

Tanglewood 2022

Sunday, August 14, 8pm, Shed

TANGLEWOOD MUSIC CENTER ORCHESTRA

STEFAN ASBURY, conductor

TMC FELLOW RITA CASTRO BLANCO, conductor

TMC FELLOW NICOLÒ UMBERTO FORON, conductor

BARTÓK Suite from the One-Act Pantomime *The Miraculous Mandarin*, Opus 19
RITA CASTRO BLANCO conducting

PRICE *Ethiopia's Shadow in America*
I. The Arrival of the Negro in America When First Brought Here as a Slave
II. His Resignation and Faith
III. His Adaptation—A Fusion of His Native and Acquired Impulses
NICOLÒ UMBERTO FORON conducting

{Intermission}

RACHMANINOFF Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Opus 27
Largo—Allegro moderato
Allegro molto
Adagio
Allegro vivace
STEFAN ASBURY conducting

Notes on the program

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Suite from *The Miraculous Mandarin*, Pantomime in one act, Opus 19

Composition and premiere: Béla Bartók began sketching his ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin*, based on a play by Melchior Lengyel, in August 1917. He composed the first version of the ballet between October 1918 and May 1919 and orchestrated it in 1923. He revised it the following year but continued to tinker with the ending between 1926 and 1931. In February 1927 he completed the orchestral "suite," comprising about the first two-thirds of the score. Bartók and György Kosa performed a part of the score for piano four-hands on Budapest Radio on April 8, 1926; the full ballet was first performed on November 27, 1926, in Cologne, Germany, with Jenő Szenkar conducting. The suite was premiered in Budapest by the Philharmonic Society Orchestra, Ernő Dohnányi conducting, on October 15, 1928. The Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra first performed the *Miraculous Mandarin* Suite in 1971 under Seiji Ozawa and played it most recently under Kazem Abdullah's direction on July 9, 2007.

The Miraculous Mandarin was the third and last of Bartók's major compositions for the theater, following his one-act opera *Bluebeard's Castle* and the ballet *The Wooden Prince*. Though still only in his thirties when he wrote *Miraculous Mandarin*, he never again attempted to write for the stage. *The Miraculous Mandarin* showed that he had absorbed the folk elements of his native country as well as the latest trends in avant-garde music from elsewhere in Europe, and his powerful musical intellect fused these elements into a personal and tremendously expressive style.

Bartók encountered Melchior Lengyel's scenario for *The Miraculous Mandarin* when it was published in the magazine *Nyugat* in 1917.* What he made of it was not a ballet, in the sense of a work composed of big dance numbers, but rather a pantomime, a story told in gesture and movement, but movement that might be called, for the most part, "prose" rather than "poetry." Bartók adapted Lengyel's scenario to give himself a basis for a musical structure, to provide some kind of symmetrical design to the story. He takes two scenes of violent movement and links each of them with three stages of action to be carried in dance.

The tale is lurid and violent, set in a brothel. At the rise of the curtain, three ruffians enter with a girl. Finding no money in her flat, they order her to go to the window and attract a customer. Three times she lures men into the room; the first two have no money, and the ruffians unceremoniously throw them out. Finally a mysterious

Tanglewood 2022

“Mandarin” enters, his face revealing no sign of emotion except for his burning eyes, which stare ceaselessly at the girl. She begins dancing with increasing sensuality, but when he embraces her, trembling with passion, she tries to elude him and he pursues her. The ruffians attack and rob him, then decide to kill him. They smother him, but he will not die, and continues staring at the girl. They stab him; he does not fall or bleed. They hang him from the chandelier; it comes crashing down, and his body begins to glow with a greenish light. Finally, the girl feels some pity for this strange man. She embraces him, and her act of compassion releases him from the longing that has driven him. His wounds begin to bleed, and he finally dies.

