

Monday Evening, February 12, 2024, at 7:30

The Juilliard School

presents

Juilliard Orchestra

JoAnn Falletta, *Conductor*

Haixan Wan, *Viola*

ROBERTO SIERRA (b. 1953) **Fandangos** (2000)

EDWARD ELGAR (1857-1934) **Concerto in E Minor, Op. 85** (1919)
(cello solo arranged for viola solo by Lionel Tertis, sanctioned by the composer)

Adagio; Moderato

Lento; Allegro molto

Adagio

Allegro; Moderato; Allegro, ma non troppo

HAIXAN WAN, *Viola*

Intermission

PETER MENNIN (1923-83) **Concertato for Orchestra, "Moby Dick"** (1961)

PAUL HINDEMITH (1895-1963) **Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes by Carl Maria von Weber** (1943)

Allegro

Turandot: Scherzo

Andantino

March

Performance time: approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes, including an intermission

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Alice Tully Hall

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are turned off during the performance.*

Notes on the Program

by Georgeanne Banker and Samuel Rhodes

Fandangos

ROBERTO SIERRA

Born: October 9, 1953, in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico

Roberto Sierra's *Fandangos* embodies the power and potential energy of this beguiling dance form. Sierra began his studies at the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music at age 13 and later studied composition with György Ligeti at the Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg, Germany. In 1989, Sierra became composer in residence with the Milwaukee Symphony and has been on faculty at Cornell University since 1992. "My cultural heritage is an integral part of my work, and the sounds I heard growing up in Puerto Rico resonate always in my music," Sierra said in a 2021 interview with Shayne Austin Miller. "I am interested in looking inward, but at the same time creating something, something personal and unique is of paramount importance." A two-time Grammy nominee, winner of a Latin Grammy, and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Sierra captivates audiences worldwide with his vibrant musical language and orchestrational prowess.

Fandangos, commissioned in 2000 by the National Symphony Orchestra, is scored for a large ensemble including four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, and ample percussion. While these instrumental forces are substantial, the inspiration behind *Fandangos* lies within a tune written for a single harpsichord. "Antonio Soler's *Fandango* for keyboard has always fascinated me, for its strange and whimsical twists and turns," Sierra explains. Catalan composer Antonio "Padre" Soler, born in 1729, was an organist, composer, priest, and teacher to Iberian aristocracy. Soler was a self-described disciple of Domenico Scarlatti (who himself wrote one keyboard fandango), and his 10-minute, hand-crossing *Fandango* fea-

tures a churning, Phrygian dominant bass that drives dazzling passagework, all while the percussive mechanics of the keyboard nearly stand in for castanets and palmas. Soler peppers in typical cadential material of his era, as if his dancers briefly pause to "behave" in front of royal passersby.

Sierra's *Fandangos* takes such cues from Soler's work. While nodding to the fandango dance form and its 18th-century iterations, Sierra infuses his own with distinctly 21st-century digressions and reveries that brilliantly explore the sonic possibilities of his orchestra. "Some of the oddities in the harmonic structure of the Soler piece provided a bridge for the incorporation of contemporary sonorities, opening windows to apparently alien sound worlds," Sierra writes. "In these parenthetical commentaries, the same materials heard before are transformed, as if one would look at the same objects through different types of lenses or prisms." Describing this work as a "super-fandango," Sierra was also inspired by the fandango that concludes Luigi Boccherini's 1788 Quintet for Strings and Guitar, Op. 40, No. 2. "The continuous variation form over an ostinato bass gave me the chance to use complex orchestration techniques as another element for variation," Sierra continues.

Heralded by the trumpet, Soler's hallmark bassline is first introduced by two dovetailing bassoons. A true couples' dance, melodic and rhythmic material often passes between pairs of instruments and sections. While in pursuit of an elusive tonic, throughout *Fandangos*, the orchestra can't help but yield to the intoxicating, magnetic pull of the dominant. Solo moments from the winds, brass, and harp, ethereal phrases in the strings, and an insatiable bassline drive Sierra's scintillating work to a thrilling, *sforzando* close.—**Georgeanne Banker**

Georgeanne Banker holds a Master of Music degree in Historical Performance from Juilliard.

