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Concert: Music of Melinda Wagner, the Karel Husa Visiting Professor of Composition

Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

Jeffery Meyer

Nicholas DiEugenio

Melinda Wagner

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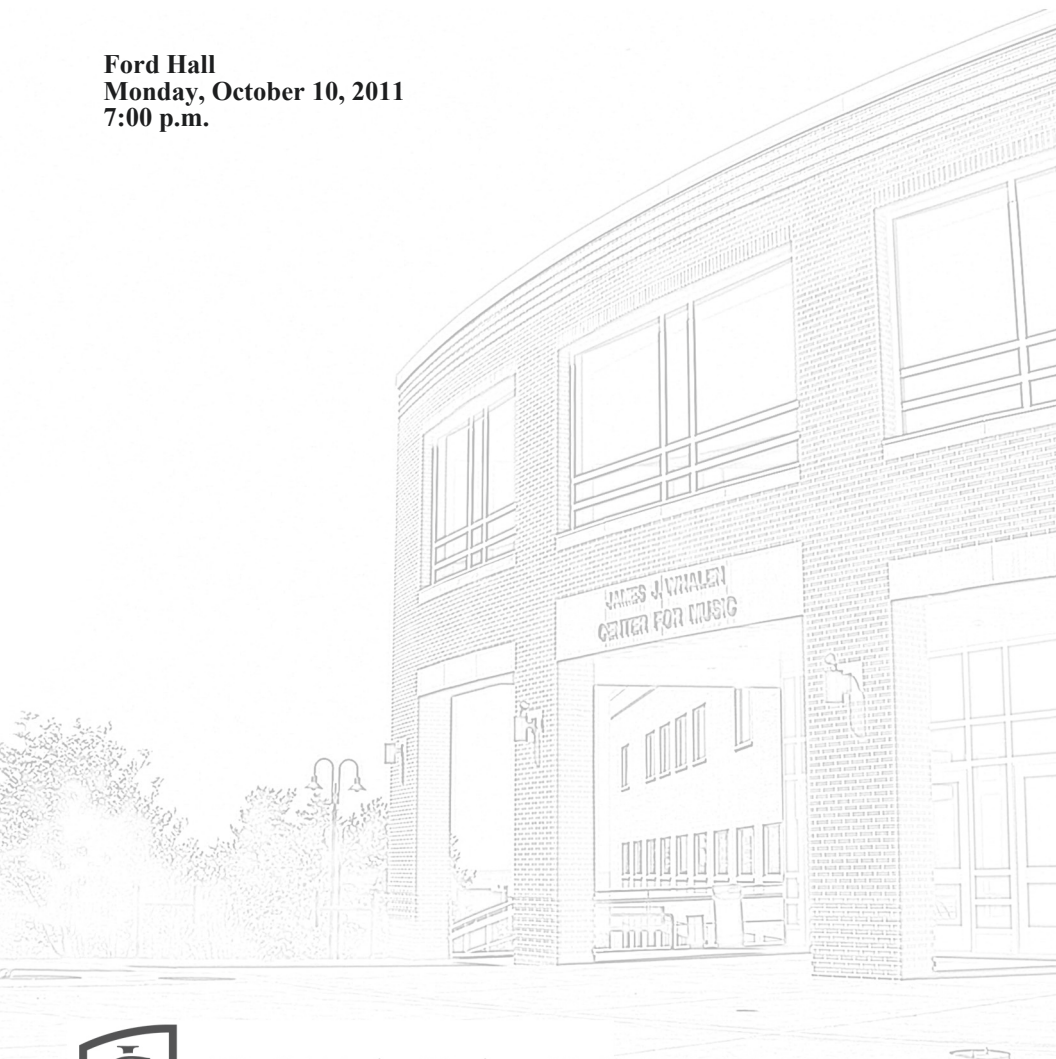
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Music of Melinda Wagner, the Karel Husa Visiting Professor of Composition

Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

Jeffery Meyer, conductor
Nicholas DiEugenio, violin

Ford Hall
Monday, October 10, 2011
7:00 p.m.



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 (BWV 1049)

Allegro

Andante

Presto

J. S. Bach
(1685-1750)

Nicholas DiEugenio, violin

Wendy Herbener Mehne, Sandra O'Hare, flutes

Little Moonhead (2009)

Melinda Wagner
(b. 1957)

Nicholas DiEugenio, violin

Laura Martellaro, Cori Shirk, flutes

Biographies

Jeffery Meyer

Born in Chicago, Jeffery Meyer began his musical studies as a pianist, and shortly thereafter continued on to study composition and conducting. He is the founder and Artistic Director of the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in St. Petersburg, Russia, as well as the Director of Orchestras at the Ithaca College School of Music. He has appeared with orchestras in the United States and abroad, including ensembles such as the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, Cayuga Chamber Orchestra and the Orchestra Sinfonico Haydn di Bolzano e Trento. In recent concert seasons, he has been seen conducting, performing as piano soloist and chamber musician, as well as conducting from the keyboard in the United States, Canada, Russia, Italy, Spain, Germany and throughout Eastern and Southeastern Asia.

