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Conservatory

Concert Program

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I am thrilled to share New England Conservatory's 2023-24 concert season—a celebration of the power of music to connect and inspire one another.

Whether you are seated in one of our concert halls or watching online, we hope you are uplifted by the performances of our students, faculty, and guest artists.

Above all, we thank you for your support of our students as they cultivate their artistry and contribute to the world through music.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrea Kalyn".

Andrea Kalyn
President

NEC Philharmonia

Hugh Wolff, conductor

Stanford and Norma Jean Calderwood Director of Orchestras

with

Cara Pogossian '24 GD, viola

Winner, NEC Concerto Competition

Tuesday, January 30, 2024

7:30 p.m.

NEC's Jordan Hall

PROGRAM

Lotta Wennäkoski
(b. 1970)

Of Footprints and Light (Helsinki Variations)
(2019)

Béla Bartók
(1881–1945)
completed and orchestrated by
Tibor Serly

Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, Sz 120 BB 128
Moderato
Andante religioso
Allegro vivace

Cara Pogossian '24 GD, viola
Winner, NEC Concerto Competition

Intermission

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809–1847)

Symphony No. 3 in A Minor, op. 56 “Scottish”
Andante con moto – Allegro un poco agitato
Vivace non troppo
Adagio
Allegro vivacissimo – Allegro maestoso assai

Wennäkoski *Of Footprints and Light (Helsinki Variations)* (2019)

In honor of the centenary anniversary of independent Finland, the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra launched a “Helsinki Variations” commission project spanning a number of years. At the beginning of 2017, six Finnish composers were invited to write works to be performed by the HPO in 2019–2022. Each composer selected a Finnish work dating from before 1945 as inspiration for a new piece lasting not more than 15 minutes. Lotta Wennäkoski’s *Om fotspår och ljus (Of Footprints and Light)*, based on a scene from the opera *Asiens ljus (Light of Asia)* by Ida Moberg (1859–1947), was the first composition to be performed. The opera tells the story of Buddha’s life, and in this scene the young prince Siddhartha Gautama sings to his faithful servant Channa in the palace garden. Moberg worked with *Asiens ljus* from 1910 until her death in 1947. The opera remained unfinished, and presumably only an excerpt (“Lullaby”) has ever been performed in public.

Finnish composer **Lotta Wennäkoski** studied the violin, music theory and composition in Budapest, Helsinki, and The Hague. Her main composition teachers have been Eero Hämeenniemi, Kaija Saariaho, Paavo Heininen, and Louis Andriessen.

Wennäkoski began her composition career by composing for radio plays and short films. A major landmark on her career was a concert at the Musica Nova Helsinki festival in 1999. Her notable works include *Sakara* for orchestra (2003), commissioned by Esa-Pekka Salonen; the string quartet *Culla d’aria* (2004), commissioned by the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival; *Hava* for chamber orchestra; the flute concerto *Soie* (2009), one of the recommended works at the UNESCO International Rostrum of Composers in 2012; *Verdigris* for chamber orchestra (2015), commissioned by The Scottish Chamber Orchestra; *Flounce* for orchestra, commissioned by the BBC and performed at the Last Night of the Proms in 2017; *Hele* (2018) for chamber ensemble, commissioned by the LA Philharmonic; *Sigla* (2022), a harp concerto; *Pige* (2022) for string quartet; her violin concerto *Prosoidia* (2023); and her first big opera *Regine*

As a composer, Wennäkoski has been described as a lyricist and a lyrical Modernist and post-Expressionist, and she has described herself as “often navigating in an area between exciting timbral qualities and more conventional gestures like melodic fragments”.

Bartók *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra*

The *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra* was one of the last pieces Béla Bartók wrote. He began composing it while living in Saranac Lake, New York, in July 1945. It was commissioned by William Primrose, a respected violist who knew that Bartók could provide a challenging piece for him to perform. He said that Bartók should not “feel in any way proscribed by the apparent technical limitations of the instrument”. Bartók was suffering the terminal stages of leukemia when he began writing the piece and left only sketches at the time of his death.

Primrose asked Bartók to write the concerto in the winter of 1944. They exchanged several letters about the piece and in one, from September 8, 1945, Bartók claims that he is nearly done with it and only has the orchestration to complete. The sketches show that this was not truly the case. After Bartók died, his close friend Tibor Serly completed the piece in 1949. The concerto was premiered on December 2, 1949, by Primrose and the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, with Antal Doráti conducting.

