

ASU Symphony Orchestra
presents

Trailblazers



ASU Symphony Orchestra

Jason Caslor, *conductor*

Jonathan Taylor Rush, *guest conductor*

Miki Aoki, *piano*




Monday, April 22, 2024

7:30 p.m.

ASU Gammage

Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts

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Dance and Theatre
Arizona State University

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Program

Piano Concerto in C-sharp minor Amy Beach
(1867-1944)

- I. Allegro Moderato
- II. Scherzo-Vivace
- III. Largo
- IV. Allegro con scioltezza

Miki Aoki, *piano*

Jason Caslor, *conductor*

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 1 in E minor Florence Price
(1887-1953)

- I. Allegro non troppo
- II. Largo, maestoso
- III. Juba Dance: Allegro
- IV. Finale: Presto

Jonathan Taylor Rush, *guest conductor*

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Assistant Conductors

Sergio Freeman

Kara Piatt

Flute/Piccolo

Mikaela Hannon

Benji Hernandez

Molly Grubbs

Hanna Moon-Earle

Oboe

Lauren Glomb

Rowan Albers

Clarinet

John Burton

Taylor Thompson

John Harden, bass clarinet

Bassoon

Cooper Taylor

Joe Florance

Horn

Zach Monroe, *principal*

Brian Allen

Alyssa Herman

Pin-Yu Chen,

Christopher Helfer, *asst principal*

Trumpet

Americo Zapata

Michael Peery

Alexander Strawn

Trombone

Ashley Rands

Jenny Zapotocky

Rhoadell Sudduth

Tuba

Jayson Rodgers

Timpani

Ethan Fox

Percussion

Joshua Cruz

Antonio De La Cruz

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Violin I

Ava Wipff, *concertmaster*
Louis Coste
Yu Zhuo
Zoe Chen
Olivia Bolles
Sarah Turner
Tiffany Steinweg
Manxi Xu
Chi-Lin Chen
Le Luo
Jeesong Ahn
Wei-Jhen Chen
Chin-An Hsueh
Luke Stikeleather
Gisselle Sanchez-Diaz

Violin II

Paula Lastra Cancela, *principal*
Jamie Wu
Ramses Cid
Bella Ward
Rebecca Rosmanitz
Christina Green
Ruby Norman
Choi Mei Lao
Rebecca Ray
Roman Rivera
Halle Smith

Viola

Nicole Allen, *principal*
Mason Haskett
Megan Evans
Anika Kang
Harriet Cohen
Alexandria Klein
Paul Hagge
Yueching Ting

Cello

Gina Choe, *principal*
Xuehui (Michelle) Yu
Janice Dacoycoy
Pinhan Lo
Reagan Drewett
Katee Grandil

Bass

Tzu-I Yang, *principal*
Dominic Pedretti
Sila Kuvanci
Ryan Giacinto
Siqing Zhang
Ash Coates

Program Notes

Amy Beach - Piano Concerto

Work on the piano concerto began in 1897 and it was clearly intended not only as a major composition, but also as a way for Beach to return to the concert platform that she missed so acutely. Reminders of this surrounded her at the time: in 1895 her father died and her mother Clara moved in with Amy and her husband. The tensions between these three, particularly in terms of Beach's musical career, cannot have been easy to bear. The first performance took place in Symphony Hall, Boston, on 7 April 1900 with the composer as soloist, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Wilhelm Gericke. The two-piano score was published the same year by the firm of Arthur P Schmidt, with a dedication to the Venezuelan pianist Teresa Carreño (1853–1917), one of the greatest soloists of the age (Sir Henry Wood described her as 'this great woman who looked like a queen among pianists—and played like a goddess'). Carreño wrote a gracious letter accepting the dedication with delight, and she tried to arrange a performance with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1901. However, these plans came to nothing and Carreño never played the work, so the task of advocating the concerto fell squarely on Beach herself. She once wrote that a composition could be 'a veritable autobiography', and the piano concerto has elements that can certainly be considered in this way. Several of the themes are quotations from earlier songs, and the idea of a piano soloist (Beach) pitted against an orchestra (the forces in her upbringing and home life that conspired to make her career so difficult) is a persuasive one. Beach herself, however, gave nothing away in her own programme note on the work:

