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Graduate Conducting Recital: Tiffany Lu

Tiffany Lu

Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

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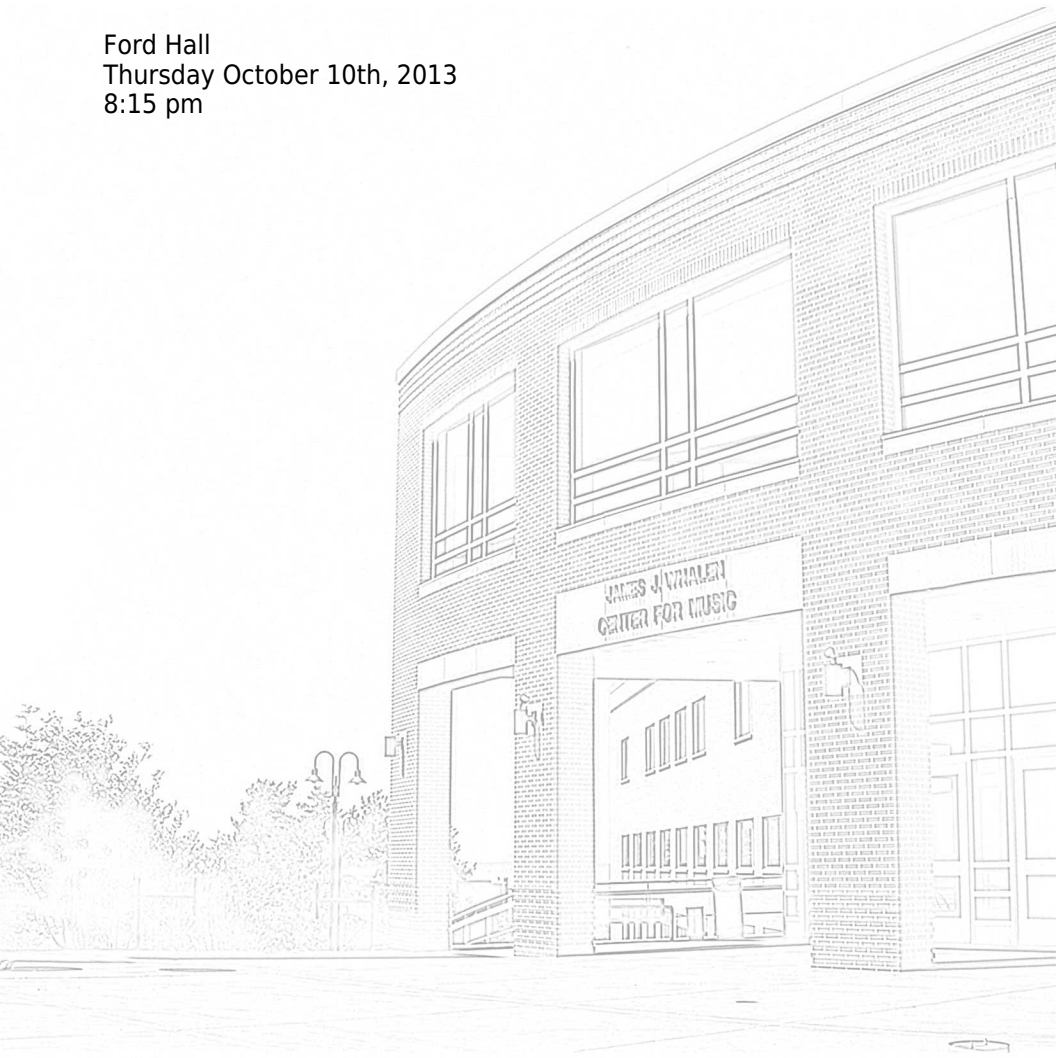
Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

Graduate Conducting Recital:

Tiffany Lu

Andrew Sickmeier, marimba
James Blumer, violin

Ford Hall
Thursday October 10th, 2013
8:15 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

Hebrides Overture, Op. 26 "Fingal's Cave"

