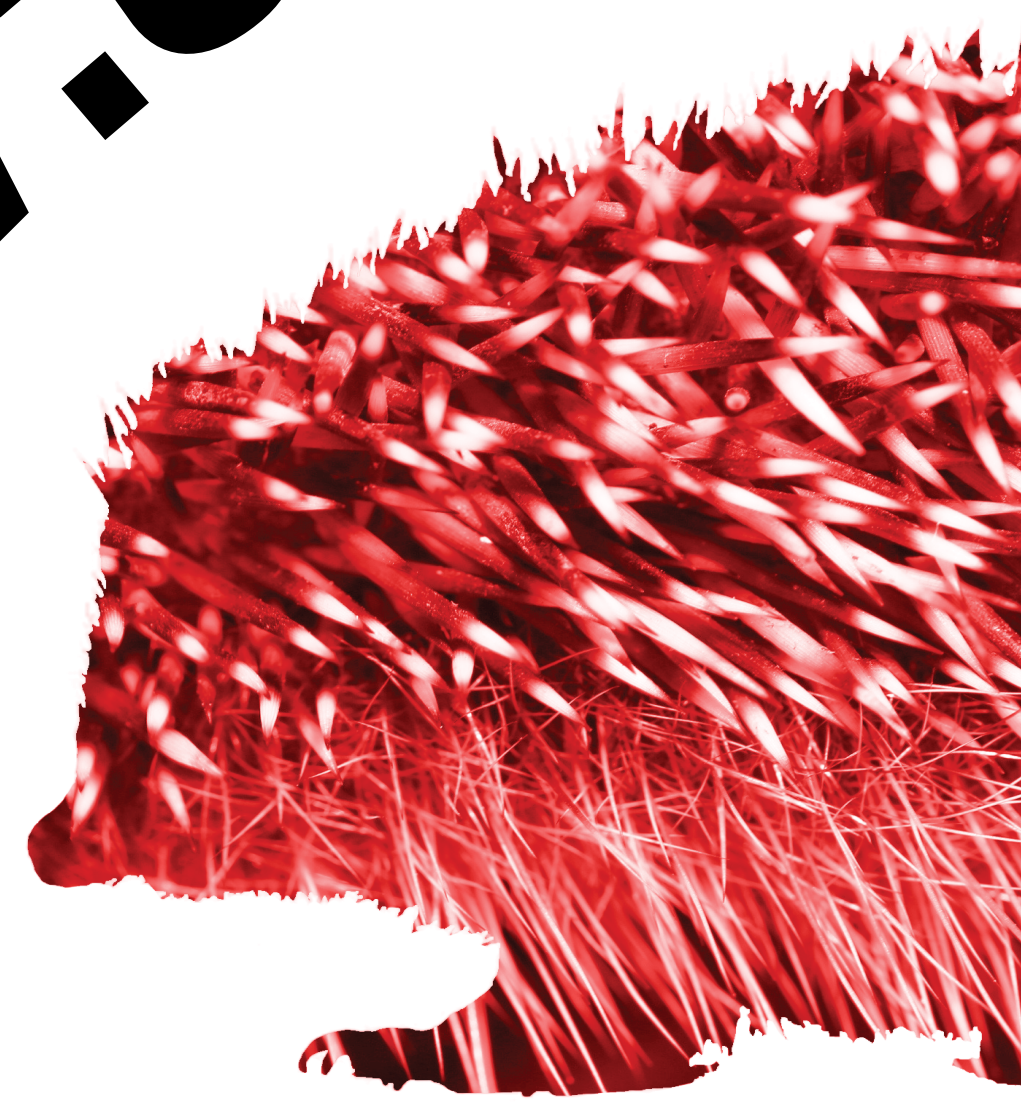


**ABRAHAM  
MONTGOMERY  
ORCHESTRA  
YALE SYMPHONY**

**SUBLIME, SUBLIME**

**MAR 7, 7:30 PM**



# Yale Symphony Orchestra

William Boughton, Music Director

## PROGRAM

### *Waltz from Four Black American Dances*

Carlos Simon

### *Sinfonia Concertante*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Tobias Liu, violin and Erin Nishi, viola

*winner of the 2024 William Waite Concerto Competition*

Allegro maestoso

Andante

Presto

## INTERMISSION

### *Symphony No. 4 in E minor, op. 98*

Johannes Brahms

Allegro non troppo

Andante moderato

Allegro giocoso

Allegro energico e passionato

*The 24/25 Woolsey Series is generously supported by the  
Daniel Feller '74 Yale Symphony Endowment Fund  
in Honor of John Mauceri (Music Director 1968-74).*

## 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.

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 commis-



sioning over 20 works from composers such 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 Jyväskylä 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.