Concerto in E Minor, Op. 85

EDWARD ELGAR

Born: June 2, 1857, in Broadheath, U.K.

Died: February 23, 1934, in Worcester, U.K.

The viola faculty proudly announced that this year's competition piece would be the Elgar Concerto! But, you say—Elgar never wrote a viola concerto, and this is his Cello Concerto, Op. 85. Why would we “steal” a work that has become a staple of the cello repertoire? Don't we have enough worthy works for our instrument? The answer to that is an emphatic yes—and we have proved that over the years by alternating standard concertos with less-studied but no less important works in our repertoire.

The reason for choosing this masterwork can be summed up by citing one name, Lionel Tertis (1876-1975), who devoted himself to making the viola a legitimate instrument in its own right and not just an adjunct to the violin. Through his unique artistry and brilliant playing, he put the viola on the map as a solo instrument and helped to enlarge its repertoire through his many commissions and arrangements. He was well-known as a chamber music player and graced many ensembles with his wonderful playing. He was active as a teacher and inspired many talented artists to take up the viola. And it's impossible to exaggerate the tremendous influence he had on British music in the first half of the 20th century. The fact that we have so many first-class violists all over the world today is due in great part to his devotion to showing that our beloved instrument was worthy of standing with the violin and the cello in stature.

But back to this piece. Elgar chose cellist Felix Salmond, with whom he'd worked before, to give his Op. 85 concerto its premiere, on October 27, 1919, with the London Symphony Orchestra, Elgar conducting. He shared the program with another

conductor who hogged much more of the rehearsal time than he was allotted. Despite Salmond's total preparation and virtuosity, because of the lack of rehearsal, this first performance did not get the work off to a good start with the critics or the public. Soon afterward, Salmond emigrated to the U.S. looking for a better chance for his career to blossom. He became a revered professor of cello and chamber music at Juilliard, from 1924 to 1952, and at the Curtis Institute of Music.

By the early 1930s, Elgar's cello concerto was performed but still not nearly as popular as it is now. It was played by major cellists such as Casals and Piatigorsky, but the performer who played it most constantly in these years was the British cellist Beatrice Harrison, who recorded it with Elgar conducting (you can find it on YouTube). However, the concerto did not become a repertoire staple until the searingly emotional interpretation of Jacqueline du Pré helped boost it to the status to what it now enjoys.

When Tertis heard the concerto, he was profoundly moved by the depth of feeling it expresses and “struck by its suitability for the viola,” he wrote in his autobiography, *My Viola and I*. Noting that he'd once mentioned to Elgar “innumerable objections I had met against my transcriptions,” he said that Elgar exclaimed: “What nonsense! What of the countless arrangements that the great masters themselves have made of their own works?”

Emboldened by that conversation, Tertis transcribed the concerto and, in 1929, asked Elgar if he and a pianist could visit and play it for him. Elgar was so pleased with the result that he authorized his publisher, Novello and Co., to print the new viola part with the citation, “Arranged by Lionel Tertis with the sanction of the composer.”

During that initial performance, at Elgar's home, an event occurred that is now part of this concerto's folklore. "The slow movement of the concerto all lies within the viola's compass with the exception of one note ... all but a single low B-flat below the viola clef," Tertis wrote. He surreptitiously tuned his C string down to B-flat between the second and third movements and, he continued, "When I played the low B-flat, [Elgar] nearly sprang out of his chair with surprise and delight. I hastened to say that I had written an alternative version of this part to avoid alteration of tuning, but his reply to this was: 'Oh, no, my dear boy—you must play it tuning the C down—it's grand!'"