Even in the form of the concert suite, Bartók’s music so clearly reflects the scenario that it is not difficult to follow the intended course of events. Except for a few very small cuts, the shorter suite is essentially two-thirds of the entire score, up to the moment when the ruffians leap out and seize the Mandarin. The last few measures are a concert ending that Bartók provided for the purpose. The prologue suggests the noisy bustle of a busy street. The three ruffians are introduced by a jerky chromatic figure in the violas. The music associated with the girl’s luring the passing men to enter is heard in the solo clarinet. The first man, an elderly rake, is parodied in trombone glissandi. The second is a shy, handsome youth, represented by the oboe. The dance turns passionate briefly before the thugs enter again and drive the hapless fellow into the street.

The arrival of the Mandarin is marked by the simplest musical moment in the score, the blaring brass instruments snarling out a single minor third, B-D. Woodwinds and strings utter wild trills. After the briefest of pauses, the girl begins a hesitant dance. The music builds in tension to almost unbearable levels, with a halting waltz that grows more and more abandoned until the girl throws herself into the Mandarin’s lap. Bartók introduces an angular theme on the trombone to suggest the Mandarin’s reaction. A pounding ostinato turns into a tense fugue.

This is roughly the point where the orchestral suite ends, bringing us to the moment when the ruffians leap out and seize the Mandarin. The composer no doubt chose this point to end the suite because it provided a symmetrical pattern in which the score’s wildest orchestral music frames the three attempts at luring victims. Once the fugue has built to its grand climax, the opening woodwind chords return, bringing the suite to its shattering conclusion.

* Lengyel’s story, with its urban setting, violence, criminal behavior born of poverty, pointed “exoticism” of the mandarin himself, and paranormal element was very much current in those decades at the start of the century, which also witnessed such psychologically charged murder-dramas as Richard Strauss’s *Salome*, Alban Berg’s *Wozzeck*, and Frank Wedekind’s play *Pandora’s Box* (the basis for Berg’s *Lulu*). Written in the midst of World War I, *The Miraculous Mandarin* was calculated to resonate with the jarring aesthetic intensity of Expressionism. Lengyel went on to gentler endeavors, working in Hollywood as the screenwriter for such films as Greta Garbo’s *Ninotchka* and Jack Benny’s *To Be or Not to Be*.—ed.

STEVEN LEDBETTER

Steven Ledbetter was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 1998.

Florence Price (1887-1953)

Ethiopia’s Shadow in America

Composition and premiere: Price wrote *Ethiopia’s Shadow in America* before 1933; its score was lost for several decades and recovered in 2009. There is no record of a performance earlier than one given by the University of Arkansas Symphony Orchestra in January 2015.

No historical composer has generated as much public interest in recent memory as Florence Beatrice Price (1887–1953). Despite the COVID-19 pandemic delaying performances of her music around the world, she has rapidly become one of the most widely programmed American composers of her generation. Given a vast catalog, boundless creativity, and an engrossing life story, it’s easy to understand why.

At the time she was born, Price’s parents—a dentist and a teacher—were central figures within a thriving Black middle-class community in Little Rock, Arkansas, that would rapidly erode from the enforcement of Jim Crow laws in the 1890s. Showing musical promise from an early age, Price nevertheless leaped over the narrow opportunities available to students of color in the South by entering Boston’s prestigious New England Conservatory in 1903. She graduated with honors in two fields—organ performance and piano pedagogy—after only three years of study. Over the next twenty years, she pursued a career primarily as a teacher in Arkansas while raising two daughters and composing short piano works for her students as time permitted.

Tanglewood 2022

Escalating racial violence prompted Price and her family to move to Chicago in 1927. Though segregated along racial lines, the city's well-developed musical infrastructure extended her more opportunities to pursue composition professionally. As musicologist Samantha Ege has shown, networks of Black women in the city offered mutual support for their musical pursuits, enabling Price to write substantial pieces in virtually every classical genre except opera. Several of the world's greatest artists—Marian Anderson, Frederick Stock, Sir John Barbirolli, and Etta Moten, to name only a few—championed her music. Open discrimination against Black women impeded Price's career, too, and even relatively unprejudiced white publishers and conductors feared professional backlash for promoting women of color. Together, these behaviors raised barriers to a permanent legacy not faced by her white or male contemporaries. In fact, most of her compositions remained unpublished upon her death and were thought lost until they were recovered from a dilapidated Illinois house in 2009.

