



2022-23 Season

Curtis Symphony Orchestra Presents “Perry, Tchaikovsky, and Sheng” at Verizon Hall and Immaculata University

Emmy Award-winning, GRAMMY-nominated conductor Miguel Harth-Bedoya ('91) leads the Curtis Symphony Orchestra in an unforgettable afternoon of firsts and favorites

PHILADELPHIA, PA—January 12, 2023—The **Curtis Symphony Orchestra**'s 2022–23 season continues on **Sunday, January 29, 2023, at 2 p.m.** with “**Perry, Tchaikovsky, and Sheng**” in Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center. The program features an afternoon of firsts and favorites with a powerful romantic classic, an exhilarating world premiere viola concerto, and an orchestral tour de force under the batons of Emmy Award-winning, Grammy-nominated conductor **Miguel Harth-Bedoya** ('91) and first-year student **Micah Gleason**, Curtis's Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellow. An additional performance takes place in Alumnae Hall at **Immaculata University** on **Saturday, January 28, at 2 p.m.**

Curtis kicks off the program with neoclassical composer, pianist, and conductor **Julia Perry**'s dynamic *Study for Orchestra* (originally titled *A Short Piece for Orchestra* when it premiered in Turin, Italy, in 1952). This fiercely raucous, high-octane work shifts gears between intensely dramatic moments reminiscent of a menacing Bernard Hermann film score and quiet, poetic passages. In 1965, Perry's energetic piece made history as the first work by a woman of color to be performed and recorded by the New York Philharmonic and only the third by a female composer.

Facing sexism and racial discrimination in a pre-Civil Rights world, as well as significant personal health issues, Perry was an inspiring trailblazer who left behind an extraordinary body of work when she died at age 55, with over a dozen symphonies, two concertos, and three operas. Although her compositions have been largely neglected until recent years, Perry's work is primed for audience rediscovery and celebration.

The concert continues with *Of Time and Love* by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer, conductor, and pianist **Bright Sheng**. Co-commissioned with the Suzhou Symphony Orchestra of China, this exciting new concerto for viola and orchestra features the virtuosity of internationally acclaimed violist **Roberto Díaz** ('84), president of Curtis. Hailed by the MacArthur Foundation as “an innovative composer who merges diverse

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musical customs in works that transcend conventional aesthetic boundaries,” Sheng’s new work will showcase the lyrical, limpid melodies and striking dramatic gestures that have made him one of the most sought-after composers of our time.

“I have always had a soft spot in my heart for the viola, particularly for its variety of characters, from the sweet and lyrical to the rough and dramatic,” says Sheng. “This work is also inspired by the fine musicianship of Roberto Díaz, an artist who is both virtuosic and exceptionally musical. I was happy to have the opportunity to write a viola concerto; I made sure the instrument would express its entire range of traits, and the solo part would sing throughout the composition. The work was written during the thick of the pandemic, which reset everyone’s complacency. When human life becomes fragile, only love is timeless.”

The final portion of the program is dedicated to **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**’s explosive Symphony No. 4, often considered one of the Russian Romantic composer’s greatest orchestral works. Written in the aftermath of a short-lived, catastrophic marriage that almost destroyed his creative core, this dark and powerful piece depicts an epic battle between unbridled joy and fate, an ominous, inescapable force that threatens the delicate beauty of life itself. Over four intensely dramatic movements, the audience is drawn into Tchaikovsky’s turbulent mind as he grapples with the torment of his inner demons and triumphs in a finale of musical fireworks, proclaiming that we all should “rejoice in the happiness of others.”

Celebrating more than 30 years of professional conducting, **Miguel Harth-Bedoya** has recently concluded tenures as chief conductor of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra (seven seasons) and as music director of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra (20 seasons), where he now holds the title of music director laureate. With a deep commitment to passing his experience on to the next generation of musicians, he is currently the Mary Franks Thompson Director of Orchestral Studies at Baylor University, where in addition to conducting the orchestras, he teaches orchestral conducting at the undergraduate and graduate level. He has also established the Conducting Institute to teach the fundamentals of conducting to students ages high school and up, of all levels, through an intensive summer program, workshops, courses, and seminars. Previously he was the director of orchestral studies at the University of Nebraska, Omaha.

Harth-Bedoya conducts orchestras worldwide such as the Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Atlanta Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, BBC Orchestra, Birmingham Orchestra, National Orchestra of Spain, New Zealand Symphony, Sydney Symphony, Melbourne Symphony, NHK Symphony, and Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, among others.

Harth-Bedoya has an impressive discography of more than 25 recordings, including critically acclaimed albums on Harmonia Mundi, Deutsche Grammophon, Decca, LAWO, Naxos, and MSR Classics. He is the artistic and managing director of Caminos del Inka, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the rich musical legacy of the Americas. Born and raised in Peru, Harth-Bedoya received his Bachelor of Music degree from the Curtis Institute of Music and his Master of Music degree from the Juilliard School, both under the guidance of Otto-Werner Mueller.

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A violist of international reputation, **Roberto Díaz** is president and CEO of the Curtis Institute of Music, following in the footsteps of renowned soloist/directors such as Josef Hofmann, Efrem Zimbalist, and Rudolf Serkin. As a teacher of viola at Curtis and former principal viola of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Mr. Díaz has already had a significant impact on American musical life and continues to do so in his dual roles as performer and educator.

As a soloist, Mr. Díaz collaborates with leading conductors of our time on stages throughout North and South America, Europe, and Asia. He has also worked directly with important 20th- and 21st-century composers, including Krzysztof Penderecki—whose viola concerto he has performed many times with the composer on the podium and whose double concerto he premiered in the United States—as well as Edison Denisov, Ricardo Lorenz, and Roberto Sierra, among others.

