LONGWOOD GARDENS INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

Performance Curtis Symphony Orchestra Friday, May 12, 2023 7 pm

Osmo Vänskä, conductor Janice Carissa, piano

Program (subject to change)

Awakening Lion (World Premiere)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in G major, Sz. 95 I. Allegro II. Adagio—Presto—Più adagio III. Allegro molto

Janice Carissa, piano

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36Pyotr Illyich TchaikovskyI. Andante sostenuto — Moderato con anima(1840–93)— Moderato assai, quasi Andante — Allegro vivoII. Andantino in modo di canzona

III. Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato - Allegro

IV. Finale: Allegro con fuoco

Curtis Symphony Orchestra

Violin

Danny Yehun Jin, co-concertmaster Eunseo Lee, co-concertmaster Michael Shaham, principal second violin Leah Amory Maya Anjali Buchanan I-Hao Cheng Alexandra Cooreman Ling Yu Dong Jacques Forestier Yiyang Hou Zhenyi Jiang Gawon Kim Na Hyun Della Kyun Yesong Sophie Lee Hairui Lei Tianyou Ma Jieon Park Anastasia Petrunina* Dongyoung Jake Shim Alejandra Switala* Hannah Tam

Viola

Jinyoung Yoon

Soyoung Cho, *co-principal* Emad Zolfaghari, *co-principal* Jack Kessler, *associate principal* Chih-Ta Chen Sofia Gilchenok Jiwon Grace Kim Yizilin Liang Haneul Park Dillon Scott Alyssa Warcup

Cello

Matthew Christakos, *principal* Eunae Jin, *associate principal* Hun Choi SaiSai Ding Romain-Olivier Gray Jiayin He TaeYeon Rachel Kim Ania Lewis Laura Navasardian Elliot Sloss Nygel Witherspoon Yoonsoo Yeo

Double Bass

Jason Henery, *principal* Tobias Vigneau, *associate principal* Hanxiao Deng Christian Luevano Dimitrios Mattas William McGregor

Flute Julin Cheung Emily DeNucci Eunah Kim Xiaoxi Annie Li Anastasia Samsel

Oboe

Izaiah Cheeran Christopher Correa Ben Price Cameron Slaton Oliver Talukder

Clarinet Yejin Ahn Simon Bakos Alexander Erlich-Herzog Hwaseop Jeong Tzu-Yi Yu

Bassoon

Preston Atkins Luis Marquez Teruel Diego Peña Kahlan Yenney

Horn

Martina Adams Nicholas Ivy Amit Melzer* Christine Ott Marcus Shaw

Trumpet

Dasara Beta Franz Maury Raúl Orellana

Trombone

Natanel Bikov Diogo Fernandes Derek Gullett Changwon Park, *bass trombone*

Tuba Ethan Marmolejos

Timpani and Percussion

Griffin Harrison Tae McLoughlin Denis Petrunin* Zachary Strickland* Zachary Thomas

Piano Yangyang Ruan

Harp Daniel Benedict

Conducting Fellow/ Cover Conductor Micah Gleason Jacob Niemann

*guest artist

About the Curtis Symphony Orchestra

Dai Wei (b. 1989) Bèla Bartók (1881–1945)

Acclaimed for its "otherworldly ensemble and professional level of sophistication" (*The New York Times*), the Curtis Symphony Orchestra offers a dynamic showcase of tomorrow's exceptional young talent. Each year the 100 extraordinary musicians of the orchestra work with internationally renowned conductors, including Osmo Vänskä, Vladimir Jurowski, Marin Alsop, Simon Rattle, Robert Spano, and Yannick Nézet-Séguin, who also mentors the early-career conductors who hold Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellowships. This professional training has enabled Curtis alumni to assume prominent positions in America's leading orchestras, as well as esteemed orchestral, opera, and chamber ensembles around the world.

The Curtis Symphony Orchestra embarks on its first tour of the U.S. West Coast in May 2023, performing four concerts in ten days, in the cities of Kennett Square, PA; Prescott, AZ; Santa Barbara, CA; and Davis, CA under the baton of Osmo Vänskä, with soloist Yefim Bronfman, a Curtis alumnus and faculty member.

Part of **Curtis on Tour**, the Nina von Maltzahn global touring initiative, these performances are grounded in the school's "learn by doing" philosophy, offering students real-world, professional touring experience alongside celebrated alumni and faculty. In addition to performing, musicians offer master classes, interactive programs, and community engagement activities. Since the program was established in 2008, students, faculty, and alumni have performed more than 375 concerts in over 100 cities in Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

The **Curtis Institute of Music**, "one of the world's finest music academies" (*BBC Culture*), produces top prizewinners of international competitions, soloists with major ensembles, and today's most promising artists. Founded in 1924, Curtis pairs tradition and innovation, educating exceptionally gifted young musicians as artist-citizens who engage a local and global community through music-making of the highest caliber. Over forty percent of the student body comes to Curtis from outside the United States, and 20 nations are represented by the student body in a typical year.

