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**SUNDAY, JULY 29, 2018 ■ 4:30 P.M.**

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND FINE ARTS CENTER CONCERT HALL

## A WORLD PREMIERE

SPONSORED BY THE SOUTH KINGSTOWN LAND TRUST  
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**SAINT-SAËNS**

**Sonata for Oboe and Piano in D Major, Op. 166**

*Andantino*  
*Ad libitum — Allegretto — Ad libitum*  
*Molto Allegro*

**OBOE:** JAMES AUSTIN SMITH

**PIANO:** NATALIE ZHU

**LUDWIG**

***Paganiniana: Concerto No. 2 for Violin***  
**and Chamber Ensemble**

*World Premiere of a Festival Co-Commission*

**SOLO VIOLIN:** JASMINE LIN

**FLUTE:** MIMI STILLMAN

**CLARINET:** RICARDO MORALES

**VIOLIN:** NOAH GELLER

**CELLO:** EFE BALTACIGIL

**PIANO:** NATALIE ZHU

**PERCUSSION:** MARI YOSHINAGA

### INTERMISSION

**TCHAIKOVSKY**

**String Sextet in D Minor “Souvenir de Florence,”**  
**Op. 70**

*Allegro con spirito*  
*Adagio cantabile e con moto*  
*Allegretto moderato*  
*Allegro vivace*

**VIOLINS:** DAVID KIM AND AMY OSHIRO-MORALES

**VIOLAS:** BURCHARD TANG AND CHE-HUNG CHEN

**CELLOS:** PRISCILLA LEE AND EFE BALTACIGIL

## Sonata for Oboe and Piano in D Major, Op. 166

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835–1921)

In the last year of his long life, Camille Saint-Saëns found himself something of a musical “dinosaur,” a representative of a generation that had, by and large, passed away. A brilliant pianist and distinguished teacher in his own day, he had become the opponent of most of the new musical trends that surrounded him. He had attempted to prevent the music of Debussy and his ilk (music which, he said, “cultivated the absence of style and the absence of logic and common sense”) from making headway, and not surprisingly he attacked the complex new harmonic trends. As if to make a considered statement on the necessity of pure line and simple form in music, Saint-Saëns composed in his final year (1921) three sonatas for woodwind instruments with piano, some of his very last works. The first, for oboe (Opus 166), was followed by works for clarinet (Opus 167) and bassoon (Opus 168). Here are no echoes of the upheavals that the musical world had undergone in the preceding decade or so — no hint of the work of Debussy or Richard Strauss, Schoenberg or Stravinsky. All is direct, immediate, approachable, and filled with Gallic charm, emphasizing throughout the melodic lines of the oboe and piano, not thick textures or dense harmonic combinations.

The Oboe Sonata is direct and simple in its melodic unfolding — possibly a conscious reproach from the aging Saint-Saëns to the modernist composers of the early postwar period. The first two movements are abundantly lyrical, and the finale caps things off with a flamboyant, lively ending.

## Paganiniana: Concerto No. 2 for Violin and Chamber Ensemble World Premiere of a Festival Co-Commission

DAVID LUDWIG (B. 1974)

David Ludwig has composed works for many of today’s leading artists and ensembles, including pianist Jonathan Biss, violinist Jennifer Koh, the Dover and Borromeo quartets, eighth blackbird, ECCO, and orchestras including the Philadelphia, Minnesota, Pittsburgh, and National Symphonies. In 2011 NPR Music named Ludwig among the Top 100 Composers Under Forty in the world. The following year his choral work *The New Colossus* was selected to open the private prayer service at the second inauguration of Barack Obama.

Born in Bucks County, Penn., Ludwig is descended from several generations of eminent musicians, grandfather Rudolf Serkin and great-grandfather Adolf Busch among them. He holds degrees from Oberlin, The Manhattan School, the Curtis Institute, The Juilliard School, and his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. Ludwig is the chair of composition at Curtis where he also serves as Gie and Lisa Liem Artistic Advisor and director of the Curtis 20/21 Contemporary Music Ensemble. He is the recipient of the First Music Award, is a two-time winner of the Independence Foundation Fellowship, and has received a Theodore Presser Foundation Career Grant as well as awards from New Music USA, American Composers Forum, American Music Center, and the National Endowment for the Arts. He has held multiple residencies at the Yaddo and MacDowell artist colonies, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and Marlboro Music.

Among Ludwig’s recent performance highlights is a violin concerto written for his wife, acclaimed violinist Bella Hristova, commissioned by a consortium of eight U.S. orchestras, as well as the concerto *Pangaea* for pianist Anne-Marie McDermott, commissioned by the

Bravo! Vail music festival, *Swan Song* for Benjamin Beilman, commissioned by Carnegie Hall, and *Pictures from the Floating World*, commissioned by the Philadelphia Orchestra for bassoonist Daniel Matsukawa and conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Ludwig was awarded the prestigious Pew Center for Arts and Heritage Performance Grant to create the song cycle monodrama *The Anchoress*.