Price first turned to orchestral composition in the late 1920s and continued to pursue it sporadically over the next twenty-five years, ultimately completing just over a dozen large-scale pieces. The inspiration for her earliest orchestral works was a contest for Black composers named in honor of the department store magnate Rodman Wanamaker. Her *Symphony in E Minor* (1932) won first prize and, with the support of one of Chicago's Black musical leaders, Maude Roberts George, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra premiered the piece under Frederick Stock in June 1933. The flurry of interest surrounding the symphony prompted Price to finish a violin concerto and a piano concerto within the next twelve months.

The tone poem *Ethiopia's Shadow in America* belongs to this early cluster of works, for it was completed in time for the competition won by her symphony. (This work garnered an honorable mention.) Curiously, it is one of only a few pieces for which she provided a descriptive narrative; much of her orchestral music might be called "absolute music." In this piece, the first page of the manuscript score explains that she wanted the music to portray "I—The Arrival of the Negro in America when first brought here as a slave. II—His Resignation and Faith. III—His Adaptation, A fusion of his native and acquired impulses." This three-part arc traces the historical American experiences of enslaved Africans and aligns conceptually with certain works of figures associated with the Harlem Renaissance, such as Will Marion Cook, William Grant Still, and Duke Ellington. Listeners familiar with Price's other orchestral music will be pleased to encounter her characteristically lush orchestration, harmonic richness, and, above all, keen melodic sense. New listeners will find music that blends the orchestral sonorities of the late 19th century with a distinctly American sensibility.

A brief introduction by a solo clarinet sets the scene before the orchestra launches into the two-part opening movement. The first part, an Adagio, moves seamlessly between simple melodic material reminiscent of folk music and the complex harmonic language often used to enhance dramatic situations in opera or film. A quiet close gives way to a buoyant Allegretto introduced by the wood block and plucked strings. The first violins then take off with a sinewy syncopated melody that appears in various costumes across the rest of the movement while percussion add a distinct sparkle. The profoundly religious second movement introduces the soft lament of a solo violinist accompanied by string choir. A solo cellist later takes over the tune before it fades to an echo in the French horn, clarinet, and oboe. Now invoking vernacular dance, a catchy melody whips the third movement into a whirling array of orchestral color before a recollection of the opening Adagio offers a moment of reflection. But the dance resumes, propelling ever forward and closing the piece in grand fashion. Price observed that in music of the African diaspora, "Rhythm is of preeminent importance. In the dance, it is a compelling, onward-sweeping force that tolerates no interruption."

DOUGLAS SHADLE

Douglas Shadle is Associate Professor of Musicology at the Vanderbilt University Blair School of Music. An award-winning historian of American orchestral music, he is currently co-authoring a biography of Florence Price with Samantha Ege (University of Oxford).

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Opus 27

Composition and premiere: Rachmaninoff composed his Second Symphony mostly in Dresden, Germany, in 1906-07. He led the premiere in St. Petersburg, Russia, on January 26, 1908. Leon Fleisher and André Previn led the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra's previous performances of the piece, in 1986 and 1999, respectively.

Tanglewood 2022

By the time he came to write his Second Symphony, Rachmaninoff had become such a celebrity in Moscow—as composer, pianist, and conductor—that he found he had to “escape” in order to be able to compose without interruption. This need was made more urgent by the increasing political unrest, especially the massacre before the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg in January 1905, an anticipation of the revolution that was barely a dozen years away and that made his conducting post with the state-run Bolshoi Theater awkward. Disturbances continued throughout the year 1905, and though Rachmaninoff was busy seeing two new operas, *Francesca da Rimini* and *The Miserly Knight*, through their premieres in January 1906, he clearly decided that it was time to leave Russia for a while. By mid-February he had resigned from his position at the Bolshoi and, despite offers of remunerative conducting engagements, he moved his family to Dresden for the year. There, virtually unknown to all, he could work in seclusion as a full-time composer.

He began work on a new opera, *Monna Vanna*, based on a play by Maeterlinck. It was never to be finished, partly because he interrupted himself to compose the Second Symphony, and later because the playwright had a contract with the music publisher Heugel specifying that the rights to set the play to music be assigned to only one composer, a certain Henri Février.

