



Hartford Symphony Orchestra

## MENDELSSOHN'S ITALIAN

March 11 - 13, 2022

**HARTFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**  
[Carolyn Kuan, music director](#)

## MENDELSSOHN'S ITALIAN

Friday, March 11, 2022 / 8:00 p.m.  
Saturday, March 12, 2022 / 8:00 p.m.  
Sunday, March 13, 2022 / 3:00 p.m.

Belding Theater, The Bushnell Center  
for the Performing Arts

**CAROLYN KUAN**, conductor  
**DEMARRE MCGILL**, flute

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### **FELIX MENDELSSOHN** **(1809-1847)**

Selections from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Op. 61  
Intermezzo  
Nocturne  
Scherzo  
Wedding March

### **KEVIN PUTS** **(b. 1972)**

Flute Concerto  
With great sincerity and affection; flexible, with motion  
Andante  
Very fast, with tremendous energy  
**Demarre McGill, flute**

~ INTERMISSION ~

### **FELIX MENDELSSOHN** **(1809-1847)**

Symphony No. 4 in A Major, Op. 90, "Italian"  
I. Allegro vivace  
II. Andante con moto  
III. Con moto moderato  
IV. Saltarello: Presto

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The post of Music Director is endowed by The Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation.

Cameras and recording equipment are not permitted during the performance.

As a courtesy to the performers and other audience members, please turn off watch alarms and cell phones.

The Hartford Symphony Orchestra receives major support from the Greater Hartford Arts Council, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, and with support from the Department of Economic and Community Development, Connecticut Office of the Arts which also receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

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## Artist Biography

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### DEMARRE MCGILL

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Flute

**Demarre McGill** has gained international recognition as a soloist, recitalist, chamber and orchestral musician. Winner of an Avery Fisher Career Grant and the Sphinx Medal of Excellence, he has appeared as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Seattle, Pittsburgh, Dallas, Grant Park, Hawaii, San Diego, San Francisco and Baltimore symphony orchestras and, at age 15, the Chicago Symphony.

Now principal flute of the Seattle Symphony, he previously served as principal flute of the Dallas Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Florida Orchestra, and Santa Fe Opera Orchestra and as acting principal flute of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

As an educator, Demarre has performed, coached and presented master classes in South Africa, Korea, Japan, Quebec and throughout the United States. With his brother Anthony, he was a speaker and performer at the 2018 League of American Orchestras Conference. He has also served on the faculties of the National Youth Orchestra of the United States, the National Orchestral Institute (NOI) at the University of Maryland, the Orford Music Festival, and participated in Summerfest at the Curtis Institute of Music, to name of few. In August of 2019, he was named Associate Professor of Flute at Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and is an artist-faculty member of the Aspen Music Festival and School.

A founding member of The Myriad Trio, and former member of Chamber Music Society Two, Demarre has participated in the Santa Fe, Marlboro, Seattle and Stellenbosch chamber music festivals, to name a few. He is co-founder of The Art of Élan and, along with clarinetist Anthony McGill and pianist Michael McHale, founded the McGill/McHale Trio in 2014. Their first CD, "Portraits," released in August 2017, has received rave reviews, as has "Winged Creatures," his recording with Anthony McGill and the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra. In December 2019 the McGill/McHale Trio performed at New York City's 92nd Street Y, and in March 2020 at the National Gallery in Washington D.C., in Danville KY, Ames IA and Tulsa OK.

Media credits include appearances on PBS's Live from Lincoln Center, A & E Network's The Gifted Ones, NBC's Today Show, NBC Nightly News, and, with his brother Anthony when they were teenagers, on Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood.

A native of Chicago, Demarre McGill began studying flute at age 7 and later, until he left Chicago, was a student of Susan Levitin. He attended the Merit School, was a member of the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra and went on to study at The Curtis Institute of Music and The Juilliard School where he studied with Jeffrey Khaner and Julius Baker.

Demarre McGill can be heard on Cedille Records, Seattle Symphony Media and Angel Records.