For nearly a century Curtis has provided each member of its small student body with an unparalleled education alongside musical peers, distinguished by a "learn by doing" philosophy and personalized attention from a faculty that includes a high proportion of actively performing musicians. With admissions based solely on artistic promise, no student is turned away due to financial need. Curtis invests in each admitted student, ensuring no tuition is charged for their studies and they enter the profession free from educational debt. In a typical year, Curtis students hone their craft through more than 200 orchestra, opera, and solo and chamber music offerings in Philadelphia and around the world.

The extraordinary young musicians of Curtis graduate to join 4,000 alumni who have long made music history, performing around the world. As musical leaders, they make a profound impact on music onstage and in their communities. To learn more, visit **Curtis.edu**.

OSMO VÄNSKÄ Conductor

Conductor Laureate of the Minnesota Orchestra, where he held the music directorship for 19 years, and music director of Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra from 2020 to 2023, Osmo Vänskä is recognized for his compelling interpretations of repertoire of all eras and an energetic presence on the podium. His democratic and inclusive style of work has been key in forging long-standing relationships with many orchestras worldwide.

Performances of Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* with Minnesota Orchestra in June 2022 provided a fitting culmination for Vänskä's tenure as music director. Together they undertook five major European tours, as well as an historic trip to Cuba in 2015—the first visit by an American orchestra since the two countries re-established diplomatic relations. They also made a ground-breaking tour to South Africa in 2018 as part of worldwide celebrations of Nelson Mandela's centenary—also the first visit by an American orchestra—drawing together South African and American performers in musical expressions of peace, freedom, and reconciliation on a five-city tour. Vänskä and Minnesota Orchestra also made an acclaimed return to London's BBC Proms in summer 2018.

Vänskä led the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra on a major European tour in the fall of 2022, including concerts in Vienna, Salzburg, Amsterdam, and London. He returns to guest conduct the Seoul Philharmonic several times in 2023.

He returned this season to the symphony and philharmonic orchestras of Bamberg, Chicago, Los Angeles, Helsinki, Israel, Houston, Montreal, and Pittsburgh. Past guest conducting invitations include renowned international ensembles such as Cleveland, Philadelphia, and San Francisco Symphony orchestras in North America, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Iceland Symphony, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, and London Philharmonic Orchestra. He is regularly invited to guest conduct in Asia including with Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, and the China, Hangzhou, Hong Kong, and Taiwan philharmonic orchestras.

In the 2022–23 season, in addition to continuing his relationship with the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, Vänskä was invited to guest conduct the New World Symphony in Miami, where he also coaches its conducting fellows.

A distinguished recording artist for the BIS label, Vänskä is currently recording all of Mahler's symphonies with Minnesota Orchestra. His recording of Symphony No. 5 received a GRAMMY nomination in 2017 for Best Classical Orchestral Performance. Vänskä and Minnesota Orchestra have also recorded the complete symphonies of Beethoven and Sibelius to critical acclaim, winning a GRAMMY Award for Best Orchestral Performance in 2014 as well as being nominated on several other occasions. In 2021 they were voted Gramophone's Orchestra of the Year.

Vänskä studied conducting at Finland's Sibelius Academy and was awarded first prize in the 1982 Besançon Competition. He began his career as a clarinetist, occupying the co-principal chair of Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra. He regularly performs chamber music, having been invited to La Jolla Summerfest, Seattle Chamber Music Festival, Naantali Summer Festival, Sysmä Summer Sounds, and Music in Ruovesi. He has recorded Bernhard Henrik Crusell's three Clarinet Quartets and Kalevi Aho's Clarinet Quintet for the BIS label and is recording several duos for clarinet and violin which he has commissioned with his wife, violinist Erin Keefe.

Vänskä is the recipient of a Royal Philharmonic Society Award, the Finlandia Foundation's Arts and Letters award, the 2010 Ditson Award from Columbia University, and the Pro Finlandia medal awarded to him by the State of Finland. He holds honorary doctorates from the universities of Glasgow and Minnesota and was named Musical America's 2005 Conductor of the Year. In 2013 he received the Annual Award from the German Record Critics' Award Association for his involvement in BIS's recordings of the complete works by Sibelius.

JANICE CARISSA Piano

A Gilmore Young Artist and winner of Salon de Virtuosi, Janice Carissa has "the multicolored highlights of a mature pianist" *(Philadelphia Inquirer)* and "strong, sure hands" *(Voice of America)* that "convey a vivid story rather than a mere showpiece." *(Chicago Classical Review)* Her artistry has been showcased at an array of renowned stages, including the Sydney Opera House, Carnegie Hall, United Nations, Kennedy Center, Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park, Louis Vuitton Foundation and Saratoga Performing Arts Center.

