

Queer Urban Orchestra presents:

Fantastic Dreams

Symphonie fantastique

Piano Concerto No. 2 by Rachmaninoff

Prelude to Hymns of the Sky by Gilbert Galindo

featuring **James Adler**

Artistic Director **Ian Shafer**

Assistant Conductor **Laurel Charleston**



March 12th, 2022 at 8pm

Church of the Holy Apostles 296 ninth ave, New York



Season 13
March 12, 2022

Ian Shafer, Artistic Director
Laurel Charleston, Assistant Conductor
James Adler, Guest Pianist

Prelude To Hymns Of The Sky Gilbert Galindo

Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor Sergei Rachmaninoff
Op. 18

- i. Moderato
- ii. Adagio sostenuto – Più animato – Tempo I
- iii. Allegro scherzando

James Adler, Guest Pianist

Intermission

Symphonie fantastique Hector Berlioz
Op. 14

- i. Rêveries – Passions (Daydreams – Passions)
- ii. Un bal (A ball)
- iii. Scène aux champs (Scene in the country)
- iv. Marche au supplice (March to the scaffold)
- v. Songe d'une nuit du sabbat
(Dream of a witches' Sabbath)

Queer Urban Orchestra

VIOLIN 1

Mikayla Chan
Glenna Cureton**
Audrey Epstein
Belinda Liu
Safieh Moshir-Fatemi
Alia Scheirman
Dane Stalcup
Navida Stein
Adam Waller
Natalie Wolford

VIOLIN 2

Belinda Bauer
Alva Bostick+
Jon Chang*
Peter Fifield
Laura Flanagan
Andre Gillard
Sophia Liu
Cory Pitts
Jessica Waddell
Bob Wei

VIOLA

Nicole Baz
Zachary Cohen
James Di Meglio+**
Noah Green
Margaret Knoerzer
Marion Lederer
Claire Schlegel
Joe Treviño
Alex Wen

BASS

Jared Chamoff
Craig Klonowski
Andrew Opt Hof
Conor Riccomini**

CELLO

Bjorn Berkhout**
Alex Humesky
Navin Manglani+
Steve McLure
Richard Moy
Bryanne Pashley
Todd Porter
Nicholas Saunders

FLUTE

Craig Devereaux**+
Scott Oaks

PICCOLO

Craig Devereaux
Scott Oaks*

OBOE

Alan Hyde
Rishi Magia
Joël Angel Roches**

ENGLISH HORN

Rishi Magia

CLARINET

Daniel Olson
Patrick Sikes**

E♭ CLARINET

Patrick Sikes

BASS CLARINET

Patrick Sikes

BASSOON

Adam Beyt
Norma Kerlin
David Lohman*
Charlie Scatamacchia+

FRENCH HORN

Lynn Caron
Eric Peterson
Joe Vega
Kyle Walker*

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Erin Kulick
Ron Nahass**+

TRUMPET

Ryan Dougherty
Jordan Hirsch
Bryan Wang

TROMBONE

Ryan Gochee
Kevin Schmitt*

BASS TROMBONE

Alex Arellano+

TUBA

Matthew Cain
Adam Rosenberg

PERCUSSION

Andrew Berman*+
Nolan N Dresden
Martha-Emily Harvel
Alvaro Rodas
Hannah Webster

HARP

Stephanie Babirak*
Liann Cline

*Principal **Acting Principal +Section Leader

Ian Shafer

Artistic Director

Ian Shafer is a New York based conductor and oboist with a wide range of experience and a repertory spanning the Baroque to the Avant-garde. Currently, he is the Artistic Director of the Queer Urban Orchestra of New York, and the Music Director of Resonant Refractions– the resident ensemble of the NYSoundCircuit–and one that is dedicated to the promotion of new music. He has appeared as a guest conductor with the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Brooklyn



Philharmonic, and served as the Cover Conductor for JoAnn Falletta with the New Jersey Symphony. He has given operatic performances as the Music Director of the Christman Opera Company, and the Sylph Ensemble. Currently, he is also a co-producer of the NYSoundCircuit, a multi-media salon series promoting the art of today. He has independently commissioned and/or premiered nearly thirty-five works since 2009.

