1812 Overture – opening the annual fireworks. Seven years later, Eric leads our orchestra through this pandemic in the Crescendo 75 season, embodying the showman’s credo “The Show Must Go On!”

Since his inaugural season, 2014-15, Eric has electrified our audience, bringing to The Klein such performers as Gabriel Kahane, Sara Watkins, Jan Vogler, Nicholas Cords, Johnny Gandelsman, Kayhan Kalhor, Sandeep Das, Karen Ouzounian and Mathias Kunzli to perform with GBS. In December 2014, he also introduced his Bridgeport audience to his then-fiancée – now his wife – singer-songwriter Aoife O’Donovan.

In 2018-19, Eric led GBS in “A Season in Space,” a celebration of flight in music, with thrilling selections including The Planets, Also Sprach Zarathustra, and The Beautiful Blue Danube. Eric brought three of today’s greatest Classical performers to The Klein – Colin Jacobsen, Yuja Wang, and Gil Shaham. Shaham was a surprise guest in April 2018 when GBS brought the entire orchestra into Bridgeport’s Central High School. With GBS musicians, Eric spread music into a dozen other Bridgeport public schools. Though 2019-20 Season, which began with exotic sounds created by members of the Silkroad Project, was cut short in March 2020, Eric is thrilled that the music of GBS will still find its audience in this pandemic year.

Born and raised on Long Island, Eric is the son of Edmund Jacobsen, a violinist and former member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, and the late Ivy
Jacobsen, a noted flutist. At age four, he discovered the cello, though he was too small to handle such a large instrument; his father got him a viola and fitted it with an endpin – and the rest is history. His brother is violinist Colin Jacobsen (who performed the Brahms Violin Concerto with GBS in October 2014 and in September 2018 on The Lark Ascending), with whom Eric co-founded Brooklyn Rider and The Knights. The Jacobsen brothers were exposed early to music through their parents, whose late-night chamber music soirees, in part, influenced the brothers to study music. Both brothers went on to graduate from The Juilliard School.

Based in Brooklyn, New York, Eric is also conductor of Yo-Yo Ma’s Silk Road Ensemble and the Orlando Symphony, and is acclaimed all over the world with his music. Even with all this, Bridgeport has assumed a big role in his life. In September 2018, Eric spearheaded production of the first installment of a YouTube series – The Bridgeport Sets – featuring GBS playing in iconic locations. With his brother Colin, Eric brought the orchestra into Bridgeport’s abandoned Palace Theater which resulted in a stunning video of The Lark Ascending, released in July 2019. “Some of my most rewarding and beautiful experiences have been in Bridgeport,” said Eric. “Between working with students in local schools, and making music with the incredible musicians of GBS, I feel at home here in Bridgeport.”
The Greater Bridgeport Symphony

wishes to express its heartfelt gratitude to

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Mozart to Beethoven to Mahler

Eric Jacobsen, Conductor
Mira Wang, Violin

The Doris and Herbert Harrington Pre-Concert Talk
hosted by Colleen Filush
(please go to GBS.org)

Ludwig van Beethoven
1770-1828

String Quartet No. 11 in F minor (1814)
Op. 95, “Serioso, arr. Mahler
IV. Larghetto espressivo; Allegro agitato; Allegro

Gustav Mahler
1860-1911

Adagietto from Symphony No. 5 (1901-02)
III. Adagietto

INTERMISSION
A few words from Mira Wang

W. A. Mozart
1756-1791

Violin Concerto in A major (1775)
K219, “Turkish”
I. Allegro aperto; Adagio; Allegro aperto
II. Adagio (E major)
III. Rondeau – Tempo di minuetto

Recorded at The Klein Memorial Auditorium, Bridgeport, Connecticut
Mira Wang has built a remarkable bridge from her time as a child prodigy in Beijing, China to an acclaimed soloist on the world stage today.

She has appeared as a soloist with many prestigious orchestras all over the world including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Staatskapelle Dresden, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Saarbrücken Radio Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic and NDR Philharmonic Hannover.

An avid chamber musician, Mira’s partners include Hélène Grimaud, Oli Mustonen, Alice Sara Ott, Lise de la Salle, Louis Lortie, Jeremy Denk, Daniel Müller-Schott, Gautier Capucon, Jan Vogler, Lawrence Power and Lars Anders Tomter.

She is an enthusiastic exponent of contemporary music, premiering the violin concerto Spring in Dresden by Chinese-American composer Chen Yi with the Staatskapelle Dresden, conducted by Ivan Fischer and John Harbison’s Double Concerto for Violin and Cello with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Carlos Kalmar. In 2015 she premiered the double concerto by Wolfgang Rihm, with Jan Vogler and the Orpheus Chamber orchestra at Carnegie Hall.

Mira has recorded extensively for many labels including Sony Classical and Edel Classics. Her discography includes violin
concerto No. 2 by Prokofiev with the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony, the violin concerto No. 3 by Saint-Saens with NDR Philharmonic Hannover, a duo album with cellist Jan Vogler and several chamber music recordings with Artists of the Moritzburg Festival.

