

OUR 112TH SEASON OF FREE CLASSICAL MUSIC
CONCERTS FOR THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK



NAUMBURG
ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

PRESENTS

ENSEMBLE LPR

TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2017 • 7:30PM

*The Historic Naumburg Bandshell on the Concert Ground of Central Park.
Please visit NAUMBURGCONCERTS.ORG for more information on our series.
Our Next Concerts will be on 11 & 18 July and 1 August 2017*

TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2017 ▪ 7:30PM

In celebration of 112 years of Free Concerts for the people of
New York City - The oldest continuous free outdoor western classical music
concert series in the world.

*Tonight's concert is being broadcast live on classical WQXR - 105.9 FM -
and via live stream at www.wqxr.org with WQXR host Paul Cavalconte*

Naumburg Orchestral Concerts Presents

ENSEMBLE LPR

David Handler, *Artistic Director* | Lara St John, *Violin*

JESSIE MONTGOMERY (1981-)

Starburst (2012)

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)

The Lark Ascending (1920)

arr, Arman | Lara St John, violin

MATTHEW HINDSON (1968-)

Maralinga (US Premiere)

Lara St John, violin

INTERMISSION

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)

Concerto in E-flat, "Dumbarton Oaks" (1937-38)

BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913-76)

Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge, Op.10 (1936)

I. Introduction and Theme

II. Variation 1: Adagio

III. Variation 2: March

IV. Variation 3: Romance

V. Variation 4: Aria Italiana

VI. Variation 5: Bourée classique

VII. Variation 6: Wiener Waltz

VIII. Variation 7: Moto perpetuo

IX. Variation 8: Funeral March

X. Variation 9: Chant

XI. Variation 10: Fugue and Finale

*This performance of Ensemble LPR has been made possible by a generous anonymous grant.
The performance of the Havana Lyceum Orchestra, June 13, was made possible by a generous grant
from Judith E. Naumburg, Board Chair & Treasurer.*

MUSICAL NOTES

ENSEMBLE LPR

Named after & headquartered at the acclaimed NYC venue Le Poisson Rouge, Ensemble LPR is an assemblage of NY's finest musicians. The group personifies the venue's commitment to aesthetic diversity and artistic excellence.

Ensemble LPR performs an eclectic spectrum of music—from works by the finest living composers, to compelling interpretations of the standard repertoire—and collaborates with distinguished artists from classical & non-classical backgrounds: Timo Andres, Simone Dinnerstein, San Fermin, Daniel Hope, Taka Kigawa, Jennifer Koh, Mica Levi, David Longstreth (of Dirty Projectors), John Lurie, Ursula Oppens, Max Richter, André de Ridder, Christopher Rountree and Fred Sherry, to name a few.

In January of 2015 Ensemble LPR made its Deutsche Grammophon debut with Follow, Poet, featuring the music of Mohammed Fairouz and the words of Seamus Heaney and John F. Kennedy. Ensemble LPR's acclaimed Central Park performance followed in June, part of the 110th Anniversary of the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts.

In 2008 Le Poisson Rouge changed the classical music landscape, creating a new environment in which to experience art music. In doing so, Le Poisson Rouge expanded classical music listenership. *The New York Times* has heralded Le Poisson Rouge as “[a] forward-thinking venue that seeks to showcase disparate musical styles under one roof” and “[the] coolest place to hear contemporary music.” *The Los Angeles Times* raves, “[The] place isn't merely cool...the venue is a downright musical marvel.” Le Poisson Rouge Co-Founder David Handler brings this same ethos to Ensemble LPR, of which he is Founding Executive & Artistic Director.

LARA ST. JOHN Canadian-born violinist Lara St. John has been described as “something of a phenomenon” by *The Strad* and a “high-powered soloist” by *The New York Times*.

She has performed as soloist with the orchestras of Cleveland, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, & with the Boston Pops, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, NDR Symphony, Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Camerata Ireland, Amsterdam Symphony, Brazilian Symphony, Sao Paulo Symphony, China Philharmonic, Hong Kong Symphony, Tokyo Symphony, & the orchestras of Brisbane, Adelaide & Auckland among many others.

The Los Angeles Times wrote “Lara St. John happens to be a volcanic violinist with a huge, fabulous tone that pours out of her like molten lava. She has technique to burn and plays at a constant high heat.”

