

78TH SEASON OF

CONCERTS

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART | MARCH 8, 2020



PROGRAM

Jennifer Johnson Cano, mezzo-soprano

John Popham, cello

Renate Rohlfing, piano

Emi Ferguson, flute

Doori Na, violin

Kallie Ciechomski, viola

A New Country

March 8, 2020 | 3:30

West Building, West Garden Court

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

“Elindultam szép hazámból” (1906)

Traditional

Selected American Folk Songs

Betsy Jolas (b. 1926)

Femme le soir, eight lieder for cello and piano (2018)

Lulling

Songeries

Shall we...

Eh toi, la bas...?

Qui parle

Mots de sable

Sing Maria

Bonjour...

Shawn Jaeger (b. 1985)

*Going Away** (2020)

i. ...to a world unknown (after Charley Patton’s “Down the Dirt Road Blues”)

ii. ...on a mountain so high (after Clarence Ashley “The Coo-Coo Bird”)

iii. ...pour te voir [to see you] (after Joe Falcon and Cleoma Breaux’s

“Acadian One-Step”)

Paul Moravec (b. 1957)

A New Country (2018)

“My Dream” (Anna Vacek)

“You” (Walt Whitman)

“The New Colossus” (Emma Lazarus)

“City of the World” (Walt Whitman)

“Old Ireland” (Walt Whitman)

Bartók’s “Elindultam szép hazámból” and the American Folk Songs will be announced from the stage.

* Transcriptions of songs from Harry Smith’s *Anthology of American Folk Music* (1952)

THE MUSICIANS

Jennifer Johnson Cano, mezzo-soprano

A naturally gifted singer noted for her commanding stage presence and profound artistry, Jennifer Johnson Cano has garnered critical acclaim for committed performances of both new and standard repertoire. For her performance as Offred in Poul Ruders's *The Handmaid's Tale*, she was lauded as a "consummate actress" by the *Wall Street Journal*; a "tour de force" by the *Boston Globe*; and "towering...restless, powerful, profound [and] as formidable as this astonishingly demanding role deserves" by the *New York Times*. In recital with Anna Netrebko at Carnegie Hall, *Bachtrack* magazine called her performance "self-effacing and full of musicality."

Following her summer 2019 engagements at Bravo! Vail with the New York Philharmonic, Ravinia Festival with Matthew Polenzani, Cleveland Orchestra's Blossom Music Festival, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic for performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the Hollywood Bowl, Cano began her 2019–2020 season with Michael Tilson Thomas at San Francisco Symphony's Opening Night Gala. Additional orchestral highlights of the season include Berg's *Lulu*, singing the role of Geschwitz with the Cleveland Orchestra, Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Riccardo Muti and the Chicago Symphony. In recital she appears at Da Camera of Houston for a performance of Argento's *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* and joins pianist Benjamin Hochman and friends for Janáček's *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* at New York's 92nd Street Y. After widespread acclaim last season for her portrayal of Offred in Ruders's *A Handmaid's Tale* with the Boston Lyric Opera, Cano bows this season as Adalgisa in Bellini's *Norma* with the Pittsburgh Opera, Komponist in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* with the Arizona Opera, and as the title role of Bizet's *Carmen* with the New Orleans Opera.

Cano is a native of St. Louis and earned degrees from Webster University and Rice University and was honored as a distinguished alumna and commencement speaker at Webster University in May 2017. Her debut recital recording with pianist Christopher Cano, *Unaffected: Live from the Savannah Voice Festival*, was recorded completely live and unedited. Recent recordings include Bernstein's Symphony no. 1, "Jeremiah," with Marin Alsop and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and a live recording of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, featuring conductor George Manahan, tenor Paul Groves, and the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble. Cano joined the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan Opera after winning the Metropolitan Opera National Council Audition, and she made her Met debut during the 2009–2010 season.

John Popham, cello

John Popham, "a very fine artist" (*Fanfare*), is a critically acclaimed cellist, educator, and musical organizer based in Brooklyn, New York. A versatile and dynamic performer, Popham has collaborated with a wide range of composers, musicians, and performing artists both within the United States and abroad. His "brilliant" and "virtuosic" (*Kronen Zeitung*) playing can be heard on numerous solo and chamber music releases on Tzadik, Carrier, New Focus Recordings, Albany, and Arte Nova labels. Critics have noted Popham's "velvet tone" and "remarkable technique" (*Fanfare*), and his "warm but variegated" and "highly polished" artistry (*New York Times*).

