

PROGRAM

Of Our New Day Begun

Omar Thomas

Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier*

Richard Strauss

Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 18

Sergei Rachmaninoff

George Hua '22, Winner of the

2020 William Waite Concerto Competition, Piano

Moderato

Adagio sostenuto – Più animato – Tempo I

Allegro scherzando

Tonight's performance is presented without intermission.

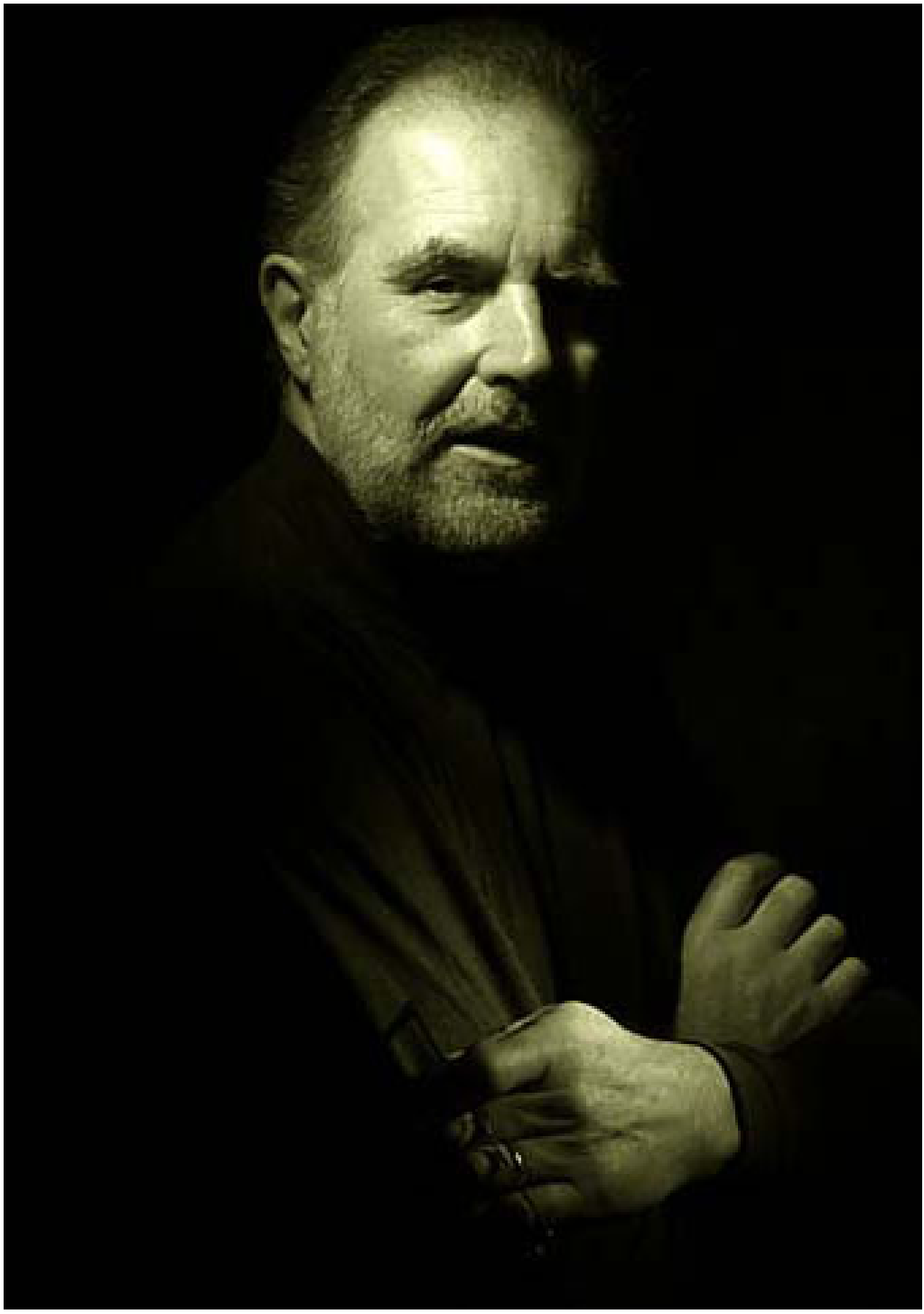
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William Boughton, *Conductor*

Born into a musical family - his grandfather (Rutland Boughton) was a composer, his father a professional viola player and his mother a singer. After studies, at New England Conservatory (Boston), Guildhall School of Music (London) and Prague Academy as a cellist, he entered the profession in

London playing with the Royal Philharmonic, BBC and London Sinfonietta Orchestras.