Called "one of the most interesting and creatively productive conductors working in St. Petersburg" by Sergei Slonimsky, he is an active participant in the music of our time, has collaborated with dozens of composers, and commissioned and premiered numerous new works. In 2007, he made his Glinka Hall conducting debut in the final concert of the 43rd St. Petersburg "Musical Spring" International Festival, featuring works by three of St. Petersburg's most prominent composers, and in 2009, he conducted the opening concert of the 14th International Musical Olympus Festival at the Hermitage Theatre and was recently invited back to perform in the 2011 festival. He has also been featured numerous times as both a conductor and pianist as part of the "Sound Ways" International New Music Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia. Most recently, he led the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in its United States debut with three performances at Symphony Space's 2010 "Wall-to-Wall, Behind the Wall" Festival in New York City which the New York Times called "impressive", "powerful", "splendid", and "blazing."

As a pianist, Meyer has been in residence at the Banff Centre for the Arts, and in residence at the Aspen Festival as part of the Furious Band. He performs frequently with percussionist Paul Vaillancourt as part of the piano-percussion duo Strike, which, in January 2010, released an album of world-premiere recordings of works written for the duo on Luminescence Records, Chicago. The duo has recently appeared in the Beijing Modern Festival and at the Tianjin Conservatory in China. He has been broadcast on CBC, has recorded and performed with the Philadelphia Virtuosi (Naxos), and has been heard as a soloist at the Aspen Festival. During the 2001-2002 academic year he lived and studied in Berlin and Leipzig as the recipient of a DAAD grant in music, during which time he wrote incidental music to David Mamet's Duck Variations, which was performed throughout Berlin by the theater group Heimspieltheater. He has been distinguished in several international competitions (2008 Cadaqués Orchestra Conducting Competition, 2003 Vakhtang Jordania International Conducting Competition, 2003 Beethoven Sonata International Piano Competition, Memphis, Tennessee) and was a

prizewinner in the 2008 X. International Conducting Competition "Antonio Pedrotti" and the 2011 American Prize in Conducting. Meyer is an active adjudicator, guest clinician, and masterclass teacher. He has adjudicated competitions throughout the United States, including Alaska, as well as at the Hong Kong Schools Music Festival. He has given masterclasses throughout the United States as well as Canada and Asia, and recently led conducting masterclasses at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, China. He has served on the faculties of the Icicle Creek Music Center, Dorian Keyboard Festival, Opusfest Chamber Music Festival (Philippines), Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, Marrowstone Music Festival, and the LSM Academy and Festival. In the summer of 2011, he returned to China as the guest conductor of the 2011 Beijing International Composition Workshop at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, China.

Meyer holds degrees in piano as well as composition and completed his Doctorate of Musical Arts in Piano Performance with Gilbert Kalish at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Melinda Wagner

Melinda Wagner was born in Philadelphia and received graduate degrees in Music Composition from the University of Chicago and the University of Pennsylvania. Her teachers included Richard Wernick, George Crumb, Shulamit Ran, and Jay Reise.

Wagner's Concerto for Flute, Strings, and Percussion was awarded the 1999 Pulitzer Prize. The Chicago Symphony has commissioned three major works - Falling Angels (1992); a piano concerto, Extremity of Sky (2002) for Emanuel Ax; and a third orchestra work in 2006. Extremity of Sky has also been performed by Emanuel Ax with the National Symphony, the Toronto Symphony, the Kansas City Symphony, and the Staatskapelle Berlin.

Other commissions have come from the New York Philharmonic (a concerto for principal trombonist Joseph Alessi), from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Barlow, Fromm, and Koussevitzky Foundations, the American Brass Quintet, and from guitarist David Starobin. Ms. Wagner is the recipient of a Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, an award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, an honorary degree from Hamilton College, and a Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Pennsylvania. Other performances have come from the Dallas Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, the Women's Philharmonic, the New York Pops, and the US Marine Band.

Melinda Wagner has taught at the University of Pennsylvania, Swarthmore College, Syracuse University, and Hunter College. She has lectured at many schools including Yale, Cornell, Juilliard, and Mannes. Ms. Wagner has served as Composer-in-Residence at the University of Texas (Austin) and at the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival. She lives in New Jersey with her husband, percussionist James Saporito, and their children.

