

M Manhattan
School of Music

*Symphony
and Song:
A Queer Benefit
Concert*

Daniel Jansen, Coordinator and horn

Gabriel Levy, Conductor

Featuring **Ramon Tenefrancia** (BM '18), tenor

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2023 | 7:30 PM
NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL



Council on the Arts

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Symphony and Song: A Queer Benefit Concert

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PROGRAM

AARON COPLAND
(1900–1990)

Fanfare for the Common Man

BENJAMIN BRITTEN
(1913–1976)

Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, Op. 31

Prologue

Pastoral

(Text by Charles Cotton)

Nocturne

(Text by Alfred, Lord Tennyson)

Elegy

(Text by William Blake)

Dirge

(Anonymous text)

Hymn

(Text by Ben Jonson)

Sonnet

(Text by John Keats)

Epilogue

Ramon Tenefrancia (BM '18), tenor

Daniel Jansen, horn

PYOTR ILYICH
TCHAIKOVSKY
(1840–1893)

Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64

Andante - Allegro con anima

Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza

Valse. Allegro moderato

Finale. Andante maestoso - Allegro vivace

SYMPHONY AND SONG ORCHESTRA

Gabriel Levy, Conductor

VIOLIN

Cheng-Cian Li

Hsinchu City, Taiwan

Licheng Chen

Bondi Junction, Australia

Jackson Chang

New Taipei City, Taiwan

Eliana Valdivieso

Bronx, New York

Hao-Ning Hsu

Taiwan, Taiwan

Javed Wong

Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Xenia Bergmann

Murnau, Germany

Spencer Ting

Taipei City, Taiwan

Subin Choi

Vaughan, Canada

Oliver Costello

Denver, Colorado

Betania Johnny

London, United Kingdom

Arianna Behrendt

Redwood City, California

Rohil Sabherwal

Washington, DC

Vivian Kao

Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Jiachen Xu

Ningbo, China

Alvaro Amat

Miami, Florida

Cecilia Martin

Bexley, Ohio

Jesse Ji

Houston, Texas

VIOLA

Jack Rittendale

New York, New York

Katya Eibozhenko

Moscow, Russia

Sage Small

Phoenix, Arizona

Ryan Giannitelli

Westbury, New York

Noah Stevens

Montclair, New Jersey

Shia He Lin

Taipei City, Taiwan

CELLO

Zoe Hardel

Yarmouth, Maine

Aidan Pan

Ithaca, New York

Hauen Chung

Jinju, South Korea

Jessica Li

Davis, California

Rahel Lulseged

Richardson, Texas

August Schwob

Oak Park, Illinois

Ting-Yu Lin

Hsinchu City, Taiwan

Yu-Sheng Tu

New York, New York

Audrey Jellett

Kerrville, Texas

Pablo Elizalde Nino

Pasadena, California

BASS

Lauren Seery

Bethpage, Texas

Antonio Suarez

Yonkers, New York

Conor Riccomini

West Sayville, New York

Kyle Perea

Huntington, New York

Aiden Johnson

Dacula, Georgia

JP Bernabe

Ridgewood, New Jersey

FLUTE

Blue Shelton

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Jocelyn Braun

Sunnyvale, California

Lorien Britt

Fate, Texas

OBOE

Rebecca Nelsen

Manorville, New York

Sebastian Gonzales

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

CLARINET

Jeongmin Hong

Goyang, South Korea

Emily Geoffroy

Portland, Oregon

BASSOON

Nicholas Fitch

Kurroville, Texas

Lauren Hallonquist

Pawleys Island, South Carolina

HORN**Keegan McCardell**

Ellicott City, Maryland

Daniel Jansen

Aspen, Colorado

Taylor Krause

Calgary, Canada

Vera Romero

Austin, Texas

Dylan Correia

Moorpark, California

TRUMPET**Benjamin Hambro**

Egg Harbor Township,

New Jersey

Themba Pieterse

Albany, New York

Kyle Nix

Pontotoc, Mississippi

TROMBONE**Leor Arbel**

Katy, Texas

Nate Wasihun

Lilburn, Georgia

Ryan Parichuk

Budd Lake, New Jersey

TUBA**Zachary Solano**

Ledgerwood, New Jersey

PERCUSSION**Hwane Pak**

Columbia, Maryland

Jay Walton

East Lansing, Michigan

Glenn Choe

Cedar Park, Texas

PROGRAM NOTES

Fanfare for the Common Man **Aaron Copland**

Fanfare for the Common Man was written by American composer Aaron Copland in 1942. It features a full brass section, as well as timpani, bass drum, and tam-tam. It was commissioned by the Cincinnati Orchestra, and the title was inspired by a speech given by at-the-time vice-president Henry Wallace, in which he described the 20th century as the “century of the common man.” The music is bold, noble, and brief; a striking statement.

Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, Op. 31 **Benjamin Britten**

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) is one of the most recognizable and iconic composers of the 20th Century. Throughout Britten’s career as a composer, conductor and pianist, he had several influences and collaborations that contributed to the wealth of works and the iconic style we can recognize today. Among these influences include Wystan Hugh Auden and Frank Bridge, but among all these collaborations, the most important and longest standing of these collaborations was that of him and tenor, Peter Pears.

Britten and Pears met briefly in 1934 in England but it was not until 1939 that their professional relationship develop into a romantic relationship. Between the time the two first met leading up to the beginning of their romance, their paths crossed on several occasions. In 1937, their common friend Peter Burra died in an air crash and both Britten and Pears volunteered to help get their late friend’s estate in order. They two grew close as they both attended to the paperwork for the arrangements surrounding Burra’s sudden passing. In that same year, they gave first recital together. In 1939, the two took a trip for several weeks in Canada, where their relationship officially developed from a platonic into a romantic one.

In many ways, Peter Pears can be considered one of Britten’s muses throughout his career as a composer. Britten not only composed several of his songs and operas with Pears’ voice in mind, he also regularly toured with Pears, performing several recitals together. Britten’s first composition written specifically with Pears in mind was his song cycle *Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo*, Op. 22 in 1940. In that same year, both Britten and Pears moved to New York where they lived with Britten’s long standing friend, Wystan Auden.

Disapproving of the War, they refused to actively participate and remained in America. Eventually, they both decided to return to England but needed to receive recognition as conscientious objectors, which they were granted on the basis that both performed in recitals in America for the benefit of war relief efforts. While in England, both were active with the English Opera Group in London where they premiered several of Britten's operas with Pears as a lead. Among these operas were *The Rape of Lucretia* (1946) with Pears as the Male Chorus, *Albert Herring* (1947) with Pears in the title role, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1960) with Pears premiering the role of Flute. As Britten continuously composed operas with title roles specifically for Peter Pears, there was growing dissent among the members accusing Britten for favoritism.

The couple later founded the Aldeburgh Music Festival (at the suggestion of Pears) where Britten premiered multiple works such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1960) and *Death in Venice* (1973), with Pears premiering the role of Gustav von Aschenbach. In 1972, Britten and Pears founded the Britten-Pears School which was initially a venue which presented several masterclasses but later evolved into a school in 1977. Following Britten's death in 1976, Pears continued running both the Aldeburgh Festival and the Britten-Pears School.

As the longest collaborator and without a doubt one of the biggest aesthetic influences to his vocal music, it is almost impossible to separate the distinctive sound of Peter Pears from the vocal repertoire of Benjamin Britten. A comparison held even today when discussing Britten. Their relationship not only resulted in a lifelong love story, but also one of tremendous musical growth, development and output.

Composed in 1943 for Peter Pears and horn virtuoso Dennis Brain, the *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* is one of the masterpieces composed by Britten following his return to England from America.

