

AMERICAN YOUTH SYMPHONY

Fall Concert

Sunday, November 1st
4:00 pm Pacific | 7:00 pm Eastern



PROGRAM

Carlos Izcaray, Conductor

Jessie MONTGOMERY

Starburst (3 mins)

AYS Strings Ensemble

Igor STRAVINSKY

Symphonies of Wind Instruments (9 mins)

AYS Winds & Brass Ensemble

Carlos IZCARAY

Bloom, WORLD PREMIERE (5 mins)

AYS Percussion Trio

Gwendolyn Brooks: "We Real Cool"

Lucille Clifton: "won't you celebrate with me"

Benjamin BRITTEN

Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge (26 mins)

AYS Strings Ensemble



Jessie MONTGOMERY

Starburst

Jessie Montgomery is an acclaimed composer, violinist, and educator. The recipient of the Leonard Bernstein Award from the ASCAP Foundation, her works are performed frequently around the world. Her music interweaves classical music with elements of vernacular music, improvisation, language, and social justice, placing her squarely as one of the most relevant interpreters of 21st-century American sound and experience. Her profoundly felt works have been described as “turbulent, wildly colorful and exploding with life” (The Washington Post). Since 1999, Jessie has been affiliated with The Sphinx Organization, which supports young African-American and Latinx string players. She currently serves as composer-in-residence for the Sphinx Virtuosi, the Organization’s professional touring ensemble. A graduate of Juilliard and New York University, Jessie is currently a Graduate Fellow in Music Composition at Princeton University.

Orchestration: String orchestra

This brief one-movement work for string orchestra is a play on imagery of rapidly changing musical colors. Exploding gestures are juxtaposed with gentle fleeting melodies in an attempt to create a multidimensional soundscape. A common definition of a starburst: “the rapid formation of large numbers of new stars in a galaxy at a rate high enough to alter the structure of the galaxy significantly” lends itself almost literally to the nature of the performing ensemble who premieres the work, The Sphinx Virtuosi, and I wrote the piece with their dynamic in mind.

— Jessie Montgomery

Photo by Jiyang Chen





Igor STRAVINKSY (1882-1971)

Symphonies of Wind Instruments

Program Note Written by: Marianne W. Tobias

Program Book Annotator

Provided by: Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra



Orchestration: 3 flutes, 2 oboes, english horn, 3 clarinets, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba

Two years after the death of Claude Debussy, Stravinsky was asked by La Revue Musicale to write a piece in his memory which would appear in a book including tributes by other composers as well. He was delighted to be asked, and in 1959, he explained that enthusiasm, saying "the musicians of my generation and I myself owe the most to Debussy." The piece he submitted was the Chorale (arranged for piano solo), which concludes the Symphonies.

Stravinsky's plan was this: "The homage that I intended to pay to the memory of the great musician ought not to be inspired by his musical thought. On the contrary, I desired rather to express myself in a language essentially my own." His own language, for this purpose, consisted of wind instruments only, in a work which he described in his autobiography, as a piece "not meant 'to please' an audience or rouse its passions. I had hoped however, that it would appeal to those in whom a purely musical receptivity outweighed the desire to satisfy emotional cravings."

The title "symphony" referred to the exact meaning of the word—sounding together. Symphonies of Wind Instruments premiered on June 10, 1920 in London at Queen's Hall with Serge Koussevitsky conducting. The reception was terrible. The audience laughed, complained, and hissed. He certainly achieved his wish to write something that was "not pleasing." Despite the reaction, he stood up at the conclusion and took a bow, in spite of his later opinion that the premier constituted an "execution of my Symphonies." In 1936, Stravinsky was still defensive about the premiere and noted "I did not, and indeed I could not, count on any immediate success for this work. It lacks all those elements that infallibly appeal to the ordinary listener, or to which he is accustomed... it is an austere ritual which is unfolded in terms of short litanies."



In 1947, Stravinsky re-orchestrated the original score, and that is the version on tonight's concert. In this revision, he substituted flute and clarinet for the original alto flute and basset horn. In the scoring, he reduced the music written for French horn and increased the parts for oboes, English horn, and contrabassoon. These changes resulted in a reedier and more cutting sound, which had the effect of sharper articulations and more biting, abrupt chords. He also rebarred the work, erasing irregular phrases into regular groupings.

