The Juilliard School

presents

# **AXIOM**

Jeffrey Milarsky, *Conductor*Oliver Neubauer, *Violin*Sophia Werner, *Violin*Dylan Hamme, *Violin* 

ANNA THORVALDSDOTTIR (b. 1977) Hrím (2010)

ARVO PÄRT (b. 1935) *Tabula rasa* (1977) Ludus Silentium OLIVER NEUBAUER, *Violin* SOPHIA WERNER, *Violin* 

Intermission

GYÖRGY LIGETI (1923-2006) **Violin Concerto** (1992) Praeludium Aria, Hoquetus, Choral Intermezzo Passacaglia Appassionato DYLAN HAMME, *Violin* 

Performance time: approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes, including an intermission

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# About the Program

By Noémie Chemali

### Hrím

ANNA THORVALDSDOTTIR
Born: July 11, 1977, in Bogames, Iceland

Born on Iceland's southwest coast surrounded by mountains and the sea, Anna Thorvaldsdóttir writes music that has been described as expansive, deeply rooted in the beauty of the natural world. Just as the greats before her turned to the golden ratio to recreate aesthetic harmony of nature in their music, Thorvaldsdóttir takes inspiration from the open air for the structural balance of her works.

Thorvaldsdóttir composes by hand-drawing sketches before taking her musical ideas to the staff. Some of the drawings that inspired the eventual creation of *Hrím* can be found in the booklet for her debut portrait recording, *Rhízōma* (2011). The pencil sketch on the album cover resembles a turnip root running perpendicular to several horizontal lines intersecting in the earth. This imagery can be retraced to the structure of her music, which in this case is inspired by the movement of subterranean roots or "rhizomes."

Hrím was written in late 2009 and early 2010 as a commission for the University of California San Diego New Music Ensemble, was premiered by CAPUT Ensemble at the National Gallery of Iceland, and has been performed dozens of times since, notably by Ensemble Intercontomporain, members of the Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Helsinki Philharmonic, and Iceland Symphony.

Its creation was intended to serve as a companion piece to Ligeti's chamber concerto. Like the Ligeti concerto, *Hrím* is scored for 13 musicians, and each musician plays an equal, soloistic role within the whole. Each

voice develops at its own pace, with varying rhythmic configurations contributing to an otherworldly soundscape. *Hrím*—which is an Icelandic word which refers to the slow growth of crystals—is characterized by impulses that ease the discourse toward apparently small but highly repercussive structural events.

Thorvaldsdóttir describes her piece as being inspired by dispersion, which in biology makes reference to the scattering of organisms over time. She reinterprets this concept to embody the release and echoing of single elements in the music throughout the ensemble. This dispersion is evident in individual lines, such as when the violin plays a distinct melody to attract the cello. Despite these individual moments of singularity, the focus remains on the overall impact of the piece, particularly in how the composer explores color using instruments of similar register and reflects on the concept of light.

### Tabula Rasa

ARVO PÄRT

Born: September 11, 1935, in Paide, Estonia

Following Arvo Pärt's experimentation with Bach preludes using serial tone rows, he faced a compositional silence period from 1968 to the mid-1970s due to censure from a Soviet government that maintained strict control over the cultural expression of the Estonian SSR. To the Soviets, the promotion of Bach's music equated to Lutheran expressions of faith, hence it was viewed with suspicion. Meanwhile. Pärt became fascinated with the music of the Russian Orthodoxy. His study of monody and plainchant led to the development of his new style he coined tintinnabulation, the use of bell-like tones, triadic harmony, and sparse textures.

Pärt describes how he came to his new style: "Tintinnabulation is an area I sometimes wander into when I am searching for answers-in my life, my music, my work. In my dark hours, I have the certain feeling that everything outside this one thing has no meaning. The complex and many-faceted only confuses me, and I must search for unity. What is it, this one thing, and how do I find my way to it? Traces of this perfect thing appear in many guises—and everything that is unimportant falls away. Tintinnabulation is like this. Here I am alone with silence ... I work with very few elementswith one voice, with two voices. I build with the most primitive materials—with the triad, with one specific tonality. The three notes of a triad are like bells. And that is why I called it tintinnabulation."

The first movement of *Tabula Rasa*, "Ludus" (Latin for "game"), features alternating moments of silence and expanding canon variations, a cadenza, and a final meno mosso. The movement begins with the two solo violins playing a fortissimo octave "A," followed by an eight-beat grand pause. The violins enter from highest to lowest pitch range every half measure, with each pair divided into a melodic and tintinnabuli voice. The melodic voice plays the notes of the A-minor scale, and the tintinnabuli voice plays the notes of the A-minor triad. The movement ends with the double-bass continuing to play a pedal note "A."

