

★ ★ PROTESTRA ★ ★

TAKE A STAND: A CONCERT FOR MENTAL HEALTH



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2023 @ 4:00 PM

THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH – SOUTH HALL – 490 RIVERSIDE DR.

❁ PROGRAM ❁

WHEN YOU'RE SMILING

arr. Louis Armstrong, 1929

Written by Larry Shay, Mark Fisher,
and Joe Goodwin, 1928

A SONG FOR YOU

arr. Donny Hathaway, 1971

Written by Leon Russell, 1970

HERE COMES THE SUN

arr. Nina Simone, 1971

Written by The Beatles, 1969

*Saniyyah Bamberg, vocals
Esteban Castro, piano*

NEVER TO RETURN

Karen Sunabacka, 2013

ADAGIO FOR STRINGS

Samuel Barber, 1936

Danielle Jagelski, conductor

❁ 10 MIN. INTERMISSION ❁

SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN E MINOR

Pyotr Tchaikovsky, 1888

Michelle Rofrano, conductor



PROTESTRA (protest + orchestra) is a musician-run orchestra and 501(c)(3) organization 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 nonprofits related to the concerts' themes. PROTESTRA's new vision for classical music prioritizes diversity, equity, inclusion, representation, and accessibility in its hiring and programming practices. PROTESTRA maintains a robust social media presence, creating and sharing original content and resources with 9,000+ followers across multiple platforms.



OPEN PATH PSYCHOTHERAPY COLLECTIVE



Open Path Psychotherapy Collective is a nonprofit nationwide network of mental health professionals dedicated to providing in-office and online mental health care—at a steeply reduced rate—to clients in need. Open Path envisions a just, compassionate world where all people can easily access the care they need to thrive. In partnership with mental health clinicians in private practice throughout the fifty states and Canada, Open Path provides middle and lower-income level clients with access to affordable mental health care.



IHI THERAPY CENTER



IHI Therapy Center (Institute for Human Identity) is an NYC-based nonprofit psychotherapy and training center dedicated to fostering personal growth free of traditional gender, sexual orientation, and cultural biases. IHI's vision is a world where everyone—regardless of their gender identity, sexuality, race, age, disability, or immigration status—can find safety and support through affordable mental health care that is respectful of their needs and experiences.

[PROTESTRA.ORG](https://protestra.org)

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VIOLIN I

Samuel Gray
Charlotte Loukola
Kira L Hall
Salome Lomidze
Thomas Purcell
Oliver Costello
Danielle Sinclair
Inês Ayer
Tristan Aniceto

VIOLIN II

Dominique Valenzuela
Samantha Tomblin
Yeji Pyun
Mia Smith
Jacqueline Coston
Louis Barker
Jessica Beberaggi
Dario Cazzani
YoonJung Hwang

VIOLA

Avery Vyvyan Avanti
Soolim Shin
Shia-He Lin
Alec Santamaria
Alex McLaughlin
Oriana Hawley
Maxim Azucena Estevez-
Curtis
Katya Barmotina
Jack Rittendale

CELLO

Anthime Miller
Malachi Brown
Halie Morris
Jennie Davis
Chialing Pidd
Janet Rosenberg
Jessamyn Fry

BASS

Noah Strevell
Andrew Vinther
Ruth Christopher
Ian Fales
Morton Cahn

FLUTE

Mitzy Nonaka
Natasha Loomis
Savannah Gentry

CLARINET

Elia Foster
Tommy Shermulis

OBOE

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CONDUCTORS

Michelle Rofrano
Danielle Jagelski
Claire Lewis

JAZZ DUO

Saniyyah (Sunni) Bamberg
Esteban Castro

Thank you to the musicians who played as substitutes during our rehearsals for this concert!

Blue Shelton - Flute
Rebecca Nelsen - Oboe
Tanner Stegink - Tuba

PROGRAM NOTES

Never to Return – Karen Sunabacka

"Never to Return" was commissioned by the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra in 2013. The work is an exploration of loss and mental illness through the lens and lives of composer Karen Sunabacka's Scottish settler and Métis ancestors. One of the three recognized Aboriginal peoples in Canada, Métis are people of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry. In "Never to Return," Sunabacka uses her unique perspective as a child of cultural fusion to tell the story of her great-great grandmother, Mathilda Clouston, who lived in the Manitoba Asylum after the death of two of her children in the 1880s.

