



# MSM WIND ENSEMBLE

**George Manahan** (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

**Lisa Kim** (MM '23), violin

**Seth Schultheis** (BM '22, MM '24), piano

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2022 | 7:30 PM  
GORDON K. AND HARRIET GREENFIELD HALL

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## PROGRAM

YUNFEI LI  
(b. 1992)

*Five Elements* (2021)

Metal

Wood

Water

Fire

Earth

DARIUS MILHAUD  
(1892–1974)

*La création du monde (The Creation of the World)*, Op. 81

## *Intermission*

ALBAN BERG  
(1885–1935)

Chamber Concerto

*Thema scherzoso con variazione*

*Adagio*

*Rondo ritmico con introduzione*

Students in this performance are being supported by the *Artur Balsam Memorial Scholarship*, the *International Advisory Board Scholarship*, the *Jim Peterscak Annual Scholarship*, the *Paul Price Percussion Endowed Scholarship*, the *Robert Mann Endowed Scholarship for Violin and Chamber Studies*, the *Sabian/Zildjian Memorial Scholarship*, and the *William Randolph Hearst Scholarship*.

# PROGRAM NOTES

## Yunfei Li

### *Five Elements*

The music of composer and violinist Yunfei Li is characterized by an exploration of new sounds on instruments and music software. She takes inspiration from the sounds of nature, converting them into musical language in her compositions. With a background that includes both Eastern and Western classical music, she is also inspired by various contemporary music styles and genres, including pop music, electroacoustic music, and film music, and has collaborated with film directors, writers, choreographers, and multimedia artists as a composer.

Her wind octet piece *Five Elements* (2021) was commissioned by Steven D. Davis and Anya Pogorelova and premiered by the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory Wind Symphony. This commission was made by grant funding from the UMKC Women's Council and the support of 42 consortium members across North America.

A resident composer of the Nomadic Soundsters in 2021–22, Yunfei won a composition prize in the MUSICACOUSTICA–Beijing International Electronic Music Composition Competition and received an award from the Denver International Electronic Music Composition Competition.

Yunfei Li is a doctoral candidate in composition at the University of Missouri–Kansas City, where she studies composition with Chen Yi, Zhou Long, Yotam Haber, and Paul Rudy. She graduated from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro with a Master of Music in Composition, where she studied with Mark Engbretson, Alejandro Rutty, and Lisa Bielawa. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in electronic music production at the Beijing Central Conservatory of Music.

—©Yunfei Li

## Darius Milhaud

### *La création du monde, Op. 81*

Often considered a folklorist, Milhaud succeeded in achieving a synthesis between popular culture and high art. Not only did he draw extensively on his native Provençal culture for his compositions, but he assimilated North and South American music—exemplified by *Le boeuf sur le toit* (*The Ox on the Roof*), *Kentuckiana*, *Carnaval à la Nouvelle-Orléans*, *Le bal martiniquais* (*The Martinique Ball*), and *La création du monde* (*The Creation of the World*). He was

particularly attracted by jazz, as were many composers just after World War I. The instrumentation, the rhythms, and the melodies all appealed to him; further, because of his Jewish heritage, he identified with jazz, a music of another dispossessed and persecuted race.

Milhaud had first been exposed to jazz when he heard an American band playing in London. In 1922 he arrived in New York for a series of U.S. engagements and absorbed as much jazz as he could, from the Leo Reisman band and Paul Whiteman orchestra to the bands in Harlem clubs. Back in Paris he was asked to create a ballet for Swedish producer Rolf de Maré, in collaboration with writer Blaise Cendrars, scene designer Fernand Léger, and choreographer Jean Börlin.

