

PUGET SOUND

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

FRIDAY
NOV. 18
2022



UNIVERSITY of
**PUGET
SOUND**

School of Music

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We begin by acknowledging that this event takes place on the ancestral territory of the Puyallup Tribe and the Lushootseed-speaking people, whose relationship with the land continues to this day.

We respectfully acknowledge and honor the history and presence of Indigenous students, staff, and faculty here at Puget Sound. We who are guests on this land offer our gratitude for the opportunity to make music together here.

The School of Music strives to recognize, include, and respect all of the peoples and musical traditions that make up our community.

PROGRAM

Overture (2022).....Jessie Montgomery (1981–present)
Concerto in F (1925).....George Gershwin (1898–1937)
I. Allegro

Ivan Tarasenkov '23, piano soloist

INTERMISSION

Variations on an Original Theme, Opus 36.....Edward Elgar (1857–1934)
IX. “Nimrod” (1899)

Miguel Ledezma '22, MAT'23, conductor

Symphony no. 1 in C minor, Opus 68 (1876)...Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)
I. Un poco sostenuto – Allegro
II. Andante sostenuto
III. Un poco allegretto e grazioso
IV. Adagio – Allegro non troppo, ma con brio

PROGRAM NOTES

As a bi-racial, New-York-raised composer, whose polyglot incorporation of diverse styles into classical genres heralds the dynamic disruption of symphonic spaces, Jessie Montgomery has been ordained the musical voice of her generation. Montgomery's music, which, as noted in her biography "interweaves classical music with elements of vernacular music, improvisation, language, and social justice," has been described by *The Washington Post* as "turbulent, colorful and exploding with life." As an advocate and spokesperson for living and racially marginalized composers, Montgomery has become a highly visible and symbolic figure. Her dazzling music – evidently contoured by the virtuosity of her own violin playing – appears with ubiquity on orchestral programs across the country.

Now composer-in-residence for the Chicago Symphony, Montgomery's every note is heard through the prism of expectation. How does this music embody an evolving musical canon? How is it an "instant classic"? Traversing a proliferation of commissions, writer's block, a global pandemic, and the responsibility of representing new music's future, Montgomery has put forth a body of orchestral works in 2022, in partnership with Chicago Symphony's musicians and their conductor, Riccardo Muti. *Overture*, which freshly approaches the project of musical introduction, is described by the composer as follows:

"Overture is a one-movement orchestral tutti steeped in harmonic textures inspired by a fusion between jazz and American classical harmonies, Baroque rhythmic gestures, and polyphonic tension."

This short, five-movement work showcases the upper tessitura of the strings, who play with ardor and unified gesture. The rest of the orchestra eventually joins in, resulting in an unrelenting buildup of expressive and surprising sonorities, couched in conventional ABA form.

–Anna Wittstruck

George Gershwin's (1898-1937) Concerto in F is often overshadowed by his more popular orchestral works. Yet it represents a significant statement by the composer, who sought to legitimize his status as a "serious" composer as well as a widely successful pianist and songwriter. Although his *Rhapsody in Blue* enthralled the public, many critics found it formless, a collection of memorable but meaningless tunes. Gershwin, who had made many attempts to elevate his compositional status, supposedly requested lessons from Maurice Ravel and Nadia Boulanger, which led to respectful rejections. This concerto represents what is likely Gershwin's most significant attempt at presenting himself as a more serious composer.

Although the concerto doesn't stray too far from Gershwin's jazz influenced style with its defining use of the Charleston Rhythm, the stride piano style, and steamy syncopation, the concerto notably affirms itself as a more classically structured and holistic three-movement work.