This work consisting of six songs bookended by a prologue and epilogue is representative of the composer at the height of his artistry. The cycle with text from various sources takes the listener on a journey through the night beginning at dusk (*Pastoral*) until the dawn (*Epilogue*). The work begins with the *Prologue* which is representative of the setting sun, followed by the *Pastoral* with text by Charles Cotton which captures the serenity at sunset as the world settles down to rest. The *Nocturne* with text by Tennyson highlights the energy of the early evening. This is followed by the *Elegy* and followed by the *Dirge* that represent the most haunting movements of the work, containing texts by William Blake and an anonymous fifteenth-century poet that represent of the dead of night. The text, on the

corruption of beauty and the music setting a haunting atmosphere followed by a funeral march that embodies the mystique and sense of foreboding associated with the night. This is followed by the *Hymn*, an ode to Diana the Goddess of the Hunt who is often associated with the night as contrast to her twin Apollo who is often associated with the day. The *Sonnet* with text by Keats provides a soothing sense of calm characteristic of the “still” before sunrise. The work is then concluded with the *Epilogue*, the offstage restatement of the theme of the *Prologue* that marks the end of the journey through the night.

Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony is music of passion and spontaneity. It was written and premiered in 1888, with the composer himself conducting the first performance, and has since become one of the most played pieces in concert halls around the world. Like the fifth symphonies of Beethoven and Mahler, it journeys from darkness into light, but in contrast to the grand impetuosity those works find their darkness in, what is here is veiled—murky and intimate.

The piece begins with a slow introduction, with two clarinets in unison accompanied by low strings. Here is presented the main motif which Tchaikovsky weaves in and out of all four movements, and through the progression of this motif, the arc of the piece as a whole can be tracked. The movement continues, and its main body is marked *allegro con anima*—fast with spirit. Jumping from extreme to extreme, it seems at times to find its direction only as it goes along. To contrast it again with Beethoven’s 5th, whose first movement sounds as though it sprung into existence fully formed, this first movement seems to change its mind each step of the way. One moment the music sings of the greatest sorrow, the next of childlike joy. At times it gets lost within itself, and at others it seems hyper-fixated on some elusive goal, always out of reach. Finally, just as it began, this movement closes in murky darkness, setting the stage for the most wonderful slow movement.

The second movement is the centerpiece of the symphony; in addition to its entrancing melodies, its end contains the important shift away from darkness and into light. The movement again opens with low strings, this time a chorale into an extended french horn solo, and it gradually builds to an assortment of turbulent outbursts—with the motif from the introduction—and soaring confessions. This music is filled with longing; it contains a perplexing mixture of hope and anxiety, and for parts of its second theme Tchaikovsky gave the markings *con noblezza*, *con desiderio*, and *con passione*: nobly, with desire, and with passion. The movement’s

final outburst acts as a release of the energy accumulated thus far in the symphony, and following this release, the two clarinets from the piece's introduction guide the music away from darkness and into the realm of light.

The movement which follows is a waltz, and it is the closest in this symphony to the ballet music for which Tchaikovsky is perhaps most well known. This waltz is filled with rhythmic play and melodic sweetness, it also features two brief bassoon solos as well as moments for all the other woodwinds. This is the shortest movement in the piece; it is less than half the length of any of the others. The atmosphere here is predominantly light and playful, and it serves as a slight break from the rest of the intense action. It is almost an interlude, although it is a necessary bridge from the longing of the second movement into the triumph of the finale. As the waltz closes, the two clarinets again leave their mark with an auspicious reminder of the introduction motif, as if to say "hope you didn't forget about me."

