

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra

Rebecca Bryant Novak,
Yonatan Dvir, and Serena Reuten,
conductors

Morgan Chalmers, Aliceyn Covington,
Alina Liebschner, and Lea Helsel,
horns

Friday, April 19, 2024
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre
7:30 PM



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

~ PROGRAM ~
Eastman School Symphony Orchestra
Rebecca Bryant Novak, Yonatan Dvir, and Serena Reuten, *conductors*

Short Ride in a Fast Machine (1986)

John Adams
(b. 1947)
4'

Rebecca Bryant Novak, *conductor*

Konzertstück for Four Horns, Op. 86 (1849)

Robert Schumann
(1810-1856)
19'

I. Lebhaft
II. Romanze: Ziemlich langsam
III. Sehr lebhaft

Morgan Chalmers, Aliceyn Covington,
Alina Liebschner, and Lea Helsel, *horns*

Yonatan Dvir, *conductor*

~ INTERMISSION ~

D'un matin de printemps, LB 41C (1918)

Lili Boulanger
(1893-1918)
5'

D'n soir triste, LB 40C (1917-1918)

Lili Boulanger
12'

Rebecca Bryant Novak, *conductor*

D'un soir triste was provided by the
Edwin A. Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music at the Free Library of Philadelphia.

The Nutcracker: Suite No. 1, Op. 71A (1891-1892) Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

I. Overture (1840-1893)
II. Character Dances: 22'
a) March
b) Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy
c) Russian Dance: Trepak
e) Chinese Dance
f) Dance of the Mirlitons (Reed Pipes)
III. Waltz of the Flowers

Serena Reuten, *conductor*

~ PROGRAM NOTES ~

Short Ride in a Fast Machine

Premiered in 1986, John Adams' *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* has long been a calling card of sunny West Coast minimalism. Its opening is iconic – a single bar of woodblock, which will serve as a relentless metronome for the rest of the piece. Adams nods to the tradition the brass fanfare – in the piece's title and its content - but with none of the ceremony and gravitas usually associated with that genre. Instead, *Short Ride* lives up to its name and takes the listener on an exhilarating and visceral musical journey.

Konzertstück for Four Horns, Op. 86

Among the 'standard repertoire' concerti regularly performed today, Robert Schumann's *Konzertstück* (read: Concert Piece) stands as a chimeric anomaly. The piece is structured in three movements - defying the mid-nineteenth century notion of a single-movement 'concert piece' - while still being shorter than a traditional concerto. Its thematic cyclicality predates many compositional trends in concerto writing. However, the most unique element of Schumann's *Konzertstück* is that it is written for not one, but four valve horn soloists. This unique instrumentation, which was uncommon for the Romantic era, is reminiscent of baroque *Sinfonia Concertanti* and *Concerti Grossi*, in which the juxtaposition between soloist and ensemble was more blurry.

The valve horn (Ge: Ventilhorn) was a fairly new instrument during Schumann's lifetime; a significant upgrade from the natural horn, which could only play a limited amount of notes in a certain key, and had to often rely on switching crooks for transpositions. The earliest report of this new instrument date back to 1815, in Breslau, though we know that the use of the valve horn would not be standardized until the end of the century, with composers such as Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) still opting to employ the use of natural horns throughout their lifetime. Schumann's decision to write a concerto for four valve horns has without a doubt contributed greatly to the popularization of the instrument by showing its versatility and brilliant virtuosity.

The work opens with two striking chords by the orchestra, followed by a valiant opening statement by the solo quartet. Following, the opening 'Lebhaft' (lively) movement unfolds the same triplet-laden motif. The following movement, aptly titled 'Romanze', follows a song-like structure, displaying the lyrical qualities of the soloists with long, drawn melodic lines and poignant counterpoint. A brief trumpet fanfare announces the beginning of

the third movement, 'Sehr Lebhaft' (very lively), played without pause from the previous 'Romanze'. This movement is by far the most virtuosic, with all four horn parts containing demanding lines with frequent arpeggiations, leaps, and register changes.

