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Akemi Takayama
violin soloist

September 12, 2021
at Penn State Recital Hall

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Yaniv Attar



A native of Israel, Yaniv Attar is the 1st prize winner of the Duna Szimfonikus Conducting Competition Budapest, multiple recipient of the Sir Georg Solti Foundation Award, and the 2009 Bruno Walter Memorial Foundation Award.

Attar is the Music Director of the Pennsylvania Chamber Orchestra, the Bellingham Symphony Orchestra, and Artistic Partner with Northwest Sinfonietta. Highlights of past seasons included collaborations with artists such as Alesio Bax, James Ehnes, Tine Thing Helseth, Sharon Isbin, Alex Klein, Jennifer Koh, Johannes Moser and Gil Shaham. Attar was also one of 10 conductors from around the world who were invited to INTERACTION, and conducted an orchestra composed of all of Germany's top orchestras, including the Berliner Philharmoniker, Konzerthaus Orchestra, German Symphony Orchestra, and the Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin. Prior to his current music directorships, Attar completed his two years residency as the Assistant Conductor of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, where he conducted nearly 100 performances, and worked extensively with Maestro Justin Brown.

Drawn to orchestral conducting from early age, Attar has studied with Israel Edelson in Jerusalem, Virginia Allen at the Juilliard School in New York and Neil Thomson at the Royal College of Music in London, where he was also the Associate Conductor and co-founder of the Tempus Chamber Orchestra. In 2008, Attar earned his Doctor of Music degree from McGill University where he studied under the tutelage of Alexis Hauser.

Attar also studied with Kurt Masur, Leonard Slatkin, Janos Fürst, Jorma Panula, Gustav Meier, Johannes Schlaefli, Peter Gülke, Gabor Hollerung, Neil Varon, Carl St. Clair, David Effron, Donald Thulean and Michael Jurowski.

Attar has worked with the Cincinnati Symphony, Duna Szimfonikus Budapest, Dohnanyi Orchestra Budapest, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Haifa Symphony, Hamburg Symphony, Israel Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra I Pomeriggi Musicali Milan, Jerusalem

Symphony, Lithuanian State Symphony, London Solists Chamber Orchestra, Memphis Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Manhattan School of Music Orchestra, Mihail Jora Philharmonic Romania, National Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Northwest Sinfonietta, Reno Chamber Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic, Russe Philharmonic Bulgaria, Salzburg Chamber Soloists, and Virginia Symphony.

Attar is also an accomplished classical guitarist. He has studied under Irit Even-Tov, Charles Ramirez and Sharon Isbin, for whom he served as teaching assistant at the Aspen Music Festival from 2003 to 2005. Attar was the first guitarist to win the Aviv Competition Prize in Israel and the Concerto Competition at the Juilliard School. Attar plays a 2014 Dake Traphagen Guitar. His studies have been generously supported by the America and Canada Israel Cultural Foundations, The Williamson Foundation for Music, Ronen Foundation, The Olga Forrai Foundation New York, the Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation, AVI Fellowships Switzerland, the Rislvo Foundation, and the ISEF Foundation.

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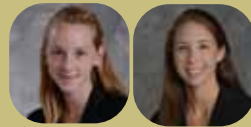
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Our Soloist

Akemi Takayama is known worldwide for her musical artistry and passion as well as for the extensive range and versatility of her repertoire. With a unique blend of warmth and excitement, her masterful performances have enthralled audiences throughout Japan, France, England, Turkey, Israel, and the U.S. Currently the concertmaster of both the Roanoke Symphony and the Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra, Takayama is also an Associate Professor of Violin, holding the Victor Brown Endowed Chair in Violin, in the Shenandoah Conservatory at Shenandoah University, where she works with private students and chamber groups.



Akemi Takayama

Orchestra of Washington. Takayama was a member of the internationally celebrated Audubon Quartet for fourteen years, during which time the group toured regionally and nationally and made a number of CD recordings on the Centaur and Composers labels.

