John Corigliano Portrait Concert

SATURDAY **FEBRUARY 23, 2019** 8:00

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New England Conservatory

John Corigliano Portrait Concert

SATURDAY **FEBRUARY 23, 2019** 8:00
JORDAN HALL AT NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY
Pre-concert talk hosted by Robert Kirzinger at 7:00

DIANA VOYER The Infinite Forest (2019)
Winner of the 2018-2019 New England Conservatory Composition Competition

JOHN CORIGLIANO Troubadours (1993)
Eliot Fisk, guitar

INTERMISSION

JOHN CORIGLIANO Symphony No. 2 (2000)

I. Prelude
II. Scherzo
III. Nocturne
IV. Fugue
V. Postlude

GIL ROSE conductor

CLIVE GRAINGER

TONIGHT'S PERFORMERS

FLUTE
Jessica Lizak
Ashley Addington

OBOE
Jennifer SLowik
Laura Pardee

CLARINET
Michael Norsworthy
Gary Gorczyca

BASSOON
Jensen Ling
Greg Newton

HORN
Neil Godwin
Alyssa Daly

PERCUSSION
Robert Schulz
Craig McNutt

PIANO
Linda Osborn

VIOLIN I
Gabriela Diaz
Susan Jensen
Piotr Buczek
Amy Sims
MaeLynn Arnold
Sonia Deng

VIOLIN II
Megumi Stohs
Yumi Okada
Lilit Hartunian
Nivedita Sarnath
Kay Rooney Matthews

VIOLA
Peter Sulski
Emily Rideout
Dimitar Petkov
Emily Rome

CELLO
Rafael Popper-Keizer
Jing Li
Nicole Cariglia
Miriam Bolkosky

BASS
Anthony D'Amico
Bebo Shiu

PROGRAM NOTES

By Clifton Ingram

DIANA VOYER (b.1994)
The Infinite Forest (2019)

LIZ LINDER

Diana Voyer is like many of the emerging, multi-faceted artists of the up-and-coming generations, displaying keen interests in interdisciplinary work. Indeed, Voyer has many irons in the fire, which encompass the fields of composer, vocalist, fantasy writer, and engineer. Voyer's education also underlines how their interest in many fields feeds their music. They hold bachelor's degrees in electrical engineering and music and technology, as well as a masters in computer engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology, where they studied with Dr. Justin Dello Joio and Andy Brick. Currently, Voyer is pursuing a Master of Music in Composition at New England Conservatory of Music, where they study with Dr. Kati Agócs. Voyer's work has been recorded by the Budapest Film Orchestra and the Jasper Quartet, and their horn trio, *Shapes*, will be performed by Boston's Juventas New Music Ensemble in June 2019.

Their current work displays a focus on the intersections of their various disciplines, "focus[ing] on patterns that are derived from science and technology as an organizing principle." Voyer's *The Infinite Forest*, the winning piece for the 2019 BMOP-NEC Composition Competition, is no exception. In their own words, Voyer describes the thrust of this orchestral work:

"*The Infinite Forest* is about branching. The process kicked off by the opening measures can resolve itself in myriad ways. Twelve instances of this process are presented here in a single movement, interleaved through the piece in a manner determined by the forking of lightning. This work does not show branching in progress, rather it presents a crystallized structure visible through panes of glass, hazy but complete."

As this tersely evocative explanation indicates, Voyer has imbued their work with a complex structure, one that in all likelihood challenges the limits of human perception by means of its use of mathematical concepts (for example, structures based on prime numbers, pitch sets generated by non-abelian groups, etc.). Texture upon texture, imbricated layers of material moving at differing rates: looking at the score, one cannot help but think of the spider-web "micropolyphony" of György Ligeti, writing designed for an ambient or atmospheric type of listening.

