THE APOLLO ENSEMBLE

PRESENTS

RACHMANINOFF

SYMPHONY NO. 2



YANGFAN XU

World Premiere

No Other Water

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

7:30 PM

FIRST CHURCH CAMBRIDGE

11 GARDEN STREET,
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

TICKETS

The Boston Foundation

The Apollo Ensemble of Boston
Elias Miller, Music Director

Violin I
Hyunsu Ko, Concertmaster
Sarah McGuire Stebbings,
Assistant Concertmaster
Samuel Lee
Matthew Lamb
Stephanie Doong
Mary Davis
Olga Myatieva
Pamela Blau
Jad Hilal
Adam Symborski
Jean Bae
Olivia de Geofroy

Violin II
Jimmy Nguyen, Principal
Allison Connuck, Assistant Principal
Andrew To
Sam Wiseman
Kathryn Kovarik
M. Christian Brown
Meghan Titzer
Toshi Motoyama
Catherine Kraft
Iris Ye

Viola
Grace Wodarcyk, Principal
Peter Chew, Assistant Principal
Jeff Bigler
Stephen Moss
William Shipley
Ian Chung
Lucy Caplan
Nikola Chubrich

Cello
Wheeler Jarvis, Principal
Meghan Leong, Assistant Principal
Jewel Kim
Jeremy Gershonowitz
Joe Rovine
Arthur Fleming
Guillermo del Angel
Amy Nolan

Bass
Brett Sawka, Principal
Dylan Rader, Assistant Principal
Martha Davis
Rainbow Chen
Rebecca Pasley

The Apollo Ensemble of Boston

Elias Miller, Music Director

Flute
Michael Tabak (R)
Emilia Lew (X)
Wendy Vignaux

Piccolo
Kristyn Morey

Oboe
Joel Bard (R)
Liv Oster (X)

English Horn
Kai O'Donnell

Clarinet
Danbi Jo Choy (R)
Soyeon Park (X)

Bass Clarinet
Brian Schaefer

Bassoon
Sarah Prabala (X)
Laura Reyes (R)

Key
X = Principal in Xu
R = Principal in Rachmaninoff

French Horn
Isaac Julien (X)
Jang Soo Lee
Eric Miller
Keianna Wen (R)

Trumpet
Friederike Butt
George Goodwin (X)
Emily Languedoc (R)

Trombone
Sam Hausman (X)
Sum Ho Tsui (R)

Bass Trombone
Liam Tierney

Tuba
Peter Belknap

Timpani
Jeremy Lang

Percussion
Noah Coughlen
Skyler Hedblom
John Minor

Orchestra Manager
Michael Tabak

Orchestra Librarian
Mia Fasanello

The Apollo Ensemble of Boston

Elias Miller, Music Director

~ Program ~

Rachmaninoff's Second

No Other Water — Yangfan Xu

World Premiere

Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 27 — Sergei Rachmaninoff

I. Largo — Allegro moderato

II. Allegro molto

III. Adagio

IV. Allegro vivace

~ Program Note ~

No Other Water — Yangfan Xu

Commissioned by Elias Miller and the Apollo Ensemble of Boston, *No Other Water* was written in a period of grief, after the sudden loss of my cat Logan, whom I loved deeply.

In learning how to live with his absence, I kept returning to a poem by the Tang Dynasty poet Yuan Zhen.

I have been thinking about what it means to carry something painful forward. Rachmaninoff's own path toward his Second Symphony was shaped by years of self-doubt and creative struggle. Yet he returned to the symphonic form and created music of extraordinary tenderness, expansiveness, and hope. I hear the Second Symphony as a journey not of forgetting what came before, but of finding the strength to continue with it. Since losing Logan, I have been learning something similar. I carry the grief of his absence, but also the difficult work of forgiving myself for what I could not know, what I could not change, and all the questions that cannot be answered. Healing, for me, has not meant leaving him behind. It has meant learning to work again, to create music again, and to allow myself to keep living while carrying him with me.

《离思》
唐 · 元稹

曾经沧海难为水，
除却巫山不是云。
取次花丛懒回顾，
半缘修道半缘君。

Thoughts in Separation
Yuan Zhen (Tang Dynasty)
Translated and adapted by Yangfan Xu

Once I have known the vastness of the sea,
no other water can compare.
Once I have seen the clouds above Mount Wu,
no other cloud seems quite the same.
I pass through fields of flowers,
without turning back,
partly because I must keep walking forward,
partly because I still carry you with me.

~ Biographical Notes ~

Composer:

Yangfan Xu (b. 1998) holds a deep passion and love for cats. Whenever she hears a string player glissando in the upper registers, she can't help but think of a cat's meow. In addition to her feline obsession, Xu is a Chinese-born US-based composer who comes from a musical family in Lanzhou, Gansu province, with a spoiled cat who eats better than everyone else.

Xu has received major commissions from the Texas New Music Ensemble, Impulse New Music Festival, Boston New Music Initiative, Horizon Ensemble, and the New York City Ballet. Her compositions have been performed by many ensembles including the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Albany Symphony Orchestra, Pacific Chamber Orchestra, Sydney Contemporary Orchestra, New Juilliard Ensemble, New England Philharmonic, Friction Quartet, Hausmann Quartet, SFCM New Music Ensemble, Choral Chameleon, and more.

Xu received her bachelor's degree in composition from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and her master's degree in composition from the Juilliard School. She is currently a DMA candidate at the New England Conservatory of Music.

Conductor:

Music Director of the Apollo Ensemble of Boston, Associate Conductor of the Columbus Symphony, and Music Director of the Columbus Symphony Youth Orchestra (CSYO), **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, and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. Miller has appeared as a guest conductor with the Utah Symphony in two performances at their Deer Valley Music festival, and with the New York International Symphony Orchestra in concerts in Carnegie Hall and the Harvard Club of Boston. As the Columbus Symphony's associate conductor, Miller regularly conducts classical, education, pops, and community concerts with the esteemed orchestra. The 2026-27 season will see him make his subscription debut with the symphony and also conduct three performances of Handel's *Messiah*. In the pops repertoire, Miller has conducted programs with legendary bands including The Beach Boys, Tower of Power, and Guster and conducted Dolly Parton's

Threads: My Songs in Symphony. Summer 2026 saw him lead the CSYO on its first international tour in 20 years before conducting the Columbus Symphony in nine performances.

An active conductor of opera and oratorio, Miller conducted Festival Theater Hudson's inaugural production: 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. Miller served as Assistant Conductor on a production of *West Side Story* — a collaboration between Opera Columbus, BalletMet, CAPA, and the Columbus Symphony — in 2025, as Assistant Conductor and Chorus Master on a production of *La Traviata* with Opera Columbus in 2026, and as the Assistant Conductor of Opera Saratoga in 2020.

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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