Active as an educator and arts advocate throughout Virginia, Takayama has served as the chair for College Advisory Committee for the Virginia String Teachers Association. She has served on the faculties of the Chautauqua Institute in New York, the Idyllwild School for the Arts in California, the Brevard Music Center in North Carolina, Shenandoah Performs

in Virginia, and Virginia Tech. In addition to teaching on the faculty at Shenandoah University (since 2007), Takayama was invited to teach at the Oberlin Conservatory in the fall semester of 2012.

An inspiring educator, Takayama has taught countless violinists who now have successful careers performing chamber music and playing in orchestras. Many of her students have been accepted to pursue Master of Music or Doctor of Musical Arts degree studies at schools such as Indiana University, Boston Conservatory, Oberlin, Florida State University, Case Western Reserve University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, University of North Carolina School of the Arts, East Carolina University, and The Catholic University of America. Some have gone into music education, teaching at institutions such as the Princeton Shenzhen International Children's Learning Center Education in Shenzhen, China; the Community School of The Arts in Charlotte, North Carolina; and the International School of Music in Bethesda, Maryland.

Praised by Isaac Stern as a "true musician," Akemi Takayama was invited to participate in the Marlboro Music Festival in 1997. Recent solo performances with orchestras include Daugherty's Fire and Blood and Ladder to the Moon, Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto and Double Concerto, Vivaldi's The Four Seasons, Piazzolla's The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires, Pärt's Fratres, Bach's Violin Concerto in E Major, Chausson's Poème, Saint-Saëns' Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, Beethoven's Violin Concerto and Triple Concerto, Brahms' Double Concerto for Violin and Cello, Mozart's Violin Concerto #5, Roskott's Violin Concerto, and Barber's Violin Concerto.

In addition to concert seasons with the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra and the Williamsburg Symphony, recent collaborations include the Opera Roanoke, Shenandoah Performs, the Chamber Orchestra of Southwest Virginia, and the New

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About Our Assistant Conductor

Rebekah K. O'Brien

Music, dance, and friendship were always at the center of **Ms. Rebekah O'Brien's** activities as a child and from an early age the question grew: could she create her life out of music, movement, and friendship? As this question continues to inspire her, Rebekah is delighted to experience her childhood dream blossoming through her opportunities to work with musicians of the Newark Symphony. In 2006, during a summer filled with conducting master-classes in America and abroad, Rebekah met Simeone Tartaglione and his wife. This was the beginning of a heartwarming and



inspiring friendship. Ms. O'Brien found a teacher and friend in Gerardo Edelstein and completed her studies in conducting under his direction at Penn State University. Currently, Ms. O'Brien serves as the orchestra director at Juniata College and is invited often as a guest clinician by various community orchestras throughout Pennsylvania. Deepening her understanding of movement and its relationship to music, in 2016 Ms. O'Brien completed an intensive training in the art of Eurythmy in Northern California. She shares those gifts now as the Eurythmy teacher at the Susquehanna Waldorf School. She currently lives with her beautiful and quickly growing daughter, Genavieve, in central Pennsylvania.



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TODAY'S PROGRAM

The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires

Ástor Piazzolla
(1921-1992)

arr. **Leonid Desyatnikov**
(b.1955)

Primavera Porteña (Buenos Aires Spring)

Verano Porteño (Buenos Aires Summer)

Invierno Porteño (Buenos Aires Winter)

Otoño Porteño (Buenos Aires Autumn)

Akemi Takayama, *violin*

--- intermission ---

Overture to Abduction from the Seraglio, K. 384

W A Mozart
(1756-1791)

Czech Suite, Op. 39

Antonín Dvořák
(1841-1904)

I. Praeludium (Pastorale)

II. Polka

III. Menuette (Sousedská)

IV. Romanze

V. Finale (Furiant)



Thank you **Carnegie House** for hosting Maestro Attar and **Hyatt Place State College** for hosting Ms. Takayama for this concert.

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It is rare indeed that a musical composition might highlight the differences between the North and South Hemispheres of Planet Earth. But today we'll experience one.

It is true that January, the coldest month in Venice, has an average temperature of 3.5 °C (38 °F), and that of the warmest months, July and August) is of 23 °C (73 °F). It is also true that January is the hottest month in Buenos Aires with an average temperature of 25°C (77°F) and the coldest is June at 12°C (54°F). It would follow then that music written about the seasons in the Northern Hemisphere would have an atmosphere quite different from a similar work written in the Southern Hemisphere.