Mathilda and her Orcadian husband, Joseph Clouston, established roots in the Red River Settlement (modern-day Winnipeg). Mathilda's story was passed down by Métis relatives who were working as aides in the asylum during Mathilda's stay. Because of her Orcadian heritage, Sunabacka chose to base "Never to Return" on three Scottish melodies. The first is a happy fiddle tune played at Orkney weddings; the second is a tune that an Orkney man gathered and paired with lyrics to tell the story of loss; and the third is "Ye Banks and Braes," a well known Scottish song.

Moreover, the piece also has a strong tie to Sunabacka's mother, Joyce Clouston, who was struggling with depression while Sunabacka was composing "Never to Return." Sunabacka was inspired by the relationship between Mathilda's story, which she heard as she was growing up, and the depression she watched her mother experience firsthand.

Sunabacka's other influences include art, prairies, nature, and fantasy/science-fiction. In September 2022, she released her first album, titled "Curlicue," in collaboration with pianist Darryl Friesen. She is a skilled teacher, composer, and performer and is an Associate Professor of Music at Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo in Ontario.

Contributors: Michaela Wright, Danielle Jagelski

PROGRAM NOTES, CONT'D

We cannot measure how you heal
or measure every sufferer's prayer,
yet we believe in your grace responds
where faith and doubt unite to care.
Your hands, though bloodied on the cross,
survive to hold and heal and warn,
to carry all through death to life
and cradle children yet unborn.
The pain that will not go away,
the guilt that clings from things long past,
the fear of what the future holds,
are present as if meant to last.
But present too is love which tends
the hurt we never hope to find,
the private agonies inside,
the memories that haunt the mind.
So some have come who need your help and some have come to make amends,
as hands which shaped and saved the world
are present in the touch of friends.
Lord, let your Spirit meet us here
to mend the body, mind and soul,
to disentangle peace from pain
and make your broken people whole.
- John Bell and Graham Maule

Ye banks and braes o'bonnie Doon
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair
How can ye chaunt, ye little birds,
And I sae weary, fu' o'care.
Ye'll break my heart, ye warbling birds
That wanton through the flowery thorn,
Ye mind me o' departed joys,
Departed, never too return.
Oft hae I roved by bonnie Doon
To see the rose and woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sand o' its love,
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree
But my fause lover stole my rose,
And Ah! he left the thorn wi' me.
-Robert Burns

PROGRAM NOTES, CONT'D

Adagio for Strings – Samuel Barber

Samuel Barber was born on March 9, 1910, in West Chester, Pennsylvania. From a very early age, people took notice of Barber's musical genius. Barber completed his first piece at age 7 and his first opera at age 10. By age 12, he was already on staff as the church organist and by age 14, he was enrolled at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music. In addition to his work as a composer, Barber was also an accomplished pianist and baritone. During his time at Curtis, he studied with Rosario Scalero, who further affirmed that Barber had found his purpose in music.

During his studies, the two-time Pulitzer Prize winner met his lifelong partner, Giancarlo Menotti. It became an annual tradition for the two to travel to Europe every summer, where they shared a home just outside of Salzburg, Austria, for 30 years. It was during their 1936 vacation that Barber wrote the slow movement to his string quartet, which would later become his "Adagio for Strings." Arturo Toscanini instantly recognized the movement as a masterpiece and encouraged Barber to score it for full orchestra. On November 5, 1938, "Adagio for Strings" had its debut on NBC Radio Broadcast.

Barber's compositional output included art songs, operas, symphonies, and choral works, including an arrangement of "Adagio for Strings" for a capella chorus titled "Agnus Dei" (Lamb of God). While some consider "Adagio for Strings" one of the saddest pieces of music ever composed, Barber once remarked that he was the happiest he had ever been while writing it.

Sadly, Barber's life was not a happy one overall. He struggled immensely with mental illness that only worsened with age. Thomas Larson states that Barber was a "scarily gifted musician, whose youth vibrated with musical ardor and whose age darkened with alcoholic depression." Barbara B. Heyman also remarks that "in his last days, Samuel Barber was filled with depression and suffered from alcoholism, both of which greatly dampened his talent and creativity."