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The four-movement structure is perhaps an echo of Brahms's second piano concerto, and as Beach herself suggests in her note, the soloist and orchestra are in a state of tension, even opposition—'vying with each other', as she puts it. This is apparent throughout the long first movement, which is much the most extended of the four. The second movement quotes from her song 'Empress of Night', setting a poem by her husband, with a dedication to her mother. The figurations of the piano accompaniment are transformed in the concerto into the soloist's *perpetuum mobile* theme, which—in this new guise—consumes and all but buries the main melody of the song. The slow movement quotes from the song 'Twilight', another setting of her husband's verse; freed of Dr Beach's rather stiff words, the music develops with a tragic intensity that is all the more remarkable given the conciseness of the movement. The rondo finale is marked *Allegro con scioltezza*, indicating fluency and agility. The soloist takes the lead throughout, introducing each idea, and growing in confidence and domination. If we accept the evidence for an unstated autobiographical programme lying behind this work, then Beach's finale has the soloist (herself) emerging triumphant and free. It was to be a prophetic metaphor: in 1910 her husband died, and her mother's death came early the next year. Free at last to make her own professional decisions, Beach in her early forties was able to pursue her career as a concert pianist, and she undertook several successful tours in Europe, and while she continued to compose, it was performing that gave her the greatest pleasure before she retired from concert-giving in 1940. In *Musical America* in 1917, she declared that 'the joy of giving of your highest powers

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is beyond description ... When I play there is only limitless enthusiasm and enjoyment.'

Notes by Nigel Simeone

Florence Price - Symphony No. 1 in E minor

Price was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1887. Her father was a dentist and her mother a music teacher, and Florence attended the same elementary school as the composer William Grant Still, although he was two years younger. She demonstrated precocity for school and music, graduating from high school as valedictorian at age 14. Her parents sent her to the New England Conservatory of Music to pursue organ and piano and she studied composition with George Chadwick, who had taken an interest in spirituals, including them in his own music. Upon graduation Price moved home to Arkansas for a brief time before taking a job at what is now Clark Atlanta University as head of the music department. She returned to Little Rock, where racial injustice made it impossible for her to thrive. She left for Chicago in 1927 and became part of a community of exceptional musicians and intellectuals known as the Black Chicago Renaissance.

In 1932 the Chicago Defender announced a musical contest, "an event of paramount importance open to all musical composers of the Race," cosponsored by NANM (National Association of Negro Musicians) and the Wanamaker's department store. Margaret Bonds, a student and composer friend of Price's, recalled, "We all prayed, and Florence won \$500 for a symphony [her First Symphony]. Our prayers were powerful because Florence also won \$250 for a piano sonata, and I won \$250 for an art song." It was this symphony that Frederick Stock, conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, would include in a 1933 concert, enshrining Price's Symphony No. 1 as the first composition by an Af-

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ican-American woman to be played by a major American orchestra. The concert was part of the Chicago World's Fair, whose theme was "A Century of Progress." Contemporary writings about the event emphasized the Symphony as a symbol of uplift and community.

Price composed over 300 pieces, 40 of which are large-scale works, 100 or so songs, chamber music, and settings of spirituals for piano and voice. Marian Anderson sang Price's arrangement of "My Soul Is Anchored in the Lord" to conclude her 1939 concert at the Lincoln Memorial before 75,000 people. Together Price and Anderson advocated for equality through music's unstoppable pulse.

Price's First Symphony is a panoply of gorgeous instrumental timbres expertly displayed within a traditional four-movement symphonic frame.

The first movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, is in sonata form. It opens with a syncopated bassoon solo, recalling Dvořák's "New World" Symphony. Instruments swell and billow. A long contrasting middle section captures tranquility, as if Price is musically painting the great American pastime: sitting on the porch. Peace is disturbed with a return of the first theme and brass and percussive blasts end the movement.

The second movement is marked *Largo, maestoso* and commences with a four-part brass hymn texture, which infuses the Symphony with transcendence. The movement is optimistic and full of space, much like music by Copland, and like Debussy's tone poems it rarely reaches an overwhelming forte, reverent in its subtle changes in dynamics.

Leading us out of church and into a party, the third movement, *Juba Dance: Allegro*, is in duple meter (4/8) with a catchy syncopated melody. Price intended that each of her symphonies have a juba, or stomping, dance, which some scholars see as the precursor to tap dancing. She demon-

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strates her gift for catchy melodies and introduces small and large African drums and a wind whistle into the work.