Felix Mendelssohn
1809-1847

I Venti for Strings, Solo Violin, Marimba, and
Electronics, V. 127

Patrick Valentino
b. 1982

I. Tramontana (North Wind)

II. Levante (East Wind)

III. Sirocco (Southeast Wind)

IV. Zephyrus (West Wind)

V. Mistral (Northwest Wind)

Andrew Sickmeier, marimba
James Blumer, violin

Intermission

Appalachian Spring (Suite for Chamber Ensemble)

Aaron Copland
1900-1990

Biographies

James Blumer, violin

Born in Scranton, PA, James began taking violin lessons at age 12 and went on to graduate summa cum laude from Montclair State University, earning a degree in Violin Performance. A full scholarship from the city of Graz, Austria brought him there to study at the Universität der Musik und darstellende Kunst. While pursuing a masters at Ithaca College with Susan Waterbury, James is also currently working on certifications in both Body Mapping and Suzuki Pedagogy.

Andrew Sickmeier, marimba

Tonight marks Andrew's second collaboration with composer Patrick Valentino, the first being his concerto for vibraphone and chamber orchestra entitled "Visions," which they premiered at the Brevard Summer Music Academy. Andrew received both his B.A. and M.M. in percussion performance from Ithaca College and returns to perform with the orchestra for the first time since his undergraduate work. Since his graduation in May, Andrew has been appointed the principle percussionist of the Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes in Elmira, and continues to perform locally as well.

Patrick Valentino, composer

Patrick Valentino (b.1982) has been described as "a composer and conductor who believes that music creates community" (Atlantic Herald), who "combines a flair for musical drama and a gift for colorful orchestration to create pieces full of surprises." (HippoPress).

Born in Hazlet, New Jersey, Patrick composed his first pieces at age nine, and started devouring texts on music theory and orchestration, as well as studying scores and transcribing film music. In high school he was a student of the late Dr. Robert Abramson, former faculty of the Juilliard School, and later attended Montclair State University where he became the first undergraduate ever to compose a work for the MSU Symphonic Band (Journey of the Phoenix). Patrick's studies took him to the prestigious Moscow Conservatory, where he studied both composition and orchestral conducting, and ultimately to New England Conservatory, where he collaborated with the Ariel String quartet, recent winner of the Cleveland Quartet Award.

Patrick's music has been performed by various ensembles on three continents, including the Nashua, Monmouth, Oak Ridge and Central New Jersey Symphonies, the brass ensemble of Moscow Conservatory and Massive Brass, among others. He has also appeared on KSFO radio and WGBH television. In 2010, his music was performed at the dedication of Montclair State University's new music school, and in 2012 he led the Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra in the premiere of ImpulsEscape, while earning a masters in orchestral conducting.

During the 2014-15 season, the work you will hear today, I Venti, will be the focus of a dual-concert collaboration with the Orchestra Filharmonica Nissena in Sicily. Future projects include string quartets, chamber operas, sacred choral music, and cross collaborative works. More information, sound clips, and score samples can be found at PatrickValentinoMusic.com

Tiffany Lu, conductor

Tiffany Lu is currently in the second year of a tenure at Ithaca College, where she serves as assistant conductor for the Ithaca College Orchestras and holds a graduate assistantship studying under Dr. Jeffery Meyer. For the past two seasons, Tiffany has also attended the Pierre Monteux School for Conductors and Orchestral Musicians in Hancock, Maine, studying with Michael Jinbo.

Since beginning conducting studies in 2010, Tiffany has also served as an assistant conductor at the National Music Festival (2011 and 2012) and at the Tampa Metropolitan Youth Orchestras (2011-2012). She was an active participant at the Ithaca International Conducting Masterclass in April 2013 under David Effron, where she conducted in the final performance of Lutoslawski's Concerto for Orchestra.

As a violinist and violist, Tiffany regularly performs and substitutes with ensembles of all kinds in both Tampa and in Ithaca, including The Florida Orchestra, the Binghamton Philharmonic, the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, various chamber groups, and Gadje, a gypsy rock band based in Ithaca. She remains an active performer in every context she can find the opportunity to participate.

