



CURTIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

APRIL 15, 2023



2022
2023
SEASON
MADE WITH LOVE

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ABOUT CURTIS

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 makes an investment in the artistic potential of its students, providing them with full-tuition scholarships and need-based grants for living expenses to ensure that each student can enter the profession without educational debt.

In a typical year, Curtis students hone their craft through more than 200 orchestra, opera, and solo and chamber music offerings and programs that bring arts access and education to the community. This real-world training allows these extraordinary young musicians to join the front rank of performers, composers, conductors, and musical leaders, making a profound impact on music onstage and in their communities.

To learn more, visit **Curtis.edu**.



ABOUT THE CURTIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Acclaimed for its “otherworldly ensemble and professional level of sophistication” (*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.



WELCOME

Dear Friends,

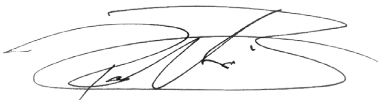
Thank you so much for joining us for today's Curtis Symphony Orchestra performance—our final Verizon Hall concert of the 2022–23 season.

The annual closing concert is always special, representing the culmination of our orchestra's work together over the school year. But this moment is especially poignant for the students who will be graduating in just a few weeks because this marks the last time they will play together in Verizon Hall as a member of the Curtis orchestra. I am so very proud of them, and look forward to seeing all they will accomplish as Curtis alumni.

Although this is the final orchestra concert in Philadelphia this year, we have a number of other performances in the coming weeks. In addition to the dozens of free recitals our students will perform over the final weeks of the semester, Curtis Opera Theatre presents George Frideric Handel's *Ariodante* from May 4 through 7 at the Perelman Theater with members of Tempesta di Mare—Philadelphia's self-led baroque orchestra. And we hope you consider coming out to Longwood Gardens on May 12 for a special Curtis Symphony Orchestra concert that kicks off our first-ever U.S. West Coast tour.

Of course, all of these performances are made possible thanks to the generous support of friends like you. We are immensely grateful for the time and resources that you invest in our students and our school. Thank you for all you do for Curtis.

All my very best,



Roberto Díaz (Viola '84)
PRESIDENT

Nina von Maltzahn President's Chair
James and Betty Matarese Chair in Viola Studies



Curtis Symphony Orchestra

PRESENTS

PERRY, SCHUMANN, AND MAHLER

Osmo Vänskä, *conductor*

Micah Gleason, *Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellow*

Amy Yang ('06), *piano*

Saturday, April 15, 2023

at 3:00 p.m.

Verizon Hall, Kimmel Center

The concert runs approximately 2 hours, including one intermission.

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.

Photographic and recording equipment may not be used in Verizon Hall.

PROGRAM

JULIA PERRY

Study for Orchestra

Micah Gleason, *conductor*

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54

Allegro affettuoso

Intermezzo: Andantino grazioso

Allegro vivace

Osmo Vänskä, *conductor*

Intermission

GUSTAV MAHLER

Symphony No. 1 in D major (“Titan”)

Langsam schleppend

Kräftig bewegt

Feierlich und gemessen

Stürmisch bewegt

Osmo Vänskä, *conductor*

Study for Orchestra by Julia Perry, published by Peermusic Classical, is used by arrangement with Subito Music Corporation.

Symphony No. 1 in D major by Gustav Mahler, published by Universal Edition, is used by arrangement with European American Music.

PROGRAM NOTES

Study for Orchestra

Julia Perry (1924-79)

Julia Perry's life was an American marvel and an American tragedy. That the Kentucky-born composer was one of the most significant classical musicians of her generation is obvious, not just from the handful of scores that are extant, but from the esteem with which her contemporaries regarded her—and this within an establishment that had, up to that time, barely acknowledged the contributions of Black composers, much less those by women. Her death by stroke at age 55 stands as a great loss for our nation's music: The neglect of her music, and of that by other Black Americans, remains a national stain that has only recently begun to be addressed.

