

Montclair State University Symphony Orchestra

Nicholas DeMaison, *conductor*

with

Members of the
Academy Orchestra
of the
New Jersey Symphony
Youth Orchestra

José Luis Domínguez, *conductor*

featuring

Sabrina Isaac, *clarinet*

Kasser Theater
Wednesday, April 27th, 2022
7:30 pm

Jonathan Koppell
President

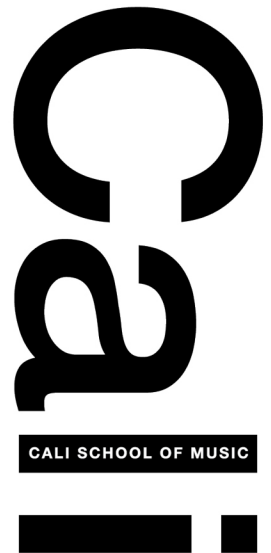
Daniel Gurskis
Dean, College of the Arts

Anthony Mazzocchi
Director
John J. Cali School of Music

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Executive Director
Arts & Culture Programming



John J. Cali School of Music



Program

Hungarian Rhapsody no.2 (1847)

Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)
arr. Hugo Domínguez

Concerto no.2, for clarinet and orchestra (2012)

Óscar Navarro
(b.1981)

*Sabrina Isaac
clarinet*

*Winner of the 2021-2022
MSU Orchestra Concerto Competition*

Pause

Symphony no. 2, op.17 (1872)
"The Ukranian"

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840-1893)

I. Andante sostenuto—Allegro vivo
II. Andantino marziale, quasi moderato
III. Scherzo. Allegro molto vivace
IV. Finale. Moderato assai

Notes on the Program

Hungarian Rhapsody no. 2

Although Franz Liszt grew up speaking German rather than Hungarian and actually lived relatively little of his life in his native land, he always remained intensely proud of his Hungarian heritage. Among the many colorful stories in Lisztian biography are the accounts of his playing in public while dressed in native folk costume. This was in the 1840's, when "Lisztomania" had become an international phenomenon and his career as a concert artist was at its height, corresponding with the growing protest in Hungary against Austrian dominance. Ultimately the unrest would lead to the Hungarian revolution of 1848, and, as Hungary's most prominent citizen, Liszt fell easily into his role as symbol of Hungarian independence.

Not surprisingly, Liszt had a strong interest in Hungarian folk music and absorbed its influences in some of his own music. The best known of his folk inspired works are the 19 Hungarian Rhapsodies for solo piano, pieces that are still very much a part of the virtuoso piano repertoire. The Rhapsody No.2 in C# minor is the best known of the set, and like many of the others, has been arranged for orchestra. The version heard today was transposed down a half step to C minor and arranged by Hugo Domínguez, father of the conductor of the Academy Orchestra of the NJSYO, José Luis Domínguez.

To achieve its folk flavor, the Rhapsody is set in the form of a *czárdás*, a Hungarian dance that is traditionally laid out in two sections, one slow and one fast. The opening, called *Lassan* (Hungarian for "slow"), sets a proudly ponderous tone filled with theatrically melancholy emotion. Adding to the exotic flavor is the use of the so-called Phrygian mode, an ancient scale much used in Spanish music. The fast section known as the *Friska* (literally "fresh" in Hungarian), begins with the tinkling imitation of the *cimbalom*, a folk instrument used in Gypsy bands. Adding to the frantically exuberant tone are several invigorating *accelerandi* and a final concluding *spectacular prestissimo*. -*Note by Daniel Maki*

Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra no. 2

The second Concerto for Clarinet and Symphony Orchestra was a commission of the "Valencia Music Institute" and dedicated to clarinetist José Franch-Ballester. The work was written between November 2011 and January 2012. The shape of this concerto is in one movement with three main sections. The work exploits most of the technical possibilities of the clarinet while in many parts is treated as the instrument *par excellence* in all of us, the voice.

The first major section of the work is divided into two parts, a very cantabile style and a second completely contrasting style typical of traditional flamenco music. This

part is accompanied by one of the instruments used in the world of flamenco, the palms. Clarinet, Orchestra and "clappers" are responsible for creating the dance that takes us to the second large and slow section of the work. This second section exploits the dynamic possibilities of expression of the clarinet, becoming at times very close to the human voice.

