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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Music

2023 – 2024 Concert Series

University of Richmond Symphony Orchestra

Naima Burrs, Conductor

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

7:30 PM

Camp Concert Hall



UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
School of Arts & Sciences[™]

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

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PROGRAM

Overture to *Egmont*, op. 84

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Concerto in C Major for Violin, Cello, and Piano,
op. 56 ("Triple Concerto")

Beethoven

Allegro

Largo

Rondo alla polacca

Dr. Anyango Yarbo-Davenport, violin

Dr. Christoph Wagner, cello

Dr. Joanne Kong, piano

-- brief intermission --

From the Southland

Through Moanin' Pines

The Frolic

In De Col' Moonlight

A Jubilee

On Bended Knees

A New Hidin' Place

Harry T. Burleigh
(1866-1949)

Arr. by Stig Junge

*Please silence cell phones before the concert.
Recording, Taping, Photographing are strictly prohibited.*

Notes on the Program

Beethoven: Overture to *Egmont*

In 1809, Beethoven received a commission to compose the overture and incidental music to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's tragic play, *Egmont*. Often referred to as "The Shakespeare of Germany," Goethe was one of Beethoven's personal heroes and the leading intellectual of his time, which made Beethoven's acceptance of this offer an easy yes. In addition to this honor, the composer was highly fixated on the subject matter of triumph and heroism over tyranny, so the story of *Egmont* was aligned with his own passion. Beethoven captures the true essence of this tragedy in the overture, in what could be regarded as a compact tone poem, not only showcasing the conflicts within the story but the triumphant resolution as well.

The structure of the overture is in line with the opening movement of many classical symphonies. After a slow introduction, two themes are presented, developed, and restated in almost the original presentation. The work concludes with a coda, which uses previous material. A part of today's standard orchestral repertoire, the overture is often performed as a stand-alone work, separate from the entire Goethe drama. Thanks to Beethoven's mastery, the overture feels complete, highlighting the conflict and triumph found in Goethe's work.

Beethoven: Concerto for Violin, Cello, Piano ("Triple Concerto")

The piano trio (violin, cello, piano) was a popular chamber ensemble of the late 18th century, used often by leading composers of the time, such as Mozart and Haydn. Though it was a popular form of chamber music, never before had it been featured alongside an orchestra. In 1804, that completely changed, when Beethoven

(in true Beethoven fashion) decided to use the popular form of the piano trio as the featured soloists in his Triple Concerto in C Major, op. 56. Though it was composed around the same time as his “Eroica” Symphony No. 3, the triple concerto showcases a much more lyrical side of Beethoven’s output.

The work is divided into three contrasting movements: the first movement an energetic and lively *Allegro*, the second movement a lyrical and expressive *Adagio*, and the third and final movement a high- spirited *Rondo* in the form of a Polish dance. Beethoven was well aware of the challenges he would face by composing for these three instruments together as soloists. Due to the range/timbral differences and being accompanied by a full orchestra, he feared that the cello would get lost in the overall sonority of the ensemble. To compensate for this reality, Beethoven often uses the cello as the vehicle to introduce the melodic ideas, and he features the cello playing in its upper register, for better projection.

The Triple Concerto is known for its innovative approach to the concerto form, and for the incredible interaction between the three solo instruments and the orchestra.

Burleigh: From the Southland

Harry T. Burleigh was an influential African-American composer, arranger, baritone singer, and music editor. He played a significant role in the preservation and popularization of African-American spirituals and folk music, as well as making the music of Black Americans accessible for the concert stage, bridging the gap between African-American music and the classical tradition. Born in Erie, Pennsylvania, Burleigh studied voice in New York City at the National Conservatory of Music, becoming the protégé of Antonín Dvořák, director of the music school at the time. It is

through this relationship that Dvořák gained a true understanding and appreciation of the Negro spiritual, later leading him to proclaim that American music and the American sound is found in the music of Black Americans and Indigenous Americans.

From the Southland was originally a collection of piano pieces showcasing Burleigh's Southern roots. Featuring elements of spirituals, folk melodies, and rhythms, each piece evokes nostalgia by painting a vivid musical portrait of the landscapes and culture of the American South. Burleigh's legacy is that of a pioneering figure in American music, as someone who helped to shape the musical landscape of his time by highlighting and celebrating the music and rich tradition of his African ancestors.

