

Yale SCHOOL OF MUSIC

José García-León, Dean

Yale Philharmonia

Earl Lee, *guest conductor*

Leanne Jin, *piano*

Friday, May 9, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.
Woolsey Hall

Program

Ludwig van Beethoven
1770–1827

Overture from Egmont, Op. 84

Sergei Prokofiev
1891–1953

Piano Concerto No. 3 in C major, Op. 26

- I. Andante. Allegro
- II. Tema con variazioni
- III. Allegro, ma non troppo

Leanne Jin, *piano*

INTERMISSION

Robert Schumann
1810–1856

Symphony No. 4 in D minor, Op. 120

- I. Ziemlich langsam - Lebhaft
- II. Romanze: Ziemlich langsam
- III. Scherzo: Lebhaft
- IV. Langsam - Lebhaft

As a courtesy to others, please silence all devices. Photography and recording of any kind is strictly prohibited. Please do not leave the hall during musical selections. Thank you.

Artist Profiles

Earl Lee, *guest conductor*

Winner of the 2022 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award, Earl Lee is a renowned Korean-Canadian conductor who has captivated audiences worldwide. Music Director of the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra since 2022, he recently finished a successful three-year tenure as Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which he has led in subscription concerts both at Symphony Hall and Tanglewood.

In addition to a full season of concerts with the Ann Arbor Symphony, Mr. Lee's 2024/25 season includes debuts with the Atlanta, New World, Colorado, Sarasota, and Victoria Symphonies, and the Juilliard Orchestra, and returns to the San Francisco Symphony and Royal Conservatory Orchestra Toronto.

Mr. Lee previously held positions as Associate Conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony and as the Resident Conductor of the Toronto Symphony. In 2022, he appeared with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam as a participant in the Ammodo masterclasses led by Fabio Luisi.

In all of his professional activities, Mr. Lee seeks ways to connect with fellow musicians and audiences on a personal level. He has taken great pleasure in mentoring young musicians as former Artistic Director and Conductor of the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra, and as Music Director of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra and is a regular guest conductor with the orchestras of North America's top music schools such as Manhattan School of Music, The Juilliard School, and the New England, San Francisco, and Royal Conservatories.

Mr. Lee was the recipient of the 50th Anniversary Heinz Unger Award from the Ontario Arts Council in 2018, of a Solti Career Assistance Award in 2021 and has been awarded a Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Scholarship by Kurt Masur and the Ansbacher Fellowship by the American Austrian Foundation and members of the Vienna Philharmonic.

Leanne Jin, *piano*

Leanne Jin is currently completing her Master of Music degree at the Yale School of Music studying with Boris Berman. Recently she completed her Bachelor of Music Performance degree with First Class Honours at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music studying with Natalia Ricci, who continues to be her mentor.

Ms. Jin has been invited to perform in the Encuentro Españoles Spanish Music Festival, Canberra International Music Festival, Bowral Autumn Music Festival, Phoenix Central Park and Carnegie Hall. Other highlights include solo performances with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Conservatorium Orchestra, Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra and Penrith Symphony Orchestra. She has also played in masterclasses for pianists including Marta Zabaleta, Ferenc Rados, Sa Chen, Yejin Gil, Wei-Yi Yang, Melvin Chen, Michael Endres, Vyacheslav Gryzanov, Thomas Hecht and Jan Jiracek von Arnim.

Ms. Jin's debut film recording with Master Performers, featuring works by Schumann, Rachmaninoff, Falla and Debussy, is due for imminent release. She will record her second DVD with Master Performers this year featuring Spanish and Latin American masterworks.

Program Notes

Overture from Egmont, Op. 84

BEETHOVEN

Danielle Wiebe Burke

“Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any way terrible,” Edmund Burke writes, “is a source of the sublime; that is, productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling.”

Composed in 1809, Beethoven’s incidental music to Goethe’s drama Egmont indexes an ongoing shift in early-Romantic compositional style toward capturing in music what Edmund Burke calls the “beautiful” and the “sublime” in his eponymous treatise. Beginning in F minor with a series of dark, shuddering chords, the overture’s opening depicts the struggle between Egmont, a Dutch warrior, and the Spanish Duke of Alba. The slow, deep chords employ the rhythm of a Sarabande, subtly acknowledging the Spanish oppression of the Flemish with this antique dance form, its slow triple-meter enhanced by the chords’ long-long-short progression. Even as the work spins out into its major-mode, fast-paced section, the subliminal threat of Goethe’s “storm and stress” persists, as consistent repeated notes in the lower strings foreground the overture. Although the opening rhythm returns in this faster tempo, now in the major mode, to represent a sort of victory, the movement comes to an abrupt halt with a dolorous cry in the violins shortly thereafter. What follows is a solemn chorale in the winds that gives way to a joyous yet anxious coda that in its euphoria perhaps most

concretely carries the contours of the sublime: its sense of motion is consistently catalyzed by fast-paced notes throughout the orchestra, while the melodic material feels frantic, almost nervous, in its exuberance. Nowhere in this overture is the audience released from the impassioned grip of the sublime, as even its ecstatic, victorious melodies emanate from a mercurial place of wonderment and oppression.

