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Department of Theatre production

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Department of Theatre production

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Arts and Life performance series

Angel Blue

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Arts and Life performance series

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Arts and Life performance series

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April 14-16, 2022

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Searcy Summer Dinner Theatre

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Department of Theatre production



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harding.edu/theatre • harding.edu/artsandlife

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Left to right:

**Mary McCraw, CFP[®], Ralph Broadwater, M.D., CFP[®],
Rick Adkins, CFP[®], Kristina Bolhouse, CPA/PFS, CFP[®]**



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FROM THE CEO

Dear ASO patrons,

Thank you all for being here today to celebrate and enjoy your Arkansas Symphony Orchestra. After a long time of waiting, we are finally able to safely have a full orchestra on stage to perform for you.

This season has so many artistic high points: Grammy Award-winning violinist Gil Shaham, outstanding conductors, pianists Conrad Tao and Martina Filjak, and more. In addition, we have two very unique and nationally recognized artistic accomplishments. One, the world-premiere of Tania León's *Pasajes*. ASO is honored to have been selected by NewMusicUSA for an Amplifying Voices grant to be the lead orchestra with co-commissioners Detroit, National, Auburn Symphony, and Orlando Philharmonic in this project. Ms. León is here in Arkansas for a week working with young composers, meeting with high school musicians, working with our orchestra and Rockefeller String Quartet, and meeting our community. She won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2021 and has been working in our field for decades. I have wanted to meet her and work with her since I started in this industry, and I am so thankful to do so now.

Another major accomplishment is the first commercial recording by ASO that is available worldwide: the Florence Price Piano Concerto in One Movement with the composer's own orchestration with pianist Karen Walwyn. In September, the Stella Boyle Smith Trust underwrote a free concert for our community that included this work. The following day, the orchestra with conductor Geoff Robson recorded it at Robinson. I am so excited to announce that you can now go to Spotify, YouTube, and Amazon and look for your Arkansas Symphony Orchestra and Florence Price Piano Concerto in One Movement, Geoffrey Robson, conductor, and Karen Walwyn, piano. We are the first to release a commercial recording of Price's orchestration. It sounds wonderful. Feel free to share the recording with your friends and family.

While the challenges the entire world has experienced these past two years have been large, we are looking to the future. We have recently announced plans for the ASO Stella Boyle Smith Music Center – not just a new headquarters for the ASO but a true community music hub with greatly expanded facilities for our rapidly growing education programs, a streaming studio to reach more people across the state, improved spaces for our musicians to rehearse and perform, all accessibly located in Downtown Little Rock's East End.

Thank you for being here. If you have any questions or would like to get more involved in the behind-the-scenes work of the orchestra, please do not hesitate to contact me at CLittlejohn@ArkansasSymphony.org. I look forward to seeing you this year!

Sincerely,

Christina Littlejohn, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
ARKANSAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



ARKANSAS
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Thank you



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MASTERWORKS Series



FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

To All,

Thank you for supporting your ASO through this historic return to the concert hall in the 21-22 season. Artistically, this has been an extraordinary season for the orchestra, full of exhilarating and inspired performances from the incredible players of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra and our world-class guest artists. As we look ahead, the rest of 2022 will bring even more excitement and achievement.

By the time you read this, Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Tania León will be in Little Rock to work with the orchestra and hear ASO play the world premiere of her new work *Pasajes*, or *Passages*. Twice more in 2022 we will welcome prominent composers to Little Rock; on all occasions, visiting composers engage deeply in education and outreach in our community, in addition to their work directly with the orchestra.

We also continue to feature outstanding Arkansan talent on the stage with and within the orchestra. From *American Idol* Kris Allen and composer and cellist Jeremy Crosmer, both alums of the ASO Youth Ensembles, to the astonishing array of local vocal talent that we regularly feature, Arkansas is full of stars, present and future, that we aim to feature and promote.

The 2022-23 season will bring historic collaborations with other arts institutions like the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts and Ballet Arkansas. Our roster of guest artists next season will include legendary violinist Rachel Barton Pine, renowned Florence Price scholar Samantha Ege, our own incredible harpist Alisa Coffey, and the fiery showman George Li.

Above all, the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra remains committed to serving the whole community, dedicated to artistic growth and achievement, and passionate about sharing the power of music with the people of Arkansas and beyond.

It is an honor and pleasure to serve as Artistic Director of and to conduct your Arkansas Symphony Orchestra. I am looking forward to seeing you at many amazing performances in the near future.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Robson, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
ARKANSAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



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PROGRAM

Saturday, April 9, 2022 • 7:30 PM Sunday, April 10, 2022 • 3 PM
Robinson Performance Hall Little Rock, Arkansas

STELLA BOYLE SMITH MASTERWORKS SERIES

Mozart & Strauss

Akiko Fujimoto, *conductor*

Martina Filjak, *piano*

Tania León, *composer-in-residence*

LEÓN (b. 1943)	<i>Pasajes</i> (2022) Adagietto, calmo	12'
MOZART (1756-1791)	Piano Concerto No. 21 in C major, K. 467 I. Allegro maestoso II. Andante III. Allegro vivace assai <i>Martina Filjak, piano</i>	29'

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

STRAUSS, R. (1864-1949)	<i>Death and Transfiguration</i> , Op. 24 Largo – allegro molto agitato – Meno mosso – Allegro molto agitato – Moderato	26'
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Original work composed by Tania León – World Premiere.

Amplifying Voices is a New Music USA initiative which is powered by the Sphinx Ventures Fund, with additional support from ASCAP and the Sorel Organization.