Mr. Shafer has deep commitment to education and to his students. Throughout his career fostering the next generation of artists has been at the forefront. Most recently, he was the Guest Conductor for NYSMA's Nassau County, Division IV Orchestra (2020), and the Music Director at the 2019 NYC High School Honors Music Festival. He co-founded and led the Greater Philadelphia Honors Orchestra and the Crescendo Chamber Music Camp (PA) for six seasons in the aughts. He was a Guest Conductor with Young Artist's Philharmonic of Connecticut in 2018 and the Assistant Conductor of the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra while still a student at Oberlin. Since 2013, Mr. Shafer has been a Faculty Teaching Artist at the Manhattan School of Music Precollege for both the Woodwinds and Theory divisions and has

recently become an Adjunct Faculty with New Jersey City University. His students have gone on to become students at some of the most prominent institutions including: Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Columbia, U. Michigan, Ithaca, Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory, Juilliard Precollege, and Mannes Preparatory Division.

As an oboist, he has extensive experience in opera, Broadway, and orchestral performance. Mr. Shafer has been an active New York freelance oboist for the past decade. He has also given several world-premiere performances in the major New York theaters, including a recital at Carnegie Hall; at which he premiered *Locales*—a work that he commissioned from Mohammed Fairouz. At the Yamaha Artist's Studios, he premiered James Adler's *Elegy and Impromptu*, (written on commission) with the composer at the piano. *Langanach-Taragto*, a seven-minute improvised solo to Elizabeth Hoffman's digital score, which later expanded to *Improvisational Spirals* for oboe, dancer, and DJ premiered at the Dimenna Center for the NYSoundCircuit. Mr. Shafer was honored to play twice by invitation for the delegates of the United Nations at two Concerts for Peace. He is a Decapo Recording Artist where he can be heard as the soloist on *Layers of Earth*, by Lars Graugaard, score for oboe, electronics and fifteen percussionists.

He holds degrees in composition, oboe performance and conducting from Oberlin, NYU and Mannes College respectively.



James Adler

Guest Pianist



James Adler is a pianist who “can create whatever type of music he wants at the keyboard” (Chicago Sun-Times) and a composer who writes “with uncommon imagination” (Atlanta Journal-Constitution).

This season, Mr. Adler celebrated the return of live music with a noontime recital on November 9 at the Yamaha Artist Services Piano Salon in New York City, featuring Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 21 (Waldstein), and an adaptation of the Horowitz

Variations on a Theme from Bizet’s *Carmen*. Additionally, he is a member of the adjudication panel (piano division) of the 2021-2022 Sound Espresso Global Music Competition.

After winning the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Award, Mr. Adler made his orchestral performing debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in Orchestra Hall. He has appeared in places as varied as Chicago’s Grant Park and Ravinia Festival; London’s Royal Albert Hall (broadcast by the BBC) and Wigmore Hall; the Dimitria Festival in Thessaloniki, Greece; and New York’s Alice Tully Hall, Symphony Space, and Paramount Theatre at Madison Square Garden.

His extensive list of compositions is headed by *Memento mori: An AIDS Requiem*. Recorded by Amor Artis Choral and Orchestra, and published by Alfred Music, *Memento mori* features a “range of expression [that] is expansive” and is “a unique, well-crafted, emotionally rich piece” (American Record Guide). His catalog includes numerous works for chorus, chamber works for vocalists and instrumentalists, and works for

symphonic band and for orchestra. They have been performed worldwide: from Christchurch, New Zealand, to Tallinn, Estonia; New York City to San Francisco; at Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the United Nations, and at the Statue of Liberty 200th anniversary celebration.

A musician who is greatly interested in new works, Mr. Adler has had the privilege of premiering compositions written for him by Paul Turok, Henco Espag, Kevin Cummines, Abdulaziz Shabakouh, and Seth Bedford. He has also written works commissioned by the Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus, the New York City Gay Men's Chorus, the piano duo of LeDuc and Engel, oboist Ian Shafer, baritone Malcolm Merriweather, Central Regional High School (NJ), the Cheektowaga Millenium Youth Chorus, and the Lesbian & Gay Big Apple Corps symphonic band.

As performer and composer, Mr. Adler can be heard on recordings from Albany Records, Capstone, Navona, and Ravello Records. He is a member of the Department of Fine Arts at Saint Peter's University, a National Arts Associate in the Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity and was selected in 2018 for membership in the SAI Composer's Bureau. James Adler is a recipient of the 2017 Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award. James Adler is a Yamaha Artist.