The last section, the *prestisimo*, is framed in a big dance where the clarinetist and orchestra engage a technical virtuosity, creating a dialogue between the two. -*Note by Óscar Navarro*

Symphony no. 2

The common nickname for the symphony since its composition has been the "Little Russian." Though by some margin the shortest of Tchaikovsky's symphonies, this is not a "little Russian" symphony as distinct from a "great Russian" symphony. The nickname, conferred by Nicolai Dimitrievich Kashkin, a Moscow music critic and acquaintance of Tchaikovsky's, refers to "Little Russia," what was, at that time, an affectionate name for Ukraine. Kashkin thought *Little Russian* an apt nickname for the altogether sensible reason that the work includes several Ukrainian folk tunes. Tchaikovsky had begun the work in Ukraine. His younger sister Alexandra Ilinishna, known in the family as Sasha, had married Lev Davidov in 1860, and the Davidov estate at Kamenka, near Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, became a home away from home for Tchaikovsky, a place where he could always find the warmly nurturing family life for which he longed, but that he could not establish on his own. It was at Kamenka that he began the symphony and where he heard some of the Davidov servants sing the tunes he used. Working in an uncommonly sunny mood, he continued to write at Kiev and on his summer travels with his brother Modest, and he completed the score in Moscow, where he had to return to resume his teaching duties at the Conservatory.

In his letters that fall, Tchaikovsky laments his loneliness, missing the meat pastries, the *pelmeny*, at his father's house and wishing that the Davidovs might move to Moscow. But in what he says about his new symphony he is optimistic. He played the finale at a Christmas party at the Rimsky-Korsakovs and recounts how he was nearly torn to pieces by the enraptured company, his hostess insisting that he should make a piano duet arrangement immediately. The premiere too went well, and on February 5, 1873, he was able to tell his father, "My symphony was played here last week with great success. I was called for many times and cheered repeatedly. The success was so great that the symphony will be played again at the tenth concert, and a subscription has been started to make me a present. Also I received 300 rubles from the Musical Society. . . . I am delighted with all the success and the material profit that has accrued from it."

Like almost every major work of Tchaikovsky, this one begins with a fairly slow introduction. A single horn sustains one of the notes of the preemptory chord with

which the symphony begins, and that note is the first of a Ukrainian song, “Down by Mother Volga.” John Warrack points out in his Tchaikovsky biography that it “also bears some relation to a city song, ‘O You Winter, Little Winter’; it was a student favorite and associated with the Cossack rebel Stenka Razin.” Its downward droops and its way of traversing and re-traversing the same figures give it an unmistakably Russian flavor. Something exotic is contributed by the odd seven-measure phrase length. After the horn comes the turn of the bassoon, and that instrument is accompanied by plucked cellos and basses whose figurations resemble blurred echoes of the tune itself. The horn picks it up again, this time against a background of sustained strings and soft but nervously pulsating woodwind chords. This procedure of presenting an unchanging tune against a constantly changing background, something Tchaikovsky probably learned from the delightful *Kamarinskaya* of Glinka, the “great avatar of Russian music,” as Stravinsky called him, sustains the entire ample and imaginative introduction. That section comes full circle when we hear the tune played again on two unaccompanied horns.

This is a symphony without any really slow music, nothing slower at any rate than the not terribly slow *Andante sostenuto* of the introduction. Where we might now expect a slow movement, Tchaikovsky gives us a march, music he recycled from *Undine*, an opera he began and abandoned in 1869. This is like a slightly exotic path off the main road that leads from Schubert to Mahler. Tchaikovsky uses it as the anchor of a simple but charming rondo, whose second episode, a clarinet tune with flute accompaniment, is another Ukrainian song, “Spin, o my spinner.” The movement ends with a “disintegrating” coda of the kind invented by Beethoven for the funeral march of the *Eroica*.

Next comes a brilliant scherzo. It carries reminiscences of the corresponding movement of Borodin’s *Symphony No. 1* (1867) and, far more familiar to most of us, of the “Queen Mab” Scherzo in Berlioz’s *Roméo et Juliette*. In contrast to the 3/8 measures of the scherzo itself, the trio is a chattering movement in duple meter, perhaps a folk song (but, if so, not yet firmly identified as such).

A portentous—mock-portentous, that is—introduction prepares the spirited and swift finale that so delighted the gathering *chez* Rimsky-Korsakov. The main theme is a song called “The Crane.” This, too, Tchaikovsky treats with that same Glinkaesque “changing background” technique of orchestral variation that he used so effectively with “Down by Mother Volga” at the beginning of the symphony. For contrast, he introduces a melody whose delightfully quirky metric suggests either a peg-legged waltz or a rumba. A little later, after a make-believe catastrophe, this is developed in a more staccato style, and at that point one understands very clearly one of the reasons Stravinsky was so fond of this piece. The play catastrophe returns, emphasized this time with a *fortissimo* stroke on the tam-tam, and then comes the coda. Tchaikovsky could be insistent when it came to letting you know that a piece was about to be over, and this is a case in point. -Note by Michael Steinberg