-- *Notes by Naima Burrs*

The Performers



ANYANGO YARBO-DAVENPORT, VIOLINIST

Born and raised in Munich, Germany, violinist Anyango Yarbo-Davenport was born into the musical family of American soprano Africa Yarbo-Davenport and the late Austrian conductor Hans Peter Jillich. She performs regularly in such notable venues as Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Royal Festival Hall London, Teatro Mayor Bogotá, Mozarteum Saal Salzburg, and Teatro Colón, and can be heard on radio and TV in the US, South America, and Europe.

In 2023-24 Dr. Yarbo-Davenport has been invited as Artist-in-Residence at Rutgers University, Emory University (Schwartz Artist-in-Residence) and the University of Richmond, among others. She will be performing the iconic concertos from Beethoven, Brahms, Piazzolla and Price throughout the Americas and Europe during the 2023–25 seasons. Recent engagements include solos with the Orchestra Bellas Artes at the televised New Year's Gala, performances on BBC, FOX26, WXXI, PBS, and NPR, as well as chamber music collaborations with members of the Vienna Philharmonic. Dr. Yarbo-Davenport's debut CD, *AMERICANA!* (Sheva Collection UK, 2022), was released by Naxos Digital Library in April 2022 and features a collection of contemporary American music by Grammy winning composers Robert Aldridge (world premiere recording), Jennifer Higdon, and John Corigliano, with pianist Vanessa Fadial (The Colburn School Los Angeles). She recorded her second CD, *Invisible Threads* (Sheva Collection UK, 2024), with duo partner pianist Jinson Kim, featuring works by Florence Price, Béla Bartók, Tōru Takemitsu,

and the world premiere recording of Colombian composer Juan Antonio Cuéllar's "Safos." *Invisible Threads* was awarded the prestigious research prize by Banco Santander.

Since making her début in 2017 as the newly appointed soloist and conductor of the Colour of Music Festival Virtuosi, an all-female/co-ed chamber orchestra of African ancestry, Dr. Yarbo-Davenport and the ensemble have presented widely celebrated and sold-out events at institutions such as The City University of New York, UC Davis, The Riviera Theatre Charleston, University of Houston, and others. She is program curator of the COMF Virtuosi and a member of the festival's artistic committee.

Yarbo-Davenport pursued her doctoral degree at the Eastman School of Music (New York), where she was awarded the coveted Performers' Certificate and served as teaching assistant to her mentor, Charles Castleman. She received her early training at the Musik Hochschule Munich (Germany) and the University "Mozarteum" Salzburg (Austria), with additional studies at the Sibelius Academy Helsinki (Finland) with Paivyt Meller. A post-doctoral fellow in 2021-22, she expanded her research at Belmont University (Tennessee) into musician health, and has begun her next recording project of works for violin solo written by underrepresented composers.

Dr. Yarbo-Davenport is Professor and Coordinator of Violin and Chamber Music at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana Bogotá (Colombia). She previously served as faculty at Universidad de Los Andes Bogotá and at the summer music institutes of Virginia Commonwealth University and the University of North Texas. A dedicated teacher, she was awarded the Jack L. Frank Award for Excellence in Teaching. Her students win top prizes in

international competitions, hold orchestra positions in the Americas and Europe, and have been accepted into the top universities of Germany, France, Austria and USA.

Dr. Yarbo-Davenport performs on an 18th-century French violin, chooses from bows ranging from the Peccatte School to contemporary makers, and is an Olitarte Artist.



CHRISTOPH WAGNER, CELLIST

Dr. Christoph Wagner is a prize-winning cellist, sought-after chamber musician, and pedagogue whose mission is to transform the world through music. He received first prizes at the German Youth Competition Jugend Musiziert, Ribalta Mozart Italia in Italy, and the Peter Pirazzi

Competition in Germany. Prize-winner of the National Society of Arts and Letters competition in Bloomington, Indiana, in both 2016 and 2017, he holds scholarships from the Richard Wagner Verband in Frankfurt, the Lions Club in Karlsruhe, and the Theodor Rogler Foundation for Young Musicians. In 2018, he received the Sviatoslav Richter Grant from Rice University, followed by the Amici di Via Gabina Fellowship in 2019 for research and performances in Italy. Wagner has performed in major concert halls in Europe such as the Berlin Philharmonie and the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, under renowned conductors including Jonathan Nott, Lothar Zagrosek and Stefan Asbury, and appeared at the Wiesbaden Winter Music Festival, Aspen Music Festival, and the Holocaust Museum in Houston, Texas. His international career has spanned four continents, including appearances in Switzerland, Croatia, France, Italy, South Africa, South America, China, South Korea and the US.