Commissioned by the ASO and a consortium including the Auburn Symphony, Detroit Symphony, National Symphony, and Orlando Philharmonic.

This project is supported in part by NewMusic USA and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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USA



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Use of cameras and recording equipment is not permitted in the concert hall.

The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra is supported in part by a grant from the Arkansas Arts Council, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage, and the City of Little Rock.



ORCHESTRA

Mozart & Strauss

AKIKO FUJIMOTO, Conductor, *Pamela Diane Stephens Conductor's Chair*

MARTINA FILJAK, Piano TANIA LEÓN, Composer-in-residence

VIOLIN

Andrew Irvin
Concertmaster

Dora Paley Ronnel
Concertmaster's Chair

Kiril Laskarov
Concertmaster

Katherine Williamson
Assistant Concertmaster

*† Meredith Maddox Hicks
Principal Second Violin
Eric M. Hayward
Memorial Chair

Edward Barnes

‡ Linnaea Brophy

† Charlotte Crosmer

Leanne Day-Simpson

‡ Trisha McGovern Freeney

Albert Garcia

Linda Hsu

Sandra McDonald

Tom McDonald

Juan Mario Moreno

Jordan Musgrave

Geronimo Oyenard

Magdalena Ryszkowski

Geoffrey Robson

Daniel Santelices

Chi Young Song

Algimantas Staskevicius

Leigh Wing

VIOLA

‡ Katherine Reynolds
Principal

Dr. Howard & Celia
Barnhard Chair

Joe Joyner

Tatiana Kotcherguina

Josquin Larsen

† Timothy MacDuff

Julian Pranata

Borys Smolaga

Amanda Wilton

CELLO

† David Gerstein
Principal

Linda Garner Riggs Chair

Casey Buck

Micah Donar

Stephen Feldman

Joanna Klett

Rafael León

Kristin Smith

‡ Jacob Wunsch

BASS

Barron Weir
Principal

Ozzie Backus

Jordan Coleman

John Hunter

Sean O'Hara

Irmak Sabuncu

FLUTE

Carolyn Brown
Principal

Diane McVinney
Gabriel Vega

PICCOLO

Gabriel Vega

OBOE

Leanna Renfro
Principal

Rachel Fuller
Memorial Chair

Lorraine Duso Kitts
Beth Wheeler

ENGLISH HORN

Beth Wheeler
Principal

CLARINET

Kelly Johnson
Principal

Karla Fournier
Lyle Wong

BASS CLARINET

Lyle Wong

BASSOON

Susan Bell León
Principal
Marissa Takaki
Jake Fowler

CONTRABASSOON

Jake Fowler

HORN

David Renfro
Principal
Robin Dauer
Brent Shires
Tyler Bjerke
Evan Mino

TRUMPET

Ross Ahlhorn
Carl Mason
*George Worthen
Memorial Chair*
TJ Perry

TROMBONE

Michael Underwood
Principal
*William "Bill" Vickery, Jr.
Memorial Chair*
Bruce Faske
David Carter

TUBA

Ed Owen
Principal
*Greer & Barnett Grace
Chair in memory
of Gov. Frank White*

TIMPANI

Rick Dimond
Principal
*Arkansas Symphony
Orchestra Guild Chair*

PERCUSSION

Madison Shake
Principal
Erick Saoud
Justin Bunting

HARP

Alisa Coffey
Principal
Urszula Rucka

PIANO

Carl Anthony
Principal

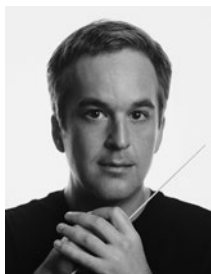
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SPECIAL EVENTS, AND PROMOTIONS!**





ARTISTS



GEOFFREY ROBSON, Artistic Director

Geoffrey Robson currently serves as artistic director and associate conductor of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, and music director of the Arkansas Symphony Youth Ensembles. During his tenure in Arkansas, he has conducted critically acclaimed and sold-out masterworks, pops, chamber, and educational concerts throughout the state. He also produces and writes *At the Symphony*, a concert preview radio series on KLRE Classical 90.5 in Little Rock.

Robson frequently collaborates with organizations in the community such as Ballet Arkansas, Arkansas Children's Theater, Opera in the Rock, the Chamber Music Society of Little Rock, and many local choral groups. He is a former faculty member at Hendrix College and since 2017, has served as artistic director of the Faulkner Chamber Music Festival, a summer concert series and two-week intensive chamber music camp. In 2013-2014, he served as visiting assistant professor of music at the University of Central Arkansas, and conductor of the Conway Symphony Orchestra.

He has worked with renowned artists Midori, Rachel Barton Pine, Vadym Kholodenko, Alexander Markov, Christiane Noll, Calvin Lee, and the Beach Boys. He regularly brings emerging world-class talent to Little Rock to entertain audiences and to educate and inspire young musicians.

A champion of new music, he collaborates with and explores the music of renowned living composers. In 2016, he conducted the premiere of James Stephenson's *Concerto for Hope* with celebrated trumpeter, Ryan Anthony and the San Juan (Colorado) Symphony. Recently, he conducted the premiere of *Into the Beautiful North*, by Joe Brent, performed by the trio, 9 Horses. He has promoted works by composers with Arkansas connections such as Jeremy Crosmer and Karen Griebeling.

Robson is also an orchestral arranger and his works have been featured on the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra's Pops Live! series concerts on numerous occasions. Additionally, he writes string arrangements for recording artists to assist them in achieving their musical goals in the studio.