The first movement begins with an exciting, yet somewhat cluttered arrangement of rhythmic pentatonic runs, which follow a boisterous introduction from the timpani. This section meddles around, suggesting an exciting piano entrance, which instead begins with the sultry second theme. This theme is presented as a tonal opposite to the introduction. The solo saunters along in a seductive and mysterious way until the orchestra reenters, bolstering the second theme to an eventual flurry of notes from the piano. Already, the concerto is presented as something not quite as straightforward as Gershwin's other works. However, like many of his works, it's hard not to see this piece as inspired by the metropolitan life Gershwin seemed so enthralled by. In fact, early drafts of the concerto were titled the "New York Concerto". Although the name didn't stick around, the almost onomatopoeic qualities of the city did. The concerto constantly shifts between the unruly energy of the city, presented by hurriedly precise passages, and the overwhelmingly romantic and indulgent themes that exaggerate the dreamy grandeur of the city. The middle section eventually leads to a reprise of the second theme, pronounced by the orchestra. This reprisal is nothing like the initial entrance from the piano but is instead a decadent expression of splendor that eventually leads into a frenzied coda and a blast-off conclusion.

–Ivan Tarasenkov

Symphony no. 1 in C minor by Johannes Brahms portrays a composer under pressure. Like Montgomery (whose deep admiration for Brahms' music inspired her to write a new cadenza for his Violin Concerto), Brahms navigated the expectation that he advance the symphonic canon: to write "an instant classic." This expectation of Brahms – to write a symphony worthy of succeeding those contributed by Ludwig van Beethoven – was articulated publicly by his mentor, Robert Schumann. Brahms' response to Schumann's mandate was a litany of symphonic attempts (many of which collapsed into other, less intimidating genres), strung across nearly thirty years of compositional gestation. An early project (written in the key of Beethoven's last symphony, Symphony no. 9) was disrupted by Schumann's own suicide attempt in 1854, instead becoming the Piano Concerto in D minor. The concerto's extended orchestral introduction is a lasting vestige of its original symphonic design. Subsequent experiments probed the bedrock of German Classical sound, genre, and tradition, drawing forth homages to Franz Joseph Haydn and an amalgamation of antiquated forms and

sweeping Romantic scale and sensibility. By 1876, the First Symphony was finally completed.

Beethoven looms large, particularly in the first and fourth movements. Casting the music in C minor (a key shared by Beethoven's Fifth Symphony), Brahms explodes onto the symphonic stage with a series of unrelenting timpani eighth notes undergirding a sustained, homophonic orchestral texture. There's an urgent physicality to his deployment of the Beethovenian struggle-triumph mold, and a nod to the labor of writing music over such a long period of time. The development section of the first movement is an extended, almost neurotic mediation on the famous "duh-duh-duh duuuuh" motive from Beethoven's Fifth, which finally breaks free from its fragmentary form into a dance-like accompaniment in the Recapitulation. Towards the end of the movement, the tempo slows. We hear the sound relax, having found itself in the comfortable glow of C major. Brahms' agility weaving together the pastoral and chromatic beautifully emerges during the inner movements, where the composer stakes his claim as a distinctive melodist and metric inventor. Pared down instrumentations and prominent solos for woodwinds, horn, and violin materialize through these sonorous and surprising interludes. With the opening of the final movement comes the return of Beethoven's long shadow: a protracted introduction of starts and stops – music searching for an answer to the symphonic question. Brahms is ready. Introducing his low brass section for the first time (another Beethoven move), he builds a call-and-response between horns and woodwinds into a glowing brass chorale. The passage ends on a question mark, followed by Brahms' answer: a hymn-like melody that paraphrases Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" from Symphony no. 9. Heard throughout the last movement, Brahms' melody is an ode to symphonic inheritance, and to the joy of bringing orchestral sounds together.

–Anna Wittstruck

UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Anna Wittstruck, conductor

Miguel Ledezma '22, MAT'23, assistant conductor

Jules Tan '23, orchestra manager

Violin 1

Jules Tan '23, concertmaster

Ela Escobar '24

Eli Connolly '25

Hailey Yang '26

Madison Hening '26

Maura Lake '23

Nikki Hindman '25

Else Mayo '24

Walter Stackler '26

Violin II

Ethan Chythlook '26, principal

Paige Franklin '26

Silvana Byram '25

Ruby Gunter '26

Katie Hayhurst '24

Ashlyne Collado '26

Ayliana Horvath '26

Ashley Garman '26

Liv Hauge '25

Jackson Jay '26

Viola

Keola Tabisola '25, principal

Ryan Chernyavsky '25

Alex Bude '26

Amelia Calderon Henes '26

Jadyn Barrio '26

Deniz Kelemet '24

Kianna Davis '25

Cello

Connor Adams '25, principal

Avi Graf '25

Seren Hawtrey '24

Angela Ronces-Cortes '24

Isabella Brady '24

Jordan Verkh-Haskell '25

Liam Kimball '24

Liam Abbott '26

Tom Angstadt '26

Aiden Higgens '24

Mandy Ausman '24

Phoenix Stoker-Graham '24

Bass

Chris East '23, principal

UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (CONT.)