Biographies

Sabrina Isaac is a woodwind musician currently studying Clarinet Performance at the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University where she studies with Benjamin Baron. She has been playing the clarinet for 13 years and is a gigging musician in the New York Tristate area. She is a part of the university's top ensembles including the Wind Symphony and Orchestra, holding principal positions. She was also the Principal Clarinet of the ISO Symphony Orchestra from 2017 to 2018 and Principle Bass Clarinetist from 2016 to 2017. Sabrina is a woodwind doubler, playing all the clarinets, flutes, and saxophones and has played in numerous off Broadway productions across the tristate area. In the summers, she works as the Executive Administrative Assistant at the Windhaven Music Festival (Weston, Vermont).

Her awards include the Montclair Symphony Orchestra Concerto Winner (2022), Excellence in Band Award (2022), Charleston International Music Competition First Prize Winner (2021), Presser Undergraduate Scholarship Award for an outstanding senior (2021), Lucille Olivia Award for outstanding achievement as a music student in recognition of her significant potential in the field (2020), Dr. Theodore Atlas Foundation Performing Arts Scholarship Award (2018), Outstanding Soloist Award - World Strides and Regional Essentially Ellington (2017, 2018), New York Philharmonic: New World Composition Challenge - second prize (2017).

Nicholas DeMaison is an American conductor and composer based in New York City where he is Co-Director of Wavefield Ensemble. Passionately devoted to the music being made in our own time, Nicholas has led dozens of premiere performances of new works for orchestra, opera, choir and various mixed ensembles with new technologies, and appears on albums released by New Focus, Mode, New World, Bright Shiny Things, and Con d'or Records. He has been a regular collaborator with International Contemporary Ensemble, and previously worked with The Composers Conference, American Opera Projects, Giants are Small, Ensemble Sospeso, Talea Ensemble, and Opera Cabal among others. Nicholas is currently the Director of Orchestral Activities at the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University in Montclair, NJ. He holds degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory and UC San Diego where his principal teachers were Chaya Czernowin and Philippe Manoury.

Coached by New Jersey Symphony musicians, the **New Jersey Symphony Youth Orchestra** gives qualified middle- and high-school students—especially Black and Latinx youth in the Greater Newark area—unparalleled opportunities to achieve personal and musical excellence. The organization brings together students of all skill levels who share a passion for music. There are four performing ensembles that are sequential in level, creating a pathway for students to flourish and grow under the guidance of the Symphony's expert faculty: Training Ensemble, String Ensemble, Chamber Orchestra, and the Academy Orchestra.

Montclair State University Symphony Orchestra
Nicholas DeMaison, Conductor

Flute

Katie Barbo
Olivia McKenna
Peter Suh
Cheryl Yang*

Oboe

Parker Diederich
Kat Keller
Alexandre Desrivieres

Clarinet

Katherine Breeden
Colin Merkovsky
Anthony Kalanick

Bassoon

Emily Sullivan
Sydney Fink*

French horn

Samantha Slockbower
Sheldon Senek
Joy Breiten
Shanyse Strickland

Trumpet

Gavin Ard
Stephanie Parmalee
Chris Harle
Michael Minnena*

Trombone

Julie Zedeck
Lucas Kirchberger
Matthew Veal

Tuba

JT Adinolfi

Percussion

Julian Dippolito
Alejandro Arbelaez
Max Tripodi
Mark Tiplado
Victor Merchan*

Harp

Liann Cline

Violin I

Etleva Vatoci,
concertmaster
Jamiroquai Ellison
Yiheng Zhou
Dana Ryan
Katia Baranova
Timothy Shi*
Evan Nguyen*
Olive Wang*

Violin II

Daniella Renteria
Lanaye Kemp
Alexander Saldana
Zaid Abuhuzeima
Gigi Maldonado
Adhithi Arun*
Samantha Huerta*
Caroleena
Fernandez-Chousal*
Ameya Srinivasan*

Viola

Nicolas Mirabile
Emily Wong
Denton Moreland
Noah Stevens
Emma O'Brien
Rachel Diaz*

Cello

Paul Vanderwal
Randy León
Lisa Tiedemann
Leyao Chen
Nicole Stites
Alexandra Prince
Stella Saliei
Ryan Lu*

Bass

Ryan Chamberlain
JP Bernabe

Orchestra Manager

Paul Vanderwal

* Member of the Academy
Orchestra of the NJ
Symphony Youth
Orchestra

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aims to create dynamic and
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