

# Chapel Hill Philharmonia

Sunday, 23 October 2022  
3:00 p.m.

Moeser Auditorium  
University of North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill

Evan Feldman, Guest Conductor

## ***Music in Motion***

<b>Overture in C Major</b>	Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel (1805-1847)
<b>Fisher's Hornpipe</b>	Traditional (Arr. by Felix Slatkin and Cindy McTee)
<b>Gol Gumbaz, or The Echo King</b>	Lee Weisert (b. 1978)
<b>Lightspeed</b>	Kevin Day (b. 1996)
<b>Symphony No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 39 (excerpt)</b> <i>Andante (ma non troppo lento)</i>	Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)
<b>Conga del Fuego Nuevo</b>	Arturo Márquez (b. 1950)
<b>We Don't Talk About Bruno (from <i>Encanto</i>)</b>	Lin-Manuel Miranda (b. 1980)



North  
Carolina  
Arts  
Council  
Fifty years  
of leadership

This program is supported by the Orange County  
Arts Commission and the North Carolina Arts  
Council, a division of the Department of Natural  
and Cultural Resources



ORANGE COUNTY  
ARTS COMMISSION

# Music in Motion

Our concert today features music that moves, sometimes gently, sometimes rapidly, sometimes rhythmically, and sometimes even through space. In dates it spans almost three centuries, from the 1830s to this year. In styles, it moves from the German Romantic to the digital age. But always it moves. Since this is a concert for young people, we end with a popular piece from an animated video production, and invite our young listeners to take up the baton and have a turn at conducting it.

## Mendelssohn-Hensel: Overture in C Major

In a time when women in the affluent classes were expected to play their defined roles in society, it was difficult for a great artistic talent like Fanny Mendelssohn's to be fulfilled. The older sister of Felix, she also showed her musical gifts early. (At 14, for her father's birthday, she played from memory all 24 of the Preludes from Bach's *Well-tempered Clavier*.) Both children were given ample scope to develop, with excellent teachers and opportunities to play and compose — for the enjoyment of the family and their friends. But when it came to being recognized outside that circle, by public performance or publication of compositions, Fanny was blocked for a long time. A few of her songs were published (with her permission) under Felix's name.



When she married artist Wilhelm Hensel in 1829, things changed. In 1830, after giving birth to their only child, she returned to composing, this time in larger forms. After three cantatas for voices and orchestra, she wrote her only work for orchestra alone, the Overture in C. Unlike Felix, she had not learned instruments other than the piano, so her understanding of instrumentation was somewhat limited. But with his helpful advice she learned quickly, as the wind parts in the overture show. Unlike her parents, her husband saw to it that a good deal of her work was published. But the overture was not included; it was rediscovered in 1996.

Her overture has echoes of those of Felix, especially *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*. There is a slow introduction and a transition passage for violins leading to the main body, a fast *Allegro*. Most of the melodic material is assigned to the violins and woodwinds, with some fanfare passages for brass.

## Fisher's Hornpipe

Every book of fiddle tunes includes a version of Fisher's Hornpipe; it is a staple of the fiddler's repertoire. Its date and place of origin is uncertain — as is the origin of the name Fisher associated with it — but it probably arose in the British Isles during the 1700s. The hornpipe is a dance often associated with sailors, but it is a more general folk dance, first noted in England in 1522. Its characteristic step is three repeated foot stamps at the end of each phrase.

We play an arrangement for orchestra by Felix Slatkin (a famous mid-20th century Hollywood violinist and father of the conductor Leonard Slatkin) which was further adapted by Cindy McTee.

## **Weisert: Gol Gumbaz, or The Echo King**

[Notes by the composer] Lee Weisert is a composer of instrumental and electronic music and an associate professor in the Music Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he teaches courses in composition, electronic music, and musicianship. Weisert's recent music has incorporated increasingly disparate elements such as orchestral instruments, found sounds, field recordings, digital synthesis, and analog circuitry, in an attempt to find, "through experimentation, tinkering, and unconventional approaches, a ritualistic and deeply expressive world of sound."



This piece was commissioned by the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra as part of their Elementary School Concert Program in 2020. COVID-19 halted the premiere, but it was finally premiered to thousands of North Carolina school kids in March 2022. My initial desire was to write something that combined the sounds of the orchestra with electronic sounds in a way that might spark the curiosity and interest of the children. I hit upon the idea of using an electronic delay effect to create artificial "echoes" of the orchestra as they played. In the beginning of the piece the orchestra plays very short and very loud "hits," which are immediately followed by their own diminishing echoes. The frequency and variation of these loud chord hits increases during the first section, eventually devolving into a chaos of echoes crashing over themselves. In the second section, the echoes are applied to quieter and more lyrical melodic ideas, creating a dreamlike texture. The title, *Gol Gumbaz*, refers to a temple in Karnataka, India that is famous for its acoustic echo effects resulting from the huge central dome and other architectural features.

## **Day: Lightspeed**

Kevin Day, one of the brightest young composers on the current scene, grew up in Arlington, TX. His father was a hip-hop producer in the 1980s and his mother was a well-known gospel singer. Day, who is 26, is on the faculty of Wilfred Laurier University in Canada, and is currently studying for a doctorate in music at the University of Miami.

[From his web site] Day has quickly emerged as one of the leading young voices in the world of music composition today, whose music ranges from powerful introspection to joyous exuberance. Kevin Day is an internationally acclaimed composer, conductor, and pianist, whose music often intersects between the worlds of jazz, minimalism, Latin music, fusion, and contemporary classical idioms.



