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Concert: Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Octavio Más-Arocas

Kyle Armbrust

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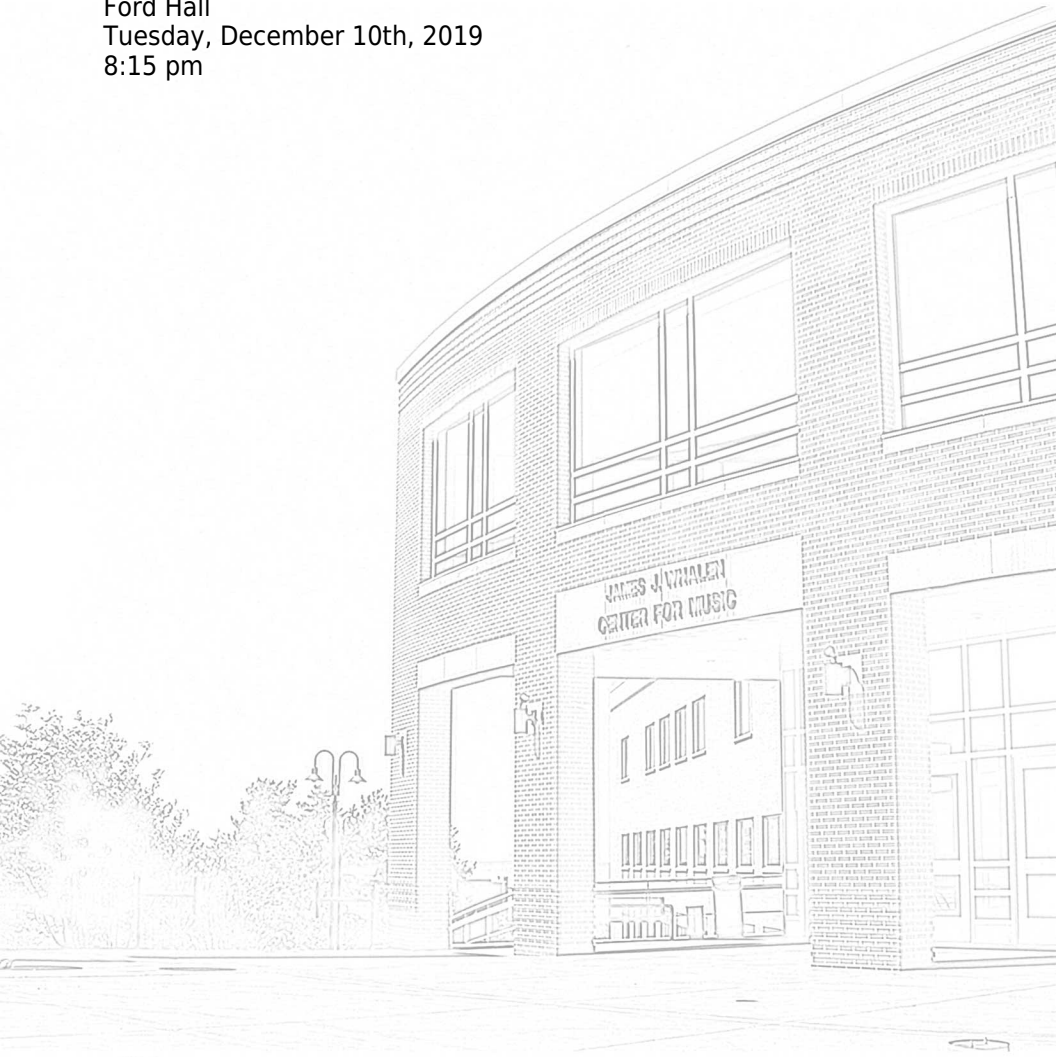
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Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Octavio Más-Arocas, music director and conductor

Kyle Armbrust, viola

Ford Hall
Tuesday, December 10th, 2019
8:15 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

Anticipation

Jeffrey Taylor
(b. 1999)