Ástor Piazzolla was born in Argentina, raised in New York and educated in Paris by the legendary composition teacher Nadia



Boulanger. It seemed he was destined for a satisfactory but unremarkable career penning orchestral ditties with a South American accent. But one day Boulanger heard Piazzolla nonchalantly playing a Tango at her piano before a lesson. She urged her pupil to follow this direction with the proclamation that 'here is the true Piazzolla.' But she also insisted that he continue his rigorous study of Baroque and High Classical music.

When the young composer returned to Buenos Aires, he began to do for the Tango what Johann Strauss had for the waltz over a century before. He thrust classical complexities, harmonies and textures into the form, cultivating it and adapting it without compromising its raw ingredients.

Piazzolla's most famous concert work is a monumental salute to Vivaldi entitled *The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires* ('Las

Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas'). In a sense, it represents the apex of the Argentine's 'Tango Nuevo' style, music that was born from the Tango but was designed to be listened to, rather than danced to.

This particular piece, though, was crafted carefully and slowly. The first season, *Verano Porteño* (Summer), arrived in 1965, scored for string quartet and designed to accompany a play by the composer's colleague Rodríguez Muñoz. In 1969 Piazzolla wrote *Autumn* for the same forces and in the following year, *Spring and Winter*.

The present version for solo violin and string orchestra postdates Piazzolla's death by several years. The Russian violinist, Gidon Kremer wanted a piece to complement Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and commissioned composer Leonid Desyatnikov to make this arrangement, which was completed in 1998.

Desyatnikov did not confine himself to mere transcription. To a degree he recomposed the pieces to fit Kremer's concept, adding quotations from the Vivaldi Seasons as well as cadenzas for the solo violinist and principal cellist. He did preserve certain special effects Piazzolla devised to compensate for the lack of percussion in his quintet—slapping the back of the bass and scrubbing behind the violin bridge to produce an imitation of the stick-scratched gourd called a guiro, as well as violin slides both slow and whipped.

Buenos Aires is located about two-thirds down the East coast of South America on the Rio de la Plata; its climate is classified as subtropical. But a warning for the meteorologically unprepared: in recognition of the reversal of seasons south of the Equator, in Desyatnikov's arrangement Vivaldi's *Winter* is quoted in Piazzolla's *Summer*, and Vivaldi's *Summer* in Piazzolla's *Winter*. *Spring* and *Autumn* references are similarly switched.

It was an open secret in Mozart's day that Wolfgang wished to free himself from service at the Salzburg court of the Archbishop Hieronymus von Colloredo. Mozart's letters are full of colorful rants about the archbishop.

Colloredo became exceptionally annoyed with Mozart's frequent absences. After a number of arguments, he ultimately dismissed him with the words, "Soll er doch gehen, ich brauche ihn nicht!" ("He should just go then; I don't need him!")



Mozart's letters to his father recount his indignation at what he portrays as abusive and insulting behavior by the Archbishop. In his letter of June 13, 1781, Mozart recounts that the final indignity of his dismissal by Colloredo was a kick up the backside administered by the Archbishop's steward, Count Arco.

Free at last Mozart left to pursue a career as a freelance performer and composer in Austria's capital. In Vienna, Mozart met Constanze Weber (a cousin of the composer Carl Maria von Weber) and they were to be married on August 4, 1782. Mozart's father, Leopold objected strongly to the wedding but in the end relented and gave his approval.

Just before the wedding, Wolfgang was involved in a rather large and influential project. A recent artistic trend in Vienna focused on the Ottoman Empire. Just a century before, Vienna has been attacked by the Turks, so it is somewhat unusual that music, art, clothing were so influenced by the Near East. Mozart's

contribution to this fad was his singspiel (an opera with spoken dialogue) *The Abduction from the Seraglio*.

In the singspiel, Mozart uses the "alla Turca style." Inspired by the sounds of Turkish military bands, this style features strong downbeats and jangling grace notes that imitate the sounds of the Turkish Crescent, an instrument consisting of a long pole with an Islamic crescent adorned with small bells that jingled when the pole struck the floor in time with the music. The Overture to *The Abduction from the Seraglio* contains the perfect example of this style.

