



**CURTIS**  
INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

# **ENSEMBLE**

## **20/21**



**PORTRAIT OF**  
**AARON JAY KERNIS**

**2022-23 SEASON**

**MADE WITH LOVE**

**CURTIS INSTITUTE OF MUSIC**  
**2022-23 SEASON**

*Made with Love*

x

**Ensemble 20/21**

Nick DiBerardino, director

*Portrait of Aaron Jay Kernis*

Saturday, March 25, 2023, at 8:00 p.m.

Gould Rehearsal Hall

x

**PROGRAM**

*Earth* (2020-21 chamber version) East Coast premiere

AARON JAY KERNIS

Seasons

(b. 1960)

Farewell

Laurence Kilsby, tenor  
Xiaoxi Annie Li, flute and piccolo  
Cameron Slaton, oboe  
Martina Adams, horn

Zhenyi Jiang, violin  
Dillon Scott, viola  
Jiayin He, cello  
Thomas Weaver, piano

Sarah Ioannides ('98), conductor

**INTERMISSION**

*Goblin Market* (1995) Philadelphia premiere

KERNIS

Ashley Marie Robillard (Voice '18, Opera '20), narrator

Julin Cheung, piccolo and alto flute

Zachary Thomas, percussion

Oliver Talukder, oboe

Griffin Harrison, percussion

Izaiah Cheeran, English horn

Hamza Able, percussion

Yejin Ahn, clarinet, Eb clarinet

Thomas Weaver, piano

Tzu-Yi Yu, bass clarinet

Jacques Forestier, violin

Preston Atkins, bassoon

Soyoung Cho, viola

Nicholas Ivy, horn

Elliot Sloss, cello

Raúl Orellana, trumpet

Christian Luevano, double bass

Sarah Ioannides ('98), conductor

x

## PROGRAM NOTES

By Aaron Jay Kernis

### *Earth*

*Earth* is a work about what is likely the most important issue of our time.

The two movements are a story, and a song. The first, “Seasons,” is a story of a farmer and the land on which he lives, works, and raises his family—a microcosm of our own lives on this ground we call home. This text is by poet, sustainable farmer, and researcher Kai Hoffman-Krull, who lives and farms near Seattle. I came to know him first as a Yale poet (I teach at Yale School of Music) and followed his work with composer Michael Gilbertson before suggesting we collaborate together.

The second movement, “Farewell,” is a song on an excerpt of *Tintern Abbey* (from 1798), a poem by William Wordsworth, who wrote passionately and powerfully about his love of nature.

Writing the work began as a homage to Gustav Mahler’s late song cycle, *Das Lied von Der Erde* (*The Song of the Earth*), a work I love deeply. Its last movement is titled “The Farewell (Der Abschied),” and is a rhapsodic, pensive and deeply spiritual farewell to earthly life. The instrumentation of *Earth* particularly highlights instruments that Mahler himself featured prominently in this work—flute, oboe, and horn, along with extensive string solos.

This work is additionally inspired by the rare artistry of tenor Nicholas Phan, for whom it was written, and by the artistic venue Tippet Rise. Tippet Rise is on hundreds of acres of protected, exquisite, ruggedly beautiful land in Montana, founded by Peter and Cathy Halstead. The original chamber version of this work was commissioned by them as part of a three-work project that they, with great generosity, commissioned from me in recent years.

### *Goblin Market*

The idea to set Christina Rossetti’s essential poem “Goblin Market” first came to me in 1989 when I discovered it as I searched poetry sections in bookshops for inspiration. I came across the Dover edition of the text with Lawrence Housman’s illustrations and was hooked.

A few years later I was asked by the Birmingham (U.K.) Contemporary Music Group for a work, and the connection between the Pre-Raphaelite artists in the background of the Rosetti and the Birmingham area made this poem leap back into my mind. I wrote this large work for BCMG in 1995, and it was first produced with staging by the Trestle Mime Company and presented on a multi-stop tour of England.

At the time of writing the work the AIDS epidemic was at its height. Certainly the parallels between the poisoning at the heart of the text made the urgency to set it feel even more palpable. As I read more in the growing body of post-Freudian scholarship about the Goblin Market poem, it became far less possible to read the text purely as a children’s story. The 20th century readings of the text I explored viewed it as suffused with elements of latent sensuality and sexuality, issues of male and female power and control, tensions between free and religious morality, freedoms for women within a

straitjacketed society, and a whole host of metaphors related to Christina Rossetti's sheltered life within the context of Victorian social mores.

Ultimately my delight in this tale of the two sisters, Laura and Lizzie and the gaggle of goblins led my musical imagination in composing this work. It is undoubtedly influenced by 19th century music dramas, using recurring musical motives which represent characters, action and psychological states throughout.

The work is scored for narrator, flute, oboe, English horn, two clarinets and bass clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, piano, percussion and string quartet.

