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WELCOME TO THIS CONCERT

We try hard to punch beyond our weight, as the saying goes, by always engaging well-regarded local and regional musicians in our orchestra and by bringing you world-class guest artists from time to time. Much of the success and acclaim we receive in both these endeavors can be attributed to our long-time music director, Jed Gaylin. Jed's ability to draw out the best from our orchestra members and recruit distinguished guest artists from around the world enables us to please and inspire you, our wonderful audience. Those who come to perform – and those who attend – quickly reach a common conclusion: Friends of Music and its Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra are a gem, sparkling in the hills of rural-ish West Virginia.

When I've spoken with Jed about the caliber of people he brings to us, one thing stands out: His respect for natural talent and an artist's ability to continually develop his or her skills and polish over time. He loves to watch people grow as performers, and this carries over to his desire for our orchestra musicians to grow as well.

The two artists we are featuring in this concert fit Jed's criteria to a tee. They are superb musicians who never stop growing or looking for new ways to excel. Both are acknowledged stars in their individual realms.

Stefan Jackiw has been performing in the United States and around the world for some 30 years, starting at age 4; he is now considered one of this country's foremost violinists. His technique is impeccable, but what Jed admires most is his sensitivity and musical substance. Stefan's interpretations get deeper and more nuanced the more he plays.

Yoonah Kim's career has come into wider view since 2016 when she became the first solo clarinetist in nearly 30 years to win the Concert Artists Guild International Competition. Now, with several other firsts under her belt too, she is well into a busy performing career.

Together, Stefan and Yoonah greatly enjoy performing works that are widely appreciated but also like commissioning new pieces. One such piece they will showcase for us is by Eric Nathan, an outstanding contemporary composer whose work is broad-ranging and highly sought after in the classical performance world and beyond.

We hope you enjoy this superlative concert as we bring this season to its official close. But remember, on June 22 we are offering a special free concert of Revolutionary War-era martial music to recognize the 250th anniversary of the Beeline March, our town's most significant Revolutionary War event.

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JED GAYLIN

This concert season, Jed Gaylin is celebrating his 12th season as music director of the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra. He is a tremendous asset, and we are lucky to have him! He has made an enormous difference in the quality and creativity of the orchestra's programming and performances.

His approach to music, musicians, and life-lived-large is rare: It includes an old-world commitment to study and depth of conception, combined with a welcoming presence and warm engagement – both on and off the podium.

Orchestra members and soloists often recount how Jed's rehearsals and performances elicit their very best, not only individually but collectively. His dedication to exploring music's fullest potential in a collaborative spirit reaches beyond the stage to draw the audience into the creative act. Listeners feel engaged as participants in an eloquent musical conversation.

Jed is also the music director of the Hopkins Symphony Orchestra in Baltimore and the Bay Atlantic Symphony in New Jersey. In addition, he is principal guest conductor of the Cape May Music Festival. His numerous guest appearances include the St. Petersburg State Symphony, National Film and Radio Philharmonic (Beijing, China), Shanghai Conservatory Orchestra, Bucharest Radio Orchestra, Academia del Gran Teatre del Liceu (Barcelona, Spain), Eastman School of Music Broadband Ensemble, and many others.

He earned both a Bachelor of Music in piano and a Master of Music in conducting at the Oberlin Conservatory, and a Doctor of Musical Arts in conducting at the Peabody Conservatory. He attended the Aspen Music Festival as a conducting fellow. Among other honors, he has received a National Endowment for the Arts grant and the Presser Music Award. His conducting teachers have included Frederik Prausnitz, Leonard Slatkin, Jahja Ling, Murry Sidlin, Paul Vermel, and Michel Singher, and, for piano, Lydia Frumkin.

He lives in Baltimore with his wife, poet Lia Purpura, and their standard poodle, Dasha.

For more information, visit his website at www.jedgaylin.com.

