

ASU Chamber Orchestra Presents

Ecstasy of Memory: Respighi, Ravel and Mendelssohn

Jeffery Meyer, conductor

School of Music
Herberger Institute for Design & the Arts
Arizona State University
2016-2017 Season

September 9, 2016
7:30pm

Katzin Concert Hall

MUSIC

ASU Herberger Institute
FOR DESIGN AND THE ARTS

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

ASU Chamber Orchestra

Jeffery Meyer, conductor

Trittico Botticelliano, P.151 (1927).....Ottorino Respighi
(1879-1936)

- I. La Primavera
- II. L'adorazione dei Magi
- III. La nascita di Venere

Le Tombeau de Couperin (1917)Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

- I. Prelude
- II. Fugue
- III. Forlane
- IV. Rigaudon
- V. Menuet
- VI. Toccata

~ *Intermission* ~

Symphony No. 4 (1833).....Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

- I. Allegro Vivace
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Con moto moderato
- IV. Presto and Finale: Saltarello

ASU Chamber Orchestra

Violin I

Luke Hill, *Concertmaster*

Vladimir Gebe

Christiano Rodrigues

Aihua Zhang

Sicong Chen

Erin Heidrick

Violin II

Tee Tong Tang, *Principal*

Kathleen Strahm

Meghan Ruel

Jingting Liu

Emily Rumney

Felix Herbst

Viola

YenFang Chen, *Principal*

Joseph Bingham

Gloria Yoon

Sarah Evins

Cello

Elliot Yang, *Principal*

Yeil Park

Wesley Skinner

Alex Duke

Bass

Chunyang Wang, *Principal*

Benjamin Hedquist

Piccolo

Eyona Mathews

Flute

Stephanie Hoeckley*^#

Chaz Salazar

Eyona Mathews.

Oboe

Rachel Messing*^

Charlotte Heiner#

English Horn

Wilson Harmon

Clarinet

Jeremy Ruth*#

Seula Lee^

Bassoon

Toan Tran#

Gabbie Hsu^

Evelyn Jones*

Brittany O'Quin

Horn

Juli Smith*^#

Parker Kauffman

Trumpet

Brianne Borden^#

Robert Giambruno*

Harp

Emma Quinn^*

Jessica Zappanti

Piano

Dongfang Zhang

Celesta

Olga Kim

Timpani

Jingya Zhou

Percussion

Cy Miessler

Principal Distinctions

*Ravel

^Respighi

#Mendelssohn

To respect the performers, please silence all electronic devices.

Program Notes

Each of the virtuosic pieces on this program touch upon the concept of memory in music; Respighi's rumination on Botticelli's trilogy of masterpieces, Ravel's homage to friends taken from him by the violence of World War I and nod to the French Baroque keyboard suites, and finally Mendelssohn's joyous remembrance of a tour to Italy. Taken together they evoke poignant scenes and ecstatic atmospheres, and create feelings of nostalgia alongside the vibrancy of the present. These works were chosen to highlight the extraordinary abilities of the young musicians in the ASU orchestral program.

Jeffery Meyer,
ASU Director Of Orchestras

The two orchestral aspects of Respighi include his best-known compositions: on the one hand the epic (one might say bombastically colorful) tone poems of the "*Roman Trilogy*," comprising *Fountains of Rome*, *Pines of Rome*, and *Roman Festivals*, all for gigantic orchestra. The other side comprises his charming arrangements for smaller orchestral ensembles of melodies by composers of the 17th and early-18th centuries, the three Suites of *Ancient Airs and Dances* and *The Birds*, as well as the *Botticelli Triptych (Trittico Botticelli)* of original material, except as noted below.

The Trittico is an evocation of three celebrated paintings by Sandro Botticelli (born Alessandro di Mariano di Vanni Filipepi in Florence, c. 1445, died 1510) that today hang in Florence's Uffizzi Gallery.

The first mention of the musical *Trittico* seems to have been in an interview with the composer's wife, Elsa, a soprano – the composer often accompanied her at the piano in his own and other Italian composers' music – after an American tour in 1927 sponsored by the indomitable Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, patron also of such greats as Bartók, Copland, Poulenc, Ravel, Schoenberg, and Hindemith, in the process drawing from those composers and others too numerous to mention here a substantial portion of the 20th-century chamber-music repertoire.

