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# **MSM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

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

**Harry Ning** (BM '25, MM '27), trombone

**Winner of the 2024-2025 Eisenberg-Fried Concerto Competition**

**JT Kane**, Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral  
Performance

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025 | 7:30 PM  
NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL



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## PROGRAM

GEORG CHRISTOPH WAGENSEIL  
(1715–1777)

Trombone Concerto in E-flat Major

*Adagio*

*Allegro assai*

**Harry Ning** (BM '25, MM '27), trombone

ALBERTO GINASTERA  
(1916–1983)

Four Dances from *Estancia*, Op. 8a

*Los Trabajadores agricolas*

*Danza del trigo*

*Los Peones de hacienda*

*Danza final*

JEAN SIBELIUS  
(1865–1957)

Symphony No. 3 in C Major, Op. 52

*Allegro moderato*

*Andantino con moto, quasi allegretto*

*Moderato—Allegro ma non tanto*

# MSM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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

Harry Ning (BM '25, MM '27), trombone

## VIOLIN 1

**Marina Alba Lopez,**

concertmaster

*Madrid, Spain*

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*Vancouver, Canada*

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*Beijing, China*

**Joshua Knight**  
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**BRASS AND WIND PRINCIPALS**

1 WAGENSEIL – TROMBONE CONCERTO IN E-FLAT MAJOR

2 GINASTERA – FOUR DANCES FROM ESTANCIA, OP. 8A

3 SIBELIUS – SYMPHONY NO. 3 IN C MAJOR, OP. 52

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*Egg Harbor Township,  
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**Sarah Rathbun**<sup>3</sup>  
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# PROGRAM NOTES

## Dances from *Estancia*, Op. 8a

### Alberto Ginastera

Ginastera described his own creative evolution as falling into three basic periods: objective nationalism, subjective nationalism, and neo-expressionism. In his objective nationalistic compositions Ginastera presented Argentine folk materials directly and overtly, though he rarely quoted literally. His ballet *Estancia* represents this early period. It was commissioned in 1941 for the American Ballet Caravan by Lincoln Kirstein, who wanted a work based on Argentine country life. 1941 was a significant year for the composer—he was appointed professor of composition at the National Conservatory, was chosen chair of music at the Liceo Militar General San Martín, and married former fellow student Mercedes de Toro.

*Estancia* was dedicated to Kirstein, but the staged production had to be postponed because the American Ballet Caravan disbanded in 1942. Nonetheless, a highly successful concert performance of the suite of dances from the ballet was given at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires on May 12, 1943, which won great recognition for Ginastera as a nationalistic voice. Eventually, in 1952, the work was staged, at the same theater, with choreography by Michel Borovsky.

The story of the ballet involves a young man from the village who must prove himself by laboring on a large ranch (“estancia”) to win the love of a country girl. *The Four Dances* consist of three sections from the ballet’s second scene and the last from the fifth and final scene. The first, *Los trabadores agrícolas* (*The peasant farmers*), is a vigorous dance with accented, syncopated, chordal patterns that suggest the energetic efforts of the farmers harvesting wheat.

*Danza del trigo* (*Dance of the wheat*), which actually precedes the *Dance of the Peasant Farmers* in the complete ballet, sets the tranquil morning scene of haystacks, windmills, and wheat in the sun just before harvest. Plaintive flute and violin solos enhance the peaceful atmosphere.

The energetic rhythms return in *Los peones de hacienda* (*The farmhands of the estate*), in which the gauchos, along with the country girl, tame wild horses. Salient horn and timpani parts add to the driving quality.

*Danza finale* (*Malambo*) concludes the ballet on the morning of the next day, after the young couple has shared a tender romance the previous evening. The malambo was traditionally danced by gauchos as a test of manhood—the one left standing was declared the winner. In the ballet the dance begins with



introductory sparkle and picks up momentum with its accented, repetitive dance rhythms, enlivened by brass pronouncements, colorful piano glissandos (slides), occasional instrumental “cheers,” and full percussion section in which the xylophone is prominent.

—©Jane Vial Jaffe

## Symphony No. 3 in C Major, Op. 52

### Jean Sibelius

Sibelius’s Third Symphony went through a long and difficult gestation period, and its premiere was even postponed because the composer could not meet the deadline he had arranged. Sibelius first mentioned work on the Symphony in a letter to his friend Axel Carpelan dated September 21, 1904. He returned to it on and off during the next few years, in between moving into his new home at Järvenpää; revising his Violin Concerto; making trips to England, France, and Germany; and composing—incidental music for *Pelléas och Mélisande* and *Belshazzar’s Feast*, symphonic fantasy *Pohjola’s Daughter*, songs, and piano pieces.

The composer put himself under great pressure by accepting the invitation of the Royal Philharmonic Society of London to conduct the new Symphony in the spring of 1907. He even refused several requests for compositions in late 1906 and early 1907 in order to finish it, but still could not get the work ready in time. On September 10, 1907, his publisher Lienau begged him to send the finale as the other two movements had already been engraved. The Symphony was finally premiered later that month at a concert in Helsinki on which Sibelius also conducted *Pohjola’s Daughter* and *Belshazzar’s Feast*. The London Philharmonic Society’s long-awaited premiere had to wait until the following spring and by then Sibelius had conducted the Third Symphony in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Stockholm.