Elegy Artist Management



Adler Oaks Music

Laurel Charleston

Assistant Conductor

Laurel Charleston (they/them, she/her) serves as Assistant Conductor for the Queer Urban Orchestra. As an out transgender musician, Laurel hopes to blaze trails for new generations of transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming conductors that have historically been withheld from classical institutions.



Originating from the small town of Bangor, Pennsylvania, Laurel chased their dreams and landed in New York City after finishing studies at Penn State University. They are a young conductor known for leading ensembles with electric energy, authenticity, and passion, while always using their platform to give visibility to issues in the LGBTQIA community. They have recently been featured in NY Times, Paper Magazine, Them, and Dazed Beauty.

Laurel holds a Bachelor's degree in French Horn performance and a Professional Performance Certificate in Orchestral Conducting, both from Pennsylvania State University.

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This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Gilbert Galindo

Composer

Tejano composer & DJ-producer Gilbert Galindo, originally of West Texas, currently resides and works in New York City. He is the Executive and Curatorial Director of NYsoundCircuit, a multimedia event series that showcases contemporary artists of differing disciplines and “genre integration.” Galindo has collaborated with a diverse body of vocal artists, film producers, choreographers, visual artists, fashion designers, spoken-word artists, and contemporary instrumental ensembles, crafting both classical and electronic music. Under the name Casa de Galindo, his “tribal house and dance pop hits” can be heard throughout the city from Webster Hall to Stonewall and Rebar.



Venues across the United States and Europe have presented Galindo’s compositions; his music has featured in numerous festivals and series including the American Composers Alliance Festival of American Music, Concept Lab, the Queens New Music Festival, and Make Music for New York. Recent commissions include partnerships with Sound of Silent Film Festival by Access Contemporary Music, the Chicago Fine Arts Society, Lone Star Brass, and Queer Urban Orchestra. Galindo is a Teaching Artist in New York City public schools and leads a private composition studio (Northwestern University, BM; Cleveland Institute of Music, MM).



gilbertgalindo.com

Program Notes

Prelude to Hymns of the Sky, written in 2019, is an ode to Galindo's upbringing in the American Southwest: "Upon taking trips to New Mexico the past few summers, I have been taken aback by the beauty and true enchantment of the land. In particular, I find the sky in New Mexico expansive and delightfully mysterious."

Sergei Vasilievich Rachmaninoff, widely regarded as one of the greatest pianists of all time and one of the most outstanding melodists amongst composers, was born near Novgorod, Russia, on April 1, 1873. Both his father and grandfather were pianists. Financial difficulties led to the sale of the family estate when Sergei was nine, and the family moved to St Petersburg. As a pre-teen, Rachmaninoff began piano lessons at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire. His cousin, pianist and conductor Alexander Siloti, suggested Rachmaninoff move to Moscow to study with his former teacher, Nikolai Zverev. In 1885 at the age of twelve, he made the journey to Moscow, staying with Zverev for three years and subsequently studying with his cousin.

Rachmaninoff also studied composition with Sergei Taneyev and Anton Arensky, and received advice from Tchaikovsky (who was Siloti's former teacher).

Even before he graduated from the conservatory in 1891, Rachmaninoff had composed what would become his best-known work: the Prelude in C-sharp minor. The 1897 premiere of his First Symphony, however, was an utter disaster. Rumors asserted conductor Alexander Glazunov was drunk; consequently, Rachmaninoff destroyed the score. Fortunately, a set of parts survived which later provided for a posthumous reconstruction of the score.

Rachmaninoff's early career established a difficult, life-long balancing act between composing and performing. As early as 1899, he became an internationally-recognized talent when he conducted and performed (as a pianist) a concert of his orchestral works in London.

The following year, Rachmaninoff began his Second Piano Concerto, one of the most frequently performed of all works in the genre. He completed it in 1901 at the same time as the beloved Cello Concerto. He married in 1902, followed by the birth of a daughter in 1903. In 1904 Rachmaninoff took up a conductor's post at the Bolshoi Opera in Moscow, stimulating the completion of two operas, *Francesca da Rimini* and *The Miserly Knight*, in 1906. The pressures of conducting life in the Bolshoi persuaded the Rachmaninoffs to spend some time

away from the capital, and they moved for a short while to Dresden, where he worked on his Second Symphony; Rachmaninoff himself conducted the premiere, in St Petersburg, in 1908.