Symphonies for Winds emerges in clearly defined segments, each segment comprised of a different set of winds. You will not hear long term fluency and connectivity. His format bounces quickly into contrasting moods and combinations. The content from one segment to another differs, although allusions to previous musical passages occur throughout the work. Sometimes the segments move in blended timbres, offering chord-like passages, and other times individual or paired instruments leap into the spotlight, spun off from the ensemble for a bit of energetic or lyrical freedom. Adding to the instrumental color, Stravinsky frequently invokes a modal style, leaving tonality to be ambiguous. The final chorale coats these jagged features of the main corpus with soothing balm: dynamics remain soft; the pace is steady; the mixing of timbres becomes stabilized. After the foregoing flurry, surprises, quicksilver changes and drama, Stravinsky opted for a starkly serene conclusion. One might have expected a blasting summation, building on the ignition and fuel of the preceding material into a grand fanfare, but his artistic decision is, in its simplicity and calmness, intensely moving.



Photo by Gallia Kastner

Carlos IZCARAY: *Bloom* WORLD PREMIERE

Carlos Izcaray is one of the leading conductors of his generation, as well as an emerging composer. He is Music Director for AYS and the Alabama Symphony Orchestra. He is now in his fourth season with AYS.

Izcaray shows special interest and prowess in undertaking the most complex works in the classical

canon, while also championing innovative programming and celebrating new voices. Praised by international press, Izcaray has won top prizes at prestigious festivals and competitions the world over, appearing with numerous ensembles across five continents.



Photo by Philip Holahan

Orchestration: 2 marimbas, 2 congas, 3 woodblocks, bass drum, gong, drum kit, 2 keyboards

Bloom is a piece for two percussionists and a keyboardist who operates both a synthesizer and pre-recorded electronic sounds. Wanting to highlight potent messages from the Black community, the sounds include recorded poetry readings by authors Gwendolyn Brooks (*We Real Cool*) and Lucille Clifton (*won't you celebrate with me*), as well as extracts from George Washington Johnson's 1890's recording of *The Laughing Song*, early recordings from descendants of slaves, statements from recent student protests, and songs from Zulu singers that I recorded during a visit to South Africa. Shaped more or less as an arch, the first section, played by two marimbas, is optimistic and hopeful, but it is interrupted by a much darker synth-sounds middle section that reminds us of unresolved issues regarding equity and social justice. This middle episode erupts into a frenzy that points us towards a bright resolution. — Carlos Izcaray

Poem Credits:

Gwendolyn Brooks, "*We Real Cool*," recorded on May 3, 1983, as part of the Academy of American Poets reading series, held at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City. Used with permission of Academy of American Poets.

Lucille Clifton, "*won't you celebrate with me*," read by Lucille Clifton. Part of the Poetry Everywhere project airing on public television. Produced by David Grubin Productions and WGBH Boston, in association with the Poetry Foundation. Filmed at the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival.



Jonathan WISNER

Timpani

Jonathan Wisner, a native of Houston, TX, is currently pursuing a Performer's Certificate at the Colburn Conservatory in Los Angeles, CA. As a performer, Jonathan has played in concert halls throughout the world, performing with the LA Phil, Houston Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, and the Alba Music Festival in Alba, Italy. He has played under the batons of Gustavo Dudamel, Fabio Luisi, Andris Nelsons,

Marin Alsop and has shared the stage with soloists such as Emanuel Ax and Helene Grimaud. As a chamber musician, Jonathan is an avid performer of new music, performing in the LA Phil's new music festival "Noon to Midnight" and numerous solo and chamber recitals. Jonathan holds his Bachelor of Music from the University of Miami and a Master of Music from the University of Southern California.



Jeremy DAVIS

Percussion

Jeremy Davis is 19 years old and lives in Los Angeles where he is a Sophomore at the University of Southern California studying for his B.M. in Percussion Performance. He studies Percussion and Timpani with Jim Babor and Joseph Pereira who are both members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He made his solo debut on NPR's "From the Top" when he performed a marimba solo on the KUSC radio station

and won the Jack Kent Cooke Young Artist Award. Through his summers, he has performed on four continents with the National Youth Orchestra of the USA and attended the Aspen Music Festival. He is currently heading into his second year as the Principal Percussionist of the American Youth Symphony.



