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Concert: Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra - 2013 Concerto Concert

Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Jeffery Meyer

Keegan Sheehy

Weiyan Li

Mengfei Xu

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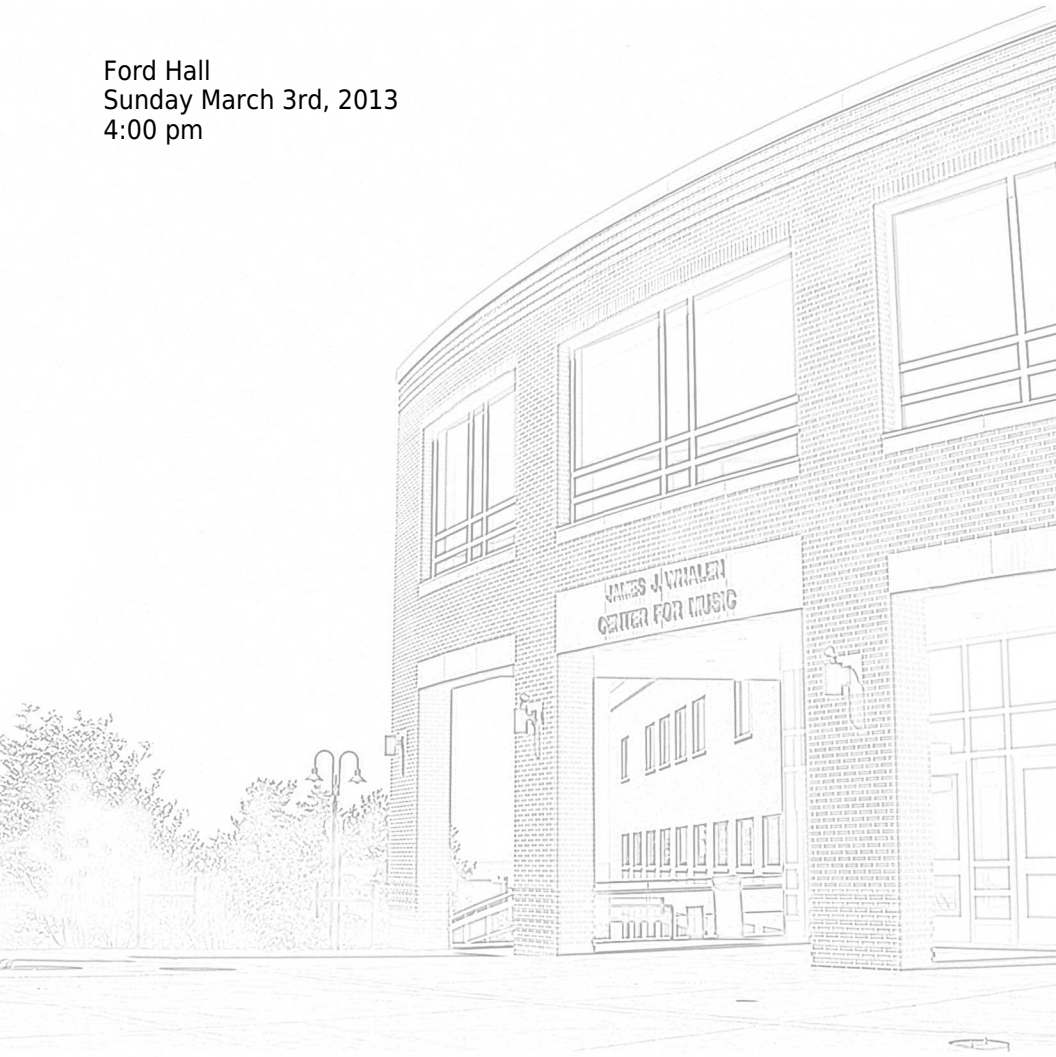
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Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Jeffery Meyer, conductor

