

# Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth

presents

## Edgar Meyer and Scottish Ensemble

### **Violin 1**

Jonathan Morton  
Emily Davis  
Roberto Ruisi  
Greta Mutlu

### **Cello**

Alison Lawrance  
Naomi Pavri  
Sonia Cromarty

### **Violin 2**

Tristan Gurney  
Joanne Green  
Laura Ghio

### **Double Bass**

James Manson

### **Viola**

Jane Atkins  
Andrew Berridge  
Meghan Cassidy

**Tuesday, March 29, 7:30 pm**

Spaulding Auditorium • Dartmouth College • 2022

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# Program

Approximate duration: 90 minutes

*St Paul's Suite*

Gustav Holst

String Quintet Movement 1

Edgar Meyer

New Work – title to be announced from the stage\*

Edgar Meyer

*Gamba Sonata in G BWV 1027*

Johann Sebastian Bach

*Punctum*

Caroline Shaw

*The Lark Ascending*

Ralph Vaughan Williams arr Johnson

\* Commissioned by Modlin Center of the Arts at University of Richmond and Scottish Ensemble

## Program Notes

Caroline Shaw *Punctum*

The idea of ‘punctum’ comes from renowned essayist and theorist Roland Barthes. Summed up very crudely (it’s a complex and much-debated topic, which those interested in photography may wish to explore), it refers to the unexpected, entirely subjective effects of a piece of art—in Barthes’ case, a photograph—on the observer: “[the] element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me.”

This intriguing idea is the inspiration for Shaw’s tapestry of moments; an exploration of expectation and disruption, communal and personal, familiarity and surprise. “A particular secondary dominant” from Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* is our center of gravity, but, along with other comforting musical intervals and harmonic progressions, it is strung out, splintered, fragmented, dissolving and reemerging like memories. In denying us of their usual familiarity and patterns, what “shoots out” to pierce us forms a wholly personal sonic photograph of our own.

Ralph Vaughan Williams *The Lark Ascending*

Ralph Vaughan Williams is inarguably one of finest and most important British composers of the 20th

century. As with Elgar, his music has become almost synonymous with the sound of ‘Englishness,’ borne out of both the influences of English folk song and Tudor polyphony which can be heard throughout so much of his music, as well as his subject matter—a Renaissance court composer; Greensleeves; London. He is also admired for the wide-ranging span of his compositions, which include choral works, opera, symphonies and concerti.

This hauntingly beautiful piece is one of Vaughan Williams’s most enduringly popular works, continually topping classical ‘best-known’ or ‘most-loved’ polls, frequently heard in adverts, films and documentaries.

It first appeared as a piece for solo violin and piano in 1914, on the brink of World War I, inspired by a poem by the English poet George Meredith which depicted the upwards soaring and circling of a song bird. It was revised six years later as a serene romance for orchestra and solo violin, receiving its premiere in 1921, played by the violinist for whom Vaughan Williams had first written it, Marie Hall.

Given that its two publication dates flanked one of the most horrific periods of warfare, death and loss that

Britain had known, its subject—the peaceful flights and fillips of a small innocent bird—seems to have taken on an even weightier sense of quiet beauty in the almost 100 years since its premiere performance, encapsulating for some the calming, healing passivity of the English countryside, and nature in general.

The solo violin's near perfect evocation of the lark's 'chirrup, whistle, slur and shake,' as it soars above delicate orchestral support, certainly demonstrates the composer's mastery of the pastoral concept.