Perry's father was a physician and her mother a schoolteacher: Both were gifted pianists and encouraged vigorous musical education among their five daughters. Julia, the fourth, was raised mostly in Akron, Ohio, where early on she proved herself a bit of wunderkind, especially as a singer, violinist, and composer. From 1943 to 1948 she attended Westminster Choir College, where she completed bachelor's and master's degrees, completing the latter course with a secular cantata *Chicago*, on Carl Sandburg texts.

During the early 1950s, Perry lived in New York, took courses at the Juilliard School, and studied voice at the Curtis Institute of Music. A conductor friend introduced her to Luigi Dallapiccola, with whom she studied composition in 1951 at the Tanglewood Music Center and later in Italy. Among her many prizes were two Guggenheim Fellowships, which she used for study in Europe. After spending several years overseas, she returned to the United States to teach at Florida A&M University and Atlanta University.

Just as important as the serialist techniques that Perry absorbed from Dallapiccola were her studies, during the mid-1950s, with Nadia Boulanger at the American Academy

in Fontainebleau. (There she was awarded the Prix Fontainebleau for a viola sonata.) The style that emerged demonstrates a dramatically conceived melodic style, clarity of counterpoint and texture, and a harmonic language that deftly fuses diatonic and serial principles.

Perry's *Stabat Mater* appeared in 1951 and was performed widely, and her opera *The Cask of Amontillado* was presented at Columbia University in 1954. Other works including a *Requiem for Orchestra*, large-scale operas based on the Salem witchcraft trials and on Oscar Wilde's *The Selfish Giant*, concertos for violin and piano, *Homunculus C.F.* (for percussion, harp, and piano, inspired by Goethe's *Faust*), and *Three Spirituals for Orchestra*.

Perry suffered the first of two strokes in 1971. Gradually learning to write with her left hand, she composed prolifically for her few remaining years. In all, she produced 12 symphonies, three operas, and a wide range of vocal music including works inspired by spirituals. Sadly, only a handful of her works were published or recorded: A large portion of her output remains lost or inaccessible—a ripe area for enterprising musicologists.

Study for Orchestra from 1965 (also known as *Short Piece for Orchestra*) was originally performed and recorded by the New York Philharmonic and conductor William Steinberg. It is a vigorous miniature “symphonic poem,” with arching gestures, rich orchestral textures, and broad dramatic scope that all reveal a composer in full command.

—Paul Horsley

8 minutes ♦ 1 movement

Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54

Robert Schumann (1810–56)

One of the most widely performed and recorded piano concertos in the Romantic repertoire, Robert Schumann's challenging, immensely rewarding Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54—the only piano concerto he composed during his lifetime—forgoes pyrotechnic displays of virtuosity for subtlety, poise, and precision, flitting between elegant dreamlike passages and bold rhythmic syncopations that culminate in an exhilarating finale. Composed during a brief two-week period in May of 1841, the first movement of this iconic work originated as a Phantasie in A minor for piano and orchestra. Revised and expanded in the summer of 1845, with two additional movements, the Concerto premiered on December 4 at a Gewandhaus concert in Dresden, featuring his wife Clara Schumann as piano soloist and Ferdinand Hiller (the piece's dedicatee) at the podium. Struck by the almost conversational degree to which the piano and the orchestra interact—instead of the prevailing structure of taking turns, often displayed in concertos of the era—Clara was effusive in her praise, saying, "I am happy as a king at the thought of playing it with orchestra."