Two years before, Cendrars had published an anthology of black folklore, which included *Cosmogonic Legends*. From this section he fashioned the scenario of the ballet, summarized by Claude Rostand as follows:

Heaven and earth have just separated. Nzamé, Mébère and N’Kwa, the three creation deities, stand in a dramatic setting high in the mountains. They perform magic incantations, then depart. The Great Fetishes appear and create the insects and the apes. The birds of rain pass across the stage. The animals begin to form a circle which slowly turns into a dance around the inner group of birth-giving beings crowded into the middle of the scene. At each turn a new creature rushes out from the center, mingling with the dance, which he leads in his turn. The Nguils, the Imprecators, the Sorcerers, the Hypnotists, the Vampyr and the Fetishists, male and female, join in the dance, which builds up to the point of frenzy. The deities disappear at the sound of a great tam-tam. The circle stops and opens. A monstrous leg appears, backs stretch, a hairy head is seen, two arms reach forth, two breasts stand out: it is Man, it is Woman—Sékoumé and Mbongwé. They stand facing each other. The dance begins again, very calm. The couple is lost in a kiss, transported as if by a wave. Moon and stars begin to glow: it is the springtime of human existence.

Léger’s scenery and costumes were based on primitive African art. Milhaud found here the perfect chance to employ the jazz idioms that he had been assimilating, in conjunction with traditional “art music” techniques, such as the fugue that begins after the “overture” as the curtain rises. *La création du monde* is scored in the style of jazz bands as an ensemble of soloists, including two flutes, oboe, two clarinets, bassoon, horn, two trumpets, trombone, piano, a large

battery of percussion, two solo violins, saxophone (taking the viola's traditional place), cello, and bass.

*La création du monde* was premiered in Paris by the Ballet Suédois on October 25, 1923. Milhaud's music was criticized as frivolous and more suited to the popular dance hall than the ballet theater or concert hall, but, as Milhaud wrote in his autobiography, *Notes without Music*: "Ten years later the selfsame critics were discussing the philosophy of jazz and learnedly demonstrating that *La création* was the best of my works."

—©Jane Vial Jaffe

## **Alban Berg** ***Chamber Concerto***

Between 1923 and 1925 Berg composed his Chamber Concerto for piano, violin, and thirteen winds for the fiftieth birthday of his teacher, Arnold Schoenberg. Berg had long wanted to compose a piano concerto or a concerto with multiple soloists, and decided on fifteen players in homage to his teacher's famous Chamber Symphony. Berg honored his teacher further with a kind of musical encryption, which he described in a long "open letter" to Schoenberg on February 9, 1925. The main musical motto, Berg wrote, uses the notes equivalent to letters from an important trio of names (shown in capital letters):

Arnold Schoenberg (in German S [Es] is E-flat, B is B-flat, and H is B-natural)

Anton Webern (Schoenberg's other famous pupil and Berg's friend)

Alban Berg

Berg also hinted at the Chamber Concerto's "secret program," saying, "If it were known exactly what I have smuggled in the way of human-spiritual references into these three movements of friendship, love, and world, the adherents of program music (if there should be any left) would be delighted." Uncovering these secrets long after Berg's death—that is, when his private papers became available with the death of his widow Helene in 1976—Berg aficionados have indeed delighted in discovering further manifestations of his well-known fascination with numerology, codes, and palindromes involving secret stories of his inner circle. Given the ups and downs of Berg's complicated relationship with Schoenberg it is not surprising that he kept many of the details to himself.

To begin with public knowledge, the motto "*Aller guten Dinge*" that heads the piece refers to the proverb "All good things come in threes." In addition to the

three encrypted names, he notes that there are three movements merged into one and three performing forces (“keyboard, string, and wind”), which he combines in three “distinctive sound groups”: Movement 1, piano and wind ensemble; Movement 2, violin and wind ensemble; and Movement 3, piano, violin, and wind ensemble. Further, the number of measures in each movement is divisible by three, and the forms of the movements relate to the number three. He joked in the letter about making this known, saying, “I realize . . . my reputation as a mathematician will grow in proportion to the square of the distance by which my reputation as a composer sinks.”

The first movement combines variation form (six sections) with features of sonata form (three sections). Following the motto of the three names (Schoenberg = piano, Webern = violin, Berg = horn), the wind ensemble presents the main theme (30 measures), which Berg also labels “exposition.” The piano elaborates the theme as Variation 1, much like it would in a concerto sonata-form exposition. Variations 2 through 4—also labeled “development”—consist of the retrograde, inversion, and retrograde inversion of his material, and Variation 5 acts as a modified reprise with coda.