World Premiere, IC Orchestras Fanfare Project

Purple Rhapsody

Joan Tower
(b. 1938)

Kyle Armbrust, viola

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, op. 43

Jean Sibelius
(1865-1957)

Allegretto

Tempo andante, ma rubato

Vivacissimo-Lento e soave

Finale: Allegro moderato—Molto largamente

Program Notes

Tower: Purple Rhapsody

Purple Rhapsody was commissioned by the Omaha Symphony with the Buffalo Philharmonic, Virginia Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, ProMusica Chamber Orchestra, Peninsula Music Festival Orchestra and the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra with a grant from the Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation in the Library of Congress. The work is dedicated with affection to the wonderful violist Paul Neubauer who made it all possible.

The sound of the viola has always reminded me of the color purple—a deep kind of luscious purple. In fact, the first solo viola piece I wrote for Paul is called "Wild Purple" (where the "wild" refers to the high energy and virtuosity of that work).

In the concerto, I try to make the solo viola "sing"—trying to take advantage on occasion (not always) of the viola's inherent melodic abilities. This is not an easy task since the viola is one of the tougher instruments to pit against an orchestra.

In fact, for my orchestration of this work, I left out several instruments (horns and oboes) to thin out the background to allow the viola to come forward (even in strong passages) with a little more "leverage". I am hoping that at the climaxes of some of these "rhapsodic" and energetic lines, the orchestra does not overwhelm the viola.

Notes by Joan Tower

Sibelius: Symphony No. 2

Though one of Jean Sibelius's most well-known characteristics is his nationalistic proclivities, epitomized by his tone poem *Finlandia* and choral symphony *Kullervo* based on Finnish national epic *Kalevala*, Finnish cultural influences only gradually made way into his career and compositions during the first thirty years of his life. Finland had been under Swedish control for many centuries, and he grew up in a Swedish-speaking family. Despite the majority of the country being Finnish speakers, Swedish-speaking elites held more power, resulting in a growing resentment against the them.

Sibelius began his formal studies in music in violin and identified more as a violinist than a composer at first. Though he dabbled in composition as well, he admitted that his works were bad and were only for his own entertainment. However, his interests in composition grew in his conservatory years, and soon he began to study composition privately with Martin Wegelius at the Helsinki Music Institute.

A few years after graduating, Sibelius traveled to Vienna for another year of studies. There, several developments happened that pushed Sibelius into a new direction. Having written mostly for chamber ensembles in an academic style until this point in his career, he took to writing for the orchestra. He also encountered music of Bruckner and Wagner. After hearing Bruckner's Third Symphony and Wagner's *Siegfried*, Sibelius became a fan of both composers, turning away from the Brahmsian academics. Lastly, through a developing relationship with Aino Järnefelt, who would go on to become his wife, he began to take interest in Finnish culture. The Järnefelt family was a staunch advocate of Finnish literature and its importance in Finnish identity: her letters to Sibelius from this period are written in Finnish, and he replied in Swedish because of his lack of fluency in Finnish. It was during this time that he studied *Kalevala*, Finnish national epic that would go on to inspire many of his works.

Back in Finland, he began working on *Kullervo*, a large scale work for orchestra, two soloists, and a male choir, that told the story of one of the heroes of *Kalevala*. He was further influenced by Finnish national culture by Karelianism—the fascination with the now-Russian occupied region of Karelia, the territory that were considered to harbor the heart of Finnish traditions. He searched for folk music traditions and began to incorporate them in his music. By the mid-1890s, he was steeped in Finnish culture. In his First Symphony, written in 1899, he combined the traditional symphonic form with distinctly regional and nationalistic themes, and it proved to be an international success.