The premiere of Rachmaninoff’s First Symphony in 1897 had been so disastrous that the 24-year-old composer nearly gave up composition entirely. Memories of that event were no doubt the reason that Rachmaninoff composed his new symphony in secret, not telling even his best friends in Russia until he was essentially finished and word had leaked out in a German paper. On February 11, 1907, he added a postscript to a letter from Dresden with the confession: “I have composed a symphony. It’s true! It’s only ready in rough. I finished it a month ago and immediately put it aside. It was a severe worry to me and I am not going to think about it anymore. But I am mystified how the newspapers got onto it!”

Rachmaninoff returned to Russia that summer, carrying with him the newly composed First Piano Sonata and the nearly finished symphony. He conducted the first two performances of the symphony, one in St. Petersburg, the other in Moscow. After repeating it in Warsaw he returned to Dresden, where he made the final adjustments to the score before sending it off to the publishers.

The Second Symphony’s very first phrase in the cellos and basses is the essential motto, which dominates the symphony on its surface or somewhere in the undertow. Its melodic turn is at once converted into an expressive figure in the violins in the first of many elaborations. A new one occurs in the restless Allegro that follows. The A minor scherzo movement is one of Rachmaninoff’s most original in character and scoring, right from the opening horn theme, which is a rather festive march, and the violin figure that follows will return to open the symphony’s finale. Periodically the movement softens into a lyrical stepwise melody before returning to the energetic business for which the movement is intended to serve. At the end, a coda dies away into nothingness.

A high point of the symphony comes in the third movement, one of the most romantic passages in the entire orchestral repertory. The passion hinted at in the introductory measures return in full force at the climax. But first the clarinet sings a long, tender song expanding without repetition for twenty-three measures. The middle section is lightly scored, with brief questions and answers tossed back and forth by the English horn and oboe against reminders in the violins of the symphony’s opening motto. A long crescendo leads to the climactic statement of the romantic opening figure of the movement. This quickly collapses, though, and the motto intertwines with the romantic figure in mysterious dialogue, leading to the restatement of the clarinet song. Another romantic climax ensues, and the movement dies away in a dialogue of murmuring calm.

The finale abruptly breaks the romantic atmosphere with a theme full of triplets rushing headlong in a carnival mood. Recollections of earlier movements are woven into this madcap chase with great subtlety, and the string choir has the opportunity to introduce (in unison) another of Rachmaninoff’s great soaring, singing melodic inventions. A brief Adagio recalls the slow movement and the violin version of the opening motto before we plunge into the development section, which contains one of Rachmaninoff’s greatest masterstrokes. Gradually one instrument and then another begins to play a descending scale, first in quarter-notes, then some in eighth-notes or whole notes, overlapping and making an extraordinary noise, as if someone were ringing the changes on all the bells of Moscow at once. A recapitulation and swift coda ends the symphony in a truly resplendent manner.

STEVEN LEDBETTER

Steven Ledbetter was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 1998.