D'un matin de printemps* *D'un soir triste

Born to a musical family, Lili Boulanger was the first woman to win the prestigious Prix de Rome. A talented and prolific composer, Boulanger's life was tragically cut short in 1918, when she died at the age of 24 after a lifetime of poor health. *D'un Matin de Printemps* and *D'un Soir Triste* were some of her final works. Both show a keen balance between classical formal structures and complex 20th century chromaticism, demonstrating the skill of a highly trained composer – no surprise, as Boulanger's father won the Prix de Rome a generation before her.

D'un Matin de Printemps (Of *A Spring Morning*) evokes the freshness of spring, but never becomes saccharine or cliched. The piece begins with a soft, buzzing energy from violins and flute, then alternates between light and shadow, clarity and ambiguity – both structurally and harmonically. As the piece comes to a close, the opening theme bursts into bloom with a dramatic treatment from the full orchestra.

D'un Soir Triste (Of *A Sad Evening*) demonstrates an extraordinary level of compositional and emotional maturity. The last work Boulanger was able to complete in her own hand, the score is replete with markings such as "sad," "heavy," and "funereal." At times, the piece can have a fantasia-like quality of shifting moods and sound qualities, but beneath the surface, it maintains a highly structured form. Like *D'un Matin de Printemps*, *D'un Soir Triste* relies on the increasingly complex presentation of its initial theme, which she alters to great coloristic effect throughout the piece, finally concluding with a majestic, if tragic, final statement.

Ms. Bryant Novak's performance of Lili Boulanger's *D'un soir triste* is dedicated to all women whose musical voices have been diminished - including Cara Kizer, Amanda Stewart, and many others - with hope that they will ultimately be restored and celebrated.

The Nutcracker: Suite No. 1, Op. 71A

The Nutcracker Suite was written about nine months prior to the full ballet in 1892, Tchaikovsky's third ballet after *Swan Lake* (1876) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1889), and displays some of Tchaikovsky's most innovative orchestral writing. Adapted from ETA Hoffman's tale of *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, the first act is mainly plot-driven, focusing on the main character – a young girl named Clara – and the events of a Christmas party in her family home.

She receives a Nutcracker as a gift for Christmas and when she sneaks down to check on it later at midnight, she discovers that she is magically shrinking as mice fill the room. The Nutcracker comes to life and engages in a fierce battle with the Mouse King, before Clara distracts the Mouse King by throwing her shoe at him and giving the Nutcracker enough time to fatally stab the Mouse King. The Nutcracker then turns into a human prince and leads Clara towards a snowy forest as they enter his magical kingdom. Now set in the magical kingdom, Tchaikovsky expands the story in the second act of the ballet to include the character dances presented in the Suite that gives dancers the opportunity to showcase their virtuosity and versatility.

The suite opens with the *Overture* from the beginning of the ballet (usually played before the rise of the curtain) which is scored for orchestra without low strings and brass, setting a very light and airy atmosphere for the beginning of the ballet. The next movements are a series of character dances, starting with the march from the first act of the ballet that usually introduces the shenanigans of the young children. *The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy* is iconic for its use of the celesta, which is featured prominently throughout the movement. The strings accompany with a very regular pizzicato or staccato rhythm that is reminiscent of the ticking of a music box, adding to the doll-like choreography of the solo dancer. The *Russian Dance Trepak* is a male solo dance usually featuring acrobatic leaps and repeating turns with the quick tempo reflecting the athleticism and power of the dancer. (The full suite includes another movement called *Arabian Dance* which will not be performed in this concert.) The *Chinese Dance* offers many possibilities for choreography, often displaying angular movements and other non-traditional ballet gestures. The movement features the flutes and piccolo that play virtuosic flourishes in dialogue with pizzicato strings. The *Dance of the Mirlitons* features the flutes again and the english horn, but this time transitions to a very menacing middle section played by the brass and percussion. The final movement is *Waltz of the Flowers*, which displays the virtuosic capabilities of the harp at the beginning before transitioning to a vibrant waltz with many variations in orchestration. This big group dance comes near the final conclusion of the whole ballet, ending with a final jubilant finish!

