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Senior Projects Spring 2016

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

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Spring 2016

## 21st Century Orchestral Studies

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*Bard College*

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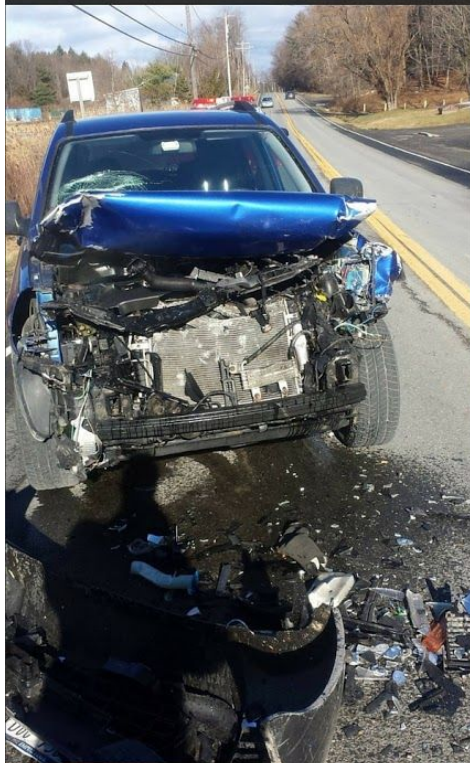
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# 21ST CENTURY ORCHESTRAL STUDIES:

A Senior Concert by  
Jackson McKinnon and Paul Sylvester

feat. Bard Conservatory, Music Department, and APS musicians



May 18th in  
Olin Hall  
8:00 p.m.



**Program:**

'Poltergeist'

Daniel Zlatkin '16

Appalachian Spring  
Suite for 13 Instruments

Aaron Copland  
(1900-1990)

*-Intermission-*

'Sportage'\*

Paul Sylvester '16

*Computer/Live mix - Paul Sylvester*

Piano Concerto No. 2 in F, Op. 102

Dmitri Shostakovich  
(1906-1975)

- I *Allegro*
- II *Andante*
- III *Allegro*

*Conductor/Pianist - Jackson McKinnon*

\* = debut performance

## *Poltergeist*

Daniel Zlatkin '16

One of my favorite compositions by Beethoven is his King Stephen Overture. I love how Beethoven is not afraid to be quirky, humorous, and extreme in the music. In *Poltergeist*, I sought to write an orchestra piece that incorporates similar aspects, although with a darker twist. Themes of horror and black comedy are aesthetically significant to me.

- Zlatkin

## *Appalachian Spring*

Aaron Copland

In 1942, the year the piece was commissioned, Aaron Copland had started to truly establish himself as an “americana” composer. The 1930’s saw a rapid influx in expressive media and mediums and Copland started composing film scores, radio show broadcasts, and an already established older form of expression, the ballet. After Copland had exemplified his versatility in musical language and especially after the raving reviews of his ballet score to “Billy the Kid,” Martha Graham of the Martha Graham Dance Company and Elizabeth Coolidge of the Coolidge Foundation approached Copland about composing a ballet on an “american theme.” After taking a little over a year to finish the work, Martha Graham set the music to a story of springtime jubilation and celebration in 19th Century American pioneer life after the completion of a farmhouse in Pennsylvania. This work touches on aspects of the sublime from personal religious meditation to grandiose landscapes of rural Pennsylvania and even to moments of profound community manifesting in a barn dance.

- McKinnon

## *Sportage*

Paul Sylvester '16

So last year (December 13th, 2014) I got into my first real car accident. I was headed down 9G returning to Bard from a night in Albany with my two friends, and I rear ended someone making a turn and totaled my car. The car was a 2008 Kia Sportage. In an attempt to emulate the weird feelings going through me that day, I wrote this piece of

music for orchestra and field/found recordings. I didn't start writing until May 2015, but wrote it all in 6 days in a creative burst. I spent about 24 hours every day in the library plugging in a certain structure/list of constraints that I set for myself in the outset. The car was totaled at 11am the piece goes through 11 key areas. The winds have a conversation. The strings lay the foundation. yada yada. Since this was my first accident, and I took vyvanse for the first time right before the drive, I was feeling light, airy, and anxious. I was in a state of shock the whole day. I couldn't wrap my head around what was happening, even though it seemed like such a simple thing. People get in accidents all the time, I had no idea why I was feeling what I was.

