~ PROGRAM ~

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra
Matthew Straw, conductor

Mirabai Songs (1982)
I. It’s True, I Went to the Market
II. All I Was Doing Was Breathing
III. Why Mira Can’t Go Back To Her Old House
IV. Where Did You Go?
V. The Clouds
VI. Don’t Go, Don’t Go

Anna Thompson, soprano

Cate Carson, violin; Ally Keller, viola
Felix Kim, violoncello; Luke Black, double bass
Dylan Tucker, alto flute; Lauren Enos, bass clarinet
Remy Thomas, percussion; Lindsay Haukom & Megan Cooke, harp

~ Pause ~

Serenade No. 1, Op. 11, D Major (1858)
I. Allegro molto
II. Scherzo
III. Adagio non troppo
IV. Menuetto I & II
V. Scherzo
VI. Rondo

John Harbison
(b. 1938)

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

18’

49’
Serenade No. 1 in D Major

In 1857 at the age of 24, Brahms moved to Detmold where he accepted a job as court composer, piano teacher, and kapellmeister. He had a relatively light work load in Detmold, which allowed him plenty of time to work on his own music.

Having recently gained the favor of then famous composer Robert Schumann who touted him as the next great composer, destined to carry on the musical legacy of Beethoven, Brahms felt a great deal of pressure to follow in the footsteps of the great German symphonists. In writing his Serenade—his first piece for orchestra—Brahms was able to avoid the pressure of writing a symphony, while still exercising his compositional chops in a “pre-symphonic” setting. Originally, the serenade was written as a nonet for winds and strings, but upon the recommendation of Joseph Joachim, Brahms expanded his early version to create the work we know today for full orchestra.

In keeping with a serenade style form, characterized traditionally by many contrasting movements (certainly more than the 4 movements we’re used to hearing in a symphony), Brahms wrote 6 movements which feature wonderfully bucolic themes, as well as the soaring Brahmsian melodies for which he would later become known.

The Serenade No. 1 premiered in 1860 and received a very positive reception. About the serenade, Eduard Hanslick wrote “we regard the serenade, whose constitution can assume the most multifarious forms, as the playground of idyllic dreams, of beloved thoughts, of lightness and gaiety. It is the symphony of tranquility.” - Matthew Straw

Mirabai Songs

Mirabai’s ecstatic religious poetry was written in 16th-century India. When she was 27, her husband was killed in a war. Mirabai refused to die on her husband’s funeral pyre, as was the custom. Instead, she left her family compound, wrote her poems to Krishna, the Dark One, and sang and danced them in the streets. - John Harbison

American composer John Harbison (B. 1938) has received commissions from most of America’s premiere musical institutions, including the Metropolitan Opera, Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, New York Philharmonic, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. As one of America’s most distinguished artistic figures, he is recipient of numerous awards and honors, among them a MacArthur Fellowship and a Pulitzer Prize.

~MEET THE ARTIST~

Soprano Anna Thompson is a senior Voice Performance major at the Eastman School of Music. Upcoming operatic engagements include performing the title role in Puccini’s Suor Angelica and covering the role of Mary Johnson in Fellow Travelers (Spears) at the Seagle Festival. Past operatic credits include the roles of Diana in La Calisto (Cavalli) and Rosalinde in Die Fledermaus. She has also appeared as Zweite Dame in Die Zauberflöte (scenes). This season Anna will perform John Harbison’s Mirabai Songs with the Eastman School Symphony Orchestra as a winner of the 2021 Voice and Opera Department Concerto Competition. She will also appear as a soloist in Mozart’s Great Mass in C minor with the ESSO and the Eastman Rochester Chorus. Previous engagements with the ERC and Eastman Philharmonia include the Soprano I solo in Schumann’s Requiem für Mignon. She was also recently awarded 2nd Prize in the 2022 Friends of Eastman Opera Competition, and will appear as Cinderella’s Mother in Eastman Opera Theatre’s production of Into the Woods in Kodak Hall this spring. Anna is also a dual-degree student pursuing a BA in Linguistics at the University of Rochester.
I. It's True, I Went to the Market
My friend, I went to the market and bought the Dark One.
You claim by night, I claim by day.
Actually I was beating a drum all the time I was buying him.
You say I gave too much; I say too little.
Actually I put him on the scale before I bought him.
What I paid was my social body, my town body, my family body, and all my inherited jewels.
Mirabai says: The Dark One is my husband now.
The Dark One is my husband now.
Be with me when I lie down; you promised me this in an earlier life.