His Second Symphony takes further departures from the traditional symphonic form. The first movement begins in fragments. It is unclear whether the opening chords played by the strings are a thematic material or just an accompanying figure. Soon after, woodwinds come with a melody of their own, soon to be taken over by the horns. Unlike an exposition of a traditional sonata form movement in which the musical materials are firmly established, Sibelius only sows the seeds of the themes and motives, allowing them to develop through the course of the movement. The middle movements share a sense of struggle though in different affects. The second movement begins calmly with cellos and basses playing pizzicato, followed by a lyrical theme in the bassoons, before building into a towering brass climax. The third movement is a more outward and restless in its mood. Brief moments of ethereal song by the oboe takes us out of the tension, but soon, the restlessness returns and builds toward the triumph in the finale.

Considering the political unrest in Finland at the turn of the century from growing Russian repression, some have claimed that this piece is a statement of political protest and Finnish triumph. However, Sibelius rejected this idea during his lifetime, perhaps fueled by his desire to make the piece more pan-European than regional. Whatever his motive may have been, the work contains beauty and emotions that are timeless and continue to touch hearts of many. British conductor Sir Colin Davis, in his liner notes for the work, included the following lines from William Wordsworth's *Preludes*:

[At distance not the third part of a mile
Was a blue chasm, a fracture in the vapour,
A deep and gloomy breathing-place, through which
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
Innumerable, roaring with one voice.
The universal spectacle throughout
Was shaped for admiration and delight,]
Grand in itself alone, but in that breach
Through which the homeless voice of waters rose,
That dark deep thoroughfare, had Nature lodged
The soul, the imagination of the whole.

Notes by Andrew J. Kim

Biographies

Octavio Más-Arocas

Octavio Más-Arocas is a versatile and dynamic conductor whose achievements demonstrate his talent and musicianship. Más-Arocas is currently the Music Director and Conductor of the Mansfield Symphony Orchestra in Ohio, Principal Conductor of the Marquette Symphony Orchestra in Michigan, the Director of Orchestras and Professor of Orchestral Conducting at Ithaca College in New York, and Conductor-in-Residence at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in California.

An award-winner conductor, Mr. Más-Arocas won the Robert J. Harth Conducting Prize at the Aspen Music Festival, the Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Award, given by Kurt Masur, is the recipient of the Thelma A. Robinson Award from the Conductors Guild, a Prize Winner of the Third European Conductors Competition, and a winner of the National Youth Orchestra of Spain Conductors Competition. In 2012, Mr. Más-Arocas was selected by the League of American Orchestras to conduct the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in a showcase event during the League's National Conference in Dallas.

Chosen by Kurt Masur, Mr. Más-Arocas was awarded the prestigious Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Scholarship. Consequently, he worked as Maestro Masur's assistant with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and the Helsinki Radio Orchestra, and made his German conducting debut with the Leipziger Symphonieorchester. The offer came after Mr. Más-Arocas' New York debut concert sharing the podium with Maestro Masur and the Manhattan School of Music Symphony.

Mr. Más-Arocas served as Principal Conductor of the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra, Wisconsin, and held the positions of Director of Orchestral Studies and Opera Conductor at the Lawrence University Conservatory of Music in Wisconsin, Director of Orchestral Studies and Associate Professor of Conducting at the Baldwin Wallace University Conservatory of Music in Ohio, Director of Orchestras at the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, Resident Conductor of the Sewanee Summer Music Festival in Tennessee, and Assistant conductor of the National Repertory Orchestra in Colorado. In 2013, simultaneously to his work with the Lawrence Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Más-Arocas was the Resident Conductor of the Unicamp Symphony Orchestra in Campinas, Brazil, where he also was a Visiting Professor of conducting at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas. Mr. Más-Arocas spends part of his summers in the Grand Traverse area, where he continues his association as conductor at the Interlochen Center for the Arts. In addition, he has worked with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra as a regular cover conductor.

