



A Celebration of Isaac Stern

BEETHOVEN, BRAHMS and MENDELSSOHN'S VIOLIN CONCERTO

Friday and Saturday, January 17-18, 2020 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, January 19, 2020 at 2 p.m.

HELZBERG HALL, KAUFFMAN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

PETER OUNDJIAN, *guest conductor*

NANCY ZHOU, *violin*

BRAHMS

Variations on a Theme by Haydn, op. 56a

Chorale St. Antoni: Andante

Variation I: Poco più animato

Variation II: Più vivace

Variation III: Con moto

Variation IV: Andante con moto

Variation V: Vivace

Variation VI: Vivace

Variation VII: Grazioso

Variation VIII: Presto non troppo

Finale: Andante

MENDELSSOHN

Concerto in E Minor for Violin and Orchestra, op. 64

I. Allegro molto appassionato

II. Andante

III. Allegretto non troppo — Allegro molto vivace

Nancy Zhou, *violin*

INTERMISSION

VIVIAN FUNG

Dust Devils

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 1 in C Major, op. 21

I. Adagio molto — Allegro con brio

II. Andante cantabile con moto

III. Menuetto: Allegro molto e vivace

IV. Adagio — Allegro molto e vivace

The 2019/20 season is generously sponsored by
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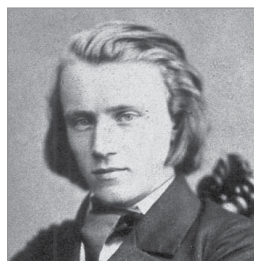
JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Variations on a Theme by Haydn, op. 56a (1873) 19 minutes

Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, triangle and strings.

In 1870, Carl Ferdinand Pohl, a musicologist and biographer of 18th-century Austrian composer Franz Joseph Haydn, showed Johannes Brahms the score of a *Feldpartita* for eight wind instruments, an open-air suite purportedly by Haydn. However, more recent scholarship indicates the most likely composer of the *Feldpartita* was Haydn's pupil, Ignaz Pleyel. The piece contained a melody that greatly appealed to Brahms. It was this melody, entitled the "St. Anthony Chorale," which served as the basis for a series of variations composed by Brahms in 1873. These variations manifested themselves in two arrangements — one for two pianos (opus 56b) and the more familiar orchestral version (opus 56a). The orchestral setting of the "Haydn Variations" received its premiere in Vienna on November 2, 1873, with the composer leading the Vienna Philharmonic.

The "Haydn Variations" open with a presentation of the "St. Anthony Chorale." The use of the winds, over pizzicato lower strings, evokes the scoring of the original *Feldpartita*. A series of eight variations follows. The finale employs a ground bass figure, derived from the "St. Anthony" melody, and played by the lower strings. This figure serves as the foundation for the finale's own set of variations, culminating in a final, spectacular presentation of the "St. Anthony Chorale."



The "Haydn Variations," completed three years before Brahms' First Symphony, are the work of a master orchestral composer.



Mendelssohn composed his Violin Concerto for Ferdinand David, concertmaster of the great Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

Concerto in E minor for Violin and Orchestra, op. 64 (1844) 27 minutes

Solo violin, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings.

Felix Mendelssohn composed this violin concerto for his dear friend Ferdinand David. David, an eminent violinist, was concertmaster of Mendelssohn's Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig. Six years elapsed from the time Mendelssohn first told David about the work until it was completed. Mendelssohn dedicated the concerto to David, who performed it at the March 13, 1845 Gewandhaus

premiere. Mendelssohn was recuperating from an illness at the time, and Niels W. Gade served as the conductor for the premiere.

The Mendelssohn E-minor is one of the most cherished of all violin concertos. The work's seamless, inevitable flow belies the years of struggle invested by Mendelssohn and his worthy collaborator, Ferdinand David, in completing the work. The genial lyricism also tends to obscure several innovative, even revolutionary touches in the magnificent score. This work along with others, like the Octet for Strings (1825) and the Overture to the Incidental Music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1826), represent Mendelssohn at his zenith, a composer demonstrating the capacity to approach, and perhaps even achieve, perfection.

The concerto is in three movements. In the first movement, Mendelssohn dispenses with the traditional orchestral introduction of the principal themes. Instead, the soloist plays the haunting melody that Mendelssohn confessed to David left him "no peace." Another departure from the conventions of the time is the placement of the solo cadenza immediately before the recapitulation of the principal

themes, rather than toward the close of the entire movement. The tempestuous closing measures lead without pause to the slow-tempo second movement, fashioned along the lines of an opera aria without words, with the presentation and ultimate reprise of the principal melody separated by a contrasting, dramatic interlude. Once again, the final movement follows without pause. The mood of the finale is joyous throughout, concluding in triumphant fashion, with brilliant solo writing.

