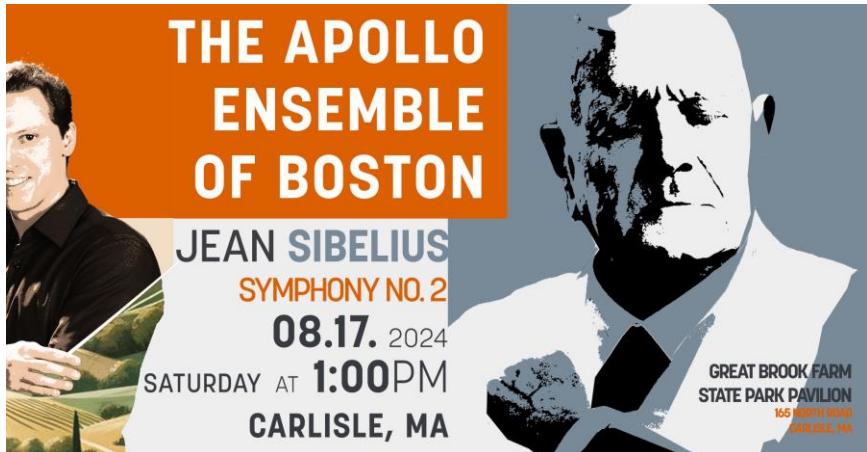


~ The Apollo Ensemble of Boston ~

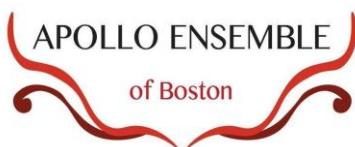
Sibelius 2



The Apollo Ensemble of Boston

Elias Miller, Music Director

Saturday, 17 August 2024 at 1:00PM
Great Brook Farm State Park Pavilion,
Carlisle, MA



Violin I

Haig Hovsepian, Concertmaster
Eun Joo Ahn
Sarah McGuire
Lauren Oeser
Tiffany Rice
Denver Speelman
Finnian Long
Stuart Schulman
Hope Yuan
Rossana Chung
Nishanth Shah
Jennifer Hsiao

Violin II

Audrey Shadle, Principal
Alexia Taylor Eichman
Jessica Lin
Shu-Hong Lin
Mathieu Moutou
Sami Labban
Nicholas Barbier
Alex Hirsch
Elena Haworth
Brandon Enriquez
Christine Ko

Viola

Sean Lee, Principal
Andrew Gretzinger
Timothy Chen
Jessica Chen
Ana Cardona Izquier
Arjun Mudan
Shinwho Kwun
T'Yara Lesueur
Sabrina Lang
Jeff Bigler

Cello

Nate Steele, Principal
Sophie Paul
Wheeler Jarvis
Meghan Leong
Maddie Tucker
Justin Solomon
Lauren Roberts
Amy Nolan
Raj Kumar
Guillermo del Angel

Bass

Brett Sawka, Principal
Martha Davis
Nathan Haggett
Jim Gray
Boris Lu

Flute

Michael Tabak (S)
Katie Berry (B, G)
Emilia Lew

Piccolo

Emilia Lew (B, G)

Oboe

Joel Bard (S)
Mia Fasanello (B, G)

English Horn

Joel Bard (G)

Clarinet

Brandon Von (B, S)
Brian Schaefer (G)

Bass Clarinet

Brian Schaefer (B)

Bassoon

Laura Reyes (S)
Veronica Pratt (B, G)

Horn

Maya Tappa (S)
John Kessen (B, G)
Victor Maës
Portia Sirinek

Trumpet

Emily Languedoc (G, S)
Dom Amico (B)
Caylan Laundrie

Trombone

Grant Randall (S)
Sam Hausman (B)
Steve Benson

Tuba

Tim Shepard (B, S)

Timpani

Jeremy Lang (B, G, S)

Percussion

Jeremy Lang
Kendall Floyd
Shereen Sodder
Reuben Stern

Harp

Ella Brown (B)

Assistant Conductor

Reuben Stern

Orchestra Manager

Michael Tabak

B = Principal on Bieber

G = Principal on Gau

S = Principal on Sibelius

The Apollo Ensemble of Boston
Elias Miller, Music Director

~ Program ~

The Silver Streaks

Nathan Bieber
(b. 1995)

New England Premiere

Serenade

Julian Gau
(b. 1997)

- I. A Bridge
- II. A Dream
- III. A Smile

World Premiere

Symphony No. 2 in D major

Jean Sibelius
(1865 – 1957)

- I. Allegretto – Poco allegro
- II. Tempo andante, ma rubato
- III. Vivacissimo
- IV. Finale: Allegro moderato

~ Program Notes ~

The Silver Streaks (Nathan Bieber)

The Silver Streaks is a film score for a movie that does not exist. The music tells the story of my grandfather and his service aboard a B-26 bomber in the European theater during WWII. Somber, exhilarating, and triumphant, the music depicts a dramatic day in the life of the Allied forces in the immediate aftermath of the successful invasion of Normandy. The title, “The Silver Streaks,” refers to his bombardment unit which flew in unpainted planes. If you looked for them, you would only see streaks of silver cutting through the skies.