Her world premiere recording of Matthew Hindson's Violin Concerto prompted Gramophone to write: “It's the sort of work that should get audiences running, not walking, back to concert halls on new-music nights.”

She performs on the 1779 “Salabue” Guadagnini thanks to an anonymous donor & Heinel & Co. of Toronto.

PROGRAM NOTES

STARBURST, a brief one-movement work for string orchestra, is a play on imagery of rapidly changing musical colors. Exploding gestures are juxtaposed with gentle fleeting melodies in an attempt to create a multidimensional soundscape. – Jessie Montgomery

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS' *The Lark Ascending* is one of the most popular works in the classical repertoire. The piece was inspired by the 122 line poem of the same name, written by Williams' countryman George Meredith about the song of the skylark. Originally composed for violin and piano in 1914, the piece was not premiered until 1920, the same year it was re-scored for violin and orchestra in what would become the more frequently performed version of the piece. The notoriety of the piece has far surpassed that of the poem, & the all-string version you will hear this evening was orchestrated by Nurhan Arman, Music Director of the Sinfonia Toronto. The lark's distinctive song is represented by the solo violin, opening & closing the piece with two extended lyrical cadenzas based on the same melody over a continuous & hushed string harmony. A shorter cadenza brings on the contrasting middle section in which two British folk melodies are introduced. In the end, serenity prevails with the solo violin lifting the listener upward until its song fades into silence.

MARALINGA is a place in the South Australian desert, and was the site for secret British nuclear testing in the 1950s & 1960s. Not a happy place in Australian history for either the Aboriginal inhabitants of the area, nor the Australian service personnel who were unwittingly used as guinea pigs for the effects of radiation. The site & its history remains a stain upon Australia's historical record. This piece makes reference to the long Aboriginal history at Maralinga as well as more recent events and attitudes. Maralinga was written for Lara St. John, who premiered the piece on 20 March, 2009. It was commissioned by the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts.

IGOR STRAVINSKY'S *Concerto in E-flat*, subtitled Dumbarton Oaks 8-v-1938 (1937-38) is a chamber concerto named for the Dumbarton Oaks estate of Robert Woods Bliss & Mildred Barnes Bliss in Washington, DC, who commissioned it for their 30th wedding anniversary. Composed in Stravinsky's neo-classical period, the piece is one of Stravinsky's two chamber concertos & is scored for a chamber orchestra of flute, B-flat clarinet, bassoon, two horns, three violins, three violas, two cellos, & two double basses. The three movements - Tempo giusto, Allegretto, and Con moto - are performed without pause. The commission was brokered by Nadia Boulanger who conducted the May 8, 1938 private premiere in the music room at Dumbarton Oaks, while the composer was hospitalized with tuberculosis. The piece was the last Stravinsky completed in Europe. The composer writes: "My Concerto in E-flat... was begun almost immediately upon my return to Europe after Jeux de cartes, in the spring of 1937. I had moved from Paris to Annemasse in the Haute Savoie to be near my daughter Mika [Ludmila] who, mortally ill with tuberculosis, was confined to a sanatorium there. Annemasse is near Geneva, and [conductor] Ernest Ansermet was therefore a neighbor and also a helpful friend at this, perhaps the most difficult time of my life. [Ludmila died in 1938.] I played Bach regularly during the composition of the Concerto, and was greatly attracted to the "Brandenburg" Concertos. Whether or not the first theme of my [first] movement is a conscious borrowing from the third Brandenburg, however, I do not know."

BENJAMIN BRITTEN'S *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge*, Op. 10, is the work that brought Benjamin Britten to international attention. The piece is dedicated "to F.B. A tribute with affection and admiration." In 1932 Britten began writing a set of variations on a theme by Frank Bridge, with whom he studied from 1927. It wasn't until 1937 that Boyd Neel, having been invited to conduct at the Salzburg Festival, commissioned Britten to write a piece for string orchestra. Neel had previously conducted Britten's film score for *Love From a Stranger*. For a theme, Britten took the second of Bridge's *Three Idylls for string quartet*, Op. 6, No. 2. Each variation is a representation of a specific quality in Bridge's personality as understood by Britten: the Adagio represents Bridge's "integrity"; the March, his "energy"; the Romance, his charm; the Aria Italiana, his humour; the Bourrée, his tradition; the Wiener Walzer, his enthusiasm; the Moto perpetuo, his vitality; the Funeral March, his sympathy; the Chant, his reverence; the Fugue, his skill (containing references to other works by Bridge); & their mutual affection appears in the Finale. These connections were made explicit on the score Britten presented to Bridge, but they do not appear in the printed score. Britten also imitates the styles of a number of composers such as Gioachino Rossini, Maurice Ravel & Igor Stravinsky. Paul Kildea writes of the piece: "Though the theme is played in the opening section, it is done so rather whimsically, & it is only at the end of the piece that it is spelled out with weight and clarity. When it arrives it makes sense of everything that has gone before it, demanding that we start again from the beginning, hearing the work once more, this time with our ears alert."