The Infinite Forest is as the name implies: a "nature-walk" of a piece. Here, as a listener you follow the path set by the composer, allowing your "aural gaze" to fall upon whatever it finds most interesting (occasionally guided by the gentle nudge of conductor). On occasion, an arching canopy of lush motivic material slowly undulates high above the forest floor, drawing the ear to the rustle of an oboe or flute or perhaps a brassy gale of wind that sets the leaves to roaring. The ground itself is littered with stones, roots, branches, and overgrowth in a constant churning of sixteenth note patterns that one soon finds the knack of navigating. Textural episodes collide and blend together at Voyer's "branching"

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points, sometimes crystalline or hazy, tranquil or pointed. Voyer: "I'd definitely call it a 'process piece' ... what interested me in this setup is how this process could unfold in a clear and straightforward way, and then layering it back on itself to help disguise it." If Voyer's piece is indeed like a forest, it is perhaps an old one that has begun to reclaim any of the cleared paths, allowing entropic growth to become part of the architecture. *The Infinite Forest* takes a simple idea such as "branching" and gives the jaunty genre of musical *pastorale* an update for the digital age.

JOHN CORIGLIANO (b.1938)
TROUBADOURS (1993)

Written for guitarist Sharon Isbin and premiered by the St. Paul Chamber Symphony under Hugh Wolff, John Corigliano's *Troubadours* is admittedly a piece that almost did not happen. Corigliano's "fear of writing a concerto for an inherently delicate instrument" was only surmounted by the persistence of Isbin's enthusiasm for the piece, and she would send various materials (scores, tapes, letters, etc.) to the composer with her ideas for the project; indeed, this type of collaboration lasted nearly 13 years, until finally the right theme was found. Corigliano: "When I received a letter from [Isbin] some years ago with articles about the age of the troubadours, and particularly some celebrated women troubadours, I started thinking about the idea of serenading and of song. Slowly the conception of a troubadour concerto began to form." But listener be aware: this is not a piece for the rehashing of early music techniques and musical resources per se. It is a piece that is more concerned with a historical "flavor," a piece taken by an idea and inspired by a re-imagining of the troubadours, their musical trade, and their world. Accuracy and history are not irrelevant, however, as this is piece about heritage. But by focusing on the spirit of his collaboration with Isbin, Corigliano shaped *Troubadour*s with all the raucous good times of the anachronism of a Renaissance fair.

Troubadours opens as if traveling through a great darkness, perhaps the past, threads of time lightly passing by like bands of translucent light, barely seen in the dimness. Gossamer in texture, like antiphonal shimmering clouds, ethereal chords of violin harmonics are answered in turn by violas and celli as the introduction begins to take shape. Gently growing and blooming in strength, downward-sloping string glissandi give the vaporous sound an undulating polish before their descent and eventual rest cues a lonely oboe: the sound of the music finally hitting a melodic *terra firma*. The oboe solo slowly and lyrically falls from sustained high note to sustained high note, linked together by rapid turns and ornaments for which early music performance practice is well-known. The violins echo the oboe's high-tumbling melody, trilling and muted (*con sordino*) in a spidery, bright mockery. The mood is a primeval one until the solo guitar enters, in a steady and stately step that "like a dream" drifts into quietly plucked harmonics. The soloist then builds into a proper theme, civilizing the chaos, which melts away before an impossibly long line of endless guitar cadenza (but not yet *the* cadenza, of course) that adds some welcome fire beneath the orchestra, especially the twinkling sneers from the winds and percussion. The orchestra hiccups and dances to keep up with the guitar's *rapido* runs. All the while, there is a hinting at the Spanish flamenco origins of the instrument—idiomatic, but not cliché. Eventually the gas runs out, and after more stately thematic material, the guitarist's theme finally concludes with a quotation. For

the more historically inclined, listen to the end of this melody for a quote from a beautiful late 12th-century trobairitz (female troubadour) song, "A chantar m'er de so qu'ieu non volria," by the La Comtessa (Beatritz) de Dia.