Wan Rosalind WONG

Piano

Los Angeles-based pianist Wan Rosalind Wong has been awarded numerous scholarships and competition prizes by foundations such as New West Symphony and the Getty foundation. Her live performances have been featured in concerts at major west coast museums, cultural centers, and concert halls. Rosalind studied music at UCLA with Inna Faliks and Walter Ponce. She received her Masters in 2015 and her

Doctorate in 2017. She studied music hermeneutics with Roger Savage, and currently studies composition with Richard Danielpour. Rosalind taught music theory, poetry, piano, music history, and music composition privately, at UCLA, and also at Larchmont Charter School. For more information, visit her website at sophosmusic.org/rosalind

Benjamin BRITTEN (1913-1976)

Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge

*Program Note Written by: Chris Morrison
Provided by: Reno Philharmonic*

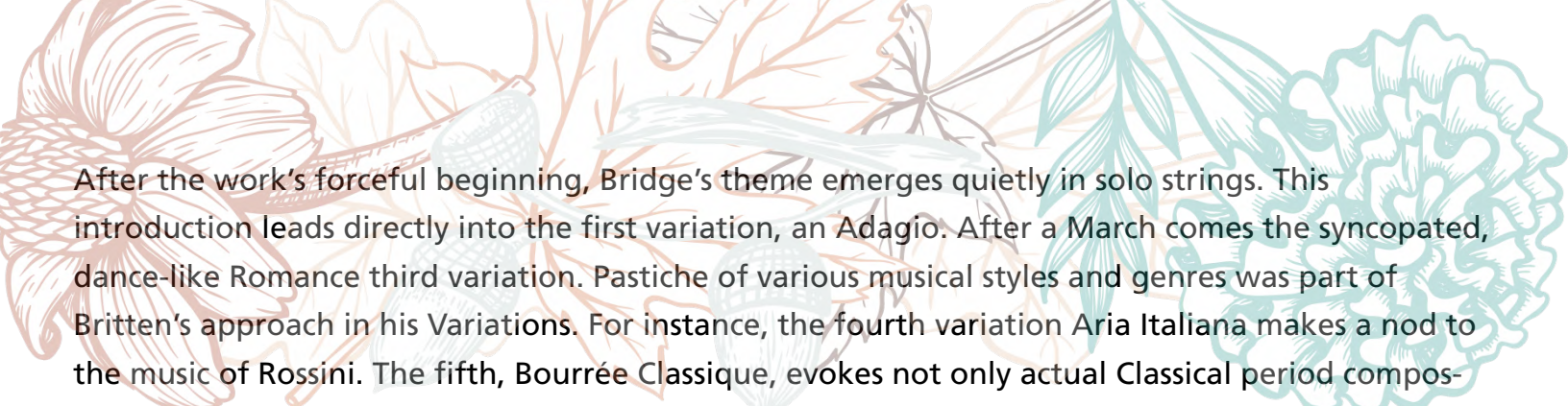
Orchestration: String Orchestra

English composer and violist Frank Bridge (1879-1941) was one of the main reasons that Benjamin Britten became a composer. On hearing Bridge's most popular orchestral work, *The Sea*, at a concert when he was eleven years old, Britten said that he was "knocked sideways." It led him to start composing at an even more prolific rate (Britten started writing music at age five). Three years later, in 1927, Britten got to meet Bridge and show him some of the music he'd been writing. Bridge was impressed, and invited Britten to study with him.



Bridge was Britten's first proper composition teacher, and although Britten had written a considerable amount of music before then, Bridge's formal training was invaluable. "Bridge insisted on the absolutely clear relationship of what was in my mind to what was on the paper," wrote Britten many years later. "I used to get sent to the other side of the room; Bridge would play what I'd written and demand if it was what I'd really meant ... He taught me to think and feel through the instruments I was writing for."

In 1932 Britten started writing a set of variations on a theme from one of Bridge's works, but he got stalled and set the piece aside. Then, in May 1937, the Salzburg Festival asked conductor Boyd Neel and his orchestra to perform three works at that year's Festival, one a previously unperformed work by a British composer. Neel sought out Britten, who returned to that notion of a work based on a melody by his teacher. Taking the same theme he'd used five years earlier – the main tune from the second of Bridge's *Three Idylls*, Op. 6/2 for string quartet (1911) – Britten wrote his *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* in just ten days, and had the work completed within a month. The work's premiere on August 27, 1937 was a huge success, bringing Britten his first international attention.