"Generous" is the word listeners and performers use time and again to describe conductor Jed Gaylin's approach to the orchestra, the score, and the audience. His joyful abandon and probing intellect combine to create powerful programs, compelling interpretations, and evenings that are fresh and exuberant. The legendary conductor George Szell said: "In music one must think with the heart and feel with the mind." Jed Gaylin embodies this maxim abundantly and passionately.

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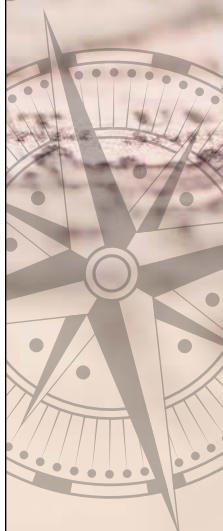
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GUEST ARTIST

STEFAN JACKIW VIOLIN

Stefan Jackiw is one of America's foremost violinists, captivating audiences with playing that combines poetry and purity with impeccable technique.

Hailed for playing of "uncommon musical substance" that is "striking for its intelligence and sensitivity" (*Boston Globe*), Jackiw has appeared as a soloist with the Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco Symphony Orchestras, among others.

In the 2024-25 season, Jackiw's schedule has been studded with performances in the United States, Europe, and Asia. In November, he returned to the Cleveland Orchestra to perform Tchaikovsky's violin concerto under the baton of Santtu-Matias Rouvali. That same month, Nonesuch released Jackiw's recording of the complete violin sonatas of Charles Ives, performed with his longtime collaborator, the pianist Jeremy Denk. Of the disc, Alex Ross wrote in *The New Yorker*, "Jackiw sets a new standard." In the winter of 2024, Jackiw joined the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland under Hans Graf's baton and debuted with the Suwon Philharmonic in South Korea. In April, he returned to the 92NY stage with the Junction Trio to showcase a program featuring the world premiere of a New Work by John Zorn, followed by a residence at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he led performances and masterclasses. Jackiw then joined the Pasadena Symphony for Mozart's Violin Concerto, along with a Junction Trio performance at Rockefeller University and a performance of Korngold's Violin Concerto with The Florida Orchestra in the Spring.



"This is a young star of astonishing gifts, whose musicality and technical finesse place him at the top of his peers."

— *Seattle Times*

"A lovely, innocent musician ... brilliantly skillful and selflessly musical."

— *Financial Times*

"Stefan Jackiw has risen swiftly in the past decade to challenge the foremost talents of our day."

— *The Globe and Mail*

Jackiw opened his 2023–24 season returning to the New York Philharmonic to perform the Barber Concerto with Jaap van Zweden. His season also included a quadruple world premiere of new works at Roulette, performances with the Taiwan Philharmonic, China National Symphony, and the Junction Trio's highly praised debut at Carnegie Hall.

Jackiw recently performed a new violin concerto, written for him by Conrad Tao and premiered by the Atlanta Symphony and the Baltimore Symphony. He has also premiered David Fulmer's concerto *Jauchzende Bögen* with Matthias Pintscher and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen at the Heidelberger Frühling.

A devoted chamber musician, Jackiw is the artistic director of the Hawaii Chamber Music Festival. In addition, he tours frequently with his musical partners, the pianist Conrad Tao and the cellist Jay Campbell, as part of the Junction Trio. Last season, Jackiw also collaborated in a special piano trio project at 92NY with Daniil Trifonov and Alisa Weilerstein. In 2019, he recorded Beethoven's Triple Concerto with Inon Barnatan, Alisa Weilerstein, Alan Gilbert and the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields.

Jackiw has performed in numerous major festivals and concert halls around the world, including the Aspen Music Festival, Ravinia Festival, the Caramoor International Music Festival, the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, New York's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Philharmonie de Paris, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, the Celebrity Series of Boston, and the Washington Performing Arts Society.