I composed “The Silver Streaks” for my thesis project at Berklee College of Music, Valencia Campus. It was first recorded at AIR Studios in London, England in June of 2023 – almost 79 years to the day after the fateful events from which it draws inspiration.

- Nathan Bieber

Serenade (Julian Gau)

The *Serenade* exists thanks to the skills of Boston-area musicians and friends as well as the encouragement of conductor Elias Miller. I serve as music director of the Horizon Ensemble, an orchestra that plays music by friends and music of history. In the summer of 2023, we performed *Across the Pond*, a concert which included Charles Ives’s *Three Places in New England* and Benjamin Britten’s *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*. To complement these pieces, especially the Britten, I had the idea of a collaborative *Serenade* for wind instruments, written by Horizon-associated composers. I wrote the first movement, with the other three by friends Enrique Hernández de Tejada III, Brian Daniel Ross, and Amber Mofan Dai. Elias Miller, who came to see the concert, enjoyed my movement and asked me to expand and adapt it for orchestra.

There are three movements. The first, *A Bridge*, is adapted from the original movement of the *Serenade* for winds. This part contains some

images such as the wind, the Harvard Bridge across the Charles River, hands, a streetlight in the evening, and the color green, arranged in a certain narrative pattern. Many of the thematic fragments come from the Taiwanese song “Bāng Chhun-hong” (望春風), composed by the Taiwanese songwriter Teng Yu-hsien (鄧雨賢). The title means something like “Longing for Spring Wind” or “Hoping for the Spring Breeze”. The lyrics, written in Taiwanese Hokkien by Lee Lim-chhiu (李臨秋), describe someone longing for a lover in the spring wind. The lover never comes; at the end of the movement the melody is sung out in full by the first trumpeter, and it continues to float throughout the whole piece.

The music continues to the second movement, *A Dream*. The sounds of nighttime rise out of the grey, such as the wind, American bullfrogs, crickets, and the calls of an American robin. A flowing reverie ensues, growing before disappearing in the morning under a certain violin melody. The third movement, *A Smile*, begins with a horn call meant to imitate the speech patterns of the reading of Japanese poetry. Specifically, the recitation of traditional poetry is a key part of the traditional Japanese card game karuta. A karuta match opens with the *Poem of Naniwa Bay*, attributed to the semi-legendary scholar Wani of the 3rd or 4th century:

Naniwa-zu ni	In Naniwa Bay
Sakuya kono hana	These flowers bloom
Fuyu-gomori	From winter's seclusion
Ima wo harube to	Now it is spring and
Sakuya kono hana	The flowers on the trees bloom

Karuta matches are quite frantic and lively, as is the music following, and smiling is all we can really do after waking up from a too-kind dream. The other idea I tried to capture here is the energy of Chinese music. As a performer of Chinese music, I feel that its flow and energy somehow are just different from Western music in some unspeakable way. I tried to capture this through original figures reminiscent of Chinese compositions I've played and studied. In a rondo-like form, various motives and melodies

dance about in the wind. After reaching a bittersweet chorale, the music finds a smiling finish in the splendor of springtime.

The *Serenade* incorporates many ideas associated with the word “serenade”. Historically, one can also think of early Serenades by composers such as Johannes Brahms and Ethel Smyth which represented some of their early efforts at orchestral composition, just as this is my first work for orchestra. Traditionally, many serenades are in triple time or compound meter. In other words, the rhythms are grouped into threes, just like most of this piece. A serenade can be a song of love; it can be a piece evoking the evening and the night; it can be a pleasant composition meant to make someone smile. At least, I hope it makes you smile.

Many thanks are in order, first of all to Elias Miller and the Apollo Ensemble of Boston. I also thank the composer Wang Lu, from whom I took a class on orchestration in spring 2018. I am indebted also to composers I like by whom I was inspired mostly intentionally and occasionally accidentally, such as Lili Boulanger, Teng Yu-hsien, Benjamin Britten, Steven Lutvak, Gaetano Donizetti, Fanny Hensel, Francis Poulenc, Percy Grainger, Jean Sibelius, Béla Bartók, Ottorino Respighi, Maurice Ravel, Ulysses Kay, Sui Li Jun, Igor Stravinsky, Olivier Messiaen, Gustav Mahler, Ernest Bloch, and nature. And finally, thank you for listening!

