



UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

**Eastman
School of Music**

100 YEARS | 1921-2021

Eastman Philharmonia

**Neil Varon
and Austin Chanu,
conductors**

Monday, November 14, 2022
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre
7:30 PM

~ PROGRAM ~
Eastman Philharmonia
Neil Varon and Austin Chanu, *conductors*

A Midsummer Night's Dream: Overture (1827)

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)
12'

Austin Chanu, conductor

The Oak (1943)

Florence Price
(1887-1953)
15'

Austin Chanu, conductor

~ INTERMISSION ~

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, op. 73 (1877)

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)
43'

- I. Allegro non troppo
- II. Adagio non troppo
- III. Allegretto grazioso (Quasi andantino)
- IV. Allegro con spirito

~ PERSONNEL ~

Eastman Philharmonia

Violin I

Nicholas Garcia-Hettinger,
concertmaster
Angelina Phillips
Emilie Tupper
Cate Carson
Katrina Johnson
Noah Arcenas
Luke Lee
Shisheng Song
Ashni Budge
Chloe Yofan
Mateo Garza
Jessica Zhuang
Suwon Kim
Abreal Whitman
Alex Tada
Anatole Keshwani
Mengxiao Hong
Lydia Newton

Violin II

Rebecca Villalta,
principal
Jingxuan Hu
Weichao Zhu
Jenny Choi
Lily Dunlap
Madeleine Nysetvold
Jia Wen Lin
Emily Palmer
Alisha Stafford
Jaewon Jun
Emma Milian
Jiayu Zhu
Yu-Jen Weng
Grace Belsie
Xiaoman Ke
Jasmin Mönkkönen

Viola

Lizzy Macintosh,
principal
Sophia Moreira
Rachel Smith
Adrian Jackson
Megan Wike
Jane Vourlekis
Fanshu Sun
Wednesday Hsu
Hannah Esquivel
Juliana Kilcoyne
Clayton Trumbull
Komkrit Suriya
Ben Barron
Qiongwen Zhang

Violoncello

Isaac Moorman,
principal
Owen Cummings
Wil Vanderslice
Zac Fung
Taylor Yoon
Cole Leonard
Cecilia Hoyt
Jacob Hinton
Haeun Choi
Noah Janowicz
Juewen Zhang
Cori Trenczer

Double Bass

Riley Collier,
principal
Madame Wynter McCray
Arden Ingersoll
Janae Gaddy
Carlton Huff
Ziyuan Qin

Flute

Eric Bergeman
Emily Claman
Alexander Day
Alexandra Stokes
Brooke Walden

Oboe

Vincent Chang
Peter Davies
Katie Eaton
Jeehoon Kim
Maxx Mejia

Clarinet

Owen Cheung
Alyssa Estrella
Jason Gluck

Bassoon

Avery Dabe
Cole George
Megan Neuman

Horn

Kristin Andlauer
Gretchen Berendt
Morgan Chalmers
Aliceyn Covington
Katherine Perrine
Azil Ressler
Weverton Santos

Trumpet

Daniel Adamczyk
Jess Green
Davan Sagara

Trombone

Talia Berenbaum
Joshua Brown
Rose Cantrell
Chase Farrell
Wayne Kreml

Tuba

Jordan Oliveira

Timpani

Sammy DeAngelis
David Wang

Percussion

Kana Funayama
Sean McWilliams
Rachel Richards

Harp

Mae Cooke
Elizabeth Mayo

A Midsummer Night's Dream: Overture

Mendelssohn's overture to Shakespeare's play dates 1826, when Mendelssohn was 17 and he and his sister Fanny first became acquainted with the brilliant Romantic German translation of Shakespeare by August Wilhelm Schlegel. Germans took to Schlegel's translation so strongly that they spoke of "unser Shakespeare" ("our Shakespeare"), as if the Bard had written in German. Although the prodigious siblings had composed regularly during their youth, the overture served as Felix's public debut, garnering for him recognition as a musical genius. The work immediately became spectacularly popular and was performed repeatedly throughout northern Europe.

Years later, in a letter to his publisher, Mendelssohn commented that the sequence of ideas in the overture follows the play closely: "We hear first the fairy music whispering on the violins, later we hear the bray of Bottom, he with the ass's head, and also Bottom's peasant dance towards the end. At the end, after everything has been satisfactorily concluded, and the principal players have joyfully left the stage, the elves follow them, bless the house and vanish with the dawn. Thus the play ends, and my overture as well."

Sixteen years later, in 1842, Mendelssohn was invited by Frederick William IV, King of Prussia, to compose incidental music for a Berlin production of *Ein Sommernachtstraum*. By using themes from the overture as a basis for the later sections, as well as recapturing the airy style of the earlier orchestration, Mendelssohn was able to make the music sound like a seamless whole. The eerie effect of the introduction into fairyland was such a touch of brilliance that subsequent composers have shamelessly borrowed it — note the opening measures of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*.