Wagner has been a passionate music ambassador as fellowship holder from Live Music Now - Yehudi Menuhin Foundation in Germany and as a musician in Classical Connections in Bloomington where he played numerous concerts in underserved areas. Active in expanding the role of the arts in community outreach, Wagner participated in a summer residency with Street Symphony in Los Angeles in 2018, working with homeless and prison communities, and he designed a program through the DACAMERA Young Artist Program combining health, mindfulness and music for underserved communities in the Houston area.

Wagner received a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Music in Frankfurt, a Master of Music at Indiana University, holds a Performance Diploma from the Conservatory of Music L'Hay-les-Roses in Paris, France, and received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. His doctoral dissertation is titled "Injuries in Professional Orchestral Musicians - An Overview of Current Data and Trends." His research at Houston Methodist hospital addressed artist health, injury prevention, and peak performance, including several systematic reviews to investigate (1) effectiveness of curriculum for artist health and peak performance, (2) coaching in music performance and education, and (3) the role of nutrition in musical peak performance. His goal in the near future is to design a core curriculum university class featuring musicians' health and peak performance.

Dr. Wagner is currently Assistant Professor of Cello at the University of New Mexico.



JOANNE KONG, PIANIST

Keyboardist Joanne Kong captures the attention of audiences in compelling performances that celebrate the vibrancy and eloquence of musical expression. Embracing a broad range of repertoire from Baroque to contemporary music, her performances have been praised for “great finesse and flexibility” (*The*

Washington Post), “superb” playing (*The Boston Globe*), “utmost keyboard sensitivity and variety of tone” (*Richmond Times-Dispatch*), “remarkable technical ability” (*The Oregonian*), and “superb artistry” (*San Antonio Express-News*) for works “sensitively played” (*The New York Times*). Her versatility includes the distinction of being the first artist to release a harpsichord-piano recording of Bach’s *Goldberg* and Beethoven’s *Diabelli Variations*, and she gave the world premiere of Pulitzer Prize – winning composer Michael Colgrass’s *Side by Side*, the first concerto written for a soloist in the dual role of pianist and harpsichordist.

Dr. Kong has performed to critical acclaim at numerous venues including the Los Angeles and Oregon Bach Festivals, Abbey Bach Festival, Bach Aria Festival, Texas Bach Collegium, Houston Harpsichord Recital Series, Memphis Chamber Music Society, Stotsenberg Concert Series, San Antonio Festival, Los Angeles Monday Evening Concert Series, Virginia Waterfront International Festival of the Arts, the Royal Netherlands Embassy, National Gallery of Art Concert Series, Strathmore Hall’s “Music in the Mansion” series, Columbia University, Harvard University, international performances in the United Kingdom, Austria, Italy, Colombia, Brazil and India, and orchestral performances under William McGlaughlin, Myung-Whun Chung, Alberto Bolet,

Steven Smith, Samuel Baron, George Manahan, Alexander Kordzaia, Eckart Preu, John Sinclair, Mark Russell Smith, Gil Rose and Alex Pauk. A gifted collaborator, she has performed with numerous artists including the Shanghai String Quartet; flutist Eugenia Zukerman; cellists James Wilson, Christoph Wagner and Ronald Crutcher; viola da gambist Lisa Terry; violinists Karen Johnson and Lindsey Strand-Polyak; soprano Ying Huang; baritones James Weaver and Zheng Zhou; and four-time Grammy Award-winning ensemble Eighth Blackbird. She has been masterclass pianist for numerous world-renowned artists; is in demand for masterclasses in keyboard performance, chamber music and Baroque interpretation, including visits to Yale University, New York University, New England Conservatory, Brigham Young University and the Colburn School; and has led workshops internationally on Performance Anxiety and Effective Practicing Techniques.

An acknowledged Bach specialist, Kong twice received performance fellowships to the Bach Aria Festival and Institute held in Stony Brook, New York, and is regular guest keyboardist for the Winter Park Bach Festival in Florida, where she regularly performs Bach concertos and both the *St. John Passion* and *St. Matthew Passion*, under the artistic direction of John Sinclair. Her performances of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* and *Goldberg Variations* have received wide acclaim.