As a violinist, he performs frequently on the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra's popular *River Rhapsodies Chamber Music* series, often sharing the stage with principal members of the orchestra. Prior to his appointment in Arkansas, he served as concertmaster of the Connecticut Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra, and assistant concertmaster of the Waterbury Symphony. Recognized for his skill and versatility, he is increasingly sought after as a studio musician.

Robson studied orchestral conducting at the Mannes College of Music in New York City under the tutelage of David Hayes and holds violin performance degrees from Yale University and the Michigan State University Honors College. Primary violin teachers include Erick Friedman, Dmitri Berlinsky, and I-fu Wang.

He studied conducting at Yale University with Lawrence Leighton Smith, Edward Cumming, and Shinik Hahm. Other notable teachers include Leon Gregorian, John Farrer, Neil Thomson, and Larry Rachleff.



AKIKO FUJIMOTO, Conductor

Akiko Fujimoto was named Music Director of the Mid-Texas Symphony in May 2019. Fujimoto has electrified audiences throughout North America and has guest conducted the National Symphony Orchestra, Florida Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony, Houston Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Lexington Philharmonic, and the Corpus Christi Symphony.

Upcoming highlights include debuts with the San Francisco Symphony, Vermont Symphony and the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, return engagements with the Virginia Symphony and the Florida Orchestra, and world premieres by Suad Bushnaq and Tania León.

At the Minnesota Orchestra, Fujimoto was appointed as Assistant Conductor for the 2017–18 season under Music Director Osmo Vänskä and promoted to Associate Conductor for the following two seasons. During 2017–2020, Fujimoto also served as cover conductor at the Los Angeles Philharmonic for Esa-Pekka Salonen, Zubin Mehta, and Susanna Mälkki. Prior to arriving in Minnesota, she was Assistant then Associate Conductor of the San Antonio Symphony and Conducting Associate for the Virginia Symphony.

A passionate advocate for young musicians, Fujimoto has held conducting appointments at Harvard University, Stanford University, and the College of William & Mary. While in Virginia, she also served as Music Director of the Williamsburg Youth Orchestras. Born in Japan, Fujimoto holds a bachelor's degree in music and psychology from Stanford University and Master of Music degrees in conducting from Boston University and the Eastman School of Music.



MARTINA FILJAK, Piano

Martina Filjak revealed herself to be a premium class pianist.

—SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG

Brilliant, sensitive and imaginative playing with resourcefulness of technique and naturalness of musicality... a striking individuality... a pianist to watch.

—THE NEW YORK TIMES

One of the most exciting artists to emerge in recent years, Martina Filjak is garnering international praise for her poetic passion and technical mastery at the keyboard as well as for her charismatic personality and magnetic stage presence.

Martina Filjak came to international attention by winning the Gold Medal, the 1st prize and the Beethoven prize at the Cleveland International Piano Competition in 2009, which brought her numerous engagements in the United States and internationally. Prior to that, she won 1st prizes at the Maria Canals Piano Competition (Barcelona) and the Viotti Piano Competition (Vercelli), and was a laureate at the Busoni Piano Competition.

ARTISTS continued

The 18-19 season kicked off with a performance of the 2nd Piano Concerto by Brahms alongside the Staatskapelle Halle at the Music Festival in Chorin, Germany and continues with a series of concerto performances that include collaborations with Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá and Diego Naser, the New West Symphony and Fawzi Haimor, the Norddeutsche Philharmonie Rostock and Nicholas Milton, the Colorado Springs Philharmonic and Josep Caballé Domenech, the Filarmónica de Málaga and Guillermo Garcia Calvo, the Capella Aquileia and Paul Goodwin, the Orquesta Filarmónica de Buenos Aires at the Teatro Colon and Manuel Hernández Silva, the Torino Philharmonic and the Zagreb Soloists, various chamber music performances as well as a recital tour in Latin America.

Martina Filjak's latest CD has been released in 2016 on Solo Musica (distributed by Sony Music) with works by Bach, Schumann and Scriabin. Martina Filjak's debut CD with sonatas by Antonio Soler was released in 2011 under the Naxos label. August 2013 marked the Sony Classical release of her chamber music recording with Jan Vogler and Christian Poltéra. In January 2019 she is going to record her new CD for Hänssler Classic with works by Liszt.

During the past seasons Ms Filjak has performed with esteemed orchestras that include The Cleveland Orchestra, San Diego Symphony Orchestra, The Florida Orchestra, the Strasbourg Philharmonic, Barcelona Symphony, Bilbao Symphony and the Granada Symphony, Turku Philharmonic Orchestra; the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, the Staatskapelle Halle, the Staatskapelle Weimar; the Bremen Philharmonic, the Lübeck Philharmonic, the City Orchestra of Kassel, the Norddeutsche Philharmonie Rostock the Symphony Orchestra Göttingen, the Japan Century Symphony Orchestra, the Deagu Symphony Orchestra, the Krakow Philharmonic, the Zagreb Philharmonic, the Slovenian Philharmonic, the Israel Chamber Orchestra as well as the Orchestra La Verdi in Milano. She has performed at international venues such as the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Konzerthaus Berlin, l'Auditori and Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona, Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York, Boston's Jordan Hall, Teatro San Carlo in Naples, Sala Verdi in Milan, Salle Gaveau in Paris, Musikverein and the Konzerthaus in Vienna, NDR Hall in Hannover, Residenz in Munich, Auditorio Nacional in Madrid, the Ravinia Festival in Chicago.