II. All I Was Doing Was Breathing
Something has reached out and taken in the beams of my eyes.
There is a longing, it is for his body for every hair of that dark body.
All I was doing was being, and the Dancing Energy came by my house.
His face looks curiously like the moon, I saw it from the side, smiling.
My family says: “Don’t ever see him again!”
And imply things in a low voice.
But my eyes have their own life: and they know whose they are.
I believe I can bear on my shoulders whatever you want to say of me.
Mirabai says: Without the energy that lifts mountains, how am I to live?

III. Why Mira Can’t Go Back To Her Old House
The colors of the Dark One have penetrated Mirabai’s body; all the other colors washed out.
Making love with the Dark One and eating little, those are my pearls and my carnelians.
Meditation beads and the forehead streak, those are my scarves and my rings.
That’s enough feminine wiles for me. My teacher taught me this.
Approve me or disapprove me.
I praise the Mountain Energy night and day.
I take the old ecstatic path.

I don’t steal money, I don’t hit anyone.
What will you charge me with?
I have felt the swaying of the elephant’s shoulders; and now you want me to climb on a jackass?
Try to be serious.

IV. Where Did You Go?
Where did you go, Holy One, after you left my body?
Your flame jumped to the wick, and then you disappeared and left the lamp alone.
You put the boat into the surf, and then walked inland, leaving the boat in an ocean of parting.
Mirabai says: Tell me when you will come to meet me.

V. The Clouds
When I saw the dark clouds, I wept, O Dark One, I wept at the dark clouds.
Black clouds soared up, and took some yellow along; rain did fall, some rain fell long.
There was water east of the house, west of the house; fields all green.
The one I love lives past those fields; rain has fallen on my body, on my hair, as I wait in the open door for him.
The Energy that holds up mountains is the energy Mirabai bows down to.
He lives century after century, and the test I set for him he has passed.

VI. Don’t Go, Don’t Go
Don’t go, don’t go. I touch your soles. I’m sold to you.
Show me where to find the bhakti path, show me where to go.
I would like my body to turn into a heap of incense and sandalwood and you set a torch to it.
When I’ve fallen down to gray ashes, smear me on your shoulders and chest.
Mirabai says: You who lift the mountains I have some light, I want to mingle it with yours.
~ PROGRAM NOTES ~

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra

Violin I
Nicholas Garcia-Hettinger, concertmaster
Leona Liu
Magali Pelletey
Jia Wen Lin
Aviva Bock
Ellie Loya
Yu-Jen Weng
Yan Yue
Grace Belsie
Veronica Rokicki

Violin II
Isabel Chen, principal
Carly Paris
Ashni Budge
Jaewon Jun
Enyu Ye
Angelina Phillips
Xuanzhen Zhang

Viola
Arthur Nyanfor II, principal
Clayton Trumbull
Max Wang
Hannah Esquivel
Phoenix Mercier
KatyAnn Stenner

Violoncello
Danny O’Connell, principal
Taylor Yoon
Juwen Zhang
Amarilli Severa

Double Bass
Janae Gaddy, principal
Madame McCray
Nadia Magalski

Flute
Andrew Hankes
Brooke Walden

Oboe
Payton Brown
Alexis Wilson

Clarinet
Lauren Enos
Scott Shao

Bassoon
Cole George
Austin Struble

Horn
Joe Alberico
Dylan Kingdom
Alana Knowles
Miles Teague
Cristina Vicitez

Trumpet
Derek Gong
Eve Shanks

Timpani
Remy Thomas

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

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 on whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.

Upcoming Concerts
Events are free unless otherwise noted.

Friday, April 1
Eastman Philharmonia Chamber Orchestra
Music of Mozart, Giuliani, and Friedman
Neil Varon, Grant O’Brien, and Nicholas Sharma, conductors
Kilbourn Hall • 7:30PM

Monday, April 4
Musica Nova
Music of Sanchez-Gutierrez, Neuwirth, Cox, and Frazier
Brad Lubman and Georgia Mills, conductors
Kilbourn Hall 7:30PM

Friday-Sunday, April 7-10
Eastman Opera Theatre
Sondheim’s Into the Woods
Timothy Long, music director
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre • 7:30PM/2:00PM Sunday
Tickets required – go to www.EastmanTheatre.org for more information

Sunday, April 10
Repertory Singers/Women’s Choir
Music of Purcell, Mendelssohn, Diemer, Lowry, Torke, Ivanova, and Silvey
Philip Silvey, Christian Bigliani, Daniel Reid, and Grace Leung, conductors
Kilbourn Hall 7:30PM

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Kilbourn Hall fire exits are located along the right and left sides, and at the back of the hall. 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.

A fully accessible restroom is located on the main floor of the Eastman School of Music. Our ushers will be happy to direct you to this facility.

Please note: The use of unauthorized photographic 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:
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Thank you!