- Sylvester

## Piano Concerto No. 2

Dmitri Shostakovich

Shostakovich's Second Piano Concerto is a rare glimpse into the child-like character of Dmitri's personality. Shostakovich is best known for his avant-garde and rebellious approach to music especially during the tyranny of Stalin, writing music that almost got him killed several times over. But this concerto, much like Schumann's Kinderszenen, seems to be a retrospective exercise in a fully grown adult returning to the sounds and characters of their childhood. This is made obvious by Shostakovich's desires and initial reasons for writing the piece. The concerto was written for his son, Maxim, for his graduation from the Moscow Conservatory. All throughout the work there are jokes, schizophrenic episodes, and moments of pure revelation that truly embody an adult's view of children. Shostakovich even includes basic piano themes and exercises that he had used as a teaching tool for his son while he was growing up and learning piano. The two most notable of which are found in the bookending movements. In the first, after a cute introductory dance between the piano and the woodwinds, a marching theme enters in pure immature joy. The second of which is actually a main theme in the third movement. Many pianists grow up learning Hanon as a technical exercise and Shostakovich takes it a step further and uses the Hanon exercise as a theme with the hands in respective sixths to each other rather than just playing the same notes in each hand. A piece of pure charm and powerful simplicity, this concerto has been loved by many across the globe since its debut in 1957. It has even been used by Disney in their iconic classical music cartoon, Fantasia.

- McKinnon

## **Biographies**

*Jackson McKinnon* '16, born in 1993 in Lubbock, TX, studies piano performance with a concentration in orchestral and choral conducting in the Music Department at Bard College. He will be joining the Graduate Choral Conducting Program in the Bard Conservatory of Music to continue studying with his conducting mentor, James Bagwell, after the completion of his undergraduate degree this semester. Music has always been an integral part of his life, but it was not until the age of 16 that he found the piano and started taking lessons. He fell in love with classical music at 17 and decided to devote his life to sharing it with others. Since then, Jackson has studied with Christopher Oldfather of the Manhattan School of Music, Paul Whitley of John Brown University, Tatjana Rankovic, Bruno Canino, and currently studies with his piano mentor and Bard faculty member, Blair McMillen.

*Paul Sylvester* '16, was born in 1994 on Long Island. He has studied Composition at Bard College since 2012 with Kyle Gann, Alexander Bonus and Matt Sargent. His musical interests include, but in no way are limited to: interaction of computer/electronic rhythm and human rhythm, integration of nonclassical musics into the western canon, rhythmic precision, and making silly ass music He is a senior at Bard, and this piece counts for the second half of his senior project in Music Composition and Experimental Humanities. His first half was a 45 minute live film scoring of an early adaptation of Alice in Wonderland named Alice in Wonderland (1915).

*Daniel Zlatkin's* ('16) music has been played by the Da Capo Chamber Players, The Orchestra Now, the Bard Conservatory Orchestra, and members of the New Haven Symphony. He performs regularly as a cellist, and has played with groups including the American Symphony Orchestra, New York Youth Symphony, and Contemporaneous. He is committed to musical outreach, and has brought a team of musicians to Cali, Colombia to teach youth for over three years. He currently attends the Bard Conservatory and Bard College, where he studies composition with Joan Tower and George Tsontakis, cello with Peter Wiley, and political studies.

## The Orchestra

### Violin I

Sergio Carleo, *Concertmaster*  
Rachel Nalecz  
Eliot Roske

### Violin II

Alex Van der Veen  
Labeeby Marie  
Luke Koenig

### Viola

Joe Burke  
Roger Sweet  
Andrew Carlson  
Yushi Pan

### Cello

Chris Beroes-Haigis  
Stanley Moore  
Obadiah Wright

### Double Bass

John Stajduhar  
David Mercier

### Piccolo

Emma Neiman

### Flute

Kelly Herrmann

### Oboe

Amy Cassiere  
Alessandro Cirafici

### Clarinet

Jingyu Mao  
Caitlin Beare

### Bassoon

Adam Romey

### Trumpet

Matyas Fieszl

### Horn

Laszlo Csabay

### Trombone

Nick Reilingh  
Hsiao-Fang Lin

### Tuba

Benjamin Reusch

Please join us all in the atrium for a reception after the show!

Special thanks to Paul and Jackson's Senior Board members:  
Blair McMillen, James Bagwell, Peter Laki, Alex Bonus, Kyle Gann, Matt Sargent,  
and Laura Kunreuther