Tertis performed the concerto on several occasions both in the U.K. and in continental Europe, and, most importantly, twice with Elgar conducting, in London in 1930 at Queen's Hall and at the Hereford Festival in September 1933. This second performance went particularly well, and "as we walked from the platform together, he whispered to me, 'Good Boy!'—words which from him were high praise indeed," Tertis wrote. "He was not well at Hereford but I had no notion of the dire disease that had seized upon him and never for a moment dreamed that this would be the last time he was to conduct." Elgar died six months later.

In the light of this important evidence of the composer's approval, I think we are well justified in presenting this deeply emotional work on the viola. And now Juilliard student Haixan Wan continues the tradition of this concerto with the unique sound and expression that the viola has to offer. —**Samuel Rhodes**

Samuel Rhodes is chair of the cello faculty and was the Juilliard String Quartet violist from 1969 to 2013.

Concertato for Orchestra, "Moby Dick"

PETER MENNIN

Born: May 17, 1923, in Erie, Pennsylvania

Died: June 17, 1983, in New York City

Like looking out at a crimson sunrise over an uncertain horizon, Peter Mennin's Concertato, "Moby Dick," opens with quiet anticipation. Through its dynamic swells and spectacular orchestration, "Moby Dick" is a short, rhapsodic synopsis of Herman Melville's 1851 novel. The work "depicts the emotional impact of the novel as a whole rather than musically describing isolated incidents occurring in the novel," Mennin said. In avid pursuit of the leviathan, Mennin brings us on a thrilling sonic voyage of prophecy, risk, and unrelenting obsession.

Commissioned in 1952 by his hometown orchestra, the Erie Philharmonic Society, "Moby Dick" was completed by Mennin one year shy of his 30th birthday. A child prodigy whose penchant for composition was clear early on, Mennin began to study solfège at age 5, piano at 6, and composition at 7, and even played in an accordion duo with his brother, composer Louis Mennini. In 1940, Mennin enrolled at the Oberlin Conservatory to study composition before taking leave to serve in the U.S. Army Air Corps. Following his service, Mennin returned to his studies, this time at the Eastman School of Music, where he earned his doctorate with his Symphony No. 3, in 1947. Performed by the New York Philharmonic, this pivotal symphony secured Mennin's position as one of the foremost musical figures in the country. He soon after joined the composition faculty at Juilliard.

An equally skilled administrator, Mennin later presided over the Peabody Institute before his appointment as Juilliard's president, in 1962. His scrupulous approach to music permeated the ethos of the school throughout his two-decade tenure. With Mennin at the

helm, Juilliard secured its position as one of the most distinguished music schools in the world; Mennin also oversaw Juilliard's move to Lincoln Center and other considerable augmentations, including the creation of the Drama Division and doctoral program (and, in a nod to his own training, the introduction of solfège instruction). A composer at heart, Mennin was ever committed to his craft, composing nine more works—including three symphonies—before his death in 1983.

"Moby Dick" begins as a band of winds—sounding first like a distant steam whistle—move cautiously against a piano, aerial D in the first violins. Above the quiet flow of strings, a solo flute soars like a boatswain's call. The full orchestra roars to a crescendo with the introduction of the Allegro, with thematic material weaving through each orchestral section as both homophonic and contrapuntal textures ebb to piano and surge to forte. The orchestra is reduced to smaller forces of strings and winds before the maelstrom of sound ushers Captain Ahab's *Pequod* to its Neptunian fate.—