In the last few years Mr. Más-Arocas has conducted orchestra across North and South America and Europe including the Filarmonica George Enescu in Romania, the Orquesta de Valencia and Granada City Orchestra in Spain, the Leipziger Symphonieorchester in Germany, the Orquestra Sinfônica da Unicamp in Brazil, the Green Bay, Traverse City, Bluewater, Catskill, Clinton, Fort Worth, Spokane, Toledo, Phoenix, Memphis, Kansas City, and San Antonio Symphonies, the National Repertory Orchestra, the Manhattan School of Music Symphony, the orchestras of Viana do Castelo and Artave in Portugal, the Interlochen Philharmonic, the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico Philharmonic, the Rosario Symphony in Argentina, Kharkov Symphony in Ukraine, the National Youth Orchestras of Portugal and Spain, the Pescara Symphony in Italy, the Amsterdam Brass in the Netherlands, and the Ciudad Alcala de Henares Symphony. In addition, Mr. Más-Arocas has served as assistant conductor at the Madrid Royal Opera House.

Mr. Más-Arocas was assistant conductor of the National Repertory Orchestra, which he conducted in subscription, family, and pops concerts. As the Resident Conductor at the Sewanee Summer Music Festival he conducted the Festival, Symphony, and Cumberland Orchestras. Other festival appearances include the Aspen Music Festival, the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, the Festival Internacional Carlos Gomes in Campinas, Brazil, the Interlochen Music Festival, the Bach Festival at Baldwin Wallace University, and the MidAmerican Center for Contemporary Music.

His ability to work, inspire, and transform young talents has lead him to be a frequent guest conductor with prominent music education organizations and ensembles around the world. He has worked with the World Youth Symphony Orchestra, the national youth orchestras of Portugal and Spain, has conducted All-State Honor Orchestras, and has been in residence with university orchestras in Chicago, Cornell University, Portugal, and Brazil. Mr. Más-Arocas has lead tours with the National Youth Orchestra "Templarios" of Portugal, the Interlochen Symphony, the Baldwin Wallace Symphony, and toured Argentina with the Silleda Wind Symphony.

Mr. Más-Arocas is in demand as conducting teacher. He is on faculty of two of the world most competitive conducting workshops, the Cabrillo Festival Conducting Workshop and the Ithaca International Conducting Masterclass, and has taught at the Queens College Conducting Workshop in New York, and leads the very selective graduate orchestral conducting program at Ithaca College.

Mr. Más-Arocas is an alumnus of the prestigious American Academy of Conducting at Aspen, where he studied with David Zinman. He completed doctoral studies and his main mentors include Kurt Masur, Harold Farberman, and Emily Freeman Brown.

Kyle Armbrust

Kyle Armbrust started playing the viola at age three. Since giving his New York solo debut with Kurt Masur and the Juilliard Orchestra in Avery Fisher Hall, he has created a multi-dimensional career performing and recording a wide range of music.

This season, Kyle premiered a new solo viola work by Vijay Iyer titled *For Flint*, and recorded a string quartet by Laurie Anderson in front of a live audience and the composer at the Paula Cooper Gallery in NYC. As a member of the International Contemporary Ensemble, Kyle performed in Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring* with the Martha Graham Dance Company for the 75th anniversary of the ballet, and he also performed with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra on tour with Mitsuko Uchida.

Kyle is a founding member of the Knights Chamber Orchestra, a member of the International Contemporary Ensemble, and principal viola of the Westchester Philharmonic. He has performed as principal viola with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and has been a substitute member of the Philadelphia Orchestra since 2006. Kyle served as assistant principal viola of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra from 2009-2011.

A dedicated chamber musician and active collaborator, Kyle has worked with distinct artists such as Yuri Bashmet, Elliot Carter, J. Cole, Herbie Hancock, Lauryn Hill, Vijay Iyer, Yo-Yo Ma, Steve Reich, Kaija Saariaho, Tyshawn Sorey, Anna Thorvaldsdottir, and John Zorn. He has recorded for the Ancalagon, Cedille, Interscope, Naxos, Nonesuch, Ondine, Phil.harmoni, Sony, and Tzadik labels.

Kyle is currently the Assistant Professor of Viola at Ithaca College, and has been on faculty with the International Contemporary Ensemble at the Banff Centre for three years. He received three degrees from The Juilliard School where he studied with Heidi Castleman, Misha Amory, and Michael Tree.

Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Tower: Purple Rhapsody

Violin I

Lucia Barrero
Jenna Trunk
Felix Gamez
Timothy Ryan
Parham
Harris Andersen
Lily Mell
Amber Murillo
Masakazu
Yasumoto

Violin II

Emily Scicchitano
Caroline Ryan
Jingwen Ou
Robert Finley
McGregor
Rowan Whitesell
Allison Quade
Tiffany Hotte
Michaela
Deutsch-Dornfeld

Viola

Zac Cohen
Simone Cartales
Maria Dupree
Alora Foster
Karly Masters
Sarah Nichols
Matthew Rizzo
Molly Crocker

Cello

Malachi Brown
Grace Dashnaw
Jennie Davis
Laura Van Voris
Michael Zieglar
David Shane
Abigail Pugh
Emma Scheneman

Bass

Nicholas David
Mathisen
Brandon Kulzer
Jack David Pesch
Anthony Bottone

Flute

Leandra Stirling
Kevin Buff (picc.)

Clarinet

Daniel Jaggars
Emma Dwyer

Bassoon

Eden Treado
Sierra Winter-Klepel

Trumpet

Aleyna Ashenfarb
Evan Schreiber

Bass Trombone

Tim White

Timpani

Greg Savino

Percussion

Ethan Cowburn

Sibelius: Symphony No. 2

Violin I

Lucia Barrero
Jenna Trunk
Felix Gamez
Timothy Ryan
Parham
Harris Andersen
Lily Mell
Amber Murillo
Masakazu
Yasumoto
Jingwen Ou
Robert Finley
McGregor
Rowan Whitesell

Violin II

Emily Scicchitano
Caroline Ryan
Allison Quade
Tiffany Hotte
Michaela
Deutsch-Dornfeld
Ashley Apanavicius
Benjamin Harrison
Strait
Kathryn Andersen
Katelyn Levine
Toni Nargentino
Megan Rowburrey

Viola

Zac Cohen
Simone Cartales
Maria Dupree
Alora Foster
Karly Masters
Sarah Nichols
Matthew Rizzo
Molly Crocker
Christopher Chen
Liv Ceterski
Laura Avila
Faith Willet

Cello

Malachi Brown
Grace Dashnaw
Jennie Davis
Laura Van Voris
Dylan Costa
Elizabeth Carroll
Hideo Schwartz
Caroline Andrews
Aidan Saltini
Katelyn Miller
Colleen d'Alelio

Bass

Nicholas David
Mathisen
Jonathan Hoe
Zane Carnes
Samuel Koch
Matthew Suffern
Samuel Higgins
Katelyn Adams
Jack David Pesch

Flute

Leandra Stirling
Timothy Mullins

Oboe

Erica Erath
Raelene Ford

Clarinet

Daniel Jaggars
Emma Dwyer

Bassoon

Bradley Johnson
Donald Schweikert

Horn

Ben Futterman
Charlotte Povey
Sarah Capobianco
Sydney Rosen
Tori Postler (asst.)

Trumpet

Anna Damigella
Aleyna Ashenfarb
Evan Schreiber

Trombone

Kurt Eide
Clare Martin
Timothy White
(bass.)

Tuba

Brandon Bartschat

Timpani

Greg Savino

Acknowledgements

Concerts and Facilities

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Upcoming Events

February 9th, 2020 at 4pm - Lecture Recital: Cibelle J. Donza with Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Z. Kodály: Háry János Suite

Gabriela Lena Frank: Walkabout: Concerto for Orchestra

Cibelle J. Donza, conductor

February 16th, 2020 at 3pm - Children's Concert with Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Z. Kodály: Háry János Suite

Octavio Más-Arocas, music director and conductor

February 28th, 2020 at 8:15pm: Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Gabriela Lena Frank: Walkabout: Concerto for Orchestra

Fredrick Kaufman: Concerto for Cello and Strings, "Kaddish"

Elizabeth Simkin, cello

Z. Kodály: Háry János Suite

Octavio Más-Arocas, music director and conductor