Tiffany holds a B.A. from Princeton University from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Policy and is currently a candidate for the M.M. degree of Orchestral Conducting at Ithaca College.

Program Notes

Mendelssohn: Hebrides Overture, Op. 26 "Fingal's Cave"

The opening theme to this most beloved of Mendelssohn's concert overtures came to him in a fit of inspiration during a trip to the eponymous Scottish archipelago in 1829. (The same trip was also to spark his "Scottish" Symphony No. 3 in A minor, which would not come to fruition for another twelve years.) Despite the effortless inception, Mendelssohn would not finalize the overture until 1832, reportedly struggling to capture the scenery's grit - the "oil and seagulls and dead fish" - as well as its austere beauty. The overture's enduring popularity attests to Mendelssohn's success in rendering both.

The main theme, a murmuring, falling line in B minor, is first given to the cello amidst a luminous backdrop of sustained strings and winds. The mood is wondrous, but with a touch of awe and fear, ever-conscious of the changeable and capricious sea. Even the more tranquil second theme, set in the relative key of D Major, swells and abates without preamble; as it gives way to a turbulent cascade of sixteenth notes, we hear a call from the horns and trumpets, which appear first triumphantly, but then recede into loneliness, echoing across the water. The development builds steadily to a crashing climax, from which the opening melody suddenly emerges, as quiet as it was to begin with, but now cloaked in a murmuring, more anxious accompaniment. The clarinet duo which revives the second theme in gorgeous harmony provides the overture's only moment of true serenity and repose. But the violins awaken with a start, and from then on it is a rush to the finish - or at least, to the last four bars, when a rising wisp of a flute melody and three quiet unison pizzicati put the storm to rest as quickly as it came.

-Tiffany Lu

Valentino: I Venti (2012)

I Venti ("The Winds") is a work for string orchestra, soloists, and live electronics which seeks to depict characteristic elements of five of the Mediterranean winds. The winds that sweep over the Mediterranean Sea are so distinct and varied that, over time, their meteorological characteristics have become almost personifying attributes.

The first movement, Tramontana, translates literally to "from beyond the mountains" (in this case the Alps), and is associated with all things strange, foreign, and savage. Violent, otherworldly sonorities are juxtaposed with eerily quiet sections; meter is nearly nonexistent and the sonic events move in an unpredictable cycle.

In contrast, Levante is gentle and damp, mostly accompanying fog and clouds. It reaches its intensity in the Strait of Gibraltar, where Europe meets North Africa. A complete change from the first movement, this section gently glides along with repetitive rhythms and buoyant, purple sonorities. One of the most famous and distinct, Sirocco screams up from the Sahara with dry air and hurricane gales. This short central movement uses tight harmonies, bright colors and rapidly changing timbres in an attempt to capture this lightening wind.

Zephyrus, the West Wind, is associated with favorable weather and the sunset; this gentle, harmonious wind inspires meditation on things eternal and temporal. Musically, this movement is based on a single melody, which is repeated ad lib in a massive, subdued canon. Soon, the contour of the lines merge to one texture comprised only of the melody. A closing section repeats the melody, this time more drawn out and metrical, until each section pauses while playing until the melody becomes undone.

The Northwest wind, Mistral, means 'Masterly'; this summer wind brings in clear, fresh weather. It is strong, cold, and dry. The final movement is a masterful *moto perpetuo* in which the main line is passed from section to section, occasionally amplified or commented upon. As soon as it comes it flies off, leaving only small echoes of itself.

Copland: Appalachian Spring

Composed under commission in 1944, the "Ballet for Martha" lacked a name until just before the premiere, when choreographer Martha Graham chose the title from a poem called *The Dance* by American author Hart Crane. In truth, the name bears virtually no relation to the music or the ballet, causing Copland much amusement when he repeatedly received comments about the music's power to evoke the scenery of mountains in spring. However, regardless what imagery this music may conjure in one's mind, the harmonic language is unmistakably American, and it won Copland the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 1945. That same year, Copland rearranged the ballet music into an orchestral suite which retained most of the original music. The suite is a continuous twenty-three minutes, and was originally scored for a chamber ensemble featuring thirteen instruments: flute, clarinet, bassoon, piano, and one desk each of the string family members (except the single double bass). He would subsequently score a version of the suite for full orchestra, which is more frequently performed. Copland also authorized the chamber version to be performed with an expanded string section, which is the version performed here today.