Born to physicist parents of Korean and Ukrainian descent, Jackiw began playing the violin at the age of four. His teachers have included Zinaida Gilels, Michèle Auclair, and Donald Weilerstein. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University, as well as an Artist Diploma from the New England Conservatory, and is the recipient of a prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant. He plays a violin made in 1705 by Vincenzo Ruggieri.

He lives in New York City.

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GUEST ARTIST

YOONAH KIM CLARINET

Hailed by the New York Times for her "inexhaustible virtuosity," clarinetist Yoonah Kim is an artist of uncommon musical depth and versatility. She enjoys a diverse career as solo clarinetist, chamber musician, orchestral musician, and educator.

Kim launched her career when she won the 2016 Concert Artists Guild International Competition. The first solo clarinetist to win CAG in nearly 30 years, she joined the ranks of prominent solo clarinetists discovered by CAG, including David Shifrin, Michael Collins, and David Krakauer. She is also the first woman to win first prize at the Vandoren Emerging Artist Competition, and she is a first-prize winner of the George Gershwin International Competition and the Vienna International Competition.

Kim has given recitals at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Chicago's Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts series, Washington Performing Arts' Music in the Country series, Chamber Music Society of Little Rock and Union County Performing Arts Center. She has also appeared as concerto soloist with the Maui Chamber Orchestra, the New England Philharmonic, the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra, the New York Classical Players, the DuPage Symphony Orchestra, the Arkansas Symphony Youth Orchestra, and the Chesapeake Youth Symphony.

Beyond her performing solo clarinet repertoire in recitals and with orchestras, Kim is devoted to commissioning and premiering new works for the clarinet. She has commissioned and premiered new works including Eric Nathan's Double Concerto for Violin and Clarinet (premiered alongside her husband, the violinist Stefan Jackiw), Texu Kim's reimagining of Gershwin's



"Clarinetist Yoonah Kim...won the 2016 Concert Artists Guild International Competition– the first solo clarinetist to do so in nearly 30 years."

– *Chicago Tribune*

"Yoonah Kim took all the score's demands in stride, displaying great subtlety as she fined her clarinet-voice down to a thread...virtuoso performance."

– *Oberon's Grove*

Rhapsody in Blue for solo clarinet and string orchestra, and Andrew Hsu's Erebus for clarinet and piano and Three Pieces for solo clarinet.

Kim regularly performs as guest principal clarinet with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Albany Symphony, and the Princeton Symphony, and has also appeared as guest principal clarinet with the Binghamton Philharmonic.

From 2016 to 2018, Kim was a member of Ensemble Connect, a highly selective two-year fellowship program under the joint auspices of Carnegie Hall, The Weill Institute, and The Juilliard School. With Ensemble Connect, she performed regularly at Carnegie Hall, often in collaboration with renowned conductors and guest artists. Highlights include performances with Sir Simon Rattle at Zankel Hall, and with the soprano Natalie Dessay at the Philharmonie de Paris.

As a sought-after chamber musician, Kim tours regularly with the ensembles Founders and Frisson, and has appeared at numerous international chamber music festivals, including the Marlboro Music Festival, Mainly Mozart Festival, Moab Music Festival, Chautauqua Music Festival, Maui Classical Music Festival, Honolulu's Hawaii Chamber Music Festival, California's Festival Napa Valley, Maine's Bay Chamber Music Festival, Bravo! Vail, Sarasota Music Festival, The Banff Centre Music Festival, Thessaloniki Festival in Greece, and the GumNanse Music Center festival in Busan, Korea.

Born in Seoul, Korea, and raised in Langley, British Columbia, Kim now calls New York her home. She is currently pursuing her doctoral degree at The Juilliard School as the C. V. Starr Doctoral Fellow. She holds a Master of Music degree from Juilliard and a Bachelor of Music degree from the Mannes College of Music at The New School, where she studied clarinet under Charles Neidich.