The second movement, "Silentium," begins with an arpeggiated D-minor second inversion chord on the prepared piano. Pärt expands the music by adding one pitch above and below the central pitch of each pair in each successive section, gradually adding pitches until reaching silence on the second scale degree of the D-minor scale.

Tabula Rasa was commissioned as a companion piece to Alfred Schnittke's Concerto Grosso, using the same instrumentation. The first performance in 1977 featured violinists Gidon Kremer and Tatjana Grindenko, Schnittke on prepared piano, and

the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra conducted by Eri Klas. Pärt's wife Nora noted that she had never "experienced the silence that took over the assembly hall after the premiere." It is so fitting that, after Pärt's long silence, he would propose to the audience a breathtaking blank slate to sit in silence and reimagine themselves.

### **Violin Concerto**

GYÖRGY LIGETI

Born: May 28, 1923, in Târnăveni, Romania Died: June 12, 2006, in Vienna

In 1941, a teenage György Ligeti applied for admission into the faculty of physics and mathematics at the University of Kolozsvár (Cluj), a Hungarian University in his native Romania. By the time he applied to the university, the Hungarian government, which controlled the academic life of the city, refused to admit Jewish students into the science department. Therefore, Ligeti regrettably accepted a place at the Gheorghe Dima National Music Academy, which allowed Jewish students to be admitted. This was to foreshadow the gradual antisemitic violence the Ligeti family endured, and György's miraculous happenstance as a fledgling composer.

Not three years later, Ligeti was forcibly sent to a Jewish labor battalion in Szeged. Hungary. The following summer, the Germans invaded Hungary, captured the Jewish laborers, and sent them to Siberian copper mines to work, only to eventually be shot and killed. It was by a chance encounter with the Soviet army near Budapest that Ligeti was able to escape his captors, and narrowly avoided near-certain death. His family members, however, were not as lucky; his brother Gábor, who was a gifted violinist, was deported to the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp and both of his parents were sent to Auschwitz. His mother was the only person in his immediate family to survive.

Despite escaping the Soviet bloc in 1956 and experiencing great success as one of the most innovative voices of his generation, Ligeti would carry this trauma with him. "My music bears the imprint of a long time spent in the shadow of death," Ligeti said, "both as an individual and as a member of a group. Not that it lends a tragic quality to my music, quite the opposite. Anyone who has been through horrific experiences is not likely to create terrifying works of art in all seriousness. He is more likely to alienate."

Ligeti desired to see music as independent from society, existing for its own intrinsic purposes and following its own inherent principles. However, the theme of loss and mourning is a recurring motif in Ligeti's music, often presented in an abstracted manner. This is notably expressed through the frequent use of the chromatic lament, which finds its origins in the Romanian *bocet*.

This folk influence can be heard throughout his Violin Concerto, written in 1992. Each movement is incredibly lyrical; this concerto marked a transition in Ligeti's style which turned away from the avant-garde. He still used some of the experimental techniques that he had developed, but many places throughout are quite consonant, even despite its microtonal elements (one tutti violin and viola are scordatura, and tuned down to the natural harmonics of the double-bass). One striking example is the fact

that the second movement, which is slow like a medieval chant, is infused with modal harmonies and ends on a C-major chord.

If there is a movement which most directly responds to Ligeti's life experience, it might be the fourth movement of the Violin Concerto. Following the Presto third movement, it features a sudden change in mood: a slow Passacaglia, with a recurring motif of five rising chromatic pitches. Against this lamenting ostinato, the solo violin begins by holding extremely high-pitched taught melodic lines punctuated by a series of abrupt outbursts.

The movement culminates with as close to a choking scream of anguish as we ever hear in Ligeti's music. The winds max out their ranges, and the tone begins to sound ever breathier as the movement progresses. The violin adds to this tension by playing an extremely jarring and erratic melody at the very extreme end of its high range in unison with the orchestra, which eventually culminates in a strident anaphylaxis. In this movement, it is nearly impossible not to recall Ligeti's brother, Gábor, who was murdered by the Nazis at age 17 via a fatal injection into his heart.

Violist Noémie Chemali, who earned her master's from Juilliard in 2022, leads a free-lance career in New York City as a performer, teacher, music journalist, grant writer, and arts administrator.