– **Serena Reuten**

~ MEET THE ARTISTS ~

The Bells N' Roses (Morgan Chalmers, Aliceyn Covington, Alina Liebschner, Lea Hesel) is a French horn quartet comprised of the junior class at the Eastman School of Music. The quartet formed in 2022, and has performed at venues such as the George Eastman House, Eastman at Washington Square, and the Honeoye Falls Historical Society. They have been featured in multiple Eastman Horn Choir concerts, and have performed for many notable figures such as Frøydis Ree Wekre, William VerMeulen, and Nathaniel Silberschlag, in masterclasses at Eastman. The Bells N' Roses study with Professor Peter Kurau and receive weekly coachings from Professor Maura Corvington.

Morgan Chalmers (First Horn) is from Clarence, New York, and is a member of several ensembles at Eastman including Brass Guild, Horn Choir, and Bells N' Roses. She currently holds the position of Third Horn with the Binghamton Philharmonic Orchestra and Principal Horn with the Clarence Summer Orchestra. Chalmers also frequently subs with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra.

Aliceyn Covington (Second Horn) is from Blairsville, Georgia and has been playing the french horn for 10 years. She is currently performing as a sublist musician with the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes. Last summer, Covington participated as a fellow at the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival and will spend this summer at the National Music Festival and the Berlin Opera Academy.

Alina Liebschner (Third Horn) is from Pearland, Texas. She has performed at the Mid Europe Festival in Schladming, Austria as a part of the World Youth Wind Orchestra Project in 2022, and was a featured artist at the Schwarzwälder Horntage Festival in Staufen, Germany in 2023. This summer Liebschner will serve as a Student Ambassador to Havana, Cuba, with the CAYO Organization as well as perform with the Opera Academy in Berlin for the OpernFest.

Lea Hesel (Fourth Horn) is from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Outside of Bells N' Roses, she is a member of the Eastman Brass Guild, Eastman Horn Choir, and the Alvim Animo Brass Quintet. As a freelancer, Hesel frequently subs with orchestras such as the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Wheeling Symphony, and the Pittsburgh Ballet Theater Orchestra. This summer, she will be touring Europe with the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra.

The Bells N' Roses would like to give a special thank you to the enormous support of their professors Peter Kurau and Maura Corvington.

~ PERSONNEL ~

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra

Violin I

Simon Cheng,
concertmaster
Ingrid Buschkopf
Sofia Grimes
Victoria Zhao
Olivia Walberger
Liliana Mahave
Leena Hocutt Duarte
Kellen Mikesell
Chloe Hyun
Kristina Kaye
Lauren Edwards
Claire Chen

Violin II

Kaylynn Li,
principal
Amelia Posner-Hess
Hagan Tran
Sanne Zwikker
Nicole Cheng
Erica Lin
Karen Wang
Ellen Kim
Sedona Kmen
Madison Oh
Kaitlyn McLaughlin
Miyako Cornelius
Tiara Lai

Viola

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

Violoncello

Felix Harkness,
principal
Catalina Wooldridge
Clara Schultz
Ryan Post
Anika Grieve
Audrey Cherwinski
Ariun-enerel Gantumur
Haozheng Sun
Maggie Slap
Ethan Hess
Joseph Yang
Pyotr Alvarado

Double Bass

Liz Young,
principal
Nathan Kim
Gregory Galand
Austin Beck
Samantha Liu
Annaliese White

Flute

Julia Benitez-Nelson
Alexander Day
Kaja Hammerschmidt
Maya Stock

Oboe

Lewis Painter
Sihan Qi
Josh So

Clarinet

Kevin Jin
Harrison Kim
Eliza Reimold

Bassoon

Roan Alonzo
Noah Eastman
Colin Gentry
Ryan Zych

Horn

Amelia Caruk
Andrew Foster
Aaron Fulton
Aby Stumpf
Jennelle Williams
Sam Wood
Claire Zhao

Trumpet

Ted Ekstrand
Seth Henderson
Kirk Morrison
Eve Shanks
Yue Zhang

Trombone

Andrew Bianchi
Darren Brady
Charley Hibscheiler
Matous Rybka

Tuba

Andrew Sieradzki

Timpani

Lucy Chugh
Lexi Kunz

Percussion

Izaiah Gonzales
Kai Gray
Ben Landon

Harp

Sunshine Quan

Keyboard

Veniamin Blokh



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