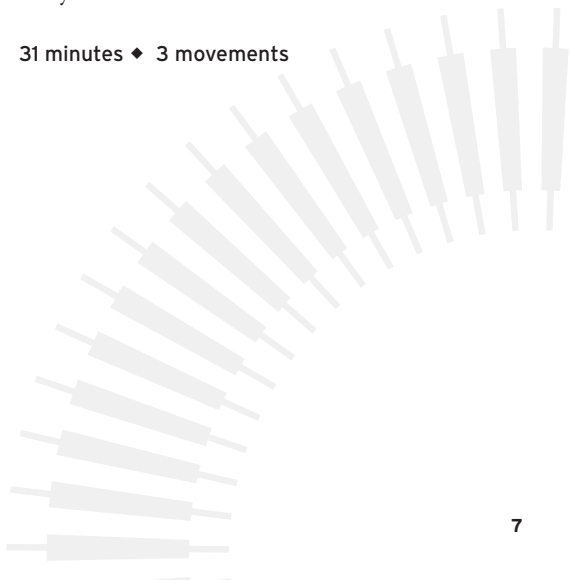
Initially set in three distinct movements, Schumann often listed the work in two, with the second and third movements folding into one another without pause. The opening movement (*Allegro affettuoso*) draws inspiration from the stand-alone Phantasie, with a nod to the two conflicting emotional extremities of his personality, Florestan (the outgoing and audacious) and Eusebius (introspective and cerebral). Following a forte chord shared between the strings and timpani, the soloist makes a splashy entrance with a descending pianistic passage and syncopated rhythms that embody the extroverted facet of his personality. This is followed by a calm, reflective section introduced by the oboe, featuring the notes C-B-A or C-H-A (based on the German note-naming system), a tribute to

his wife, Clara—a secret code between them based on her poetic nickname, "Chiara." A third idea is introduced, and the mood shifts again as the violins present a lively animato, followed by a powerful cadenza for the soloist and a fiery coda that brings the movement to a close with four robust tutti chords.

The shorter, beautifully languid second movement (*Intermezzo: Andantino grazioso*) quiets the excited tension of the *Allegro* and flaunts Schumann's lush orchestrations and melodic gifts. It truly feels like a heartfelt love letter to his wife. The piano and strings engage in one of the most exquisite musical dialogues in the literature, with a particularly poignant, rhapsodic "B" section introduced by the sonorous, sighing cello section. However, this reverie is fleeting and immediately launches into the *Allegro vivace*. A major-key reconfiguration of the first movement's main theme opens the finale, with quickly shifting time signatures, string flourishes, and a striking interlude from the piano and the winds, contrasted with a syncopated second theme. A tense extended cadenza and a long, breathtaking coda bring Schumann's piano concerto to an exhilarating conclusion.

—Ryan Scott Lathan

31 minutes ♦ 3 movements



Symphony No. 1 in D major (“Titan”)

Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)

The young Mahler might have identified with the central character of *Der Titan*, Jean Paul Richter’s four-volume epic novel completed in 1803, about an anguished, heroic figure given to extreme passions and destructive self-contemplation. In 1884 Mahler sketched out a “program” for a two-part, five-movement tone poem, based loosely on the novel, which would evolve into the First Symphony. Though he later claimed to have created a narrative simply to make the piece easier to understand, titles drawn from it were used in early performances. They ran something like this:

I. *From the Days of Youth: Flowers, Fruits, and Thorns*, comprising three movements: “Spring without End”; “Blumine—Of Flowers” (later omitted from the Symphony, though it is occasionally still played today); and “At Full Sail” (the second movement of the final version).

II. *Commedia humana* (the present third and fourth movements): “Stranded: Funeral March in the Style of Callot”; and “Dall’ Inferno al Paradiso” (subtitled “a sudden outburst of the despair of a deeply wounded heart”)

Work on the first version (from 1884 to 1888) overlapped with the completion of the *Songs of a Wayfarer*, and melodic material from the songs appear in the symphony. (Mahler would later similarly infuse material from his *Wunderhorn* songs into his Second, Third, and Fourth symphonies.) During this period the composer was in his mid-20s and continually in love—first with the singer Johanna Richter and later with Marion von Weber, wife of Carl Maria von Weber’s grandson. One is hard-pressed to find much of Richter’s morbid self-absorption here: With the exception of the mildly acerbic third movement, the First Symphony is a work of great cheer.

