The Hartt Orchestra

Edward Cumming, conductor
Britney Alcine, assistant conductor

featuring

Paranov Concerto Competition Winner

SeungHyun Seo

Friday, April 28, 2023
7:30 p.m.
Lincoln Theater

The Unanswered Question
Charles Ives
(1874-1954)

Britney Alcine, conductor

Concerto for Flute and Orchestra, Op. 39
Lowell Liebermann
(b. 1961)

SeungHyun Seo, flute

Intermission

Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840-1893)

I. Andante
II. Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza
III. Valse. Allegro moderato
IV. Finale. Andante maestoso
The Hartt Orchestra
Edward Cumming, music director
Ziwei Ma and Britney Alcine, assistant conductors
Marnielle Charles, ensemble manager

Violin I
Selah Kwak
   concertmaster
Daniella Greene
Eya Setsu
Hannah Goldreich
Cecilia Cooper
Emily Paul
Hugh Chomentowski
Alex Roginsky
Micaiah Bradley
Kaitlyn Walsh
Megan Jones

Violin II
Jorhendi Esquivel*
Kelly Gembara
Noah-Michael Carlson
Akili Farrow
Kristen Joy Quintin
Ciyin Zhou
Sunaj Britt
Stephanie Ruddy
Nisha Srinivas
Stephen Sailer

Viola
Nicole Felker*
Jennifer Quian-Lopez
Jian Xiong
Maris Leese
Marnielle Charles
Mengyuan Song
Chase Jordan
Caleb Smith

Cello
Sanga Yoon*
Alexander Bloom
Hsin Chen
Ian Machemer
Andrew Gagi
Paul Lee
Grace Cushing
Alexa Shepardson
Nathaniel Bollerman
Anton Yaeger

Bass
Baker Wainscoat*
Grace St. Laurent
Emily Byrne
Benjamin Wolgang
Nathaniel Savage
Maxwell Lozier

Flute
Grace Boniello*
Chaosupei Gao**
Wanqin He*
Julius Lagoa-Iacono
Nicole Paquette*
Madison Rombough*
Lindsey Wearne*

Piccolo
Elva Tang
Yunlu Tong

Oboe
Hyunjung Lim*
Pedro Rivera

English Horn
Pedro Rivera

Clarinet
Jonathan Maginnis*
Jung Kyu Song
Chadwick Thomas**

Bass Clarinet
Linus Poon

Bassoon
Luke Ashworth
Miah Miglore*
Morgan Pope**

Contrabassoon
Abigail Veilleux

Horn
Cassandra Cardarelli*
Taylor Hestvik
Charlotte Poye
Joshua Rosenbaum**

Trumpet
Aaron Heine
Lauren Holtshouser**
Marjorie Jarsulic
Jack MacDonald*
Mark Murphy
Dylan Protho

Trombone
Luke Actie
Aidan Jacobson*
Rory Mosher

Tuba
Brent Nichols

Timpani
Honoka Masuyama

Percussion
Lucas Conant

Piano
Arisa Sato

Harp
Alyssa Hall

Lincoln Theater Staff
Kevin L. Hart
   technical director
Aaron Hochheiser
   master electrician
Rachel Landy
   sound engineer
Program Notes

Charles Ives, *The Unanswered Question* (1908, rev. 1934)

Ives writes, "Around . . . say 1906 ... up to about 1912-14 or so, things like *All the Way Around and Back, The Gong on the Hook and Ladder, Over the Pavements, Tone Roads, The Unanswered Question*, etc. were made. Some of them were played — or better tried out — usually ending in a fight or hiss .... I must say that many of those things were started as kinds [of] studies, or rather trying out sounds, beats, etc., usually by what is called politely 'improvisations on the keyboard' — what classmates in the flat called 'resident disturbances.'

"The strings play *ppp* throughout with no change in tempo. They are to represent ‘The Silences of the Druids — Who Know, See, and Hear Nothing.' The trumpet intones ‘The Perennial Question of Existence,’ and states it in the same tone of voice each time. But the hunt for ‘The Invisible Answer’ undertaken by the flutes and other human beings, becomes gradually more active, faster and louder through an animando to a con fuoco. . . . It is played in somewhat of an impromptu way; if there be no conductor, one of the flute players may direct their playing. ‘The Fighting Answers,’ as the time goes on, and after a 'secret conference,' seem to realize a futility, and begin to mock ‘The Question’ — the strife is over for the moment. After they disappear, ‘The Question’ is asked for the last time, and ‘The Silences’ are heard beyond in ‘Undisturbed Solitude.’"

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Lowell Liebermann has composed extensively for orchestras, symphonies, operas, and his own instrument, the piano. Despite this, it is this Concerto for Flute and Orchestra for which he is best known - one of the most well-known concertos in the flute repertoire.

Sir James Galway commissioned the work, originally asking for the composer to orchestrate his flute sonata. Liebermann agreed but told Galway that composing the concerto would be a more fulfilling project.

The work is a standard in the repertoire and has been recorded over 20 times. It is traditional in its three-movement structure the first movement is not in the traditional sonata form. Instead, the orchestra uses a forceful, minimalist ostinato to accompany single themes coupled with simple yet powerful interjections from the soloists and the orchestra.

A five-variation structure is adopted in the movement’s middle section, followed by a formal set of chaconne variations using the main theme. After the standard set of variations is completed, the complex structure subsides, returning us to the feeling of the movement’s beginning.

Throughout the Adagio middle movement, there is a lyrical and expressive quality that is layered over an offbeat accompaniment. This finale fulfills its closing duties through an agile rondo in which the soloist’s absolute virtuosity is highlighted to the fullest extent.