In the decade prior to the Russian Revolution, Rachmaninoff wrote his Third Piano Concerto, a choral symphony (The Bells), several choral works, and the symphonic poem The Isle of the Dead. After the October 1917 Revolution, Rachmaninoff accepted an invitation to perform in Stockholm; his wife and children accompanied him to Sweden. Less than a year later, they moved to the United States. Rachmaninoff never returned to his homeland. He quickly established himself in America as a sought-after concert pianist and producer: nearly a century later, music lovers still regard his artistic interpretations as some of the most important in the history of recorded performance.

By the 1930s, Rachmaninoff sought a respite from the demands of his career and built a villa on the shores of Lake Lucerne, Switzerland. Here, he wrote the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini and the Third Symphony. His last large-scale masterpiece was the Symphonic Dances, composed in 1940. While on tour, his health began to fail; doctors diagnosed an aggressive melanoma. Sergei Rachmaninoff died on March 28, 1943 in Beverly Hills, a few days before what would have been his seventieth birthday.

Biographical information compiled from Boosey & Hawkes

At the head of the first page of Rachmaninoff's **Second Piano Concerto, op. 18** stands the simple dedication, "À Monsieur N. Dahl." Monsieur Dahl was actually Dr. Nicolai Dahl, an internist who had been studying hypnosis. Dahl was also an excellent violist and cellist and founder of his own string quartet. Rachmaninoff began daily visits to him in January 1900. The first aim was to improve the composer's sleep and appetite. The larger goal was to enable him to compose a piano concerto. Dr. Dahl's treatment, a mixture of hypnotic suggestion ("You will begin your concerto . . . you will work with great facility . . . the concerto will be excellent . . .") and cultured conversation, did its work.

By April, Rachmaninoff felt well enough to travel to the Crimea and on to Italy. When he returned home, he brought with him sketches for the new piano concerto. Two movements, the second and third, were finished that fall and introduced in December. After the concert, Rachmaninoff added the first movement. Five days before the

premiere in November 1901, he suffered a moment of panic and was convinced he had produced a totally incompetent piece of work, but the tempestuous success he enjoyed at the premiere seems to have convinced him otherwise.

A quality especially apparent in the Second Piano Concerto is a sense of effortlessness in its unfolding, and that is something new in Rachmaninoff's music. He begins magnificently, and with something so familiar that we come perilously close to taking it for granted—a series of piano chords in crescendo, all based on F, each reinforced by the tolling of the lowest F on the keyboard, and, through the gathering harmonic tension and dynamic force, constituting a powerful springboard for the move into the home chord of C minor. Once there, the strings with clarinet initiate a plain but intensely expressive melody, which the piano accompanies with sonorous broken chords. The piano's role as accompanist is also worth noting. Nowhere is the pianist so often an ensemble partner and so rarely a soloist aggressively in the foreground as in this first movement of the Second Concerto. The initial impulse plays itself out in one grand, tightly organized paragraph, to which Rachmaninoff appends two small afterthoughts, a bit of scurrying for the piano and a quite formal set of cadential chords. It is only then that the orchestra falls silent and the pianist steps forward as a vocal soloist in the grand Romantic manner. Rachmaninoff constructs a bridge passage into the second movement. Again the pianist is at first the accompanist, briefly to the flute, at greater length to the clarinet. Throughout the movement the relationship between piano and orchestra is imagined and worked out with great delicacy. There is something captivatingly touching about the way the piano shyly inserts just six notes of melody between the first two phrases of the clarinet, the roles of piano and orchestra being reversed later in the movement. A quicker interlude functions as a token scherzo. This interlude spills into a splash of cadenza, and for just five notes a pair of flutes eases the music back into softly swaying arpeggios.

Rachmaninoff again makes a bridge into the finale, beginning with distant, rather conspiratorial march music, then working his way around to the piano's assertive entrance. The march music is now determined and vigorous, and Rachmaninoff finds for contrast the most famous of his big tunes. It all moves to a rattling bring-down-the-house conclusion. When one remembers the biographical background to this concerto, it is pleasing to see that the last tempo mark is *risoluto*.