2013 Concerto Concert
Keegan Sheehy, percussion
Weiyang Li, piano
Mengfei Xu, piano

Ford Hall
Sunday March 3rd, 2013
4:00 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

No Time Like the Present (1996)

Eric Moe
(b.1954)

Dichotomous Figures (2013)
World Premiere

Keegan Sheehy, percussion

R. Aaron Walters
(b.1992)

Piano Concerto No. 3, Op. 26 in C Major
I. Andante - Allegro

Mengfei Xu, piano

Sergei Prokofiev
(1891-1953)

Intermission

Piano Concerto in G Major
I. Allegramente
II. Adagio assai
III. Presto

Weiyang Li, piano

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

Four Sea Interludes from *Peter Grimes*, Op. 33a
I. Dawn
II. Sunday Morning
III. Moonlight
IV. Storm

Benjamin Britten
(1913-1976)

Biographies

Weiyen Li, piano

Weiyen Li comes from Chongqing, China, where she started playing the piano at age 3. After initial piano studies with Chenggang Yang at the middle/high school of the Sichuan Conservatory of Music in Chengdu (2002-2008), she pursued and completed her undergraduate piano studies with Youzhe Lou at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music (2008-2012). During her time there, she presented several solo recitals in Chongqing and Shanghai, with a repertory ranging from Scarlatti to Messiaen. In 2010 she was one of the winners at the KAWAI Asia Piano Competition in Hong Kong. In the same year she also founded the "Glory Trio", a piano trio which performed in Shanghai, Hangzhou and Nanjing. She is currently a first-year graduate piano performance major and a graduate assistant at the Ithaca College School of Music where she studies with Dr. Charis Dimaras.

Keegan Sheehy, percussion

Keegan Sheehy, born in 1992, is an active percussionist based in Ithaca, NY. He is currently pursuing his BM in Percussion Performance and Music Theory at Ithaca College. While there, he has been a member of various ensembles, including the IC Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, and Percussion Ensembles. In addition, he is a frequent performer with the Cornell Symphony Orchestra, and performed with the 50th Anniversary Percussive Arts Society International Convention Marimba Orchestra.

Keegan has served as co-president and treasurer of the Percussive Arts Society of Ithaca College, through which he has helped to organize visits by percussion guest artists. He is a 2013 inductee to Pi Kappa Lambda and is a member of the Oracle Honor Society. He has been employed by Grover Pro Percussion and been involved with Malletech and Marimba Productions, Inc.

As a solo performer, Keegan has given several solo and joint recitals at IC, and enjoys collaborating with composers on new works. He has also performed as soloist with the New England Youth Wind Ensemble. Keegan has studied percussion with Gordon Stout, Conrad Alexander and Deborah Ibanez.

Mengfei Xu, piano

A native of Dalian, Liaoning, China, Ms. Mengfei Xu started playing the piano at the age of 8. In 2001, aged 12, she was admitted for professional music studies to the middle/high school of the Shenyang Conservatory of Music (Shenyang), where she studied with Peijie Sun as the recipient of advanced student scholarships for four continuous years. In 2007 she continued her piano studies with Professor Jia Leng and Fang Li at the Xinghai Conservatory of Music (Canton) from which she graduated with a Bachelor of Music Degree in 2011. Since September of 2011 she has held a graduate assistantship at Ithaca College where she studies piano with Dr. Charis Dimaras. During these past two years, she has presented numerous solo and collaborative recitals on and off campus and has participated in several chamber music performances. In February of 2012 she was awarded the first prize in the Bach Performance category at the United States Open Music Competition (USOMC) in San Francisco, CA. Ms. Xu is expected to graduate from Ithaca College with a Master Degree in Piano Performance in May of 2013. She is planning to finish an Organ Performance Degree at Ithaca College next academic year with Professor Jean Radice.