Tanglewood 2022

Artists

Stefan Asbury

Stefan Asbury's 2021-22 season included his debuts with the Seattle Symphony and Ensemble Resonanz at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, followed by engagements with the MDR Sinfonieorchester Leipzig, Norrköpings Symfoniorkester, Ensemble Modern, Tokyo New City Orchestra, and Szczecin Philharmonic. Recent seasons saw Mr. Asbury returning to and debuting with several orchestras across the world, including the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Copenhagen Philharmonic, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia, and China National Symphony Orchestra. He conducted the MDR Sinfonieorchester Leipzig as part of Beethovenfest Bonn and Orquesta Sinfonica de Bilbao during Bilbao's Musika-Musica 2019 festival. Mr. Asbury has particularly strong relationships with many living composers, including Steve Reich, Wolfgang Rihm, Unsuk Chin, and Mark-Anthony Turnage. In recent seasons he conducted the world premiere of Bernd Richard Deutsch's organ concerto at the Musikverein in Vienna and the world premiere of Sir Harrison Birtwistle's Piano Concerto with Pierre-Laurent Aimard and Sinfonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, as well as the U.S. premiere with Aimard and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Following the sad passing of Oliver Knussen, a very close mentor, Mr. Asbury conducted the composer's last completed work with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group in November 2018. He conducted Knussen's *Where the Wild Things Are* at the 2013 Tanglewood Music Festival. Mr. Asbury's CD of music by Jonathan Harvey was awarded a Monde de la Musique CHOC award, and his complete cycle of Gérard Grisey's *Les Espaces acoustiques* with WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln won a Deutschen Schallplattenkritik award. Since 1995 Stefan Asbury has served on the faculty of the Tanglewood Music Center and has held the Sana H. Sabbagh Master Teacher Chair on the Conducting Faculty since 2005. In addition to his regular summer teaching, he has given master classes at the Hochschule der Künste (Zurich), Venice Conservatoire, and Geneva Conservatoire, and as part of the Boston Symphony Orchestra's video series "Inside the TMC." This summer he led TMC Fellows in Oliver Knussen's *Requiem: Songs for Sue* and silent film music during the Festival of Contemporary Music and the combined Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra and Boston Symphony Orchestra in Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* for Tanglewood on Parade.

Rita Castro Blanco

Rita Castro Blanco is one of the most promising young Portuguese conductors of her generation and has had debuts with Orquestra Gulbenkian, Orquestra Metropolitana de Lisboa, and Orquestra das Beiras. From September 2019 to January 2022, she was principal conductor of the Huddersfield Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition to these recent debuts, the young conductor has been working as assistant conductor to Nuno Coelho, Giancarlo Guerrero, Joana Carneiro, and Clark Rundell, among others. Castro Blanco has attended masterclasses with the Royal Opera House Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, and Balthasar Neumann Ensemble. In summer 2021, she inaugurated the Mentorship for Women Conductors at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence and was also a conducting fellow at the Lucerne Festival. Castro Blanco graduated with distinction with a master of music degree in performance at the Royal Northern College of Music, following a bachelor's degree in orchestral conducting at Academia Nacional Superior de Orquestre.

Nicolò Umberto Foron

Nicolò Umberto Foron, born in 1998 in Genoa, Italy, is principal assistant conductor of Ensemble Intercontemporain, conductor of the Peter Eötvös Mentoring Program, and winner of the 2021 International Conducting Competition Bucharest. He has worked with prestigious orchestras such as North Netherlands Orchestra, Symfonieorkest Vlaanderen, Het Residentie Orkest, Sofia Philharmonic, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, and London Symphony Orchestra. He has been praised for his versatile repertoire, ranging from early classical symphonies and operas to contemporary world premieres. His first CD, released in 2021, was nominated for the Schallplattenpreis. He began studying with Jorma Panula at age 11 and later studied conducting, piano, and composition in Amsterdam before studying in London, where he earned his master's degree at the Royal College of Music and his artist diploma at the Royal Academy of Music. He has worked with several world-renowned conductors—at age 15 with Lorin Maazel and later with Bernard Haitink in his masterclass at Lucerne Festival. He also assisted Riccardo Muti in a production of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Tanglewood 2022

TANGLEWOOD MUSIC CENTER ORCHESTRA

Sunday, August 14, 2022, 8pm

Koussevitzky Music Shed

Stefan Asbury (Rachmaninoff)

Rita Castro Blanco (Bartók)

NICOLÒ Foron (Price)