Day calls his whirling 2019 piece *Lightspeed* "a fanfare for orchestra". It is mostly set in a rapid 7/8 measure, translated either as (1-2, 1-2, 1, 1-2) or as (1-2, 1-2, 1-2-3).

## **Sibelius: Symphony No. 1 in E Minor, Op 39**

Jean Sibelius had his first piano lessons at age seven. At ten he was given a violin and set himself the goal of becoming a concert artist. But he also began composing, without any instruction. He started law school, but soon switched to the music conservatory in Helsinki, where he had his first lessons in composition. A year in Berlin and another in Vienna followed, during which he gave up hopes of a

solo career, having concluded that he started too late. Returning to Helsinki, he immersed himself in Finnish legends and began writing tone poems about them. Performances of his works obtained for him a ten-year grant which allowed him to devote himself entirely to composing (this was later extended for life). At this time his orchestral works were almost entirely programmatic, descriptive of Finland, its history, its beauty, and its legends.

In 1898 he began work on a symphony. It was a time of patriotic fervor because the Russian Czar was attempting to curtail Finland's autonomy within the Russian Empire. Sibelius composed a series of tableaux about Finnish history, in response to the suppression of a newspaper. The last of these, *Finland Awakens*, became after small revisions the tone poem *Finlandia*, by far Sibelius's most performed work.

The first symphony was well received at its Helsinki premiere in 1899, but Sibelius was unhappy with part of it and revised it for a European tour with the conductor Robert Kajanus and his orchestra. This was a great success and gave Sibelius international recognition as an important composer.

Already in this symphony Sibelius exhibits his "organic" approach, building big statements from small earlier ones. For example, the work opens with a solo clarinet playing, over a soft rumble from the tympani, a plaintive theme that disappears until the beginning of the finale, when it is stated forcefully by the entire string section. There are yearning melodies reminiscent of Tchaikovsky, whom Sibelius admired, but they are typically of the step-wise type that he favored: moving from one note to another closely above or below. (Think of the big melody in *Finlandia*.)

Today we play the *Andante* second movement of the symphony, an audience favorite. It begins with a calm step-wise melody in violins and cellos, completed by the clarinets:

1st Violin, Cello (in octaves)

Clarinet

The first two bars contain the basic elements for most of what follows. In the middle section there is a long *accelerando* until the tempo is exactly doubled. While the strings run up and down with rapid notes, the main theme returns in the original tempo *fortissimo* in the winds. But suddenly things quiet down and the scene of the opening returns as the violins and cellos restate the melody one last time.

[Please join us for our concert on 11 December, when we will play the entire symphony.]

### Márquez: Conga del Fuego Nuevo

Arturo Márquez grew up in a family of performers. His grandfather was a well-known folk musician, and his father played in *mariachi* bands. He started writing music at age 16, and studied at the Mexican Music Conservatory. His music has mostly been in the traditions of his native country, especially its dance forms.

Interest in his work was heightened by the performances of his *Danzon No. 2* by the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra directed by Gustavo Dudamel in their 2007 world tour. [The Chapel Hill Philharmonia performed that work in 2019.]



Márquez's *Conga del Fuego Nuevo* is a 2005 concert piece for symphony orchestra, based on the dance called conga. The title refers to a ceremony of the Aztecs, who had two calendars: a "ritual" one of 260 days, and a "daily" one of 365 days. Once every 52 years the beginning of those two calendars would coincide. This was regarded as the start of a new world, and to make sure it began appropriately the ceremony of the "new fire" was performed, when all fires were extinguished and new ones started. (There was more, involving human sacrifice, but...)

Like other dances that trace their origins to African slaves of the Caribbean islands, the conga was developed in Cuba. And like some of the others, at first it was regarded as disreputable and even banned from public use. In the typical cycle, it went from low-class to acceptable to popular to *passé*. Here is the conga rhythm as used in a popular dance step (for example, in a conga line):



Márquez uses many Mexican styles in his treatment of the conga. Notable is a long section for trumpets in *marachi* style. But underneath it all is the infectious beat of the conga rhythm.

### Miranda: We Don't Talk About Bruno

Researching Lin-Manuel Miranda is a bit overwhelming. At every turn, starting when he was in high school, one sees creative genius. Then when you turn to his life outside show business, you find a dedicated activist for the people of Puerto Rico where his roots lie, a family man and father of three, and a really nice guy. But also a guy who at age 42 has received the following awards (among many others) for his work: a Kennedy Center Award, a McArthur Fellowship, three Tony awards, two Laurence Olivier awards, and a Pulitzer Prize. His best-known work is, of course, the musical *Hamilton*, which is still running on Broadway after seven years. An earlier work, *In the Heights*, also won a Tony for best musical.



Two years before *Hamilton* opened, Miranda had signed with Disney to write songs for their productions. One of the songs he wrote for the animated film *Moana* received several prestigious award nominations. He contributed to other films, including two in the *Star Wars* series. Then in 2021 came the animated film *Encanto*. His song from that film, *We Don't Talk About Bruno*, rose to the top of the Billboard Hot 100. The YouTube clip of this number from the film has been viewed over 500 million times in the nine months since it was posted.

*Encanto* is about an enchanted village in Colombia, where at age five each child is given a magical gift. One of the first children so gifted was Bruno, who was given the power to see the future. Because his predictions often foretold unwelcome events, he was ostracized and disappeared (until near the end of the story). The song explains why the people of Encanto never talk about Bruno — no, no, no.

At the end of our concert, we will invite young people from the audience to take the podium and baton and conduct the orchestra in the catchy Latin rhythms of this song.