Jeffery Meyer, conductor

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 Director of Orchestras at Ithaca College and since 2002 he has been the Artistic Director of the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in St. Petersburg, Russia one of St. Petersburg's most innovative and progressive ensembles. He has appeared with orchestras in the United States and abroad, including ensembles such as the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, Sichuan Symphony, 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. The New York Times described his performances with the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in its United States debut at Symphony Space's 2010 "Wall-to-Wall, Behind the Wall" Festival in New York City as "impressive", "powerful", "splendid", and "blazing." His programming has been recognized with two ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming (with the Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra), as well as the Vytautas Marijosius Memorial Award for Programming. 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. 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.

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.

Passionate about working with young musicians and music education, Meyer is an active adjudicator, guest clinician, and masterclass teacher. He has judged 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.

Program Notes

No Time Like the Present (1996)

Eric Moe

Eric Moe's *No Time Like the Present* is a muscular, energetic, and invigorating five-minute exploration of orchestral rhythm. Commissioned in 1996 by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, it was premiered in 1998 by then-music director Mariss Jansons. It seeks to respond to the proposition of what might have happened had Stravinsky spent his time in the States absorbing the rhythms of Detroit's Motown rather than Los Angeles's Hollywood.

The work opens with a vigorous motor of sixteenths which underlies fragments of jagged and "funky" rhythms distributed among solo wind and brass, and interrupted by bars of siren-like triplets. A horn solo emerges to inaugurate a rhapsodic contrasting mood, characterized by solos which move to piccolo, english horn, and eventually, strings. These are punctuated by outbursts from the brass and percussion, which flare forth and then melt away as quickly as they came.

A solo bass clarinet colored by trombones commences the final section, a series of angular, increasingly extended and instrumentally-layered swells that crest in sudden explosions and unexpected silences. Bold triplets in the horn section urge the music forward to a percussion-driven climax which ends abruptly, leaving only the soft glow of a cluster of harmonics in the cello, like an "afterimage" of the explosion we have just witnessed.

Moe is currently Professor of Composition and Theory at the University of Pittsburgh.

Dichotomos Figures (2013)

R. Aaron Walters

Dichotomos Figures was originally a solo piece for multiple percussion. It was a compositional experiment exploring the process of alternate notation and it was also my first piece for multiple percussion. It featured a cadenza and other soloistic/virtuosic moments that lent it to be similar to a concerto. The idea of actually extracting the ideas into a concerto was mentioned in passing between percussionist Keegan Sheehy and me in early Spring 2012. It was not long after then when he officially commissioned me to write it for his recital in Fall 2012 and to audition for the Ithaca College Concerto Competition. I accepted this challenge and began with the two-piano reduction over the summer.

Dichotomos Figures explores phrasal and spatial applications of the concepts of circle and square. The terms "round" and "jagged" are also explored in a similar fashion. The soloist, to represent these concepts spatially and timbrally, uses a few extended techniques (e.g. the traditional thumb roll applied nontraditionally, timpani bowl hits, a music stand as an instrument). The opening clusters are scattered all about the piece to represent jaggedness. There are strict mixed meters that also incorporate jagged unevenness and discomfort. The square, or "jagged" ideas, are signified by repetitive symmetric grooves and ostinatos and phrases using duple divisions. Repeating grooves in asymmetric meters and ostinatos and phrases with non-duple subdivisions, often represents the circular, or "round" ideas. These concepts overlap quite frequently throughout the piece and are even expressed melodically a harmonically with symmetric whole-tone and octatonic collections versus asymmetric modal melodies. After the cadenza a new interpretation of a recurring theme is presented to bring us to the end of the piece where the idea that neither of the two opposing styles (circle vs. square, round vs. jagged) has taken on a singular existence in the entire piece.

-R. Aaron Walters

Piano Concerto No. 3, Op. 26 in C Major
I. Andante - Allegro
Sergei Prokofiev

Prokofiev's third and most enduringly popular piano concerto was premiered in 1921 (though sketches of the second movement date as far back as 1913). The bulk of the composition was completed during the summer of that year, which he spent in Brittany, France. He premiered it himself that December with Frederick Stock and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Vital and witty, this three-movement concerto is a pillar of the twentieth-century piano repertoire.