In addition to her thriving performance career, Kim is dedicated to teaching. She has given masterclasses throughout the United States and Canada, and in South Korea. She is on the clarinet faculty at New York University's Steinhardt School and is also a co-founder of Chime for Children, an initiative aimed at bringing joy and inspiration through interactive performances to children with limited exposure and access to music.

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– *Broadstreet Review*

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THE PROGRAM

EN FAMILLE

Carlos Simon (b. 1986) — Elegy: A Cry from the Grave

**Eric Nathan (b. 1983) — Double Concerto for Solo Violin,
Solo Clarinet and String Orchestra**

Stefan Jackiw, violin, and Yoonah Kim, clarinet

**Aaron Copland (1900–1990) — Concerto for Clarinet and
String Orchestra (with Harp and Piano)**

Yoonah Kim, clarinet

— INTERMISSION —

**Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) — Prelude to Act III,
La Forza del Destino ("The Force of Destiny")**

Yoonah Kim, clarinet

**Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) — Violin Concerto in D minor,
Op. posth.**

1. Allegro
2. Andante
3. Allegro

Stefan Jackiw, violin

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Carlos Simon

(Born in Washington, D.C., in 1986)

Elegy: A Cry from the Grave

The American composer Carlos Simon, who was born in Washington, D.C., and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, is one of the most popular musicians and composers working in the United States, with a similarly growing reputation around the world. He is currently the composer-in-residence for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, as well as being an associate professor at Georgetown University, in Washington, D.C. Simon's career as a composer has been boldly advancing for more than two decades, and he has accrued many awards and honors. In 2023, he received a Grammy nomination for Best Contemporary Classical Composition for his album, *Requiem for the Enslaved*. Simon is extremely prolific, writing in a host of genres for chamber, choral, and orchestral ensembles as well as film soundtracks, many of them on commission. His compositions are often powerful reflections on social issues, with a prominent focus on Black Americans' struggles for equality. He told the *Washington Post* recently,

My dad, he always gets on me. He wants me to be a preacher, but I always tell him, "Music is my pulpit. That's where I preach."

Simon's *Elegy: A Cry from the Grave* was written in 2015 as a personal protest and seeks to bear witness to injustice, as Simon explains:

This piece is an artistic reflection dedicated to those who have been murdered wrongfully by an oppressive power; namely Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, and Michael Brown. The stimulus for composing this piece came as a result of prosecuting attorney Robert McCulloch announcing that a selected jury had decided not to indict police officer, Daren Wilson after fatally shooting an unarmed teenager, Michael Brown, in Ferguson, Missouri. The evocative nature of the piece draws on strong lyricism and a lush harmonic character. A melodic idea is played in all the voices of the ensemble at some point of the piece either whole or fragmented. The recurring ominous motif represents the cry of those struck down unjustly in this country. While the predominant essence of the piece is sorrowful and contemplative, there are moments of extreme hope represented by bright consonant harmonies.



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The opening bars begin with the feeling of quiet, cold winds stealing through the air, as the upper strings rustle in tremolos marked to be played *Sul ponticello*, a musical direction to bow very close to the bridge, creating an eerie, hollow sound. This ghostly aura becomes even more ethereal as several of the strings make *portamenti* (small slides) between pitches. Above that, the central melodic idea soon arises in the violas. This melodic idea is an angular motive with several wide intervallic leaps, and yet it's darkly lyrical, evoking the feel of a wounded soul singing out with passion and representing the crying out of those unjustly killed, which will be spoken by an increasingly angered chorus. The upper strings quickly respond with this same melodic idea, while the lower strings then continue the eerie tremolos. And from this sound bed, the melodic idea finds its way into every voice in the ensemble, often moving in tandem, or in harmony, or in polyphonic complexities. And yet, in the building of this chorus, Simon creates many moments of sheer beauty that shine spotlights of hopefulness. The exquisite harmonies that the lower strings create at only 30 seconds into the work is but one of these many beauties.