But what Berg also smuggled into these variations were portraits of other members of Schoenberg’s circle, the “friendship” aspect of the Concerto that he mentioned in the letter. His sketches show that Variation 1 represents pianist Edward Steuermann, Variation 2 violinist Rudolf Kolisch, Variation 3 theorist Josef Polnauer, Variation 4 writer on music Erwin Stein, and Variation 5 “the others who follow after, want to overtake, etc.” All had been students of Schoenberg and were active in Schoenberg’s Society for Private Musical Performances—in fact Polnauer, whose aggressiveness is reflected in Variation 3, was the “bouncer” who removed hecklers from the audience.

The slow middle movement was shown by Brenda Dolan in 1989 to represent Schoenberg’s wife Mathilde—the motive A-H-D-E is encrypted here. Berg apparently portrayed the breakdown of their marriage following her affair with painter Richard Gerstl as well as her return to Schoenberg and her “spiritual death” after Gerstl’s suicide. “Twelve strokes,” a designation in Berg’s sketches and heard deep in the piano part—the only notes it plays in this movement—suggests the clock chiming noon (not midnight as Dolan states) in *Pelleas and Melisande*. Berg had written a lengthy analysis of Schoenberg’s tone poem on Maeterlinck’s play, and the chiming refers to the moment Melisande loses the wedding ring given to her by her jealous husband.

More recently it has been suggested that the Adagio makes reference to another of Mathilde's liaisons, bass singer Hugo Breuer, and even to a possible affair Berg himself had with Schoenberg's "man-mad" wife. Further, Berg may also have alluded to Balzac's novel *Séraphita*, which he and Schoenberg both admired and which has a more hopeful look at love transcending human selfishness and ignorance.

Outwardly the Adagio is based on a series of twelve-tone themes—not yet treated as twelve-note rows—that are carefully structured in two halves. The first half is in three-part form, in which the third part is an inversion of the first, and the second half consists of the first half played in reverse (retrograde). This "turning point" was so important to Berg that he insisted this section always be printed on opposite pages for visual emphasis. We marvel that despite so many structural constraints, Berg produced a movement of such poetry.

The finale, *Rondo ritmico con Introduzione*, which corresponds to "world" in Berg's symbolic "friendship, love, world" trinity, is an exceptional compositional achievement. He combines elements of the first two movements, arriving at twice the number of measures—in three sections, of course. The piano and violin, playing together for the first time, launch the movement with a cadenza in which the violin's repeated notes introduce the first of the movement's three all-important rhythms mentioned in the letter.

The beginning of the "*rondo ritmico*" proper, which also corresponds to the main theme in a sonata-form exposition, presents the second of the three rhythms (called the "main rhythm" in the letter). The rondo's first episode, corresponding to the second theme in a sonata form, presents his third rhythm ("subsidiary rhythm"). Berg lays his rhythms under pitch material from the first two movements—but it is not the pitch material that he "develops" and "recapitulates," rather it is his three rhythms. Using rhythm to determine form was a radical departure from 18th- and 19th-century pitch-oriented practice, and from this point on all of Berg's works contain "secret" programs that give rise to or accommodate his abstract formal structures.

With Steuermann at the piano, Kolisch on the violin, and Hermann Scherchen conducting, the Chamber Concerto premiered in Berlin on March 27, 1927. Berg was dissatisfied with that performance but much happier with the Vienna premiere later that month with the same soloists led by Webern.