## ABOUT AARON JAY KERNIS

Pulitzer Prize and Grammy award-winning composer Aaron Jay Kernis draws artistic inspiration from a vast and often surprising palette of sources. One of America's most honored composers, he has also won the Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition, and Nemmers Award, and his music appears on major musical stages world-wide, performed and commissioned by many of America's foremost artists, including; the New York and London Philharmonics; The Philadelphia Orchestra; San Francisco, St. Louis, Toronto, Singapore, and Melbourne symphonies; Los Angeles, Orpheus and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestras; Walt Disney Company; Rose Center for Earth and Space at New York's American Museum of Natural History; Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and soloists including Renee Fleming, Dawn Upshaw, Joshua Bell, James Ehnes, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, and Sharon Isbin. Recent premieres have included his Fourth Symphony ("Chromelodeon") for the New England Conservatory's 150th anniversary and Nashville Symphony; concerti for cellist Joshua Roman, violist Paul Neubauer, and flutist Marina Piccinini; a work for the Borromeo String Quartet; a series of works for Tippet Rise Art Center; and a piece for the San Francisco Girls and Brooklyn Youth Choruses with The Knights for the New York Philharmonic Biennial. Most recently he scored and produced a film, *Elegy for those we lost*, with filmmaker Esther Shubinski for victims of COVID-19 and their families. Recently Mr. Kernis wrote an oratorio, *Edensongs*, with poet and translator Peter Cole for Yale's Schola chorus and San Francisco's Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra.

His works have been recorded on Nonesuch, Koch, Onyx, Naxos, Signum, Cedille, Virgin and Argo, with which Mr. Kernis had an exclusive recording contract, and many other labels. Recent recordings include his "Chromelodeon" with the Nashville Symphony, his works for flute with Marin Alsop and Leonard Slatkin with the Peabody Symphony and his Grammy-award-winning violin concerto for James Ehnes with Ludovic Morlot and the Seattle Symphony.

He is the workshop director of the Nashville Symphony Composer Lab and, for 15 years, served as new music adviser to the Minnesota Orchestra, with which he co-founded and directed its Composer Institute for 11 years. Mr. Kernis teaches composition at Yale School of Music, and was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Classical Music Hall of Fame. Leta Miller's book-length portrait of Mr. Kernis and his work was published by University of Illinois Press as part of its American Composer series.

## FEATURED ARTISTS

### **Sarah Ioannides ('98), conductor**

The Music Director of Symphony Tacoma, Sarah Ioannides is the newly appointed Resident Conductor of NYOUSA, and maintains an extensive and international reputation as a guest conductor, speaker and adjudicator. Described by the *New York Times* as a conductor with “unquestionable strength and authority,” she has gained recognition for her passionate performances, multifaceted leadership and creativity in programming and multimedia productions.

Internationally, Ms. Ioannides has conducted on six continents with orchestras including the Tonkünstler, the Royal Philharmonic, Orchestre Nationale de Lyon, Malmö Symphony Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony, the Flemish Radio, and Bilbao Symphony.

Ms. Ioannides began her career with the Cincinnati Symphony, becoming the first woman appointed to a full-time conducting position there and has since conducted extensively in the U.S. including with the Buffalo Philharmonic, Louisville Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic, and the symphonies of Charleston, Hawai'i, North Carolina, Tulsa, and Toledo.

A great advocate for new music, Ms. Ioannides has conducted and curated over 60 world, North American, and European premieres, and has recorded world premieres with Nordic Chamber Orchestra, Malmö Symphony, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Equally at home with opera and choral repertoire, she has led many opera productions and conducted at festivals worldwide, including the European premiere of Stephen Paulus's *The Woodlanders*, and Australian and Greek premieres of Tan Dun's *Water Passion After St. Matthew*.

Enthusiastic about education, Sarah is the founding artistic director of Cascade Conducting & Composing, now in its sixth year, which supports diversity on the podium through generous scholarships. Ms. Ioannides also continues to conduct conservatory orchestras such as Yale University, the Jacobs School of Music, and the Curtis Institute of Music.

Born in Australia of Greek and Scottish descent, Ms. Ioannides was raised in England, studied at Oxford University on an instrumental scholarship, attended the Guildhall School and the Juilliard School, earning two master's degrees. Ioannides came to the U.S. first as a Fulbright Scholar and graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music where she studied with the late Otto-Werner Mueller.

### **Laurence Kilsby, tenor**

Noted in the London *Times* as “a young singer to watch,” Laurence Kilsby is a member of the Académie at Opéra National de Paris this season. He was recently awarded first prizes at the 2022 Wigmore Hall/Bollinger International Song Competition and the 2022 Cesti Competition at the Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik. This season sees Laurence in a revival of *L'incoronazione di Poppea* at the Royal Opéra of Versailles, the Paris Opera Académie's production of *La Scala di Seta* at the Théâtre Athénée, as well as various recitals in Paris, Venice, Heidelberg and Saarbrücken. An alumnus of the Ravinia Steans Music Institute, Renée Fleming's SongStudio at Carnegie Hall, the Curtis Institute of Music, and the Royal College of Music, he regularly studies under tenor, Jack LiVigni.

### **Ashley Marie Robillard (Voice '18, Opera '20), narrator**

An alumna of the Merola Opera Program, Wolf Trap Opera, and Opera Philadelphia's Emerging Artist Program, Ashley Robillard (Voice '18, Opera '20) received her Master of Music degree in opera and Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance from the Curtis Institute of Music in 2020 and 2018, respectively.

