

M Manhattan
School of Music

ORCHESTRAL PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

OPUS130

David Chan, Conductor

Head of the Orchestral Performance Program

Arthur Li, piano

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2023 | 7:30 PM
NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL



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ORCHESTRAL PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

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PROGRAM

CARLOS SIMON
(b. 1986)

Fate Now Conquers

ALFRED SCHNITTKE
(1934–1998)

Concerto for Piano and Strings

Intermission

FELIX MENDELSSOHN
(1809–1847)

Symphony No. 4 in A Major, Op. 90 (“Italian”)

Allegro vivace

Andante con moto

Con moto moderato

Saltarello. Presto

OPUS130

David Chan, Conductor

Arthur Li, piano

VIOLIN 1

Jihyeon Kim,
concertmaster
New York, New York

Eugenia Cho
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Sandra Bouissou
Palo Alto, California

Minjoo Moon
Gwangju, South Korea

Hana Mundiya
New York, New York

Jihyun Baik
Gwacheon, South Korea

Xuan Yao
Changsha, China

Corinne Au
Short Hills, New Jersey

Christophe Koenig
East Aurora, New York

Yen-Chih Lin
Taichung City, Taiwan

Alina Hernandez
Temecula, California

Yeonsoo Jung
Queens, New York

VIOLIN 2

Coco Sun, principal
New York, New York

Haegge Chung
New York, New York

Jeonghyun Park
Seoul, South Korea

Andy Caveda
Miami, Florida

Hao-Ning Hsu
Taiwan, Taiwan

Nini Giorgadze
Kutaisi, Georgia

Yulin Zhou
Guangzhou, China

Javed Wong
Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Po Hsuan Chiang
New Taipei City, Taiwan

Naru Watanabe
Ube, Japan

Hao Yuan
Hamburg, Germany

Mengzhe Zhao
Lanzhou, China

VIOLA

Kunbo Xu, principal
Changsha, China

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New York, New York

Martin Rojas
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Owne Xayboury
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Kaohsiung City, Taiwan

Ella Bukszpan
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Ryan O'Shea
West Islip, New York

Soolim Shin
Goyang, South Korea

CELLO

Jessamyn Fry, principal
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Jiho Seo
Yongsan, South Korea

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San Ramon, California

Alex Lavine
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Chase Park

*Englewood Cliffs,
New Jersey*

Zoe Hardel

Yarmouth, Maine

Rahel Lulseged

Richardson, Texas

Audrey Jellett

Kerrville, Texas

DOUBLE BASS**Parry Leong**, principal

McKinney, Texas

Bakari Williams

Duncanville, Texas

Antonio Suarez

Yonkers, New York

Jielin Li

Xiamen, China

FLUTE**Kyrese Washington**[†]

Raleigh, North Carolina

Hyewon Jeong^{*}

Seoul, South Korea

OBOE**Ellen Gruber**[†]

Cortlandt Manor, New York

Zihao Zhang

Beijing, China

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* SIMON

Fate Now Conquers

† MENDELSSOHN

Symphony No. 4 in A Major, Op. 90 (“Italian”)

PROGRAM NOTES

Fate Now Conquers

Carlos Simon

Currently composer-in-residence for the Kennedy Center, Carlos Simon frequently writes for the National Symphony Orchestra and Washington National Opera, and his 2022–23 season saw premieres with the Boston and Detroit Symphony Orchestras, Brooklyn Art Song Society, and Minnesota Orchestra, the last of these a large-scale tribute to George Floyd and the ongoing movement for racial justice. Simon’s latest album, *Requiem for the Enslaved* (Decca, 2022), was nominated for a 2023 Grammy for Best Contemporary Classical Composition. His talents as a composer and performer have been sought by myriad organizations and artists and fascinated audiences nationwide.

Simon works in a wide variety of genres, drawing influence from his youthful experience as a piano player and gospel songwriter at his father’s small church in Atlanta, as a jazz keyboardist and arranger, as a self-confessed “tech geek,” and as someone trained in classical techniques and styles as well as film scoring. After earning his undergraduate degree at Morehouse College and a Master’s degree at Georgia State University, he earned his doctorate at the University of Michigan as a student of Michael Daugherty and Evan Chambers. He also studied at the Hollywood Music Workshop in Baden, Austria, and at New York University’s Film Scoring Summer Workshop.

As music director and keyboardist for Grammy winner Jennifer Holliday, Simon has performed with the Boston Pops and the Jackson and St. Louis Symphonies and has toured internationally with Grammy-nominated soul artist Angie Stone. He joined the faculty of Georgetown University in 2019, having also taught at Spelman and Morehouse Colleges.

Simon composed *Fate Now Conquers* in 2020 for the Philadelphia Orchestra’s BeethovenNOW series, which showcases new works inspired by and performed alongside Beethoven’s symphonies. The piece was premiered March 26 that year conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin. The composer writes:

This piece was inspired by a journal entry from Ludwig van Beethoven’s notebook written in 1815: “Iliad. The Twenty-Second Book: But Fate now conquers; I am hers; and yet not she shall share in my renown; that life is left to every noble spirit. And that some great deed shall beget that all lives shall inherit.”

Using the beautifully fluid harmonic structure of the second movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, I have composed musical gestures that are representative of the unpredictable ways of fate. Jolting stabs, coupled with an agitated groove with every persona. Frenzied arpeggios in the strings that morph into an ambiguous cloud of free-flowing running passages depicts the uncertainty of life that hovers over us.

We know that Beethoven strived to overcome many obstacles in his life and documented his aspirations to prevail, despite his ailments. Whatever the specific reason for including this particularly profound passage from the *Iliad*, in the end, it seems that Beethoven relinquished to fate. Fate now conquers.

Concerto for Piano and Strings

Alfred Schnittke

Schnittke's music combines Russian, German, and Jewish traits, which contribute to its widespread appeal. He wrote of his heritage in 1984, "I was born on November 24, 1934, in Engels on the Volga, in the Saratov province. I have my German name from my parents; my father, a Jew born in Frankfurt-am-Main, came to the Soviet Union in 1926 with his parents—who were, however, of Russian origin—and there married a German woman born in Russia." After piano studies in Vienna (1946–48), he studied conducting at the Moscow Special Music School (1949–53) and composition at the Moscow Conservatory (1953–58), where his teachers Nikolai Rakov and Evgeni Golubev were relatively conservative.

Schnittke went on to teach at the Moscow Conservatory for a decade (1962–72), then earned his living primarily from his compositions, including several ballets, over sixty film scores, concertos, chamber works, choral works, songs, and piano pieces. He also traveled extensively, served as lecturer at the Vienna Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, and in 1981 was elected to the West German Akademie der Künste.

Though influenced in his early works by Shostakovich, Schnittke soon experimented with the latest developments in Western music. Eventually finding serialism too limiting, he began to combine free tonality with strict serialism to arrive at what he considered a reinstatement of certain conditions of music history on a new level—"perhaps the opposition of two styles can be experienced in a similar way to the interaction of two themes in a sonata form."

Schnittke composed the Concerto for Piano and Strings in 1979, dedicating it to Vladimir Krainev, a winner of the 1970 Tchaikovsky Competition, who gave the premiere with the Leningrad Philharmonic conducted by Alexander Dimitrijevic on December 12, 1979. Schnittke described his concept for the work in conversation with Alexander Ivashkin:

I found the desired somnambulistic security in the approach to triteness in form and dynamics—and in the immediate avoidance of the same, . . . where everything—unable to create the balance between “sunshine” and “storm clouds”—shatters finally into a thousand pieces. The Coda consists of dream-like soft recollections of all that came before. Only at the end does a new uncertainty arise—maybe not without hope?

The Concerto’s unusual one-movement form results from its programmatic concept. This is not a strict theme-and-variations form with numbered variations but a free form in which the opening motives provide material for the work, and the theme itself does not appear until the end.

The piano introduces soft questioning motives followed by a recitation based on one repeated tone in imitation of Russian Orthodox chant. One might identify nine variations that follow, the first beginning with the hushed, sustained entry of the strings while the piano plays repeating patterns, a common Schnittke device. The two entities eventually come together and climax with the orchestra playing a chorale based on the opening recitation and the piano imitating great bells—a symbolic gesture of Russia’s greatness with many nineteenth-century composers but which here may point to the Communist oppression of religion in the Soviet Union.

A second variation returns to a slower tempo with the piano playing nocturne-like figuration while the strings glissando between pitches and accumulate dissonance. The rhythmic, driven third variation culminates in the chorale sounding without dissonance, the fourth shows Schnittke’s fondness for jazz, and the fifth places a waltz at the center of the work—one that that comes to dramatic conclusion.

Following a pause, the sixth variation is a piano cadenza, which begins like the opening recitation and eventually accumulates sound in a kind of additive layered crescendo. The seventh variation reintroduces bell-like sounds in the piano with clashing orchestral interjections. The eighth variation again features the chorale but turns to cacophony, replete with the pianist playing clusters with the palm. A luminous A–major moment opens the ninth variation, which finally presents the main theme, recognizable from previous elements. The opening returns, and the piece ends in an unresolved haze.

Symphony No. 4 in A Major, Op. 90 (“Italian”) Felix Mendelssohn

While on an extended visit to Italy in 1830, Mendelssohn wrote home to his family that he was making rapid progress on a symphony, which he already referred to as “the Italian.” “It will be the jolliest piece I have so far written, especially the last movement. I have not yet decided on the adagio and I think I shall wait until I get to Naples.” He was concurrently working on his Scottish Symphony, which together with other distractions kept him from returning to the Italian until spurred on by a commission from the London Philharmonic Society in November 1832.

Mendelssohn completed the work in time for the Society’s scheduled premiere on May 13, 1833, in London’s famed Hanover Square Rooms, where Haydn’s symphonies had met with such success forty years earlier. Not only did Mendelssohn conduct his new Symphony, but he performed the solo part of Mozart’s D minor Piano Concerto. His playing and his new work met with enthusiastic approval from the audience, which included the delighted violin virtuoso Paganini. Mendelssohn himself, however, had reservations about the Symphony and began revising it. He died having never performed it again nor publishing it, still intending further alterations. Commentators have wondered ever since what he could have possibly objected to in this masterpiece.

The inspired opening, with its exuberant main theme set against fast, repeated wind chords, launches a traditional sonata form. The standard framework, however, contains a wealth of ingenuities, such as the little closing theme that leads to the repeat of the exposition and a decisive new theme, treated fugally in the development. Mendelssohn cleverly includes the “fugue” theme in the second theme group in the recapitulation, and his coda promotes the little closing theme from the exposition.

Tradition has it that the main theme of the second movement recalls a religious procession Mendelssohn had seen in Naples. But, as biographer Eric Werner suggested in the 1960s, Mendelssohn may have been paying tribute, consciously or unconsciously, to his former teacher—the theme resembles Carl Zelter’s song “Es war ein König in Thule” (There was a king in Thule). A striking effect is created at the repetition of the melody by the scoring for violins and flutes, which the distinguished music scholar Donald Francis Tovey called “one of the most delightful tours de force in all modern orchestration.”

Mendelssohn chose the grace of a minuet rather than the bustle or wit of a scherzo for his third movement. The trio features the horns and bassoons in a reduced texture typical of trios in Classic period minuets. Here they evoke a fairy-tale world so often associated with Mendelssohn.

The last movement of Mendelssohn's "jolliest piece" makes an exhilarating conclusion to the Symphony by presenting a *saltarello*, an Italian leaping dance, followed by a theme featuring the running eighth notes of a *tarantella*. But the most staggering notion behind the movement is that Mendelssohn chose the tonic *minor* key for his merriment, ending his A major Symphony in the key of A minor. Thus the Italian Symphony constitutes one of the great rarities in music: a work that begins in major but ends in minor—and victoriously at that.

—Program notes ©Jane Vial Jaffe

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

David Chan, Conductor

Known as one of the most accomplished violinists of his generation, David Chan, Head of Manhattan School of Music's Orchestral Performance Program, is also quickly making a name for himself as an elegant conductor of unusual interpretive depth. *New York Classical Review* wrote of a March 2019 performance of Mozart's Symphony No. 40 that "It sounded like a kinder, gentler Toscanini was running the show." Currently in his 24th season as concertmaster of New York's Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, he has also recently served as Music Director of the APEX Ensemble, with which he earned high praise for innovative and adventurous programming, and as Music Director of Camerata Notturna, one of New York City's foremost chamber orchestras. As Artistic Partner of Mainly Mozart's Festival of Orchestras, he has conducted the organization's famed All-Star Orchestra, as well as an entire festival combining musicians of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the San Francisco Symphony, and another series bringing together members of the MET Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra.

Increasingly in demand on the podium, Chan has had engagements in recent seasons with Belgium's l'Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège, the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, and l'Orchestre Dijon Bourgogne in France; the Grant Park and Classical Tahoe summer festivals; the Juilliard Orchestra in New York City; the Apollo Orchestra in Washington, D.C.; and at Musique et Vin au Clos Vougeot, where the festival orchestra comprises musicians from the Metropolitan Opera, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic, and all of the top orchestras in Paris. As a soloist, he has appeared under the baton of such conductors as James Levine and Fabio Luisi, with orchestras including the MET Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Diego Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan, and Moscow State Symphony. He is also a dedicated chamber musician who performs regularly in the New York area and at all the leading summer festivals.

In addition to his concert appearances, Chan is active as an entrepreneur and creative director. In 2008, combining his interest in wine with his passion for music, he cofounded the Musique et Vin au Clos Vougeot festival in the Burgundy region of France. During his 13 seasons as artistic director of the festival, which pairs wine tastings with music, he oversaw its growth from a small, intimate gathering to a destination event attracting many of the biggest names in classical

music, including Yo-Yo Ma, Joyce DiDonato, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Matthew Polenzani, Emmanuel Pahud, Menahem Pressler, Cho-Liang Lin, Gary Hoffman, Marlis Petersen, and Ildar Abdrazakov.

A native of San Diego, Chan began his musical education at the age of four. After winning prizes at the Tchaikovsky and Indianapolis international violin competitions, he made his New York debut in 1995 at Avery Fisher Hall, and his Carnegie Hall debut in 2003, performing the Brahms Double Concerto with the MET Orchestra. A student of Dorothy DeLay, Hyo Kang, and Michael Tseitlin, he received his Bachelor's degree from Harvard University and his Master's degree from the Juilliard School. Appointed Head of MSM's Orchestral Performance Program in 2022, he is also on the faculty of Juilliard. He lives in the New York City area with his wife, violinist Catherine Ro, and their children.

Arthur Li, piano

Arthur Siyun Li is a Hong Kong-Canadian composer and pianist based in New York. A student of pianist Alexandre Moutouzkine and composer and soprano Susan Botti, Li is pursuing concurrent Master of Music degrees at Manhattan School of Music.

Li is an active performer and exponent of new music. Recent appearances include a program of piano works by Chin, Kondo, and Lutosławski at Mostly Modern Festival, solo and chamber performances of new works at the Tenri Cultural Institute and MSM's Neidorff-Karpati Hall with the BeComEnsemble, the Scotia Festival of Music's Highlight Concerts at Dalhousie Arts Center, and City Lyric Opera's U.S. premiere of Elizabeth Raum's chamber opera *The Garden of Alice*. Upcoming projects include the RASA Project at National Sawdust, featuring selections from John Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano.

Li's recent compositional work explores dialectics of continuity and fracture, appearance and disappearance; instruments and ensembles as spatializations of meaning; and the layered relationships between music and poetics. Li has been commissioned by Tactus, the resident contemporary ensemble at MSM, as the winner of the Tactus Commission Prize.

ABOUT THE ORCHESTRAL PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

Inaugurated in 1991, MSM's Graduate Program in Orchestral Performance was the first accredited degree program of its kind in the United States. Led by David Chan, the program produces polished musicians of the highest artistic caliber, who are prepared intensively in the orchestral repertoire for careers as symphonic players. Orchestral Performance students receive individual instruction from some of the leading players on the classical scene. The program incorporates curricula specifically designed to train the exceptional, advanced student in both performance and nonmusical aspects of life in the modern orchestra, such as orchestra governance, artistic planning, community engagement, and audience development.

FACULTY

VIOLIN

David Chan, *Concertmaster*, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra

Lisa Kim, *assistant principal second violin*, New York Philharmonic

VIOLA

Shmuel Katz, *viola*, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra

CELLO

Alan Stepansky, *former associate principal cello*, New York Philharmonic

Qiang Tu, *cello*, New York Philharmonic

BASS

Timothy Cobb, *principal bass*, New York Philharmonic

Orin O'Brien, *former bass*, New York Philharmonic

FLUTE

Robert Langevin, *principal flute*, New York Philharmonic

OBOE

Robert Botti, *oboe*, New York Philharmonic

Sherry Sylar, *associate principal oboe*, New York Philharmonic

Stephen Taylor, *principal oboe*, Orchestra of St. Luke's; *co-principal oboe*,

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra

CLARINET

Pascual Martinez Forteza, *second clarinet*, New York Philharmonic

BASSOON

Evan Epifanio, *principal bassoon*, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra

Kim Laskowski, *associate principal bassoon*, New York Philharmonic

William Short, *principal bassoon*, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra

HORN

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PERCUSSION

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Duncan Patton, *former principal timpani*, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra

Steven White, *percussion and assistant timpani*, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra

ABOUT MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Founded as a community music school by Janet Daniels Schenck in 1918, today MSM is recognized for its more than 1,000 superbly talented undergraduate and graduate students who come from more than 50 countries and nearly all 50 states; its innovative curricula and world-renowned artist-teacher faculty that includes musicians from the New York Philharmonic, the Met Orchestra, and the top ranks of the jazz and Broadway communities; and a distinguished community of accomplished, award-winning alumni working at the highest levels of the musical, educational, cultural, and professional worlds.

The School is dedicated to the personal, artistic, and intellectual development of aspiring musicians, from its Precollege students through those pursuing doctoral studies. Offering classical, jazz, and musical theatre training, MSM grants a range of undergraduate and graduate degrees. True to MSM's origins as a music school for children, the Precollege Division is a highly competitive and professionally oriented Saturday music program, dedicated to the musical and personal growth of talented young musicians ages 5 to 18. The School also serves some 2,000 New York City schoolchildren through its Arts-in-Education Program, and another 2,000 students through its critically acclaimed Distance Learning Program.

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Linda Chesis, Chair, Woodwinds
Mark DelPiora, Chair, Guitar
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John Forconi, Chair, Collaborative Piano
Christopher Lamb, Chair, Percussion
Jeffrey Langford, Associate Dean of
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George Manahan, Director of Orchestral Activities
Nicholas Mann, Chair, Strings
Ryan Kamm, Assistant Dean for Youth
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Alexandre Moutouzkine, Co-Head, Piano
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