After the work's forceful beginning, Bridge's theme emerges quietly in solo strings. This introduction leads directly into the first variation, an Adagio. After a March comes the syncopated, dance-like Romance third variation. Pastiche of various musical styles and genres was part of Britten's approach in his Variations. For instance, the fourth variation *Aria Italiana* makes a nod to the music of Rossini. The fifth, *Bourrée Classique*, evokes not only actual Classical period composers like Mozart but also the modern Neoclassical style of Igor Stravinsky. The sixth, *Wiener Walzer*, pretty strongly suggests Maurice Ravel's *La valse*. Contrasting with the lively seventh movement *Moto Perpetuo* is the intense eighth, a Funeral March. After the ninth variation *Chant* comes an elaborate concluding Fugue which makes reference to several other works by Frank Bridge, including *The Sea* and his orchestral works *Summer* and *Enter Spring*.

According to handwritten notes in the score that Britten gave Bridge, each variation was also meant to allude to an aspect of Bridge's personality: the first variation his integrity, the second his energy, the third his charm, the fourth his wit, the fifth his respect for tradition, the sixth his gaiety, the seventh his enthusiasm, the eighth his sympathy, the ninth his reverence, and the tenth both Bridge's skill and the mutual affection that Bridge and Britten enjoyed.



Photo by Gallia Kastner

AMERICAN YOUTH SYMPHONY

FALL CONCERT ROSTER

FIRST VIOLIN

Gallia Kastner, Concertmaster
Elizabeth Scarnati
Tony Kukavica
Yaxin Tan
Justus Ross

SECOND VIOLIN

Wenqi Ke
Mari De Napoli
Ani Sinanyan
Oscar Martinez

VIOLA

Carson Rick
Sarah Wilkinson
Lorena Garcia
Lu Walsted

CELLO

Alex Mansour
Michael Ljungh
Angela Marvin

BASS

Evan Hillis
Chris Baetchel
Moses Aubrey

FLUTE

Elizabeth LaCoste
Sierra Schmeltzer
Marley Eder

OBOE

Laura Arganbright
Evan Sanchez

ENGLISH HORN

Kim Foskett

CLARINET

Sérgio Coelho
Alexander Tu
Tyler Baillie

BASSOON

Anne Ranzani
Samantha Epp

CONTRABASSOON

Miles Mateus

HORN

Valerie Ankeney
Christian Thomas
Elizabeth Linares
Jackson Prasifka

TRUMPET

Forrest Johnston
Nicolás Bejarano
Tyler Norris

TROMBONE

Michael Dolin
Cole Davis

BASS TROMBONE

Riley McGinn

TUBA

Errol Rhoden III

TIMPANI

Jonathan Wisner

PERCUSSION

Jeremy Davis

PIANO

Wan Rosalind Wong

Photo by Alberto Santillán



FALL CONCERT PRODUCTION CREDITS

STARBURST by Jessie Montgomery &

VARIATIONS ON A THEME OF FRANK BRIDGE by Benjamin Britten

Artistic Director & Conductor: Carlos Izcaray

AYS Strings Ensemble

Director of Photography: Philip Holahan

Co-Producer: Alan Marino

Camera Operators: Andres Porras, Victor Deras, Benjamin Ramirez, Joseph Greco, Axel Ledezma

Assistant Camera: Lupe Cambisso, Raul Rodriguez, Nicolas Rodriguez, Justice Ott

Production Assistant: Meagan Plummer

Editing Consultant & Score Reader: Michael Armstrong

Audio Engineer: Francesco Perlangeli

Recorded at Royce Hall, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA

SYMPHONIES OF WIND INSTRUMENTS by Igor Stravinsky

Artistic Director & Conductor: Carlos Izcaray

AYS Winds & Brass Ensemble

Post-Production Company: Paxeros

Post-Production Supervisor: Sean Drummond

Editor: Dawson Taylor

Audio Engineer: Francesco Perlangeli

Videography: AYS Musicians

BLOOM by Carlos Izcaray

Artistic Director & Conductor: Carlos Izcaray

AYS Percussion Trio

Post-Production Company: Paxeros

Post-Production Supervisor: Sean Drummond

Editor: Dawson Taylor

Audio Engineer: Francesco Perlangeli

Videography: Rich Johnson, Tara Aesquivel

Recorded at the CalPercLA, Los Angeles, CA

Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool," recorded on May 3, 1983, as part of the Academy of American Poets reading series, held at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City. Used with permission of Academy of AmericaPoets.

Lucille Clifton, "won't you celebrate with me," read by Lucille Clifton. Part of the Poetry Everywhere project airing on public television. Produced by David Grubin Productions and WGBH Boston, in association with the Poetry Foundation. Filmed at the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival.



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