Performance highlights at the Curtis include Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Musetta (*La bohème*), Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), Bianca (*La rondine*), Lucia (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Barbarina (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Jessie (*Mahagonny: ein Songspiel*), and Pousette (*Manon*). She also presented many recitals in the Curtis Recital Series with repertoire ranging from Pallestrina to Rorem.

### **Thomas Weaver, musical studies faculty**

Thomas Weaver is a composer and pianist, as well as an active chamber musician, currently a member of the Amram Ensemble and New England Chamber Players. Mr. Weaver's compositions have been performed by ensembles including the Boston University Symphony Orchestra, Daraja Ensemble, Alea III, and the Mannes American Composers Ensemble. Mr. Weaver holds a Master of Music degree in piano performance and composition from Mannes College, and studied piano and composition at Boston University. He joined the Curtis faculty in 2015.

## MUSICIANS

**Hamza Able**, from Jacksonville, Fla., and Casablanca, Morocco, a student of Ji Su Jung, Don Liuzzi, and Eric Millstein, is the Harry L. and Cecilia F. Slavin Fellow and entered Curtis in 2020.

**Martina Adams**, from Philadelphia, a student of Jeffrey Lang and Jennifer Montone, is the Thomas and Patricia Vernon Fellow and entered Curtis in 2019.

**Yejin Ahn**, from Seoul, a student of Anthony McGill, is the Felix Meyer Fellow and entered Curtis in 2019.

**Preston Atkins**, from Cedar Falls, Iowa, a student of Daniel Matsukawa, is a Curtis Institute of Music Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

**Izaiah Cheeran**, from Apple Valley, Minn., a student of Katherine Needleman and Philippe Tondre, is a Curtis Institute of Music Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

**Julin Cheung**, from Seattle, a student of Jeffrey Khaner, is the Gerry and Marguerite Lenfest Fellow and entered Curtis in 2020.

**Soyoung Cho**, from Seoul, a student of Misha Amory and Edward Gazouleas, is the Reamur and Mary Corrin Winston Fellow and first entered Curtis in 2017.

**Jacques Forestier**, from Edmonton, Alberta, a student of Shmuel Ashkenasi and Pamela Frank, is the Thomas D. Watkins Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

**Griffin Harrison**, from Rochester, N.Y., a student of Ji Su Jung, Don Liuzzi, and Eric Millstein, is the Elaine W. Camarda and A. Morris Williams, Jr. Fellow and entered Curtis in 2021.

**Jiayin He**, from Shanghai, a student of Gary Hoffman and Peter Wiley, is the Demeng Foundation Fellow and entered Curtis in 2018.

**Nicholas Ivy**, from Seminole, Fla., a student of Jeffrey Lang and Jennifer Montone, is the Alice Madge and William J. Middleton Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

**Zhenyi Jiang**, from Beijing, a student of Midori, is the Joseph and Marie Field Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

**Xiaoxi Annie Li**, from Beijing, a student of Jeffrey Khaner, is the Huldah Bender Kerner, M.D., Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

**Christian Luevano**, from Denton, Texas, a student of Edgar Meyer and Harold Hall Robinson, is the Albert M. Greenfield Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

**Raúl Orellana**, from Parkland, Fla., a student of David Bilger, is the Abigail Rebecca Zubrow Cohen Memorial Fellow and entered Curtis in 2019.

**Dillon Scott**, from Lansdale, Pa., a student of Roberto Diaz and Edward Gazouleas, is the Mark E. Rubenstein Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

**Cameron Slaton**, from Franklin, Ohio, a student of Katherine Needleman and Philippe Tondre, is the Laura and Bill Buck Fellow and entered Curtis in 2020.

**Elliot Sloss**, from Toronto, a student of Gary Hoffman and Peter Wiley, is the Peter King Fellow and entered Curtis in 2021.

**Oliver Talukder**, from Glenview, Ill., a student of Katherine Needleman and Philippe Tondre, is the Joseph F. Baker and William S. Mulherin Fellow and entered Curtis in 2020.

**Zachary Thomas**, from Tucson, Ariz., a student of Ji Su Jung, Don Liuzzi, and Eric Millstein, is a Curtis Institute of Music Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

**Tzu-Yi Yu**, from Taoyuan City, Taiwan, a student of Anthony McGill, is a Curtis Institute of Music Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

If students study with more than one faculty member, their teachers are listed alphabetically.

## ABOUT ENSEMBLE 20/21

Ensemble 20/21's repertoire features works from the 20th and 21st centuries. With bold collaborations and striking productions, Ensemble 20/21 embraces the cutting edge of contemporary classical music through the highest level of artistry.

*Generous support for Ensemble 20/21 is provided by the Daniel W. Dietrich II Foundation.*

Learn more and discover upcoming concerts at [Curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu)

x

Follow us @CurtisInstitute:



Unauthorized use of cameras and recording devices is prohibited in Gould Rehearsal Hall. Please switch off cell phones, pagers, watch alarms, and any other electronic devices. Recitals are professionally recorded for educational use and possible broadcast.