Eventually and inexorably, the voices build up to an anguished climax at about four and a half minutes, when every instrument breaks into a loud, aggravated tremolo. From here, the music recedes into quieter and quieter iterations of the melodic idea, like ebbing anger faintly illuminated by hope.

Eric Nathan

(Born in New York, New York, in 1983)

Double Concerto for Solo Violin, Solo Clarinet, and String Orchestra

The American composer Eric Nathan has received many prestigious awards and grants, including both Guggenheim and Rome Prize fellowships and a Charles Ives Scholarship, and has become a celebrated voice in the international musical scene. He is an associate professor of music at Brown University in Rhode Island and serves as artistic director of the Boston ensemble, Collage New Music.

Nathan wrote his *Double Concerto for Solo Violin, Solo Clarinet and String Orchestra* in 2019 at the request of both the New York Classical Players and the New England Philharmonic. And he wrote it specifically for our concert's soloists, Stefan Jakiw and Yoonah Kim. The work is dedicated to them, and they performed its premiere in 2019 (and married each other during their preparation for the premiere).



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PROGRAM NOTES

Nathan describes this work as a "relationship" between its players that dramatizes "an emotional transformation":

At the heart of Double Concerto is a focus on the relationships between our three main characters – the two soloists and the string orchestra. Some of my thinking on the roles these characters play grew out of early conversations I had with Stefan Jackiw and Yoonah Kim, the two soloists for which this piece was composed, and is dedicated. Jackiw described thinking of the role of the clarinet in string chamber works, such as Mozart's Clarinet Quintet, as an invited guest. In my Double Concerto, we begin alone with our protagonist, the violin, and the string orchestra, which acts throughout like a chorus from Ancient Greek theater, standing in solidarity with the soloists and narrating and personifying the internal or external struggles they face. The solo clarinetist does not enter until almost halfway through the work, but when it does, it unexpectedly alters the course of the concerto, perhaps also instilling hope when it is most needed. The work, cast in a single movement, follows an emotional transformation.

The orchestra opens the concerto by playing long, static pitches evoking a vast and desolate landscape. The violin soloist then enters with a slowly rising passage that's both beautiful and lamenting. As the violin weeps, a series of descending glissandi (long slides) occur in the orchestra, creating an eerie and surreal effect as though, in the inky black of the night sky, the canopy of stars begins to fall. This weeping-wandering continues until about two and a half minutes, when the soloist plays a rather resolute passage that finishes by reaching upwards with three long pitches, each just a bit higher than the last. This motive will reappear several times in the concerto, and Nathan describes it as an *idée fixe* – a musical phrase that reoccurs at important moments.

After some darkly turbulent music, the violin climbs back up to its earlier high perch in pitch – meanwhile, the clarinet has been waiting silently for six minutes. From *niente* (nothingness) the clarinet enters here, joining the violin's stratospheric pitch, and grows in volume from a tiny ray of light into pearlescent radiance. The violin responds with its *idée fixe*, to which the clarinet replies with growing resolve, seeming to lead the violin out of its gloom with an increasingly assured tone. As it does so, a remarkably beautiful accompaniment occurs. Here, Nathan borrows from one of Bach's *Twelve Little Preludes* (1720s), a tutorial that Bach created to teach his son, Wilhelm Friedemann, how to play the keyboard. Nathan sets the basic chords of the



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collection's first prelude (BWV 924 in C Major) as the orchestra's accompaniment to the clarinet's ruminations, and the appearance of such unexpected tonality is breathtaking. This, however, soon creates conflict with the violin, sparking a virtuosic madness of rhythms and volume.

When calm returns at about 13 minutes, the clarinet begins an unorthodox cadenza. Instructed to play "encouraging, teaching," the clarinet sings small parts of the violin's *idée fixe*. And at the end of each fragment the clarinet holds the last note, inviting the violin – "teaching" as Bach had done with his preludes for his son – to join in that note, which the violin does with touching vulnerability. The final bars are directed to be played "floating, timeless, blending," and this fascinating, moving concerto then deliquesces into its final, healing silence.

