

THE **APOLLO** ORCHESTRA

DAVID NEELY, GUEST CONDUCTOR

DAVID CHAN, VIOLIN SOLOIST

MARCH 12 2023, 4 PM

Program

Overture, *La forza del destino* Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

Four Sea Interludes, op. 33a, and Passacaglia, op. 33b, from *Peter Grimes*
Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

1. Dawn
2. Sunday Morning
3. Moonlight
4. Passacaglia
5. Storm

INTERMISSION

Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35 Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
Allegro moderato
Canzonetta: Andante
Finale: Allegro vivacissimo

*This program is made possible through the generosity of
The Downing Family Foundation.*

The works of Benjamin Britten are presented under license from Boosey & Hawkes.

***Please join The Apollo Orchestra for the remainder
of our 2022-2023 season!***

Sunday April 30, 2023, 4 pm. Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church, 1 Chevy Chase Circle, Washington DC.

Cho-Liang Lin, violin, conducting and performing with soloist Michelle Kim, violin.

Vivaldi: Concerto for 2 violins in A minor, op. 3 no. 8, RV 522

Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto, op 64 E minor

Wagner: Siegfried Idyll

Mozart: Symphony #35, K. 385, "Haffner"

Sunday, June 4, 2023, 4 pm. Church of the Resurrection, 3315 Greencastle Rd, Burtonsville, MD.

David Chan, conductor, with Hera Hyesang Park, soprano.

Operatic works by Mozart and Rossini

Schubert: Symphony, D.759, B minor (Unfinished)

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www.ApolloOrchestra.com

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About the Artists

Known as one of the most accomplished violinists of his generation, **David Chan** is in his 23rd season as concertmaster of New York's MET Orchestra. After winning prizes at the Tchaikovsky and Indianapolis international violin competitions, he made his New York debut in 1995 at Avery Fisher Hall, and his Carnegie Hall debut in 2003, performing the Brahms Double Concerto with the MET Orchestra. A student of Dorothy DeLay, Hyo Kang, and Michael Tseitlin, he received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University and his master's from the Juilliard School. In addition to being on the Juilliard faculty, he also serves as Head of the prestigious Orchestral Performance Program at the Manhattan School of Music. As a soloist, he has appeared under the baton of such conductors as James Levine and Fabio Luisi, with orchestras including the MET Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Diego Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan, and Moscow State Symphony. He is also a dedicated chamber musician who performs regularly in the New York area and at all the leading summer festivals.

In addition to his performance career, Chan is quickly making a name for himself as an elegant conductor of unusual interpretive depth. He has recently served as Music Director of the APEX Ensemble, with which he earned high praise for innovative and adventurous programming, and as Music Director of Camerata Notturna, one of New York City's foremost chamber orchestras. As Artistic Partner of Mainly Mozart's Festival of Orchestras, he has conducted the organization's famed All-Star Orchestra, as well as an entire festival combining musicians of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the San Francisco Symphony, and another series bringing together members of the MET Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra.

"Major credit clearly went to conductor Chan, who must be some kind of natural at this ... it sounded like a kinder, gentler Toscanini was running the show."

– *New York Classical Review*

Increasingly in demand on the podium, Chan's conducting engagements in recent seasons have included Belgium's l'Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège, the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, and l'Orchestre Dijon Bourgogne in France; the Grant Park and Classical Tahoe summer festivals; the Juilliard Orchestra in New York City; and at Musique et Vin au Clos Vougeot, where the festival orchestra comprises musicians from the Metropolitan Opera, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic, and all of the top orchestras in Paris.

In addition to his concert appearances, Chan is active as an entrepreneur and creative director. In 2008, combining his interest in wine with his passion for music, he co-founded the Musique et Vin au Clos Vougeot festival in the Burgundy region of France. During his 13 seasons as artistic director of the festival, which pairs wine tastings with music, he oversaw its growth from a small, intimate gathering to a destination event attracting many of the biggest names in classical music, such as Yo-Yo Ma, Joyce DiDonato, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Matthew Polenzani, Emmanuel Pahud, Menahem Pressler, Cho-Liang Lin, Gary Hoffman, Marlis Petersen, and Ildar Abdrazakov.

A native of San Diego, Chan lives in the New York City area with his wife, violinist Catherine Ro, and their children Annalise, Micah, and Arianna.