*Paganiniana* was commissioned by the Kingston Chamber Music Festival for its 30th anniversary, the Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival for its 10th anniversary, the Lake George Music Festival for its 10th anniversary, and the Portland Chamber Music Festival for its 25th anniversary. The piece was composed for soloists Jasmine Lin, Soovin Kim, Barbora Kolarova, and David McCarroll. Ludwig describes in the following commentary what inspired his creation of this work.

*The four music festivals that commissioned Paganiniana all were founded by terrific violin players, and that fact made me think immediately of Niccolò Paganini (1782–1840), an iconic virtuoso and the first truly superstar violinist. Reading about Paganini and his legendary (and very troubled) life moved me to write a piece inspired by his Twenty-Four Caprices for solo violin. At first, I considered a kind of musical biopic that would end with a somber reflection of Paganini’s difficult final years. But then I realized that our collective memory of this extraordinary musician is of a flying acrobat — a daring figure skater who always hit his quintuple Lutz, and that is the character I wanted to bring back into life.*

*The title Paganiniana is borrowed from Nathan Milstein’s piece of the same name in which he stitches together individual caprices from Paganini’s collection to make a larger narrative. My ambitions are similar, although rather than using the material of the caprices directly, I am more interested in impressions of gestures, effects, and virtuosic figures reflected in my music. Still, there are a few quotations from Paganini’s caprices — some hidden, some in plain view and tongue-in-cheek — and all with a nod to the violinist-composer’s brilliance, charm, and virtuosity.*

*The idea of the “Caprice” itself — a lively and spontaneous work without the pretense of classical formality — was further motivation for this piece. The concerto is set in a single movement, divided into three sections, and written as a fantasy that follows the path of each of Paganini’s Caprices, one after the next, like a continuous set of variations on the entire collection, running parallel, two centuries apart.*

*My Paganiniana begins with a solo cadenza that merges violin techniques from these two centuries, interrupted in its middle for the ensemble to come in, then returning to finish later in the piece. The soloist is asked to explore most every aspect of virtuosity, from fast arpeggios to long, held melodic lines, and to extract a wide variety of strident sounds and colors from the violin through extended techniques. Throughout, the ensemble offers accompaniment and commentary to the violin’s constantly shifting and fluctuating part until the very end, where the music concludes in a familiar yet most capricious way.*

— David Ludwig

## String Sextet in D Minor “Souvenir de Florence,” Op. 70

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)

As early as June 1887 Tchaikovsky had made a start on a string sextet for the St. Petersburg Chamber Music Society (which had requested a work the preceding October), but he gave it up after a few days. He was not to return to the medium until the early months of 1890 when, while living in Florence and deeply involved with his opera *The Queen of Spades*, he wrote

down the melody that was to become the main theme of the slow movement. This fact alone (and no further programmatic connotation) motivated the title of the finished composition.

Tchaikovsky finished the opera on June 20, and five days later he began serious work on the sextet. He was concerned about the medium, a new one for him, and particularly about the question as to whether he might not be conceiving music that demanded an orchestra and then reducing it to six strings. By the time he finished his sketch on July 12, his view of the piece had begun to improve. But he still worried about the scoring as he worked out the final details, which were completed by August 6. Neither the composer nor his closest friends were entirely happy with the third and fourth movements at a private performance in December. Tchaikovsky set it aside for a year and then made major revisions to the last two movements and a small adjustment to the first movement, resulting in the form in which we know the piece.

The sextet is one of Tchaikovsky's last multi-movement instrumental works (only the Sixth Symphony followed) and the last in which he retained the traditional patterns of abstract symphonic form. He worked out a splendidly detailed sonata-form exposition for the first movement, in which the transition grows out of a three-note figure that appears in the main theme and then continues under the surprisingly shy entrance of the second theme in the first violin. Although formal structure was always something of a struggle for Tchaikovsky, this exposition clearly demonstrates his hard-won mastery over the years.

The slow movement is among the most purely personal passages in Tchaikovsky's output, and the one place in the score where his love of melodic lines laid out as a duet, intertwining, mutually complementary, comes to full flower. The third movement takes a melody of a Slavonic folkish cast and puts it through its paces, alternating two different versions with varied textures and accompaniments.

For the finale, Tchaikovsky offered another sonata-form movement based on a dancing theme of Slavonic imprint varied with two sections of vigorous contrapuntal development. In writing for the mostly German membership of the St. Petersburg Chamber Music Society, Tchaikovsky knew that he would be expected to offer some display of his ability at counterpoint, and he obliged with these two passages, the second of which becomes a full-scale fugato leading to a wildly sonorous close.