Aaron Copland

(Born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1900; died in North Tarrytown, New York, in 1990)

Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra (with Harp and Piano)

1. Slowly and Expressively Cadenza
2. Rather Fast Coda

During the 1930's America's taste in popular music was all about "Swing" music (as Jazz was called then), which was played on the radio, on play-at-home records, and in local dance halls. One of the greatest Swing bandleaders in that era was Benny Goodman (1909–1986) who was also a phenomenal jazz clarinetist. But during World War II and later in the 1940's, American tastes changed as Swing gave way to the "Bebop" jazz of Charlie Parker and Thelonius Monk. Goodman changed, too, and so began his second career as a classical clarinetist but with a jazz inflection. It was in this new role that in 1947 Goodman commissioned a concerto for clarinet from the greatest contemporary American classical composer, Aaron Copland.

At this time, Copland was lecturing and conducting in Brazil, where he created most of Goodman's concerto. Copland infused the work with an ear towards Goodman's hallmark jazz, while also weaving in aspects of popular Brazilian music – almost unconsciously, he said. The concerto was premiered to great acclaim in 1950 in New York, with Goodman as the soloist, and it quickly became a beloved fixture in the clarinet repertory.



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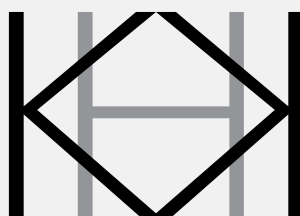
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PROGRAM NOTES

The concerto is conceived in an unusual structure with only two movements, one slow and one fast, connected by a long clarinet cadenza. As accompaniment for the soloist, Copland relies on a sparse orchestra of strings, harp, and piano. The first movement, marked "Slowly and Expressively," begins with the open and glowing simplicity of plucked basses and harp, and as the remainder of the strings slowly join in, the clarinet starts singing a meandering, intimate song. This first movement progresses through some exquisite harmonies under the singing clarinet as it enchants us with its exceptional lyrical abilities and extraordinary range.

At about six minutes, the music quiets considerably, and the soloist begins a two-minute cadenza. At first, the feeling is pacific, but soon the mood changes dramatically, shot through with increasingly frenetic passages. Within this lengthy cadenza, Copland shows off the clarinet's remarkably athletic character, while also introducing many of the motives that appear in the next movement, which begins without any pause.

This second movement, marked "Rather Fast," begins with the harp plucking, the stringed instruments playing harmonics and tapping their strings with the wooden end of their bows, and the piano playing short, soft notes, directed to be played "staccato, delicate, and wraith-like [like a ghost]," evoking a kind of mischievous, apparitional music box playing at high speed. This movement focuses on short ostinatos and riffs – little syncopated phrases that repeat – and which are constantly changing. This is jazz in classical clothing and Copland employs ever-more jazzy elements throughout. He explained, "I used slapping basses and whacking harp sounds to simulate [jazzy percussion effects]," which you can hear at about three and a half minutes after the start of this second movement.

Evocations of Brazilian popular music start to show up in this movement as well: the first appearing only a few bars after the "slap-bass" begins, where Copland inserts a very singable little tune in the clarinet, rising up in steps and then coming back down, and then a second one appears about 30 seconds later with a little noodling run upwards, first heard in the strings, then the piano, and followed by the clarinet. The music, however, gets increasingly intense and filled with disorienting syncopations until, at about three minutes later, a pounding, descending bass line in the piano begins, launching the Coda (ending section) and setting off a melee of excitement. This masterpiece concerto nearly hurls itself to its final bars, jubilantly ending with "a clarinet glissando – or 'smear' [in jazz lingo]."