Her most recent conductor collaborations include JoAnn Falletta, Stanislav Kochanovsky, Alexander Shelley, Hans Graf, Markus Poschner, Sebastian Lang-Lessing, Josep Caballé-Domenech, Tito Munoz, Carlos Miguel Prieto and Stefan Sanderling. She is also a passionate chamber musician and frequently collaborates with various ensembles and soloists such as the Szymanowski Quartet, Ensemble Berlin, Dmitry Sinkovsky, Radovan Vlatkovic, Felix Klieser and Tatjana Vassiljeva.

The artist's extensive repertoire ranges from Bach to Berio and encompasses more than 30 piano concertos. She is dedicated to continuous exploring of piano literature and various concert formats.

Performing with orchestra takes the biggest part of her time and she frequently states that she enjoys the interaction and the exchange of energies between so many musicians on stage.

Based in Berlin, Martina speaks seven languages. Fortunately, for an active performer, she loves to travel.

www.martinafiljak.com | www.facebook.com/martinafiljak



TANIA LEÓN, Composer-in-residence

Tania León (b. Havana, Cuba), a vital personality on today's music scene, is highly regarded as a composer and conductor and for her accomplishments as an educator and advisor to arts organizations. She has been the subject of profiles on ABC, CBS, CNN, PBS, BB3, Telemundo, independent films, and Univision, including their noted series "Orgullo Hispano," which celebrates living American Latinos whose contributions in society have been invaluable.

León's orchestral work *Stride*, commissioned by the New York Philharmonic in celebration of the centennial of the 19th Amendment, was awarded the 2021 Pulitzer Prize in Music. Recent commissions include *Anima* for Jennifer

Koh's *Alone Together* in response to the Coronavirus pandemic; *Ritmicas* for The Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition's Grossman Ensemble; *Ser* for the Los Angeles Philharmonic; *Pa'lante* for the International Contemporary Ensemble and *YOLA* (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles); and *Ethos* for pianist Ursula Oppens and Cassatt String Quartet.

Upcoming premieres feature commissions by Arkansas Symphony for the New Music USA Amplifying Voices Program; The Musical Fund Society in Philadelphia to celebrate their 200th anniversary; The Crossing chamber choir with Claire Chase, flutist; Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; and Brooklyn Youth Chorus, featuring text by New York Youth Poet Laureate Aaliyah C. Daniels.

León's opera *Scourge of Hyacinths*, based on a play by Wole Soyinka with staging and design by Robert Wilson, received over 20 performances throughout Europe and Mexico. Commissioned by Hans Werner Henze and the city of Munich for the Fourth Munich Biennale, it took home the coveted BMW Prize, and the aria "Oh Yemanjá" ("Mother's Prayer") was recorded by Dawn Upshaw on her *Nonesuch CD, The World So Wide*.

Past commissions include works for The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Library of Congress, National Endowment for the Arts, NDR Symphony Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, New World Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble Modern, Fest der Kontinente (Hamburg, Germany), The Koussevitzky Music Foundation, Fromm Music Foundation, Los Angeles Master Chorale, DanceBrazil, and Dance Theatre of Harlem.

León's compositions have been performed by such orchestras as the Gewandhausorchester, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande (Switzerland), China National Symphony, NDR Symphony Orchestra (Germany), Symphonic and Lyric Orchestra of Nancy (France), and Orquesta de la Opera, Palacio de Bellas Artes (Mexico). As a composer, she has also collaborated with poets, writers and directors, including John Ashbury, Margaret Atwood, Rita Dove, Wendy Kesselman, Jamaica Kincaid, Mark Lamos, Fae Myenne Ng, Julie Taymor, Derek Walcott, and Robert Wilson.

ARTISTS continued

Past highlights include a Composer Portrait at Columbia University's Miller Theatre in New York City, and the hour-long, multimedia work *Drummin'*, featuring percussionists of diverse cultures and performed by New World Symphony in Miami and members of the NDR Symphony Orchestra in Hamburg, Germany. León was one of the first artists to be featured by Harlem Stage in Aaron Davis Hall's initiative *WaterWorks*, and her work was featured in the celebration of some of the most prestigious composers of our time, including Pierre Boulez's 80th birthday, "Gyorgy Ligeti's 80th Birthday, and the Copland Centennial.

As a guest conductor, Tania León has appeared with the Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus of Marseille and Colonne Orchestra (France), Gewandhausorchester and Beethovenhalle Orchestra (Germany), Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and Geneva Chamber Orchestra (Switzerland), Orquesta Sinfonica de Asturias and Orquesta y Coro de la Comunidad de Madrid (Spain), Santa Cecilia Orchestra (Italy), Sadler's Wells Orchestra (England), Guanajuato Symphony Orchestra (Mexico), Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá (Colombia), Orquesta Sinfónica de El Salvador (El Salvador), Orquesta Sinfónica de Cuba, Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, and KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra (South Africa), and the New York Philharmonic, among others.

In 1969, Tania León became a founding member and first Music Director of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, establishing the Dance Theatre's Music Department, Music School and Orchestra. She instituted the Brooklyn Philharmonic Community Concert Series in 1978, and founded the Sampler Concerts series presented by the Whitney Museum of American Art at Atria. In 1994, in her capacity of Latin American Music Advisor, she co-founded the American Composers Orchestra's *Sonidos de las Américas* festivals. From 1993 to 1997, she was New Music Advisor to Kurt Masur and the New York Philharmonic.

