

Eastman Philharmonia

Tito Muñoz,
conductor

Rebecca Bryant Novak,
assistant conductor

Xinyue Scarlett Zheng,
piano

Wednesday, November 13, 2024
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre
7:30 PM

~ PROGRAM ~
Eastman Philharmonia
Tito Muñoz, *conductor*

Untitled (After Bełski) (2024)

Talia Berenbaum
(b.)

Piano Concerto in G Major (1929-1931)

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio assai
- III. Presto

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)
23'

Xinyue Scarlett Zheng, *piano*

~ INTERMISSION ~

Prélude à "L'après-midi d'un faune" (1891-1894)

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)
10'

La mer (1903-1905)

- I. De l'aube à midi sur la mer
(From Dawn to Noon on the Sea)
- II. Jeux de vagues
(Play of the Waves)
- III. Dialogue du vent et de la mer
(Dialogue of Wind and Sea)

Claude Debussy
23'

Rebecca Bryant Novak, *conductor*



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

~ PROGRAM NOTES ~

Untitled (After Beksiński)

Untitled (After Beksiński) is a musical exploration of the work of Polish visual artist Zdzisław Beksiński. His work, particularly his paintings, have been called “dystopian surrealism,” a label which I personally quite agree with. Many familiar symbols appear in his work, such as human faces and forms, architecture (Beksiński was a career architect), and even musical instruments. Even more striking is his use of Christian symbols like crosses and crucifixions. All of these familiar things, though, are often made wrong somehow. Human faces are obscured or contorted or appear in places that they shouldn’t, hands are gnarled and have far too many fingers. Buildings are covered by mist or on fire. Crosses hang crooked or appear in impossible places.

Beksiński’s work is powerful because even with all these familiar symbols, it is impossible to tell what they mean or why they are there. His work masterfully gives a glimpse at the familiar but denies the viewer an explanation. It is for this reason that I believe that he refused to title most of his work, though in keeping with the theme, he rarely offered explanations for why he did so.

My piece explores this surreal use of symbolism as in Beksiński’s work. Ideas which might be familiar are obscured by orchestration, fragmentation, or even style. However, flashes of familiarity appear blindingly; contemporary “sound-mass” style composition is juxtaposed with something you’d expect to have heard from orchestras 100 or 200 years ago. In keeping with Beksiński’s use of Christian symbols, pervasive in the piece is the Lutheran hymn “Nun Komm der Heider Heiland,” though it is rarely audible in its entirety. All of these familiar sounds are shattered against each other. The line between a “Nun Komm” and something like Haydn begins is deliberately blurred. In keeping with Beksiński’s own titling, this piece too bears no title beyond its nod to the great artist.

- Talia Berenbaum

Scan this QR code to see some of Beksiński’s works:



Piano Concerto in G Major

Maurice Ravel’s Piano Concerto in G Major opens with a burst of color, a vibrant mosaic of jazz rhythms and sparkling orchestration that brings the listener into a world of rhythm and energy. The first movement, marked *Allegretto*, is driven by syncopated piano lines that dance above a lively orchestral accompaniment, its jazzy influences echoing the composer’s fascination with the sounds of the American jazz scene. The music breathes with life and playfulness, building in momentum before slipping into a finale that feels like a delighted exhale.

The second movement, *Adagio assai*, is a contrasting world of serene introspection, beginning with a long, unbroken line from the piano, its gentle phrases suspended like moments of pure stillness. The orchestra enters with soft harmonies, supporting the soloist’s delicate melody. This movement feels timeless, offering a glimpse into Ravel’s lyrical soul, an oasis of calm amid the concerto’s liveliness.

The Presto finale is a rush of energy and wit, the piano and orchestra propelling each other forward in rapid exchanges. Ravel draws on his fascination with rhythm and movement, crafting a brilliant, unpredictable conclusion that sparkles until the final notes. With jazz, folk, and a touch of whimsy, Ravel’s Concerto in G is a joyful journey, full of delight and vibrant imagination.

Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune

Claude Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* is a musical impression of sensual awakening. Inspired by the poem by Stéphane Mallarmé, the piece opens with a sinuous flute solo, as if the faun is rousing from slumber, lost in the dreamy warmth of an afternoon. This languid melody lingers and unfolds, capturing a delicate world of dappled light and shadow, as if each instrument in the orchestra is breathing life into a sunlit landscape.

As the piece develops, the orchestra shimmers with Debussy’s unique harmonic language, evoking a world that is both hazy and luminous. The music flows with fluidity, never fully settling, as if the faun’s thoughts are drifting between reality and fantasy. Rich woodwinds, strings, and delicate harp lines intertwine, creating colors that feel as fleeting as sunlight through leaves.

Toward the end, the flute melody returns, this time more languorous, as if the faun is again sinking into drowsy dreams. Debussy leaves the piece to fade away, capturing an atmosphere that is both tactile and ephemeral, a glimpse into a world of sensual reverie. *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* is a masterpiece of mood and color, a timeless evocation of nature and desire.