There can be no doubt that **Hector Berlioz** (December 11, 1803—March 8, 1869) was a genius, but genius does not always ensure a calm passage through life. Berlioz's biography makes extraordinary reading, especially when liberally peppered with accounts lifted from his beautifully written and often hilarious *Mémoires* (which have been vividly captured in English translation by David Cairns). His father was a physician in a town not far from Grenoble, within view of the Alps, and since the father assumed that his son would follow in the same profession, the son's musical inclinations were largely ignored. As a result, Berlioz never learned to play more than a few chords on the piano, and his practical abilities as a performer were limited to lessons on flute and guitar, on neither of which he achieved true virtuosity.

His unorthodox musical background surely contributed to his nonconformist musical language. He was sent to Paris to attend medical school, hated the experience, enrolled instead in private musical studies and, beginning in 1826, the composition curriculum at the Paris Conservatoire. The seal of approval for all Conservatoire composition students was the Prix de Rome, and in 1830 (in his fourth consecutive attempt) he was finally honored with that prize. The work that won him this distinction, the cantata *La Mort de Sardanapale*, is long forgotten; in fact, only a fragment of it survives.

Ironically, Berlioz had already composed earlier in the same year the work that would most consistently forge his place in posterity, the *Symphonie fantastique*, op. 14. It would be the first of four Berlioz symphonies, all of which leave the abstract realm of Beethoven's symphonic ideal for the programmatic terrain that would find fruition later in the 19th century in the new genre of the symphonic poem. The originality of Berlioz' achievement in the *Symphonie fantastique* is simply astonishing; it has been truly observed that this must be the most remarkable First Symphony ever written, not to be rivaled in this regard until the appearance of Mahler's six decades later. Even those rare listeners familiar with the excellent but neglected symphonies of Berlioz's predecessors in Paris, including Étienne-Nicolas Méhul and Luigi Cherubini, will be compelled to acknowledge that those works do little to prepare the ear for Berlioz's accomplishment. Certainly programmatic symphonies had been written before — Beethoven's *Pastoral* is a famous example — but in the *Symphonie fantastique* the images are depicted with such vibrant specificity as to become downright cinematic. Furthermore, Berlioz's sense of the programmatic goes well beyond the "merely" descriptive to enter the realm of the psychological and the image of a state of mind, one that is far from stable and that spills into hallucinations (It is doubtless no

coincidence that the modern Berlioz revival began in the acid-tripping 1960s). The *Symphonie fantastique* is an extraordinary example of self-exploration and self-expression, a work of autobiography underscored by the subtitle “Episode de la vie d’un artiste” (Episode in the Life of an Artist). The episode in question was carefully described in a program note Berlioz prepared. The action is often accompanied by an *idée fixe*, a musical theme that surfaces throughout the piece in various transformations. It is first played by flute and violins at the beginning of the opening movement’s Passions section (following the *Rêveries* introduction), and pervades the ensuing material. In succeeding movements, the artist finds himself in a ballroom, where he waltzes with his beloved, and in the Alpine countryside, where memories of his beloved disturb his peace. Under the influence of a narcotic drug, he imagines himself being led to the scaffold, where he is executed for murdering his beloved, and finally to a Witches’ Sabbath convened in honor of his death, at which the *idée fixe* now appears as a grotesque dance heard along with a parody of the funeral chant *Dies Irae*.

Berlioz penned this scenario to be printed for the premiere of the *Symphonie fantastique*:

Part One: *Rêveries, Passions* — The author imagines that a young musician, afflicted with that moral disease that a well-known writer calls the *vague des passions*, sees for the first time a woman who embodies all the charms of the ideal being he has imagined in his dreams, and he falls desperately in love with her. Through an odd whim, whenever the beloved image appears before the mind’s eye of the artist, it is linked with a musical thought whose character, passionate but at the same time noble and shy, he finds similar to the one he attributes to his beloved. This melodic image and the model it reflects pursue him incessantly like a double *idée fixe*. That is the reason for the constant appearance, in every movement of the symphony, of the melody that begins the first *Allegro*. The passage from this state of melancholy reverie, interrupted by a few fits of groundless joy, to one of frenzied passion, with its gestures of fury, of jealousy, its return of tenderness, its tears, its religious consolations.

Part Two: *A Ball* — The artist finds himself in the most varied situations — in the midst of the tumult of a party, in the peaceful contemplation of the beauties of nature; but everywhere, in town, in the country, the beloved image appears before him and disturbs his peace of mind.