The first movement, featured on this program, opens with a quiet and lyrical clarinet solo, which the strings also quote. The introspective mood does not last long, however, as the strings rush forward with sixteenth notes to begin the Allegro, and the piano bursts forward with the main subject, a lively chattering theme. A slower, more wistful theme is articulated first by the oboe over pizzicato strings, which the piano develops before accelerating into a series of cascading triplets which crescendos into a grand restatement of the Andante theme, now given fully and expressively by the entire orchestra. The music segues into a long, discursive development of this theme. Then, with four quietly expectant chords intoned by the winds, the Allegro is brought back with a vengeance. The recapitulation features abrupt, jagged tempo changes that highlight each returning theme. The recapitulation of second theme winds down gradually, as if out of steam. But just before the listener catches his breath, the piano enters for the final flourish, a continuous run of sixteenths which drives forward inexorably to a thrilling close.

Piano Concerto in G Major
Maurice Ravel

One of two piano concerti Ravel composed, this dazzling jazz-influenced work premiered to long-lasting success in 1932, with Marguerite Long at the piano and Ravel himself conducting. Though it sparkles pianistically, its color and character derive in equal part from Ravel's distinctive use of the orchestra, which is as vital in this work as in any of his exclusively orchestral compositions.

The first movement opens with a single whip crack and a sprightly first subject presented by the winds above a light accompaniment and scintillating flourishes in the piano. Gradually the entire orchestra joins in the theme, until the piano emerges with a rhapsodic discourse, punctuated by blues figures from the winds; the second theme ascends, lyrical and more introverted, is introduced quietly by the piano. Syncopated accents characterize the return of the scintillating opening material, and the exposition concludes with a flourishing cadenza that brings back material from the opening. The dreamlike development is a thoughtful extension of the first theme, featuring string harmonics, solo harp, and massive colorful outbursts from the orchestra. The second theme's development crests into a series of running sixteenths which incessantly drives us forward to the boisterous, brassy descending scale that concludes the movement.

The transcendent second movement spotlights one of Ravel's most ethereal strokes of lyrical genius, and one of his most hard-won. The first subject, presented initially only by the solo piano, exists serenely for several minutes, until a solo flute breaks the reverie and the rest of the orchestra enters. The second subject is darker and accompanied by dissonant rising chords in brass and winds, but retains the stately loveliness imparted by the piano's continual waltz-like chords. After reaching a brief and lushly dissonant zenith, the first theme is brought back by an extended English horn solo, around which the piano flows gently and continually to a glowing close.

The third movement is a *moto perpetuo*, a tour de force by both soloist and orchestra. It opens with four explosive chords which recur throughout the movement, and features difficult solos and passagework for almost all the instruments in the orchestra. The movement switches between a sixteenth-note running motor and a galloping triplet tattoo, and ends explosively, with the same four chords that open the movement.

Four Sea Interludes from Peter Grimes, Op. 33a Benjamin Britten

Britten's opera *Peter Grimes* tells the bleak story of a misanthropic loner fisherman who faces the unforgiving accusations of the townsfolk after his apprentices suffer unforeseen but accidental deaths. Tortured and unstable, Grimes is driven to suicide in the raging, stormy sea. Inspired by George Crabbe's poem "The Borough," Britten's work takes a more sympathetic view towards Grimes, and explores the darkness of a man hopelessly marginalized. The opera premiered in 1945 and became one of Britten's first critical and commercial successes.

The *Four Sea Interludes* extracted from the opera comprise a series of vignettes evoking the sea in its myriad symbolic states throughout the story. Their existence highlights the seaside setting's centrality in the opera; while the town is fictional, the opera is pervaded with the eerily haunting beauty of the coast along Britten's native Suffolk.