Popham is a member of Longleash and Either/Or Ensemble, and has performed with Klangforum Wien, the Talea Ensemble, the Wet Ink Ensemble, the Argento Chamber Ensemble, and the ECCE Ensemble. Recent festival appearances include Monday Evening Concerts (Los Angeles), reMusik (St. Petersburg, Russia), Beijing Modern Music Festival (China), Brücken (Austria), Internationales Musikfest Hamburg (Germany), Open Music (Austria), Wiener Festwochen (Austria), Bay Chamber (Maine), and the Contemporary Classical Music Festival (Peru). Popham has appeared as soloist with the Louisville Orchestra, the String Orchestra of Brooklyn, the Red Light Ensemble, and the Kunstuniversität Graz Chorus.

As an educator and arts advocate, Popham is committed to a holistic and socially engaged approach to musical instruction. In 2016, he joined the cello faculty of the Juilliard School's Music Advancement Program. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees in music from the Manhattan School of Music, where he was awarded the Manhattan School of Music Full Scholarship. In 2013, he received a Fulbright Research Grant to study the performance practice of Austrian contemporary music with the ensemble Klangforum Wien. Popham is currently a doctoral candidate at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Renate Rohlfing, piano

Winner of the Sonderpreis Klavier (Special Pianists' Prize) at the 2016 Internationaler Wettbewerb für Liedkunst Stuttgart, Renate Rohlfing is active as a vocal accompanist, chamber musician, and orchestral pianist. She has performed with many of the world's leading artists, including James Conlon, Anna Netrebko, Frederica von Stade, Alan Gilbert, and John Adams. Her performances have taken her to the most prestigious halls and festivals in the world, including Carnegie Hall, the Ravinia Festival, Amsterdam's Muziekgebouw, London's Royal Albert Hall, and the David Koch Theater at the Lincoln Center. Rohlfing is known as "a truly exceptional lieder accompanist" (*New York Classical Review*); singers have partnered with her to win first prize at the Naumburg Foundation Competition (2014) and the Young Concert Artists Competition (2012 and 2015), and in 2015, she and baritone Samuel Hasselhorn were awarded second prize at the Wigmore Hall Song Competition.

An accomplished chamber musician, Rohlfing is a founding member of the critically acclaimed piano trio, Longleash. An “expert young trio” praised for its “subtle and meticulous musicianship” (*Strad Magazine*, UK), Longleash maintains a full performing schedule in venues such as New York’s Merkin Hall, San Francisco’s Center for New Music, and Norway’s Trondheim Chamber Music Festival, among others. Rohlfing has served as a resident pianist at leading festivals and for four seasons was invited to return to the Ravinia Festival in Chicago.

Recent and upcoming highlights include engagements at London’s Wigmore Hall, Boston’s Isabella Gardner Museum, and Schloss Elmau in Krün, Germany; recitals with baritone Áneas Humm at Musikfest Bremen and Schloss Bellevue; a return to the music staff at Spoleto Festival USA; as well as concerts and university residencies with Longleash in Austria, Ireland, Hungary, and across the United States. Rohlfing is a native of Honolulu, Hawaii, and a graduate of the Juilliard School.

Emi Ferguson, flute

Flutist, vocalist, and composer Emi Ferguson can be heard live in concerts and festivals as a soloist and member of the Handel and Haydn Society, the New York New Music Ensemble, and the Manhattan Chamber Players. Ferguson’s recordings for Arezzo Music, *Fly the Coop: Bach Sonatas and Preludes* (2019) and *Amour Cruel* (2017), were among the top ten albums on the *Classical and World Music Billboard Charts* and showcase her fascination with reinvigorating music of the past for the present.

Ferguson has spoken and performed at several TEDx events and has been featured on media outlets, including the Discovery Channel, Vox, Amazon, and TouchPress apps, talking about how music relates to our world today. She has been featured in performances by the Marlboro, Lucerne, Lake Champlain, pianoSonoma, and Twickenhamfest music festivals. Ferguson is currently on the faculty of the Juilliard School. Born in Japan and raised in London and Boston, she now resides in New York City.

Doori Na, violin

Doori Na, a San Francisco native, started violin at the age of four and made his San Francisco Symphony debut in 2018, playing alongside Itzhak Perlman and Michael Tilson Thomas. Currently a New York resident, Na performs with numerous groups, including the Argento Chamber Ensemble, the Orpheus Chamber Ensemble, and the New Chamber Ballet.

Chamber music has always been a big part of Na’s growth as a musician. His first endeavor playing in an ensemble was as a teenager with the Luna Trio, which was a finalist at the 2016 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. Subsequently, he has collaborated with members of the Juilliard String Quartet, the New York Philharmonic, and the Metropolitan Opera and has toured with Itzhak Perlman. Other notable experiences include performing at the Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach with the Bonhoeffer Trio and Les Amies Trio.

Na earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at the Juilliard School, where he studied with Itzhak Perlman, Catherine Cho, and Donald Weilerstein. With the school, he performed with the orchestra as concertmaster and traveled to São Paulo, Brazil, and Dubai, United Arab Emirates, to teach and perform.

