

PROTESTRA 

MUSIC IN ACTION:

a concert against gun violence

July 28, 2022 @ 8 PM

The DiMenna Center, NYC

A portion of ticket proceeds will be donated to
Save our Streets (S.O.S) and Everytown for Gun Safety



Suggested donation: \$25

www.protestra.org

PROGRAM

- **dis[armed] – Yaz Lancaster**
Featuring **Tamika Gorski & Tyler Hefferon, percussion**
- **Soul of Remembrance – Mary D. Watkins**
- **Kindertotenlieder – Gustav Mahler**
Featuring **Alice Chung, mezzo-soprano**

Michelle Rofrano, conductor



Yaz Lancaster



Mary D. Watkins



Gustav Mahler

PLAYERS

Violin 1

Samuel Gray, Concertmaster
Kayla Iwane
Shaleah Feinstein
Veronica Riner
Nicole Pellman
Bryn Digney
Tristan Aniceto
Glenna Cureton

Violin 2

Sam Tomblin, Principal
Salome Lomidze
Martin Vaillancourt
Lucia Lostumbo
Sunjay Jayaram
Jade Schoolcraft
Edan Sabah

Viola

Linnea Marchie, Principal
Nick Pauly
Katya Barmotina
Brian Thompson
Beth Holub
Brienne Lugo
Alec Santamaria

Cello

Najette Abouelhadi, Principal
Alicia Furey
Emily Mantone
Halie Morris
Peri Mauer
Jennifer Shaw

Bass

Mort Cahn, Principal
Christina Morris
Andrew Vinther
Noah Strevell

Flute

Jamie Lee *
Natasha Loomis ^

Oboe

Christian Trãn, Principal
Timothy Hommowun
Jonathan Acampora, English Horn

Clarinet

Elia Foster, Principal
Christine Todd
Eric Schultz, Bass Clarinet

Bassoon

Nicholas Hooks, Principal
Chris Burrow

* **Principal on Mahler**

^ **Principal on Watkins**

Horn

Blair Hamrick
Matthew Jaimes *
Hanan Rahman ^
Ian Vlahovic

Trumpet

Malcolm Shier, Principal
Hugh Ash
Oscar Wiley Thorp

Trombone

Rich Cush
Oscar Mendez
Owen Caprell, Bass Trombone

Tuba

Genevieve Blesch

Timpani

Tamika Gorski

Percussion

Tyler Hefferon

Harp

Lianne Cline

Electronics and A/V

Shane Brown

Rehearsal Pianist

Dura Jun

SAVE OUR STREETS (S.O.S.)



Mission

Save Our Streets (S.O.S.) seeks to end gun violence at the neighborhood level by changing local norms around violence and creating opportunities for meaningful educational and employment opportunities within the community.

Approach

The core of the program consists of violence interrupters with first-hand knowledge of street and gang life who use their credibility and relationships to mediate conflicts before they escalate. In partnership with local organizations and faith leaders, S.O.S. holds frequent community events along with rapid responses to individual shootings, sending the message that the community will not tolerate violence.

www.courtinnovation.org/programs/save-our-streets

EVERYTOWN FOR GUN SAFETY



Mission

Everytown is a movement of nearly 10 million mayors, moms, teachers, survivors, gun owners, students, and everyday Americans who have come together to make their own communities safer. Everytown works to keep guns out of the wrong hands, keep guns out of schools, prohibit assault weapons and dangerous hardware, hold the gun industry accountable, and ultimately keep communities safe.

Approach

Everytown organizations are fighting for the changes that will save lives through:

Support & Education - Such as researching causes and solutions, supporting survivors, and building partnerships

Taking Action - Demanding accountability and advocating for safety reforms locally and nationally

Building a Movement - Grassroots organizing in every state to create a community.

www.everytown.org

PROTESTRA 

PROGRAM NOTES

dis[armed] – Yaz Lancaster

dis[armed] is scored for percussion duo with tape, originally written for Washington Squared (Nick Gigante & Yang Chen). This piece is my attempt at exploring the conversation surrounding gun violence--particularly mass shootings and the killing of unarmed Black people by police in the US. Through this piece, I've tried to put the separate but related occurrences in dialogue, and parse out my own feelings, meditations and confusion surrounding gun violence/control and legislature. It is my hope that people begin putting both mass shootings and police brutality in the same conversation when trying to figure out where to go from here. & that there is somewhere better to go. *This is a revised version of the original score, which contained 4 movements:

II. disjunct (tape only, then vibraphone 1/kick drum + vibraphone 2)

- This movement is about conversation, debate and disagreements.