The experience of playing in orchestras led to a passion to pursue a career in conducting studying with George Hurst and then Sir Colin Davis. In 1980 he formed the English String Orchestra initially focusing on early 20th Century English repertoire but developing it into late



20th and 21st Century Contemporary music commissioning over 20 works from composers such as Peter Sculthorpe, John Joubert, Anthony Powers, Michael Berkeley, John Metcalf, Stephen Roberts and Adrian Williams. The depth of his partnership with the ESO was epitomised in 1985 when, as Artistic Director of the Malvern Festival, he collaborated with Sir Michael Tippett to present a musical celebration of the composer's eightieth birthday which was the subject of a BBC "Omnibus" documentary.

With the ESO he built a significant discography of internationally acclaimed recordings with Nimbus Records - predominantly of English music, a number of which reached the Top Ten in the US Billboard charts.

Between 1986-93 he was also Artistic & Music Director of the Jyvaskyla Sinfonia in Finland and guest conducted with numerous orchestras including the London Symphony, Philharmonia, San Francisco, Royal Philharmonic, Finnish Radio, Mittel Deutsch Radio, working with artists such as Nigel Kennedy, Leonidas Kavakos, Emmanuel Ax, Radu Lupu and Viktoria Mullova.

In October 1993, William Boughton was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Coventry University

in recognition of his expertise in British music. In November 1995, he and the ESO presented a weekend of music celebrating the 60th birthday of English composer Nicholas Maw, marking another milestone in his championship of contemporary English music. In 1996 William Boughton commenced a second term as Artistic Director of the Malvern Festival.

The 2005/6 Season was his final year with the ESO in which they celebrated the Orchestra's 25th Anniversary performing a 'Complete Beethoven Symphony Cycle', and created a new series of pre-concert performances of British contemporary music, including works by Birtwistle, Knussen, Watkins, Woolrich, Holloway and Turnage.

In July 2007 he became the 10th Music Director of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra (NHSO), with whom he instituted a 'Composer in Residence' Scheme (Augusta Read Thomas, Christopher Theofanidis, Hannah Lash) and started a major Walton Project with concerts, lectures/talks and recordings on the Nimbus Label. With the NHSO he has received two ASCAP Awards (2011 & 2014) for Adventurous Programming and received critical acclaim for the Walton Project, with Gramophones Edward Greenfield nominating it for 'Record of the Year' (2010). In October 2014 two new recordings were released with the New Haven Symphony of William Walton and Augusta Read Thomas.

His commitment and dedication to the younger generation is epitomized through his teaching – creating a cello studio in one of the poorest areas of New Haven, building the NHSO's Education Dept, working with the State and Regional Youth Orchestras and teaching at the Yale School of Music. In May 2016 he visited Central China University for Conducting Master-classes and conducted the Hubei Symphony. He regularly records for both Nimbus and Lyrita Labels and guest conducts in the USA.

George Hua, *Piano*

Among many awards and distinctions in the Canadian Music Competition, George Hua is the first prize winner of the 2014 Canadian Chopin Competition. At the age of eleven, he made his orchestral debut performing Mozart piano concerto no.8 with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. Three years later, he performed Saint-Saëns' Carnival of the Animals with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Kent Nagano. George's sensitive and profound playing has brought him to renowned concert venues, such as the Koener Hall in Toronto, the Maison Symphonique Hall and the Wilfred-Pelletier Hall in Montreal as well as Carnegie Hall in New York. He has performed numerous times at the annual MSO Classical Spree Festival and at the Quebec Music Educators' Association Music Festival.



Born in Vancouver in 2000, George began his piano studies at the age of five and had already passed the grade 10 piano examination in China by the time he was nine. Upon his return to Canada in 2009, he continued his studies under Chen Li-Bénard, during which time he completed his grade 10 Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) piano examinations, receiving First Class Honours with Distinction. Since 2012, he had been studying with Suzanne Goyette at the Montreal Music Conservatory.

George is a senior in TD College, double majoring in Statistics & Data Science and Economics. He studied with Wei-Yi Yang at the Yale School of Music and as a BA/MM candidate, he currently studies with Melvin Chen. Outside of music, he enjoys running, board games, slow walks on campus and long meals with friends in the dining halls.