At only about three minutes per movement, each of the four portrayals is brief but highly illustrative. The first, *Dawn*, is drawn from the transition between the prologue and first act, and sets an austere stage. It utilizes only three main elements: a thin, high, and cold melody of sunlight piercing the clouds, given by violins and flutes; the gentle rising and falling murmur of the surf, featuring clarinet and violas; and ominous, dramatic swells from the brass. In *Sunday Morning*, which precedes act two, the sunny tolling of church bells overlays digressive, meandering melodies in the strings and fragmented conversation in the winds, suggesting the townsfolk at worship against the backdrop of a lively ocean. The congregation scene depicts the townsfolk's callous bigotry towards Grimes.

In *Moonlight*, the most serene of the four movements, an unceasing and ever-more-yearning series of swells mimics the tide at nighttime, accentuated by glints of light from percussion and woodwinds. Underlying the nighttime serenity is a muted ominousness, though, and the fourth movement's *Storm* is the realization of all that was portended before it. The referenced storm actually takes place in the first act of the opera - however, the turmoil it reflects festers in Grimes himself and grows continually, making these seascapes also function as a reflection of Grimes' emotional state. The movement is full of violent swells and brutal crushing dissonances. Short-lived relief comes in the form of a few glowing, suspended arcs of melody, moments of brief hope in which the embattled Grimes imagines a possible safe haven. Ultimately, however, they are fleeting and must succumb to the tempest, which surges forward to a savage, oppressive victory.

-Program notes by Tiffany Lu

Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Violin I

Martiros Shakhzadyan,
concertmaster
Emily Frederick
Natalie Brandt
Haehyun Park
Jason Kim
Jessica Chen
Christopher Mattaliano
Claire Wilcox
Nils Schwerzmann
Brian Schmidt
Joe D'Esposito
Ryann Aery
Kathleen Wallace
Nadine Cohen

Violin II

Jenna Trunk, principal
Margaret Dagon
Marcus Hogan
Jenna Jordan
Aiko Richter
Elizabeth Benz
Colleen Mahoney
Emilie Benigno
Flora Kielland
Scott Altman
Cynthia Mathiesen
Leila Welton
Alexas Esposito

Viola

Stephen Gorgone,
principal
Austin Savage
Emma Brown
Jonathan Fleischman
Amanda Schmitz
Lindsey Clark
Angelica Aseptine
Kelly Sadwin
Isadora Herold
Daniel Martinez

Cello

Pan Yan, principal
Jacqueline Georgis
Brooks Griffith
Eric Perreault
Madeline Docimo
William Sharrin
Hamadi Duggan
David Fenwick
Meredith Gennaro
Emily Faris
Sean Swartz
Sophie Chang
Zachary Brown

Bass

Samuel Shuhan,
principal
Lindsey Orcutt
Benjamin Dows
Andrew Whitford
Desmond Bratton
Cara Turnbull
Kate Corcoran

Flute

Savannah Clayton,
principal
Maya Holmes,
principal
Caitlin Phillips, piccolo

Oboe

Elizabeth Schmitt,
principal
Rachel Schlesinger
Jacob Walsh, English
Horn

Clarinet

Michelle McGuire,
principal
James Conte, E-flat
clarinet
Anna Goebel, Bass
Clarinet

Bassoon

Sean Harkin, principal
Amanda Nauseef
Stanley Howard,
contrabassoon

French Horn

Colin Speirs, principal
Ryan Chiaino
Aubrey Landsfeld
Alyssa A'Hearn
William Larch

Trumpet

Keli Price, principal
Ryenne Flynn
Alexandra Payton

Trombone

Timothy Taylor,
principal
Matthew Confer
Edward Steenstra,
bass

Tuba

Eric Hoang, principal

Timpani

Andrew Dobos,
principal

Percussion

Christopher
Demetriou, principal
Jessica Linden
Keegan Sheehy

Harp

Julie Spring, principal

Piano

Xinni Zhang, principal

Assistant Conductors

Patrick Valentino
Tiffany Lu