With Isbin's guidance, Corigliano has managed to craft a piece for what he sees as the strengths of the instrument: "Lyrical, direct, and introspective, [the guitar] has a natural innocence about it that has attracted amateurs and professionals, young and old." In this way, Corigliano states that the piece brought him back to an earlier time in his compositional life, "a nostalgic return to all the feelings … before the commissions and deadlines and reviews" when the act of composing was about self-expression and optimistic exploration. *Troubadours* is indeed a balanced piece in its tone, seemingly one of good health that takes the bad with the good. Perhaps a bit like Bruegel the Elder's painting, *The Fight Between Carnival and Lent*: there is mischief, but there is also a joyful vivaciousness to the scene. Split into three parts by Corigliano, the outer sections are slow, while the central movement is fast. This partitioning means that the murkiness of the opening is soon forgotten, and the second section gallops forward, complete with rapping upon the guitar's body to percussive effect. There's much dancing and trotting about the orchestra, and the mischief of listening to *Troubadours* quickly becomes the madcap dash from episode to episode: the encountering of the unexpected. Keep an ear out for a nasal trio of tongue-and-cheek double-reeds and drums, meant to mimic the sound of the ancestor of the oboes and bassoons, the shawm. After an orchestral "cacophonous climax," the guitar cadenza takes a much more intimate mood, eventually leading the orchestra in a seven-chord *chaconne* to begin the third and final section, and a slow shifting from this *chaconne* eventually mutates back into the murkiness of the opening. However, Corigliano reassures us that the materials are actually derived from each other and form a sort of balancing act in the work. Corigliano: "The change is not one of material or technique, but one of attitude. The innocence of the earlier *chaconne* is gone, replaced by another kind of expression. The loss of one is balanced by another." *Troubadours*, ever a piece about heritage allows the guitarist to hold on until the very end this time, playing an insistently delicate plucked harmonic: an echo in the enveloping darkness almost as if a small part of our reimagined past, our "idea of the troubadour," has indeed traveled back with us to live in a memory.

JOHN CORIGLIANO

Symphony No. 2 (2000)

John Corigliano, a recent octogenarian having just celebrated his 80th last February, has lived a full musical lifetime by any definition. Born in 1938 to a notably musical household — his father a concertmaster for the New York Philharmonic and his mother an accomplished pianist and educator — Corigliano's life was steeped in music from the start. And although he would have to persist against his parents' resistance to his passion, Corigliano now stands a much-celebrated American composer, a poised pluralist with accomplishments that prove his abilities capable of adapting to a diverse variety of genres and formats. He is the winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition, as well as five Grammy Awards. His works span the impressive gamut between chamber and symphonic, instrumental and vocal, art song and choral, concert and film score. His grand opera buffa, *The Ghosts of Versailles*, demonstrates a hand equally comfortable with a drôlely surreal tale about the rococo afterlives of French royalty as with the folk music of Bob Dylan in 2003's *Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan*, which earned him his third Grammy. Corigliano has also earned much acclaim in the world of film scoring, having been nominated for an Academy Award for his searingly psychedelic score for 1980's trippy *Altered States*. He would go on to win the Oscar in 1998 for the lush melancholia of *The Red Violin*. Corigliano is also an accomplished educator (like his mother), serving as a professor at Lehman College, the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and the Juilliard School.

Commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in honor of the 100th anniversary of Symphony Hall, *Symphony No. 2* was premiered under Seiji Ozawa on November 30th, 2000. Upon completion of the work, the composer mused that he's still surprised to find that a younger self had vowed to "never write a symphony," let alone a second. (Of course, he has since written a third: 2004's *Circus Maximus*.) Yet his astonishment even at such an august age shows a composer that still disdains gestures of vanity or ego. Therefore, it is of no surprise to learn the scope of a project that would cause Corigliano to tackle the genre of the symphony. Written at the close of the 1980s, Corigliano's first symphony stands as a memorial to friends and colleagues lost along the way, a musical work borne from the overwhelming emotions of the time of the AIDS pandemic. Corigliano writes,