For its premiere in November 1889 in Budapest, Mahler suppressed the movement titles, but he restored them in subsequent

performances in Hamburg (1893) and Weimar (1894). By the time of the Berlin performance in 1896 he had decided to omit them in favor of simple tempo markings, “not just because I think they are inadequate and do not characterize the music accurately ... but also because I have learned from past experiences how the public is misled by them.” At this time he reconsidered the whole work, omitting the “Blumine” movement and presenting the remaining four movements as a symphony. He continued to revise the orchestration before the work was published in 1899.

The descending-fourth interval that forms the motivic kernel of the slow introduction (“Like a sound of nature”) is drawn from the first two pitches of the second *Wayfarer* song (“Ging heut’ Morgen über’s Feld”). Out of these inchoate meanderings grows a cuckoo’s call and a sunny, bucolic principal subject; as the movement progresses through sonata form in a *gemächlicher* (comfortable) tempo it does indeed seem to depict a brisk stroll through the countryside. The scherzo movement is a *Ländler*, an Austrian folk dance that was to become one of Mahler’s favorites. The third movement retains a pastoral redolence despite its heavy sadness; its thematic material derives from “Bruder Martin” (best known in its French version as “Frère Jacques”), making that innocent children’s tune into a solemn minor-key dirge initiated by a double-bass solo. The funeral march is interrupted by tawdry band music that heightens the feeling of queasiness. The finale moves from fiery defiance to reconciliation.

—Paul Horsley

53 minutes ♦ 4 movements

BIOGRAPHIES

Osmo Vänskä

Conductor

Conductor Laureate of the Minnesota Orchestra, where he held the music directorship for 19 years, and music director of Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra from 2020 to 2023, Osmo Vänskä is recognized for his compelling interpretations of repertoire of all eras and an energetic presence on the podium. His democratic and inclusive style of work has been key in forging long-standing relationships with many orchestras worldwide.

With the Minnesota Orchestra he undertook five major European tours, as well as an historic trip to Cuba in 2015—the first visit by an American orchestra since the two countries re-established diplomatic relations. They also made a ground-breaking tour to South Africa in 2018 as part of celebrations of Nelson Mandela's centenary—also the first visit by an American orchestra—drawing together South African and American performers in musical expressions of peace, freedom, and reconciliation on a five-city tour.

He returned this season to the symphony and philharmonic orchestras of Bamberg, Chicago, Los Angeles, Helsinki, Israel, Houston, Montreal, and Pittsburgh. Past guest conducting invitations include Cleveland, Philadelphia, and San Francisco Symphony orchestras; Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Iceland Symphony, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, and London Philharmonic Orchestra. He is regularly invited to guest conduct in Asia including with Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, and the China, Hangzhou, Hong Kong and Taiwan philharmonic orchestras.

Mr. Vänskä studied conducting at Finland's Sibelius Academy and was awarded first prize in the 1982 Besançon Competition. He began his career as a clarinetist, occupying the co-principal chair of Helsinki

Philharmonic Orchestra and is currently recording several duos for clarinet and violin which he has commissioned with his wife, violinist Erin Keefe.

Mr. Vänskä is the recipient of a Royal Philharmonic Society Award, the Finlandia Foundation's Arts and Letters award, and the Pro Finlandia medal awarded to him by the State of Finland. He holds honorary doctorates from the universities of Glasgow and Minnesota and was named Musical America's 2005 Conductor of the Year.

Micah Gleason

Conducting Fellow

Micah Gleason, from Chapel Hill, N.C., entered the Curtis Institute of Music in 2022. As a conducting fellow, she works closely with Curtis mentor conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin, music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera. All students at Curtis receive merit-based, full-tuition scholarships, and Ms. Gleason is the Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellow.