Towards the end of his life, Barber was diagnosed with myeloma (lymphatic system cancer); he died in 1981. Despite his struggles with depression and substance abuse, Barber gifted us with the one-of-a-kind music that became his legacy. We hope to highlight the good in his life by performing this classic work, an iconic piece written during a more joyful chapter of his life.

Contributors: Ian Vlahović, Michaela Wright

Sources:

NPR

Thomas Larson

Classic FM

Diagnosed with myeloma (Lymphatic system cancer) and died 1981

The Last Years – Barbara B Heyman

Wise Music Classical

PROGRAM NOTES, CONT'D

Symphony No. 5 -Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born May 7, 1840, in Kamsko-Votkinsk, Russia. At the time of his birth, a career in composition was not an option in Russia. By age 19, he had completed his studies and joined the Ministry of Justice; he quit three years later, risking financial instability to attend the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Here Tchaikovsky had his first exposure to Western European compositional techniques; his fusion of these learned techniques with the Russian style he knew well became his trademark compositional style.

Tchaikovsky's music occupies a stylistic space that is neither wholly Russian music nor Western European. To Russians, it lacked the overt nationalism they knew and craved; to Europeans, it lacked classical form and structure. Tchaikovsky himself reflected that "I cannot complain of lack of inventive power, but I have always suffered from want of skill in the management of form." An extremely sensitive man, Tchaikovsky suffered great anxiety from constant criticism: "[He] was prone to immense angst, self-doubt, and bouts of depression. As an artist, he doubted his work" (California Symphony). Moreover, as a closeted gay man, Tchaikovsky suffered from extreme social anxiety, self-loathing, and a relentless fear of his sexuality being exposed. Consequently, he married his student Antonina Miliukova in hopes of "curing" his homosexuality; the marriage lasted only ten short weeks.

Tchaikovsky composed his Symphony No. 5 during the summer of 1885. He shared no specific programmatic concept for this symphony, yet Ken Meltzer of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra writes that "among Tchaikovsky's sketches for the Fifth are words from the composer suggesting the Symphony depicts a confrontation with Fate." Knowing what we do about Tchaikovsky's lifelong struggle with depression, it is difficult to listen to his Fifth Symphony without hearing his anguish and his deep desire to overcome it. The Fifth proved to be a more positive moment in Tchaikovsky's timeline; while he lamented the negative initial reception to its premiere, he successfully led performances of the work throughout Europe, Russia, and eventually the U.S.

Tchaikovsky begins the first movement with a dolorous theme in E minor; then, like his Western European predecessors, develops that theme in sonata form. However, in an emotionally impactful approach, he continues to utilize this main theme throughout the symphony as a recurring motif, similar to Berlioz's "idée fixe" and Wagner's "leitmotif." The clarinets are the first to state the theme in the ominous key of E minor, which subsequently reappears in each movement of the symphony, at times dark and mysterious, at others terrifying and declarative. Despite the new sound worlds presented in each subsequent movement, "fate" consistently interrupts with foreboding reminders of its presence.

PROGRAM NOTES, CONT'D

The theme morphs to a warmer and more uplifting E major at the beginning of the fourth movement, but it is once again counteracted by the trumpets' auspicious fanfare that leads us back to E minor. We enter a turmoil-filled musical "war" between the dark minor key and light-filled major key, and ultimately, major wins. Once the theme triumphantly makes its final return to E major, with the trumpets echoing their approval, the coda (finale) of the movement makes a lighthearted and carefree vivace departure from the "fate" theme altogether, as if the listeners (and composer) are finally free of inner strife. Perhaps this symbolizes the wishful thinking that fate will smile on us; perhaps it means that our fate is ultimately what we make of it.

Richard Kogan writes that Tchaikovsky "really only had two strategies for relieving his unbearable sadness: One was alcoholism and the other was composing." And yet his music has brought immense joy to so many people; he composed some of the most widely loved works of all time. By performing this symphony, we hope to honor Tchaikovsky and the musicians who came before us who received no support for their mental health struggles during their lifetimes. We hope to create a world where artists are able to receive the care and support they need to continue to add beauty to the world through music.