> *Only the death of countless friends from AIDS prompted me to write in our largest orchestral form. Mahler once described writing a symphony as creating a world. My Symphony No. 1 was about world-scale tragedy and, I felt, needed a comparably epic form.*

Symphony No. 2 was also borne of circumstances of loss, albeit of a completely different nature (and a "chosen" one, at that). Corigliano's decision to base his second symphony upon his 1995 *String Quartet*, itself written for the occasion of the Cleveland Quartet's farewell tour, makes a personal "farewell" a much grander affair. The composer felt his chamber piece ripe for transformation into the symphonic: the private turned public, like a musical invitation into a larger, more immersive version of an initially intimate gesture. The quartet also demanded some modification during its metamorphosis, as the original spatial notation had to be adapted to much larger forces. As Corigliano explains, "This [notation] means that the players do not count beats, but play more freely rhythmically, coordinating at various points but totally independent in others." The result is a more fluid sound: a more organic production of texture, whose dynamic of communication across the orchestra's players relies on triggering events rather than following the rigid grid of a conventional metric beat or pulse (or in musical theory parlance: a time signature). Additionally, rescoring was necessary in light that "tension would yield to bombast" in translating the taut energy of the chamber source material into a string symphony.

Corigliano's second symphony is notably true to its string quartet origins, displaying the influence of Béla Bartók. The work's arch-form (the musical equivalent of a palindrome) pays more than a superficial resemblance to Bartok's fourth quartet, where the outer movements (I and V) are related thematically, as are the inner movements (II and IV), leaving the middle movement (III) central to the work, solitary and nocturnal in character. The first movement ("Prelude") looms forth in an eerie fashion, like opaque banks of fog drifting up and rolling down dark green-grey hills at dusk or dawn. The spatial notation is on full display from the start, as threads of harmonic glissandi form gentle (yet tense) undulation after undulation. Practice mutes are also used to enhance the quietude of the

moment, able to reduce the instruments' normally rich sonorities to hoarse whispering. The second movement ("Scherzo") dashes forth with a rather manic sense of humor, with an "almost pop-like manner." A *chaconne*, a gentle trio formed from the harmonies of the "Prelude," is framed by the sawing of relentless slashing chords. These cruel chords are themselves unsettled by polyrhythmically propulsive mutations, cross-cutting already frenetic moments into heights of frenzy complete with Bartokian snap-pizzicato techniques. Central to the whole piece, the third movement ("Nocturne") reveals a more personal layer to Corigliano's symphony. The movement is meant to invoke a specifically memory of a night in Morocco. Given that it is Corigliano's memory, let us turn to his own words:

> *Some years ago during a vacation in Morocco, I stayed at the Palais Jamais in Fez. My room overlooked the old city and during the night (about 4 a.m.) I was awakened by the calls of the muezzins from the many mosques in the city. First one, then another, and finally dozens of independent calls created a glorious counterpoint, and at one moment all of the calls held on to a single note (pure accident) and the result was a major chord. The calls died away, a cock crowed and a dog barked to announce the sun. This Nocturne recalls that memory — the serenity of the Moroccan night, the calls (here composed of motivic fragments of repeated notes and minor thirds) and the descent to silence and the dawn."*

Truly, "Nocturne" is of a different emotional quality entirely, more introspective with its bald yearning, an impressionistic mimetic moment (like a diary entry) in direct contrast to the spectral and severe outer movements that surround it. "Fugue" demonstrates textures that start in a surprisingly stark manner. Instead of using rhythm to create audible independence between the voices, Corigliano begins his fugue with strict homorhythmic textures. Eventually, the different instruments begin to move at different rates, unfurling into complex rhythms that once more degenerate into spatial notation passages that Corigliano calls "asynchronous 'chases.'" The last movement ("Postlude") directly follows "Fugue," quickly revealing a sustained note in the *altissimo* range of a solo violin. Ostinato patterns shift underneath like doppler ambulance sirens passing far below in unsettling ways. Corigliano explains that "this quality of [registral] separation is meant to impart a feeling of farewell to the entire movement," in which distance between the instruments becomes a metaphor, a lamenting withdrawal as they sing together from afar. Thus, the symphony lapsing into the spectral mists and fogs from which it began, fading into silence.

