



## 76TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

JANUARY 7, 2018 / NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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# Program

## Harlem Symphony Orchestra

Amadi Azikiwe, conductor

**JANUARY 7, 2018 / 3:30**

**WEST BUILDING, WEST GARDEN COURT**

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Overture to *Egmont*, op. 84

Dr. James Lee III (b. 1975)

Symphony no. 1, “In this Generation”\*

Preamble

Tarantella

The Eternally Present

Fugue

“...and then the probation closed!”

### Intermission

Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)

*Strum*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat for Violin and Viola, K. 364

Allegro maestoso

Andante

Presto

Orlando Wells, violin

Aundrey Mitchell, viola

\*World premiere

## The Musicians

### AMADI AZIKIWE

Amadi Azikiwe, violist, violinist, and conductor, has been heard in recital in major cities throughout the United States and has been a guest at the Kennedy Center and with the Lincoln Center’s Chamber Music Society. Abroad, he has performed throughout Israel, South America, Central America, Nigeria, India, and Japan. As a soloist, he has appeared with the Delaware Symphony, the Fort Collins Symphony, the National Symphony of Ecuador, and at the Costa Rica International Music Festival. As an orchestral musician, he has played with the New York Philharmonic and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, as well as with Canada’s National Arts Centre Orchestra as guest principal violist.

A native of New York City, Azikiwe studied first with his mother and then trained at the North Carolina School of the Arts as a student of Sally Peck. His studies continued at the New England Conservatory with Marcus Thompson and at Indiana University with Atar Arad. Currently, Azikiwe is the music director of the Harlem Symphony Orchestra, as well as a member of the Harlem Chamber Players.

### ORLANDO WELLS

Orlando Wells, violin, attended the State University of New York at Purchase, studying with Yuval Waldman and Emanuel Vardi and graduating with a double major in violin and viola. Wells continued his studies at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers in the studio of Michael Tree.

Wells has played with numerous ensembles, including the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic, St. Luke’s Chamber Orchestra, the Bronx Opera, and the Ritz Chamber Players. He has appeared as soloist with Manhattan Virtuosi, the Harlem Symphony Orchestra, and Antara Chamber Orchestra and has performed and recorded with Mariah Carey, John Legend, Rihanna, and Elvis Costello. A frequent performer in Broadway musicals, Wells currently serves as assistant concertmaster of the *Porgy and Bess* revival.

## AUNDREY MITCHELL

Aundrey Mitchell, viola, has performed throughout the United States, South America, and Europe as a recitalist, soloist, and chamber musician. She has appeared at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Hall, and the Kimmel Center.

Mitchell attended the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France, and the Taos School of Music festivals. She graduated from the Cleveland Institute of Music with her bachelor's and master's degrees in music. Her post-graduate studies were at the Manhattan School of Music. Mitchell earned her doctorate in musical arts from Rutgers, studying under Michael Tree, Karen Ritscher, and Lucian Joel. Mitchell has taught at Moravian College, the Eastern Music Festival, the Westminster Choir College, and the Pennsylvania Academy of Music. She is an active chamber musician in New York and Philadelphia.

## Program Notes

### OVERTURE TO *EGMONT*, OP. 84

In keeping with Beethoven's interest in the kinds of people—real or fictitious—who dedicated their lives to opposing injustice and oppression, he was commissioned in 1809 to compose incidental music for Goethe's play *Egmont*. The play is based on the Dutch people's struggle for liberation from Spain, a movement led by Count Egmont (1522–1568). During the time of Beethoven's work on *Egmont*, Vienna was under siege by the French, not only isolating Beethoven, but also giving him a firsthand view of war.

Egmont's passionate speech before his execution and martyrdom provided a powerful impetus for the Dutch people's ultimate victory over Spain. Beginning slowly and ominously, with chords that suggest a sinister version of a Spanish sarabande, the overture transforms into a restless, quick-paced account, full of tension, and punctuated with faster versions of the opening chords. The finale of the overture, which is also heard in the play's final act, is heroic and triumphant, and guides the listener through victory over tragedy.