The Abduction takes place in sixteenth-century Turkey and concerns the efforts of Belmonte to find his lover Konstanze who has been abducted by pirates and sold to a Turkish Pasha named Osmin. All ends well after Osmin takes pity on Belmonte and pardons both him and Konstanze (and their devoted servants) from further punishment for their attempts at escape. This story was a popular farce in Vienna in the eighteenth century and was familiar to audiences. The work was first performed on July 16, 1782, at the Burgtheater in Vienna.

In 1874, Brahms reluctantly sat on the jury of the Austrian State Stipendium with the critic Eduard Hanslick and the Director of the Imperial Opera, Johann Herbeck. The jury was to award financial support to talented composers in need within the Habsburg Empire. Brahms encountered a massive submission from an obscure Czech composer: fifteen works including two symphonies, several overtures and a song cycle (Op. 7). Brahms was visibly overcome by the mastery and talent of this unknown individual. As a result of Brahms's support, Antonin Dvořák received the stipend (and twice more in 1876 and 1877).

The Czech suite was written at the point in Antonin Dvořák's career when his

fame as a composer was burgeoning. The popularity of nationalist music was growing. Liszt had had great success with his set of Hungarian rhapsodies, composed from 1846 onwards, and Brahms had followed on with his famous set of 21 Hungarian dances.

Brahms' music publisher, Fritz Simrock was looking for more music of this kind, and on the recommendation of Brahms approached Dvorák to commission a new work. The commission saw the publication of a set of 16 Slavonic dances which were originally written for piano duet. The work was a huge success. Simrock made a handsome profit and Dvorák received a pitifully small fee. At Simrock's request Dvorák orchestrated the dances and they were published as his Opus 46. This time Dvorák insisted on and received a much higher fee. The Czech suite was written the following year.

The work is made up of five movements, three of which are traditional Czech dances, and two are descriptive of the Bohemian countryside which inspired much of Dvorák's music.

The first movement is a pastorale in which the bucolic atmosphere is created by drone sounds accompanying a long lyrical melody and the sounds of bird-like songs.

The second movement is a Polka, the most celebrated of Bohemian dances. It

is in a minor key and in duple time.

The third movement is a sousedská, a calm swaying dance in three quarter time. Some refer to the style as the grandparents' dance.

The fourth movement is a romance that takes us back into the countryside. It is slower and gentler than the two preceding dances.

The final movement is a furiant. This is a fast energetic dance that frequently shifts accents between duple and triple time. It provides a lively and exuberant conclusion to the work.



Program notes by
Conductor Laureate,
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Mark your calendars

Holiday Concert:

Handel's Messiah

Sunday, December 12, 3:00 pm

Penn State Recital Hall
Christopher Kiver, Guest Conductor
Penn State Concert Choir
George Frideric Handel - Messiah,
HWV 56

Season Concert 2:

Dance Together

Sunday, January 30, 3:00 pm

Penn State Recital Hall
Yaniv Attar, *Music Director*
Rebekah K. O'Brien,
Assistant Conductor
Anthony Costa, *Clarinet*
Anne Sullivan, *Harp*
Claude Debussy -
Sacred and Profane Dances
Aaron Copland - Clarinet Concerto
Louise Farrenc - Symphony No. 3
Op. 36

Family Concert

Rebekah K. O'Brien, *Assistant Conductor*
Date TBD

Spring Serenade

Yaniv Attar, *Music Director*
Rebekah K. O'Brien, *Assistant Conductor*
Date TBD

Season Concert 3:

Celebrate Together

Sunday, May 8, 3:00 pm

Penn State Recital Hall
Yaniv Attar, *Music Director*
Rebekah K. O'Brien, *Assistant Conductor*
Elisa Barston, *Violin*
Amy Sue Barston, *Cello*
Elizabeth Morgan, *Piano*

Ludwig van Beethoven - Overture
to The Creatures of Prometheus,
Op. 43

Ludwig van Beethoven - Concerto
for Violin, Cello, and Piano in C
major, Op. 56,

Ludwig van Beethoven -
Symphony No. 7 in A major,
Op. 92



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