



SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2019 ■ 4:00 P.M.

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND FINE ARTS CENTER CONCERT HALL

# APPALACHIAN SPRING

SPONSORED BY SAM AND LYNDIE ERSAN

## COPLAND *Appalachian Spring* for 13 Players

<i>Very Slowly</i>	<i>Fast</i>	<i>Rather slow</i>
<i>Allegro</i>	<i>Allegro</i>	<i>Molto Allegro ed agitato</i>
<i>Moderato</i>	<i>Theme and Variations</i>	<i>Moderato</i>

**VIOLINS:** HILARY HAHN, AYANO NINOMIYA, JULIETTE KANG, ZACH DEPUE

**VIOLAS:** CHE-HUNG CHEN, REN MARTIN-DOIKE

**CELLOS:** PRISCILLA LEE, CLANCY NEWMAN

**DOUBLE BASS:** NATHAN FARRINGTON

**FLUTE:** MIMI STILLMAN | **CLARINET:** IGOR BEGELMAN

**BASSOON:** ROSE VRBSKY | **PIANO:** NATALIE ZHU

## MEYER *Bell-Meyer, No. 3* for Violin and Bass

**VIOLIN:** ZACH DEPUE | **DOUBLE BASS:** NATHAN FARRINGTON

## AUERBACH *Fractured Dreams, Sonata No. 4* for Violin and Piano

<i>Sogno 1: Preludium</i>	<i>Sogno 10: Sognando libero</i>
<i>Sogno 2: Tragico</i>	<i>Sogno 11: Nostalgico curioso</i>
<i>Sogno 3: Recitativo</i>	<i>Sogno 12: Allegro furioso</i>
<i>Sogno 4: Monologo libero</i>	<i>Sogno 13: Magico</i>
<i>Sogno 5: Misterioso tragico</i>	<i>Sogno 14: Tragico</i>
<i>Sogno 6: Nostalgico</i>	<i>Sogno 15: Solo nervosamente</i>
<i>Sogno 7: Scherzando meccanico</i>	<i>Sogno 16: Adagio mortale</i>
<i>Sogno 8: Adagio</i>	<i>Sogno 17: Allegro furioso</i>
<i>Sogno 9: Allegro moderato</i>	<i>Sogno 18: Postludium</i>

**VIOLIN:** HILARY HAHN | **PIANO:** LERA AUERBACH

## INTERMISSION

## SCHUBERT *Octet in F Major, D. 803*

*Adagio — Allegro — Più allegro*  
*Adagio*  
*Allegro vivace — Trio — Allegro vivace*  
*Andante — variations. Un poco più mosso — Più lento*  
*Menuetto. Allegretto — Trio — Menuetto — Coda*  
*Andante molto — Allegro — Andante molto — Allegro molto*

**VIOLINS:** JULIETTE KANG, AYANO NINOMIYA

**VIOLA:** CHE-HUNG CHEN | **CELLO:** PRISCILLA LEE

**DOUBLE BASS:** NATHAN FARRINGTON | **CLARINET:** IGOR BEGELMAN

**BASSOON:** ROSE VRBSKY | **FRENCH HORN:** GEOFFREY PILKINGTON

## ***Appalachian Spring* for 13 Players**

AARON COPLAND (1900–1990)

After Copland's major success in the ballets *Billy the Kid* and *Rodeo*, he turned from the West to a simpler time back East: the marriage of a young couple from the Pennsylvania mountains in the early 19th century. Composed for Martha Graham's ballet company, it was commissioned by the enlightened Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation and won the 1945 Pulitzer Prize. Graham herself changed the original title, "Ballet for Martha," to a phrase from a Hart Crane poem. Graham, Merce Cunningham, Erick Hawkins and May O'Donnell were the famous dancers who premiered the work, and the ballet was chosen as the outstanding theatrical work of the season by the Music Critics Circle of New York.

Its original instrumentation for thirteen players is the version heard here, though it is most often heard in its later full-orchestral setting. Copland's deftness at scoring is more evident for us in this chamber setting, bringing us closer to picturing the ballet scenes.

The piece begins with a quiet scene characterized by an almost-religious severity, leading to a happy and bouncy allegro followed by a gentle dance for the young couple. Then comes a country dance by a visiting revivalist and his retinue; a joyful, rhythmically intense solo dance by the bride; a pastoral section featuring lovely wind solos; and a halting transition to the most famous section. Soon the Shaker theme "Simple Gifts" arrives via a brief flute introduction, and spins through a series of variations, not so much by altering the familiar tune, but by presenting it in many sonic combinations and tempo shifts. In the story, an older neighbor and a Revivalist mention the dark aspects of life and human experience. Soon, an emphatic ensemble restatement leads to a peaceful closing section, in which the couple imagine their new life together.