- © 2019 Joseph & Elizabeth Kahn

The Oak

Florence B. Price was a musical pioneer of her time - she was one of the first Black students to graduate from the New England Conservatory of Music and the first Black woman to have a symphony performed by a major American orchestra. Her catalogue includes three symphonies, with a fourth still lost, two violin concertos, a piano concerto, multiple orchestral tone poems, and a wide variety of chamber music.

Price's *The Oak* was an unknown composition until its un-dated manuscript was discovered in the Sibley Library at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY in the late 1990s. It is exciting to have the first performance of this work at Eastman occur during the end of our centennial celebration. After the manuscript was discovered, it was moved to the Price Archives at the University of Arkansas, where scholars determined that *The Oak* had been composed in 1943. Price, who died in 1953, was never able to hear the work performed. The first documented performance of *The Oak* took place on March 25, 2000 with the Women's Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Apo Hsu, in San Francisco and was recorded by the same ensemble a year later. The score was just recently, in 2019, published by G. Schirmer and has been programmed more frequently especially since Price's renaissance in the past few years.

Price's *The Oak* is one of her darkest works, departing from her overt hymnal vernacular that is present in her symphonies and violin concerti. In this

piece, there are moments where her spiritual influences shine through, but her compositional language is changing at this point in her career. *The Oak* explores a number of different moods and atmospheres, from mysterious to more aggressive and irritated. It begins with an incredibly soft yet ominous melodic fragment presented in the cello and basses that reappears throughout the entire composition. This dark thematic opening is balanced out by soaring string melodies and faster paced passages within the entire orchestra. The work balances between light and dark motifs.

There is no research or writings from Price about the title, *The Oak*, so its significance is left to speculation. At this time in her career, Price was struggling to get her music performed as she was beginning to mature in her language and compositional approach, and this work is a major shift in Price's approach to harmony, structure, and melodic writing.

- Austin Chanu

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, op. 73

Less than a year after the successful premiere of Johannes Brahms' First Symphony on November 4, 1876, the composer left Vienna to spend the summer at the lakeside town of Pörschach on Lake Wörth in southern Austria. There, in the beauty and quiet of the countryside, Brahms completed his Second Symphony. Pörschach was to be a productive place for Brahms; over the course of three summers there he wrote several important works, including his Violin Concerto. In a letter to critic Eduard Hanslick, a lifelong Brahms supporter, Brahms wrote, "The melodies fly so thick here that you have to be careful not to step on one."

Unlike the First Symphony, which took Brahms over 20 years to complete, work on the Second Symphony went smoothly, and Brahms finished it in just four months. Brahms felt so good about his progress that he joked with his publisher, "The new symphony is so melancholy that you won't stand it. I have never written anything so sad ... the score must appear with a black border." In a different letter, Brahms self-mockingly observed, "Whether I have a pretty symphony I don't know; I must ask clever people sometime." As Brahms composed, he shared his work-in-progress with lifelong friend Clara Schumann. "Johannes came this evening and played me the first movement of his Second Symphony in D major, which greatly delighted me," Schumann noted in her diary in October 1877. "I find it in invention more significant than the first movement of the First Symphony ... I also heard a part of the last movement and am quite overjoyed with it. With this symphony he will have a more telling success with the public as well than he did with the First, much as musicians are captivated by the latter through its inspiration and wonderful working-out."

The Symphony No. 2 is often described as the cheerful alter ego to the solemn melancholy of Brahms' First Symphony. No. 2 unfolds seamlessly, almost inevitably, without calling obvious attention to the elegant complexity of Brahms' compositional style. Brahms uses the lilting notes of the *Allegro non troppo* as a common link throughout all four movements, where they are repeated, reversed, and otherwise, in Schumann's words, "wonderfully worked-out." In the extended coda, Brahms introduces the trombones and tuba, casting a tiny shadow over the sunny mood. The *Adagio non troppo*'s lyrical cello melody also hints at the wistful melancholy that inhabits so much of Brahms' music. The *Allegretto grazioso* is remarkably gentle, with little of the joking quality for which scherzos are named, and the infectious joy of the *Allegro con spirito* expands on the first movement's amiable mood, so much so that at the Vienna premiere on December 30, 1877, the audience demanded an encore. - © 2019 Elizabeth Schwartz

Upcoming Concerts

Events are free unless otherwise noted.

Thursday, November 17

Eastman Jazz Workshop Ensemble

Andrew Watkins, director

Kilbourn Hall • 7:30PM

Friday, November 18

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra

Music of Wagner, Grieg, Rossini, and Schumann

Neil Varon, conductor

Featuring Megan Brilleslyper, mezzo-soprano

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre • 7:30PM

Tuesday, November 29

Eastman Jazz Ensemble

Christine Jensen, director

Kilbourn Hall • 7:30PM

Friday, December 2

Eastman School Symphony Orchestra & Eastman-Rochester Chorus

Johannes Brahms: *A German Requiem*

William Weinert, conductor

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 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:

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!