III. reset (tape only)

- This movement is about accountability.

IV. refocus (vibraphone/newspaper)

- This movement is about breathing, shifting focus and learning how to move forward.

PROGRAM NOTES

Soul of Remembrance – Mary D. Watkins

Soul of Remembrance is the second movement of Watkins' Five Movements in Color, which was commissioned by the Camellia Symphony Orchestra in 1993 and premiered the following year. Collectively, the movements are about the African-American experience and its second movement is a tribute to the wisdom and knowledge her ancestors nurtured while simultaneously being dehumanized. *Soul of Remembrance* reflects particularly on the sorrow felt by Africans forced into slavery.

Watkins opens the movement with strings nostalgically floating above the steady beat of a harp. As each voice melds into each other, the orchestra grows into a collective grief and tenderly releases.

Sources:

[The Adore Project](#)

[Richmond Symphony](#)

[National Endowment for the Arts](#)

[White Snake Projects](#)

PROGRAM NOTES

Kindertotenlieder – Gustav Mahler

“Gustav Mahler’s *Kindertotenlieder* (*Songs on the Death of Children*) is a song cycle of five songs adapted from Friedrich Rückert’s collection of poems of the same name. Rückert was a German poet, linguistics professor, and translator; fluent in thirty languages, his connection to a wide range of cultures strongly influenced his poetry. Several well-known composers would go on to set his poems to music, including Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Richard Strauss, and, of course, Gustav Mahler. *Kindertotenlieder* is one of two Mahler settings of Rückert’s poetry; the second is the aptly named song cycle *Rückert-Lieder*.

Rückert’s 428 *Kindertotenlieder* poems, written in 1833–1834, are far more devastating than the rest of his output: They encapsulate the profound loss and overwhelming agony he felt following the deaths of two of his children due to scarlet fever. Musicologist Karen Painter describes Rückert’s emotional journey through the various stages of grief as he penned these tragic poems:

[They] became singular, almost manic documents of the psychological endeavor to cope with such loss. In ever new variations, Rückert’s poems attempt a poetic resuscitation of the children that is punctuated by anguished outbursts. **But above all, the poems show a quiet acquiescence to fate and to a peaceful world of solace.**

PROGRAM NOTES

Kindertotenlieder, cont.

In truth, Rückert never intended for these intimate, highly personal poems to be published, but they ultimately appeared in print in 1871, five years after his death. In 1901, Mahler experienced a close brush with death after suffering an intestinal hemorrhage; faced with his own mortality, he began setting three of Rückert's poems to music. He tabled the project to focus on composing his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, but resumed work on the remaining two lieder in 1904, two weeks after the birth of his second daughter, Anna Justine. Upon hearing of this decision, his wife Alma, also a skilled composer, begged him not to use them for his song cycle, viewing it as a bad omen:

I could understand setting such frightful words to music if one had no children, or had lost those one had... Rückert did not write these harrowing elegies solely out of his imagination; they were dictated by the cruelest loss of his whole life. What I could not understand was bewailing the deaths of children who were in the best of health and spirits...hardly one hour after having kissed and fondled them. I exclaimed at the time: "For Heaven's sake, don't tempt Providence!"

Mahler's life was sadly already shaped by untimely death—eight of his siblings had not lived past childhood—but he ignored Alma's pleas and completed *Kindertotenlieder* in the summer of 1904. The work is clearly Mahlerian in style, but represents a distinct departure from his earlier large-scale, idyllic, triumphant, and occasionally sardonic compositional voice. Instead, it is scored for vocal soloist (either mezzo-soprano or baritone) and a relatively pared-down chamber orchestra that Mahler felt would bring greater subtlety and nuance to Rückert's contemplative, heartbreaking poems.

PROGRAM NOTES

Kindertotenlieder, cont.

Mahler was adamant that the five lieder “form a complete and indivisible whole...their continuity must be preserved by preventing interruptions, such as, for example, applause at the end of each song.” He conducted the 1905 Vienna premiere of Kindertotenlieder, which featured a smaller orchestra comprising musicians from the Vienna Philharmonic with Friedrich Weidemann, leading baritone of the Vienna Court Opera, as soloist. Appropriately, Mahler paired Kindertotenlieder with its twin song cycle, Rückert-Lieder, for this first performance.