In the end, the structure of *Symphony No. 2* is like that of touching a memory, a sonic landscape where the orchestra's path moving toward and away from the central third movement traces a psycho-drama of sorts. Approaching and withdrawing to invest or divest mental or emotional energy in anticipation of gain or loss. Here, the ear's proximity to the third memory-movement, embedded at the center of the work, serves as much to preserve Corigliano's identity in a romantic flourish of Moroccan nostalgia as it does to underline its eventual dispersal — however, its simple lamenting ear-worm is far from forgotten. In this way, *Symphony No. 2*'s architecture seems to be built to remind us that our memories remain, even when "the music stops."

Clifton Ingram is a Boston-based composer, performer (Rested Field, guitars/electronics), and writer interested in the fault lines between contemporary and historical traditions. He holds degrees in music (composition) and classics from Skidmore College and The Boston Conservatory.

GUEST ARTISTS

KEITARO YOSHIOKA

ELIOT FISK

Guitarist Eliot Fisk is known worldwide as a charismatic performer famed for his adventurous and virtuosic repertoire. After nearly 50 years before the public he remains as his mentor Andres Segovia once wrote, "at the top line of our artistic world." In recent seasons, Fisk continues to break new ground for the guitar with marathon performances of his transcriptions of all 6 Bach solo cello Suites, duo performances with guitar legend Angel Romero and with a new trio formed with virtuoso guitarists Joaquin Clerch and Aniello Desiderio. In addition, numerous new works have been dedicated to him by composers as varied as Leonardo Balada, Robert Beaser, Luciano Berio, Ralf Gawlick, Nicholas Maw, George Rochberg, Daniel Bernard Roumain and Kurt Schwertsik.

Eliot Fisk has performed as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, Rochester Symphony, Orchestra of St. Lukes, Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, Pro Arte Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Boston Modern Orchestra Project and many others. He returns regularly to numerous guitar festivals such as those of Cordoba, Spain; Belgrade, Serbia; and Iserlohn, Bad Aibling and Hersbrueck, Germany.

Eliot Fisk has performed with a dizzying array of chamber music colleagues including flutist, Paula Robison; clarinetist, Richard Stoltzman; cellist Yehuda Hanani; violinists Ruggiero Ricci, Gidon Kremer and Joshua Bell, the Shanghai, Juilliard, Miro, Borromeo and Arditti String Quartets. He has invented numerous cross over projects with among others Paco Peña (flamenco guitar); Joe Pass and Bill Frisell (jazz guitar) chanteuse Ute Lemper, and Turkish music specialist, Burhan Öçal.

Eliot Fisk remains a prolific recording artist. Recent releases include Ralf Gawlick's *Kollwitz Konnex* for soprano and guitar (Musica Omnia) Anthony Paul de Ritis's *Pop Concerto* with Gil Rose leading the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, a pair of CDs of new music dedicated to and transcribed by Fisk of works by Beaser, Corigliano, Schwertsik, and Rochberg (Wildner Records) and duo discs with flamenco legend, Paco Peña (on Nimbus Records) and cellist, Yehuda Hanani (Albany Records).

Following his own graduation in 1977, Eliot Fisk founded the guitar department at the Yale School of Music. Currently, he is Professor at the Universität Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria and in Boston at the New England Conservatory where in 2010 he received the Krasner Award as "Teacher of the Year."