Tania León is the founder and Artistic Director of the nonprofit organization and festival *Composers Now*, created in New York City in 2010. *Composers Now* is dedicated to the empowerment of living composers by celebrating the diversity of their voices and honoring the significance of their artistic contributions to the cultural fabric of society. In 2017, a proclamation on behalf of Mayor Bill de Blasio was presented to *Composers Now* in recognition of their contributions to living composers (composersnow.org).

León has lectured at the prestigious *Mosse-Lectures* at Humboldt-University in Berlin and at Harvard University and University of Chicago. In 2012 she was the Andrew Mellon Foundation's Distinguished Scholar at University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. She has been Visiting Professor at Yale University, Chicago University, University of Michigan, University of Kansas, Purchase College, and the Musikschule in Hamburg, Germany, among others, and she served as *Composer's Mentor* at the *Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute*. She was also a *Guest Composer/Conductor* at the Musikschule in Hamburg, and at Central Conservatory of music in Beijing, China. In 2020, she was the Robert M. Trotter Lecturer at College Music Society.

León has received Honorary Doctorate Degrees from Colgate University, Oberlin, and SUNY Purchase College, and served as U.S. Artistic Ambassador of American Culture in Madrid, Spain. A Professor at Brooklyn College and at The Graduate Center, CUNY since 1985, she was named the Claire and Leonard Tow Professor in Music in 2000, Distinguished Professor of the City University of New York in 2006, and Professor Emerita in September 2019.

Honors include the New York Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award; American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Music; fellowships and awards from The Koussevitzky Music Foundation, Guggenheim Foundation, Fromm Music Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Chamber Music America, NYSCA, Lila Wallace/Reader's Digest Fund, ASCAP and Meet the Composer; Symphony Space's Access to the Arts; and artist residencies at Bellagio, Citivella Ranieri, MacDowell, and the American Academy in Rome in Italy, among others. In 2010 León was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She received a 2008 Pulitzer Prize nomination for *Ácana*, and both a Grammy nomination for "Best Contemporary Classical Composition" and a Latin Grammy nomination for "Best Classical Contemporary Composition" in 2012 for *Inura*. She is also the recipient of the 2013 ASCAP Victor Herbert Award, the 2017 MadWoman Festival Award in Music in Madrid, Spain, and, most recently, she was awarded a 2018 United States Artists Fellowship.

León serves as an honorary chair for the Recording Academy's Songwriters & Composers Wing.

* * *

Original work composed by Tania León – World Premiere.

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ARKANSAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Pasajes / TANIA LEÓN

b. Havana, Cuba / May 14, 1943

Pasajes (Passages) is an episodic piece, each section recalling scenes of the environment where the composer grew up. The opening is like remembering a far-off, serene song which is indicative of the beautiful melodies of Latin American cultures. Then the song of an imaginary bird enters, surrounded by the sounds of nature. This is increasingly intertwined with rhythmical pulses: the ever-present pulse of Caribbean culture. Last, we hear the bombastic joy of revelers' music as they prepare their dances for carnival, parading through the neighborhood. This final scene is the joyous flash of rhythm in which the piece culminates.

Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major, K. 467

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

b. Salzburg, Austria / January 27, 1756; d. Vienna, Austria / December 5, 1791

The Classical period witnessed the first demonstration that the concerto, previously little more than a virtuoso showpiece, could be a meaningful, respectable musical form. Mozart made the difference. The skill and imagination he lavished upon the concerto elevated it to a stature equal to the symphony. The process was naturally a gradual one, and it centred primarily on the piano, the instrument upon which he was best known as a performer.

After an apprenticeship spent creating piano concertos based on themes by other composers, Mozart created his first fully original piano concerto (known as "No. 5") in 1773. His first indisputable masterpiece in the form came four years later. Concerto No. 9 is filled with innovative features. Rather than following the standard practice of having the orchestra present the first movement's themes in a lengthy introductory passage, for example, Mozart gave the opening word to the piano.

In May 1781, he was unceremoniously discharged from the service of Hieronymous Colleredo, Archbishop of Salzburg. Delighted to be free from this unappreciative and demeaning relationship, he relocated from the cultural backwater of Salzburg to the bustling musical metropolis of Vienna. The city was ripe for free-lance artists with his talent and drive. Before long he had immersed himself deeply in a frantic schedule of composing, performing and teaching.

Vienna valued Mozart the pianist above all; naturally he responded to this preference. In a burst of activity characterized by equal parts concentration and innovation, he composed 12 superlative piano concertos between February 1784 and December 1786. They are deeper in feeling, broader in scope and richer in color than any written before. In years to come, they served as models of their kind, ones to which Beethoven, Brahms and other similarly high-minded composers would turn for inspiration.

Mozart gave the premieres of most of these "golden dozen" concertos himself, often within days of their completion, and usually at subscription concerts designed for his own benefit. Such was the case with this piece. Its first performance took place, with great success, on March 10, 1785.

The concerto whose creation preceded it by just four weeks—No. 20 in D Minor—is one of the darkest, most Romantic pieces Mozart composed in any form. In terms of personality, this “sequel” is its polar opposite.

The opening movement is built on a fully symphonic scale, with an orchestral backing that matches the solo part for interest and variety. Mozart here balances forcefulness, elegance and wit with perfect ease. The dreamlike slow movement is based on the simplest of materials; its effect, nevertheless, is magical. Its placid beauty served as a most effective backdrop for the 1967 Swedish film romance *Elvira Madigan*. The concerto concludes with a merry rondo. It echoes with the laughter of comic opera, looking ahead to Mozart’s masterpiece in this genre, *The Marriage of Figaro*, whose creation followed just one year later.