Of Our New Day Begun

Omar Thomas

Of Our New Day Begun was written to honor nine beautiful souls who lost their lives to a callous act of hatred and domestic terrorism on the evening of June 17, 2015 while worshipping in their beloved sanctuary, the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church (affectionately referred to as “Mother Emanuel”) in Charleston, South Carolina. My greatest challenge in creating this work was walking the line between reverence for the victims and their families, and honoring my strong, bitter feelings towards both the perpetrator and the segments of our society that continue to create people like him. I realized that the most powerful musical expression I could offer incorporated elements from both sides of that line - embracing my pain and anger while being moved by the displays of grace and forgiveness demonstrated by the victims’ families.

Historically, black Americans have, in great number, turned to the church to find refuge and grounding in the most trying of times. Thus, the musical themes and ideas for *Of Our New Day Begun* are rooted in the Black American church tradition. The piece is anchored by James and John Johnson’s time-honored song, *Lift Every Voice and Sing* (known endearingly as the “Negro National Anthem”), and peppered with blues harmonies and melodies. Singing, stomping, and clapping are also prominent features of this work, as they have always been a mainstay of black music traditions, and the inclusion of the tambourine in these sections is a direct nod to black worship services.

Of Our New Day Begun begins with a unison statement of a melodic cell from “Lift Every Voice....” before suddenly giving way to ghostly, bluesy chords in the horns and bassoons. This section moves to a dolorous and bitter dirge presentation of the anthem in irregularly shifting 12/8 and 6/8 meter, which grows in intensity as it offers fleeting glimmers of hope and relief answered by cries of blues-inspired licks. A maddening, ostinato-driven section representing a frustration and weariness that words can-

not, grows into a group singing of *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, fueled by the stomping and clapping reminiscent of the black church.

In the latter half of the piece the music turns hopeful, settling into 9/8 time and modulating up a step during its ascent to a glorious statement of the final lines of “Lift Every Voice....” in 4/4, honoring the powerful display of humanity set forth by the families of the victims. There is a long and emotional decrescendo that lands on a pensive and cathartic gospel-inspired hymnsong. Returning to 9/8 time, the piece comes to rest on a unison F that grows from a very distant hum to a thunderous roar, driven forward by march-like stomping to represent the ceaseless marching of black Americans towards equality.

The consortium assembled to create this work is led by Dr. Gary Schallert and the Western Kentucky University Wind Ensemble. The orchestral version of this piece was commissioned by the Colorado Symphony.

Omar Thomas

Piano Concerto No. 2

Sergei Rachmaninoff

The story surrounding the composition of Rachmaninoff's 2nd Piano Concerto has become almost as legendary as the work itself. When Rachmaninoff began work on the piece, he was suffering from a near total mental and physical collapse brought on by the failure of his First Symphony in 1897. He himself realized the difficulties of the Symphony during its final rehearsals and actually fled during the performance. The critics were devastating, and Rachmaninoff entered a period of deep depression. He shunned all companionship and rejected efforts to revive his interest in life. Finally, in 1900, he was persuaded by his friends to see a Dr. Dahl, a clinical psychologist in Moscow who had created quite a reputation through his unorthodox methods of treating nervous illnesses. For four months, Rachmaninoff saw Dr. Dahl every day and heard repeated the same formula: “You will start to write your Concerto ... You will compose with the greatest of ease ... The Concerto will be of excellent quality.” The treatment worked, and in three months, he had finished two movements of the Concerto. After a successful performance of these two movements at a charity concert, he finished the work and dedicated it to Dr. Dahl.

Rob Kapilow

Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier*

Richard Strauss

Richard Strauss's three-part opera *Der Rosenkavalier* (*The Knight of the Rose*) was written in 1911 to an original libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Set in 18th century Vienna, *Der Rosenkavalier* follows the escapades of the middle-aged Marschallin Marie Thérèse, whose tryst with the charming (but teenage) Octavian sets the scene for the opening curtain rise. Their affair is further complicated by the introduction of the boorish Baron Von Ochs and his intended fiancée, Sophie. In a rose-bearing ceremony, Octavian and Sophie fall in love, resulting in jealous plots, trickery, and even cross-dressing as characters pursue their hearts' desires. In a bittersweet conclusion, Marschallin relinquishes her own love and gives her blessing to Octavian and Sophie.

The Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier* was composed more than 30 years later, likely arranged by conductor Artur Rodziński in 1944. Like many other suites composed after original operas and ballets (Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* and Bizet's *Carmen*), the Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier* condenses an opera over three hours long into a twenty-minute orchestral performance. We're introduced to *Der Rosenkavalier* by a leaping horn and bassoon call, followed by lush, romantic phrases scattered across the orchestra. This chromatic and passionate frenzy escalates in fervor before ebbing back to a sense of calm. Strauss, however, retains the colorful and striking harmonic palette as beautiful melodies are passed between brass and winds. After stirring runs in the strings and a triumphant brass cadence, the oboist steals the show in a tender love scene, with occasional sparkling chords in the flutes, piccolo, celesta, harps, and violins. Suddenly, a storm arises in the strings, with winds in hot pursuit. Brass and low strings end this scene with a Mahlerian cadence. Out of the silence, the violins emerge with a cautious, even apprehensive waltz. In style of the Viennese Waltz, the dance has a comforting lilt, as we float on the waves of the Danube. After an interjection of unbridled romanticism, we return to a moment of reflection and beauty (with a solo from trumpet and a duet for violin and oboe). Finally, our waltz returns, but it is joyous and triumphant – love has prevailed!

Noah Lee

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About the Orchestra

The Yale Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1965 by a group of students who saw the growing potential for a large orchestral ensemble to thrive on campus. The YSO provides a means for students to perform orchestral music at the conservatory level while taking advantage of all that Yale, a liberal-arts institution, has to offer.

The YSO boasts an impressive number of alumni who have gone on to successful musical careers with: New York Philharmonic (Sharon Yamada, 1st violin), the Boston Symphony Orchestra (Haldan Martinson, principal 2nd violin, and Owen Young, cello), the Los Angeles Philharmonic (David Howard, clarinet), the San Francisco Symphony (the late William Bennett, oboe), Philadelphia Orchestra (Jonathan Beiler, violin), Toronto Symphony (Harry Sargous, oboe, ret.) and the Israel Philharmonic (Miriam Hartman, viola); as well as music director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Marin Alsop; National Public Radio commentator Miles Hoffman; composers Michael Gore, Robert Beaser, Conrad Cummings, Stephen Paul Hartke, Robert Kyr, and more.

Throughout its history the YSO has been committed to commissioning and performing new music. Notably, the YSO presented the European premiere of Leonard Bernstein's Mass in 1973, the world premiere of the definitive restoration of Charles Ives' Three Places in New England, the U.S. premiere of Debussy's Khamma, and the East Coast premiere of Benjamin Britten's The Building of the House.

The YSO programs orchestral works written by new and emerging composers, as well as lesser-known works by established and obscure composers. The full list of YSO premieres can be seen at <https://yso.yalecollege.yale.edu/give-yso/premieres>.

The YSO has performed with internationally recog-

nized soloists; including Yo-Yo Ma, Frederica von Stade, Emmanuel Ax, David Shifrin, Thomas Murray, and Idil Biret. Each year the YSO is proud to perform major solo concerti played by the student winners of the William Waite Concerto Competition.

The YSO has performed at New York City's Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center, and St. Patrick's Cathedral. In the past ten years, the YSO has toured domestically and internationally, including a 2010 tour of Turkey with acclaimed pianist Idil Biret. Ms. Biret rejoined the orchestra for a recording of Paul Hindemith's piano concerti, which were released in 2013 on the Naxos label.

Past tours have brought the orchestra to Portugal, Korea, Central Europe, Italy, and Brazil. The YSO completed its first tour of Russia in May of 2017. The full list of YSO tours can be seen at <https://yso.yalecollege.yale.edu/history/touring>.

The YSO is famous for its legendary Halloween Show, a student-directed and -produced silent movie, performed around midnight in full costume. Long a Yale tradition, the Halloween Show sells out Woolsey Hall days in advance, and the production details and storyline remain closely guarded secrets until the night of performance. Recent cameo film appearances include James Franco, Woody Allen, Alanis Morissette, Rosa DeLauro, Jodie Foster and Jimmy Kimmel.

The YSO music directors include Richmond Browne, John Mauceri, C. William Harwood, Robert Kapilow, Leif Bjaland, Alasdair Neale, David Stern, James Ross, James Sinclair, Shinik Hahm, George Rothman, and Toshiyuki Shimada. This year is William Boughton's third year as Director.

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