Mr. McGill is represented by ACM 360 Artists

[www.acm360artists.com](http://www.acm360artists.com)



### FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

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Selections from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Op. 61

**World Premiere:** *October 14, 1843*

**Most Recent HSO Performance:** *January 9, 2014*

**Instrumentation:** *2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba (ophecleide) timpani, triangle, cymbals and strings: violin I, violin II, viola, cello, and bass*

**Duration:** 20'

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### Selections from the Incidental Music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Op. 61 (1842)

#### Felix Mendelssohn

**(Born February 3, 1809 in Hamburg Died November 4, 1847 in Leipzig)**

Berlin in the 1820s was a populous, densely packed city with few open spaces, "a city without lungs," wrote the art historian Karl Scheffler. Abraham Mendelssohn, father of Felix and a wealthy banker, was one of those who could afford to live beyond the city gates, where the open country made life more pleasant. The Mendelssohn home was a mansion, a small palace really, set on ten verdant acres. The residence boasted a hall for theatrical productions, while the garden house was arranged so that its large interior could be used for concerts with an audience of several hundred. There were, in fact, regular Sunday afternoon musicales in the Mendelssohn household, with Felix and his older sister, Fanny, being regular participants. (It was for these events that Mendelssohn composed and — a luxury rare among composers — heard his early music performed immediately, including the dozen lovely Symphonies for Strings.) Also on the grounds was a beautiful garden, a magical place for young Felix, where the warm days of summer were spent reading and dreaming. In later years, he told his friend the English composer William Sterndale Bennett about an evening in July 1826, "It was in that garden one night that I encountered Shakespeare."

Felix and Fanny were enamored in those years of reading the works of Shakespeare, who, next to the arch-Romantic Jean-Paul, was their favorite writer. Shakespeare's plays had been appearing in excellent German translations by Ludwig Tieck and August Schlegel (father Abraham's brother-in-law) since the turn of the century, and the young Mendelssohns particularly enjoyed the wondrous fantasy world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The play inspired the already accomplished budding composer, and plans began to stir in his imagination. Early in July, he wrote in a letter, "I have grown accustomed to composing in our garden. Today or tomorrow I am going to dream there [the music to accompany] *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*. This is, however, an enormous audacity...." Within a few days, however, he had embarked on his "audacity," and was writing an Overture to the play. By August 6th, the work was done. On November 19th, Felix and Fanny played the original piano duet version of the score on one of their Sunday musicales, and a private orchestral performance followed before the end of the year. In February, the work was first played publicly in Stettin. It immediately garnered a success that has never waned.

By 1842, Mendelssohn was the most famous musician in Europe and in demand everywhere. He was director of the superb Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig, a regular visitor to England, and Kapellmeister to King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia in Berlin. For Mendelssohn's Berlin duties, Friedrich required incidental music for several new productions at the Royal Theater, including Sophocles' *Oedipus* and *Antigone*, Racine's *Athalie* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This last would, of course, include the celebrated Overture which Mendelssohn had written when he was seventeen, exactly half his age in 1842. He composed the twelve additional

numbers of the incidental music the following spring, creating a perfect match for the inspiration and style of the Overture. The premiere of the new production in November was an enormous triumph.

The *Entr'acte/Intermezzo* to Act III is a swift and agitated piece that depicts the desperation of Shakespeare's pairs of lovers caused by a magic spell that has made one of the men fall in love with the wrong woman; the movement concludes with a bumptious country dance to accompany the entry of the Rustics whose style recalls moments from *Der Freischütz* by Mendelssohn's friend, Carl Maria von Weber.

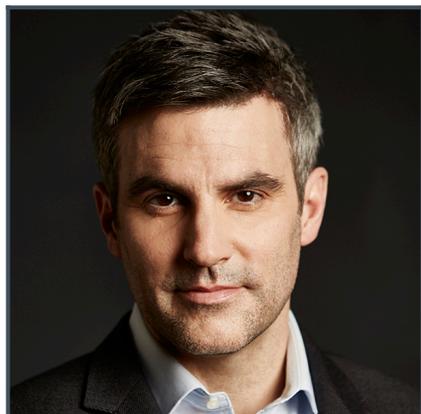
The *Nocturne* evokes the magic slumber of the lovers in the moonlit forest in Act III, Scene 2 through the burnished sonorities of horns and bassoons.