As a frequent recitalist, Mr. Díaz enjoys collaborating with young pianists, bringing a fresh approach to the repertoire, and providing invaluable opportunities to artists at the beginnings of their careers. In addition to performing with major string quartets and pianists in chamber music series and festivals worldwide, Mr. Díaz has toured Europe, Asia, and the Americas as a member of the Díaz Trio with violinist Andrés Cárdenes and cellist Andrés Díaz. The Díaz Trio has recorded for the Artek and Dorian labels.

Mr. Díaz received an honorary doctorate from Bowdoin College and was awarded an honorary membership by the National Board of the American Viola Society. In 2013 he became a member of the prestigious American Philosophical Society founded by Benjamin Franklin. As a member of the Philadelphia Orchestra, he was selected by then-music director Christoph Eschenbach to receive the C. Hartman Kuhn Award, given annually to “the member of the Philadelphia Orchestra who has shown ability and enterprise of such character as to enhance the standards and the reputation of the Philadelphia Orchestra.” He received a bachelor’s degree from the New England Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Burton Fine; and a diploma from the Curtis Institute of Music, where his teacher was his predecessor at the Philadelphia Orchestra, Joseph de Pasquale. Mr. Díaz also holds a degree in industrial design.

In addition to his decade-long tenure as principal viola of the Philadelphia Orchestra, where he performed the entire standard viola concerto repertoire and gave a number of Philadelphia Orchestra premieres, Mr. Díaz was principal viola of the National Symphony under Mstislav Rostropovich, a member of the Boston Symphony under Seiji Ozawa, and a member of the Minnesota Orchestra under Sir Neville Marriner. He plays the ex-Primrose Amati viola.

Acclaimed for its “otherworldly ensemble and professional level of sophistication” (*The New York Times*), the **Curtis Symphony Orchestra** offers a dynamic showcase of tomorrow’s exceptional young talent. Each year the 100 extraordinary musicians of the orchestra work with internationally renowned conductors, including Osmo Vänskä, Vladimir Jurowski, Marin Alsop, Simon Rattle, Robert Spano, and Yannick Nézet Séguin, who also mentors the early-career conductors who hold Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellowships. This professional training has enabled Curtis alumni to assume prominent positions in America’s leading orchestras, as well as esteemed orchestral, opera, and chamber ensembles around the world.

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The Curtis Symphony Orchestra returns to Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center on Saturday, April 15, at 3 p.m. for the final performance of the 2022–23 season (“Mahler, Schumann, and Ra”) featuring conductor Osmo Vänskä and acclaimed pianist Amy Yang (’06). To learn more about this performance, as well as the Curtis Opera Theatre, Ensemble 20/21 concerts, Curtis Recital Series, and more, visit **[Curtis.edu/Calendar](https://www.curtis.edu/Calendar)**.

Single tickets start at \$19 and are available for purchase at **[Curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu)**. Subscriptions are on sale for Curtis’s 2022–23 season. The flexible Choose Your Own subscription option offers 25% off ticket prices when purchasing tickets to two or more performances. Curtis is also offering a new Season Pass, providing access to all remaining performances in the 2022–23 season for \$99 per person. To order a subscription, visit **[Curtis.edu/Subscribe](https://www.curtis.edu/Subscribe)**, call (215) 893-7902, or email **tickets@curtis.edu**.

About the Curtis Institute of Music

The **Curtis Institute of Music** educates and trains exceptionally gifted young musicians to engage a local and global community through the highest level of artistry. For nearly a century Curtis has provided each member of its small student body with an unparalleled education alongside musical peers, distinguished by a “learn by doing” philosophy and personalized attention from a faculty that includes a high proportion of actively performing musicians. With admissions based solely on artistic promise, no student is turned away due to financial need. Curtis invests in each admitted student, ensuring no tuition is charged for their studies and they enter the profession free from educational debt. In a typical year, Curtis students hone their craft through more than 200 orchestra, opera, and solo and chamber music offerings in Philadelphia and around the world. Learn more at **[Curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu)**.

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CURTIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Perry, Tchaikovsky, and Sheng

Saturday, January 28, 2023, at 2 p.m.

Alumnae Hall, Immaculata University, 1145 King Road, Immaculata, Pa.

Sunday, January 29, 2023, at 2 p.m.

Verizon Hall, Kimmel Center, Broad and Spruce Streets, Philadelphia

Miguel Harth-Bedoya, conductor

Micah Gleason, Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellow

PROGRAM

JULIA PERRY

Study for Orchestra

BRIGHT SHENG

Of Time and Love, Concerto for Viola and Orchestra

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Symphony No. 4

Tickets

Immaculata single tickets: \$19, sold by Curtis Patron Services at **Curtis.edu/Performances**, or (215) 893-7902.

Philadelphia single tickets: \$19–55, sold by the Kimmel Center Box Office at **KimmelCulturalCampus.org**, or (215) 893-1999.

Orchestral concerts are supported by the Jack Wolgin Curtis Orchestral Concerts Endowment Fund.

Guest conductor appearances for each Curtis Symphony Orchestra performance are made possible by the Rita E. and Gustave M. Hauser Chair in Conducting Studies.

Bright Sheng's Of Time and Love is commissioned by the Curtis Institute of Music for the Curtis Symphony Orchestra and Roberto Díaz, with support from Bridget Baird, Brenda Baird Senturia, Robert B. Downing and the Downing Family Foundation in cooperation with the Apollo Orchestra, and Allen R. and Judy Brick Freedman. Co-commissioned with the Suzhou Symphony Orchestra of China.

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