- Julian Gau

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43 (Jean Sibelius)

Shortly after the successful premiere of Sibelius' famous tone poem *Finlandia*, Baron Axel Carpelan — who had given *Finlandia* its name — wrote to Sibelius,

“You have been sitting at home for quite a while, Mr. Sibelius, it is high time for you to travel. You will spend the late autumn and the winter in Italy, a country where one learns cantabile, balance and harmony, plasticity and symmetry of lines, a country where

everything is beautiful – even the ugly. You remember what Italy meant for Tchaikovsky's development and for Richard Strauss."

Though penniless himself, Baron Carpelan enlisted the help of a patron to subsidize Sibelius's sojourn, and, after two months in Berlin, the composer arrived in Italy in late January 1901. It was there that he would begin work on his second symphony, a work he would later describe as "a confession of the soul." In his study in a mountain villa near Rapallo, he recalled a moment from Jean Paul's *Flegeljahre*, writing, "The midday moment has something ominous to it...a kind of muteness, as if nature itself is breathlessly listening to the stealthy footsteps of something supernatural, and at that very moment one feels a greater need for company than ever." This image resulted in a vision, which Sibelius jotted down on a sheet of paper: "Don Juan. Sitting in the twilight in my castle, a guest enters. I ask many times who he is. No answer. I make an effort to entertain him. He remains mute. Eventually he starts singing. At this time, Don Juan notices who he is—Death." On the other side of that same sheet, Sibelius sketched the somber D-minor bassoon melody that would become the first theme of the symphony's second movement. Two months later, in Florence, Sibelius drafted the movement's second theme and titled it "Christus." One possible interpretation of this movement is thus that it represents the journey from death to resurrection.

Because Sibelius denied the validity of programmatic readings of any of his symphonies, it is impossible to know exactly from where Sibelius derived his inspiration for the other movements and what story (if any) he may have been trying to tell. However, some scholars have argued that the sorrowful themes of the piece's final two movements were written in memory of the composer's sister-in-law, who had recently died by suicide. Many more have argued that the symphony deals with the situation and fate of the Finnish people, depicting the horrors of Russian oppression and predicting the rise of a Finnish nationalism that would ultimately lead to independence.

Sibelius conducted the premiere of the Symphony with the Helsinki Orchestral Society on March 8, 1902 in three sold-out performances. He revised the symphony during the following year, and Armas Järnefelt conducted the premiere of the new version — the one you will hear today — on November 10, 1903 in Stockholm. Though critical reception was mixed, the public's reaction was overwhelmingly positive. So many connected the work's triumphant and grandiose finale with Finland's national spirit, that the piece was quickly dubbed the "Symphony of Independence."

The first movement is a sonata form that begins with a rising three-note motive that reoccurs many times throughout the symphony. The oboes and clarinets bring in the movement's first theme accompanied by the rising motive in the low strings. After a rushing set of rising pizzicato scales in the strings, the second theme enters over this same opening motive. The tempo relaxes and a statement of the second theme by a lone oboe heralds the beginning of the tumultuous development section. A brass chorale signifies the end of the development, and the horns prepare the recapitulation, which sees restatements of both themes.

The second movement is based on the *Don Juan* and *Christus* themes that Sibelius composed in Italy. Some scholars have also suggested that this movement may be modeled after Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Robert Kajanus, a Finnish conductor, composer, teacher, and the founder of the Helsinki Orchestral Society, which premiered the work, wrote that the movement "strikes one as the most broken-hearted protest against all the injustice that threatens at the present time to deprive the sun of its light and our flowers of their scent."

The third movement is a furious and frenetic scherzo punctuated by two tragically lyrical trios. Kajanus said of the movement, "Everyone piles his straw on the haystack, all fibers are strained and every second seems to last an hour. One senses in the contrasting trio section with its oboe motive in G-flat major what is at stake."

The finale, which follows the scherzo without pause, is the climax of the symphony. Kajanus wrote that this movement “develops towards a triumphant conclusion intended to rouse in the listener a picture of lighter and confident prospects for the future.”

- Jeff Bigler & Elias Miller

~ Biographical Notes ~

Composer:

Nathan Bieber is a composer, conductor, music producer, and violinist currently based in Nashville, Tennessee. As a composer, he draws inspiration from classical music, film scores, progressive metal, electronic music, classic rock, and jazz. He began composing his first melodies at age six and has since developed his unique musical voice through improvisation and score study. Recent commissions include a trio for harpsichord, violin, and viola, numerous arrangements for large symphony orchestra, and a litany of independent film projects.