## Tobias Liu, *Violin*

Tobias Liu is a violinist and junior at Yale University where he studies with Kyung Yu and majors in economics and molecular biology. In addition to soloing with the Yale Symphony Orchestra as a winner of the William Waite Concerto Competition, Tobias has been featured as a soloist with the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Georgia Philharmonic, the Alpharetta Symphony Orchestra, the DeKalb Symphony Orchestra, and the Westminster Chamber Orchestra. He is also a winner of the YoungArts National Competition in Violin.



As a chamber musician, Tobias' piano trio, the Sycamore Trio, won the first prize and the People's Choice prize at the WDAV's Young Chamber Musicians National Competition and the silver medal at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. As an orchestral musician, Tobias is currently principal second violinist of the Yale Symphony Orchestra. He has also served as concertmaster of the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra and the GMEA All-State Orchestra and as a member of the National Youth Orchestra of the United States. Tobias has performed in master classes with distinguished artists such as Joel Smirnoff, Hilary Hahn, Cho-Liang Lin, Karen Gomyo, Steven Copes, and the Emerson Quartet. He has spent summers participating in the Bowdoin and Orford International Music Festivals.

On campus, Tobias serves on the executive board of the Yale Symphony Orchestra, works as a research assistant for healthcare and economics projects, volunteers at a free clinic, and writes about music for the *Yale Daily News*. Off campus, he works part-time for a health policy consulting firm in Washington, D.C. and has studied abroad in Ecuador, Argentina, and Spain.

Tobias is a native of Johns Creek, Georgia, where he previously studied violin with Nadir Khashimov, Sonja Foster, and Keiko Furness and where he swam competitively for eleven years. Tobias is an avid Atlanta sports fan and enjoys reading, writing, and running.

## Erin Nishi, *Viola*

Erin Emi Nishi is a violinist and violist from Honolulu, Hawaii. She studies violin with Kyung Yu at Yale University, where she is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a concentration in Neuroscience. She has held concertmaster and principal positions with the Yale Symphony Orchestra,



Punahou Symphony, and Hawaii Youth Symphony, and has performed as a soloist with the Yale Symphony Orchestra, Hawaii Symphony Orchestra, Maui Chamber Orchestra, and the Ka-

muela Philharmonic. Notable achievements include winning the 2024 William Waite Concerto Competition and receiving first prizes in the Osaka International Competition and Nā Hōkū `Ōpio Young Stars Competition. Erin has participated in prominent summer festivals, including the Yellow Barn Young Artists Program, Bowdoin International Music Festival, Kinhaven Young Artists Seminar, and Domaine Forget International Festival. She has performed in masterclasses with renowned musicians including Sarah Chang, Hilary Hahn, Ray Chen, Augustin Hadelich, Chee-Yun Kim, Martin Beaver, Jeffrey Thayer, William Van der Sloot, Joel Smirnoff, and members of the Parker, Cavani, Calder, and Miro Quartets, among others. In her free time, Erin enjoys participating in Japanese tea ceremony, eating popcorn, and learning about sharks

## *Waltz*

### from *Four Black American Dances*

Carlos Simon

“My dad, he always gets on me. He wants me to be a preacher, but I always tell him, ‘Music is my pulpit. That’s where I preach,’” Carlos Simon once told the *Washington Post*.

In his “Four Black American Dances,” Simon is not exactly standing at a pulpit, per sé. But it’s certainly a lesson of sorts, an elaborately detailed yet compact discourse through the history of Black America. The fourteen-minute work is an action-packed commentary on the “centrality of dance as an expression of connection, ritual, celebration, and worship in Black culture” — a “gesture of reclamation,” as the *Boston Globe* put it.

Raised in a household in Atlanta where listening to anything except for gospel music was forbidden, Simon’s work is rooted in gospel music — Protestant music that traces its origins to Black spirituals and songs of enslaved people in America and the West Indies. In “Four Black American Dances,” Simon dives into the tension from which gospel music emerged from and explores the complex ways in which dance, history, and the Christian religion have braided together to shape the contours of Black American culture.