Flute

Jonah Kembel '26
Julia Vahey '24
Alex Westervelt '25

Piccolo

Jonah Kembel '26

Oboe

Clara Gibbs '25
Athena Schaefer '26

English horn

Mariah Canton '24

Clarinet

Jenna Hlavaty '24
Hailey Matas '25
Mireia Pujol '26
Levi Walsh '24

Bass Clarinet

Mireia Pujol '26

Bassoon

Sahaj Oliver '26
Sara Ponsioen '26

Contrabassoon

Levi Walsh '24

Horn

Rodger Burnett, faculty member
Rosa Dale-Moore, alumna
Nalin Richardson, alumnus
Sam Sherwood, community member

Trumpet

Olivia Fross '23
Abbey Hansen '24
Alyssa Shane '25
Mya Woods '25

Trombone

Maia Nilsson '24
Miguel Ledezma '22, MAT'23

Bass Trombone

Elias Thiemann '24

Euphonium

William Lum '23

Tuba

Ian Dunlap '24

Timpani

Dylan Petersen '23

Percussion

Ray Carlsen '25
Skyler Hedblom '25
Freyja Lundquist '25
Abby Pierson '24

BIOGRAPHIES

ANNA WITTSTRUCK joined the University of Puget Sound School of Music in 2017 as assistant professor, director of orchestra. Before that, she spent two years at Stanford University as acting assistant professor, serving as interim music director and conductor of the Stanford Symphony Orchestra and Stanford Philharmonia. In 2019, she was appointed music director of the West Seattle Symphony Orchestra, and currently conducts the Federal Way Youth Symphonies.

Wittstruck has conducted concerts across the United States, in Latin America, Europe and in Asia. She has served as a guest conductor with the Harbin Symphony in China, the Northwest Sinfonietta, and the Eastern Sierra Symphony. She conducted concerts at Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City and Teatro Nacional de Cuba in Havana, where she performed with Lizt Alfonso Dance Cuba and the Chamber Orchestra of Havana. She has conducted concerts at the Rudolfinum in Prague and the Musikzentrum Augarten (home of the Vienna Boys' Choir) in Vienna, as well as concerts in Berlin, Bad Elster, and Teplice.

Wittstruck is also an active orchestral musician whose performances as a cellist span from the Beijing Modern Music Festival to the 2011 YouTube Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas. Her string quartet gave a concert tour of Thailand sponsored by the Yonok and American-Thai Foundations, in honor of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn's 60th birthday celebrations. She won a blind audition at the age of 14 to become the youngest contracted member of the Asheville Symphony Orchestra, and has participated in orchestra festivals such as Tanglewood, Round Top, and the National Symphony/Kennedy Center Institute. She has appeared as a soloist with the Charlotte and Hendersonville Symphonies, on the Public Radio International show, "From the Top."

She received her Bachelor of Arts in music from Princeton University with certificates in orchestral conducting and creative writing, and her Ph.D. in musicology from Stanford University. While a graduate student, she conducted the Summer Stanford Symphony Orchestra and directed the Stanford Wind Symphony, the Stanford New Ensemble, and the Stanford Chinese Ensemble. She also helped create the Stanford Youth Orchestra, an international program for advanced high school students, and taught courses through Stanford Pre-Collegiate Studies. At Princeton, she spent two years as assistant conductor of the Princeton University Orchestra and as associate conductor of the Princeton Sinfonia.