*Rosie Davies*

## About the Artists

Hailed by *The New Yorker* as "...the most remarkable virtuoso in the relatively un-chronicled history of his instrument," **Edgar Meyer**'s uniqueness in the field was recognized when he became the only bassist to be awarded the Avery Fisher Prize and also by a MacArthur Award. Mr. Meyer's most recent recording is *Not Our First Goat Rodeo* with Stuart Duncan, Aoife O'Donovan, Yo-Yo Ma and Chris Thile. He was honored with his fifth Grammy® Award in 2015 for his *Bass & Mandolin* recording with Chris Thile. As a composer, his music has been premiered and recorded by Emanuel Ax, Joshua Bell, Yo-Yo Ma, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Bela Fleck, Zakir Hussain, Hilary Hahn and the Emerson String Quartet, among others. The Nashville Symphony and the Aspen Music Festival and School commissioned his first purely orchestral work which was premiered by the Nashville Symphony in March 2017. Additionally, Bravo! Vail and The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields commissioned an Overture for Violin and Orchestra that was premiered by Joshua Bell and the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields in June 2017.

**Scottish Ensemble (SE)** is the UK's leading string orchestra; a core of outstanding string players who perform together under Artistic Director Jonathan Morton. Based in Glasgow, Scotland, SE inspires audiences in the UK and beyond with vibrant performances which are powerful, challenging and rewarding experiences, crossing genres, styles, musical periods and artistic forms to offer fresh perspectives on classical music.

SE regularly collaborates with high-profile guest artists, from trumpeter Alison Balsom and mezzo-soprano Sarah Connolly to cellist Pieter Wispelwey and violinists Patricia Kopatchinskaja and Nicola Benedetti. SE is also becoming increasingly known for its international collaborations with artists from other disciplines, from dance and theater companies to visual artists. Starting in 2014, their series of annual cross-artform collaborations has so far included immersive projects with visual artist Toby Paterson; Swedish contemporary dance company Andersson Dance; electronic-classical crossover composer Anna Meredith and visual artist Eleanor Meredith; and, Scottish theater company Vanishing Point.

Alongside performances across Scotland, SE presents concerts across the UK and the globe. Recent invitations to tour abroad have resulted in engagements in Taiwan, China, Brazil, the USA and across Europe, performing at prestigious venues from the Shanghai Concert Hall (China) and the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts (USA) as well as festivals including the Edinburgh International, Edinburgh Fringe and Thuringia Bach Festivals.

SE is also committed to expanding the string repertoire, with recent commissions including new works from John Tavener, James MacMillan, Sally Beamish, Martin Suckling and Anna Meredith.

**Jonathan Morton** is a musician equally at home in old and new music who enjoys collaborating with musicians and artists from different traditions.

## About the Artists *continued*

He is Artistic Director at Scottish Ensemble, where his eclectic and engaging programming has been enthusiastically praised by audiences internationally, offering fresh perspectives on familiar repertoire and championing new works. Under his leadership, Scottish Ensemble has been collaborating increasingly with other art forms such as dance, visual arts and theater. Recent critically-acclaimed projects include *20th Century Perspectives* with artist Toby Paterson, *Goldberg Variations – ternary patterns for insomnia* with Andersson Dance, and *Anno* with Anna Meredith and Eleanor Meredith.

Jonathan is also Principal First Violin at London Sinfonietta, where he has been given the opportunity to work closely with many of today's leading composers and performers, including Steve Reich, Harrison Birtwistle, Mica Levi, Oliver Knussen, Marius Nesset, Jonny Greenwood, Louis Andriessen, Thurston Moore, John Woolrich, Martin Suckling and Tyondai Braxton.

Jonathan has been invited as a guest leader with groups such as BIT20 in Bergen, Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, City

of London Sinfonia and Musikkollegium Winterhur. He is committed to sharing ideas with the next generation of string players and has directed projects at the Royal Northern College of Music, the Royal College of Music, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and the University of Auckland.

Jonathan regularly contributes to film and TV soundtracks at Abbey Road Studios and Air Lyndhurst Studios, where he leads studio orchestras for film composers including Dario Marianelli, Rael Jones, Patrick Doyle. Alex Heffes, Jóhann Jóhannsson, Christian Henson, Craig Armstrong, Joby Talbot and Laurent Eyquem.

Jonathan also plays with the Colin Currie Group in Europe and Japan.

Scottish Ensemble is supported by Creative Scotland.  
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