

Advance Program Notes

Brooklyn Rider with Maeve Gilchrist Sunday, March 15, 2020, 4 PM

These Advance Program Notes are provided online for our patrons who like to read about performances ahead of time. Printed programs will be provided to patrons at the performances. Programs are subject to change.

Brooklyn Rider

Johnny Gandelsman, violin Colin Jacobsen, violin Nicholas Cords, viola Michael Nicolas, cello

Maeve Gilchrist

Celtic harp

Program to be announced from the stage

No intermission

This performance is supported in part by gifts from Mr. Earving L. Blythe and Mrs. Elizabeth W. Blythe and Mr. David E. Reemsnyder and Mrs. Judith H. Reemsnyder.

A Note About Tonight's Program

In this groundbreaking new collaboration, Brooklyn Rider ("a string quartet of boundless imagination" —NPR Music), and Celtic harp virtuoso Maeve Gilchrist ("a phenomenal harpist who makes her instrument ring with unparalleled purity" —Dirty Linen) come together to celebrate the roots and branches of Celtic music as both an ancient tradition and a living art form. Drawing from newly imagined settings of traditional Irish repertoire, excerpts from Gilchrist's Pastures Red for Celtic harp and string quartet and inspired by Samuel Beckett's novel Watts, as well as material from her album The Harpweaver, this evening will bring together the string quartet and the emblem of ancient Ireland in a handshake between two traditions that is both timeless and breathtakingly new. Brooklyn Rider will also perform selections from their signature repertoire, including two works from their recent commissioning project Healing Modes—Indian-American composer Reena Esmail's Zeher and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Caroline Shaw's Schisma—as well as Colin Jacobsen's rollicking take on the fiddling tradition native to this side of the Atlantic in his bluegrass-infused composition Sheriff's Lied, Sheriff's Freude.

Program Notes

ZEHER (POISON) Reena Esmail

In September 2018 I developed an infection in my throat that wouldn't subside. For two weeks, it became increasingly difficult to swallow, to breathe, and especially to speak. During this time of intense, painful silence, I thought about what this loss of voice represented for me. Of how many times in my life I had been rendered voiceless—either by others or by my own doing. Healing, in this case, was not about enduring the pain, but about releasing the poison I have always swallowed—that didn't belong to me. It was only when I felt myself begin to release that poisonous energy that I felt the physical infection begin to subside.

This piece was conceived during those dark weeks, and is simply about that release. It uses two incredibly beautiful Hindustani *ragas*: the dark and mysterious *Todi* and the mournful *Bhimpalas*. While working on this piece, I was also working on a setting of a beautiful Hafiz poem which ends "When the violin can forgive / every hurt caused by others / the heart starts singing." That is very much the spirit of this piece, too.

-Reena Esmail

Zeher (Poison) generously commissioned for Brooklyn Rider by Judy Evnin First performance: November 2, 2018, in Tempe, Arizona

SCHISMA Caroline Shaw

Schisma is a reference to the phrase "in the cleft of the rock," which appears in many scriptures including the Song of Solomon and Isaiah. In the Book of Exodus (33:22), there is a beautiful line that reads, "I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by." It is essentially a promise of safety, of a makeshift refuge within a crack in something as hard and unforgiving as mountain rock, until the danger has passed. It is a kind of nest, a home. I have always felt that Beethoven's Heiliger Dankgesang (third movement of op. 132) uses a nest-like architecture in a unique and profound way. The return of the dance-like Neue Kraft fühlend section always feels like a warm homecoming, a place of hope and shelter and deep comfort. The choice to title this piece with the modern Greek word schisma (a translation of the Hebrew , or "cleft") is a reference to the islands in today's Greece, which have become harsh refugee camps for Syrians seeking asylum from the war. It also points to the nature of war, of the break between peoples, and of the search for hope and new growth within the breaks and crevices.

—Caroline Shaw

Schisma commissioned for Brooklyn Rider by Madeline Island Chamber Music in honor of Caroline Marshall First performance: June 29, 2018, in Madeline Island, Wisconsin

SHERIFF'S LEID, SHERIFF'S FREUDE Colin Jacobsen

Sheriff's Leid, Sherriff's Freude (Sheriff's Sadness, Sheriff's Joy) was written in honor of Brooklyn Rider's very own Sheriff, the violist Nicholas Cords. Every group needs one—he lays down the law, keeps us on track, and owns a badge that proves he has the authority to do so! The piece grew out of a week spent playing music with Martin Hayes, the great Irish fiddler, working on Dvořák's American Quartet and admiration for one of America's own homegrown fiddle styles: bluegrass.