# Meet the Artists



Jeffrey Milarsky

American conductor Jeffrey Milarsky (BM '88, MM '90, percussion) is the music director of AXIOM. Known for his innovative programming, he has been hailed for his interpretation of a wide range of repertoire, which spans from Bach to Xenakis. In recent seasons he has worked with such orchestras as the New York Philharmonic. San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Milwaukee Symphony, American Composers Orchestra, MET Chamber Ensemble, Bergen Philharmonic, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, New World Symphony, and the Tanglewood Festival Orchestra. In the U.S. and abroad, he has premiered and recorded works by many groundbreaking contemporary composers in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Zankel Hall, Davies Symphony Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Boston's Symphony Hall, and IRCAM in Paris. Milarsky has a long history of premiering, recording, and performing American composers and in keeping with that, in 2013 was presented with the Ditson Conductor's Award. His dedication has brought forth collaborations with Adams, Babbitt, Cage, Carter, Corigliano, Crumb, Davidovsky, Druckman, Gordon, Lang, Mackey, Rouse, Shapey, Subotnick, Wuorinen, and an entire generation of emerging composers. Milarsky serves on the conducting faculty at Juilliard and is a senior lecturer in music at Columbia University, where he is the music director and conductor of the Columbia University Orchestra. An in-demand timpanist and percussionist, Milarsky has been the principal timpanist for the Santa Fe Opera since 2005. In addition, he has performed and recorded with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Pittsburgh Symphony. He has recorded extensively for Angel, Bridge, Teldec, Telarc, New World, CRI, MusicMasters, EMI, Koch, and London records. As a Juilliard student, Milarsky was awarded the Peter Mennin Prize for outstanding leadership and achievement in the arts.



Oliver Neubauer

Oliver Neubauer (Pre-College '18; BM '22, violin) is a YCA Jacobs Fellow as first prize winner of the 2023 Susan Wadsworth Young Concert Artists International Auditions. He has appeared as a soloist with orchestras including the Springfield Symphony, National Repertory Orchestra, Sound Symphony Orchestra, and Symphony of Westchester. He captured top prizes in the 26th Hellam Competition, ArsClassica International Competition, and the National YoungArts Competition. A master's student of Li Lin and Donald Weilerstein at Juilliard, he has appeared at festivals including the Verbier Academy, Music@Menlo, and Chamber Music Northwest, and he will attend the Marlboro Music Festival this summer. Neubauer performs on the 1727 "Milstein" Guarneri Del Gesù violin, generously on loan from the Ryuji Ueno Foundation and Rare Violins in Consortium, Artists and Benefactors Collaborative.

Kovner Fellowship



# Sophia Werner

Violinist Sophia Werner is pursuing her bachelor's at Juilliard, where she studies with Laurie Smukler. An avid chamber musician, Werner has performed in a variety of ensembles under the tutelage of Smukler, Simone Dinnerstein, Rebecca Fischer, Samuel Rhodes, Natasha Brofsky, and Joel Krosnick, among others. Werner cultivated her love of chamber music at Greenwood Chamber Music Camp (2016-19), Oberlin's Baroque Performance Institute (2019), and Kneisel Hall (2022) as a young artist fellow. This summer, she will return to Kneisel Hall with her piano trio, the Apollo Trio. Werner performed twice with the Adelphi Orchestra as the overall first place winner of its Young Artists Competition and was a Juilliard Concerto Competition finalist. Other accomplishments include solo appearances with the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, Ithaca Community Orchestra, Binghamton Youth Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes, and Binghamton Community Orchestra. She performs and has held leadership positions in the Juilliard Orchestra and Juilliard Chamber Orchestra. In 2021, Werner received the Dorothy Richard Starling Foundation fellowship at the Aspen Music Festival and School, where she was a first violinist of the Aspen Festival Orchestra. She recently performed as a fellow with the Apex Ensemble. Werner plays on a 1864 J. B. Vuillaume violin, generously on loan through Juilliard's Stringed Instrument Collection.