The concerto has three movements, and in a letter dated August 5, 1945 Bartók wrote that the general concept is "a serious Allegro, a Scherzo, a (rather short) slow movement, and a finale beginning Allegretto and developing the tempo to an Allegro molto. Each movement, or at least 3 of them will, [be] preceded by a (short) recurring introduction (mostly solo for the viola), a kind of ritornello." The first movement is in a loose sonata form. The second movement is significantly shorter, and closes with a very short scherzo movement with an attacca into the third movement. – *Wikipedia*

Armenian-American violist **Cara Pogossian** is an avid chamber musician having attended numerous summer festivals, including the Marlboro Festival, Ravinia Steans Music Institute, and Taos School of Music. In 2022, Cara was the winner of the Borromeo String Quartet Guest Artist Award, and, more recently, her quartet was selected as a 2022-2023 Honors Ensemble at the New England Conservatory. She has toured with the Curtis Institute on multiple occasions, performing Schubert's Cello Quintet, as well as with the Curtis Symphony Orchestra as principal violist. Cara has had the privilege of collaborating and performing with many of the leading figures in classical music, such as Don Weilerstein, Ida Kavafian, Joseph Lin, Marcy Rosen, Peter Wiley, Daniel Phillips, Kim Kashkashian, and the Borromeo String Quartet.

Cara is lucky enough to have an entire family of musicians, with whom she frequently performs. During the pandemic, the Pogossian/Manouelian Clarinet Quintet collaborated with composers Timo Andres, Ian Krouse, Artashes Kartalyan, and Aida Shirazi, premiering each of their works in a series of online concerts.

A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with Hsin-Yun Huang and Misha Amory, Cara is currently continuing her graduate studies with Kim Kashkashian at the New England Conservatory of Music as the recipient of the Abraham Skernick Memorial Presidential Scholarship.

Mendelssohn Symphony No. 3 in A Minor, op. 56 "Scottish"

Felix Mendelssohn, a frequent visitor to the British Isles, at age 20 took a tour of Scotland. He visited the ruins of Holyrood Castle in Edinburgh and was profoundly moved by what he saw. Writing his sister in Berlin, he said, "In the deep twilight, we went to the palace where Queen Mary Stuart lived and loved. The chapel is now roofless and thick with grass and ivy. Before this ruined altar, Mary was crowned Queen of Scotland. Everything around is broken and rotting, and the bright sky shines in. I think that I found the beginning of my Scottish Symphony there today."

It took him another thirteen years to complete, but the symphony seems imbued

with Scottish character and history. The grand sweep of the melancholy opening movement builds to a violent storm scene in the coda (the kind of weather Mendelssohn might have had on the windswept Hebrides Islands). The second movement's pentatonic clarinet tune with the Scottish snap (sixteenth followed by dotted eighth) has the jaunty character of a Scottish jig. The deeply felt slow movement alternates between an achingly beautiful song without words and a proud stoic march to execution (Mary Queen of Scots' fate at the hands of her cousin Queen Elizabeth I of England?). The finale is a grand battle scene, the drama subsiding to a lonely, ghostly clarinet (the destruction-strewn field after the battle?), followed by a striking triumphal coda (the victorious soldiers and their families?). All this is speculation, but the narrative fits the music and history, and is a portal into one of the masterpieces of early German Romanticism. – Hugh Wolff

NEC Philharmonia

Hugh Wolff, conductor

First Violin

K. J. McDonald
Harin Kang
Passacaglia Mason
Mitsuru Yonezaki
SooBeen Lee
Michael Fisher
Hannah Park
Emma Boyd
Yebin Yoo
Julian Rhee
Sydney Scarlett
Caroline Smoak

Second Violin

Hannah Kim
Joshua Brown
Hyeon Hong
June Chung
Darwin Chang
Hila Dahari
Gabriella Foster
Jordan Hadrill
Ioan-Octavian Pirlea
Eunha Kim
Minami Yoshida
Chiung-Han Tsai

Viola

Bram Fisher
Nathan Emans
Asher Boorstin
Sachin Shukla
Joy Hsieh
Jowen Hsu
Philip Rawlinson
Yeh-Chun Lin
Anna Mann
Daeun Hong

Cello

Shannon Ross
Miruna Eynon
Isaac Pagano-Toub
Rachel Lin
Andres Sanchez
Max Zhenren Zhao
Nicholas Tsang Man To
Lily Uijin Gwak

Bass

Luke Tsuchiya
Isabel Atkinson
Cailin Singleton
Alyssa Peterson
Gregory Padilla

Flute

Anne Chao
Shengyu Cui ‡
Isabel Evernham §
Jungyoon Kim *

Piccolo

Anne Chao *
Isabel Evernham ‡

Oboe

Dane Bennett §
Kian Hirayama
Abigail Hope-Hull ‡
Sojeong Kim
Alexander Lenser *

Clarinet

Xianyi Ji *§
Phoebe Kuan ‡

E-flat Clarinet

Phoebe Kuan

Bass Clarinet

Dillon Acey

Bassoon

Zoe Beck ‡
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 Erik Paul
 Julien Rollins §

