

CU ★ PRESENTS

2022-23 Season



College of Music

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

AT THE PERFORMANCE

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CU ★ PRESENTS is the home of performing arts at the University of Colorado Boulder.



The mission of the **University of Colorado Boulder College of Music** is to inspire artistry and discovery, together.



The College of Music acknowledges that the university sits upon land within the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples. Further, we acknowledge that 48 contemporary tribal nations are historically tied to Colorado lands.

Symphony Orchestra

A (Delayed) World Premiere

Gary Lewis, conductor

Kedrick Armstrong, conductor

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2022

Macky Auditorium

Program

Faust Overture, Op. 46

Emilie Mayer (1812-1883)

Sinfonietta (1956)

World premiere

Irene Britten Smith (1907-1999)

- I. Moderato tranquillo – Allegro con moto
- II. Adagio
- III. Energico – Animato

Kedrick Armstrong, conductor

— Intermission —

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

- I. Allegretto – Poco allegro – Tranquillo, ma poco a poco
- II. Tempo andante, ma rubato – Andante sostenuto
- III. Vivacissimo – Lento e suave – Largamente
- IV. Finale (Allegro moderato)

Program notes

Text that is bold and underlined is a hyperlink and can be clicked or tapped for more information.

Faust Overture, Op. 46

Emilie Mayer (1812-1883)

Many concertgoers can cite Fanny Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann as representative women composers of the nineteenth century. Another name to add to this list is that of Emilie Mayer, whose life spanned almost exactly that of Wagner. Mayer was born in a small town in the extreme northeast of Germany, went to neighbouring Stettin (now Szczecin, Poland) to study with Carl Loewe, and in 1847 moved to Berlin to study with Adolf Bernhard Marx and Wilhelm Wieprecht.

Her music was played and published throughout her lifetime, though often at her own expense. What sets Mayer apart from most other women composers of the time is the sheer size and breadth of her catalogue: eight symphonies, 15 concert overtures, 12 cello sonatas, nine violin sonatas, seven piano trios, an opera, songs, piano music and more. The *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* calls her “the most prolific German woman composer of the Romantic period.” Following her death, Mayer’s music fell into obscurity; only in recent years has some of it resurfaced and been recorded.

Mayer’s *Faust-Overture* was published in Stettin in 1880. In mood and style it much resembles Schumann’s *Manfred Overture*, whose subject is a restless, troubled soul. The slow introduction (*Adagio*) probably is meant to depict Faust alone in his study. The score’s sole programmatic indication comes near the end, where the words *Sie ist gerettet* (“She [Margaret] is saved”) appear at the point where the music moves from B minor to B major. Formally, the main *Allegro* section of the 12-minute Overture is laid out in modified sonata form, with a first subject in the minor mode and a secondary one in the major. There is no development section to speak of. The coda returns to the minor mode up to the point where Margaret is “saved,” where B major once again prevails to the triumphant end.

—*Program note by Robert Markow*

Sinfonietta (1956)

World premiere

Irene Britten Smith (1907-1999)

The Chicago Black Renaissance was in full blossom by the 1930s-40s, and some of today's most venerable musicians were at the center. Mahalia Jackson, Florence Price, Louis Armstrong and Muddy Waters, to name a few, were central in defining the sound of jazz, blues, gospel, and classical music. In this environment, Irene Britten Smith (1907-1999) began her career in Chicago as an elementary public school teacher. Smith was born in Chicago, the youngest of four siblings to a father who worked as a clerk in a manufacturing company and a mother who was musical and loved to play hymns by ear. She began composing little piano at a young age and went on to study piano and violin. Smith dedicated herself to education; she took courses at Chicago Normal School to prepare her for elementary teaching. Smith would spend more than 30 years continuing her education in theory and composition, studying at Juilliard, Tanglewood Music Festival, and with Nadia Boulanger.

Smith never considered herself a “real” composer; she never tried to publish or promote her works, saying “I’m too critical of my compositions, so I’m my own worst enemy.” She indeed composed for her personal joy and satisfaction. In 1956, Smith completed a Master of Music degree from DePaul University in composition. For her master’s thesis project, she composed *Sinfonietta*, a three-movement work for orchestra, the final surviving manuscript in her body of work. *Sinfonietta* encapsulates a lifetime of study and Smith’s true craft as a composer. Sonically, her music departs from the use of Black music idioms found in her contemporaries like William Grant Still, Margaret Bonds, Florence Price and many Black composers of the time. Smith’s influences align with composers like Julia Perry, Undine Smith Moore, George Walker and Hale Smith, among others, whose ears turned toward the international modernist sensibility of the 1950s-60s. These composers, Smith included, make up a community of Black modernist composers who challenged the status quo of how Black musicians could and should engage with classical music.

Smith never heard *Sinfonietta* and was disappointed when DePaul never scheduled a reading of the work. The work has sat on archival shelves until tonight’s premiere performance. A three-note motive unites all three movements, and the three movements of the piece follow the fast-slow-fast sequence.