-Marnielle Charles

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Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, *Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64* (1888)

Throughout the course of his career, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky experienced extreme cycles of inspiration and self-doubt. He wrote to his brother Modest in May 1888 that he was convinced he had written himself out and he no longer felt the inclination, impulse, or urge to compose. Towards the end of the month, however, he established the goal of “getting a symphony out of my dulled brain with difficulty.” It seems that inspiration had started to flow since the massive Symphony No. 5 was finished by the end of August 1888.

In the introduction, a somber motto in the clarinets sets the mood for the entire work and hints at a hidden extra-musical agenda. The theme reflected Tchaikovsky’s melancholy and self-doubt when he composed the
symphony. The mood of the theme is maintained throughout most of the work, casting a shadow over everything it touches. Following the introduction, a marching theme begins, almost like a grim spectacle through misfortune. Through this other beautifully orchestrated theme, we see how many ways music can convey a sigh.

The second movement’s central theme is presented in the opening *cantabile* horn solo, which is followed by a more animated theme played by solo oboe. The double basses and cellos continue the harmony of the theme after a ponderous introduction. The movement is suddenly interrupted by a trumpet solo blasting out the theme over threatening timpani rumbles.

In the third movement, Tchaikovsky spins a waltz based on a street melody he heard in Florence ten years earlier. It has a dark undertone, and the somber motto is heard again at the end, the mood continuing into the finale.

The last movement presents the motto as the focal point of a final struggle between darkness and light, symbolized by the irresolution between minor and major. The introduction mirrors the symphony’s opening despite its unclear mood and mode. The mode reverts to minor in the Allegro, following which the tempo rises to a spirited Trepak, a Russian folk dance. After a grand pause, the key switches back to E major - with great pomp and fanfare - for the majestic coda based on the motto and a final trumpet blast of the march from the first movement.

-Marnielle Charles

**Artist Biographies**

A native of South Korea, flutist **SeungHyun Sarah Seo** has performed extensively as a soloist, orchestral and chamber musician throughout the U.S. and Asia. She has won many competitions in South Korea, including The Music Education News, Taegu Broadcast Center (TBC) Music Competition, The Music Association of Daegu and Busan, and Hongkong International Music Festival Competition. Here in the States, she won San Diego Flute Guild Young Artist Competition, Flute Society of Greater Philadelphia Young Artist Competition, and Hartt’s Parvanov Concerto Competition. In January of this year, SeungHyun won 1st prize of Florida Flute Association’s Nancy Clew Eller Artist Competition.

SeungHyun attended The 18th Chopin-Gorecki International Music Festival (Warsaw, Poland), Pacific Region International Summer Music Association (PRISMA) Festival (British Columbia, Canada) and has performed in masterclasses with worldwide flutists, Maxence Larrieu, Vincent Lucas, Jean Ferrandis, Catherin Cantin (France), Jim Walker, Valerie Coleman, Cynthia Meyers, Mark Sparks (U.S), Marc Grauwels (Belgium), Janos Balint (Hungary), and Yuki Koyama (Japan). Here at the Hartt, SeungHyun is the assistant director and conductor at the Stratosphere Flute Choir and a member of the Foot in the Door contemporary music ensemble.

SeungHyun earned her Bachelor of Music at Keimyung University (Daegu, South Korea) under the instruction of Youngmi Kim, and her Master of Music at the Hartt School, under the tutelage of Janet Arms. She is currently pursuing her Artist Diploma at the Hartt School.

**Edward Cumming** is the Director of Orchestral Activities at The Hartt School, where he conducts the Hartt Orchestra. With Glen Adsit, he is co-conductor of the Foot in the Door Ensemble and teaches graduate conducting; their recent students have distinguished themselves as leading orchestras at major summer music festivals in the United States and Great Britain as successful debuts with leading American orchestras.
Professor Cumming came to Hartt in 2010, just as he finished a decade as Music Director of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. He has worked with ensembles all over the country and throughout Europe, South America, Southeast Asia, and Israel. Before moving to Hartford twenty years ago, he had conducting residencies with the Florida Orchestra (Tampa), Pacific Symphony, and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. He received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, Berkeley, and master's and doctoral degrees from Yale University.

Britney Alcine received her master’s degree in orchestral conducting at the University of Massachusetts Amherst under Morihiko Nakahara. She conducted the UMass Symphony Orchestra and was a teaching assistant for multiple courses. She is currently pursuing her Doctor of Musical Arts in instrumental conducting at The Hartt School under Edward Cumming.

Britney has participated in several conducting festivals, including the Conducting Institute at the Eastern Music Festival with Gerard Schwarz, the International Women’s Conducting Workshop lead with Diane Wittry, and the String Orchestra of Brooklyn Conducting Workshop with Tito Muñoz. Previously, Britney was appointed Conducting Apprentice with the New York Youth Symphony in 2015-2016, where she studied with Maestro Joshua Gersen and premiered works for a chamber orchestra in concert. Britney also collaborated with instrumentalists and singers alike when she was the conductor for “Avatar, The Last Airbender: The Musical” in 2017. She continued her music directing efforts in her music education career while teaching at Dr. Orlando Edreira Academy as an elementary school music director of the chorus and recorder ensemble from 2017-2019.

A native of New Jersey, Britney has always lived a life immersed in music. Although primarily a violist, Britney considers herself a multi-instrumentalist and multi-faceted musician, with experience playing instruments of the brass family, as well as viola, flute, percussion, and voice. She has performed extensively in ensembles that span from pit orchestra to marching band to choir. She looks to bring this wide breadth of experience to the podium at every opportunity.

When not conducting or studying music, she likes to stay physically active with dance and yoga and mentally active with a good book. She resides in Hartford, CT, with her cat, Bellina.