VIVIAN FUNG (b. 1975)

Dust Devils (2011) 10 minutes

Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, antique cymbals, bass drum, glockenspiel, maracas, marimba, rainstick, ratchet, snare drum, suspended cymbals, tam-tam, tambourine, vibraphone, xylophone, harp, piano and strings.

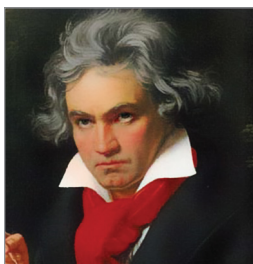
For its 50th anniversary, the Eastern Music Festival commissioned JUNO award-winning Edmonton-born composer Vivian Fung to compose *Dust Devils*. Gerard

Schwarz led the Eastern Festival Orchestra in the July 30, 2011 world premiere, which took place in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Dust Devils is the journey of emotional swirls in my mind, sometimes calm, but more often than not full of raw and intense energy. The opening starts quite forcefully and darts back and forth, culminating in a fiery pounding of the timpani, which wanes and brings this section to mere silent breaths in the brass. A slow section ensues, filled with upward cascades of arpeggios that interrupt the ethereal atmosphere. An ominous eerie string section follows leading to a powerful chorale in the brass, which overtakes the music and brings the 10-minute work to an emphatic close. — *Vivian Fung* | vivianfung.ca/music/dust-devils/



The Eastern Music Festival commissioned Vivian Fung to write *Dust Devils* for its 50th anniversary.



Beethoven completed his First Symphony at a time when he was dazzling Vienna audiences as a composer and piano virtuoso.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 1 in C Major, op. 21 (1800) 25 minutes

2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns,
2 trumpets, timpani and strings.

Ludwig van Beethoven completed the first of his nine symphonies in 1800. This was one of the happiest periods in Beethoven's life, a time when the young musician was dazzling Vienna with his unique and remarkable talents as a composer and piano virtuoso. The Symphony No. 1 premiered on April 2, 1800, at the Burgtheater in Vienna. The concert, organized by the composer for his own benefit, also featured a Mozart symphony, an aria and duet from Haydn's oratorio, *The Creation*, as well as Beethoven performing one of his piano concertos (either No. 1 or 2), and a keyboard improvisation.

Many viewed the First Symphony as the composer's homage to the elegant works of his Classical-era predecessors, Franz Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. In 1802, two years after the premiere of the First Symphony, Beethoven proclaimed to his friend Wenzel Krumpholtz, "I am not satisfied with my works up to the present time. From today I mean to take a *new road*." In terms of the symphonies, that "new road" is most clearly first revealed in the Third ("Eroica"), opus 55 (1803). Nevertheless, Beethoven's First Symphony, for all of its homage to the past, offers more than a few hints that the revolution was just around the corner.

Symphony No. 1 is cast in the traditional four movements. The work opens with a slow-tempo introduction. Despite its generally graceful nature, the ambiguous, shifting harmonies must have been unsettling to audiences of Beethoven's time. An ascending

and descending string passage leads to the principal theme. While the slow-tempo second movement generally evokes the grace and elegance of the Classical era, there are moments of unrest and turmoil as well. Beethoven designates the third movement as a minuet. However, here, the traditional elegant court dance in triple meter is replaced by fleet tempos and violent orchestral attacks, making it in actuality the first of the composer's symphonic scherzos. The finale begins with a slow-tempo introduction. After a grand *fortissimo* orchestral chord, the first violins introduce the movement's principal theme. They do so quietly and tentatively, building the theme one note at a time. Finally, the first violins play the theme in its entirety, and the central *Allegro molto e vivace* is off and running.

RECENTLY NAMED CONDUCTOR EMERITUS OF THE

Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Peter Oundjian has been hailed as a masterful and dynamic presence in the conducting world. He has developed a multifaceted portfolio as a conductor, violinist, professor and artistic advisor while being celebrated for his musicality, an eye towards collaboration, innovative programming, and an engaging personality.

Reimagining programming, international stature, audience development, touring and a number of outstanding recordings have marked Oundjian's 14-year tenure at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. He helped establish the orchestra as one of the world's top ensembles and served as a major creative force for Toronto. Oundjian led the orchestra on several international tours, to Europe and the United States, and he conducted the first performance by a North American orchestra at Reykjavik's Harpa Hall in 2014. Oundjian and the TSO's recording of Vaughan Williams' orchestral works won a JUNO Award for Best Classical Album: Large Ensemble in 2019.



