

# CU ★ PRESENTS

2022-23 Season



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# Philharmonia Orchestra

## Brilliance

Renee Gilliland, conductor

7:30 p.m., Monday, Feb. 13, 2023

Grusin Music Hall

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## Program

### **Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D major, BWV 1068**

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

II. Air

### **O Magnum Mysterium: In Memoriam Glenn Gould**

Alexina Louie (b. 1949)

## — Intermission —

### **Mother's Sacrifice**

L. Viola Kinney (c.1890-1945)

arr. Renee Gilliland

### **Symphony No. 29 in A Major, K. 201**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Andante
- III. Menuetto
- IV. Allegro con spirito

# Program notes

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

## **Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D major, BWV 1068**

*Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)*

In 1717, Bach was offered an appointment at the court of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen (today Köthen), which is located about 30 miles northwest of Leipzig. Until then the famed organist had had a post at Weimar, and we can guess that he must have been unhappy there, for he took the new position even though his new employer could not offer him a good organ, choir or theater. To increase his difficulties, Duke Wilhelm August, his former patron, imprisoned him for nearly a month as punishment for the manner in which he resigned!

The change in jobs produced a matching shift in focus, and Bach turned from organ and church music to chamber works that would be more likely to please the prince, who played the viola da gamba (a predecessor to the modern cello) in his own chamber group.

There is no exact record of the composition of the four Orchestral Suites (or “Overtures,” as Bach termed them), and different writers place them as early as 1722 and as late as 1731, but most sources agree on the earlier date. In any case, they represent something of an experiment by Bach, who may have wished to try his hand at a French style pioneered by Lully. The third of these, numbered 1068 in the standard catalog of Bach’s works, is the most popular and probably the most masterful.

The so-called “Air on a G String” is the brief (36 measures) second movement of this suite. Although the full suite includes trumpets, oboe, and tympani as well as the strings and continuo (a bass line usually played on harpsichord and cello), this movement is reduced to strings and continuo only.

The title is inappropriate in the work’s original setting, having been invented by

a violinist to identify his solo transcription. But the oddness of the title is not reflected in the music, which is one of the most pleasing trifles a listener could ask for.

—*Program note by Geoff Kuenning*

## **O Magnum Mysterium: In Memoriam Glenn Gould**

*Alexina Louie (b. 1949)*

In 1982 I was approached by John Rea, professor of music at McGill University, to write a piece for the music faculty's student string orchestra to be premiered at McGill's Festival of Contemporary Music. I remember wondering how I could encourage the students to show up for all the rehearsals and, finding my solution, I wrote each of the 44 players their own individual part. In this way, if one of them skipped a rehearsal, their part would be missing as it wasn't being covered by ten other string players. Once made, this decision offered me the opportunity to explore complex harmonies, forms, structures, and interesting/convoluted juxtapositions of material.

Brilliant electronic images of the universe served as the initial inspiration, however, the news of Glenn Gould's death interrupted my focus, leaving me to reflect on mortality and the meaning of being an artist.

Through this time I listened to those musical works most meaningful to me and consoled myself at the piano. I also attended the memorial service where we, a group of 3,000 people, participated in the singing of hymns and chorales, including the beautiful *Nun danket Alle Gott*. The effect of that mass of people sharing a common grief was overwhelming. It was during this time that the focus of my string orchestra piece began to change, and quotes of these pieces appeared in my score in a rather fantasy-like reverie, some quite clear and untampered with, others quite distorted. Throughout the fabric of this piece are woven fragments of Bach, the chorale, the *Allemande* from Suite Francaise in G, the Air on the G string, as well as the Prelude and Fugue in B-flat juxtaposed upon one another. It ends with a quote from the last movement of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, "der Abschied - the Farewell."

Besides the use of these fragments as structural elements, I have also incorporated a rather other-worldly calm theme in artificial harmonics in the upper strings, a recurring motif of rapid repeated patterns, various permutations of large chord clusters, and a bi-tonal juxtaposition of a G major triad over an F-sharp major triad. This piece is my expression of wonder at the mysteries of music, of the universe and of being an artist as well as an expression of grief over the premature death of a great musician.

—Program note by Alexina Louie

## Mother's Sacrifice

L. Viola Kinney (c.1890-1945)

arr. Renee Gilliland

I first discovered L. Viola Kinney's solo piano piece, *Mother's Sacrifice*, in Helen Walker-Hill's edition of *Black Women Composers: A Century of Piano Music (1893-1990)*. Its tender melodies and rich harmonies captured my imagination and I began to envision the piece with the colors of the orchestra. Tonight you will hear the piece arranged for the symphony orchestra. Below is Walker-Hill's description of *Mother's Sacrifice* from her writing, *Music by Black Women Composers* at the American Music Research Center.