Described by *Opera News* as "a ninja warrior with a baton" for his performances of Berg's *Wozzeck* with Des Moines Metro Opera, conductor **David Neely** maintains an active conducting career in symphonic, opera, ballet, and educational settings. Previously serving on the faculty of the Indiana

University Jacobs School of Music, he was appointed Director of Orchestral Activities at the University of Maryland in 2019. Highlights at Maryland include Mahler's Symphony No. 2, Emilie Mayer's Symphony in F minor, Carlos Simon's *The Block*, and the world premiere of Maria Newman's *Our Rights and Nothing Less*. He has appeared with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, the Portland Symphony Orchestra, Bochumer Symphoniker, Dortmunder Philharmoniker, the Symphonieorchester Vorarlberg, among others. He remains a regular guest conductor at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

As Music Director and Principal Conductor of Des Moines Metro Opera, Neely has elevated the company's musical profile with critically acclaimed performances of a wide range of new and traditional repertoire, including the recent world premiere of Kristin Kuster and Mark Campbell's *A Thousand Acres* and the in-person premiere of Damien Geter and Lila Palmer's *American Apollo*. He has led productions with Atlanta Opera, Sarasota Opera, Bonn Opera, Halle Opera, Dortmund Opera, Saarland State Opera, St. Gallen Opera, Coburg Opera, the Eutiner Festspiele. His performances have been praised in Opera News, Opera Today, the Chicago Tribune, and the Wall Street Journal.

Neely has performed with numerous prominent artists including Joshua Roman, Bella Hristova, Benjamin Beilman, Rainer Honeck, Nicholas Daniel, Delfeayo Marsalis, Ben Lulich, and Ricardo Morales. He has appeared as a collaborative pianist with numerous singers, including a recent recital with Joyce Castle and *Winterreise* with David Adam Moore. He has served as a conducting teacher and guest master coach with Washington National Opera's Cafritz Young Artist program, and conducted WNO's American Opera Initiative in 2021. He will appear with the National Orchestra Institute in 2023. He is currently Director of Orchestral Activities at the University of Maryland School of Music, having previously served on conducting faculties of the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, the University of Kansas, and the University of Texas. He has also been honored as Kansas' Artist-Educator of the Year.

PROGRAM NOTES

Overture, *La forza del destino*, Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

Giuseppe Verdi's operatic masterpiece, *La forza del destino* (The Force of Destiny) was composed in 1861 in collaboration with Italian librettist, Francesco Maria Piave. Commissioned by the Imperial Theater of St. Petersburg, *La forza* received its Russian premiere in November of 1862. After the Russian premiere, Verdi undertook his first set of revisions before the opera eventually traveled to New York, Buenos Aires, and London; with premieres in 1865, 1866, and 1867 respectively. However, at this point the opera still did not have its now-famous overture; rather, the opera simply began with a brief prelude. After the 1867 London production, Verdi undertook a more extensive round of revisions. These included a new overture to replace the prelude, the addition of a new scene in Act 3, and a new ending in which the male lead doesn't kill himself. This final version (complete with its iconic overture) premiered in Milan in 1869, and has become the version most frequently performed in opera houses around the world.

Based on Angel de Saavedra's 1835 Spanish drama, *Don Alvaro o la fuerza del sino*, the story of *La forza* is, at its heart, a story about the tragic and unforeseen consequences of racism and classism. In the libretto a Spanish nobleman (the Marquis of Calatrava) will not permit the union between his daughter (Leonora) and her lover (Don Alvaro), whose inferior Inca bloodline puts him beneath her station. The seriousness of the subject matter is apparent in the seething orchestral introduction, as this tale of revenge and death unfolds. The **Overture** begins with six *fortissimo* exclamations in the brass...the unmistakable hammer blows of the "Fate motif." Immediately, the opening theme

establishes an atmosphere of foreboding and doom, even as the opera's various melodic motifs are presented. Like an overcast sky, the music of the opening theme surrounds everything, casting its inescapable gloom over Verdi's gently-rising lyricism, and serving as a constant reminder that the end result of hate and inequality is always the same...

"All are punished." —*Romeo and Juliet*, Act V, s. 3

Four Sea Interludes, op. 33a, and Passacaglia, op. 33b, from *Peter Grimes* Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Born and raised in the Suffolk seaport town of Lowestoft, it is not surprising that the Sea left its indelible impression upon British composer, **Benjamin Britten** (1913-1976). It is an ever-present influence upon his musical output, and arguably there is no finer example of this "call of the sea" than Britten's opera, ***Peter Grimes***. As avowed pacifists, Britten and his life-partner, legendary tenor Sir Peter Pears, felt compelled to leave the UK during the run-up to WWII, traveling in 1939 to the Pacific coast town of Escondido, CA. While there, Britten happened upon the writings of Suffolk poet, George Crabbe. One of his poems, *The Borough*, contained the tragic story of a fisherman—Peter Grimes. The story filled Britten with an overwhelming sense of nostalgia, and he immediately made up his mind to do two things: turn the story into an opera, and move back to England. Britten and Pears returned to England in 1942, whereupon Britten asked Montagu Slater to begin writing the libretto to *Peter Grimes*. Unlike the character in Crabbe's poem, Slater's Peter Grimes becomes a far more complex protagonist, morphing from a clearcut villain into a forlorn victim of both cruel fate and an even more cruel society. The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians calls *Peter Grimes*, "a powerful allegory of homosexual oppression." Britten's own 1945 reflection was much simpler: "[It is] a subject very close to my heart — the struggle of the individual against the masses. The more vicious the society, the more vicious the individual."