Wittstruck has attended the Pierre Monteux School of Conducting in Hancock, Maine, where she studied with Michael Jinbo, and the Conductor's Retreat at Medomak, where she studied with Kenneth Kiesler. Other conducting teachers include Michael Pratt, Ruth Ochs, Stephen Sano, Jindong Cai, and Edwin Outwater.

IVAN TARASENKOV '23 is a pianist based in Washington state. He was born in Moscow in 2000 and moved to the United States in 2007, where he first began his studies with Dr. Elena Vozheiko-Wheaton. In 2019, he began his studies with Dr. Tanya Stambuk at the University of Puget Sound, where he currently is majoring in piano performance and mathematics. With Dr. Stambuk, Tarasenkov was a Young-Artist winner of the 2020 Washington State MTNA competition. Later, under the guidance of Dr. Isabella Jie, he was named a winner of the University of Puget Sound's Concerto Aria Competition. Tarasenkov is now a senior at the university and currently studying with Dr. Ronaldo Rolim.

MIGUEL LEDEZMA '22, MAT'23 is a Master of Arts in Teaching candidate pursuing a teaching credential in music education. Ledezma graduated with a Bachelor of Music in music education from the University of Puget Sound in 2022. During his undergraduate work, he studied trombone under Dr. David Krosschell and through his practice became the trombone section leader in Wind Ensemble, directed by Dr. Gerard Morris, Principal trombonist of the Symphony Orchestra, directed by Dr. Anna Wittstruck, and a member of the Puget Sound Jazz Orchestra, directed by Tracy Knoop. Outside of the university, Ledezma has been the acting Principal trombonist for the Seattle Philharmonic Orchestra performing and premiering works at Benaroya Hall. Ledezma is also the trombone coach for the Bellevue Youth Symphony and is the assistant conductor of the Rainier Symphony, under the direction of Professor Jeff Lund.

Ledezma is the former president of the University of Puget Sound's chapter of the Collegiate Washington Music Educators Association, a member of the Music Student Advisory Committee, worked for the Department of Music Education and is the current conducting assistant for the Symphony Orchestra and Wind Ensemble.

UPCOMING SCHOOL OF MUSIC EVENTS

All events are free unless noted otherwise. Most performances are broadcast at PUGETSOUND.EDU/SCHNEEBECKLIVE

SATURDAY, NOV. 19

Chamber Music Program I

Alistair MacRae, director
Schneebeck Concert Hall, 2 p.m.

SUNDAY, NOV. 20

Chamber Music Program II

Alistair MacRae, director
Schneebeck Concert Hall, 2 p.m.

FRIDAY, DEC. 2

Organ at Noon Series

Wyatt Smith, organ
Kilworth Memorial Chapel, noon

FRIDAY, DEC. 2

Wind Ensemble/Concert Band

Minna Stelzner, conductor
Schneebeck Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, DEC. 3

Adelphian Concert Choir WinterFest

Steven Zopfi, conductor; Rev. David Wright, narrator
Kilworth Memorial Chapel, 7:30 p.m. | tickets.pugetsound.edu

SUNDAY, DEC. 4

Adelphian Concert Choir WinterFest

Steven Zopfi, conductor; Rev. David Wright, narrator
Kilworth Memorial Chapel, 2 p.m. | tickets.pugetsound.edu

All listings are subject to change. For the most current information about upcoming arts events and lectures, visit pugetsound.edu/events.

Puget Sound is committed to being accessible to all people. If you have questions about event accessibility, please contact 25Live@pugetsound.edu, or visit pugetsound.edu/accessibility.

The School of Music at University of Puget Sound, situated within a nationally recognized liberal arts university, prepares students to be broad-minded, creative, arts-aware social leaders. We attract highly engaged student musicians and empower them to create the diverse musical offerings and effective educational programs of the future.

From the classroom to the concert hall, we cultivate students' self-expression, cultural competency, and critical engagement. Through a wide variety of public offerings and a vibrant Community Music program, the School of Music enriches the cultural life of both the Puget Sound campus and surrounding communities.

Community Music, a division of the School of Music, welcomes people of all ages and skill levels to participate in music lessons and classes throughout the year.
pugetsound.edu/communitymusic | 253.879.3575