### SYMPHONY NO. 1, "IN THIS GENERATION"

Symphony no. 1 is part of a collection of orchestral pieces, and the only one composed for strings by Dr. James Lee III. Lee provides an ideal mixture of technical demands and lyricism, often suggesting the influence of scripture, as seen in the titles and character of the third and fifth movements. Throughout the symphony, deft changes in tempo, textures, and tension can be heard, including a meditative quality. Always expressive, Symphony no. 1 is a high point for the Harlem Symphony Orchestra to explore, with the additional honor of premiering it at the National Gallery of Art.

### STRUM

Originally written for the Catalyst Quartet as an orchestral piece, *Strum* is a particularly delightful vehicle for the principal solo players. Beginning modestly, in a swaying manner, the orchestra provides a backdrop for the sometimes lyrical, solo quartet dialogue. An ostinato rhythm evokes a dance quality similar to Caribbean or African music, as the piece draws to a rousing conclusion.

## SINFONIA CONCERTANTE IN E-FLAT FOR VIOLIN AND VIOLA, K. 364

Beloved by violinists and violists, the Sinfonia Concertante is one of the few concerti from the classical period that allows the viola to shine equally with the violin. Written by Mozart in 1779—after returning from a tour and before being dismissed by the Archbishop of Salzburg—the Sinfonia Concertante was one of the new musical forms Mozart discovered after visiting Mannheim and Paris. In Paris, Mozart would have heard the music of the African-French composer and violinist Joseph Bologne de St. George, who is widely credited with creating the form of the Sinfonia Concertante for violin and viola.

In Mozart's work, the viola is instructed to tune the instrument one-half step higher than normal, and to play the viola part in D major (sounding in E-flat major) to better match the brightness of the violin. Most modern-day violists play the work with the solo part written in E-flat, partly because of the greater projection ability of modern instruments.

Operatic beauty, drama, and even humor are present throughout the concerto, with the cadenzas provided by Mozart himself. The orchestral viola part is divided in two, creating an unusually rich orchestral sonority. The slow middle movement is in a minor key, and its melodies are so sorrowful that listeners might wonder if Mozart was thinking of his recently deceased mother. The outer movements are full of joy, virtuosity, and a celebration of inspired creativity.

## Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Sixth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin Concerts

Unless otherwise noted, all programs take place in the West Building, West Garden Court.

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Juho Pohjonen, piano  
Music by Bach and Mozart  
January 14, 3:30

—  
Piffaro, The Renaissance Band  
Celebrating *Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting: Inspiration and Rivalry*  
January 21, 3:30

—  
Sybarite5  
*Outliers*  
Celebrating *Outliers and American Vanguard Art*  
January 28, 3:30

—  
Daniel Bernard Roumain, violin  
Yayoi Ikawa, piano  
*Redemption Songs and Sonatas*  
February 4, 3:30

—  
Curtis on Tour  
*A Celebration of Leonard Bernstein*  
February 11, 3:30

—  
Trio con Brio Copenhagen  
*To Travel Is to Live*  
Music by Grieg, Gade, Mendelssohn, and Tchaikovsky  
February 18, 3:30

Narek Hakhnazaryan, cello  
Noreen Polera, piano  
Music by Albéniz, Brahms, Schumann, and others  
February 25, 3:30

—  
ETHEL  
*Blue Dress for String Quartet*  
March 4, 3:30

—  
Janoska Ensemble  
Classical music with jazz, gypsy, tango, Latin, and a dash of pop  
March 11, 3:30

—  
The Canales Project  
*This I Choose...*  
A celebration of the choices of extraordinary women  
March 18, 3:30

—  
Benedetto Lupo, piano  
Featuring solo piano works by Debussy  
Celebrating *Cézanne Portraits*  
March 25, 3:30

—  
Richard Stoltzman, clarinet  
Mika Stoltzman, marimba  
*Duo Cantando*  
April 1, 3:30  
Music by Bill Douglas, Chick Corea, Toru Takemitsu, and John Zorn

—  
Heinavanker Ensemble  
Featuring ancient Estonian songs and folk hymns  
Celebrating *Michel Sittow: Estonian Painter at the Courts of Renaissance Europe*  
April 8, 3:30