



Queer Urban Orchestra Presents
Grandiose Spirit

Music by **Zaq Latino**, **Sergei Rachmaninoff**,
and **Jean Sibelius**

Ian Shafer, Artistic Director
featuring pianist **Matthieu Cognet**

May 7, 2022 at 8pm
Church of the Holy Apostles
296 Ninth Ave, New York, NY



Season 13
May 7, 2022

Ian Shafer, Artistic Director
Matthieu Cagnet, Guest Pianist

living enby

Zaq Latino

Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor
Op. 30

Sergei Rachmaninoff

- i. Allegro ma non tanto
- ii. Intermezzo: Adagio
- iii. Finale: Alla breve

Matthieu Cagnet, Guest Pianist

Intermission

Symphony No. 2 in D major
Op. 43

Jean Sibelius

- i. Allegretto
- ii. Tempo andante, ma rubato
- iii. Vivacissimo
- iv. Finale: Allegro moderato

Queer Urban Orchestra

VIOLIN 1

Belinda Bauer
Mikayla Chan
Glenna Cureton***
Wiqar Farooqi
Amos Lee
Belinda Liu
Dane Stalcup
Navida Stein
Liz Taub
Yihan Zhu

VIOLIN 2

Jonathan Balsano
Alva Bostick+
Jon Chang*
Carla Eilo
Andre Gillard
Andrew Holland
Andrés J. Rodriguez-Aponte
Ligia Sakurai
Jessica Waddell
Bob Wei

VIOLA

James di Meglio*+
Noah Green
Margaret Knoerzer
Marion Lederer
Jamie Price
Gabiella Savino
Joe Treviño
Dustin Zuelke

CELLO

Bjorn Berkhout**
Alex Humesky
Navin Manglani+
Steve McLure
Richard Moy
Bryanne Pashley
Nicholas Saunders
Brit Schlude
Michael Shattner
Rogerio Shieh Barbosa

BASS

Jared Chamoff**
Andrew Opt Hof

FLUTE

Craig Devereaux*+
Scott Oaks

PICCOLO

Craig Devereaux

OBOE

Matthew Hadley*+
Joël Angel Roches
Brian Shaw

ENGLISH HORN

Brian Shaw

CLARINET

Travis Fraser+
Daniel Olson

E♭ CLARINET

Patrick Sikes

BASSOON

David Lohman*
Charlie Scatamacchia+

FRENCH HORN

Lynn Caron
Eric Peterson
Joe Vega
Kyle Walker*

TRUMPET

Julia Cohen
Ron Nahass*+
Ryan Yacos

TROMBONE

Ryan Gochee
Kevin Schmitt*

BASS TROMBONE

Alex Arellano+

TUBA

Adam Rosenberg

PERCUSSION

Andrew Berman*+
Nolan N Dresden
Alvaro Rodas
Hannah Webster

*Principal **Acting Principal

*** Acting Concertmaster +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.



Matthieu Cognet

Guest Pianist



French pianist Matthieu Cognet is an active soloist and sought-after chamber player who performs extensively in Europe and the United States. He has appeared in major venues and festivals in Europe and the United States, including Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall, Steinway Hall, the Cultural Institute of Chicago (Dame Myra Hess Series), Hemptinne Festival (Belgium), Rushmore Music Festival, SD, Memphis in May Festival, and Prades Festival (France). He recently collaborated in concert with Juilliard and Stony Brook faculty and Grammy Award nominee Carol Wincenc.

He has been a soloist with the Charleston Symphony Orchestra, Stony Brook University Orchestra, Indiana University Student Orchestra, and the Paris Sorbonne Orchestra. His recital and chamber music performances have been featured on Radio France and Chicago WMFT Radio broadcasts.

Matthieu Cognet is a laureate of the Concours Musical de France and won the 1st Prize of the Travel Grant Competition in Bloomington in 2010. In March 2015, he won the Stony Brook Concerto Competition with R. Strauss' Burleske for piano and orchestra. He won 1st Prize in the Entraide Française Competition in New York in May 2017, which earned him a recital at the French Consulate in New York City in the spring of 2018.