—Program note by Renee Gilliland

Viola Kinney's piece demonstrates her mastery of harmony, employing a chord built on the flatted sixth in the third measure of the introduction as well as other chromaticisms. From the home key of F major, the piece modulates neatly to G minor, then E-flat major in the two contrasting inner sections. Its graceful melody is embellished on its return and softly repeated in a lower register by the left hand to bring the piece to a close.

Kinney came from Sedalia, Missouri, and was the daughter of Patrick Kinney, a cook, and his wife Lillian, an employee of the Missouri Pacific Railroad shops. Kinney was a student in Professor Jackson's Harmony Class and Choral Society at Western University, and entered her composition in the Inter-State Literary Original Music Contest in December 1908, winning second prize. After graduation, she returned to Sedalia, and in 1911 began a 35-year tenure as teacher of music and English at the segregated secondary school, Lincoln

High School. She married Frederick Ferguson, an undertaker, in 1918. They separated in 1925 and Kinney returned to live in her widowed mother's home. By 1931 she had dropped her married name. No other music by her has been discovered.

—Program note by Helen Walker-Hill

## **Symphony No. 29 in A Major, K. 201**

*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)*

This symphony was completed by the adolescent Mozart in April 1774, and belongs to a group of three written in Salzburg after his return from a brief visit to Vienna in the autumn of 1773, and prior to a journey to Munich at the end of 1774 for the staging of his new opera *La finta giardiniera*.

Scored for an orchestra of strings with pairs of oboes and French horns, the first movement (*Allegro moderato*) begins with a wonderfully eloquent melody given to the first violins and made up of a series of repeated notes and falling octaves. Its caressing gesture is all the more remarkable for its reappearance soon afterwards when it is heard in close imitation between upper and lower strings. A more extended second theme appears, decorated with trills and grace notes, and after the repeat of the first section a short developmental passage explores two fresh ideas; one characterised by imitative scale figures, the other by the sequential treatment of a new theme. In a concise coda, initially unsure of its direction, Mozart recalls the principal theme in a masterstroke of imitation between first violins, violas and cellos.

An intimacy of expression permeates the second movement (*Andante*) where muted violins present two closely related themes supported by the discreet but telling use of oboes and horns. Like the *Andante*, the sprightly *Menuetto*'s distinctive use of dotted rhythm colours the opening theme – given out here initially by violins – which closes with a witty tag from oboes and horns in unison, and is smoothed away by a glowing central trio.

The finale (*Allegro con spirito*) is impetuous, festive and brilliant in mood. Sharp contrast is created between the fiery opening theme, with its distinctive octaves and rising semiquaver flourish, and a lilting secondary idea on the

lower strings with accompanying chirping from the first violins. In its forward momentum, it has the character of a *chasse*—a hunting finale with vivid horns dominating the impulsive closing pages. The work’s dramatic strength, which anticipates Mozart’s later symphonic achievements, is all the more remarkable for being the work of an eighteen year old.

—*Program note by David Truslove*



# Personnel

## Renee Gilliland

Renee Gilliland conducts the University of Colorado Boulder Philharmonia Orchestra where she is pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree under the instruction of Maestro Gary Lewis. Concurrently, she is the assistant conductor of the Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra. Previously, Gilliland has conducted the CU Boulder Campus Orchestra and Anschutz Medical Campus Orchestra. Gilliland has also served as the associate conductor of the Denver Philharmonic Orchestra. She was awarded an Artist Diploma in orchestral conducting from the University of Denver where she was the assistant conductor of the Lamont School of Music Symphony and Opera Theater Orchestras.

Gilliland has conducted in workshops and festivals in the United States as well as abroad in Austria, Bulgaria, Ukraine and the Czech Republic. She has conducted works in concert with the Boulder Philharmonic, the El Paso Symphony, Boulder Concert Band, Playground Ensemble and Bang on a Can All Stars, among others. In 2021, Gilliland was featured in the inaugural Girls Who Conduct Conducting Symposium: Diverse Pathways to the Podium as part of the Ensemble Showcase. Passionate about discovering and promoting diverse repertoire, Gilliland contributes as the youth orchestra assistant editor for the African Diaspora Music Project. Gilliland enjoys working with musicians of all ages and bringing to life works of living composers.