The action of the ballet features a pair of pioneers celebrating their newly-built farmhouse in Pennsylvania and their upcoming marriage. They are visited by various neighbors and advisors, and experience the spectrum of emotions that come with starting a new life in an unfamiliar place. After phases of both joy and uncertainty, in the end the couple stands ready to face their new life with quiet courage.

The eight sections of the suite proceed thusly (text in quotation marks indicates Copland's own prose):

1. "*Very Slowly*. Introduction of the characters, one by one, in a suffused light." This serene section features gentle solos over an ever-present A Major tonality.
2. "*Fast*. Sudden burst of unison strings in A major arpeggios starts the action. A sentiment both elated and religious gives the keynote to this scene." Copland indicates "vigoroso" for this bright and lively tune, which later becomes superimposed upon a more expansive string texture.
3. "*Moderate*. Duo for the Bride and her Intended--scene of tenderness and passion." This section is introduced by a lilting irregular rhythmic figure, which then dissolves into more intimate and expressive but muted sonorities in far-off keys.
4. "*Quite Fast*. The Revivalist and his flock. Folksy feelings--suggestions of square dances and country fiddlers." This section is sprightly and dancelike, depicting the exuberance of the spiritual revivalists. This eventually crests into an eloquent and grandiose statement, leaving a pronounced impression on the protagonists, who quietly reflect on these themes.
5. "*Still Faster*. Solo dance of the Bride--presentiment of motherhood. Extremes of joy and fear and wonder." After an irregular transitional section, the following presto is a sort of *moto perpetuo*, featuring highly syncopated tunes above a never-ending tattoo of eighth notes. But with an abrupt silence the music lurches into a more deliberate, firm tempo, cadencing with a firm resolve in C Major.
6. "*Very Slowly (as at first)*. Transition scenes reminiscent of the introduction." The music here is very similar to that of the slow introduction, but set in A-flat Major, a half-step lower, perhaps illustrating the mellowing effects of maturity and experience.
7. "*Calm and Flowing*. Scenes of daily activity for the Bride and her farmer-husband. There are five variations on a Shaker theme... sung by a solo clarinet..." This well-known hymn, otherwise known as "Simple Gifts," becomes more and more elaborate and excitable with every variation, until the final iteration, which is stated in glorious and dignified fashion.
8. "*Moderate. Coda*. The Bride takes her place among her neighbors. At the end the couple are left 'quiet and strong in their new house.' Muted strings intone a hushed, prayerlike passage. The close is reminiscent of the opening music."

-Tiffany Lu

Personnel

Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

Violin 1

James Blumer, *concertmaster*
Jenna Trunk
Joohyun Lee
Brian Schmidt
Elizabeth Benz
Kevin Pham

Violin 2

Sonsoles Llodra, *principal*
Sarah Hoag
Aiko Richter
Christopher Sforza
Nils Schwerzmann
Colleen Mahoney

Viola

Daniel Martinez, *principal*
Austin Savage
Jonathan Fleischman
Kelly Ralston

Cello

Eric Perreault, *principal*
Hamadi Duggan
Sophie Chang
Madeline Docimo

Bass

Samuel Shuhan, *principal*
John DiCarlo

Flute

Sarah Peskanov, *principal*
Rachel Auger

Oboe

Elizabeth Schmitt, *principal*
Chloe Washington

Clarinet

James Conte, *principal*
Christopher Pena

Bassoon

Ross Triner, *co-principal*
Sean Harkin, *co-principal*

French Horn

Robert Oldroyd, *principal*
Megan Carpenter

Trumpet

Daniel Venora, *principal*
Thomas Pang

Timpani

Keegan Sheehy, *principal*

Piano

Ni Zhang, *principal*

Electronics

Paul Grobey