Tod und Verklärung (Death and Transfiguration), Op. 24

RICHARD STRAUSS

b. Munich, Germany / June 11, 1864; d. Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany / September 8, 1949

Shortly after Strauss completed *Don Juan*, his second tone poem and the first to win success, he set to work on a third such piece, *Death and Transfiguration*. He conducted the premiere in Eisenach, Germany, on June 21, 1890.

Five years later, he revealed his inspiration for this initially terrifying yet ultimately uplifting piece in a letter to a friend: “The idea came to me to write a tone poem describing the last hours of a man who has striven for the highest ideals, presumably an artist. The sick man lies in bed breathing heavily and irregularly in his sleep. Friendly dreams bring a smile to the face of the sufferer; his sleep grows lighter; he awakens. Fearful pains begin once more to torture him, fever shakes his body. When the attack is over and the pain recedes, he recalls his past life; his childhood passes before his eyes; his youth with its striving and passions and then, while the pains return, there appears to him the goal of his life’s journey, the ideal, the ideal which he attempts to embody in his art, but which he was unable to perfect because such perfection can be achieved by no man. The fatal hour arrives. The soul leaves the body, to discover in the eternal cosmos the magnificent realization of the ideal which could not be fulfilled here below.”

Death and Transfiguration is a purely imaginary work, the twenty-five-year-old composer not having undergone any life-threatening experiences by that point in his life. It displayed remarkable maturity for one so young, in terms of creative confidence, philosophical ambition, and the skillful handling of the large, post-romantic orchestra. In it, he led listeners on a harrowing but ultimately heartening, Beethoven-like journey from darkness to light.

Sixty years later, he quoted the noble, symbolically rising “transfiguration” theme in the concluding section of the *Four Last Songs*, after the soloist has sung the words “Can this perhaps be death?” As he lay on his deathbed, he whispered to his daughter-in-law, Alice, “Dying is just as I composed it in *Death and Transfiguration*.”

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Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto

Andrew Crust, *conductor*

Shannon Lee, *violin*

BORODIN Polovtsian Dances from *Prince Igor* 14'
(1833-1887)
 I. Dance of the Polovtsian Maidens
 II. Polovtsian Dance

SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No. 9 in E-flat Major, Op. 70 27'
(1906-1975)
 I. Allegro
 II. Moderato
 IV. Largo
 V. Allegretto

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

TCHAIKOVSKY Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35 33'
(1840-1893)
 I. Allegro moderato
 II. Canzonetta: Andante
 III. Finale: Allegro vivacissimo
Shannon Lee, violin

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Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto

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SHANNON LEE, Violin

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ARTISTS



ANDREW CRUST, Conductor

Andrew Crust has developed a versatile international career as a conductor of orchestral, opera, ballet and pops programs. Currently serving as the Assistant Conductor of the Vancouver Symphony a large number of subscription, pops, educational and contemporary concerts with the VSO each season.

In the current and upcoming seasons Andrew will debut with the Vermont, Bozeman Lima Music Director finalist, and with the Arkansas Symphony, San Diego Symphony Calgary Philharmonic Winnipeg Symphony, Memphis Symphony, Hartford Symphony, and l'Orchestre de la Francophonie Andrew is equally at ease in the pit, having conducted ballet with Ballet Memphis New Ballet Ensemble, and opera with Opera McGill, College Light Opera Company, Boulder Opera Company, and others. As a Pops conductor, Andrew has collaborated with such artists as Rufus Wainwright, Steven Page, Michael Bolton, Cirque de la Symphonie, the United States Jazz Ambassadors and many others. Andrew has also established himself as a conductor of films with orchestra.

Andrew served as Assistant Conductor of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra *Serenade* with violinist Charles Yang. Andrew also served as Conductor of the Memphis Youth Symphony Program. As the Assistant Conductor of the Portland Symphony Orchestra Crust was the Assistant Conductor of the National Youth Orchestra of the USA (NYO-USA) Alsop and James Ross at Carnegie Hall and in a side-by-side performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra. He has also served as Cover Conductor of the Kansas City Symphony, San Diego Symphony Nashville Symphony, Assistant/Cover Conductor of the Boulder Philharmonic Opera McGill.

Abroad, he has led concerts with the Orchestra Giovanile Italiana Hamburger Symphoniker Moravian Philharmonic Republic and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Chile first prize Chigiana by Daniele Gatti, receiving a scholarship and an invitation to guest conduct the Orchestra di Sanremo Nestlé/Salzburg Festival's Young Conductors Award competition, and was selected by the Vienna Philharmonic as a winner of the Ansbacher Fellowship, with full access to all rehearsals and performances of the Salzburg Festival.

Andrew is dedicated to exploring new ways of bringing the classical music experience into the 21st century through innovative programming and marketing, creating community-oriented and socially-sensitive concert experiences, and utilizing social media and unique venues. Andrew is a firm believer in meaningful music education, having produced and written a number of original educational programs with orchestras, as well as innovative programs such as VSO Relaxed Concerts, designed for neurodiverse communities.