La Mer

Debussy’s *La Mer* is a symphonic portrait of the sea, where music becomes waves, winds, and sun-dappled water. The first movement, *De l’aube à midi sur la mer* (“From Dawn to Noon on the Sea”), begins with a quiet, mysterious awakening. Soft murmurings in the lower strings suggest the vastness of the ocean, gradually growing brighter as the sun rises higher, filling the water with light. Swirling melodies and shimmering textures paint the sea’s gentle undulation, alive with life and energy.

In the second movement, *Jeux de vagues* (“Play of the Waves”), Debussy captures the joy of the sea in motion. The orchestra dances with playful melodies and vibrant rhythms, strings and winds tossing melodies back and forth, like waves meeting in playful collisions. The music is unpredictable and spontaneous, sparkling with brilliance, as if the sea itself is alive with a joyful energy.

The final movement, *Dialogue du vent et de la mer* (“Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea”), is the storm, where the sea roars to life in a powerful, sweeping climax. The orchestra surges with force, punctuated by sudden quiet moments of calm, before the waves rise again. *La Mer* is Debussy’s vision of the ocean in all its moods: tranquil, playful, and fierce, a work as boundless and profound as the sea itself.

~ MEET THE ARTISTS ~

Praised for his versatility, technical clarity, and keen musical insight, **Tito Muñoz** is internationally recognized as one of the most gifted conductors on the podium today. After 10 years as the Virginia G. Piper Music Director of The Phoenix Symphony, Tito's tenure, one of the longest in the organization's history, concluded at the end of the 2023-24 season. Praised for the meaningful impact he made during his tenure, Tito now continues his relationship with The Phoenix Symphony as their newly appointed Artistic Partner.

Tito previously served as Music Director of the Opéra National de Lorraine in France. Other prior appointments include Assistant Conductor positions with the Cleveland Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra and the Aspen Music Festival.

Tito has appeared with many of the most prominent orchestras in North America, including those of Atlanta, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Minnesota, New York and Utah, as well as the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra and Orchestra of St. Luke's, with whom he made his Carnegie Hall debut in a sold-out performance of Orff's *Carmina Burana* (February 2024). He also maintains a strong international conducting presence, including engagements with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony, SWR Symphonieorchester, Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, a tour with Orchestre National d'Île de France, Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra, Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony, Royal Philharmonic (London), Ulster Orchestra, Danish National Chamber Orchestra, Luxembourg Philharmonic, Opéra Orchestre National Montpellier/*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Opéra de Rennes/*The Turn of the Screw*, Auckland Philharmonia, Sydney Symphony and Sao Paulo State Symphony.

As a proponent of new music, Tito champions the composers of our time through expanded programming, commissions, premieres, and recordings. He has conducted important premieres of works by Christopher Cerrone, Kenneth Fuchs, Dai Fujikura, Michael Hersch, Adam Schoenberg and Mauricio Sotelo. A great advocate of the music of Michael Hersch, Tito has led the world premieres of many of Hersch's recent works, including *On the Threshold of Winter* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2014, his Violin Concerto with Patricia Kopatchinskaja and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra in 2015 (also recorded with the International Contemporary Ensemble on the New Focus label), *I hope we get a chance to visit soon* at the Ojai and Aldeburgh Festivals and *the script of storms* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra in London. In the 2024/25 season Tito will conduct the world premiere performances of Hersch's new opera and we, each.

A passionate educator, Tito regularly visits North America's top educational institutions, summer music festivals and youth orchestras. He has led performances at the Aspen Music Festival, Boston University Tanglewood Institute, Cleveland Institute of Music, Indiana University, Kent/Blossom Music Festival, Music Academy of the West, New England Conservatory, New World Symphony, Oberlin Conservatory, Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, University of Texas at Austin, and National Repertory Orchestra, as well as a nine-city tour with the St. Olaf College Orchestra.

Born in Queens, New York, Tito began his musical training as a violinist in New York City public schools. He attended the LaGuardia High School of the Performing Arts, the Juilliard School's Music Advancement Program, and the Manhattan School of Music Pre-College Division. He furthered his training at Queens College (CUNY) as a violin student of Daniel Phillips. Tito received conducting training at the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen where he studied with David Zinman and Murry Sidlin. He is the winner of the Aspen Music Festival's 2005 Robert J. Harth Conductor Prize and the 2006 Aspen Conducting Prize, returning to Aspen as the festival's Assistant Conductor in the summer of 2007, and later as a guest conductor.

Tito made his professional conducting debut in 2006 with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center, invited by Leonard Slatkin as a participant of the National Conducting Institute. That same year, he made his Cleveland Orchestra debut at the Blossom Music Festival. He was awarded the 2009 Mendelssohn Scholarship sponsored by Kurt Masur and the Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Foundation in Leipzig and was a prizewinner in the 2010 Sir Georg Solti International Conducting Competition in Frankfurt.