Violin I

Alison Kim ^ #

James Gikas

Liyuan Xie +

Tiffany Wee

Yingchen Zhang

Paul Halberstadt

Sean Takada

Anna Luebke

Marisa Votapek

Olivia Chen

Yeonsoo Kim

Wakka Kim

Violin II

Weilu Zhang ^ #

Dominik Kossakowski +

Seohyun Park

Zeno Fusetti

Angela Ryu

Shomya Mitra

Yeajin Kim

Arianna Brusubardis

Nikki Naghavi

Emma Carleton

Tsubasa Muramatsu

Austin Wu

Viola

Yeonsu Lee ^ #

Sofia Nikas +

Nick Borghoff

Abigail Smith

Daniel Getz ◇

Lynn Sue-A-Quan

Jude Park

Matthew Weathers

Asher Boorstin

Lyrice Smolenski

Evalynn Tyros

Rebecca Epperson

Kunjing Dai

Cello

Han Lee ^ #

Samuel Viguerie +

Luis Parra

Ania Lewis

Adam Esbensen ◇

Mizuki Hayakawa

Benjamin Maxwell

Benjamin Lanners

Backkyoung Cho

Sunnat Ibragimov

Tsz To Wong

Boseong Cho

Brandon Xu

Bass

Ethan Moffitt ^ # +

Jesse Dale

Luis Arturo Celis Avila

Andres Vela

Christopher Laven

Kebra-Seyoun Charles

Tobias Vigneau

Flute

Megan Torti ^

Seungmin Oh

Evan Pengra Sult #

Piccolo

Evan Pengra Sult ^ +

Seungmin Oh

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Oboe

Andrew Port ^
Alexander Mayer #
Elias Medina +
Daniel Calahorra Oliart

English Horn

Daniel Calahorra Oliart ^ +

Clarinet

Max Opferkuch ^
Hyunwoo Chun #
Alisha Zamore +

Daniel Solowey
Phoebe Kuan

E-flat Clarinet

Daniel Solowey ^

Bass Clarinet

Yu-Wen (Phoebe) Kuan ^
Max Opferkuch +

Bassoon

Thalia Navas ^
Asha Kline #
AJ Neubert +
Vincent Igusa

Contrabassoon

Vincent Igusa ^

Horn

Alex Moore ^
Nathan Cloeter #
Helen Wargelin +

John Michael Flavetta
Scott Sanders
Xin He

Trumpet

Gianluca Farina ^
Robert Garrison #
Sarah Jessen +

Shea Kelsay
Alan Tolbert

Trombone

Robyn Smith ^ #
Carlos Jiménez Fernández +
David Kidd

Bass Trombone

Luke Sieve ^ # +

Tuba

Colin Benton ^ # +

Timpani

Austin Cernosek ^
Jennifer Marasti #
Tsz Ho Samuel Chan +

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Percussion

Toby Grace ^
Tsz Ho Samuel Chan #
Jennifer Marasti +

Jeremy Sreejayan
Austin Cernosek

Harp

Deanna Cirielli ^

Piano

Shalun Li

Celeste

Maciej Słapiński

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Tanglewood 2022

Harp

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Piano

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Leonard Bernstein Fellowship

Soprano

Emily Helenbrook, Alexander, NY

Kandell Family Fellowship / Pearl and Alvin Schottenfeld Fellowship

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Meredith Wohlgemuth, Winter Haven, FL

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Mezzo-Soprano

Elana Bell, Baltimore, MD

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Tenor

Matthew Corcoran, Ipswich, MA

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Baritone

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Nicolò Umberto Foron, Bielefeld, Germany

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Composition

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David John Roche, Tredegar, Wales

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Viola Chan, Rosemead, CA

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Eleanor Yu, Calgary, AB, Canada

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Conducting Seminar

William Cole, London, United Kingdom

Oren Gross-Thaler, Tel-Aviv, Israel

Christina J. Morris, Freeport, NY

Ana Maria Patino Osorio, Zürich, Switzerland

Hannah von Wiehler, Moscow, Russia

Benjamin Perry Wenzelberg, Tenafly, NJ

The Conducting Workshop Program is sponsored by the Perles Family Foundation.

New Fromm Players

David Bernat, violin, Iowa City, IA

Sage Park, violin, Los Angeles, CA

Elizabeth Doubrava, viola, Tinley Park, IL

Benjamin Fryxell, cello, Cincinnati, OH

The New Fromm Players are an ensemble of musicians drawn from recent TMC alumni who have distinguished themselves in the performance of new music. These artists will concentrate almost exclusively on this literature, performing works by the TMC Composition Fellows and works demanding lengthy and intensive preparation during the Festival of Contemporary Music. The New Fromm Players ensemble has been funded by a generous grant from the Fromm Music Foundation.

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