2018 WINNER: Ansbacher Fellowship for Young Conductors
(selected by members of the Vienna Philharmonic)

2018 SEMI-FINALIST: Nestlé/Salzburg Festival Young Conductors Award

2017 FIRST PRIZE: Accademia Chigiana with Daniele Gatti



SHANNON LEE, Violin

Violinist Shannon Lee has been praised for her “remarkable fire, impeccable intonation, and big, vibrant tone” (Gramophone). She is a recent prizewinner in several international competitions, including top prize and audience award at the Sendai Competition in Japan, 4th prize at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Belgium, 2nd place at the Naumburg Competition in New York City, and Laureate at the Indianapolis Competition, where she was also recognized for Best Performance of an Ysaÿe Sonata. Her festival appearances as a soloist and chamber musician include Heifetz International

Music Institute as Artist-in-Residence, Krzyżowa-Music, Music@Menlo, and Music From Angel Fire. In 2016-17 she was a founding member of Bicycle String Trio, performing at the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival and Avaloch Farm Music Institute. Shannon also received generous support from the Sylva Gelber Foundation in Canada through their Award for career development.

Born in Canada, Shannon began studying violin at age four in Plano, Texas. She made her solo debut at the age of twelve with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and two years later performed in Europe with Maestro Christof Perick and the Nuremberg Philharmonic. Other notable appearances include with the Nashville Symphony, Las Vegas Philharmonic, Fresno Philharmonic and Phoenix Symphony. Her debut recording, *Introducing Shannon Lee*, features 19th and 20th century violin-piano works, which *Gramophone Magazine* praised for Shannon’s “technical command and fearless virtuosity.”

Shannon is pursuing a Master’s degree in Violin Performance at the Cleveland Institute of Music, studying with Jaime Laredo and Jan Sloman as the inaugural Presidential Scholarship recipient. She received a diploma from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia as a student of Ida Kavafian and Arnold Steinhardt. In Philadelphia, she also served as a Curtis ArtistYear Fellow under the mentorship of Mary Javian, developing the music program at Cramp Elementary Pre-K and working with All City Orchestra chamber music programs for high school students. Previously she completed her Bachelor’s degree in computer science from Columbia University while taking violin lessons with David Nadien. In Texas, Shannon studied with Jan Sloman, and has played privately or in master classes for Rainer Schmidt, Guillaume Pirard, and Boris Kushnir.



PROGRAM NOTES

Prince Igor: Polovtsian Dances / ALEXANDER BORODIN

b. St. Petersburg, Russia / November 12, 1833; d. St. Petersburg / February 27, 1887

Borodin's career as a doctor and professor of chemistry left him little time for music. This self-proclaimed 'Sunday composer's' magnum opus, the opera *Prince Igor*, lay incomplete at his death, despite nearly 20 years' intermittent labor. It was finished (and to some extent, actually composed) by his friend, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and his pupil, Alexander Glazunov. Drawn from Russian history, the plot concerns the twelfth-century conflict between the forces of Igor, a Russian prince, and Konchak, leader of an Eastern tribe, the Polovtsians. After Konchak takes Igor prisoner, he offers to set him free if he will swear never to attack the Polovtsians again. Igor refuses. Konchak cannot help but admire his adversary's bravery. To divert him from his melancholy state, he calls upon his people to entertain the Prince. They do so in the barbaric and poetic Polovtsian Dances.

Symphony No. 9 in E-flat Major, Op. 70 / DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

b. St. Petersburg, Russia / September 25, 1906; d. Moscow, Russia / August 9, 1975

Shostakovich regularly ran afoul of Soviet cultural authorities. The main reason was his desire for his music to express the many, contrasting facets of life, positive and negative, rather than just the simple, uplifting sentiments that the bureaucrats expected composers to express. The axe first fell on him in 1936, when the communist party newspaper, on orders from dictator Joseph Stalin, published a blistering attack on his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*.

He rehabilitated himself through his Fifth Symphony. The Seventh Symphony of 1941 is a lengthy, bombastic, and eventually optimistic piece. Known as the 'Leningrad' Symphony since he began it in that city during the Nazi siege, it was also looked upon with favor, both at home and in the Allied countries abroad. The Eighth Symphony (1943) presents a far grimmer portrait of war than the Seventh. The authorities naturally looked upon it less favorably.

At the beginning of 1945, he began writing a grand, heroic symphony celebrating the impending victory. But he became dissatisfied with it and put it aside. When he set to work once again in July, it was on an entirely new symphony. Completed in August, it was premiered on November 3.

"Everyone was praising Stalin, and now I was supposed to join in this unholy affair," wrote Shostakovich in *Testimony*, the controversial book of memoirs published in 1979. "There was an appropriate excuse. We had ended the war victoriously; no matter the cost, the important thing was that we won, the empire had expanded. And they demanded that Shostakovich use quadruple winds, choir, and soloists to hail the leader.

"I confess that I gave hope to Stalin's dreams. I announced that I was writing an apotheosis. I was trying to get them off my back but it turned against me. When my Ninth was performed, Stalin was incensed. He was deeply offended, because there was no chorus, no soloists, and no apotheosis. There wasn't even a paltry dedication. It was just music, which Stalin didn't understand very well."

PROGRAM NOTES *continued*

Audiences showed their approval of the new work, but the “official” response was savagely negative. One Soviet bureaucrat wrote, “We were prepared to listen to a new monumental musical fresco, something that we had the right to expect from the author of the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, especially at a time when the Soviet people and the whole world were still full of the recent victory over fascism. But we heard something quite different, something that at first astounded us by its unexpectedness.”

Surely the symphony’s sheer irreverence and intentional banality was the main reason behind the censure. Instead of a long, serious work that the bureaucrats hoped would somehow be related in spirit to the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven, Shostakovich provided a compact, neo-classical piece scored for an orchestra not much bigger than the one Beethoven had used – in other words, a Soviet-era descendant of Prokofiev’s “Classical” Symphony. A leisure-time activity of the period, playing piano duet arrangements of Classical-era symphonies together with composer Dmitry Kabalevsky, may have influenced its character. It undoubtedly provided fuel for the major crackdown on Soviet composers that came into force three years later.