“Dance has always been a part of any culture. Particularly in Black American communities, dance is and has been the fabric of social gatherings. There have been hundreds, perhaps thousands of dances created over the span of American history that have originated from the social climate of American slavery, Reconstruction and Jim Crow. This piece is an orchestral study of the music that is associated with the Ring Shout, the Waltz, Tap Dance and the Holy Dance. All of these dances are but a mere representation of the wide range of cultural and social differences within the Black American communities,” he writes.

Throughout the season, the orchestra will perform each of the dances. This program will feature *Waltz*, a “gesture of reclamation” towards the appearance of debutante balls in Black social circles during the 1930s.

“Cotillion balls existed for “upper-class” families as they allowed aristocratic families to vie for better marriage prospects for their daughters. However, cotillion balls were segregated and expensive, and did not include Black Americans. Debutante balls finally appeared in Black social circles during the 1930s, in large part due to the efforts of Black sororities, fraternities, and growing number of affluent Black Americans. The waltz was the dance of choice in these environments,” Simon writes.

Tobias Liu '26

## *Sinfonia Concertante*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

In his poem, “Essay on Joy Beginning with Mozart’s *Sinfonia Concertante* in E-Flat Major,” Jon Davis writes:

“Imagine Mozart, in the warm haze of his gift, blurting “Melody is simple!” then sitting at the piano to improvise a dozen.”

Mozart’s gift for melody, as Davis imagines, is on full display in the *Sinfonia Concertante* — what writer Thomas May describes as “an extraordinary abundance of ideas and sonorities which pour out with a seeming effortlessness, like ripened fruit simply there to be plucked.” But the *Sinfonia Concertante* isn’t just Mozart at his melodic best: it stands apart in its symphonic grandeur and unsurpassed emotional depth, in its redefinition of the double concerto from a vehicle of virtuosity into one of drama and sensitive storytelling.

The *Sinfonia Concertante* features violin and viola as dual soloists in dialogue with the orchestra — it’s this equality among the three partners that creates the work’s dynamic sound world. Poet Patrick Mackie, in his book *Mozart in Motion*, portrays the viola part as a “reinterpretation [of] what soloistic music is meant to



be. Far from rising above the orchestra as solo violins tend to do, its colours glint or glare or swim from right within the heart of the sound. It is like watching sunlight work its way through rich clouds.”

It’s an apt description for the opening of the concerto: after a two-minute orchestral exposition that unfurls inventively like an overture, idea after idea flowering and flowing from one to the next, the soloists glide in together almost imperceptibly on sustained high pitches, gradually warming into the foreground in a miraculous moment of sublimity. The violin and the viola then dart back and forth in a thrilling dialogue of wit and competition with each other and the orchestra.

The second movement – a *tour de force* of operatic expression with an emotional depth speculated to be Mozart’s grief following the death of his mother the previous year – transforms the conversation into a heart-wrenching interplay. In its opening, you can almost hear the cries of grief from the solo violin and the corresponding words of consolation from the viola, and as the dialogue progresses, there is a tenderness and longing, an intimacy, between the two voices that seems to weave grief and solace together so seamlessly that, by the end, they become inseparable. For me, it’s one of the greatest movements in all of music.

Then, suddenly, we’re back in the world of dancing sunlight and, as May drew from Hesse’s ethereal *Immortals*, “laughter without an object... simply light and lucidity.” The third movement is pure joy, irrepressible by neither the “maestoso” of the first movement nor the tragedy of the second, and it springs forward, barely pausing to catch its breath before tumbling gracefully and merrily into a spirited conclusion. In the closing scene of Saint-Exupéry’s *The Little Prince*, the little prince tells the pilot before departing: “you, only you, will have stars that can laugh... it will be as if, in place of the stars, I had given you a great number of little bells that knew how to laugh.” The *finale* is these laughing stars captured – effervescent bursts of joy that shimmer and sparkle.

I love this piece, and Erin and I are beyond excited to share it with you. We hope you will enjoy it as much as we do.

# Symphony No. 4 in E minor

Johannes Brahms

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), German composer of the Romantic period, composed his fourth and final symphony in 1884. Somber and serious, yet rich and complex, Symphony No. 4 in E minor features four movements rich with melodic motifs, and drawing inspiration from sonata form, as well as the works of Beethoven, Bach, and other influences.