Copland, who would also create film scores with western themes like "The Red Pony" and "Of Mice and Men," was the only American composer whose reputation was not diminished by writing for films. (British composers had no such problem.) And it's doubly curious that all the famous and familiar western film themes were by East Coast composers who had never even been to the West. But their skill at painting a musical picture, which we then accept as a definitive portrait of romanticized places and times, is what made them, and especially Copland, chroniclers of an imaginary, but affecting, Americana.

## **Bell-Meyer, No. 3 for Violin and Bass**

EDGAR MEYER (B. 1960) / JOSHUA BELL (B. 1967)

Edgar Meyer has distinguished himself as a musical chameleon, a master of many forms and continual new surprises. As a double bassist of renown, a composer, and teacher, he is probably most loved by his colleagues as a collaborator.

His recordings with Yo-Yo Ma ("Appalachia Waltz," "The Goat Rodeo Sessions," and Bach Trios) show his diversity and range. At Tanglewood, he premiered his Double Concerto for Double Bass and Violin with the latter part performed by virtuoso fiddler Joshua Bell, who contributed his essence to the work you will hear on our program. It's hard to tell how much Bell actually contributed to the composition we'll hear, or whether Meyer is just typically gracious about music they probably first improvised together, and which Meyer has played often on mandolin with several other violinists.

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Besides the ‘straight’ classical performing, there’s always a touch of Americana and jazz, a folk essence, and bluegrass tinge that permeates Meyer’s writing, a throwback to his early studio work in Nashville. It’s the rhythmic emphasis that is his true signature, and this piece is an amalgam of every one of these sources.

The classically-trained Bell travelled outside of his comfort zone to adapt to Meyer’s visions. He could easily negotiate the wealth of double-stops and dazzling runs, but was also able to encompass the folk feel of the music and bring his star power to the projects.

As the striving violin part flits and soars, the original bass part continually cooks underneath. Near the end, the violin becomes unleashed and almost takes over the piece. It’s hard to believe that any backwoods fiddler could negotiate such string challenges, but Meyer’s piece gives us that feel, of improvisatory, joyful music-making that could only be a distillation of our many American traditions.

### ***Fractured Dreams, Sonata No. 4 for Violin and Piano***

**LERA AUERBACH (B. 1973)**

While fractured and contrasting, these dreams are tied together — similar to how images and memories weave a tapestry of hidden truths in our sleep — reflecting each person in his or her most vulnerable desires and unguarded self, a black mirror in which everything is possible yet just a fraction out of reach. It is a dream that can never be fully realized. Hopes are fears in disguise. Night wears many guises; in its fractured reflections, one may glimpse shimmers of the morrow. — *Lera Auerbach*

### **Octet in F Major, D. 803**

**FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)**

It remains a mystery why the mood of many a musical work does not accurately reflect its composer’s anguished frame of mind, poor health, financial struggles, or tragic personal life. This octet is a perfect example. The 27-year-old Schubert was coping with anemia and a nervous disorder, and writing letters that said, “Every night when I go to bed I may not wake....I live without pleasure or friends.”

Amateur clarinetist Count Ferdinand von Troyer had played in the then-popular Septet, Op. 20, by Beethoven, and wanted another similar work to play. To Beethoven’s combination of clarinet, bassoon, French horn, violin, viola, cello and bass, Schubert decided to add a second violin to provide a deeper sonority, and began to work feverishly on this sunny, optimistic work, twice as long as Beethoven’s.

The Count urged its completion and, within a month, the work was played in his salon, and then played again exactly three years later in the Vienna Musikverein (the only other public performance in Schubert’s lifetime) before being forgotten in a drawer. It was eventually published in 1853, almost thirty years after its composition and twenty-five years after Schubert’s death, a reminder of the indifference toward his music he constantly faced.

After a slow, graceful introduction and initial statement, the clarinet enters with a quiet second theme, which makes up the major part of the development, with wind instruments ricocheting the melody. The music quiets down, then returns to the bouncy opening tune and the horn announcing the ending.

The adagio begins with a gorgeous clarinet melody, written to spotlight von Troyer, which is repeated by the violin with the clarinet providing a countermelody. The violin enters with a secondary theme, and the movement alternates between a reminder of the first movement and the restatement of both new melodies.

A peasant dance, with eventual clarinet recapitulation of the melody, develops into a trio with violin and walking bass line before the dance is repeated. The fourth movement is made of seven variations on a theme borrowed from an early, forgotten opera, embellished until the bravura violin parts in the seventh variation lead to a quiet ending. The menuetto alternates its melody between strings and winds, has a contrasting middle section, and then repeats its melody again.

So far there has been plenty of melody and skillful blending of voices, but little drama. That appears in the ominous introduction to the last movement as, over a cello, the other instruments each utter the principal theme twice. A march ensues in an offbeat rhythm, with clarinet and bassoon entering with a jolly second theme. Schubert then plays with both sixth-movement themes, suddenly interjects an echo of the introduction, and speeds to a virtuoso coda.

Miraculously, there's no trace of dread or melancholy in this octet, one more magical work by the greatest of all melodists.

*Notes by Tom Di Nardo*