Critics in Finland, Sweden, Russia, and England were surprised and not greatly pleased by the work. They no doubt expected a lush, Romantic work along the lines of Sibelius’s first two symphonies or a virtuoso piece for orchestra such as *Pohjola’s Daughter*. The composer himself thought highly of the Third Symphony describing, it as “the most beloved and least fortunate of my children.” Sadly it remains one of his least performed symphonies.

The Third has been, and still is, described as Sibelius’s most Classical symphony owing to its approach to form and its more transparent texture—Sibelius used only a moderate-sized orchestra. The first movement represents the composer’s clearest example of sonata form, yet within it one finds the organically unified thematic treatment and unconventional key relationships that impart that

special Sibelius quality. The interplay between modal and major-minor scales helps to define the composer's unique sound. Characteristic pedal points and folklike drones are also prevalent; here and again in the second movement one is reminded of Mahler's *Wayfarer* and *Wunderhorn* songs and symphonies.

One way Sibelius achieves organic unity is by introducing a theme that has already been prepared by an earlier motive. The second theme in this opening movement is anticipated by a carefully shaped motive in the winds and horns at the end of the first theme group. In addition, the sixteenth-note figure appearing first in the wind utterances in the first theme group, gains prominence when isolated in the second theme melody, and becomes important in the ensuing ostinato-like passages. The coda is interesting for its new-sounding theme, which actually stems from the closing group of the exposition. The movement ends with a firm plagal ("Amen") cadence that adds something ecclesiastical to the general pastoral impression.

The gentle slow movement derives much of its interest from shifting accents and play between duple and triple divisions of the 6/4 and 3/2 meters. Sibelius chose a highly remote key (G-sharp minor) to contrast with the key of the outer two movements (C major). Another religious association is conjured up by the choralelike writing for the winds at the movement's close, which is an outgrowth of fragments they had played earlier in the movement. It may have been a passage for cellos divided into three different parts in this movement that prompted the young Prokofiev, who had heard the first performance in St. Petersburg, to write for solo cello in an orchestration exercise, thereby incurring the wrath of his teacher Rimsky-Korsakov. "Why do you use a solo cello here?" asked Rimsky. "Because at this point I do not want the effect of all the cellos playing," replied Prokofiev. "Oh really! Have you ever heard solo cellos?" "Yesterday, in the Sibelius Symphony." "God in heaven! Sibelius! Why listen to Sibelius? Isn't the second subject of the *Ruslan Overture* good enough for you?"

Sibelius once characterized the third and last movement as "the crystallization of ideas from chaos." Formally this movement is the most original and complex of the Symphony, resulting from a fusion of scherzo and finale. The two distinct sections are comprised of a sonata-form scherzo in 6/8—exposition and development only—and, in place of a recapitulation, a second section or finale in 4/4. The growth and emergence of the finale's main theme is truly impressive. Related to fragments that have gone before in the "scherzo," the theme builds to an apothecotic, hymnlike close.

—©Jane Vial Jaffe

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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

George Manahan is in his 14th 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 as well as the symphonies of 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*.

## **Harry Ning** (BM '25, MM '27), trombone

Harry Ning is an active tenor and alto trombonist based in New York City and China. He finished his Bachelor of Music Degree in Classical Tenor Trombone Performance from Manhattan School of Music in 2025. Harry was a finalist of the 2024 ITA Alto Trombone Competition and placed 4th in the ITA Lewis Van Haney Philharmonic Prize. He is also a fellow of the Aspen Music Festival and School in 2025. Harry is now in his first year of his Master of Music degree in Orchestral Performance with Colin Williams.

# ABOUT THE ORCHESTRAL STUDIES PROGRAM

In the tradition of the classical music conservatory, the orchestral studies program at MSM forms the heart of the performing experience for classical instrumentalists. All students, placed by competitive audition, participate in a variety of orchestral projects under the guidance of George Manahan, Director of Orchestral Activities, and JT Kane, Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral Performance.

Students play in a variety of orchestral formats, giving them ample opportunity to develop their audition and ensemble technique, broaden their knowledge of orchestral repertoire, and perform at New York City venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, St. Patrick's Cathedral, and Merkin Concert Hall. Winners of the School's annual Eisenberg–Fried Concerto Competition perform with the orchestras as soloists.

In addition to Maestro Manahan, the orchestras work regularly with Leonard Slatkin, Distinguished Visiting Artist in Conducting and Orchestral Studies, and guest conductors such as Joshua Gersen, Mei-Ann Chen, and JoAnn Falletta.

**George Manahan**, Director of Orchestral Activities

**JT Kane**, Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral Performance

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# 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 professionally oriented Saturday music program dedicated to the musical and personal growth of talented young musicians ages 8 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.

## Your gift helps a young artist reach for the stars!

To enable Manhattan School of Music to continue educating and inspiring generations of talented students and audiences alike, please consider making a charitable contribution today.

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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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Through a bequest or other planned gift, you can help to ensure that Manhattan School of Music will provide a music education of the highest quality to exceptionally talented young artists for generations to come while also strengthening the School's long-term financial health.

Bequests are one of the easiest ways to create a living legacy and to help MSM meet important priorities, including increasing our scholarship endowment and supporting our world-class faculty.

For further information and to join our Galaxy Society, which honors those who have committed to making a planned gift to the School, **please contact Susan Madden, Vice President for Philanthropy**, at 917-493-4115, or visit: [msmnyc.edu/galaxy-society](http://msmnyc.edu/galaxy-society).

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