Georgianne Banker

Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes by Carl Maria von Weber

PAUL HINDEMITH

Born: November 16, 1895, in Hanau, Germany

Died: December 28, 1963, in Frankfurt, Germany

When Paul Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes by Carl Maria von Weber* received its New York Philharmonic debut in 1944, critic Olin Downes was quick to praise it as "one of the most entertaining scores that he has thus far given us. [Hindemith] has remarked that since these are by no means the best of Weber's themes, he has felt the freer to treat them as he pleases! Nothing like the frankness between friends, and the wonderful Carl Maria is safe in his grave!" Hindemith's early musical training was at

the behest of his father. Hindemith showed a clear proclivity for his craft: As a boy, he was invited to study at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt and as a teen, he studied composition with Arnold Mendelssohn (a first cousin once removed of Fanny and Felix). Conscripted in 1918, Hindemith served first with a military band in Alsace before seeing combat in the Flemish trenches. While his father was killed in action, he survived and returned to Frankfurt shortly following the Armistice. In the 1920s and '30s, Hindemith found success as a composer and educator and was an early champion of historically informed performance. As the Nazis assumed power, Hindemith was met with increasing hostility, and he finally emigrated to the U.S. in 1940.

While serving in Alsace, Hindemith formed a string quartet and composed quartets of his own. One evening, as they played Debussy's String Quartet, the members of the ensemble was coincidentally informed of Debussy's death. Hindemith recalled this moment of spiritual synchronicity: "It was as if our playing had been robbed of the breath of life," he wrote. "But we realized for the first time that music is more than style, technique, and the expression of powerful feelings. Music reached out beyond political boundaries, national hatred, and the horrors of war. On no other occasion have I seen so clearly what direction music must take."

In 1938, a creative idea was planted by Russian choreographer Léonide Massine. With a new ballet in mind, Massine approached Hindemith to orchestrate several keyboard pieces by the 19th-century German composer Carl Maria von Weber. Legend has it that as the collaboration progressed, Massine found Hindemith's sketches to be *too* transformed, rather preferring straighter orchestral versions of Weber's music (think Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*, choreographed by Massine in 1920). Displeased, Hindemith withdrew from this project. (Legend also

has it that Hindemith left after learning that Salvador Dalí was to design the sets.) Whatever the actual reason for his indignation, Hindemith did not abandon his music. While a Massine-Hindemith-Dalí production was not meant to be, five years later, Hindemith's ideas came to fruition as an independent, four-movement orchestral suite.

Scored for orchestra with auxiliary winds and a battery of percussion, the work kicks off with a bombastic rendition of Weber's 1820 *Huit pièces*, Op. 60, No. 4, for piano four hands. Melodic threads are traded in stereo before a lone oboe proposes an A-major theme. Amid commentary from the upper winds, the oboe later defends itself against the dogmatic bass clarinet and bassoons. While Weber's keyboard work ends on a minor note, Hindemith's rendition concludes with a shining A-major chord.

The second movement is derived from Weber's overture to Friedrich Schiller's 1809 play *Turandot*. The theme itself plays like a musical game of telephone. Weber took his theme directly from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 1768 *Dictionnaire de Musique*,

where it appeared as an "Air Chinois." While the authenticity of this melody is dubious, Hindemith places it first in the hands of the flute with upper winds. It is later transformed in fugal variation, first by the brass and then by the winds, who render it in staccato pointillism. The scherzo reaches a cinematic climax before resting on a serene F-major chord.

The third movement, an Andantino in 6/8 time, is based on the second of Weber's *Six Pièces*, Op. 10, for piano four-hands. Hindemith moves Weber's theme down a step to B-flat minor, and the melody moves first from the clarinet down to the bassoon. The brief movement concludes as 32nd notes from the flute flutter above the tranquil soundscape below. The *Symphonic Metamorphosis* ends with a march heralded by the stalwart brass. A driving return to Weber's *Huit pièces*, Hindemith's treatment of Weber's opus showcases all the orchestra has to offer, as a gripping interplay among the winds, brass, and strings leads the full ensemble to a blockbuster finish.