The tour concluded with a Respighi program in the splendid chamber musical hall – also the product of Mrs. Coolidge's generosity – of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. On this occasion, Elsa related, Respighi promised to dedicate his next piece to Mrs. Coolidge, and it was on a visit to the Uffizzi several weeks later that he found his inspiration in the three Botticelli paintings that constitute the musical *Trittico*: *La Primavera* (Spring), *L'Adorazione dei Magi* (The Adoration of the Magi), and *La nascita di Venere* (The Birth of Venus). The score was premiered at a concert in Vienna sponsored by Mrs. Coolidge at the end of the year, with the Respighis in attendance.

Sharp-eared listeners will note in the middle movement, *The Adoration*, variations on the medieval hymn *Veni, veni Emanuel*, the famous antiphon introduced here by flute and bassoon two octaves apart.

Herbert Glass
Los Angeles Philharmonic

Ravel intended *Le Tombeau de Couperin* as homage to French eighteenth-century music in general, but to make the title more vivid he invoked the name of François Couperin—who, with Rameau, was one of the great masters of the French Baroque. The *Prélude* is filled with non-stop sixteenth notes, a taxing tour de force for the oboe. In fact, most of *Le Tombeau* is a feast of opportunities for the solo oboist. In the piano suite this movement is dedicated "to the memory of Lieutenant Jacques Charlot," a musician friend.

A forlane is a lively dance that may have originated in Friuli in the extreme northeast of Italy but which made itself at home at the French court. Musically it takes many forms. Ravel's Forlane resembles the one by Couperin that he transcribed. This is a wistful piece in a lilting 6/8 meter, and the harmonies are fascinatingly oblique. The dance is dedicated to Lieutenant Gabriel Deluc, who does not otherwise appear in the Ravel biography.

The Menuet is inscribed to Jean Dreyfus, at whose parents' house Ravel had completed *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. The trio is a musette in minor, the reprise combines the minuet and musette, and there is an expansive coda. The music is of the utmost gentleness, though it does once rise to what is in fact the only *fortissimo* in the first three movements.

The Rigaudon, which follows the Forlane in the piano suite, serves as finale here. Ravel dedicated it to his childhood friends Pierre and Pascal Gaudin. A rigaudon is a vigorous French folk dance in duple meter, also "civilized" and brought to court. This one, firmly grounded in C major, brings *Le Tombeau de Couperin* to a cheery close.

Michael Steinberg
San Francisco Symphony

In 1830, Mendelssohn wrote his *Symphony No. 4 "Italian"* while inspired on a trip to Italy. He was delighted by the country and felt this was the jolliest piece he had ever written—indeed, it is his most popular symphony.

The first movement is a buoyant A-major sonata, with a joyful first and second theme underpinned by energetic eighths, followed by a minor-key march that is only introduced in a fugato within the development. The primary theme and the march seem to be caught against one another until the recapitulation, during which both themes are reconciled and bring the movement to a close.

The second movement is a solemn slow movement that features the violas, the oft-neglected altos of the string section. The basses and cellos provide a continuously

walking bassline underneath the flowing chorale melody, which alludes to techniques often employed by one of Mendelssohn's biggest musical influences and fellow Leipziger—J.S. Bach. A contrasting section features a more lyrical and Romantic character.

The minuet and trio follows. Mendelssohn ignores Beethoven's scherzo-and-trio model and chooses the lighter and more dignified minuet dance. The horns and bassoon articulate the trio with a crisp fanfare. The form recalls Beethoven's Seventh Symphony third movement: the minuet and the trio are both repeated an extra time, allowing the composers to "fake" out the audience right before the end of the movement.

The symphony's overall trajectory of A major to minor—a very unique harmonic design—is misleading regarding the work's overall joyful demeanor. Though the last movement is in minor, there is scarcely a "happier" sounding minor. Indeed, Mendelssohn described his symphony in a letter to his sister as "the happiest piece I have ever written, especially the last movement." The movement is a Saltarello dance; literally, the term translates to "jump", an audible effect in the music and visible in the violinist's bows. The movement unfolds with energy and direction, until the dance literally seems to wear itself out—not unlike what may happen to one dancing such a dance (and surely drawn from Mendelssohn's own experiences and observations in Italy!).

Notes by Kamna Gupta
Arizona State University

About the Artist

Born in Chicago, **Jeffery Meyer** began his musical studies as a pianist, and shortly thereafter continued on to study composition and conducting. Since 2002 he has been the Artistic Director of the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in St. Petersburg, Russia, one of St. Petersburg's most innovative and progressive ensembles. He has appeared with orchestras in the United States and abroad, including ensembles such as the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, Sichuan Symphony, Orquesta Sinfónica de Xalapa, and the Orchestra Sinfonico "Haydn" di Bolzano e Trento. In recent concert seasons, he has been seen conducting, performing as piano soloist and chamber musician, as well as conducting from the keyboard in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Russia, Italy, Spain, Germany, Austria, Norway and throughout Eastern and Southeastern Asia.