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Giuseppe (Fortunino Francesco) Verdi

(Born in Roncole, near Parma, Italy, in 1813; died in Milan, Italy, in 1901)

Prelude to Act III from *La Forza del Destino* ("The Force of Destiny")

In 1861, Verdi received a commission from the Imperial Theater of St. Petersburg, Russia, for a new opera. As he had with *Nabucco* and many of his previous operas, Verdi turned again to a loosely veiled theme of Italy's current struggle for independence and unification that had consumed much of the 19th century. He also returned to one of the great librettists of the day, Francesco Maria Piave (1810–1876), a longtime friend and librettist for nine of Verdi's previous operas. Piave based the text for Verdi's commission, *La Forza del Destino* ("The Force of Destiny"), on an 1835 Spanish drama, *Don Álvaro o la fuerza del sino* ("Don Álvaro, or the Power of Fate"), by the Spanish Enlightenment author and politician, Ángel de Saavedra.

La Forza del Destino follows the plight of two ill-fated lovers, Álvaro and Leonora, set in 1740's Naples. The opera begins with Álvaro and Leonora being hopelessly in love, but Leonora's father, a Spanish dignitary, cannot accept Álvaro's "half-caste" Peruvian-Incan blood as a sufficient lineage for his daughter, and so, the two lovers attempt to elope. The father discovers their plan and confronts them, and during the heated exchange Álvaro's gun accidentally fires and kills the father. Thus is set into motion the current of Fate – an inexorable sequence of tragedies – that will dog the steps of the two lovers forever.

The opening of Act III takes place in the pitch of night, in a forest near Velletri, Italy, where, in fact, an important battle took place in 1744 between Spanish-ruled Naples and the Habsburg Empire. Álvaro has joined the Spanish-Neapolitan army and is camped with his regiment before the battle. He and Leonora have been hiding separately for some time, and without any word from her, Álvaro presumes she has died. Act III opens with martial music as soldiers rowdily play cards offstage. A forlorn Álvaro slowly and silently advances into the light, and he will soon reflect on his life that has been hounded by bad luck, crowned by the most recent tragedy of having lost his beloved Leonora. But before he sings, a musical prelude sets the tragic tone with exquisite beauty.

In the prelude, the strings shudder quietly in tremolos of tattered nerves and tension, and the clarinet begins with one of Verdi's most famous solos for that instrument. Verdi often features the clarinet in *La Forza del Destino*

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(in fact, a former student and friend was the principal clarinetist of the St. Petersburg Opera). Considered to be an instrument that best resembles the human voice, the clarinet in this prelude creates a kind of psychological inner landscape of Álvaro's tortured soul. Slowly at first, the clarinet sings a tune that is beautiful, but also wistful and pained. After a few bars, the horns alone softly play three ominous notes in unison, which is Verdi's "Fate" motive that reappears throughout the opera. The clarinet sings again, but now with an even more beautiful and melancholic tune which will then become the tune of Álvaro's subsequent aria. The clarinet's singing soon branches out into small cadenza-like reveries, reflecting Álvaro's tender hope that Leonora is now in the care of angels. But eventually, the lower strings begin a quietly menacing pulsing that scatters the clarinet's ruminations, and as the clarinet plays its last, touching notes, the strings end this prelude with a series of upward steps, as though Álvaro is climbing out of his own tormented heart. Act III then moves on to feature Álvaro's aria, but for the moment, the clarinetist has been the shining operatic star, having delivered a series of potent, heart-catching solos.

Felix Mendelssohn

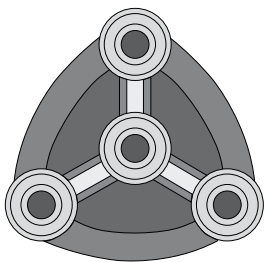
(Born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1809; died in Leipzig, Germany, in 1847)

Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. posth.