Mr. Cognet received degrees from the Conservatoire Supérieur de Paris–CNR (Bachelor of Arts) and the University of La Sorbonne in Paris (Master of Musicology). In 2007, he received his Master of Music in Piano Performance with High Distinction from the Royal Conservatory of Brussels and a Performer Diploma from Indiana University under the guidance of Bulgarian-born pianist and composer Emile Naoumoff. At Indiana University he had the privilege to work as Janos Starker's studio accompanist, and worked with Joshua Bell and Andre Watts. His other teachers include Jean-Claude Vanden Eynden and Bruno Rigutto in Brussels and Paris, respectively. He performed in numerous master-classes in Europe with Jacques Rouvier in Nice (1998), Aquiles Delle-Vigne in Salzburg (2001), Dominique Merlet in Courchevel (2002, 2005), Boris Berman and Paul Badura-Skoda in Vila-seca (2011). He recently graduated with his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Stony Brook University, under the guidance of Professor Gilbert Kalish.

In addition to his performing activities, Mr. Cognet released his own arrangement of Maurice Ravel's La Valse for piano solo under the label Lauren Keiser Publications (a group of Hal Leonard). He is also the Artistic Director and Masterclass

Director of the French-American Piano Society. He has recorded his first album "Debut Recital" in 2011 and has signed with Odradek Records for his second album "Mit Humor" (international release in 2019).

He currently lives in New York City.



matthieucognet.com



Zaq Latino

Composer

On any given day, you may find Zaq Latino reading in French, binging all the anime Hulu has to offer, geeking out to Indian-Hindustani percussion, crafting a mean eggplant parmigiana, and 'doing art.' Described as "an outstanding musician, composer, and sound artist," Zaq is equal parts composer, actor, educator, and director. They are the founder of validBodies arts project, an arts production company dedicated to the mobilization of underrepresented voices. As composer, Zaq has worked with JACK quartet, Arditti quartet, and Divertimento Ensemble among others. Most recently, Zaq was named a finalist for The American Prize in Orchestral Composition for hidden lakes. A proud non-binary artist, Zaq uses they/them/their pronouns in professional spaces.



They hold a Bachelor of Music degree from Ithaca College in Composition and Voice and a Master of Arts degree from Colorado State University.



zaqlatino.com

Program Notes

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 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.

Notes compiled from Boosey & Hawkes

In October 1906, Rachmaninoff moved with his wife and daughter from Moscow to Dresden. He was the successful composer of two piano concertos, three operas, chamber music, works for solo piano, and several dozen important songs. He was an admired conductor and recognized as one of the great pianists of his—and any—time. Like all composers who have consuming careers as performers, Rachmaninoff found himself longing for time just to compose. The move to Dresden was an attempt to take himself out of circulation, and he chose the beautiful Saxon capital because he and his wife had become fond of it on their honeymoon four years earlier. Offers to play and conduct kept coming in and were by no means all to be denied. Rachmaninoff decided to accept an invitation to visit the United States. For that tour he wrote his **Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, op. 30**. He made his American debut at a recital at Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, on November 4, 1909, went to Philadelphia to conduct the first performance in this country of

the Second Symphony, and a few weeks later introduced his new concerto with Walter Damrosch and the New York Symphony (November 28, 1919). Soon after, he played it again with the New York Philharmonic under Gustav Mahler, another conductor struggling for time to compose.

In all his works for piano and orchestra, Rachmaninoff invented arresting beginnings. In the First and Fourth concertos he is aggressive, outright combative. The Second emerges from a famous series of groping, tolling chords. In the first measures of the Third Concerto we find a quality we do not usually associate with Rachmaninoff—simplicity. For two measures, clarinet, bassoon, horn, timpani, and muted strings set up a pulse against which the piano sings a long and quiet melody, the two hands in unison, as in a piano duet by Schubert. It is a lovely inspiration, that melody unfolding in subtle variation, just a few notes being continuously redispersed rhythmically. Once only, to the extent of a single eighth note, the melody exceeds the range of an octave; most of it stays within a fifth, and that narrowness of gamut contributes to our sense that this is profoundly and unmistakably Russian. Rachmaninoff told the musicologist Joseph Yasser that the theme had come to him “ready-made” and had in effect “written itself,” an impression and observation not at all inconsistent with Yasser’s later discovery of a close relationship to a Russian liturgical chant, *Thy Tomb, O Savior, Soldiers Guarding*.