Part Three: *Scene in the Fields* — Finding himself one evening in the

country, he hears in the distance two shepherds piping a ranz des vaches in dialogue. This pastoral duet, the scenery, the quiet rustling of the trees gently brushed by the wind, the hopes he has recently found some reason to entertain — all concur in affording his heart an unaccustomed calm, and in giving a more cheerful color to his ideas. He reflects upon his isolation; he hopes that his loneliness will soon be over. — But what if she were deceiving him! — This mingling of hope and fear, form the subject of the Adagio. At the end, one of the shepherds again takes up the ranz des vaches; the other no longer replies.

Part Four: March to the Scaffold — Convinced that his love is unappreciated, the artist poisons himself with opium. The dose, too weak to kill him, plunges him into a sleep accompanied by the most horrible visions. He dreams that he has killed his beloved, that he is condemned and led to the scaffold, and that he is witnessing his own execution. The procession moves forward to the sounds of a march that is now somber and fierce, now brilliant and solemn, in which the muffled noise of heavy steps gives way without transition to the noisiest clamor. At the end of the march the first four measures of the *idée fixe* reappear.

Part Five: Dream of a Witches' Sabbath — He sees himself at the sabbath, in the midst of a frightful troop of ghosts, sorcerers, monsters of every kind, come together for his funeral. Strange noises, groans, bursts of laughter, distant cries which other cries seem to answer. The beloved melody appears again, but it has lost its character of nobility and shyness; it is no more than a dance tune, mean, trivial, and grotesque: it is she, coming to join the sabbath. — A roar of joy at her arrival. — She takes part in the devilish orgy. — Funeral knell, burlesque parody of the *Dies Irae* [a hymn sung in the funeral rites of the Catholic Church], sabbath round-dance. The sabbath round and the *Dies Irae* are combined.

Reprinted New York Philharmonic program notes, ca. 2019
QUO notes by A. Patterson

About Our Home

Church of the Holy Apostles

QUO has made its home at the Church of the Holy Apostles since 2010, but Holy Apostles has been welcoming LGBT groups and parishioners since the beginning of the gay rights movement in New York. “I know of few New York City LGBTQ organizations which did not have a home at some point in their history at the Church of the Holy Apostles,” says Father Rand Frew, 12th Rector of Holy Apostles.

When QUO violinist Joey Plaster discovered that the Gay Activists Alliance had its headquarters at Holy Apostles in the early seventies, we reached out to Fr. Frew for more information. He shared, “The annual Pride March was announced in the bulletin and verbally, and people were encouraged to take part for the expansion of human rights. The Chelsea Gay Association met at Holy Apostles. The late Vito Russo’s documentary, groundbreaking film *The Celluloid Closet* was first previewed and shown at Holy Apostles with commentary by Mr. Russo. The New York City Gay Men’s Chorus rehearsed and performed at Holy Apostles.” QUO is just one of several groups at Holy Apostles that spread a message of equality and acceptance through music. We’re happy to share this space with fellow LGBTQ music performing groups such as The Stonewall Chorale and the Empire City Men’s Chorus.



Come Play With Us!

Play an instrument? Come and join QUO! Membership is open to all adult musicians (ages 18+) regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Chat us up after the concert or
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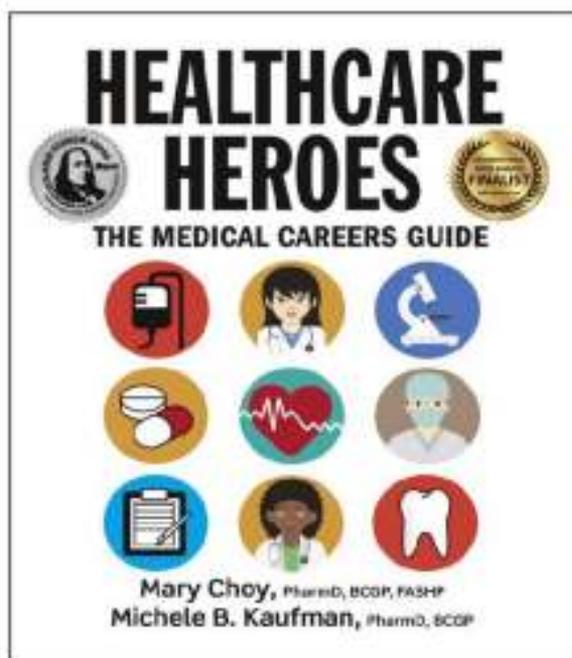
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