The finale of this symphony begins with strength and energy, in a transformed version of the first movement's opening. Here instead of murky clarinets, the full string section presents the introduction material with a sound that is rich, warm, and confident. There is a sense in this music that even when doubt is present, a reassuring force of stability is there to combat it. Guided by a crescendo in the timpani, the movement then erupts into something vigorous and fiery. From here until the piece's conclusion there are few moments to catch one's breath; the music is finally allowed to flow uninterrupted in a way that was impossible in the opening movements. Additionally, the motif from the symphony's introduction at last takes on thematic importance, whereas in the other movements it is merely a passing event. Throughout this finale the music runs, jumps, and dances, and after an array of orchestral acrobatics it closes with a final nod to the famous motif of Beethoven's Fifth.

There is something both exceedingly sweet and shamelessly barbaric about the journey made in this movement, and its triumphant ending ties the entire piece together. Although performances have differed drastically in the 135 years since it was first heard, the spirit of Tchaikovsky and his Fifth Symphony remains ever inextinguishable.

–Program notes ©Gabriel Levy

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, Op. 31 **Benjamin Britten**

Pastoral

The day's grown old; the fainting sun
Has but a little way to run,
And yet his steeds, with all his skill,
Scarce lug the chariot down the hill.

The shadows now so long do grow,
That brambles like tall cedars show;
Molehills seem mountains, and the ant
Appears a monstrous elephant.

A very little, little flock
Shades thrice the ground that it would stock;
Whilst the small stripling following them
Appears a mighty Polypheme.

And now on benches all are sat,
In the cool air to sit and chat,
Till Phoebus, dipping in the West,
Shall lead the world the way to rest.

—Text by Charles Cotton

Nocturne

The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory:

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Bugle blow; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear, how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!

Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Bugle, blow; answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying;
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

—Text by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Elegy

O Rose, thou art sick;
The invisible worm
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy;
And his dark, secret love
Does thy life destroy.

—Text by William Blake

Dirge

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
Every nighte and alle,
Fire and fleet and candle-lighte,
And Christe receive thy saule.

When thou from hence away art past,
Every nighte and alle,
To Whinnymuir thou com'st at last;
And Christe receive thy saule.

If ever thou gav'st hos'n and shoon,
Every nighte and alle,
Sit thee down and put them on;
And Christe receive thy saule.

If hos'n and shoon thou ne'er gav'st nane
Every nighte and alle,
The whinnes sall prick thee to the bare bane;
And Christe receive thy saule.

From Whinnymuir when thou may'st pass,
Every nighte and alle,
To Brig o' Dread thou com'st at last;
And Christe receive thy saule.

From Brig o' Dread when thou may'st pass,
Every nighte and alle,
To Purgatory fire thou com'st at last;
And Christe receive thy saule.

If ever thou gav'st meat or drink,
Every nighte and alle,
The fire sall never make thee shrink;
And Christe receive thy saule.

If meat or drink thou ne'er gav'st nane,
Every nighte and alle,
The fire will burn thee to the bare bane;
And Christe receive thy saule.

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
Every nighte and alle,
Fire and fleet and candle-lighte,
And Christe receive thy saule.

—Lyke Wake Dirge, Anonymous (15th century)

Hymn

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,
State in wonted manner keep:
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heav'n to clear when day did close:
Bless us then with wishèd sight,
Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
And thy crystal shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short so-ever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night,
Goddess excellently bright.

–Text by Ben Jonson

Sonnet

O soft embalmer of the still midnight,
Shutting with careful fingers and benign
Our gloom-pleas'd eyes, embower'd from the light,
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine:

O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close
In midst of this thine hymn my willing eyes,
Or wait the "Amen" ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its lulling charities.

Then save me, or the passèd day will shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes,
Save me from curious Conscience, that still lords

Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole;
Turn the key deftly in the oilèd wards,
And seal the hushèd Casket of my Soul.

–Text by John Keats

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Daniel Jansen, Coordinator and horn

Daniel Jansen is a classical horn player who lives in Morningside Heights. He has performed mainly in New York City since moving there in 2021 but has performed in venues across the country, including Florida's Mahaffey Theate, Harris Hall, Benedict Music Tent, and Wheeler Opera House in Aspen, Colorado.