Piano Concerto No. 3 in C major, Op. 26

PROKOFIEV

Patrick Campbell Jankowski

It’s hard to imagine, while listening to it, that Prokofiev’s third piano concerto could be divisive. More easy-going than his dramatic, often tempestuous second concerto and closer in style to his lighter, transparent Classical than to his fiery, almost deliberately indecipherable second symphony, it begs the question “What’s not to like?” Its 1921 premiere in Chicago with the composer at the piano was received warmly, but less so in New York. In the subsequent years it has become by far the most often performed and recorded of his five piano concertos and a true staple of the repertoire. It is fairly compact in size yet filled with brilliant melodic ideas, colorful orchestration, and a particularly flashy part for the soloist. A solo clarinet begins the concerto with an intriguing melody that becomes lush, Hollywood even, in the hands of the strings. An energetic gallop brings the solo piano in, and the remainder of the movement alternates between these contrasting ideas as well as moments of unpredictable storminess that come across

playfully here, perhaps in a self-aware nod to some of his earlier compositions that earned him a reputation as a bit of a musical troublemaker. Prokofiev's contemporary Rachmaninoff had become popular in the United States by playing into American tastes, after all, and tickets needed to be sold...

A clever middle movement is cast as a theme with five variations. The elegant theme, heard first in the woodwinds, is restrained in character and simple enough to yield imaginative variations, beginning with the solo piano's dreamy chromatic scales. A hefty, ominous, and march-like variation includes the commentary of the trumpets, while a highly syncopated episode playfully juxtaposes the offbeat accents of the piano's threes against the orchestra's doubles. An eerie, nocturnal tone takes over in the fourth variation, met with a vibrant final, celebratory variation that finds the piano and orchestra playing closely together. To close, the returns as before in the woodwinds, though now with the soloist's commentary. The finale juggles humor and nonchalance with some truly virtuosic passages for pianist and orchestra alike. A slower, subdued second theme nods to Romantic and Rachmaninoff, with glamour and orchestrational richness, although Prokofiev eventually disposes of this in favor of the argumentative tone and wild unpredictability with which he concludes the concerto.

Symphony No. 4 in D minor, Op. 120
SCHUMANN

Patrick Campbell Jankowski

"Robert's mind is very creative now, and he began a symphony yesterday which is to be in one movement... I have heard nothing of it as yet, but from seeing Robert's work, and from hearing D minor echoing wildly in the distance, I know in advance that this will be another work that is emerging from the depths of his soul." Clara Schumann – only recently wed to Robert – wrote in her diary of her husband's energetic work on this symphony around 1841, which started as his second, fresh off the success of his *Spring*. The single-movement organization that she identified is its most innovative feature, and Schumann's clever balancing of a four-movement structure with a cohesive form was mostly unheard of at that time. Franz Liszt's similarly conceived single-movement B minor piano sonata was written and dedicated to Robert in 1853, and perhaps not coincidentally.

The lively exposition of the first movement grows organically from a slow introduction, which itself oozes from a monolithic orchestral A in multiple octaves, slowly lurching towards its D minor destination. The vibrant close of the movement "ends" questioningly on an unresolved chord, and introduces the evocative *Romanze* theme in the solo oboe. Soon after, the sinuous music of the very beginning of the symphony returns, now in dialogue with the stately wind theme and later enhanced with an elegantly flowing solo violin. The scherzo

Program Notes *cont.*

interrupts with perhaps some playfulness but even more sternness and force.

That duality continues through a graceful trio and a prolonged, dramatic transition, with softly humming clarinets and bassoons, whisper-soft violins, and the distant horn calls that usher in the ecstatic, joyous finale that recalls musical themes from the preceding sections, and a final transformation, in the Beethovenian tradition, from the dramatic D minor to the triumph and sunniness of D major.

At its first premiere as the composer's second symphony, the work was received not poorly but less enthusiastically than his celebratory Spring. Its unconventional form (for its time) may have presented a hurdle, or perhaps its performance wasn't up to par. In either case, Schumann put it away for about a decade until deciding to revise and reorchestrate it later into the version you're hearing today. He added instruments, augmented the overall weightiness of the scoring, and placed a few structural elements – including a repeat in the opening movement – to help clarify the structure. The result was distinct enough from its initial version that he saw it performed and published as his fourth symphony, a second already having taken its place. Johannes Brahms notably preferred the original version of the symphony and published it decades after Schumann's death despite Clara's objections while proclaiming that Robert had transfigured “a symphony full of lightness, grace and beauty into a symphony of gloom, delusion and compulsion.” Perhaps it was his way of holding on to the memory of brighter, more optimistic days.

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