Ms. Gleason has been recognized for her diverse performance abilities as a conductor, vocal soloist, and chamber musician. Interdisciplinary collaboration and community building are at the core of her music-making. She is curious about the most effective ways to disrupt the stasis and comfort of the modern concert hall; to examine how the disciplines of music research, performance, and perception can grow more aware of each other, and how artists across disciplines, activists, and researchers can most effectively collaborate. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance from the Chicago College of Performing Arts and Master of Music degrees in conducting and vocal arts from the Bard College Conservatory of Music.

An alumna of several notable training programs, including the Aspen Music Festival and the Conducting Institute at Oxford, Ms. Gleason was one of eight inaugural vocal

fellows at the Crested Butte Music Festival. As a conductor, Ms. Gleason has led notable ensembles such as The Orchestra Now and the Eastern Festival Orchestra.

While obtaining her degrees at Bard College Conservatory of Music, studying under James Bagwell and Stephanie Blythe respectively, she served as the assistant conductor of the Bard Symphonic Chorus, conductor of the Bard Opera Workshop, and the assistant conductor of the Bard Graduate Vocal Arts Program's main stage production of Leoš Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, in collaboration with The Orchestra Now. In July 2022, Ms. Gleason served as the music director for the world premiere of the opera *The Final Veil* during its residency at The Cell Theater in New York City.

Alongside mezzo-soprano Joanne Evans, she is a co-founder of Loam, an artistic partnership presenting semi-immersive musical works.

Amy Yang

Piano

Praised by the *Washington Post* as a “jaw-dropping pianist who steals the show...with effortless finesse,” pianist Amy Yang balances an active career as soloist, chamber musician, and pedagogue. Among Ms. Yang's numerous collaborators are Yefim Bronfman, Roberto Díaz, Miriam Fried, Richard Goode, Kim Kashkashian, Ani and Ida Kavafian, Patricia Kopatchinskaya, Anne-Marie McDermott, Tito Muñoz, and Joseph Silverstein; the St. Paul and Mahler chamber orchestras; Third Coast Percussion; A Far Cry; members of the Guarneri String Quartet; and the Dover, Jasper, and Aizuri string quartets. She has appeared as a soloist with the Houston, Tuscaloosa, and Mansfield symphony orchestras; the Connecticut Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra, and Orquesta Juvenil Universitaria Eduardo Mata de la UNAM. Ms. Yang has also performed in solo and

chamber recitals for the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society—including a solo recital and collaborations with Jasper String Quartet in piano quintets by Tania León and Joan Tower for their 35th season. She was also featured in a full episode of Emmy® Award-winning producer Jim Cotter's *Articulate*, which aired on PBS in 2021.

At the Curtis Institute of Music, she is the associate dean of piano studies and artistic initiatives. She previously held the roles of program director and piano faculty of Curtis Summerfest's Young Artist Summer Program for nine summers.

Ms. Yang has premiered music by Caroline Shaw, Avner Dorman, Michael Hersch, Ezra Laderman, and Hua Yang. She has appeared in such prestigious venues such as Wigmore Hall and Carnegie Recital Hall; at the Marlboro, Ravinia, Aldeburgh, Bravo! Vail, Chelsea, Olympic, and Ojai music festivals; Verbier Academy; Cal Performances; Caramoor; IMS Prussia Cove; Music from Angel Fire; and Chamber Music Northwest, among others. Ms. Yang's discography includes a debut solo album (MSR Classics); recordings with violinists Tessa Lark (First Hand Records) and Itamar Zorman (BIS Records) and clarinetist José Franch-Ballester (iTinerant Records); and a live recording of music by Michael Hersch, performed at the Aldebergh Festival (New Focus Records).

Ms. Yang is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, the Juilliard School, and the Yale School of Music, and joined the Curtis faculty in 2011.

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Hao Zhou, violin
Aiden Kane, viola
Tate Zawadiuk, cello

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