Now that such political considerations have lost any importance they might have had, this Ninth Symphony, a crisp and entertaining work, can be judged strictly on its own merits. The odd-numbered of the five movements sport a sharp, satiric edge and cheeky circus tunes, all born of the anger and despair Shostakovich felt toward Soviet authority. The restless, melancholy second movement and the stern declamations and mournful bassoon meditations of the fourth, provide interludes of calm. The final three movements are performed without interruption.

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35 / PYOTR IL'YICH TCHAIKOVSKY

b. Kamsko-Votkinsk, Russia / May 7, 1840; d. St. Petersburg, Russia / November 6, 1893

Tchaikovsky composed this evergreen concerto while visiting Clarens, Switzerland. Dissatisfied with the original slow movement, he replaced it with the one known today. He sent the concerto to the distinguished Hungarian soloist Leopold Auer, hoping it would enter his repertoire. To Tchaikovsky’s horror, Auer pronounced it “unplayable” and “too revolutionary.” Crushed, Tchaikovsky shelved the concerto.

Some time later, German violinist Adolf Brodsky expressed an interest in it. He spent the better part of two years preparing to give the premiere. That took place at a concert by the Vienna Philharmonic, Hans Richter conducting, on December 4, 1881. The audience loved Brodsky’s playing, but not the piece. The press, led by the arch-conservative critic Eduard Hanslick, heaped abuse upon it, too. Wrote Hanslick, “For a while the concerto has proportion, is musical, and is not without genius, but soon savagery gains the upper hand and lords it to the end of the first movement. The violin is no longer played; it is yanked about, it is torn asunder, it is beaten black and blue. The slow movement almost wins us. But it breaks off abruptly to make way for a brutal and wretched finale. Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto brings to us for the first time the horrid idea that there may be music that stinks to the ear.”

Despite this initial hostility, the concerto lost little time in establishing itself as a concert favorite. Brodsky's continuing advocacy had much to do with this. In gratitude, Tchaikovsky changed his original dedication, switching it from Auer to Brodsky. Auer later changed his view, and became one of the concerto's most persuasive champions.

In breadth of conception and richness of contents, the opening movement is virtually a complete concerto in itself. Since both principal themes are lyrical rather than dramatic in character, Tchaikovsky achieves the necessary contrast by alternating lightly scored passages for violin and orchestra, with more forceful sections scored for orchestra alone.

Woodwinds introduce the wistful, elegant second movement. The soloist here plays with a mute, giving the instrument a veiled, restrained sound most appropriate to the music. The vivacious, folk-flavored dance rhythms of the finale burst in abruptly. Two warm contrasting ideas are subjected to elaborate presentation. The solo violin then leads off an exhilarating chase that brings the concerto to a dashing close.

PROGRAM NOTES BY DON ANDERSON © 2022



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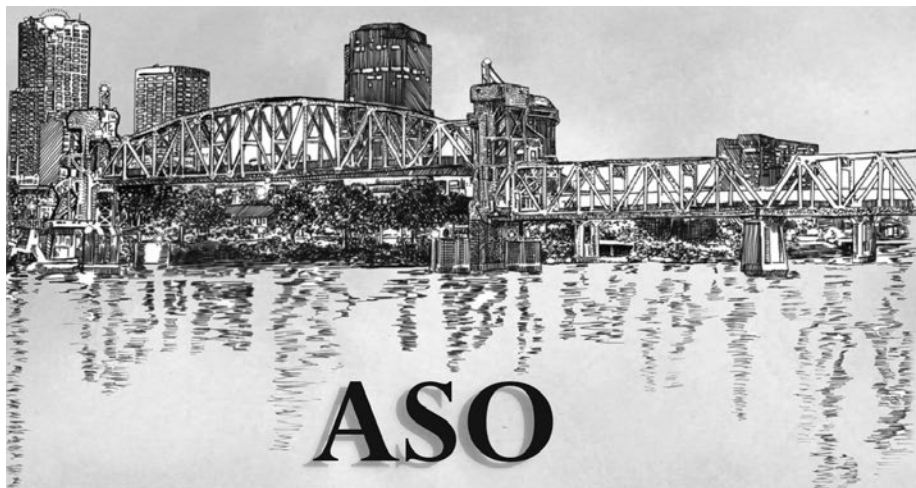
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The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra exists to connect, enrich, inspire, and advance Arkansas through music. The ASO is a nonprofit organization with an annual budget of 3.5 million dollars. Contributions from individuals provide the support needed to provide inspirational concerts, music education programs, and free concerts throughout Little Rock and the state. Thank you to our dedicated contributors for supporting ASO and its education programs.

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Leanne Day-Simpson
Artistic Operations Manager
Marc Nelson
Production Manager
Kelly Hicks
Photographer and Videographer

Guilds

Tandy Cobb
ASO Guild
Jim Gifford
Hot Springs/Hot Springs Village Symphony Guild
Kathy Westmoreland
Russellville Symphony Guild

†Indicates the Life Member is deceased



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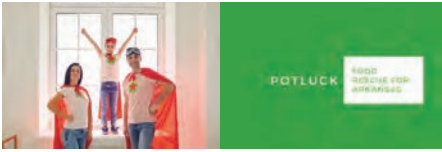


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