The *Scherzo*, the *Entr'acte* to Act II, is the music that, in the words of Sir George Grove, "brought the fairies into the orchestra and fixed them there." Its winsome grace and incandescent sonorities defined in large part the idea of delicacy in music, and there has never been another major composer (only Saint-Saëns and Berlioz come close) who was so well able to conjure exactly this mood in his works.

The majestic *Wedding March*, the *Entr'acte* to Act V, accompanies the festive triple wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta, Demetrius and Helena, and Lysander and Hermia.

Of this beautiful music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Charles O'Connell wrote, "There is a magic in it ... an elfin gaiety, a diaphanous delicacy, an ethereal quality compounded of dew and honey and the nectar of flowers, the scents of flowers on warm midnight airs, the rhythm of flowers and tiny feet dancing 'neath the towering blades of grass. There are pranks and clowning, true love and black magic, pathos and the pleasant, impossible conceits of a poet's imagination."

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## KEVIN PUTS (b. 1972)

Flute Concerto

Kevin Puts Photo © by David White

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**World Premiere:** *August 2, 2013*

**Most Recent HSO Performance:** *This is the HSO's first performance of this work.*

**Instrumentation:** *Piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, percussion, and strings: violin I, violin II, viola, cello, and bass*

**Duration:** 23'

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## Flute Concerto (2013)

Kevin Puts

(Born January 3, 1972 in St. Louis)

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Kevin Puts, born on January 3, 1972 in St. Louis, received his bachelor's degree from the Eastman School of Music (1994), his master's degree from Yale (1996), and his doctorate from Eastman (1999); his composition teachers have included Jacob Druckman, Joseph Schwantner, Christopher Rouse, Samuel Adler and David Burge. He also participated in the 1996 Tanglewood Festival Fellowship Program, where he worked with Bernard Rands and William Bolcom. Puts taught at the University of Texas at Austin from 1999 until the fall of 2006, when he joined the faculty of the Peabody Institute in Baltimore; he is also Director of the Minnesota Orchestra Composer's Institute. Kevin Puts has accumulated an impressive array of distinctions: the Pulitzer Prize in Music for his acclaimed opera *Silent Night*, based on the 2005 French film *Joyeux Noël* and premiered by Minnesota Opera in November 2012; from 1996 to 1999, he served concurrently as Composer-in-Residence with the California Symphony (which premiered three of his works) and Young Concert Artists, Inc. in New York; he has received commissions from the National Symphony Orchestra, Boston Pops, Minnesota Orchestra, Pacific Symphony Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Aspen Music Festival, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players, Eroica Trio, Ying Quartet and other noted ensembles and organizations; he was the first undergraduate to be awarded the Charles Ives Scholarship by the American Academy of Arts and Letters; he has received grants and fellowships from BMI, ASCAP, Tanglewood, the Hanson Institute for American Music and the Guggenheim Foundation, as well as the Benjamin H. Danks Award for Excellence in Orchestral Composition from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Barlow International Prize for Orchestral Music; and in 2007 he was Composer-in-Residence with both the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival and Fort Worth Symphony. His most recent opera is an adaptation of Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*, co-commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera and Philadelphia Orchestra, is slated for premiere in 2022 starring Renée Fleming, Joyce DiDonato and Kelli O'Hara.

Puts wrote that his Flute Concerto, composed in 2013 for the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in California, "opens with a melody I have had swimming around in my head for more than half a lifetime now, something I began singing to myself in college and for which I had never found appropriate context. Built on a simple three-note motive, the theme is lyrical and easy to remember but somewhat irregular rhythmically at the same time.

"The second movement was written during a period in which I was rather obsessed with the second movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21, K. 467, often referred to as the 'Elvira Madigan Concerto' due to its use in the eponymously titled film of the 1970s. What Mozart could evoke with a major chord repeated in triplets, a simple bass-line played pizzicato, and a melody floating above is mind-boggling and humbling to me. Nonetheless, I decided to enter into this hallowed environment, and, in a sense, to speak from within it in my own voice.