Mahler is said to have remarked that he was “sorry that he had to write [these lieder], and he is sorry for the world that must someday hear them, so dreadfully sad and shattering is their content.” Indeed, the work is full of meandering melodies, barren harmonies, unexpected dissonances, and ambiguous resolutions. Yet the song cycle also seems to reaffirm Mahler’s belief in the concept of an afterlife; the orchestral postlude in particular evokes a feeling of acceptance and imagery of heavenly light, like a lullaby for the souls of the prematurely departed. Tragically, Alma’s prophecy would come to pass when the Mahlers’ first daughter, Maria Anna, died in 1907 at the age of four; eerily, she succumbed to scarlet fever just as Rückert’s children had decades prior. In hindsight, Mahler confided to a close friend, “[While writing these lieder], I placed myself in the situation that a child of mine had died. When I really lost my daughter, I could not have written [them] anymore.”

Kindertotenlieder is a somber reflection on the loss of life at too young an age, and although school shootings may not have been Mahler’s original motivation to pen this stunning song cycle, it is a depressingly fitting homage to the children we have lost to gun violence in the United States.



Michelle Rofrano

Conductor, Artistic Director and Founder of PROTESTRA

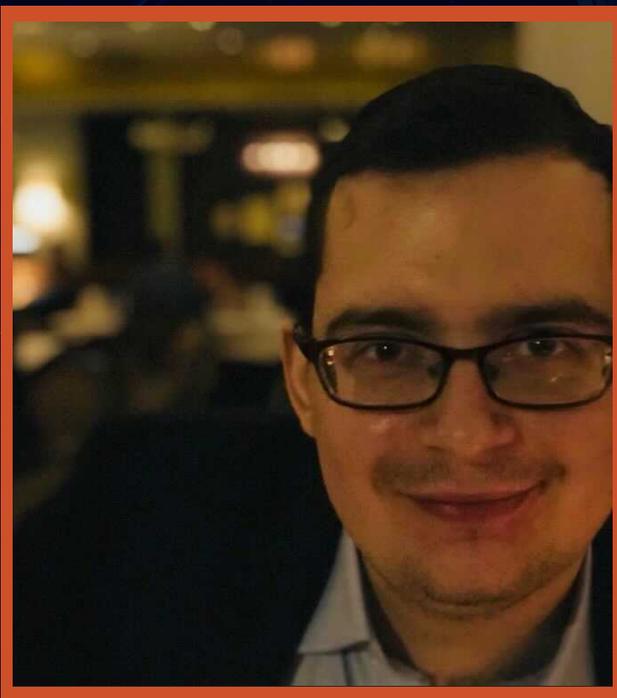
Michelle Rofrano is a Sicilian-American conductor with a keen interest in the intersection of art and social activism. An avid opera conductor, she is the current Resident Music Director of City Lyric Opera, a woman-led company based in NYC. Rofrano has previously conducted *The Queen of Spades* and *Trouble in Tahiti* with The Glimmerglass Festival; *Don Quichotte at Comacho's Wedding* with Opera Saratoga; *Le Nozze di Figaro* with The Crane School of Music; An Evening of Contemporary American Opera and *Trouble in Tahiti* with Westminster Choir College; and *Così fan tutte* and *The Turn of the Screw* with DC Public Opera. She has served as assistant conductor for productions with Juilliard Opera, The Glimmerglass Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, Opera Saratoga, Florida Grand Opera, and Opera Birmingham. Rofrano is the Founder and Artistic Director of PROTESTRA, an activist orchestra that advocates for social justice through classical music. She is also a co-creator of Girls Who Conduct, an initiative that mentors young women and non-binary musicians in an effort to achieve gender parity on the conducting podium. Rofrano completed graduate conducting studies at the Peabody Conservatory and counts Marin Alsop, Joseph Colaneri, Gustav Meier, and Markand Thakar among her mentors. Upcoming engagements for the 2021-22 season include assisting productions with Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Juilliard School, and leading productions of *Cendrillon* (Viardot) and *The Garden of Alice* (Raum) with City Lyric Opera.



Tamika Gorski

Percussion

Tamika Gorski is a percussionist currently based in New York City. An avid performer and supporter of contemporary music, she has commissioned and premiered numerous solo and chamber works by composers such as Molly Joyce, Elliot Cole, and Phong Tran. She has made appearances with the International Contemporary Ensemble and Curiosity Cabinet, among others, and has performed in Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Bang on a Can Summer Festival, and as a soloist with La Camerata Washington Heights. Orchestrally, she can be seen performing with groups including The Chelsea Symphony, Protestra, and the Greenwich Village Orchestra.