—©Jane Vial Jaffe

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## VIOLIN 1

**Yihan Zhu,**  
concertmaster  
*Shanghai, China*

**Eugene Liu**  
*Clarksville, Maryland*

## CELLO

**Clara Cho,** principal  
*Ulsan, South Korea*

## DOUBLE BASS

**Mark Lillie,** principal  
*Boulder, Colorado*

## FLUTE

**Kamilla Dancsa**<sup>†</sup>  
*Baja, Hungary*

**Nikolas Rodriguez** <sup>^</sup>  
*Bogota, Colombia*

**Blue Shelton**  
*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

## OBOE

**Samuel Kunde** <sup>^</sup>  
*Colonial Heights, Virginia*

**Yelazat**  
**Azhabagambetov**<sup>†</sup>  
*Karagandy, Kazakhstan*

**Sebastian Gonzales** <sup>^</sup>  
*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

## BRASS AND WIND PRINCIPALS

<sup>^</sup>LI *Five Elements*

<sup>^</sup>MILHAUD *La création du monde*

<sup>†</sup>BERG *Chamber Concerto*

## CLARINET

**Jue Mei** <sup>^</sup>  
*Lanzhou, China*

**Jiale Wang** <sup>^</sup>  
*New York, New York*

**Gabriel Henkin**<sup>†</sup>  
*Virginia Beach, Virginia*

**Thomas Shermulis**  
*Tinley Park, Illinois*

## BASSOON

**Devin Cohen** <sup>^</sup>  
*Jersey City, New Jersey*

**Gloria Sun** <sup>^</sup>  
*Daqing, China*

**Kennedy Plains**<sup>†</sup>  
*Wylie, Texas*

## HORN

**Constance Mulford**<sup>†</sup>  
*Setauket, New York*

**Scout Kirkham** <sup>^</sup>  
*Springfield, Virginia*

**Keegan McCardell** <sup>^</sup>  
*Ellicott City, Maryland*

## TRUMPET

**Kyle Nix** <sup>^</sup>  
*Pontotoc, Mississippi*

**Nathan McKinstry**  
*State College, Pennsylvania*

**Allison Jenkins**<sup>†</sup>  
*New York, New York*

## TROMBONE

**Jude Morris**<sup>†</sup>  
*Frisco, Texas*

## TIMPANI

**William Chinn,**  
principal  
*Irvine, California*

**Hwaneek Pak**  
*Columbia, Maryland*

## PERCUSSION

**Liam McDonald,**  
principal  
*Seaford, New York*

**Gabriel Levy**  
*Toronto, Ontario*

**Glenn Choe**  
*Cedar Park, Texas*

**Jay Walton**  
*East Lansing, Michigan*

**Owen Bloomfield**  
*Clifton Grove, Australia*

**Josh Conklin**  
*Basking Ridge, New Jersey*

## KEYBOARD

**Grace Han**

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **George Manahan** (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

George Manahan is in his 12th season as Director of Orchestral Activities at Manhattan School of Music, as well as Music Director Emeritus of the American Composers Orchestra. He served as Music Director of the New York City Opera for 14 seasons and was hailed for his leadership of the orchestra. He was also Music Director of the Richmond Symphony (VA) for 12 seasons. Recipient of Columbia University's Ditson Conductor's Award, Mr. Manahan was also honored by the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) for his "career-long advocacy for American composers and the music of our time." His Carnegie Hall performance of Samuel Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* was hailed by audiences and critics alike. "The fervent and sensitive performance that Mr. Manahan presided over made the best case for this opera that I have ever encountered," said the *New York Times*.

Mr. Manahan's guest appearances include the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Atlanta, San Francisco, Hollywood Bowl, and New Jersey, where he served as acting Music Director for four seasons. He has been a regular guest with the Curtis Institute and the Aspen Music Festival and has appeared with the opera companies of Seattle, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Chicago, Santa Fe, Paris, Sydney, Bologna, St. Louis, the Bergen Festival (Norway), and the Casals Festival (Puerto Rico). His many appearances on television include productions of *La bohème*, *Lizzie Borden*, and *Tosca* on PBS. The Live from Lincoln Center telecast of New York City Opera's production of *Madama Butterfly*, under his direction, won a 2007 Emmy Award.