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Jakob Schoenfeld ‡
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Yoonsu Cha

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Daniel Barak
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 Cody York §

Principal players

* Wennäkoski
 ‡ Bartók
 § Mendelssohn

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Our thanks to Zenas Hsu, Noriko Futagami, Guy Fishman,
 and Anthony D'Amico for their work in preparing the orchestra
 for this evening's concert.

Our gratitude to Jacob Joyce for conducting two rehearsals for this program on short
 notice. Jacob is a 2017 MM graduate of NEC and is currently the Associate Conductor
 of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

Hugh Wolff

*Stanford and Norma Jean Calderwood Director of Orchestras;
Chair, Orchestral Conducting*

Hugh Wolff joined the New England Conservatory faculty in 2008 and has conducted a large share of NEC's orchestral concerts every year since then. He has taught graduate students in an elite training program for orchestral conductors since 2009.

Wolff has appeared with all the major American orchestras, including those of Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Cleveland. He is much in demand in Europe, where he has conducted the London Symphony, the Philharmonia, the City of Birmingham Symphony, the Orchestre National de France, Czech Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Munich Philharmonic, and the Bavarian and Berlin Radio Orchestras. A regular guest conductor with orchestras in Japan, Korea, Scandinavia, Canada and Australia, he is also a frequent conductor at summer festivals.

Currently Laureate Conductor of the Belgian National Orchestra, Wolff was principal conductor of the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra from 1997 to 2006 and maintains a close relationship with that ensemble. He led it on tours of Europe, Japan, and China, and at the Salzburg Festival. Wolff was principal conductor and then music director of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (1988-2000), with which he recorded twenty discs and toured the United States, Europe, and Japan. Performances with the Boston Symphony have included the world premiere of Ned Rorem's *Swords and Ploughshares* in Symphony Hall. Wolff was music director of the New Jersey Symphony (1986-1993) and principal conductor of Chicago's Grant Park Music Festival (1994-1997). He began his professional career in 1979 as associate conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra under Mstislav Rostropovich.

Wolff's extensive discography includes the complete Beethoven symphonies with the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra and music from the baroque to the present. He has recorded or premiered works by John Adams, Stephen Albert, John Corigliano, Brett Dean, Lukas Foss, John Harbison, Aaron Jay Kernis, Edgar Meyer, Rodion Shchedrin, Bright Sheng, Michael Torke, Mark-Anthony Turnage, and Joan Tower and has collaborated on CD with Mstislav Rostropovich, Yo-Yo Ma, Steven Isserlis, Joshua Bell, Hilary Hahn, Dawn Upshaw, Jennifer Larmore, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and jazz guitarist John Scofield. Three times nominated for a Grammy Award, Wolff won the 2001 Cannes Classical Award.

A graduate of Harvard College, Wolff studied piano with George Crumb, Leon Fleisher and Leonard Shure, composition with Leon Kirchner and Olivier Messiaen, and conducting with Charles Bruck. In 1985, Wolff was awarded one of the first Seaver/ National Endowment for the Arts Conducting Prizes.

A gift from the Calderwood Charitable Foundation endowed the Stanford and Norma Jean Calderwood Director of Orchestras chair now occupied by Hugh Wolff.

He and his wife, harpist and radio journalist Judith Kogan, have three sons.

Symphonic Music at New England Conservatory

Stanford and Norma Jean Calderwood Director of Orchestras Hugh Wolff is joined by Associate Director of Orchestras David Loebel, Chamber Orchestra founder Donald Palma, and a rich array of guest conductors and coaches for dozens of FREE orchestral concerts in NEC's Jordan Hall this year.

Visit **necmusic.edu** for complete and updated concert information:

NEC SYMPHONY, David Loebel, conductor

Dawson *Negro Folk Symphony*; Beethoven *Overture to Fidelio*;

Copland *Suite from Appalachian Spring*

Thursday, February 1, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

PUCCINI: *La Bohème*

performed by NEC Opera students and members of NEC Philharmonia;

Steven Goldstein, director; Robert Tweten, conductor

Monday & Wednesday, February 5 & 7, 2024, 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

NEC CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, Donald Palma, artistic director

Herbert *Elegy*; Mozart *Divertimento for Oboe, Two Horns and Strings*;

Bartók *Divertimento*

Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

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