The accompaniment cost Rachmaninoff considerable thought and trouble. He was thinking, he told Yasser, of the sound of piano with orchestra, of singing the melody on the piano “as a singer would sing it, and [finding] a suitable orchestral accompaniment, or rather, one that would not muffle this singing.” What he found invites, for precision and delicacy, comparison with the workmanship in Mozart’s concertos. The accompaniment does indeed not muffle the singing, but even while exquisitely tactful, it is absolutely “specific”—full of character, the fragmentary utterances of the violins now anticipating, now echoing the pianist’s song, the woodwinds sometimes and with utmost gentleness reinforcing the bass or joining the piano in a few notes of its melody. Such a conjunction of integration and contrast is characteristic of this concerto. The second theme, for example, is first suggested as a

kind of twitch in a few wind instruments behind delicate piano passage-work before its formal arrival is prepared by a mini-cadenza and an expansive preparatory gesture in the orchestra. When it does appear, Rachmaninoff presents it in two different guises—first as a dialogue of orchestra and piano, then as a lyric melody. The further progress of the movement abounds in felicities and ingenuities, sharply imagined and elegantly executed. After a thunderous climax, a touching intervention of winds, and a spacious subsidence, the opening music appears again. The leisurely singing of the melody leads with extraordinary compressions to a final page in which fragments of themes ghost by in a startling amalgam of epigram and dream.

“Intermezzo” is a curiously shy designation for a movement as expansive as this Adagio, though we shall discover that it is in fact upbeat to a still more expansive finale. But the intermezzo itself is all adventure and event, not least the piano’s disruptive entrance, which wrenches the music away to new and distant harmonic ground. What ensues is a series of variations, broken up by a feather-light waltz that perhaps represents Rachmaninoff’s memory of a similar interruption in the slow movement of Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No 1. The clarinet-and-bassoon melody of the waltz is closely cousin to the concerto’s principal theme, and if one could scrutinize the piano’s dizzying figuration through a time-retarding device, one could detect that it too is made of diminutions of the same material.

When the intermezzo gives explosive birth to the finale, we are again in a torrent of virtuosity and invention. Here, too, the second theme gets a double presentation, first in harmonic outline, solidly packed piano chords against drumming strings, then—in a contrasting key, even—as a beautifully scored impassioned melody for the piano. After that, Rachmaninoff gives us the surprise of a series of variations on what pretends to be a new idea, but is in fact an issue of a union between the first movement’s second theme and the beginning of the finale. In the course of this episode, the concerto’s very first melody makes an unobtrusive, slightly varied reappearance in violas and cellos. That it is once again varied is characteristic, for the idea of repetition as instant variation has been implicit since the

first unfolding of that opening melody. Now this idea has become an important part of the means at Rachmaninoff's disposal as he faces the task of integrating a work laid out on an uncommonly large scale.

The Third Concerto offers an immense challenge to stamina and endurance, the orchestral passages that frame the intermezzo being the soloist's only moments of respite. Few pianists would agree with Rachmaninoff's own estimate that the Third Concerto is "more comfortable" than the Second. Moreover, to a degree truly uncommon for a concerto in the big Romantic bravura tradition, Rachmaninoff sees the soloist not merely as someone who can sing soulfully and thunder imposingly, but as an alert, flexible, responsive musician who knows how to blend, accompany, and listen.

From San Francisco Symphony program notes by Michael Steinberg

Jean Sibelius was born in Hämeenlinna, Finland, on December 8, 1865. His father died when 'Janne' was only two years old. Although the language spoken at home was Swedish, Janne attended Hämeenlinna's pioneering Finnish-speaking grammar school. Music was encouraged at home, and before long Janne was improvising and composing pieces of his own.

Vattendroppar (Water Drops) for violin and cello is believed to be his first surviving composition, written at age ten. In 1885 Janne finished school and moved to Helsinki, nominally to study law, although he also enrolled at the Music Institute. It was not long before the law studies were quietly dropped, and he started official composition studies under Martin Wegelius.

It was during his student years in Helsinki that Janne – now using the 'music name' Jean – met and fell in love with Aino Järnefelt. He numbered many future luminaries of Finnish culture among his friends, among them the authors Adolf Paul and Juhani Aho. He also befriended the composer and conductor Robert Kajanus and the pianist and composer Ferruccio Busoni. In 1889 Sibelius left Finland to pursue his studies abroad, first in Berlin and then in Vienna. In both cities he lived far above his means and enthusiastically nurtured a

taste for fine wines and cigars. It was at this time that he became fully aware of the potential of the Finnish epic poem, the Kalevala, as a source of musical inspiration. He was soon hard at work on a massive five-movement piece for soloists, male choir and orchestra with a Kalevala text: *Kullervo*. Back in Finland, Sibelius conducted *Kullervo* to great acclaim in April 1892.

The 1890s were a time of increasing political discontent in Finland. Although it was nominally an autonomous grand duchy of the Russian empire, the country's powers of self-determination were gradually being eroded by a series of Russian decrees and manifestos. The reaction to such measures was defiant, not least in cultural circles. Sibelius produced a series of works that helped to confirm his position as the foremost musical champion of the Finnish nationalist cause. He was also a regular customer at Helsinki's most fashionable watering holes. Works such as *En saga*, *Karelia*, *Skogsrået* (The Wood-Nymph), the *Lemminkäinen* tone poems (including The Swan of Tuonela) and *Finlandia* all date from this period, though many were later substantially revised. Sibelius dabbled with opera and with Wagner – and even visited Bayreuth in 1894 – but ultimately found that Wagner's music repelled him as much as it attracted him. Sibelius's only complete opera is a one-act piece, *Jungfrun i tornet* (The Maiden in the Tower) from 1896. Just before the turn of the century Sibelius made his mark in two further genres. His first major theater score was the music for Adolf Paul's historical drama *Kung Kristian II* (King Christian II; 1898). The second genre was the symphony: his First Symphony, a pivotal work in Sibelius's career, was premièred in Helsinki in 1899.

With the Second Symphony and Violin Concerto, Sibelius took his leave of the grand, national romantic style. The death of one of his daughters, Kirsti, from typhus in 1900 came as a profound blow, and the following year, while working on the Second Symphony in Italy, he came close to losing another daughter to the same disease. One of Sibelius's most popular pieces, *Valse triste* (1903), started life as incidental music for the symbolist play *Kuolema* (Death). The composer made the decision to

move out of Helsinki, to Järvenpää. Sibelius's music acquired a more concise, classical tone, clearly demonstrated in the Third Symphony (1907). He was not greatly drawn to conventional religious music but preferred to express his deeply held pantheistic convictions in works such as the songs *Höstkväll* (Autumn Evening, 1903) and *På verandan vid havet* (On a Balcony by the Sea, 1903).

A few years later a throat tumor was diagnosed and, although it was removed in 1908, Sibelius had to abstain from cigars and alcohol for some years. It is often said that the predominantly dark mood of Sibelius's major works from the ensuing years – among them the Fourth Symphony (1911) the tone poems *The Bard* and *Luonnotar* (both 1913) the string quartet *Voces intimae* (1909) and the Three Sonatinas for piano (1912) – is a by-product of his fear of a recurrence of the cancer. At any rate the bleakness of the Fourth Symphony came as a shock to his contemporaries.