Eliot Fisk is Founder and Artistic Director of Boston GuitarFest (www.bostonguitarfest.org) an annual cross-disciplinary event cosponsored by the New England Conservatory and Northeastern University and now entering its 13th consecutive year. In 2017 he created and served as Artistic Director of the first ever and immensely successful Salzburg Guitar Fest at the Universität Mozarteum in Salzburg.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

LIZ LINDER

GIL ROSE is a conductor helping to shape the future of classical music. His dynamic performances and many recordings have garnered international critical praise.

In 1996, Mr. Rose founded the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the foremost professional orchestra dedicated exclusively to performing and recording symphonic music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under his leadership, BMOP's unique programming and high performance standards have attracted critical acclaim.

As a guest conductor on both the opera and symphonic platforms, he made his Tanglewood debut in 2002 and in 2003 debuted with the Netherlands Radio Symphony at the Holland Festival. He has led the American Composers Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, and the National Orchestra of Porto. In 2015, he made his Japanese debut substituting for Seiji Ozawa at the Matsumoto Festival conducting Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédict*, and in March 2016 made his debut with New York City Opera at the Appel Room at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Over the past decade, Mr. Rose has also built a reputation as one of the country's most inventive and versatile opera conductors. He recently announced the formation of Odyssey Opera, an inventive company dedicated to presenting eclectic operatic repertoire in a variety of formats. The company debuted in September 2013 to critical acclaim with a 6-hour concert production of Wagner's *Rienzi*, and has continued on to great success with masterworks in concert, an annual fully-staged festival, and contemporary and family-friendly operas. Prior to founding Odyssey Opera he led Opera Boston as its Music Director starting in 2003, and in 2010 was appointed the company's first Artistic Director. Mr. Rose led Opera Boston in several American and New England premieres including Shostakovich's *The Nose*, Donizetti's *Maria Padilla*, Hindemith's *Cardillac*, and Peter Eötvös's *Angels in America*. In 2009, Mr. Rose led the world premiere of Zhou Long's *Madame White Snake*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2011.

Mr. Rose and BMOP recently partnered with the American Repertory Theater, Chicago Opera Theater, and the MIT Media Lab to create the world premiere of composer Tod Machover's *Death and the Powers* (a runner-up for the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in Music). He conducted this seminal multimedia work at its world premiere at the Opera Garnier in Monte Carlo, Monaco, in September 2010, and also led its United States premiere in Boston and a subsequent performance at Chicago Opera Theater.

An active recording artist, Gil Rose serves as the executive producer of the BMOP/sound recording label. His extensive discography includes world premiere recordings of music by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Charles Fussell, Michael Gandolfi, Tod Machover, Steven Mackey, Evan Ziporyn, and many others on such labels as Albany, Arsis, Chandos, ECM, Naxos, New World, and BMOP/sound.

He has led the longstanding Monadnock Music Festival in historic Peterborough, NH, since his appointment as Artistic Director in 2012, conducting several premieres and making his opera stage directing debut in two revivals of operas by Dominick Argento, as well as conducting, directing and producing the world premier recording of Ned Rorem's opera *Our Town*.

He has curated the Fromm Concerts at Harvard three times and served as the first curator of the Ditson Festival of Music at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art. As an educator Mr. Rose served five years as director of Orchestral Activities at Tufts University and in 2012 he joined the faculty of Northeastern University as Artist-in-Residence and Professor of Practice.

In 2007, Mr. Rose was awarded Columbia University's prestigious Ditson Award as well as an ASCAP Concert Music Award for his exemplary commitment to new American music. He is a three-time Grammy Award nominee.

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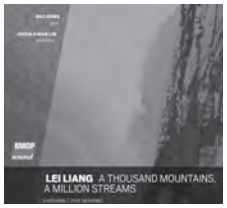

[1061]

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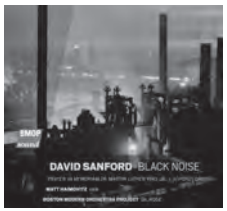

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MICHAEL COLGRASS SIDE BY SIDE

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