1. Allegro
2. Andante
3. Allegro

Mendelssohn's upbringing was filled with privilege and took place in perhaps the most artistically and intellectually stimulating environment of any musician of his time. Besides receiving near-continuous visits from many of Europe's most influential thinkers and artists, the Mendelssohn family hosted a Sunday morning musical salon for their latest guests, featuring young Felix and his sister, Fanny, performing music and showing off their own compositions. Nevertheless, there is no argument that Felix was, on his own merits, one of the greatest musical prodigies in history. Even before composing at the age of 16 or 17 his extraordinary *String Octet* (1825) and his *Overture to a Midsummer Night's Dream* (1826), Mendelssohn had already created 12 symphonies for strings; multiple sonatas for violin, piano, and organ; several lieder (songs); two short operas; a cantata; and in 1822, this violin concerto in D minor.

This D minor violin concerto should not be confused with Mendelssohn's later, and hugely beloved violin concerto in E minor that he wrote near the end of his life, in 1845. This earlier Concerto was written to be performed by



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PROGRAM NOTES

his violin teacher, Eduard Rietz (for whom Mendelssohn also later composed his *String Octet* as a birthday present), but it never made it into the family's Sunday morning salons, and there is no record of it having been performed elsewhere during Mendelssohn's life. In fact, the concerto was virtually forgotten until 1951, when a rare-book collector, a descendant of Mendelssohn's, presented it to the great violin virtuoso, Yehudi Menuhin. Menuhin premiered the Concerto in 1952 at Carnegie Hall, and slowly, this lovely work has been gaining a reputation as Mendelssohn's marvelous "other Concerto."

Written for violin soloist with string orchestra, Mendelssohn begins the first movement, *Allegro*, with the full orchestra playing a theme that cavorts with quick runs and clipped rhythms dancing up and down the scale. Though the minor key adds a sinister hint to the music, the theme nonetheless wanders into a series of somewhat playful cat-and-mouse exchanges between the upper and lower strings. The violin soloist enters at about one minute and a half with a new, more lyrical and melancholic theme, which quickly demands virtuosic runs. Virtuosity and lyricism, for both the soloist and the orchestra, then alternate in delightfully inventive ways until the end of the movement.

The second movement, *Andante*, is filled with tenderness and lyricism that feels uncannily mature for a 13-year-old composer. The violins begin with a slow and unpretentious theme, quietly climbing up the scale and then gently tumbling down. Behind them, the basses and violas echo that theme in a sort of canon that creates a sense of yearning. When the soloist enters about two minutes later with a short little cadenza, that yearning is intensified. The soloist then moves into a new theme composed of several measures of long, lyrical notes that periodically give over to more active rhythms, like a jittery love-smitten heart. The entire *Andante* explores these emotions in a number of gentle ways, until the last beautiful bars, where the soloist sings alone, quietly holding a note high in its register.

Without a pause, the fiery third movement, another *Allegro*, begins. The soloist and orchestra jump in together with a theme that's free-spirited and frisky. The soloist quickly launches into virtuosic passages, which are often answered with equally virtuosic playing in the orchestra, and together they soon arrive at a series of cadenzas for the soloist that were written out by the young Mendelssohn. The rest of the movement then sprints away as if on a precipice, with an exhilarating feeling of coming dangerously close to slipping off the edge. As the soloist performs with increasing pyrotechnics, the movement comes to its exciting and wonderfully fun final bars.

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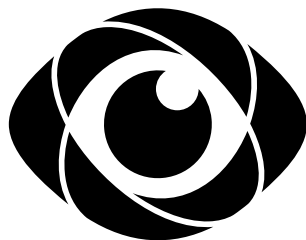
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EN FAMILLE *Featuring guest
artists Stefan Jackiw, violin, and
Yoonah Kim, clarinet*

Carlos Simon (b. 1986) —

An Elegy: A Cry From the Grave

Eric Nathan (b. 1983) — Double Concerto for
solo violin and solo clarinet

Aaron Copland (1900-1990) —
Clarinet Concerto

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) —
Prelude to Act III, *La forza del destino*

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) —
Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. posth.

SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 2025

MUSIC OF THE REGIMENT TRIO

3:00 pm • Trinity Episcopal Church,
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