Nicholas DiEugenio

Praised by the Cleveland Plain Dealer for his "invigorating, silken" playing and "mysterious atmosphere," violinist Nicholas DiEugenio leads a versatile musical life as a multi-faceted performer of composers from Buxtehude to Carter. Projects this year include a Brahms sonata cycle with pianist Mimi Solomon, Bach cantatas, experimental jazz ballads, and new music premieres. Mr. DiEugenio has taken part in concerts at Town Hall in Seattle and Merkin Hall in New York, as well in the Kavafian Sisters' 25th Anniversary at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. In 2008, Mr. DiEugenio performed Ezra Laderman's Violin Duets in Weill Recital Hall (Carnegie Hall) along with violinist Katie Hyun. Mr. DiEugenio has performed as soloist with the Cleveland Bach Consort, National Repertory Orchestra, Cleveland Pops, CIM Orchestra, and Interlochen's World Youth Symphony Orchestra. A prizewinner at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition as a founding member of both the Lorien Trio and Biava Quartet, he has also been the first violinist of the iO Quartet in New York. Mr. DiEugenio has served as concertmaster of the National Repertory Orchestra, Cleveland Bach Consort, The Cleveland Institute of Music Orchestra, Yale Philharmonia, and the Mimesis Ensemble. Mr. DiEugenio was also a member of the Yale Collegium Players and took part in a 2009 Naxos recording of the Mendelssohn and Bach Magnificats, led by Simon Carrington. Last Spring, Mr. DiEugenio recorded Schumann's three Violin Sonatas with fortepianist Chi-Chen Wu. An enthusiastic supporter of the continued life of music, Mr. DiEugenio has premiered and/or commissioned chamber works by composers Yevgeniy Sharlat, Matthew Barnson, Ted Hearne, and Timo Andres, and also by Stephen Gorbos, Kay Rhie, Erik Nathan, and Jessie Jones. In demand as a teacher, Mr. DiEugenio has been invited to give masterclasses at the University of British Columbia, Penn State University, the University of Arkansas, the University of North Dakota, and in high schools throughout the US. During the year, Mr. DiEugenio teaches at the Ithaca College School of Music, where he is Assistant Professor of Violin and Chamber Music. In the summers, Mr. DiEugenio teaches at the Kinhaven Music School in Weston, Vermont. A member of the violin faculty of the ENCORE School for Strings in the summers from 2005-07, Mr. DiEugenio has also taught undergraduate students at Yale. He holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music (BM, MM '05), where he studied with David Cerone, Linda Cerone, and Paul Kantor; from Purchase College, where he worked with Laurie Smukler and Cal Weirsmas; and from the Yale School of Music (Artist Diploma '08, MMA '09), where he studied with Ani Kavafian and was a recipient of the Alumni Foundation Award and an Alumni Ventures grant.

Wendy Herbener Mehne is professor of flute at Ithaca College where she was a 1995-96 Dana Teaching Fellow and the 2004 London Sabbatical Scholar. She is a member of the Ithaca Wind Quintet, one of the School of Music's resident faculty ensembles, and co-principal flutist with the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra.

Sandra O'Hare is the principal flutist of the Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra and Wind Ensemble. She is a student of Wendy Herbener Mehne

and is pursuing a double major in flute performance and music education.

Cori Shirk is the second flutist of the Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra and principal flutist of the Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra. She is a student of Kelly Covert and is pursuing a Bachelor of Music with an Outside Field degree as a flute major.

Laura Martellaro studies with Wendy Herbener Mehne and is pursuing a master's degree at Ithaca College in music education.

ICCO Personnel

Violin I

Natalie Brandt, concertmaster
Misako Sakurai
Margaret Dagon
Amy Schumann
Samantha Spena^
Madeleine Wething^

Violin II

Alyssa Jutting, principal
Shawn Riley
Jenna Trunk
Christopher Sforza
Elizabeth Benz^
Claire Wilcox^

Viola

Maxwell Aleman, principal
Stephen Gorgone
Kate Inie-Richards
Carly Rockenhauser#^

Cello

Peter Volpert, principal
Thilman Benham
Madeline Docimo#^
Sophie Chang^

Bass

Kyle Kresge, principal
Ethan Jodziewicz^

Flute

Wendy Mehne, principal*
Sandra O'Hare*
Laura Martellaro, principal#
Corinne Shirk#, principal^

Oboe

Alana Rosen, principal^

Clarinet

Emily Dobmeier, principal^

Bassoon

Thomas Connors, principal^

Horn

Emma Stuaadacher, principal^
Colins Speirs^
Robert Oldroyd^

Trumpet

Nathaniel Sodeur, principal^

Trombone

Kai Johnson, principal^

Tuba

Eric Hoang, principal^

Timpani

Jonathan Pereira, principal^

Percussion

Julia Ross, principal^
Jessica Linden^

Celeste/Harpsichord

Jessica Mackey, principal#^

* *Bach*

Wagner

^ *Gruber*

Harp

Myra Kovary, principal^

Notes on the Program

Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 (BWV 1049)