A native of Denver, Colorado, **Talia Berenbaum** is a composer and freelancer based out of Rochester, New York. Her music draws on many sources, combining the avant-garde, Jewish folk music, and traditional European classical music. Talia was the recipient of the 2023/24 student commission by new music group OSSIA to create an electroacoustic sound installation, and her compositions and arrangements have been performed at numerous recitals, including the 2022 Women in Music Festival in Rochester. She has studied composition with Elizabeth Ogonek, Daniel Pesca, Robert Morris, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, and Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, and trombone with Mark Kellogg, Tim Smith, and Paul Naslund.

She also is active as a performer, having performed numerous solo recitals, played with new music groups OSSIA and Musica Nova, and freelanced around the Finger Lakes region. Talia was the recipient of the Bernard Rogers Memorial Prize two years in a row, and has also received the Belle Gitelman Award and honorable mention in the Israel-Pellman Prize. She holds a BM in Composition and Trombone Performance with High Distinction from the Eastman School of Music and works towards an MM in Composition there now.

In addition to her work as a musician, Talia enjoys crocheting and spending time with her dog, Sava.

Xinyue (Scarlett) Zheng, a pianist from Nanjing, China, is currently pursuing her Master of Music degree at the Eastman School of Music in the studio of the renowned professor and pianist Alexander Kobrin. Zheng's musical journey began at the age of 5 and she has been studying with the best, including Susan Starr.

Zheng has strong performance in prestigious international competitions. She won the first prize at the 8th Nice Côte d'Azur International Young Artists Competition and was awarded second prize at the 2017 International Young Artists Piano Competition. In the same year, she earned third prize and the Audience Choice Award at the 2017 MostArts Festival Competition, where she also gave a successful performance of Mozart's Piano Concerto in D minor, K. 466, with the MostArts Festival Orchestra. In the year of 2024, she won the first prize at the Lancaster International Piano Festival Competition. Zheng has also been an active participant in renowned music festivals such as the Lancaster International Piano Festival, Vivace International Music Festival, and the Chautauqua Music Festival.

As a concert pianist, Zheng has presented solo recitals in esteemed venues including Nanjing Nanyi Concert Hall, Nanjing Muyin Concert Hall, Xiamen Wuyuan Concert Hall, the Concert Hall of the Women and Children's Activity Center of Jiangsu Province, Hatch Hall and Kodak Hall at the Eastman School of Music.

~ PERSONNEL ~
Eastman Philharmonia

Violin I

Liliana Mahave,
concertmaster
Amelia Posner-Hess
Madeleine Nysctvold
Magali Pelletay
Isabel Chen
Grace Belsie
Juyoung Lee
Fengyi Yang
Ingrid Buschkopf
Erica Lin
Aviva Bock
Anatole Keshwani
Paige Griffin
Yan Yue
Yueyang Zhang
Lisa Wang

Violin II

Anne-Marie Wnek,
principal
Qi Su
Kaitlyn McLaughlin
Caroline Cornell
Simon Cheng
Veronica Rokicki
Madison Oh
Nicole Cheng
Olivia Walberger
Enyu Ye
Hagan Tran
Bo Yang
Xuanzhen Zhang
Kristina Kaye

Viola

John Crowley,
principal
Juan Alvarez Jimenez
Max Wang
Ethan Shin
Phoenix Mercier
Syara Robert
Katherine Park
Mack Jones
Alexander Diaz
Anna Brooke
Douglas Rodriguez
Zijin Yang
Hide Shiotsu

Violoncello

Ryan Post,
principal
Felix Kim
Juewen Zhang
Alex Englehardt
Anastasia Wilson
Alex Tuan
Haozheng Sun
Ivy Robison
Amarilli Severa
Anika Grieve
Ethan Hess
Satoshi Kamei
Gabriel Hennebury
Joseph Yang

Double Bass

Emma Goldberg,
principal
Angshen Sun
Samantha Liu
Jiayan Yang
Nathan Kim
Karly Ison

Flute

Andrew Hanks
Ivy Lee
Angelina Lim
Katherine Marx
Ray Zheng

Oboe

Payton Brown
Jeehoon Kim
Lewis Painter
Sihan Qi

Clarinet

Eric Butler
Barak Dosunmu
Lauren Enos
James Julian
Victor Ni

Bassoon

Roan Alonzo
Trey Barrett
Kenny Ford
Ryan Zych

Horn

Amelia Caruk
Morgan Chalmers
Aliceyn Covington
Aaron Fulton
Suzie Lee
Danica Tuohy
Jennelle Williams

Trumpet

Norman Carswell
Charlotte McIntosh
Kirk Morrison
Cole Pringle
Diego Turner

Trombone

Caleb Albrecht
Darren Brady
Charley Hinschweile
RJ James

Tuba

Addie Canning

Timpani

Izaiah Gonzales
Aiden Hughes
Cass Lo

Percussion

Daniel Davis
Lexi Kunz
Seth Tupy

Harp

Catherine Caton
Lindsay Haukom
Kathleen Miao



For the most up to date information on Eastman concerts and events, scan this code to visit our online calendar.



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER