



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra & Eastman Philharmonia

Neil Varon,
conductor

Rebecca Bryant Novak,
assistant conductor

Darby Schmidt,
soprano

Wednesday, September 27, 2023
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre
7:30 PM

~ PROGRAM ~

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra & Eastman Philharmonia
Neil Varon, conductor
Rebecca Bryant Novak, assistant conductor

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra

Hänsel und Gretel: Prelude (1890-93)

Englebert Humperdinck
(1854-1921)
8'

and flowers pick themselves (2005)

Ricky Ian Gordon
(b. 1956)
21'

1. i thank you God for most this amazing
2. why did you go
3. Thy fingers make early flowers of
4. anyone lived in a pretty how town
5. who knows if the moon's a balloon

Darby Schmidt, soprano
Rebecca Bryant Novak, conductor

~ INTERMISSION ~

Eastman Philharmonia

Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op.68 (1855-76)

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)
45'

- I. Un poco sostenuto; Allegro
- II. Andante sostenuto
- III. Un poco allegretto e grazioso
- IV. Adagio; Più andante; Allegro non troppo, ma con brio

~ PROGRAM NOTES ~

Hänsel und Gretel: Prelude

Engelbert Humperdinck (1854-1921) was a German composer known for his versatility with various musical genres. Overall, his music bears elements of the German tradition that are closely woven within musical influences by Richard Wagner, whom he assisted for a time. Humperdinck's musical journey began with his enrollment in the Cologne Conservatory at 18, where he studied voice and composition. In 1876, he received the Mozart Stipend of Frankfurt, enabling him to study under Franz Lachner at the Royal Music School in Munich (1877-1879). During this time, he received an award from the Mendelssohn Foundation of Berlin allowing him to travel to Naples, where he met Richard Wagner during the summer of 1879.

His most famous work, "Hänsel und Gretel," based on a libretto by his sister Adelheid Wette, was first performed in Weimar in December 1893, under the baton of Richard Strauss. This opera, though initially intended for children, has appealed to audiences of all ages due to its blend of innocence and Wagnerian depth. It successfully merges a children's story with a profound orchestral world, making it a post-Wagnerian work that harmoniously embodies the German master's style. While his other works, such as the pleasant "Humoreske" for orchestra from 1880, still receive occasional performances today, Humperdinck's legacy chiefly rests on "Hansel and Gretel".

Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel" is a timeless masterpiece that transports audiences into a world of enchantment and musical splendor. Loosely based on the popular story first published by the brothers Grimm in 1812, the work unravels the tale of two impoverished siblings, Hansel and Gretel, residing in a humble forest cottage with their parents. Plagued by hunger, they embark on a journey into the woods, stumbling upon a gingerbread house harboring a malevolent witch. The opera follows their odyssey, a spellbinding narrative of courage and love triumphing over adversity.

Humperdinck's score is a symphonic tapestry, rich with folk-inspired melodies and evocative harmonic language. The overture alone transports the audience into an enchanting realm, painting vivid musical landscapes that set the stage for the captivating story. The music faithfully mirrors the characters' inner states, from playful innocence to trepidation, echoing the eerie atmosphere of their surroundings.

At its essence, "Hansel and Gretel" explores themes of familial bonds, resilience, and the timeless battle between good and evil. For over a century, "Hansel and Gretel" has held its place as a cherished gem within the operatic repertoire, and its overture is still a recurring feature on many symphonic programs. Its bewitching music, endearing characters, and timeless motifs continue to captivate audiences, inviting them to rediscover the enchantment of youth and the enduring triumph of courage and love. As you experience this performance, allow yourself to be swept away by the colorful array of folkloristic melodies. Let the overture carry you deep into the heart of the forest and the embrace of familial bonds in this enduring masterpiece. – **Yonatan Dvir**

and flowers pick themselves

Based on the poetry of e.e. cummings, Ricky Ian Gordon's *and flowers pick themselves* is a lush orchestral setting of e.e. cummings' evocative poetry for soprano and orchestra. Beginning with the iconic poem *i thank you god for most this amazing day*, Gordon sets this exuberant text to the backdrop of a sparkling orchestra, while soprano soars in delight with the earth and life itself. A brief moment of questioning - 'how should tasting touching hearing seeing / doubt unimaginable You?' takes a darker, more contemplative turn, before the work finally finishes with a glowing, affirmative "i thank you God!"

The second movement "why did you go" is a poem of loss, and the soprano's plaintive melody is supported by a dirge-like ostinato in the orchestra. Her poignant song is interspersed with distant, chorale-like orchestral interludes. She concludes with a piercing leap on the final line, 'maybe did / something go away / ever so quietly / when we weren't looking,' and the orchestra closes with its final, most extensive, iteration of their chorale, like a closing funeral hymn.

The third movement "thy fingers make early flowers of all things" depicts flowers, love, kisses - everything that is ephemeral, fleeting, uncapturable. In Gordon's setting, it is a rhythmic romp, full of play between the orchestra and soloist. The recurring line "though love be a day" is set to a kind of suspended rhythmic animation each time it appears, only to be charmingly snapped back into the musical effervescence just moments later.

The fourth movement, "anyone lived in a pretty how town" is the centerpiece of the cycle and one of cummings' most touching poems. While the previous texts simply captured images, moments, and feelings, this poem is a true narrative. It is the story of "anyone" who lived in "a pretty how town" and all of the "somebodies" and "everyones" who lived there with him. Gordon's nostalgic setting captures the sheer Americana of cummings' text, with a gentle flute solo constantly interweaving with and echoing the soprano's simple tune, and glockenspiel and piccolo painting the stars in the night sky.

The finale, "who knows if the moon's a balloon," is a poem of pure imagination, in which the moon, balloons, cities, houses, people, spring, flowers, and more, all swirl together in a kaleidoscope of images. The orchestra dances while the soprano confidently declares an almost childlike vision of the world around her. The cycle closes with its eponymous line 'and flowers pick themselves' sailing over an accompaniment that spins itself into a thrilling close. – **Rebecca Bryant Novak**

Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68

Johannes Brahms's Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68, is a landmark in the symphonic repertoire, embodying a profound artistic journey and personal struggle. Starting in 1854, Brahms's creative process for this work spanned more than two decades, shaped by his artistic growth and the weighty legacy of Beethoven.

The symphony premiered in 1876 in Karlsruhe under the baton of Felix Otto Dessoff, and unfolds in four movements, each with its own distinct character: The first movement, marked *Un poco sostenuto — Allegro*, sets the tone with an intense introduction and energetic principal theme in the exposition. The second movement, *Andante sostenuto*, offers a lyrical and contemplative respite in E major. A haunting violin solo in this movement evokes the introspective depth of Beethoven's late works. The gentle elegance of the third movement, *Un poco allegretto e grazioso* in A-flat major, provides a contrast to the preceding movements. The fourth movement, *Adagio — Più andante — Allegro non troppo, ma con brio — Più allegro*, serves as the grand finale. It begins with an extended introduction in C minor, featuring an "Alphorn" theme that unfolds majestically first in the French Horns, then in the Flutes. This movement is marked by its vast emotional scope, resolving tensions introduced earlier in the symphony. The symphony was met with critical acclaim upon its premiere, with some referring to it as "Beethoven's Tenth" due to perceptible echoes of Beethoven's compositions. While acknowledging these echoes, Brahms presents a fresh and personal voice, his first symphony being one of four which established him as one of the most significant contributors to the genre of the symphony. — **Serena Reuten**

i thank You God for most this amazing

i thank You God for most this amazing
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any—lifted from the no
of all nothing—human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

why did you go

why did you go
little fourpaws?
you forgot to shut
your big eyes

where did you go?
like little kittens
are all the leaves
which open in the rain.

little kittens who
are called spring,
is what we stroke
maybe asleep?

do you know?or maybe did
something go away
every so quietly
when we weren't looking.

Thy fingers make early flowers of

Thy fingers make early flowers of
all things.
thy hair mostly the hours love:
a smoothness which
sings,saying
(though love be a day)
do not fear,we will go amaying.

thy whitest feet crisply are straying.
Always
thy moist eyes are at kisses playing,
whose strangeness much
says;singing
(though love be a day)
for which girl art thou flowers bringing?

To be thy lips is a sweet thing
and small.
Death,Thee i call rich beyond wishing
if this thou catch,
else missing.
(though love be a day
and life be nothing,it shall not stop kissing).

anyone lived in a pretty how town

anyone lived in a pretty how town
(with up so floating many bells down)
spring summer autumn winter
he sang his didn't he danced his did.

Women and men(both little and small)
cared for anyone not at all
they sowed their isn't they reaped their same
sun moon stars rain

children guessed(but only a few
and down they forgot as up they grew
autumn winter spring summer)
that noone loved him more by more

when by now and tree by leaf
she laughed his joy she cried his grief
bird by snow and stir by still
anyone's any was all to her

someones married their everyones
laughed their cryings and did their dance
(sleep wake hope and then)they
said their nevers they slept their dream

stars rain sun moon
(and only the snow can begin to explain
how children are apt to forget to remember
with up so floating many bells down)

one day anyone died i guess
(and noone stooped to kiss his face)
busy folk buried them side by side
little by little and was by was

all by all and deep by deep
and more by more they dream their sleep
noone and anyone earth by april
wish by spirit and if by yes.

Women and men(both dong and ding)
summer autumn winter spring
reaped their sowing and went their came
sun moon stars rain

who knows if the moon's a balloon

who knows if the moon's
a balloon,coming out of a keen city
in the sky—filled with pretty people?
(and if you and i should
get into it,if they
should take me and take you into their balloon.
why then
we'd go up higher with all the pretty people
than houses and steeples and clouds:
go sailing
away and away sailing into a keen
city which nobody's ever visited,where
always
it's

Spring)and everyone's
in love and flowers pick themselves

- e.e. cummings

~ MEET THE ARTISTS ~

Currently finishing her senior year at Eastman, soprano, **Darby Schmidt**, studies with professor Joshua Conyers. She was born and raised in California where she discovered her love for music. Her 2023 summer highlights include embracing her inner child to play Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel* at Teatro Comunale di Giuseppe Manini di Narni, Italy. Previous performances with Eastman include her transformation single and pregnant Lyla Lear in *Lear on the 2nd Floor* last year. Outside of Eastman, Darby premiered the role of Annabel in *Annabel* by Deborah Kavash with Opera Modesto, a new opera based on the poem by Edgar Allen Poe and written for their Story into Song Literacy Initiative. Darby's debut role was as Maria in Jonathan Dove's *Mansfield Park*, also with Opera Modesto. She has also attended the AIMS program in Graz, Austria. Ms. Schmidt enjoys visiting her family who now reside in Arkansas.

Rebecca Bryant Novak begins her Doctor of Musical Arts at the Eastman School of Music in fall of 2023, where she studies with Neil Varon and serves as an assistant conductor of the Eastman Philharmonia and Eastman Symphony Orchestra. She is also the founder and artistic director of Ad Hoc, a flexible chamber orchestra based in Rochester, New York and named as a "Maverick Classical Music Ensemble" on ArtsJournal's Sandow.

She previously served as the Assistant Conductor of the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra and Associate Conductor of National Philharmonic, where she conducted Summer String Institute, Montgomery County Public Schools 2nd Graders Concerts, and the Johansen International Competition Showcase Concert, and served as the assistant conductor for the National Philharmonic Chorale.

She has studied at master classes with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Southwest German Philharmonic, Hradec Králové Philharmonic, the Romanian Chamber Orchestra, and the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, among others, with teachers including Gerard Schwarz, Atso Almila, Johannes Schlaefli, Markand Thakar, Ken Lam, Matthias Bamert, Martin Sieghart, and Cristian Măcelaru. She has completed graduate studies in orchestral conducting at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and the Peabody Institute.

Her innovative musical programs have won significant awards and support, including SoundWebs – a concert series and commissioning project exploring wordless music in surprising sonic spaces, supported by People's Liberty, philanthropic lab of the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. U.S. Bank Foundation – and The Listening Lab – an educational concert program that teaches students intentional listening skills, which was selected for the Peabody Institute Dean's Incentive Award and the Johns Hopkins Social Innovation Lab, with further support from the John J. Leidy Foundation and Eddie C. & C Sylvia Brown Foundation. A first-generation college graduate, she is committed to access in education and has served as a teaching artist for underserved students with Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's OrchKids, MyCincinnati, and the Peaslee Neighborhood Center.

Her wife, Jessica Smithorn, is principal oboist of the Chattanooga Symphony, and her family is from Festus, Missouri. Bryant and Novak are her grandmothers' maiden names.

~ PERSONNEL ~ *Eastman School Symphony Orchestra*

Violin I

Amelia Posner-Hess,
concertmaster
Simon Cheng
Kaitlyn McLaughlin
Sofia Grimes
Ingrid Buschkopf
Victoria Zhao
Nicole Cheng
Tiara Lai
Hagan Tran
Kellen Mikesell
Claire Chien
Lauren Edwards
Erica Lin
Sanne Zwikker
Ellen Kim

Violin II

Kaylynn Li,
principal
Madison Oh
Liliana Mahave
Karen Wang
Olivia Walberger
Sedona Kmen
Ye Jin Shin
Miyako Cornelius
Lisa Wang
Leena Hocutt Duarte
Kristina Kaye
Chloe Hyun

Viola

Brynn Cogger,
principal
Vivienne Lucier
Matthew Vu
Israel Anselme
Hide Shiotsu
Keon Sagara
Mack Jones
Wyeth Minami

Violoncello

Maggie Slap,
principal
Ryan Post
Catalina Wooldridge
Audrey Cherwinski
Haozheng Sun
Joseph Yang
Anika Grieve
Ethan Hess
Alex Tuan
Ariun-enerel Gantumur

Double Bass

Annaliese White,
principal
Elizabeth Young
Nathan Kim
Isabella Williams
Moises Lara
Austin Beck

Flute

Julia Benitez-Nelson
Helen Freeman
Hannah Wang

Oboe

Nathan Clarke
Gus Smith
Sam Suchta

Clarinet

Lauren Enos
Jay Kline
Yinuo Wang

Bassoon

Roan Alonzo
Ryan Zych

Horn

Amelia Caruk
Andrew Foster
Aaron Fulton
Danica Tuohy
Sam Wood

Trumpet

Jarett Jean Jacques
Trevor King
Dvor Yaniv

Trombone

Andrew Bianchi
Corey Bohler
Corey Hamm
Charley Hibscheiler

Tuba

Andrew Sieradzki

Timpani

Lucy Chugh
Izaiah Gonzales

Percussion

Lexi Kunz
Ben Landon

Harp

Catherine Caton

~ **PERSONNEL** ~
Eastman Philharmonia

Violin I

Ashni Budge,
concertmaster
 Cate Carson
 Nicholas Garcia-Hettinger
 Rebecca Villalta
 Jaewon Jun
 Leona Liu
 Emily Palmer
 Grace Belsie
 Hannah Kim
 Peng Zhen
 Ellie Loya
 Paige Griffin
 Aviva Bock
 Hyun Park
 Leo Liao
 Samuel Shen

Violin II

Angelina Phillips,
principal
 Noah Arcenas
 Anne-Marie Wnek
 Carly Paris
 Madeleine Nysetvold
 Magali Pellety
 Elin Schlichting
 Kang-In Han
 Luke Lee
 Leila Fanien
 Yu-Jen Weng
 Enyu Ye
 Jia Wen Lin
 Mengxiao Hong

Viola

Arthur Nyanfor II,
principal
 John Crowley
 Juan Alvarez Jimenez
 Ethan Shin
 Max Wang
 Anna Denfeld
 Alexander Diaz
 Amelia Abouljoud
 Myles Davis
 Katherine Park
 Alicia Pucci
 Douglas Rodriguez

Violoncello

Hannah Sohn,
principal
 Isaac Moorman
 Matthew Wiest
 Taylor Yoon
 Felix Kim
 Amarilli Severa
 Emmanuel Losa
 Satoshi Kamei
 Ivy Robison
 Abby Hanna

Double Bass

Arden Ingersoll,
principal
 Wynter McCray
 Janae Gaddy
 Luke Black
 Ziyuan Qin
 Nadia Magalski

Flute

Alexander Day
 Angelina Lim

Oboe

Gabriela Fry
 Alex Kang

Clarinet

Kailan Fournier
 James Julien

Bassoon

Cole George
 Austin Struble
 Adrian Wittmer

Horn

Morgan Chalmers
 Aliceyn Covington
 Weverton Santos
 Miles Teague
 Cristina Vieyetz

Trumpet

Grace Firth
 Charlotte McIntosh

Trombone

Rose Cantrell
 Ronald James
 Gabriel Williams

Timpani

Ben Blaesing

Upcoming Collegium Concerts

Events are free unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, October 4

Musica Nova

Music of Lowry, Manoury, and Rihm
 Brad Lubman and Luke Poeppel, conductors
 Kilbourn Hall • 7:30PM

Sunday, October 8

Eastman Choral

Music of Lowry, Hailstork, and Billings
 William Weinert, conductor
 Kilbourn Hall • 3:30PM

Wednesday, October 11

The Eastman Wind Ensemble

Music of Lowry, Wolfe, Walker, and Strauss
 Mark Davis Scatterday and Mason St. Pierre, conductors
 Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre • 7:30PM

Friday, October 13

Eastman Wind Orchestra

Music of Boulanger, Dickerson, Holst, and Vaughan Williams
 Mark Davis Scatterday, Zachary Griffin, and Luca Peveroni, conductors
 Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre • 7:30PM

We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the "Great Hill People" and "Keepers of the Western Door" of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.

Information about upcoming Eastman concerts and events can be found at:
www.esm.rochester.edu/calendar

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre fire exits are located along the right and left sides, and at the back of the hall on each level. In the event of an emergency, you will be notified by the stage manager. If notified, please move in a calm and orderly fashion to the nearest exit.

Restrooms are located on each level of Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre. Our ushers will be happy to direct you to them.

Please note: The use of unauthorized photo-graphic and recording equipment is not allowed in this building. We reserve the right to ask anyone disrupting a performance to leave the hall.

Supporting the Eastman School of Music: We at the Eastman School of Music are grateful for the generous contributions made by friends, parents, and alumni, as well as local and national foundations and corporations. Gifts and grants to the School support student scholarships, performance and academic facilities, educational initiatives, and programs open to the greater Rochester community. Every gift, no matter the size, is vital to enhancing Eastman's commitment to excellence. For more information on making a gift, please visit www.esm.rochester.edu/advancement or contact the Advancement Office by calling (585) 274-1040. Thank you!