Written between 1711 and 1721, the Brandenburg Concertos of J. S. Bach (1685-1750) contain diverse and unique instrumentation never to be revisited by the composer. Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 (BWV 1049) was written during the winter of 1719/1720 and was dedicated in 1721 to the Duke of Brandenburg. Bach writes in his dedication, "Your Royal Highness did me the great honor of ordering me to send Him some pieces of my own composition: therefore, and in accordance with His gracious order, I have taken the liberty of fulfilling my very humble duty to Your Royal Highness with these concerti, which I have scored for several instruments." It is likely that these works were not actually a commission but a gift to the Duke, as Bach revisits some of the melodic material in later works such as his Clavier Concerto in F (BWV 1057). It is interesting to note that during this time Bach resided in the court of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Coethen, a violinist and gamba player, under whose employ he composed a large volume of secular music. Leopold may have in fact played the solo violin part on the first performance of Brandenburg Concerto No. 4.

Composed as a true concerto grosso, Brandenburg No. 4 sets a concertante of solo violin and two flutes - originally two recorders - against a ripieno of violins, violas, cello or violone, and harpsichord. In these concerti, Bach's orchestra never exceeded 16 players - with Bach himself at the harpsichord. The opening Allegro movement in 3/8 begins with a long, lilting ritornello with the flutes bearing the primary melodic responsibility. Throughout the movement, the melodic material is largely episodic and sequential, and based on this opening ritornello. When the violin finally appears as a solo voice, it is in a manner entirely unconventional for 1721, with soloistic 32nd-note embellishments appearing largely in episodes and not in solo ritornello reprises. The Andante second movement is written in the style of a stunning French sarabande. The music flows in a slow, triple meter with emphasis on the second beat in the measure and with hemiolas at the cadences. Following the scheme typically employed by Antonio Vivaldi, Bach employs a tonally closed ritornello with *vordersatz*, *fortspinnung*, and *epilog* segments in the first section of this movement. Bach also makes extensive use of terraced dynamics throughout the Andante. The violin assumes a secondary role throughout the final Presto movement, acting as a sort of rhythmic continuo while the flutes assume the principal contrapuntal role. This movement employs a mass of fugal entries after a long, opening tutti section.

The ICCO would like to thank Nicholas Walker for assisting with the procurement of the period bows that will be used for this evening's performance of the Bach, and for working with the students on the use of these bows.

Little Moonhead (2009)

In 2006, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra of New York began the "New Brandenburg Project," an undertaking that commissioned six new pieces inspired by Bach's Brandenburg Concertos (1711-1721). These works are intended not only to pay homage to Bach, but to contribute music to a living repertoire for chamber orchestra. Relating these new compositions to Bach's Brandenburg Concertos gives audiences a lens of perspective through which to hear this new music. Little Moonhead (2009) of Melinda Wagner (b. 1957) plays on the translation of "Bach," meaning "brook" or "stream," and the work is subtitled Three Tributaries. The movements follow Bach's Fast-Slow-Fast design of Brandenburg Concerto No. 4, and the work begins with Little Prelude (with Rills). As Bach employs sequences throughout his first movement, so Wagner offers sequential arpeggios and scale fragments. The second movement entitled Moon Ache dives into the melancholy realm of muted strings and calm, contemplative melodies. The final movement, Fiddlehead, takes on the characteristics of Bach's Presto finale, speeding toward an exuberant close. Ironically, Wagner employs humor used throughout musical history in the final measures of her work - writing Bach's initials and signature motive in his writing: B-flat, A, C, B - or B, A, C, H in German notation. In addition to using the instrumentation provided by Bach, Wagner also incorporates the "liquid" sound of the celesta in stark contrast to the "plucky, overtone-saturated sound of the harpsichord."

Melinda Wagner was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1999 for her Concerto for Flute, Strings, and Percussion. Commissions for her compositions have come from the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony, Chicago Symphony, and the Staatskapelle in Berlin, to name a few. In addition to composing, Wagner has taught at the University of Pennsylvania, Swarthmore College, Syracuse University, and Hunter College, and lectured at Yale, Cornell, Juilliard, Mannes and now Ithaca College.

Now in its second century, the Ithaca College School of Music affirms its fundamental belief that music and the arts are essential components of the human experience. The School of Music prepares students to be world-class professionals and the music leaders of tomorrow - ready to transform individuals and communities by advancing the art of music.