David Handler, *Artistic Director* **VIOLIN** Conrad Harris, *CM*; Henry Wang; Alex Fortes; David Handler; Elizabeth Derham; Pauline Kim Harris, *Principal*; Brendan Speltz; Molly Germer; Ravenna Lipchik **VIOLA** William Hakim, *Principal*; Katarzyna Bryla-Weiss; Eva Gerard **CELLO** Caleb van der Swaagh, *Principal*; Alberto Parrini; Jessica Wang **BASS** Patrick Duff, *Principal*; Brian Ellingsen **FLUTE** Beomjae Kim **CLARINET** Paul Won Jin Cho **BASSOON** Karl Vilcins **HORNS** Eric Davis, *Principal*; William DeVos

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PAUL CAVALCONTE is the weekend morning host on WQXR. Every Sunday at noon, he flexes his wax muscle with Sunday Vinyl, where he cuts through the digital noise with an analog groove.

NAUMBURG ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

Thanks Pati Dynes – our Production Stage Manager. It also thanks our volunteers:

Susan Angermeier and Diane De Fazio.

MUSIC PAVILION

In 1859 Jacob Wrey Mould, an amateur musician and the architect who designed many of the original structures in Central Park, persuaded his wealthy friends to pay for free band concerts at a temporary bandstand in the Ramble, and he arranged their musical programs. The first concert, on July 13, included the Festival March from *Tannhäuser*, Mendelssohn's song, "I would that my Love," selections from *La Traviata* and Strauss's Sorgenbrecher Waltz. In the **summer of 1860** concerts were transferred to the **Mall**, and *The New York Herald* reported that the September 22 concert attracted "at least five thousand persons gathered around the performers, while outside of these were stationed an immense number of carriages...filled with the beauty and fashion of New York." The overwhelming popularity of the concerts prompted Central Park's board to finance them and to build a permanent Music Pavilion on the west side of the Mall near the Terrace. Mould designed the elaborately painted and brightly gilded Moorish-style wooden and cast-iron structure, completed in 1862. The Parks Department razed the Music Pavilion in 1923.

The Naumburg Bandshell, a gift of Elkan Naumburg 'to the City of New York and its Music Lovers', replaced in purpose the former structure. Though the Naumburg Bandshell opened on September 29th 1923, the Art Commission of New York had approved of the change in 1912 and the design of the Bandshell in 1916. "On the Mall", composed by Edwin F. Goldman in 1923, to honor Elkan Naumburg, was premiered that September afternoon, conducted by Franz Kaltenborn. Astonishingly, during that summer, 959 concerts were presented on the Concert Ground, over 400 of which were underwritten by the Parks Department. It was a popular place, providing a well-like activity.

The design of the Bandshell has historic precedents in the Pantheon of Rome, or more closely, the Imperial Russian pleasure park's pavilion at Gatchina Palace, by Vincenzo Brenna, his 'Eagle Pavilion' of the 1790's, and the later work of the architect F.G.P. Poccianti, his 'Cisternone' at Livorno of 1829-42. It has historic precedents for its function in the outdoor theatres and pavilions of Versailles, for example, or the temples and 'eye-catchers' found in park-like gardens of British country houses such as Stourhead and Stowe. The use of European park architecture as a model for what to insert in Central Park was in keeping with Olmsted's design sources and methods of nearly 60 years earlier. The Naumburg Bandshell was set into the Manhattan schist hillside, which nestles it, to prevent views being blocked across the Mall and Concert Ground which caused an earlier proposal of Carrère & Hastings to be found wanting by city and park officials. Thoughtfully, the design also stands centered between the two projecting pergola viewing points, and it admirably reflects the architect William G. Tachau's (nephew of Elkan Naumburg) own Ecole des Beaux-Arts classicist and historicist training. The result was Central Park's only Neo-Classical building.