The "**Four Sea Interludes and Passacaglia**" play a critical role in the actual production of *Peter Grimes*. They are the connective tissue between the Prologue and three subsequent acts. In the same way that Debussy's interludes in *Pelleas et Melisande* provide background and atmosphere, Britten's "**Sea Interludes**" provide a unique soundscape for the dark and somber drama. Considering them to be integral to the story, Britten directed the Interludes to be played with the curtain down-no stage action. No surprise, in the nearly 80 years since *Peter Grimes*' 1945 premiere, these Interludes and Passacaglia have achieved the status of "stand-alone" works, and are now considered standard orchestral repertoire.

Dawn links the prologue and the first scene of Act 1, which opens on a street by the sea. It is both beautiful and terrifying, opening with a clear, high theme that divides the water and sky at dawn. Clarinet and harp arpeggios toss about the gently lapping waves, while somber chords in the low brass and stings suggest a terrible undercurrent.

Sunday Morning. Four horns in pairs sound the ringing of church bells. People scurry in the streets on their way to church, while the sunlight sparkles off the sea. The streets soon empty, and a foreboding cloud cover takes over the sky.

Moonlight. The opera's final act opens in the calm of night. Moonlight reflects off the glassy sea. Harp and flutes paint a picture of repose on the ocean surface...yet an underlying menace is present.

Passacaglia. Originally Interlude No.4 in the opera score, the music more or less follows the dramatic buildup to the tragic, albeit accidental death of Grimes' young sailing/fishing apprentice on the cliffs by the edge of the Sea.

Storm. A terrible sea storm breaks, rising to a wrenching climax as Grimes realizes the inexorable dichotomy within himself. His hopes and dreams now beyond his reach, the music ends with vicious stabs of Fate's cruel dagger.

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Prominent musical biographer, David Brown describes the years 1874-1878 as "the crisis years" in Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's life. Of course, the centerpiece of the crisis was the composer's disastrous marriage in 1877, a step taken in the hope of stopping supposition about his homosexuality. No sooner had the newlyweds embarked on their honeymoon, when the composer realized the absolute folly of what he'd done. He fled in torment to the Swiss resort town of Clarens, on the shores of Lake Geneva. However, the marriage was by no means Tchaikovsky's only crisis during those years. He had composed the first piano concerto (1875) for his close friend Nikolai Rubinstein, only to have the pianist declare the work worthless and unplayable. Soon after, Tchaikovsky's new ballet, *Swan Lake* (1876) was a failure in its first production. Sadly, the composer went to his grave without ever knowing that the world would regard his work as a masterpiece.

In March of 1878, Tchaikovsky's student, friend and probable lover, the young violinist, Iosif Kotek joined him in Clarens, and on March 17 Tchaikovsky began the violin concerto. In just eleven days he sketched the entire piece; however, Kotek along with Tchaikovsky's brother, Modest expressed reservations about the slow movement. Upon further consideration Tchaikovsky agreed with them, and on April 5 he replaced the original slow movement with a new one. Tchaikovsky completed the orchestration by April 11. Sadly, he was in for a repetition of his experience with the First Piano Concerto. Tchaikovsky dedicated his new concerto to the eminent violinist Leopold Auer, to whom he had previously dedicated his *Sérénade mélancholique* for violin and orchestra. Assuming that Auer would be the soloist, he scheduled the Concerto's premier performance for March, 1879. Not having been shown or consulted about the piece, Auer refused to play the concerto, questioning its intrinsic worth. Finally, the premiere took place on December 4, 1881 in far-away Vienna, with violin soloist, Adolph Brodsky, under the baton of Hans Richter. Influential Austrian music critic, Eduard Hanslick brutalized the work, saying that it "*brought us face to face with the revolting thought that music can exist which stinks to the ear...*" He went on to write that "*the violin was not played, but beaten black and blue.*"

These cruel words wounded Tchaikovsky for the rest of his life, yet history has delivered poetic justice. For nearly a century-and-a-half Tchaikovsky's only violin concerto continues to be one of the four or five most popular concertos in the expansive violin repertory - answer enough to Hanslick!

Mvt. I. *Allegro moderato*

Written in standard sonata form, this movement can be divided into an introduction, exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda. The brief introduction is given by the orchestra in D major. (As with the first piano concerto, this introductory theme never appears again.) The soloist responds with a cadenza-like entrance, and begins the exposition with the introduction of the cantabile main theme. The development builds to a heroic orchestral tutti of the main theme in F major, and propels the soloist into Tchaikovsky's own viciously demanding cadenza. The recapitulation reprises both the main and second themes in D major, after which both soloist and orchestra race to the end in a fast-paced coda.