In 1914 Sibelius paid a triumphal visit to the United States, where he conducted the première of the tone poem *The Oceanides*. Sibelius would have been keen to visit the USA again – but the First World War intervened. As much of his music was published by German firms, his income dwindled to a trickle, and for the next few years he had little option but to remain at home. Local publishers had a steady demand for short instrumental works and songs – and Sibelius did not disappoint. The major work from these years was the Fifth Symphony, which appeared in its original four-movement form at Sibelius's fiftieth birthday concert in 1915.

By the time he was fifty Sibelius was already an iconic cultural figure in Finland, and was a highly respected composer internationally as well. Nonetheless, the Sibelius family had to seek refuge in Helsinki during the civil war that followed Finland's declaration of independence in 1917. The Sixth and Seventh Symphonies set out yet again in new directions; the modally-coloured Sixth (1923), is predominantly gentle and poetic, whilst the Seventh (1924), originally named *Fantasia sinfonica*, is a noble single-movement edifice that encapsulates and crowns Sibelius's symphonic achievement. After the

Seventh Symphony Sibelius composed two more major works, the incidental music to Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* (1925) and the tone poem *Tapiola* (1926), before launching into a monumental struggle with his Eighth Symphony. Expectations were running high – but old age brought an increasingly rigorous self-criticism and, in the end, Sibelius admitted defeat. In the mid-1940s he burned a number of manuscripts, the Eighth Symphony among them. Jean Sibelius died peacefully at home September 20, 1957 at the age of ninety-two.

Notes by Andrew Barnett, 2014

Listening to Sibelius's **Symphony No. 2 in D Major, op. 43**, which is now more than a century old and has long been a classic, we may not find the piece terribly shocking. But to ears not yet inured to its contours, it was daring indeed—a work that departed from the conventions of its genre not less than did symphonies by, say, Gustav Mahler, whose Fifth Symphony is its exact contemporary. It was, furthermore, a rarity of the most heartening sort: a brave work that nonetheless pleased audiences from the outset. Finland was undergoing its share of turmoil at the turn of the twentieth century, beginning to buckle with nationalistic fervor against the yoke of its Russian occupiers. In the closing years of the nineteenth century, Finns were fired with excitement over homegrown culture—collecting traditional music and dance, delving into ancient Finnish legends, and returning to use the Finnish language. Sibelius was caught up with the artists and writers and musicians who were plying their trades in support of an independent Finland, and he turned out a hearty diet of patriotic and propagandistic compositions.

Not all of this famous symphony emanated literally from Finland; some of the composition was carried out in Italy. Thanks to benefactions arranged by Axel Carpelan, a Finnish man-about-the-arts and the eventual dedicatee of this symphony, Sibelius and his family were able to travel to Italy between February and April 1901, and much of the Symphony No. 2 was sketched in Florence and, especially, Rapallo, where the composer rented a studio. Aspects of the piece had already begun to take form in his mind almost two years earlier,

although at that point Sibelius seems to have assumed his sketches would end up in various separate compositions rather than in a single unified symphony. Even in Rapallo he still seemed focused on writing a tone poem. He reported that on February 11, 1901, he entertained a fantasy that the villa in which his studio was located was the fanciful palace of Don Juan and that he himself was the amorous, amoral protagonist of that legend. He jotted in his diary the thoughts that accosted him at midnight:

“Don Juan. I was sitting in the dark in my castle when a stranger entered. I asked who he could be again and again—but there was no answer. I tried to make him laugh but he remained silent. At last the stranger began to sing—then Don Juan knew who it was. It was death.”

Then follow the notes that stand as the principal theme of the second movement of the Second Symphony. However, as his work evolved, he seems to have sacrificed the Don Juan idea in favor of a very different concept: a series of four tone poems based on characters from Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. But, following his return to Finland in June, Sibelius began to recognize that what was forming out of his sketches was not a set of tone poems, but rather a full-fledged symphony—one that would exhibit an extraordinary degree of unity among its sections. With his goal now clarified, Sibelius worked assiduously through the summer and fall and completed his symphony in November 1901. Then he revised the piece profoundly, at last concluding work in January 1902.