—*Program note by Kedrick Armstrong*

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Sibelius' Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43 was welcomed by the Finnish public as a missive of nationalist resilience against their Russian overlords. Conductor Robert Kajanus, a close friend who had debuted Sibelius's first symphony in 1900, concocted an essay explaining how the second symphony was "a broken-hearted protest against all the injustice that threatens at the present time to deprive the sun of its light and our flowers of their scent."

Sibelius displayed no interest in his friend's concoction. Writing his diary several years later, Sibelius declared that "a symphony is not just a 'composition' in the ordinary sense of the word. It is more of an inner confession at a given stage of one's life."

Whether the symphony is an inner confession or a political allegory, Sibelius begins with a leisurely pastoral scene. Gently pulsing strings emerge from nowhere, as if unexpectedly finding a valley after summiting a prominent hill. Winds and horns enliven this ambiance with a short, melodic fragments that saunter and frolic. The sunny mood darkens as flutes and bassoons yield to an aching theme in the violins. Here Sibelius begins to interrupt himself, alternating keening trills and other fragments with glimpses of bucolic calm. These fragments eventually coagulate into a theme Sibelius later described as "the most joyful I have ever written." The movement ends with a heroic return to the opening string motive which resounds mightily and then settles back into gentle pulsations.

The second movement follows a similar, sweeping trajectory where idyllic moments build, fragment, then dissolve into grand, emotionally raw melodies. Sibelius brackets these tidal swells with brief moments of silence, as if to allow time to contemplate this gigantic accumulation of intense section. Sibelius' joyful theme finally returns, only to dissipate in anguish. Closing pizzicato chords harken back to the first movement.

The relatively short *Scherzo* immediately evokes Mendelssohn; yet the gamboling, fleet-footed strings and lithe, open textures soon end, leaping attacca (literally "to attack" without pause) into the fourth and final movement. Structured on three grand, tidal swells, this movement consolidates earlier themes and motives into a heroic peroration.

—*Program note by Christopher DeLaurenti*

Personnel

Text that is bold and underlined is a hyperlink and can be clicked or tapped for more information.

Gary Lewis, conductor

Kedrick Armstrong

Praised by the Chicago Tribune for his ability to “simply let the score speak for itself,” Kedrick Armstrong enjoys a wide range of conducting. Armstrong was recently appointed as creative partner and principal conductor of the Galesburg Symphony Society/Knox-Galesburg Symphony. During the 2022-2023 season, Armstrong will debut at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, premiering a new opera, *The Factotum*, by Will Liverman and K Rico.

Future engagements include the Opera Theater of Saint Louis, Houston Grand Opera and the world premiere of Irene Britton Smith’s *Sinfonietta* (1956) with the University of Colorado Boulder Symphony Orchestra. Armstrong has appeared with the Oakland Symphony, Chicago Opera Theater, Chicago Sinfonietta, DePaul University Opera Theater and Wheaton College OperaMainstage. Armstrong uses his voice as a Black conductor to advocate for classical music’s performance, publication and preservation of minority voices. This advocacy and research have led to various speaking engagements and his current appointment as the Porter Research Fellow with the University of Colorado Boulder’s American Music Research Center, where he’s also pursuing a Master of Music in orchestral conducting.

Symphony Orchestra

Violin 1

Victor Avila-
Luvsangenden-
Concertmaster
Lucy Rissman
Greg Abrell
George Willis
Johnathon Winter
Joy Yamaguchi
Charles Bistodeau
Dimitri Ascarrunz
Veda Hingert-McDonald
Zhiqi Liu
MarieFaith Lane

Violin 2

Jordan Grantonic
Hailey Jang
Anna Lugbill
Larina Gray
Sam Jarvis
Olivia Breen
Seidenberg
Alisa Johnson
Richi Hsieh
Inga Well-Off-Man

Viola

Daniel Moore
Aaron Lockhart
Ashley Santore
Avedis Escandon
Preston Yamasaki
Hannah Bradshaw
Emma Reynolds
Finn Cruit
Allyson Stibbards
Andy Sprinkle

Cello

Peyton Magalhaes
Sophie Stubbs
Vincent Ramirez-Boyce
Louis Sexton
Joshua Vierra
Alex Engerhardt
Matthew Wiest
Eric Vasquez

Double bass

Jake Thurston
Isiah Holt
Micah Celedon
Victoria Bakewell
Kurt Melandy

Flute

Lauren Flaten
Andrea Kloehn
Ally Kreider

Oboe

Sophie Maeda
Taysia Petersen
Lisa Read

Clarinet

Mark Bernard
Carson Conley
Yi Dong
Randel Leung
Gleyton Pinto

Bassoon

J.T. Holdbrooks
Sam Macken
Madison Triplett
Dean Weatherbie

Horn

Stacey DeGarmo
Abigail French
Kira Goya
Ervin Keeling
Natalie Miller
Derrick Rassinier
Joy Xiaodan

Trumpet

Chris Boulais
Rebecca Ortiz
Issac Ponce Urbina
Michael Walker

Trombone

Riley Bahin
Eric Brennan
Daniel Cosio

Tuba

Evan Allenson

Timpani

Christian De La Torre

Percussion

Gavin Kitchen

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College of Music

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

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