Kallie Ciechowski, viola

Kallie Ciechowski performs regularly with the International Contemporary Ensemble, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the New York City Ballet, the New Jersey Symphony, the Talea Ensemble, Alarm Will Sound, and Ensemble Echappé. She has played for the Broadway shows *The Lion King*, *Tootsie*, and *Dear Evan Hansen* and has also appeared with Ben Folds, Norah Jones, Ray Lamontagne, The National, Andrea Bocelli, and Stevie Wonder.

Feminist Counterpoint, Ciechowski’s solo project, champions music written in her lifetime by women, transgender, and non-binary composers. The project amplifies underrepresented voices by commissioning new works, reinforcing the existing repertoire, and reaching new audiences through lecture/recital-style installations in nontraditional venues. Concerts have included an amplified recital in Times Square, a workshop at Girls Rock Camp, a two-week West Coast solo tour, and performances for viola and electronics at New Music Gathering, Areté Gallery, and Symphony Space.

Ciechowski is a native of Portland, Maine, and holds degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory and the Manhattan School of Music. In her spare time, she is an ultra-light, long-distance backpacker, apartment gardener, and Citi Bike enthusiast.

PROGRAM

Femme le soir

The great lied tradition entered my musical life many years ago, thanks to my mother, a native of Louisville, Kentucky, who had, among other gifts, a beautiful voice and was sent to Berlin to study singing in 1912. I was a teenager when I started accompanying her and thus discovered very early the rich lied repertoire that has since nurtured a good part of my thoughts on vocal music. Over the years, I became interested in the way this repertoire had notably influenced instrumental music and began studying its favorite form: the cycle. I have thus written so far several such sets, featuring various solo instruments with orchestra or piano.

Following the tradition, my own cycles often have a general title, and I have recently started to indicate subtitles as well, for their power of suggestion in the absence of a sung text.

Composed in 2017–2018, *Femme le soir* was premiered at the Reid Hall in Paris on December 3, 2018, by Anssi Karttunen and Nicolas Hodges to whom the piece is dedicated. *Program note by Betsy Jolas*

Going away

Going away, for flute and piano, was written for Emi Ferguson and Renate Rohlfing. The composition is a set of three “transcriptions” of songs from Harry Smith’s *Anthology of American Folk Music*, released by Folkways Records in 1952, and comprised of early commercial recordings made between 1926 and 1932. The *Anthology* was hugely influential to the generation of folk-revival musicians, such as Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, and Bob Dylan, who came of age during the 1950s and 60s. In *Going away*, what I “transcribe” is not always the notes and rhythms, but often so-called “secondary” characteristics: the thud of Charley Patton’s foot-tapping, the sympathetic resonance of Clarence Ashley’s “sawmill” banjo tuning, and the expansion-contraction of Joseph Falcon’s accordion playing. The intent is to honor the spirit of these recordings, without being beholden to their letter. In the words of Greil Marcus, this is the “old, weird America.” *Program note by Shawn Jaeger*

A New Country

A New Country is a cycle of five songs about immigrants arriving in America through New York City. Following the precedent of my American historical oratorios (*The Blizzard Voices*, *Sanctuary Road*, *Songs of Love and War*), the opening song sets to music the words of an actual immigrant, Anna Vacek, who arrived at Ellis Island in 1901. The second, fourth, and fifth songs set texts by Walt Whitman, reflecting his generosity of spirit regarding immigrants in America. The third song is a setting of part of “The New Colossus,” Emma Lazarus’s iconic poem about the Statue of Liberty. *A New Country* was commissioned by the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival in memory of William J. Fleming. Jennifer Johnson Cano premiered the work with the festival players in August 2018. Today’s performance is its Washington premiere. *Program note by Paul Moravec*



Edgar Degas, *The Orchestra of the Opéra* (detail), 1870, Musée d'Orsay, Paris,
© RMN-Grand Palais/photo: Hervé Lewandowski/Art Resource, New York

Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Eighth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin Concerts

Unless otherwise noted, concerts are held in the West Building, West Garden Court.

Sound Impact

Agora Dance

New York Opera Society

Degas's Musical World

A contemporary approach to Degas and his relationship to the Paris Opéra.

Celebrating *Degas at the Opéra*

March 15, 3:30 p.m.

Curtis on Tour

Vera Quartet and

Meng-Chieh Liu, piano

Works by Beethoven, César Franck, and David Hertzberg.

March 22, 3:30 p.m.

Sound Sketch

Elliot Wu, piano

Travel Log: Visual and Aural Imaginings of Distant Places

Works by Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert.

March 27, 12:10 p.m.

West Building, East Garden Court

Miyabi Koto Shamisen Ensemble

New and traditional music for Japanese koto and shamisen.

March 29, 3:30 p.m.

General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

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