The symphony’s premiere, two months later, marked a signal success. The conductor Robert Kajanus, who would become a distinguished Sibelius interpreter, insisted that the Helsinki audiences had understood the new symphony to be an overt expression of the political conflict then reigning over Finland. “The Andante,” he wrote, “strikes one as the most broken-hearted protest against all the injustice that threatens at the present time to deprive the sun of its light and our flowers of their scent. . . . The Finale develops toward a triumphant conclusion intended to rouse in the listener a picture of lighter and confident prospects for the future.” Sibelius objected to this

interpretation, preferring that no programmatic implications be attached to this work. Nonetheless, this symphony does seem to express something specific to the Finnish imagination. The composer Sulho Ranta (1901-60) spoke on behalf of his fellow Finns when he declared, “There is something about this music—at least for us—that leads us to ecstasy; almost like a shaman with his magic drum.”

A critic covering the work’s premiere expressed the opinion that Sibelius’s Second was “one of the few symphonic creations of our time that point in the same direction as Beethoven’s symphonies.” Some commentators have underscored the piece’s affinity with the symphonies of Brahms while others find that especially the finale evokes something of Tchaikovsky. Stravinsky once heard Sibelius’s Second Symphony in the company of his teacher, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, and reported that Rimsky offered a solitary comment after the performance: “Well, I suppose that’s possible, too.”

Notes from New York Philharmonic archives

Notes prepared for QUO by Dr. Aaron Patterson



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

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.



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| Leslie and Lindsay Becker | Maria McEvoy |
| Seth Bedford | Addison McQuigg |
| Andrew Berman | Meta Platforms |
| Eric and Reyna Berman | Tina Montenegro |
| Carolyn Bowser | Michael Munley |
| Bryan Boulis | Lynn Muscato |
| John Boyer | Jean Myerson |
| Bob Bronzo | Ron Nahass |
| Lynn Campbell | Mara Novak |
| Lynn Caron | Debra Oaks-Leaf and Marc Leaf |
| Eric Carnevale | Theresa Pascoe |
| Jonathan Cayer | Hannibal Person |
| Jared Chamoff | Eric Peterson |
| Jonathan Chang | Todd Porter |
| James Chien | Mark Romatz |
| Sheri Clemons | Nicholas Saunders |
| Amy Coleman | Matthew Schermerhorn |
| Trevor Cramer | Robert Schifilliti |
| Julie Desbordes | Don Schmitt |
| Craig Devereaux and Leonard Gottlieb | Kevin Schmitt |
| Malaika Dowdell | Karen Shafer |
| Jennifer Duare | Elizabeth Shoup |
| Peter Fifield | Bonnie Singer |
| Laura Flanagan | Rena Sinha |
| Ellen Nahass Haid | Dane Stalcup |
| Sue Hardt | Larry Stalcup |
| Jodie Hare | Jonathan Stark |
| Lydia Herring | Nora Stidham |
| John Hutton | Wendy Szuch |
| Jennifer Kindman | Ralph Thomas |
| Karlsson-Shockey Family Foundation | Matthew Wise and Jim Lubin |
| Katie Kwaschyn | Tak Yan |
| James McCrory | Robert Yates |
| | Amanda Younger |

QUEER URBAN ORCHESTRA

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Kyle Stalsberg

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Brian Shaw

Personnel Manager

Craig Devereaux

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 email us at:

personnel@quonyc.org

The background of the poster features two hands clasped together in a prayer-like gesture. The hands are positioned on the left side of the frame, with the fingers pointing upwards. On the inner wrist of the hand in the foreground, there is a vibrant rainbow tattoo that extends down the forearm. The overall aesthetic is clean and celebratory, set against a plain white background.

Join us for the rest of Season 13!

Alive With Spirit

June 18, 2022

Annual GayLa: A Celebration of Beauty

Samuel Barber
Adagio for Strings

Jerry Herman
La Cage aux Folles

Florence Price
The Oak

Lucas Syed
Scenes from a Melodrama

John Williams
Star Wars Suite

*8 pm at the Church of the Holy Apostles
296 Ninth Avenue, New York, NY*