Following her Philadelphia Orchestra debut at age sixteen, Carissa has for substituted Andre Watts as soloist with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and gone on to perform with the Kansas City, Amarillo, Des Moines, John Hopkins, St. Peters by the Sea, Symphony in C, Eastern Wind, Bay Atlantic, and Midwest Young Artist symphonies. In 2023, she will be a featured soloist with Sacramento Philharmonic, Promusica Chamber Orchestra, Curtis Symphony Orchestra, and the Tacoma and Battle Creek symphonies.

Carissa's burning passion for chamber music has led her to performances with Brooklyn Chamber Music Society and Jupiter Chamber Concert Series; collaborations with Vadim Gluzman, Miriam Fried, Paul Neuebauer, Lucy Shelton, Marcy Rosen, David Shifrin, Jennifer Cano, Peter Wiley, among other distinguished musicians; and appearances at Marlboro, North Shore, Ravinia, Caramoor, and Kneisel Hall festivals.

A pupil of Gary Graffman and Robert McDonald, Carissa left Indonesia in 2013 and entered the Curtis Institute of Music. All students are Curtis attend on full-tuition, merit-based scholarships, and Carissa was the Gerry and Marguerite Lenfest fellow. Having graduated with a bachelor's degree from Curtis, she is presently studying at The Juilliard School with Robert McDonald. When away from the piano, Carissa is an avid foodie and loves going on strolls with her camera.

Program Notes

Awakening Lion Dai Wei (b. 1989)

Awakening Lion is a Cantonese traditional dance that is accompanied by unpitched percussions such as Chinese bass drums, cymbals, and gongs. Customarily performed during the Lunar New Year, the Lion Dance is not only looked upon as the skillful display of strength and artistry but as the conveyance of tradition, skill, collaboration, and relationship, which I think it shares a lot in common with the symphony orchestra.

According to legend, one day, a bizarre creature came to the village and fiercely preyed on villagers and animals. The name of the creature was Nien (which sounds like the Chinese word "year"). It was so strong and violent that not even the tiger could slay it. In despair, the villagers turned to the lion for help. Rushing to meet the terrible foe, the lion wounded Nien. As Nien fled, it turned and screamed, "Beware! I will return and take my revenge."

A year later, Nien returned. But at that moment, the lion got his new job guarding the emperor's gate and he was just too busy to help. So the villagers had to hurriedly take some fabric and bamboo and created a huge mask of the lion. Several villagers crawled inside and made the lion roar and prance. Not unexpectedly, Nien ran away again. Thus, on the eve of the Lunar New Year, the awakening lion, or the lion dance, is meant to wish prosperity, good luck, and peace for another year.

What interests me the most is that under the giant beast, those are ordinary people just like you and me. We might not know what the awakening lion is, none of us have ever seen how the lion fought with the beast Nien, but we have all fought our battles—our loneliness, our vulnerability, our loss, our helplessness, our fear—existences that do not have a tangible shape. Existences that left us no way to retreat. While facing these, we sometimes make a desperate attempt to disguise ourselves as a huge beast to compete with it. At the moment when we are about to be engulfed by an invisible power, the lion that we hold up with all our inner positive strength and optimism is called the awakening lion.

—Dai Wei (Composition '19) 6 minutes | 1 movement

Awakening Lion was commissioned by the Curtis Institute of Music for Curtis on Tour, with the support of Allen R. and Judy Brick Freedman.

Piano Concerto No. 2 in G major, Sz. 95 Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

One of Bartók's goals was to try to reconcile 20th-century music's inherent tensions between tradition and revolution, folk song and iconoclasm. Each of his three piano concertos offers insight into a critical aspect of his musicianship. *The First* (1926–27), with its "barbaric" *martellato* effects, underscores the importance of irregular rhythms and percussive sonorities to Bartók's aesthetic. *The Third*, written during the composer's last year, displays a sort of neoclassical tranquility—a tender resignation, perhaps, to the sadness of exile and prolonged illness in America.

Between these two stands the mighty *Second Concerto* (1930–31), which has been deemed a masterpiece partly because of the way in which it synthesizes the dominant strands of the composer's (and of the early 20th century's) primarily interests: folksong and its rhythms, strict counterpoint even in the face of dissonance, hyperactive motivic development, and brilliant orchestral color that often includes ample percussion. Despite its fiendishly difficult solo part, the piece remains accessible and sonically intriguing even for someone hearing it for the first time.

The Second was composed in Frankfurt and received its premiere there on January 23, 1933, with the composer at the keyboard and Hans Rosbaud conducting. It would be Bartók's last performance in Germany, as Hitler was named Chancellor of Germany exactly one week later. Back in Hungary— which joined a dark alliance with Germany under the Tripartite Act—the composer's anti-fascist views would put him at odds with his own government. In 1940, he and his wife, the pianist Ditta Pásztory, fled to New York, where just five years later the composer would die from polycythemia.