Contributors: Ian Vlahović, Michelle Rofrano, Michaela Wright

Sources:

San Francisco Symphony

The Listener's Club

Ken Meltzer © 2020 – FW Symphony

Analysis of Movements –

<https://thelistenersclub.com/2019/12/11/tchaikovskys-fifth-symphony-a-journey-from-darkness-to-light/>

Richard Kogan MD

TMC News

BIOS



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.

BIOS



DANIELLE JAGELSKI **ASSOCIATE CONDUCTOR, PROTESTRA**

Danielle Jagelski is a conductor and composer based in New York City. At home in both operatic and orchestral realms, she is the Artistic Director of Renegade Opera, Associate Conductor for Protestra, and mentor for Girls Who Conduct.

Sought out for her execution of contemporary works, recent and upcoming performances include *Dark Sisters* by Nico Muhly at Temple University Opera Theater, *Adam's Run* by Ruby Fulton, and *Garden of Alice* at City Lyric Opera. Past engagements include working with ensembles such as the Stanford Symphony Orchestra, *Rhymes with Opera*, Manhattan School of Music Orchestra, Norwalk Youth Symphony, Minnesota Chorale, MOTUS vocal ensemble, and University of Idaho Symphony.

Her performances have been described: "At once timeless and of its time, it expands your heart and mind with every note, telling a story of grief and love that is as honest as it is hopeful." (Oregon ArtsWatch, 2021)

A member of the Oneida Nation, Danielle is a fierce advocate for equity in musical spaces and often collaborates on interdisciplinary projects with other Indigenous artists. Additionally has presented her research in mixed-race studies and classical music throughout the US and Canada.

BIOS



SANIYYAH BAMBERG

VOCALS

Saniyyah Bamberg was born in Portsmouth, Virginia, and is currently a second-year soprano at the Juilliard School, studying with Amy Burton. Through her studies in both classical music and jazz, Saniyyah has developed a passion for these two worlds of music. Recently,

Sanniyah debuted her original music and performed many covers of her some of her biggest influence's songs at the Juilliard School during her "Artist Debut". Saniyyah's goal is to connect people from all walks of life with her artistry.



ESTEBAN CASTRO

PIANO

Esteban Castro is a 20-year-old pianist and composer who performs internationally with his own band and as an in-demand sideman. Among others, he has played with Joe Farnsworth, Gilad Hekselman, Billy Drummond, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Marcus Miller, Ted Nash, Mark Whitfield, Russell Hall, Wayne Escoffery, and Giveton Gelin. As a leader and a sideman, has performed at venues such as The Blue Note, The Montreux Jazz Festival, Birdland, Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, The New Jersey Performing Arts Center, The Jazz Gallery, and Smalls. Esteban is currently a junior at the Juilliard School on a full scholarship, and he studies privately with Fred Hersch.

Esteban started playing the piano at age 4, and quickly found himself improvising at a very young age, which led to the beginning of his jazz journey at age 6. At age 13, Esteban was the First Prize Winner in the Montreux Jazz Piano Solo Competition in 2016, making him the youngest ever to receive this prestigious award. Then, at 14, he was the youngest First Prize recipient at the 2017 Jacksonville Jazz Piano Competition. He entered various high school programs such as the Grammy Band in 2017 and 2018, the 2019 Next Generation Jazz Orchestra, and was selected as a 2019 YoungArts Finalist. He also won a variety of classical piano competitions, including the 2019 MSM Precollege Philharmonic Concerto Competition, playing Prokofiev's 1st Piano Concerto. After graduating from high school, Esteban was selected as a finalist for the 2023 American Pianist Association Competition, with a chance to win a prize valued at \$200,000. He also won the Grand Bohemian Prize at the 2022 American Jazz Pianist Competition.

Esteban also works as an avid composer. He has garnered three ASCAP Foundation Young Jazz Composer Awards, and has won fifteen Downbeat Student Music Awards. He was commissioned by the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra to write a big band arrangement for the Thelonious Monk 100th birthday celebration.

Esteban routinely donates his time and performances to charitable causes such as the Jazz Ambassadors, the American Cancer Society, Haiti Disaster Relief, Aid to Victims of Hurricane Maria, and to provide musical instruments for needs-based students. In 2021, he led a benefit concert for the GHESKIO Haitian Global Health Alliance at the Jazz Gallery, and successfully raised \$1400 for victims of the 2021 Haiti Earthquake.

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

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

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PROTESTRA 

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