Bieber is also a dynamic young conductor, comfortable both on stage and in the recording studio. He served as Conducting Fellow of the Nashville Philharmonic in 2022, and since 2023, he has worked as a conductor for Nashville Music Scoring, where he has led sessions for film, television, and video game recording projects. In recent years, Bieber conducted several contemporary music concerts across Europe, including in Valencia and Madrid, Spain. He also served as conducting fellow at the National Orchestral Institute and Festival, and the National Music Festival. He is fortunate to have learned from many notable conductors including Marin Alsop, Kenneth Kiesler, Dr. Michael Koehler, and James Ross, among others.

In addition to composition and conducting, Bieber is an accomplished violinist. He has performed as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral musician across Europe and the United States. Bieber earned his Bachelor and Master of Music in Violin Performance, as well as a Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting from the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre, and Dance. In 2023, he received his Master of Music in Scoring for Film, Television, and Video Games from the Berklee College of Music, Valencia Campus with highest honors.

Composer:

Julian Gau is a composer living in Boston. Born in New Jersey, he grew up playing the piano, cello, and erhu. He went on to study music and mathematics at Brown University and orchestral conducting at the Boston Conservatory. As a composer, he draws inspiration from both Western classical music and traditional Chinese music, owing to his musical training and Taiwanese-American heritage. He believes in the power of music both as a storytelling medium and as a vehicle for building community and connection. Past compositions include songs, chamber music (often with spoken text), and a short one-act musical.

While he appears on this program as a composer, Julian is mainly active as a conductor working in the fields of orchestra, opera, and musical theatre. He serves as music director of the Boston-based Horizon Ensemble and the Chinese Music Ensemble of New York. In September, he will start as music director of the Providence Medical Orchestra, and he is also a current Conducting Fellow with the Chelsea Symphony in New York City. Last season, he served as music director of the musical *Cabaret* at Brown University, the double-bill Baroque pieces *The Card Game* & *The Coffee Cantata* with West End Lyric, and the children's opera *Katie the Strongest of the Strong* with Opera Saratoga. He continues to perform as a pianist and cellist, and he also acts as an arts administrator and occasional music critic. In addition to music, Julian enjoys books, noodles, and time with friends.

Conductor:

Music Director of the Apollo Ensemble of Boston since 2018 and incoming Assistant Conductor of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra and Music Director of the Columbus Symphony Youth Orchestra, **Elias Miller** has established a reputation as a leading young conductor and orchestra builder. He has worked with numerous orchestras across the United States including the New York Philharmonic, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Nashville Symphony, the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Albany Symphony, assisting notable conductors such as Giancarlo Guerrero, Juanjo

Mena, JoAnn Falletta, Scott Yoo, Carlos Miguel Prieto, Eun Sun Kim, and many more. Miller made his Carnegie Hall debut in the fall of 2023 guest conducting the New York International Symphony Orchestra. Other engagements during the past year include work with the Nashville Symphony and the Minnesota Orchestra, 8 masterworks programs with the Apollo Ensemble, several concerts with the Upbeat New Hampshire Youth Orchestra – where Miller served as Principal Conductor from 2022 until 2024 – and programs with the Colorado College Summer Music Festival, where Miller serves as Assistant Conductor. Miller's appointment in Columbus, Ohio will begin in September, 2024 and will see Miller conduct education concerts and cover subscription, pops, and movie programs with the Columbus Symphony.

An active conductor of opera and oratorio, Miller conducted Festival Theater Hudson's inaugural performance: a staged production of Wagner's *Die Walküre* (Act I) in 2021 and co-conducted a production of Philip Glass' *La Belle et la Bête* at the University of Houston's Moores Opera Center in 2022. Between 2016 and 2019, Miller led the Harvard Early Music Society in several premieres of operatic works including the Boston premiere of J.A. Hasse's *Alcide al Bivio*, the North American premiere of Telemann's 1745 *Johannespassion*, and the North American premiere of J.A. Hasse's *Sanctus Petrus et Sancta Maria Magdalena*. Miller has also conducted performances of operas by Gluck, Stravinsky, William Grant Still, and Gilbert & Sullivan and has served as Opera Saratoga's assistant conductor.

A distinguished pianist and cellist, Miller has performed solo recitals in the United States and in Europe on both instruments and has worked as a vocal coach and rehearsal pianist on many operatic productions. He holds degrees from Harvard University (A.B. in Music, summa cum laude) and the University of Michigan (M.M. in Orchestral Conducting) and completed his postgraduate studies with Mark Stringer at the University for Music and Performing Arts, Vienna.

A Note of Thanks~

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