The last movement, Finale: Presto, is a Haydnesque rondo in 6/8. The dance continues faster, as strings take over the orchestration propelling the pleasing movement forward. Trumpets and flutes take on the rondo theme and the Symphony ends triumphantly with a triple fff.

Notes by Eleonora M. Beck

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About the Artists

ASU Symphony Orchestra

One of the top orchestral programs in the United States, the [ASU Orchestras](#) explore the vast creative range of today's contemporary orchestra and bring its audiences an engaging variety of masterworks, new music, groundbreaking guest artists, multi-media and multi-disciplinary collaborations, and award-inning programming. The ASU Orchestras are creating a new model for professional and pre-professional arts organizations that value the diverse potential of human creativity. The program is thus committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion through music and the arts. In addition to numerous recordings and videos available online, the ASU Symphony Orchestra can be heard on Cedille Records with renowned pianist Ursula Oppens in the world premiere recording of Laura Kaminsky's Piano Concerto as well as on Spotify and other online platforms in the world premiere recording of [Carter Pann's Soprano Saxophone Concerto](#) featuring ASU's Christopher Creviston.

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Jonathan Taylor Rush

Jonathan Taylor Rush is an accomplished and visionary conductor hailing from Windsor, CT. His musical journey is a testament to the transformative power of music and its ability to inspire joy and hope in the hearts of others.






Rush draws inspiration from the profound emotions evoked by the enthusiastic audiences that gather to experience his performances. Fueled by a deep passion for music, his mission is two-fold: to cure someone's bad day through the power of music and to ignite a passion among younger generations of musicians and creators, who may doubt the possibility of realizing their dreams.

Rooted in his musical upbringing within the church, Rush's approach to conducting is imbued with elements of gospel and soul music. He fearlessly infuses his performances with soul and passion, breathing new life into the classical masterworks. An ardent advocate for living and underrepresented composers, Rush is committed to programming their music in the concerts he conducts. His dedication to inclusivity and representation shines through in every performance he leads.

Among his many achievements, Rush was named Assistant Conductor, and was later promoted to Associate Conductor with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra from 2020 to 2023. At the Baltimore Symphony, he curated the orchestra's inaugural Gospel Fest, a groundbreaking event featuring the

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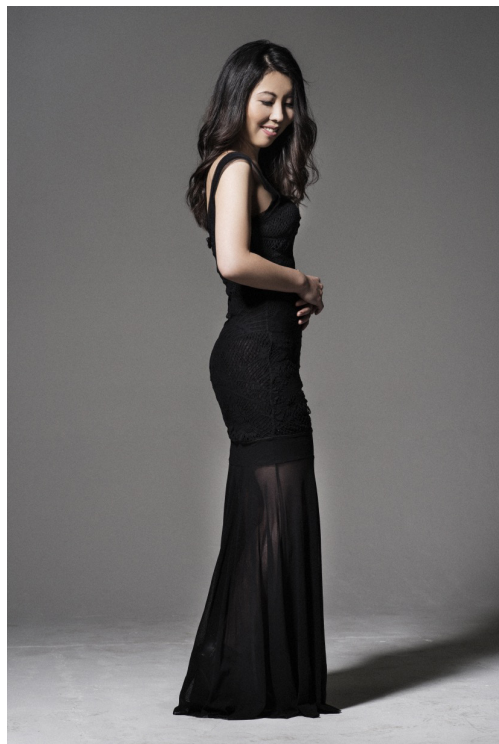
legendary gospel artist Karen Clark Sheard. While with the Baltimore Symphony, Rush also served as Artistic Director of the Baltimore Symphony Youth Orchestras. As Artistic Director, Rush led the ensemble on its first-ever international tour through Europe, showcasing their talents at renowned venues such as Dvořák Hall in Prague.

Rush's conducting prowess has graced esteemed stages both nationally and internationally. He has made captivating debuts with renowned ensembles, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Sinfonietta, Nairobi Philharmonic, and many more including his opera debut with the Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center. His academic accomplishments include a Bachelor of Music Education degree from The Ohio State University and a Master of Music degree in Orchestral Conducting from the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. Jonathan's Mentors and teachers of conducting are Joseph Young, Mei-Ann Chen, and Marin Alsop.