Mvt. II. *Canzonetta: Andante*

Beginning with a short choral-like introduction in the winds, the second movement is in a relatively slow triple meter and somber in tone. The simple melody in G minor is sweet yet melancholy, with subtle hints of Gypsy influence. A contrasting brighter section in E major is followed by a reprise of the first theme. By way of transition, a simple series of orchestral chords fades into the third movement, which follows without pause (*attacca subito*).

Mvt. III. *Finale: Allegro vivacissimo*

Unapologetically Russian, the *Finale* begins with a lively orchestral intro, after which the solo violin launches into the dancing, “Trepak-esque” main theme in D major. A slightly calmer section in A major introduces the distinctly folk-like second theme, which is presented in a series of variations. The soloist accelerates to return to the main theme in F major, followed by a reprise of the second theme in G major. With one final appearance the main theme leads us to a blistering coda and an electrifying ending, which for over a century has brought, and continues to bring breathless audiences to their feet.

Program notes by Shawn K. Buck, March 12, 2023.

Founded in 2010, **The Apollo Orchestra** is comprised of some of Washington DC area’s finest professional freelance classical musicians. Apollo’s highly experienced players, including members of the U.S. premier military bands, join forces with well-known opera stars and accomplished international instrumental soloists in a series of free concerts throughout the DC area. Apollo also frequently collaborates with young opera singers from the Washington National Opera’s Cafritz Young Artist Program, emerging soloists from other internationally known artist programs, and winners of major competitions.

Funded since its inception entirely by The Downing Family Foundation, this unique, single-source long term underwriting approach model, combined with a senior management team who volunteer their time, eliminates substantial overhead expenses typically incurred by classical orchestras and allows Apollo to maintain its free admission policy so as to serve the widest possible audience in all communities.

The Apollo Orchestra is administered by Robert Downing, Chairman, CEO and Co-founder, and Virginia Lum, Executive and Artistic Director and Co-founder. The administrative team includes Margaret Dikel, Orchestra Manager and Librarian; Jordan A. Avellino, Marketing Director; Shawn Buck, Web Administrator and author of our program notes; Alexander Rise, Stage Manager; and Bruce Vartan Boyajian, Official Photographer.

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The Downing Family Foundation; the late Mrs. Polly Lytle and Family; Jason Bruffy, Christopher Campanella, and the staff of the Cultural Arts Center at Montgomery College-Silver Spring; Olivia Ren, our former marketing director; and our ushers.***

THE APOLLO ORCHESTRA

<p>Violin 1 Claudia Chudacoff ** Kristin Bakkegard Jennifer Himes Kat Whitesides Kelly Hsu Leslie Silverfine Jennifer Houck Stephanie Flack</p> <p>Violin 2 Tommy Atkinson + Devon Oviedo Teresa Gordon Siena Baker Sarah Park Olivia Ren Sara Gill</p> <p>Viola Mary Dausch + Asli Gultekin Ozek Talya Schenk Christen Hooks Jason Diggs</p> <p>Cello Andrew Rammon + Diana Flesner MaryAnn Perkel Emma Johnson Sophie Chang</p> <p>Bass Michael Rittling + Kynan Horton-Thomas Yoshiaki Horiguchi Omar Martinez-Sandoval</p>	<p>Flute / Piccolo Stacy Ascione + Sarah McIver</p> <p>Oboe Victoria Ritter + Michael Helgerman</p> <p>Clarinet Shawn Buck + Joey Velez, e flat</p> <p>Bassoon Sandy Johnson + Jeffrey Ward Eddie Sanders III, contra</p> <p>Horn Joel Wealer + Brad Tatum + Kevin Grasel Clinton Soisson</p> <p>Trumpet Kristopher Westrich + Neil Brown Brandon Almagro</p> <p>Trombone David Sisk + Fred Gleason Michael Brown, bass</p> <p>Tuba Jess Lightner +</p> <p>Timpani Don Johns +</p>	<p>Percussion Eric Plewinski + Tim McKay Daniel Heagney</p> <p>Harp Cara Fleck Plewinski +</p> <p>Celeste Virginia Lum +</p> <p><i>Orchestra Manager & Librarian:</i> Margaret Dikel</p> <p><i>Stage Manager:</i> Alexander Rise</p> <p><i>Publicity:</i> Jordan A. Avellino and Olivia Ren</p> <p><i>Website Manager & Program</i> <i>Notes:</i> Shawn Buck</p> <p><i>Photographer:</i> Bruce V. Boyajian</p> <p><i>** indicates Concertmaster</i> <i>+ indicates section principal /</i> <i>co-principal</i></p>
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