The concerto's opening Allegro, which some have likened to Bach's busily contrapuntal *Brandenburg Concertos*, is scored for winds and brass only. The second movement (beginning with an austere, chorale-like Adagio) is accompanied by strings and percussion, with a percussive Scherzo sandwiched between the symmetrically balanced outer sections. The finale (Allegro molto), scored for full orchestra, is a sort of reiteration of the opening, which ingeniously completes the concerto's symmetry.

"Except for a single new theme, the third movement represents a free variant of the first," the composer wrote, "which serves as a 'framework' to hold together the parts of the third movement that are built on those of the first. ... The second movement is a Scherzo with an Adagio, or, if you prefer, an Adagio containing a Scherzo. The Adagio itself is divided into various equally important but mutually contrasting sections."

Just as important, he added: "Neither of my [first] two piano concertos is written for piano with *accompaniment* from an orchestra, but for piano and orchestra. In both works, I wished to realize absolute equality between solo instrument and orchestra."

—Paul Horsley 28 minutes | 3 movements

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36 Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky (1840–93)

In December of 1876, Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky stood at the vanguard of his generation's most gifted young composers and at the precipice of a permanent financial crisis. With the dawn of a new year approaching, the thirty-six-year-old received a letter from Nadezhda Filaretovna von Meck, patron of the arts, affluent businesswoman, collector of musicians, and widow of a recently deceased wealthy railroad magnate. By the time a second letter arrived in February, an unorthodox new friendship and an emotional affair blossomed between the two, one that reversed his fortunes and funded his compositional endeavors over the next thirteen years with an odd caveat that they never meet. It was one of two fateful paths that would forever alter his life's destiny and, in turn, influence his *Fourth Symphony*, secretly dedicated to von Meck with the inscription "to my best friend."

In late spring of 1877, another letter arrived. Antonina Ivanovna Milyukova, a former seamstress and pupil of Tchaikovsky, declared her undying love for him, even threatening suicide unless they met in person. On June 1, he agreed to meet but made it implicitly clear they could never be together. In May, he had begun composing Eugene Onegin (alongside Symphony No. 4) and was so swept away by Onegin's rejection of Tatyana in the opera that he succumbed to a bout of guilt, repressed his homosexuality, and proposed to Antonina a week after he had initially rejected her. There was one stipulation-this hastily arranged marriage would never be consummated. Their disastrous physical union was a short-lived affair. In July, he fled in panic to Kyiv to stay at his sister's estate, then returned to Moscow in September to reconcile the situation before falling ill. After a nervous breakdown in Saint Petersburg that almost destroyed his creative core, Tchaikovsky remained unconscious for two weeks and awoke to a life without his bride, whom he ultimately never divorced.

During this period of time, his explosive *Symphony No. 4* continued to evolve. This dark, powerful work masterfully depicts an epic battle between unbridled joy and fate, a sinister, inescapable force that threatens the fragile beauty of life itself. Over four intensely dramatic movements, the audience is drawn into Tchaikovsky's turbulent mind as he grapples with the torment of his inner demons and triumphs in a finale of musical fireworks, proclaiming that we should all "rejoice in the happiness of others."

Declamatory brass and winds dominate the central theme of Fate in the sprawling first movement, with the tonic of F minor articulated in the introduction. A sonata allegro-like A-B-A form arises, and the strings play an anxious, tipsy waltz before the honeyed sounds of the clarinet arrive to deliver the secondary motif. Each tranquil section is interrupted by the Fate motif's sharp, menacing stab. In the second movement, a gorgeous eighth-note oboe melody unfolds, giving way to a bittersweet tug-of-war between pleasure and pain in the strings and woodwinds.

The balletic third *Scherzo* movement features a woozy oboe solo, which Tchaikovsky described as "drunken peasants and a street song," offset by the sound of a military procession marching in the distance. The final movement, *Allegro con Fuoco*, immediately erupts in a volcanic fury from the full orchestra—the fortissimo bravura of the major key shifts to the minor, and the traditional Russian folk song, "The Little Birch Tree," dominates the second theme. Fate returns in the brass section to upend the ongoing celebration, but happiness prevails, even if, for Tchaikovsky, this vicarious bliss is all but fleeting.

> —Ryan Scott Lathan 43 minutes | 4 movements

This performance is part of Curtis on Tour, the Nina von Maltzahn global touring initiative of the Curtis Institute of Music.

Awakening Lion was commissioned by the Curtis Institute of Music for Curtis on Tour, with the support of Allen R. and Judy Brick Freedman.

The Steinway piano was selected from Jacobs Music Company.

This concert is made possible, in part, thanks to the Pennsylvania Tourism Office.





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