## Alexina Louie

One of Canada's most sought after composers, Alexina Louie has written for many of the country's leading soloists, chamber ensembles, new music groups and orchestras. Her works have become part of the standard repertoire, in particular her many compositions for piano which are frequently performed by students and professionals alike. Perhaps best known of these is *Scenes From A Jade Terrace*, commissioned by Jon Kimura Parker.

Louie's orchestral works have received a multitude of important international performances. Some of the world renowned conductors who have performed her music include Sir Andrew Davis, Leonard Slatkin, Alexander Lazarev,

Charles Dutoit, Bramwell Tovey, Gunther Herbig, Pinchas Zukerman, Kent Nagano, Peter Oundjian, Carlos Kalmar, James Judd and Ingo Metzmacher.

Louie's music has also been selected for productions by The National Ballet of Canada. Dominique Dumais' *a hundred words for snow* (2003) was set to Louie's *O Magnum Mysterium: In Memoriam Glenn Gould*, which The Globe and Mail described as Louie's "profoundly beautiful" homage to the late Glenn Gould. In 2007, The National Ballet of Canada commissioned Louie to write *Wolf's Court*, a new work in collaboration with choreographer Matjash Mrozewski.

In 2009, the Canadian Opera Company presented Louie's full-length, mainstage opera *The Scarlet Princess*—with libretto by Tony Award-winning playwright David Henry Hwang (*M. Butterfly*)—in concert before a sold-out audience in Toronto. The live recorded concert was broadcast across Canada and was received with enormous praise.

Her vocal and operatic works have been sung by widely celebrated singers, including Barbara Hannigan, Russell Braun, Daniel Okulitch and John Relyea. Louie's expertise in vocal writing are highlighted in her ground-breaking international award-winning humorous made-for-TV mini-operas *Toothpaste* and *Burnt Toast*, both of which were created in collaboration with director Larry Weinstein and librettist Dan Redican.

In 2014, acclaimed violinist James Ehnes commissioned *Beyond Time*, a highly virtuosic, colourful work for violin and piano which he has taken on tour. Audiences and critics alike have been thrilled by his performances of the piece.

Most recently, Louie's highly anticipated Triple Concerto For Three Violins And Orchestra, jointly commissioned by the Toronto Symphony, the National Arts Centre Orchestra and the Montreal Symphony for their three concertmasters, was performed by all three orchestras during Canada's celebratory 150th Anniversary year.

Louie has twice won JUNO awards (Canada's equivalent of the Grammy) for Best Classical Composition. In addition to the JUNOs, she is the recipient of many awards and honours including the Jules Léger Prize for Chamber

Music, the National Arts Centre Composers Award, the Chalmer's Award in Composition, an honorary doctorate from the University of Calgary, as well as many other distinctions.

In 2002, Louie was named an Officer of the Order of Canada, Canada's highest civilian honour. She is a recipient of the Order of Ontario, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal.

## Philharmonia Orchestra

### Violin

Charles Bistodeau

Olivia Breen

*Concertmaster*

Alyssa Byrne

*Principal*

Alex Earle

Regina Helgoth

Logan Indge

Sam Jarvis

Jacob Lei

Anna Lugbill

Victor Avila

*Luvsangenden*

Aaron McCulloch

Gregory Nyberg

Sarah Payton

Eli Pouliot

Lucy Rissman

Jacob Stewart

Max Tuning

Adam Weller

### Viola

Hannah Bradshaw

Rebecca Donoho

Chloe Ehrmantraut

Len Eppich

Madeline Guyer

*Principal*

Bryce Kayser

### Cello

Mackenzie Baca

Alex Engelhardt

Marti Flickinger

Logan Kuhlman

Nia Lepore

*Principal*

Connor Medberry

### Bass

Joey Aigner

*Principal*

Ella Bajcsi

Asher Dobrin

Paul Marshall

### Flute

Ayla Lantz

Madison Tallman

### Oboe

Ricky Arellano

Zane Holland

### Clarinet

Ashley Civelli

Carson Conley

### Bassoon

Ross Lowrey

Sheridan Sturm

### Horn

Abigail French

Derrick Rassinier

Olivia Walt

Joy Xiaodan

### Trumpet

Noah Solomon

Colin Terk

### Trombone

Jorin Benson

Ryan Lundahl

### Tuba

Cameron Holt

### Percussion

Justin Doute

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As of Jan. 2, 2023

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