Mira has been Artistic Director of the Model Room Musicales concert series in New York City since 2005 and in 2013, she became Director of the Moritzburg Festival Academy in Germany, a training program for young musicians that is part of the annual Moritzburg Chamber Music Festival.

Born in China, Ms. Wang studied at Central Conservatory in Beijing. She was sponsored by renowned violin teacher, the late Roman Totenberg to further her studies at Boston University, where she graduated summa cum laude and received the prestigious Kahn Award given to outstanding performers. She has won 1st prizes in several international violin competitions including the Geneva Competition.
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Ludwig van Beethoven 1770-1828

String Quartet No. 11 in F minor
“Serioso”
Op. 95 (arr. Mahler)

IV. Larghetto espressivo;
    Allegretto agitato; Allegro

Gustav Mahler, who created the arrangement you’ll hear tonight, held Beethoven in extremely high regard, and this was known by his contemporaries. Mahler was known during his time as a composer, conductor, and musical director, particularly of the opera in an opera-crazed Vienna. He was also an esteemed interpreter of Beethoven’s symphonies, all of which combine to make his expanded arrangement of a Beethoven quartet a logical part of his musical career. During Mahler’s tenure as the conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic, complaints against him were made by members of the orchestra. His “tweaks” of pieces, particularly Beethoven’s, were maddening enough to result in his termination from that position. Mahler’s viewpoint was that all art should be subject to further experimentation, and that Beethoven had begun the process that he was continuing. At its premiere, the audience loudly agreed with the members of the orchestra. Beethoven composed this quartet as he was making the transition from his “middle” period to his “late” period. This was a time when he experimented outside of his normal box of long developments and extensive structures. His phrasing becomes shorter and transitions more abrupt. This particularly compact quartet is intense even for Beethoven, his own personal crisis is felt throughout.

Beethoven did not intend for this quartet to be performed in public, instead recommending it should be kept for those who would truly appreciate it. As the name indicates, it is indeed serious in nature. The first movement is a dramatic Allegro movement is explosive, but brief in its overall length. The drama of the Allegretto second movement is contained to a shorter than typical for Beethoven movement. The third movement is like a scherzo, but without the usual lightness and humor.

The Fourth Movement is performed in tonight’s video. This finale showcases the only slow tempo in the piece, and does it in a mere seven bars full of despair. This despair evolves into a sad and lyrical darkness through the main section. The coda provides quite the plot twist as Beethoven moves into a major that is such a sudden contrast that it is almost beyond comprehension. This sudden gaiety by contrast leaves the listener wondering if Beethoven is enjoying his own sort of inside joke.
Gustav Mahler 1860-1911

**Adagietto** (from *Symphony No. 5*)

Mahler’s 5th symphony is deeply impacted by his near death experience due to a severe hemorrhage in 1901. The symphony itself wanders through a wide range of emotional highs and lows with nods to Beethoven sprinkled throughout the score. This symphony was composed during a variety of Mahler’s emotions, starting from despair at his almost demise to elation at his marriage to his love and the birth of their first child. As a conductor of one of the premier symphonies in the world, Mahler didn’t have a lot of time to compose due to the demands of his position. But when he did, he produced grand works of art. Despite the less than successful premier, the 5th symphony has grown in popularity over the last century to become one of his most popular.

The Adagietto is the 4th movement in an unusual 5 movement symphony of grand proportions and scope. This little adagio is dramatically scaled down, featuring only strings and harp. Compared to the rest of the work, this is a gentle and restrained moment in the midst of sonic chaos. Because of this, it is often performed by itself and it received positive accolades before the true acceptance of the rest of the symphony. As a letter to his lady love, this soulful and longing movement is graceful and peaceful.
In 1775, a 19-year old Mozart held the position of concertmaster of the Salzburg Prince-Archbishop’s orchestra. As befitting his position, he played the violin, led the orchestra, and composed a number of pieces including 5 concertos for violin and orchestra. The writing in all of these pieces clearly showcases Mozart’s knowledge of the instrument and its capabilities. The “Turkish” incorporates themes that give a nod to the music of neighboring Turkey, the music of which could be heard on the streets in 1775, a 19 year old Mozart held the position of concertmaster of the Salzburg Prince-Archbishop’s orchestra. As befitting his position, he played the violin, led the orchestra, and composed a number of pieces including 5 concertos for violin and orchestra. The writing in all of these pieces clearly showcases Mozart’s knowledge of the instrument and its capabilities. The “Turkish” incorporates themes that give a nod to the music of neighboring Turkey, the music of which could be heard on the streets of neighboring Austrian towns. The first movement begins with an orchestral exposition that is indeed lively and open. The adagio section is the entrance of the soloist with a brief but introspective moment. With the return of the quicker tempo, a bold new theme is introduced that leads audiences back towards the expected development of the movement.

Program notes by Colleen Filush
“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything.”

— Plato

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We’ve kept the music alive, for you. We thank you for your continuing support, and we look forward to seeing you - in person and virtually -- soon again.

Mark these dates for next season!

October 16, 2021
November 13, 2021
December 18, 2021
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