Tyler Hefferon

Percussionist, Board Treasurer of PROTESTRA

Tyler Hefferon is a percussionist with a background in nonprofit financial and operations management. His work has supported the missions of a number of organizations addressing national food insecurity, healthcare accessibility, environmental conservation, affordable housing, and education. He studied at Temple University and Boston Conservatory.



Alice Chung

Mezzo-Soprano

American mezzo-soprano Alice Chung is rapidly being recognized for her "operatic tonal glamour" (Parterre). This past spring, she made her house and role debut as Suzuki (Madama Butterfly) with Hawaii Opera Theatre and covered the role of Granny Jia in *Dream of the Red Chamber* with San Francisco Opera. She has performed with Naples Philharmonic, Music Academy of the West, Bucks County Symphony, Pittsburgh Festival Opera, Tulsa Opera, Merola Opera Program, Central City Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Kansas City Symphony, and San Francisco Opera from recital to mainstage. Off the main stage, Ms. Chung has performed and premiered works in chamber concerts and recitals, including her Schwabacher Debut Recital in San Francisco in 2020. Declared a 2021 winner of the William Matheus Sullivan Foundation Audition Awards, Ms. Chung has also been the recipient and winner of other numerous awards such as the Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshana Foundation, and other competitions such as the Cooper-Bing Competition, Gerda Lissner Foundation, Orpheus Vocal Competition, and the Metropolitan National Council Auditions. A few previous roles and covers include Ježibaba (Rusalka), Die Hexe (Hansel und Gretel), Larina (Eugene Onegin), Mercedes (Carmen), Mama McCourt (The Ballad of Baby Doe), Carmen (Carmen-cover), and Azucena (Il trovatore-cover). This spring, Ms. Chung will be performing Dritte Dame (Die Zauberflöte) with Arizona Opera. She will then head back to San Francisco Opera to cover Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*.

SUPPORTERS

PROTESTRA extends our sincere appreciation and gratitude to our many donors. The generosity of individual donors makes an extraordinary impact on PROTESTRA as we carry out our mission. The following is a list of patrons who have made contributions to PROTESTRA, current as of July 27, 2022. Thank you for your support!

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**THE
MAIN EVENT**

***COMMUNITY GIFTING PROGRAM**

PROTESTRA 

SUPPORTERS

Half Note Sponsor \$100+

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Shaun Cagney	Soul Hajuehla	Sandi-Jo Malmon	Richard Schrader	Branscombe
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Grace and Adam	Robert Jordan	Emerald Park	Chris David	Blakely Grunenberg
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Mansi Shah	Rebecca Kwiatek	Audra Purita	Elizabeth Yuan	Judith Davidson
Jennifer Jordan	James Smidt	Kathleen McLane	Emily Wong	Rachel & Michael
	Eugenie Foster	Anna Rebek	Andrew Duxbury	Lostumbo

THANK YOU!

PROTESTRA would like to thank everyone who made this concert possible and who make our fledgling organization run. Your dedication and support mean the world to us!

The PROTESTRA Team

Michelle Rofrano - Founder, Music & Artistic Director

Ian Vlahović - Co-founder, Director of Operations & Board Chair

Natasha Loomis - Co-founder

Priscilla Rinehart - Board Secretary

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Tech Production: **ARTS LAUREATE**

Christian Amonson (Owner, Founder, Lead Engineer)

www.artslaureate.com

Memorial Video:

Created by Kaitlin Bove

www.kaitlinbove.com

PROTESTRA 

ABOUT PROTESTRA



First assembled in 2017 and formally incorporated in 2020, **PROTESTRA** (protest + orchestra) is a 501(c)(3) organization and volunteer-run orchestra that bridges the divide between advocacy and classical music. PROTESTRA's grassroots orchestral benefit concerts inspire activism by contextualizing classical music performance through multimedia education, and turn voluntary audience donations into targeted support for mission- and policy-driven groups related to the concerts' themes. PROTESTRA's new vision for classical music prioritizes diversity, equity, inclusion, and representation in both its hiring and programming practices. Additionally, PROTESTRA maintains a robust social media presence, creating and sharing original content and resources with 9,000+ followers across multiple platforms. To learn more about PROTESTRA, [visit our website](#), subscribe to our mailing list, and be sure to follow us on social media: [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#) | [TikTok](#) | [LinkedIn](#)