THURSDAY, JULY 6 :: 7:30 PM

A Far Cry

Violin: Alex Fortes, Annie Rabbat, Lilit Hartunian, Nick Tavani, Jae Cosmos Lee, Adrian Anantawan, Emilie-Anne Gendron, Max Tan, Ross Snyder
Viola: Caitlin Lynch, Celia Hatton, Rimbo Wong, Ashe Gordon
Cello: Michael Unterman, Nathaniel Taylor, Mina Kim
Bass: Lizzie Burns, Karl Doty

ARUM DEM FAYER (AROUND THE FIRE) (2020)
Osvaldo Golijov (b. 1960), arr. string orchestra

BANNER FOR SOLO STRING QUARTET AND CHAMBER ORCHESTRA (2014)
Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)

THE GLITTERING WORLD (2022)
Juantio Becenti (b. 1983)
Alex Fortes, soloist

:: INTERMISSION ::

STRING QUARTET NO. 12, IN F MAJOR, OP. 96, B. 179 (AMERICAN) (1893)
Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904), arr. by A Far Cry for string orchestra
Allegro ma non troppo
Lento
Molto vivace
Finale: Vivace ma non troppo

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ARUM DEM FAYER (AROUND THE FIRE)
Osvaldo Golijov (b. La Plata, Argentina, December 5, 1960) arr. String Orchestra
Composed 2020; 6 minutes

For his latest composition for string quartet, Golijov worked with a large whiteboard alongside the piano he composes upon. There he drafted a list of guiding principles for the piece: clarity, line, light, elegance, grace, delight, rhythm, air in the harmonies, counterpoint, make believe (representation) and child wonder. The result evolved into a five-movement quartet titled *Umla Bwom* (A Good Day), depicting “a life from morning to midnight and beyond, as if told to children.” This was premiered October 7, 2021 in Boston.

“The third movement, *Arum dem Fayer* (Around the Fire),” Golijov says, “is a traditional Yiddish song that also talks about the bliss of being together around a small fire. In my version, the song appears and disappears, as a ghost, in the midst of a slow processional and restrained tears. Schubert’s motif in the slow movement of *Death and the Maiden* about the bliss of being together around a small fire. In my version, the song appears and disappears, as a ghost, in the midst of a slow processional and restrained tears. Schubert’s motif in the slow movement of *Death and the Maiden* is a rhapsody on the theme of the *Star-Spangled Banner*...”

**New York-based composer, violinist and educator Jessie Montgomery grew up in the city’s Lower East Side in the 1980s and ’90s. A Juilliard graduate, she feels grounded in the tradition of classical performance: “I feel very connected to European classical music because of the way I have learned how to play the violin. Still, being a New Yorker by birth and a long-time resident, Montgomery also embraces a wider perspective. “I’m an African American, so I think about black and black music.” With music played around the world, Montgomery is currently composer-in-residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.**

Sing... Banner picks up where Anthem left off by using a similar backbone source in its middle section but expands further, both in the references, and also in the role-play of the string quartet as the individual voice working both with and against the larger community of the orchestra. The structure is loosely based on traditional marching band form where there are several strains or contrasting sections, preceded by an introduction, and I have drawn on the drum line chorus as a source for the rhythmic underpinning in the finale. Within the same tradition, I have attempted to evoke the breathing of a large brass choir as it approaches the climax of the ‘trio’ section. A variety of other cultural anthems and American folk songs and popular idioms interact to form various textures in the finale, contributing to a multi-layered fanfare.

**THE GLITTERING WORLD**
Juanito Becenti (b. Aneth, UT, Navajo Nation, 1983)
Composed 2022; 16 minutes

Juanito Becenti writes: “The Glittering World is based on the mythological narrative of how the Navajo People came to be. According to the Navajo origin story, proto-humans emerged from a genesis-like void (described as little more than mist) and ascended from various mono-colored underworlds. With each migration, these beings became increasingly more complex and ‘more human,’ forced to deal with their own nature as they moved from world to world. Each previous world they survived was destroyed by some facet of their own nature that they had to reconcile with and overcome, or, likewise, also be destroyed. Each world is represented by a single color until these proto-humans, now demi-gods with their accumulated knowledge, emerge into the ‘Glittering World’ or ‘The World of Many Colors.’ These precursors of the ‘Surface Dwelling People’ [Navajo People] were tasked with laying the ceremonial groundwork with which to guide the Navajo People in their pursuit of harmony and beauty in all things in this current world.”

“In The Glittering World, I am attempting to highlight the idea of a diminishing world moving into the next by using various musical languages that, while in the moment may seem different, even incompatible, are fundamentally related. Each movement, or ‘world,’ gradually disintegrates into the next with their own various themes. Throughout the piece, works from various composers who have influenced me are quoted — some overtly, and some less so. I have always felt that using musical languages in this manner propels the music forward in ways it otherwise wouldn’t, in essence a reflection of a Glittering World. The ensemble is contrasted by a solo violin which, while not properly pitted against the larger ensemble as in a concerto, does add color and contrast and even commentary, almost like an individual witnessing these various changes.”

**STRING QUARTET NO. 12, IN F MAJOR, OP. 96, B. 179 (AMERICAN)**
Antonín Dvořák (b. Nelahozeves, Bohemia, September 8, 1841; d. Prague, May 1, 1904); arr. by A Far Cry for string orchestra
Composed 1893, 27 minutes

“Why did not Dvořák come to us earlier if he can write such music here in America?” asked the critic of the New York Daily Herald after the premiere of Dvořák’s new F major String Quartet. The work soon acquired the nickname, American, and began to be requested by concert promoters everywhere. Boston’s Kneisel Quartet, who gave the première in Boston on New Year’s Day, 1894, repeated the performance 12 days later at Carnegie Hall. Within one year they had given 50 performances. The American had already become the most popular of Dvořák’s 14 quartets.
Dvořák wrote the piece in Spillville, a rural community of Czech immigrants in Iowa, the hometown of the violin student Josef Jan Kovarík whom Dvořák had employed as his secretary. Dvořák, his wife, six children, sister, maid and Kovarík arrived in Spillville on June 5, 1893. What he found was a small settlement of 380 Czechs (the population has risen to 385 in the 2020 census!). These settlers maintained the cultural traditions of the old country and communicated with one another in their native language. Dvořák was happier here than at any other time in his three-year stay in the States as Director of the National Conservatory in New York. Within three days he was hard at work on the new string quartet. His early morning walks through the woods by the Little Turkey River brought the sounds of birdsong – something he had missed in New York. He even incorporated the song of a small red bird with scarlet wings (a scarlet tanager) into the third movement of the new quartet.

Dvořák sketched the quartet in just three days and wrote it out fully in another 12. Always a quick worker when inspiration was running high, Dvořák began work on a string quintet three days later and completed the work by the beginning of August. It, too, is sometimes referred to as the American. “The influence of America must be felt by everyone who has any ‘nose’ at all,” Dvořák wrote during his summer in Spillville. In the opening movement of the quartet, listeners hear everything from the melancholy grandeur of the broad plains to the poignancy of plantation songs. The slow movement may combine the intensity of Dvořák’s homesickness with the deep emotion of the spirituals he heard sung by his New York student Henry Burleigh. In the quiet, chorale-like theme in the finale, there are said to be echoes of the little organ that Dvořák used to play in the Spillville church. Above all, though, it’s the contentedness and happiness of being in the countryside among friends that seems to be reflected in the music of the American quartet.

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