"Rhythm drives the third movement, whose main ideas are drawn from the main theme of the first movement and culminate in a highly energetic dialogue between the soloist and a small, contrapuntal band of winds, brass and percussion."

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### **FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)**

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Symphony No. 4 in A Major, Op. 90, "Italian"

**World Premiere:** May 13, 1833

**Most Recent HSO Performance:** April 15, 2013

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings: violin I, violin II, viola, cello, and bass

**Duration:** 27'

## Symphony No. 4 in A major, Op. 90, "Italian" (1831-1833, revised 1834-1837)

Felix Mendelssohn

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Felix Mendelssohn never learned how to take it easy. As a boy, he was awakened at 5:00 every morning to begin a full day of private tutelage, exercise, social instruction and family activities — the busy regimen he learned as a child shaped the rest of his brief life. Inactivity was anathema. Two months of bed rest occasioned by a leg injury in London in 1829 were more painful for the confinement they necessitated than for the medical condition.

Throughout his days, Mendelssohn preferred travel to quiet life at home: he trooped across Europe, from Vienna to Wales, from Hamburg to Naples, and was welcomed and admired at every stop. Some of his journeys inspired music — the first of his ten trips to Great Britain, for example, which included a walking tour of Scotland (during which he enjoyed "a half-hour of inconsequential conversation" with Sir Walter Scott), gave rise to the "Scottish" Symphony and the *Hebrides Overture*.

When he was 21, Mendelssohn embarked on an extensive grand tour of the Continent. He met Chopin and Liszt in Paris, painted the breathtaking vistas of Switzerland, and marveled at the artistic riches (and grumbled about the inhospitable treatment by the coachmen and innkeepers) of Italy. "The land where the lemon trees blossom," as his friend Goethe described sunny Italy, stirred him so deeply that he began a musical work there in 1831 based on his impressions of Rome, Naples and the other cities he visited. The composition of this "Italian" Symphony, as he always called it, caused him much difficulty, however, and he had trouble bringing all of the movements to completion. "For the slow movement I have not yet found anything exactly right, and I think I must put it off for Naples," he wrote from Rome to his sister Fanny. The spur to finish the work came in the form of a commission for a symphony from the Philharmonic Society of London that caused Mendelssohn to gather up his sketches and complete the task.

The new Symphony was met with immediate acclaim at its premiere on May 13, 1833 in London, and was one of the series of British successes that helped enshrine Mendelssohn in the English pantheon of 19th-century musical genius as Queen Victoria's favorite composer. Mendelssohn, however, was not completely satisfied with the original version of the Symphony, and he refused to allow its publication. He tinkered with it again several years later, paying special attention to the finale, but never felt the work to be perfected. It was only after his death that the score was published and became widely available. Despite Mendelssohn's misgivings, the "Italian" Symphony has become one of the most enduring and popular pieces in the orchestral repertory, declared to be virtually perfect by the demanding British critic and scholar Sir Donald Tovey; it was a special favorite of that cantankerous curmudgeon and one-time music critic, George Bernard Shaw.

Mendelssohn cast his "Italian" Symphony in the traditional four movements. The opening movement takes an exuberant, leaping melody initiated by the violins as its principal subject and a quieter, playful strain led by the clarinets as its subsidiary theme. The intricately contrapuntal development section is largely based on a precise, staccato theme of darker emotional hue but also refers to motives from the main theme. A full recapitulation of the exposition's materials ensues before the movement ends with a coda that recalls the staccato theme from the development. The *Andante*, in the style of a slow march, may have been inspired by a religious procession that Mendelssohn saw in the streets of Naples, but it also evokes the chorale prelude sung by the Two Armed Men in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. The third movement, the gentlest of dances, is in the form of a minuet/scherzo whose central trio utilizes the burnished sonorities of bassoons and horns. The finale turns, surprisingly, to a tempestuous minor key for an exuberant and mercurial dance modeled on the whirling *saltarello* that Mendelssohn heard in Rome.