—**Georgianne Banker**

Meet the Artists



Heather Bellini

JoAnn Falletta

Multiple Grammy-winning conductor JoAnn Falletta (MM '83, DMA '89, orchestral conducting) serves as music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO), music director laureate of the Virginia Symphony, principal guest conductor of the Brevard Music Center, and conductor laureate of the Hawaii Symphony. She was named one of the 50 greatest conductors of all time by *Gramophone* magazine and ASCAP has honored her as a leading force for music of our time. As music director of the BPO, Falletta became the first woman to lead a major American orchestra. She has guest-conducted more than 100 orchestras in North America as well as many of the most prominent orchestras in Europe, Asia, and South America. As a leading recording artist for Naxos, she has won two individual Grammy awards, for Richard Danielpour's *The Passion of Yeshua* with the BPO and *Spiritualist* by Kenneth Fuchs with the London Symphony Orchestra. Her Naxos recording of John Corigliano's *Mr. Tambourine Man* with the BPO received two Grammy awards. Her Scriabin recording with the BPO was nominated for a 2024 Grammy for best orchestral performance. Falletta is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and has served by presidential appointment as a member of the National Council on the Arts. She has conducted more than 1,600 orchestral works by more than 600 composers, including more than 135 works by women composers and more than 150 premieres. Falletta earned her bachelor's at Mannes School of Music before attending Juilliard.



Haixan Wan

Haixin Wan is in her second year pursuing her bachelor's at Juilliard under the tutelage of Hsin-Yun Huang. She is a graduate of Colburn Music Academy, where she studied with Teng Li, and was previously a student at the School Affiliated to Xinghai Conservatory of Music under the guidance of Donglei Hou. Wan is a native of China and started her musical career at age 4 as a violinist, until she switched to the viola at 11. An active chamber musician, Wan has attended summer festivals including Morningside Music Bridge and Bravo! International Music Academy. She served as principal violist of the Xinghai Conservatory of Music Youth Symphony Orchestra and the Colburn Academy Virtuosi. She has appeared worldwide as a soloist in major performance spaces including Jordan Hall, Shenzhen Poly Theatre, Thayer Hall, and the Xinghai Concert Hall. In master classes, Wan has worked with Misha Amory, Paul Coletti, Robert Diaz, Kim Kashkashian, Steven Tenenbohm, and Wenting Kang. She is honored to perform the Elgar Concerto with the Juilliard Orchestra in her Alice Tully Hall debut.

Juilliard Orchestra

Juilliard's largest and most visible student performing ensemble, the Juilliard Orchestra is known for delivering polished and passionate performances of works spanning the repertoire. Comprising more than 375 students in the bachelor's and master's degree programs, the orchestra appears throughout the season in concerts on the stages of Juilliard's Peter Jay Sharp Theater, Alice Tully Hall, and Carnegie Hall. The orchestra is a strong partner to Juilliard's other divisions, appearing in opera, dance, and drama productions as well as presenting an annual concert of world premieres by Juilliard student composers. This season, an impressive roster of world-renowned conductors leads the Juilliard Orchestra, including John Adams, Marin Alsop, Joseph Colaneri, JoAnn Falletta, Ken-David Masur, Tito Muñoz, Nimrod David Pfeffer, Donald Runnicles, Jörg Widmann, and Thomas Wilkins as well as faculty conductors

David Robertson, the director of conducting studies and distinguished visiting faculty, and Jeffrey Milarsky. Among the virtual projects students from the orchestra participated in during the 2020 lockdown was *Bolero Juilliard*, which became a viral sensation. The Juilliard Orchestra has toured across the U.S. and throughout Europe, South America, and Asia, where it was the first Western conservatory ensemble allowed to visit and perform following the opening of the People's Republic of China in 1987, returning two decades later, in 2008. In summer 2019, the orchestra traveled to London, where the musicians performed alongside the Royal Academy of Music in Royal Albert Hall at the BBC Proms. Other ensembles under the Juilliard Orchestra umbrella include the conductorless Juilliard Chamber Orchestra, Wind Orchestra, Lab Orchestra, and contemporary music group AXIOM.

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Minwu Hu, *Principal*³
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Piccolo

Khoi Dinh^{3,4}
Minwu Hu²
Yeyoung Moon¹

Oboe

Jamie Yoojin Lee, *Principal*⁴
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Spencer Rubin^{3,4}
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