Daniel is a student of Richard Deane (NY Philharmonic) and currently attends Manhattan School of Music. He consistently performs recitals and full orchestra concerts with the various ensembles organized by the institution. One highlight of this year's performances is an MSM Symphony concert which featured Dvorak's Eighth Symphony. In addition, one of his more recent ensembles was the New York Youth Symphony, awarded this year's Grammy for best orchestral performance. Daniel spent two seasons with the group, including six total concerts in Carnegie Hall featuring works by Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Brahms, Bizet, and many others. The final concert of his tenure with NYYS included Mahler's Symphony No. 1, a colossal piece for the horn repertoire.

His inspiration for this project came from his most recent performance with a similar concept. The 2023 recital in question was coordinated by Ramon Tenefrancia (this project's tenor soloist) and was entitled *Serenade - Queer Soundscape*, highlighting works by composers such as Britten, Saint-Saëns, Boulanger, Schubert, and more. The idea Daniel, Ramon, and now Gabriel share is to build upon that production by utilizing a full symphony orchestra in a world-class venue. Hence the creation of *Symphony and Song: A Queer Benefit Concert*.

Gabriel Levy, Conductor

Gabriel Levy is a 20-year-old conductor committed to bringing music of all kinds to life. A student of Edmonton Opera Music Director Simon Rivard, he was the first Assistant Conductor of the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra, and won their Award for Artistic Excellence. He was also the Assistant Conductor of the Earl Haig Symphony Orchestra, the Hannaford Youth Brass Band, and has conducted numerous independent projects at the Manhattan School of Music.

Gabriel is an avid composer and has had music premiered by the 3-time Juno Award winning Gryphon Trio and broadcast on national Canadian radio. Gabriel recently spent his summer at the Pierre Monteux School and Music Festival where he learned from six of the top conducting pedagogues in the country. Additionally, he has been invited to assist Canadian Opera Company Music

Director Johannes Debus at an upcoming BigLake festival. Gabriel also studies rock, jazz, and classical improvisation.

He is pursuing a Bachelor's degree in classical percussion at Manhattan School of Music under the tutelage of Christopher Lamb, She-e Wu, Duncan Patton, and Steven White.

Ramon Tenefrancia (BM '18), tenor

Tenor Ramon Gabriel Tenefrancia is a graduate of Manhattan School of Music under the tutelage of Neil Rosenshein. Mr. Tenefrancia uses his "commanding lyric tenor" (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*) to bring to life a diverse array of characters on the operatic stage ranging from the benevolent ruler to scheming villain to enamored adolescent. Mr. Tenefrancia has appeared in productions throughout New York City, most notably with City Lyric Opera's 2022 production of Elizabeth Raum's *The Garden of Alice* (March Hare/Card#2) and their 2023 production of Verdi's *La traviata* (Giuseppe/Alfredo cover), with Long Island Lyric Opera in their 2022 production of *Don Giovanni* (Don Ottavio) and the Lighthouse Lyric Opera's production of *Susannah* (Little Bat McLean).

Mr. Tenefrancia is a recipient of both the 2022 Staten Island Arts DCA Premiere Grant and the 2023 Staten Island Arts DCLA Art Fund Grant for his online performance, Art Song Anonymous which premiered May 2022 for Staten Island Pridefest 2022 and SERENADE: Queer Soundscape for Staten Island Pridefest 2023.

In December 2020, Mr. Tenefrancia joined the Philippine Independent Arts Ventures Inc. as the tenor soloist in their online fundraiser production of Handel's *Messiah* that raised funds to provide food to impoverished areas in the Philippines that were severely impacted by the pandemic.

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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Land Acknowledgment

We want to acknowledge that we gather as Manhattan School of Music on the traditional land of the Lenape and Wappinger past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit as well.



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