From 2012 to 2018, Oundjian served as music director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. He conducted the RSNO during several tours in North America and China as well as a European festival tour with performances in Bregenz, Dresden, Innsbruck, Bergamo and Ljubljana among others. His final appearance with the orchestra as music director was at the 2018 BBC Proms, where he conducted Britten's epic *War Requiem*.

Highlights of past seasons include appearances with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and the orchestras of Detroit, Atlanta, St. Louis, Baltimore, Indianapolis and New Zealand, with visits to Cincinnati and Milwaukee planned for winter 2020. In January 2019, he transitioned from artistic advisor to music director for the Colorado Music Festival, commencing a five-year tenure.

Oundjian has been a visiting professor at Yale University's School of Music since 1981, and in 2013, the school awarded him their Sanford Medal for Distinguished Service to Music. He conducted the Yale and Juilliard orchestras and the New World Symphony during the 2018/19 season.

An outstanding violinist, Oundjian spent 14 years as the first violinist for the renowned Tokyo String Quartet before turning his energy towards conducting. ■

AMERICAN VIOLINIST NANCY ZHOU, EMERGING AS ONE OF TODAY'S

outstanding talents, is rapidly building an international profile after winning the inaugural Harbin International Violin Competition and the Shanghai Isaac Stern Violin Competition in 2018.



The past season saw Zhou performing with the Shanghai Symphony under Jaap van Zweden and the Sichuan Symphony under Darrell Ang, as well as making her debut in Poland with the Grammy® Award-winning Kalisz Philharmonic under Adam Kloczek. In December 2019, Zhou will make her Carnegie Hall debut with the New York String Orchestra under Jaime Laredo.

Highlights upcoming in 2020 include her debut with the Kansas City Symphony under Peter Oundjjan, San Diego Symphony under

Eun Sun Kim, IRIS Orchestra under Michael Stern, National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra under Lio Kuokman, Hangzhou Philharmonic Orchestra and Padua Chamber Orchestra. Zhou also will tour with Long Yu and the China Philharmonic in North America and collaborate with the Osaka Symphony to celebrate the centennial of Isaac Stern.

Alongside solo projects, Zhou actively pursues chamber music and education, visiting the Ravinia Festival, Verbier Festival, Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Marvao Festival. Additionally, she has visited Taiwan for masterclasses and served as a faculty member for the Encore Chamber Music Festival.

Born in Texas, Zhou began studying violin at age 4 under the guidance of her father, who remained her teacher throughout her youth. She went on to study with Miriam Fried at the New England Conservatory while pursuing an interest in literature and earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from Harvard University. In 2008, she caught the attention of Anne-Sophie Mutter and became a scholar of her foundation. Zhou also holds the title of Associated Artist at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel, where she previously worked with Augustin Dumay.

Zhou plays a Joseph Guarneri violin from 1730-33 known as the “l'Ame de del Gesu,” which has been kindly loaned to her from a private sponsor. ■

A CELEBRATION *of* ISAAC STERN

The 2020 calendar year marks the centennial of legendary violinist and music advocate, Isaac Stern. Guest soloists together with his son, our Music Director Michael Stern, honor the virtuoso's legacy through concerts and special events. A Celebration of Isaac Stern is sponsored by the Hall Family Foundation as well as Carol and John Kornitzer. Nancy Zhou's appearance with the Symphony is part of this season's celebration.

JUNO AWARD-WINNING COMPOSER VIVIAN FUNG HAS A UNIQUE

talent for combining idiosyncratic textures and styles into large-scale works, reflecting her multicultural background. NPR calls her “one of today’s most eclectic composers.”

Highlights of Fung’s 2019/20 season include the United Kingdom premiere of *Birdsong*, performed by violinist Midori at Kings Place in London; world premiere performances of a new trumpet concerto with trumpeter Mary Elizabeth Bowden and the Erie Philharmonic; performances of *Dust Devils* by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra led by Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Kansas City Symphony led by Peter Oundjian; and performances of *Fanfare* by the Florida Orchestra, *Aqua* by the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal under conductor James Gaffigan, *Earworms* by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra led by Bramwell Tovey, and *Pizzicato* by the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra led by Miguel Harth-Bedoya. Fung also will write new works commissioned by Standing Wave Ensemble in Vancouver and L’arc Trio in San Francisco.



With a deep interest in exploring different cultures, Fung has traveled to Cambodia, Southwest China, North Vietnam, Spain and Bali to connect with her roots and collect research for her compositions.

Passionate about fostering the talent of the next generation, this summer Fung will mentor young composers in programs hosted by the American Composers Forum, San Francisco Contemporary Chamber Players and Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music.

Born in Edmonton, Canada, Fung received her doctorate from the Juilliard School. She currently lives in California and is on the faculty of Santa Clara University. For more information, visit vivianfung.ca. ■

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