Called "one of the most interesting and creatively productive conductors working in St. Petersburg" by Sergei Slonimsky, he is an active participant in the music of our time, has collaborated with dozens of composers, and commissioned and premiered numerous new works. The New York Times described his performances with the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in its United States debut at Symphony Space's 2010 "Wall-to-Wall, Behind the Wall" Festival in New York City as "impressive", "powerful", "splendid", and "blazing." His programming has been recognized with

three ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, as well as the Vytautas Marijosius Memorial Award for Programming. In 2007, he made his Glinka Hall conducting debut in the final concert of the 43rd St. Petersburg "Musical Spring" International Festival, and in 2009, he conducted the opening concert of the 14th International Musical Olympus Festival at the Hermitage Theatre and was invited back to perform in the 2011 festival. He has also been featured numerous times as both a conductor and pianist as part of the "Sound Ways" International New Music Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia. In the summer of 2011, he returned to China as the guest conductor of the 2011 Beijing International Composition Workshop at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, China, and in 2012 conducted at the Thailand International Composition Festival. He has been distinguished in several international competitions (2008 Cadaqués Orchestra Conducting Competition, 2003 Vakhtang Jordania International Conducting Competition, 2003 Beethoven Sonata International Piano Competition, Memphis, Tennessee) and was a prizewinner in the 2008 X. International Conducting Competition "Antonio Pedrotti" and the winner of the 2013 American Prize in Conducting.

Passionate about working with young musicians and music education, Meyer is the Director of Orchestras at Arizona State University, one of the top schools of music in the United States, and is an active adjudicator, guest clinician, and masterclass teacher. Prior to his appointment at ASU, he was the Director of Orchestras at Ithaca College for over a decade. He has judged competitions throughout the United States, including Alaska, as well as at the Hong Kong Schools Music Festival. He has given masterclasses throughout the United States as well as Canada and Asia, and recently led conducting masterclasses at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, China, Tianjin Conservatory, the Jacobs School at Indiana University, and the Universität für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Vienna. He has served on the faculties of the Icicle Creek Music Center, Rocky Ridge Music Center, Dorian Keyboard Festival, Opusfest Chamber Music Festival (Philippines), Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, Marrowstone Music Festival, and the LSM Academy and Festival. Recent and upcoming activities include appearances throughout Southeast Asia including a guest residency in orchestral training at Tianjin Conservatory and concerts with the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra and the Philippine Philharmonic, and appearances with Stony Brook Symphony Orchestra and Ensemble X in New York, the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music Chamber Orchestra in Indiana, Alia Musica in Pittsburgh, the Orquesta Sinfónica de Xalapa in Mexico, the MiNensemble in Norway, and the Portland-Columbia Symphony in Oregon. Meyer holds degrees in piano as well as composition and completed his Doctorate of Musical Arts in Piano Performance with Gilbert Kalish at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.



Upcoming Ensemble Events

November 1, 2016
ASU Wind Orchestra and Wind Ensemble
Hail to the Chief
Gary Hill and Jason Caslor, *conductors*

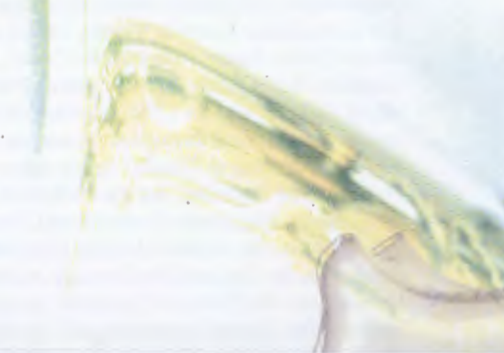
September 27, 2016
ASU Wind Orchestra and Wind Ensemble
Around the World
Gary Hill and Jason Caslor, *conductors*

September 28, 2016
ASU Symphony Orchestra
Seduction and the Hand of Fate:
Adams and Tchaikovsky
Jeffery Meyer, *conductor*

October 6, 2016
ASU Philharmonia
New Beginnings
Jason Caslor, Kamna Gupta,
Mark Alpizar, *conductors*
Evelyn Smith Music Theatre

**All events in ASU Gammage
unless otherwise specified*

**All concerts begin at 7:30pm*



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herbergerinstitute.asu.edu/events