THE MALL, CENTRAL PARK

Saturday, May 23, 1874

The double rows of American Elms, planted fourteen years earlier, create a green tunnel. Sunlight filters through the canopy of new leaves and throws dappled patterns of light and shade on the gravel walk. It is a beautiful day, the Mall is crowded: ladies in voluminous skirts and colorful hats; Irish nurses in bonnets and white aprons, pushing baby carriages; gentlemen in frock coats and top hats; a few young clerks in stylish broadcloth suits; the children in a variety of dress, miniature versions of their parents. It is a decorous crowd; tomorrow - Sunday - is when working people have a holiday and attendance will be even larger.

At the north end of the Mall, on the west side, is the bandstand. Mould has pulled out all the stops for this design. The raised platform is covered by a Moorish-style cupola, dark blue and covered with gilt stars. It is topped by a sculpture of a lyre. The roof is supported by crimson cast-iron columns. The bandstand is unoccupied - the Saturday-afternoon concerts start next month. The annual summer series is so popular - **up to forty-five thousand people attend** - that the park board has provided extra seating and has taken the unprecedented step of allowing listeners to sit on the grass. Not everyone admires these free concerts. "The barriers and hedges of society for the time being are let down," sniffs the Times, "unfortunately also a few of its decencies are forgotten."

The barriers of society are not altogether absent. Across the Mall from the bandstand is a broad concourse where the wealthy park their carriages and, separated from the lower orders by a long wisteria arbor, listen to the music in comfortable isolation. Beside the concourse stands a large one-story building with a swooping tiled roof and deep overhanging eaves. Originally the Ladies Refreshment Stand, it has recently been converted into a restaurant called the Casino.

—An excerpt from Witold Rybczynski—*A Clearing in the Distance*, pp.317-18 in which a letter of Frederick Law Olmsted—a principal designer of Central Park is quoted

THE NAUMBURG BANDSHELL AND MUSICAL CONCERTS AT THIS SITE

Central Park has hosted outdoor concerts on the Concert Ground since the park opened in the mid-nineteenth century. The site's design offers great natural beauty and tranquility for those who attend its live musical performances.

This free musical series was established by Elkan Naumburg, a philanthropist and ardent supporter of classical music, for the purpose of encouraging and stimulating the public's interest in symphonic and semi-classical music. Our outdoor summer performances, begun in 1905, are the oldest classical music series of its type in the world. The events now feature promising new classical music talent, with many performers being young and often New York based. The concerts also promote the professional development of young composers and conductors, featuring newly commissioned music, and new arrangements.

We welcome your support, contributions and suggestions. We would also like to enlarge our financial reserves so that we can both improve and expand our own concert schedule. So, please feel free to speak to one of us at a concert, or write to the [Contacts] on the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts website, **naumburgconcerts.org**.

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Updated 18 June 2017 - please do contact us with any corrections.

FROM E.B. WHITE'S *HERE IS NEW YORK*, 1949

Another hot night I stop off at the band concert in the Mall in Central Park. The people seated on the benches fanned out in front of the band shell are attentive, appreciative. In the trees the night wind sings, bringing leaves to life, endowing them with speech; the electric lights illuminate the green branches from the under side, translating them into a new language. On a bench directly in front of me, a boy sits with his arm around his girl; they are proud of each other and are swathed in music. The cornetist steps forward for a solo, begins, "Drink to me only with thine eyes..." In the wide, warm night the horn is startlingly pure and magical. Then from the North River another horn solo begins—the "Queen Mary" announcing her intentions. She is not on key; she is a half tone off. The trumpeter in the bandstand never flinches. The horns quarrel savagely, but no one minds having the intimation of travel injected into the pledge of love. "I leave," sobs Mary. "And I will pledge with mine," sighs the trumpeter. Along the asphalt paths strollers pass to and fro: they behave considerately, respecting the musical atmosphere. Popsicles are moving well. In the warm grass beyond the fence, forms wriggle in the shadows, and the skirts of girls approaching on the Mall are ballooned by the breeze, and their bare shoulders catch the lamplight. "Drink to me only with thine eyes." It is a magical occasion, and it's all free.

We hope you enjoy tonight's musical performance presented by the Naumburg Orchestral Concerts. We need your support in order to help fund these concerts. Please either stop at the reception desk on the Concert Ground to donate or join our mailing list, or visit our website to learn how to donate online or join our email list:

naumburgconcerts.org

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