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Miki Aoki

Praised for “genuinely memorable performance” by BBC Music Magazine, pianist Miki Aoki is widely recognized for her diverse abilities as a pianist and collaborative artist. Ms. Aoki records exclusively for German Label Hänssler Profil. Her debut album, comprised of the piano works of Zoltan Kodaly, was released in the fall of 2011 and won critical acclaim. Her second CD, ‘The Belyayev Project’, features fascinating compositions varying from solo piano works by Liadow, Glazunov and Blumenfeld to the expressive and rhapsodic piano Trio by Rimsky-Korsakov. It was released in 2013. The Fanfare Magazine praised ‘The Belyayev Project’ as a “graceful, expressive and transparent performance”, and The Ensemble Magazine (Germany) wrote, “...pianist Miki Aoki interprets magically.” Her third CD, ‘Mélancolie’, was released in May 2016 and was awarded a special prize by the Japanese music magazine “Record Geijutsu”. ‘Tokyo Story’, was released in 2018. This recording is a world-premiere, featuring music from the films of Yasujiro Ozu in their original piano manuscript versions and has enjoyed an especially enthusiastic reception from the Japanese media.



A frequent guest artist in prestigious concert series and festivals around the world, Ms. Aoki made her debut at age of 12 at the Royal Festival Hall in London’s South Bank Centre as a soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Aoki has performed on the stages of Carnegie Hall in New York City, St. Martin-in-the Fields, St. John’s Smith Square, the Royal Festival Hall and the Purcell Room at

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South Bank Centre, the Barbican centre, Blackheath Halls (UK), Laeizhalle Hamburg, Gasteig München, Philharmonie Essen, Beethovensaal Hannover (Germany), Philia Hall, Munetsugu Hall (Japan), Wiener-Saal (Austria), St-Petersburg Philharmonic Hall (Russia) as well as in festivals such as Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Salzburger Festspiele, Rheingau Festival (Germany), Menuhin Festival Gstaad (Switzerland), International Chamber Music Festival Silver Lyre (Russia), Beaulieu-sur-la Mer (France), Valdres Festival (Norway), Copenhagen Summer Music Festival (Denmark), Steirisches Kammermusik Festival (Austria), Tertis International Viola Competition and Festival (Isle of Man), Tembi Festival (Indonesia), Phnom Penh International Music festival (Cambodia) and the International Classical Music Festival (Myanmar).

Ms. Aoki has performed as soloist with the National Symphony, London Soloist Chamber Orchestra, Hamburg Camerata, Korean Chamber Orchestra, Washington Sinfonietta and Orquesta Sinfónica del Estado de México. Her performances have been broadcasted on NDR-North German Radio, RBB-Radio Berlin, Brandenburg, BR Classics, WDR, Hessischer Rundfunk, Radio Suisse Romande, ORF Austria, Radio France, 98.7 WFMT Chicago, MPR Classic and ABC Classic FM Australia and BBC Radio 3.

As a collaborative pianist Ms. Aoki has been employed by the Heifetz International Music Institute, The Perlman Music Program, International Summer Academy Mozarteum Salzburg, Mattheiser Sommer-Akademie, and International Violin Masterclasses at Kronberg Academy. In 2021 she served as the official accompanist for the Joseph Joachim International Violin Competition in Germany. She served the same role for the Tokyo International Viola Competition in May 2022.

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Ms. Aoki regularly plays for lessons and masterclasses of internationally renowned musicians including Yuri Bashmet, Christoph Eschenbach, Christian Tetzlaff, Maxim Vengerov and Tabea Zimmermann. Since 2009 Ms. Aoki has been engaged by the prestigious Kronberg Academy in Germany where she works with exceptionally talented young performers.




Ms. Aoki started playing the piano at age 4 and moved to London at age 9 where she joined the Purcell School of Music. She holds degrees from SUNY Stony Brook University (DMA), Yale University (MM) and Indiana University (BM). She graduated with a distinction in the Konzertexamen degree at Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg. (Mit Auszeichnung). Between 2012-2016 Ms. Aoki held a full-time Senior Lecturer position at Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Graz in Austria.

Upon starting her new role as Assistant Professor of Collaborative Piano at Arizona State University for the 2022 fall semester, Ms. Aoki relocated from New York City. She had spent the last five years in New York under the tutelage of Gilbert Kalish and graduated with her DMA degree from SUNY Stony Brook in May of 2022. She held a staff pianist position at the Juilliard School from 2019 and in Winter term 2021/2022 taught as a sabbatical replacement piano professor at Lawrence University (Appleton, WI).

During the pandemic, Ms. Aoki founded and launched the virtual concert series, 'Musik in the Air'. All programs are woven together uniquely by Ms. Aoki, and each has a theme; each in addition to the mission of 'Musik in the Air' which is to bring a world-class concert experience to listeners wherever they may be.

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Jason Caslor

Jason Caslor was born and raised in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada.




Caslor is currently an Associate Professor of Music and the Director of Bands at Arizona State University (ASU). In addition to directing the Wind Ensemble, he also mentors graduate conducting students and teaches conducting courses at the graduate and undergraduate level. Recent highlights include first commercial recordings of Kevin Day's 2022 Pulitzer Prize in Music nominated Concerto for Wind Ensemble and Carter Pann's Double Concerto "Baroque" with the ASU Wind Ensemble.



From 2015-2019, Caslor was an Assistant Professor and the Associate Director of Bands and Orchestras at ASU. Highlights of that time include founding the now firmly established ASU Philharmonia and being nominated for ASU's Outstanding Master's Mentor Award. From 2010-2015, Caslor was an Assistant Professor of Instrumental Conducting at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada where he conducted the wind ensemble and oversaw the undergraduate and graduate instrumental conducting programs. Prior to that, he spent three seasons as resident conductor with the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra (TBSO). During his tenure with the TBSO, he conducted more than 75 concerts (including a CBC Radio national broadcast) and recorded a full-length, internationally distributed CD with Canadian blues artist Rita Chiarelli.

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A Conn-Selmer Educational Clinician, Caslor has guest conducted or adjudicated in every province in Canada and throughout the United States. In addition to numerous regional engagements, Caslor has conducted the United States Army Field Band, the National Youth Band of Canada, the South Dakota All State Band, the South Dakota Intercollegiate Band, and the Alberta Wind Symphony. He also served as a conducting clinician for the inaugural CASMEC Conducting Symposium.




A fiercely proud Canadian currently living amongst cacti, Caslor's co-founding and leadership over the Canadian Band Association's (CBA) Howard Cable Memorial Prize in Composition lead to him being the recipient of the CBA's 2022 International Band Award. The award recognizes those individuals who have embraced the ideals of the CBA and have contributed to the promotion, growth and development of the musical, educational and cultural values of Canadian band outside of Canada.

As a researcher, he has presented his work at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, the WASBE International Conference, the CBDNA National Conference, the IGEB International Conference on Wind Music, the International Society for Music Education World Conference, and the Riksförbundet Unga Musikanter Wind Band Symposium (Sweden). He has also published numerous articles, most prominently in the Canadian Winds journal.

Caslor completed his doctorate in conducting at Arizona State University. Prior to earning a master's in conducting from the University of Manitoba, he earned dual bachelor's in music and education from the University of Saskatchewan, Canada.

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ASU Instrumental and Voice Faculty

Woodwinds

Elizabeth Buck, *flute*
Christopher Creviston, *saxophone*
Joshua Gardner, *clarinet*
Albie Micklich, *bassoon*
Martin Schuring, *oboe*
Robert Spring, *clarinet*

Brass

Josef Burgstaller, *trumpet*
Bradley Edwards, *trombone*
John Ericson, *horn*
Deanna Swoboda, *tuba*

Strings

Nancy Buck, *viola*
Danwen Jiang, *violin*
Martha Masters, *guitar*
Thomas Landschoot, *cello*
Charles Lynch, *harp*
Katherine McLin, *violin*
Catalin Rotaru, *bass*
Jonathan Swartz, *violin*

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the 22 tribes who are native to Arizona, and more specifically the Akimel O'odham (Pima) and Pii-paash or Pee Posh (Maricopa) tribes on whose ancestral homelands ASU's Tempe campus resides.

Percussion

Robert Carrillo
Michael Compitello
Simone Mancuso
Matt Prendergast

Keyboard

Miki Aoki
Cathal Breslin
Andrew Campbell
Hannah Creviston
Kimberly Marshall
Baruch Meir
Caio Pagano

Voice

Amanda DeMaris
Carole FitzPatrick
Gordon Hawkins
Nathan Myers
Stephanie Weiss
Andrea Will

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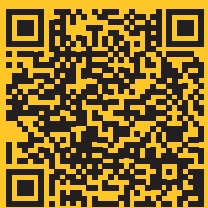
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