George Manahan's wide-ranging recording activities include the premiere recording of Steve Reich's *Tebillim* for ECM; recordings of Edward Thomas's *Desire Under the Elms*, which was nominated for a Grammy; Joe Jackson's *Will Power*; and Tobias Picker's *Emmeline*. He has conducted numerous world premieres, including Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, David Lang's *Modern Painters*, Hans Werner Henze's *The English Cat*, Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*, and Terence Blanchard's *Champion*.

He received his formal musical training at Manhattan School of Music, studying conducting with Anton Coppola and George Schick, and was appointed to the faculty of the school upon his graduation, at which time the Juilliard School

awarded him a fellowship as Assistant Conductor with the American Opera Center. Mr. Manahan was chosen as the Exxon Arts Endowment Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony the same year he made his opera debut with the Santa Fe Opera, conducting the American premiere of Arnold Schoenberg's *Von Heute auf Morgen*.

## **Seth Schultheis** (BM '22, MM '24), piano

Pianist Seth Schultheis, currently pursuing his Master of Music degree at Manhattan School of Music with Dr. Solomon Mikowsky, is developing a professional career as a performing artist. He has performed as a soloist throughout the United States and Europe in venues such as Teatro Cajasol in Seville, Spain; Ely Cathedral in England; the Mendelssohnhaus in Leipzig, Germany; Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in New York; and the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C. In 2021, he traveled through Spain and the Netherlands performing as a soloist and duo partner with violinist Carlos Martinez. He has also concertized with various orchestras, including the New York Concerti Sinfonietta, New York Session Symphony, Londontowne Symphony Orchestra, and Manhattan School of Music Philharmonic Orchestra, performing concerti by Brahms, Rachmaninoff, and Prokofiev.

Awarded the grand prize in the Osaka International Music Competition in Osaka, Japan, he has also received the top prize in several national and international competitions, including the Five Towns Piano Competition, Steinway Piano Competition in Washington, D.C., 31st International Young Artists Competition, in which he also won the Best Chinese Piece award, Baltimore International Piano Festival Competition, and International Grande Music Competition. Most recently, he received fourth prize and Best Commissioned Piece at the New York International Piano Competition.

Seth Schultheis has participated and performed in summer music festivals such as the Askenasi/Kirschbaum Chamber Seminar at the Heifetz Institute of Music; EuroArts Music Festival and Academy in Halle, Germany; International Academy of Music in Castelnuovo di Garfagnana, Italy; and the Summit Music Festival and Baltimore International Piano Festival in the U.S. He has also played for world-class musicians such as Leon Fleisher, John O'Connor, Arnaldo Cohen, Marina Lomazov, and Simone Dinnerstein. He completed his Bachelor of Music degree with the late Phillip Kawin and Dr. Solomon Mikowsky at Manhattan School of Music.

## **Lisa Kim** (MM '23), violin

Violinist Lisa Jihyeon Kim, from the Republic of Korea, began her musical studies at age 7. After winning many of her local music competitions, she made her solo debut with distinguished conductor Maestro Choi of the Wonju Philharmonic at the age of 14 playing Wieniawski's Violin Concerto No 2. She received top prizes at the Strad Competition, Odin International Competition, Segye Ilbo Competition, and Seoul Virtuosi Competition.

She went on to receive her Bachelor of Music degree in violin performance from Seoul National University in 2017, serving as a concertmaster of the SNU Philharmonic as an undergraduate. In September 2021, she began her studies under Pinchas Zukerman and Patinka Kopec at Manhattan School of Music. Throughout her career, Lisa has participated in festivals, including Music in PyeongChang, and she has taken master classes with Clara Jumi Kang, the Modigliani Quartet, and the Esme Quartet. She has also performed with the Korean Symphony Orchestra, Bucheon Philharmonic, One Korean Symphony Orchestra with Maestro MyungWhun Chung, Wonju Philharmonic, Seoul Youth Symphony Orchestra, and the Seoul Arts High School concert with Nanse Gum. In addition to performing as a soloist, Lisa is an active member of the Dyllis String Quartet. She won the Kumho Young Chamber Concert audition in 2021 and is currently preparing with the Dyllis String Quartet for the International Mozart Competition Salzburg in February of 2023.