A native of Southern California, Kong is the recipient of national and international honors, including performance fellowships from the American Academy of the Arts in Europe and the Bach Aria Festival, designation as a Laureate in the 1983 National Beethoven Foundation Fellowship Auditions, three Ruth Lorraine Close Fellowships, and the Irl Allison Grand Prize in the 1985

International Piano Recording Competition. In addition to concertizing, her performances have been broadcast over numerous radio stations, including National Public Radio's *Performance Today*, WQXR in New York, WFMT in Chicago, CKWR in Ontario, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Kong is currently the Director of Accompaniment and Coordinator of Chamber Music Ensembles at the University of Richmond. A graduate of the University of Southern California and University of Oregon, she has studied with Joanna Hodges, Malcolm Hamilton, and Victor Steinhardt, and performed in the masterclasses of Leon Fleisher and Lorin Hollander.



NAIMA BURRS, CONDUCTOR

Naima Burrs, a violinist and conductor from Richmond, earned her Master of Music degree in violin performance at the University of Northern Iowa. Burrs has performed as a section violinist with many ensembles, including the Richmond Symphony Orchestra, the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, the Williamsburg

Symphony Orchestra, and the Waterloo Cedar Falls Symphony Orchestra, as well as serving as principal second violin with Opera on the James and as concertmaster of Summer Garden Opera. Last year, Burrs was selected as a participant in the Conducting Academy of the Domaine Forget International Music Festival (Québec, Canada), where she studied with Maestro Yannick Nézet-Séguin, music director of the Metropolitan Opera House.

In January 2022, Burrs assumed the role of Music Director for the Petersburg Symphony Orchestra in Virginia. In August 2022, she

became a member of the University of Richmond's faculty, where she also currently leads the University of Richmond Symphony Orchestra. Last July, Burrs made her guest conducting debut with the Richmond Symphony Orchestra, and in November made her guest conducting debut with the National Philharmonic Orchestra, leading eight performances for their educational series at the Music Center at Strathmore in Bethesda, MD. In December, Burrs led six performances for the Richmond Ballet/Richmond Symphony annual presentation of *The Nutcracker*, while serving as the assistant conductor.

Naima Burrs is the Director of Orchestral Activities at Virginia State University (Petersburg, VA) and has previously contributed to the faculties of Longwood University (Farmville, VA) and Hampden-Sydney College (Hampden Sydney, VA). She will graduate in May 2024 with a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in instrumental conducting from The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

**The University of Richmond Symphony Orchestra
with members of the Petersburg Symphony Orchestra**

Violin I

Noah Robinson, concertmaster
Esther Kim
Lucretia Davis[†]
Cornelia Clipp[†]
Hannah Lwin
Lidiya Chambers
Shanna Thell[†]
Yoon Hee Cawley[†]
Brett Phillips
John W. Turner*
William Raposo[†]
Charles Stout[†]
Larry Lyles[†]

Violin II

Lucas Chuidian, principal
Isabella Aldeguer
Bryant Watson[†]
Trinette Randolph[†]
Paige Weber
Ria Valenzi*
Rex Britton*
Sandy Benoit[†]
Marilyn Davis[†]
Minyang Jiang
Eileen Downey**
Megan Campbell

Viola

Adele Kelley, principal
Vanessa Giraldo-Castano
Brenda Johnson[†]
Crystal Raposo[†]
Katie Baker*
Martha Reiss[†]
Erika Holmes[†]
Scott Sturt[†]

Cello

Lena Ondreyka, principal
Miah Wilson
Margery Schaffer[†]
Mark Thell[†]
Josh Walker
Giselle Santiesteban-Pizarro
Maya Johnson[†]
Janine Holley[†]
Song Bernsley[†]
Bianca Batts[†]

Bass

Michael A. Stumpf*, principal
Hannon Lane[†]
Marcus Steele[†]
Ian Smith[†]

Flute

Susan Jones***
Angie Hilliker**

Oboe

Karl Spiker*, principal
Lisa Bilski*

Clarinet

Michael Goldberg*, principal
Caty Campbell

Bassoon

Arnold Wexler*, principal

Horn

Gretchen Georgas*, principal
Ava Scott
Roxanne Williams
Andrew Adams

Trumpet

Argenis Gonzalez*, principal
Nathaniel Boyd†

Trombone

Charles Newton‡
Emmanuel Barks‡

Tuba

Russell Wolz*

Timpani

Lamon Lawhorn*

Percussion

David Chambliss

‡ Petersburg Symphony Orchestra member

* Community musician

** University of Richmond faculty/staff

*** University of Richmond alumni

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