H. Gilbert Family Scholarship



Dylan Hamme

Dylan Hamme (Pre-College '21, violin) is a third-year undergraduate studying with Areta Zhulla at Juilliard. His past teachers include Catherine Cho, Francesca dePasquale, Ying Fu, Ray Iwazumi, and Amelia Gold, and he has performed in the master classes of violinists Joseph Silverstein, Jennifer Koh, and Patinka Kopec. An avid chamber and orchestral musician, Hamme is in demand with ensembles including the Grammy-nominated North/South Consonance Ensemble and has played under the baton of conductors including Scott Yoo, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Carlos Miguel Prieto, David Robertson, Christoph Eschenbach, and Xian Zhang. This summer. Hamme will return to Colorado College Summer Music Festival as both assistant conductor and violinist and will join the string quartet residency at European American Musical Alliance. In previous summers, he was a member of Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival Orchestra and Carnegie Hall's NYO-USA. Hamme's last concert with the Juilliard Pre-College Orchestra featured him as concertmaster playing the solo of Gabriela Lena Frank's Levendas: An Andean Walkabout. Hamme also attended Manhattan School of Music (MSM) Precollege, where he held concertmaster and leadership positions with various orchestras and his piano trio won first prize in the MSM Precollege Annual Chamber Music Competition (senior division).

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### **AXIOM**

AXIOM, led by music director Jeffrey Milarsky, is dedicated to performing the masterworks of the 20th- and 21st-century repertoire. Since its debut in Avery Fisher Hall (now David Geffen Hall) in 2006, the student-created group has established itself as a leading ensemble in New York City's contemporary music scene with performances throughout Lincoln Center, in addition to appearances at Columbia University's Miller Theatre and (Le) Poisson Rouge in Greenwich Village. AXIOM is grounded in Juilliard's curriculum. Students receive a credit for performing in the ensemble and, during any four-year period, AXIOM members will have the opportunity to perform works by John Adams, Harrison Birtwistle, Jacob Druckman (BS '54, MS '56, composition; faculty 1956-72), Marcus Lindberg, and Arnold Schoenberg, among others. Guest conductors have included Alan Gilbert (Pre-College '85; MM '94, orchestral conducting; faculty 2009-18), Susanna Mälkki, and David Robertson (faculty 2018-present). Last season, AXIOM performed works by Elliott Carter (faculty 1966-84), Unsuk Chin, George Crumb, Paul Hindemith, Jordyn Gallinek (MM '20, composition), Toru Takemitsu, Schoenberg, Joan Tower, Charles Wuorinen, and Charles Ives. In the 2021-22 season, the group played music by Pierre Boulez (faculty 1972-75), Alvin Singleton, Olivier Messiaen, Thomas Adès, Jeffrey Mumford, Carter, George Lewis, Marcos Balter, Anthony Braxton, and Tania Leòn. And in the truncated 2019-20 season, AXIOM performed works by Igor Stravinsky, Takemitsu, Birtwistle, Carter, Lewis, Morton Feldman, Philip Glass (Diploma '60, MS '62, composition), Boulez, Adès, and Melinda Wagner, chair of Juilliard's composition faculty.

### **AXIOM**

Jeffrey Milarsky, Music Director

#### **THORVALDSDOTTIR** Hrím

First Violin

Matthew Hakkariainen

Second Violin

Juchao Zhao

Viola

Peter Dudek

Cello

I Cheng Liu

PÄRT Tabula rasa

First Violin

Juchao Zhao. Concertmaster Gabrielle Després

Tommu Su

Second Violin

Matthew Hakkarainen, Principal Coco Mi Chili Ekman

LIGETI **Violin Concerto** 

Violin

Juchao Zhao, Concertmaster Matthew Hakkarainen Tommu Su Coco Mi

Viola

Molly Prow, Principal Peter Dudek Joelle Hsu

Gabrielle Després

Cello

Vanny Hu. Principal I-Chena Liu

**Double Bass** 

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Double Bass Sami Ahn

Flute

Viola

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**Double Bass** 

Sami Ahn

Chris Boyadjiev

Oboe/English Horn

Tim Swanson

Clarinet

Jonathan Decker

Peter Dudek, Principal

I Cheng Liu, Principal

Heewon Lee, Principal

Alto Flute/Recorder

Piccolo/Recorder

Chris Boyadjiev

Oboe/Ocarina

Julivan Martinez.

Jonathan Decker

Principal

Tim Swanson

Clarinet

Chris Boyadjiev

Heewon Lee

**Bass Clarinet** Juliyan Martinez

French Horn

Mychal Nishimura

Trombone Theo Swanson

Piano/Celeste

Mei Yin Grace Wong

**Prepared Piano** 

Mei Yin Grace Wong Student Cover

Conductor

Soo Jin Chung

E-flat Clarinet/Ocarina

Juliyan Martinez

Bass Clarinet/Ocarina

Jonathan Decker

Bassoon/Ocarina

Ricky Shi

French Horn

Wilden Dannenberg, Principal

Mychal Nishimura

Trumpet David Green

Trombone

Theo Swanson

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