Biographies

BROOKLYN RIDER
Johnny Gandelsman, violin
Colin Jacobsen, violin
Nicholas Cords, viola
Michael Nicolas, cello

Hailed as "the future of chamber music" (Strings), the veteran string quartet Brooklyn Rider presents eclectic repertoire and gripping performances that continue to draw rave reviews from classical, world, and rock critics alike. NPR credits Brooklyn Rider with "recreating the 300-year-old form of string quartet as a vital and creative 21st-century ensemble."

In fall 2018 Brooklyn Rider released *Dreamers* on Sony Music Masterworks with celebrated Mexican jazz vocalist Magos Herrera. The recording includes gems of the Ibero-American songbook, as well as pieces written to texts by Octavio Paz, Rubén Darío, and Federico García Lorca—all reimagined by arrangers, including Jaques Morelenbaum, Gonzalo Grau, Diego Schissi, Guillermo Klein, and Brooklyn Rider's own Colin Jacobsen. The tour to support the album began at New York City's Jazz at Lincoln Center. Brooklyn Rider also recently debuted its *Healing Modes* project, which presents Beethoven's op. 132 in its entirety alongside five compact new commissions exploring the subject of healing from a wide range of historical and cultural perspectives. Composers include Reena Esmail, Gabriela Lena Frank, Matana Roberts, and recent Pulitzer Prize winners Caroline Shaw and Du Yun.

To start the 2017-2018 season Brooklyn Rider released *Spontaneous Symbols* on Johnny Gandelsman's In a Circle Records label. The album featured new quartet music by Tyondai Braxton, Evan Ziporyn, Paula Matthusen, Kyle Sanna, and Brooklyn Rider violinist Colin Jacobsen. Works from that recording were also featured in live performance for *Some of a Thousand Words*, the ensemble's recent collaboration with choreographer Brian Brooks and former New York City Ballet prima ballerina Wendy Whelan. An intimate series of duets and solos in which the quartet's live onstage music is a dynamic and central creative component, *Some of a Thousand Words* was featured at the 2016 Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival before two U.S. tours, including a week-long run at New York City's Joyce Theater. The quartet also teamed up with banjoist Béla Fleck—with whom it appeared on two different albums, 2017's *Juno Concerto* and 2013's *The Impostor*—for concerts in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Colorado, and Montana. Other recent highlights include partnering with two instrumentalists who are at the forefront of their respective genres: jazz saxophonist Joshua Redman and Irish fiddle master Martin Hayes. The tours with Redman and Hayes were the product of multi-season collaborations that will continue and include new recordings with both artists. Balancing these collaborations was a full schedule of quartet performances across the U.S., as well as in the U.K., Sweden, and Germany.

During the 2016-2017 season Brooklyn Rider released an album entitled *so many things* on Naïve Records with Swedish mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter, comprising music by Colin Jacobsen, Caroline Shaw, John Adams, Nico Muhly, Björk, Sting, Kate Bush, and Elvis Costello, among others. The group toured material from the album and more with von Otter in the U.S. and Europe, including stops at Carnegie Hall and the Opernhaus Zürich. Additionally, Brooklyn Rider performed Philip Glass's String Quartet no. 7, furthering a relationship with the iconic American composer that began with 2011's much-praised *Brooklyn Rider Plays Philip Glass* and will continue with the upcoming album release of Glass's recent quartets on the composer's Orange Mountain Music label.

In 2015 the group celebrated its 10th anniversary with the groundbreaking multi-disciplinary project *Brooklyn Rider Almanac*, for which it recorded and toured 15 specially commissioned works, each inspired by a different artistic muse. Other recording projects include the quartet's eclectic debut recording in 2008, *Passport*, followed by *Dominant Curve* in 2010, *Seven Steps* in 2012, and *A Walking Fire* in 2013. In 2016 Brooklyn Rider released *The Fiction Issue* with singer-songwriter Gabriel Kahane, the title track of which is a Kahane composition that was premiered in 2012 at Carnegie Hall by Kahane, Brooklyn Rider, and Shara Nova. A long-standing relationship between Brooklyn Rider and Iranian kamancheh player Kayhan Kalhor resulted in the much-praised 2008 recording *Silent City*.