The first movement, *Allegro non troppo*, begins in E minor. The violins present the opening theme — a series of falling thirds when taken out of register. After some experimentation on the main melodic theme and additional motivic ideas, the woodwinds present a more rigid, yet forward-looking transition motif featuring quarter-note triplets. This leads into the secondary theme featuring longer notes, first played by the cellos. What follows is an interplay between and variation on the material presented in the exposition, climaxing at a *forte* dynamic, then receding back down to piano before the development. Eventually, a slower and more reflective version of the primary melody returns in the recapitulation. The secondary and triplet-based themes are also presented again, and the overall dynamic grows, culminating in a final, defiant statement in E minor, in a strong opening for the symphony.

The second movement, *Andante moderato*, begins more pensively, in a slower six-eight meter. The movement is oriented around the E Phrygian mode, displayed immediately by the opening horn statement with a flattened supertonic. This idea is then passed to the woodwinds, supported by *pizzicato* strings. Soon, *staccato* triplets lead into a lush secondary theme in B major presented by the cellos. The strings swell around this tonal center, until the violins announce the recapitulation with the primary theme once again. The energy increases, and the *staccato* triplets are reintroduced, followed by the secondary theme, this time in E major. The *coda* returns to the Phrygian ideas of the beginning, this time with a more lyrical and arpeggiated arrangement ending with a satisfying *pianissimo* E major chord.

The third movement, *Allegro giocoso*, is a short, six-

minute duple dance in C major, serving a similar role as a Beethoven *scherzo*. It begins triumphant and playful with the full orchestra, in stark contrast to the previous movements, and features the addition of the piccolo and triangle for a more light-hearted feel.

The fourth movement, *Allegro energico e passionato*, has arguably the most unique form of the four movements. The first eight measures present an important melody: a rising run up the minor scale featuring a raised fourth scale degree and a return to the tonic. This eight-measure motivic idea is repeated for a total of thirty variations, each also eight measures, culminating in a *finale*.

The genre of the fourth movement is that of a Bach *chaconne*, and the recurring eight-measure theme draws from Bach's Cantata No. 150. The final measures of the movement are tragic, relentless, intense, offering no sense of hope, ending with a loud, bold, searing E minor chord — a resolute and fitting final statement to round out Brahms' final symphony.

— Jacob Leshnower '26

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# Yale Symphony Orchestra



## 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), Vancouver Symphony (Henry Shapard, principal cellist), 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-heard 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, Brazil, and Russia. The YSO completed its first tour of Mexico in March of 2023. 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 seventh and final year as Director.

# YSO ENDOWMENT

As we embark upon the 24/25 Season of concerts – William Boughton’s final season as Director of the Orchestra – which includes five Woolsey Hall concerts, a concert tour to North Macedonia and Greece, a visit to the New York Philharmonic, chamber music concerts, community activities and much, much, more, we’re appealing for your support to assist in all these activities through the YSO Endowment:

## 1. Instrument Bank

The YSO has spent the past five years, earnestly building an instrument collection for the use of our members.

This allows students with financial need - principally those who borrowed a high school instrument



and would therefore be unable to take part in the YSO – to have access to a quality instrument in order to continue their musical growth. It helps us accommodate the ever-growing list of percussion requirements required by new composers, and offers members the opportunity to develop technique and a better understanding of the sound world of period instruments that baroque and classical composers had in mind.

*Fund Required: \$1 million  
(for the purchase and maintenance of the collection)*

## 2. International Touring

We strive to enable the YSO to undertake a concert tour every other year and support all members with adequate financial assistance.

*Fund Required: \$2.5 million*





### 3. Free Admission

We aim to make available free tickets to each YSO concert in Woolsey Hall for both the Yale and New Haven Communities.

*Fund Required: \$500,000*

### 4. Commissioning and Recording

As part of our musical mission to perform new music by American composers, it is our goal to commission one new work per year from an American composer and make a recording of American music, which supports and promotes American talent worldwide.

*Fund Required: \$500,000*

### 5. Masterclasses & Professionally-Led Sectional Rehearsals:

Yale has no undergraduate performance degree, yet it attracts many young musicians that want — and



who will — go into the profession. These students have decided that they'd like a University, rather than Conservatory, education. To create the ability to offer masterclasses from soloists, chamber and orchestral musicians would be beneficial to both the collective and individual development of the YSO.

*Fund Required: \$500,000*

*(which will provide 30 Sectional Rehearsal Coaching Sessions and 12 Masterclasses)*

To donate follow this link.

<https://yso.yalecollege.yale.edu/support-us>

Thank you for helping the YSO to thrive and grow.

The Yale Symphony Orchestra would like to thank the following for their support:

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