Biographies, continued

MAEVE GILCHRIST, harpist and composer

Described by one critic as "a phenomenal harp player who can make her instrument ring with unparalleled purity," Maeve Gilchrist has taken the Celtic (lever) harp to new levels of performance and visibility.

Born and raised in Edinburgh, Scotland, and currently based in Brooklyn, New York, Gilchrist's innovative approach to her instrument stretches its harmonic limits and improvisational possibilities. She is as at home as a soloist with an internationally renowned orchestra as she is playing with a traditional Irish folk group or using electronic augmentation in a more contemporary, improvisatory setting.

Gilchrist tours internationally as a band leader and maintains a number of collaborations, including the progressive folk quartet DuoDuo (featuring percussive dancer Nic Gareiss, cellist Natalie Haas, and Yann Falquet of Quebecois super-group Genticorum) and a more electronics-based project with Viktor Krauss. Gilchrist is a member of the Irish Music Network-commissioned Edges of Light quartet, a multidisciplinary group featuring piper David Power, dancer Colin Dunne, and fiddler Tola Custy. She is also a member of the prestigious Silkroad Ensemble. She has appeared at such major music events as Celtic Connections in Glasgow, Tanglewood Jazz Festival, the World Harp Congress in Amsterdam, and the historic opening of the Scottish Parliament. She has played with such luminaries as Yo-Yo Ma, Esperanza Spalding, Tony Trishka, Ambrose Akinmusire, Darol Anger, and Kathy Mattea.

Gilchrist has released five albums to date, including her most recent recording, *Vignette*, on Adventure Records with bassist Viktor Krauss. On her own label, her solo *Ostinato Project* is a beguiling exploration of the possibilities of her instrument. In 2018 Gilchrist was a featured soloist on the Dreamworks blockbuster movie soundtrack, *How to Tame Your Dragon: The Hidden World*.

Gilchrist was the first lever harpist to be employed as an instructor by her alma mater, Berklee College of Music in Boston, where she taught for five years before switching to being a visiting artist in 2018. She has written several instructional books published by Hal Leonard Music. She is also an in-demand composer and arranger, with past commissions including a groundbreaking concerto for lever harp and symphony orchestra co-written with North Carolina-based composer Luke Benton, and most recently a new piece for harp and string quartet premiered at the Edinburgh International Harp festival last spring. Gilchrist is the the co-artistic director of the new Celtic Roots and Branches Festival (launched in Rockport, Massachusetts, last summer) and the assistant music director of WGBH's *Christmas Celtic Sojourn*.

Go Deeper

How does the musicians' chosen repertoire both rekindle and transcend "traditional" Celtic music as you know it? Where did you hear contemporary techniques, styles, and compositional elements interrelating with older Celtic music forms?

In the Galleries

Now on View FIERCE WOMEN Chakaia Booker, Guerrilla Girls, Jenny Holzer, Marilyn Minter, and Rozeal Through Saturday, April 25, 2020 All galleries

This suite of one-person exhibitions by some of the most acclaimed artists of our era presents exemplary works of art that are formidable, impactful, and "fierce" in both their dramatic visual power and the potency of ideas presented. Spanning the latter part of the 20th century up to the present time, the exhibition features sculpture, painting, works on paper, digital prints, and video, all of which give voice to a range of critical issues in our world today. Beginning with the historical precedent of the Guerrilla Girls, a notorious (and still active) collective of activist artists, the exhibition continues with works by the internationally acclaimed artist Jenny Holzer, then proceeds up to the present with an enthralling large-scale video installation by Marilyn Minter. Ranging from Holzer's iconic LED signs to Chakaia Booker's audacious rubber tire compositions or Rozeal's fantastical, cross-cultural mashups, these artists take on gender and racial inequality, the politics of identity, and a panoply of injustices surrounding power, morality, and corruption in our world.

The Corset Unlaced: A Conversation with Valerie Steele, Ph.D.

Friday, March 20, 2020

Doors: 4 PM | Event: 4:30 PM

Cube

Join us as Valerie Steele, author, editor, and director and chief curator of The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, offers a closer look at one of the world's most influential garments: the corset.

Free; register through the box office.

GALLERY HOURS

Monday-Friday, 10 AM-5:30 PM Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM

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