

Fanfare For The Women

Saturday, August 15, 2020 · 7:30 p.m.

Libby Larsen

(B.1950)

Fanfare for the Women

Dr. John Charles Thomas, trumpet

Multimedia Tribute to Dame Ethel Smyth

Leif Bjaland, narrator

Cécile Chaminade

(1857-1944)

Concertino

Kim Collins, flute

Dr. William Braun, piano

Maria Theresia von Paradis

(1759-1824)

Sicilienne

Alyce Cognetta Bertz, violin

Joseph Jacovino, piano

Sharon Ruchman

(B.1949)

Cello and Piano Sonata, "Exultation"

Second Movement

Sharon Ruchman, piano

Mary Costanza, cello

Sharon Ruchman

(B.1949)

Tango (Slow)

Milonga

Sharon Ruchman, piano

Mary Costanza, cello

Idabelle Firestone

(1874-1954)

If I Could Tell You

Robert Cinnante, tenor

Dr. Mijin Choi, piano

Dr. John Charles Thomas

Dr. John Charles Thomas has performed in the premieres of works in both Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, and appeared in Europe, Asia, Canada, Latin America and the U.S. as soloist and chamber musician. He has played under many of the great conductors, including Riccardo Muti, Lorin Maazel, Sir Colin Davis, Charles Dutoit, Zubin Mehta, Krzysztof Penderecki, Alan Gilbert and Mstislav Rostropovich. Dr. Thomas is the assistant principal trumpet of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, principal trumpet with the Ridgefield and Waterbury Symphonies (Connecticut), and the associate principal trumpet of the Queens Symphony (NYC). He has performed frequently with the New York Philharmonic, Harrisburg Symphony and various Broadway shows. He has appeared with L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, American Symphony, Solisti New York, Trier Bach Soloists (Germany), Vienna Symphony, Bermuda Philharmonic, San Jose and San Francisco Symphonies. He was member of the Grammy Award winning Chestnut Brass Company for over 20 years. As a soloist, his appearances have included performances of Bach's "Brandenburg Concerto No. 2", Copland's "Quiet City", and concertos by Vivaldi, Haydn and Arutunian, among others.

Dr. Thomas teaches trumpet and jazz studies at the Hartt School, and is the Artist/Teacher of Classical Trumpet at the University of Rhode Island.



Leif Bjaland

Leif Bjaland served as the Artistic Director/Conductor of the Sarasota Orchestra from 1997 to 2012, during which time the orchestra experienced unprecedented artistic growth. As Artistic Advisor to The Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra for the last three seasons, he conducted concerts, led the orchestra on its first statewide tour and administered the search for a new music director.



A popular and active guest conductor, Mr. Bjaland made his debut at the Ravinia Festival conducting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in a program entitled "Bernstein on Broadway" also involving soloists, chorus and dancers, and his first CSO Symphony Hall performance sharing the stage with Leonard Bernstein. He has appeared with the San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, Florida Philharmonic, Louisiana Philharmonic and the symphony orchestras of Fort Worth, Nashville, Detroit, Rochester, Utah, Madison, San Jose, Rhode Island, Virginia, Harrisburg, Colorado, Long Beach, and New World Symphony. As Music Director of the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra, Bjaland has received enormous enthusiasm and critical praise for his performances and imaginative programming. This included the 2019 premiere of a multi-media program called "The American Sound", which incorporated rare historic footage of New York City at the turn of the century, and also film and spoken commentary of Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, and Aaron Copland. Bjaland is an enthusiastic proponent of music education, having taught for several summers in Venezuela as part of the country's El Sistema program. He received his Master's degree in conducting from The University of Michigan, where he studied with Gustav Meier, and was a student of Leonard Bernstein and Michael Tilson Thomas at the Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute.

Bjaland has served as the Music Director & Conductor of the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra since the 1994-1995 season.

Kim Collins

Kim Collins' flexibility with varied roles, sensitivity and passion for the flute have allowed her to have a multi-faceted career as a performing artist. She is Principal Flutist with Waterbury Symphony Orchestra, with which she has also appeared as soloist on several occasions. She has also performed and recorded with the Grammy-Award winning Albany Symphony, as well as with the Hartford, New Haven, Springfield, and Vermont Symphony Orchestras. Ms. Collin's endeavors have taken her on tour as both soloist and orchestral player throughout the United States, Europe, China, and the Middle East.



Equally at home “in the pit,” Collins has performed with Wicked on Broadway as well as with touring Broadway shows at venues throughout Connecticut. Pit playing has afforded her the added challenge of performing on a wide variety of flutes including recorders, whistles, Asian flutes and pan pipes. She has been heard at Connecticut arenas performing with artists such as Marie Osmond, Josh Groban, Deep Purple, Kansas, LeAnn Rimes, Peter Cetera, Clay Aiken, The Irish Tenors, Il Divo, Peter Frampton, Yes, and Brian Wilson.

Ms. Collins graduated from the Hartt School, where she also served on the faculty of the Community Division. She has held additional faculty positions at Choate Rosemary Hall, Fairfield University, the Neighborhood School of Music, and Southern Connecticut State University. She currently teaches from her home studio in South Glastonbury and is the Music Librarian for the Springfield Symphony Orchestra.

Dr. William Braun

Dr. William Braun has appeared as concerto soloist with the New World Symphony in Miami and the Florida West Coast Symphony (Sarasota) on multiple occasions. He has been the pianist of the New Haven Symphony for thirty-three years, performing as soloist in concertos by Ròzsa, Lambert and Gershwin and has appeared frequently as a pianist for the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra. For twenty years he was the pianist of the Wall Street Chamber Players, and he has taught piano at Wesleyan University since 1984.



Dr. Braun has also written more than three hundred articles for Opera News magazine, including cover profiles of John Adams, Ian Bostridge, Thomas Adès and Nina Stemme, overviews of the operas of Michael Tippett and Giacomo Meyerbeer, and analyses of Britten's Peter Grimes and Gloriana, Verdi's Macbeth and Don Carlos, and Messiaen's Saint François d'Assise.

Dr. Braun earned his doctorate from Yale University.

Alyce Cagnetta Bertz

Alyce Cagnetta Bertz is the Concertmaster of the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra. She studied violin with Syoko Aki of the Yale School of Music and with Charles Tregor of the Hartt School of Music.

Ms. Bertz has studied chamber music with the Cleveland Quartet, the Julliard Quartet and Joseph Gingold. As a high school student she performed in Vienna, Austria at the world premier of Leonard Bernstein's "Mass". She has performed concerts at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, La Philharmonica de las Americas (Mexico), The Blossom Music Festival (Ohio), and the Waterloo Music Festival with members of the New York Philharmonic.

Ms. Bertz has been violin soloist on WQXR in New York. She has appeared as a soloist with the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, Hartt Symphony Orchestra and has been a featured soloist with the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra on numerous occasions.

As a member of the Cagnetta Trio, Ms. Bertz has appeared around New England at Cape Cod Summer Music Festival in Chatham, the Kosciuszko Foundation in New York City, Wolcott Classic Series, Whaling Church Classical Series in Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, Woodbury Chamber Music Series, and in solo recitals at Geneva Opera House in New York.

Ms. Bertz performs on an Italian violin made by Postiglione in 1869. She resides in Southbury with her husband, Gary, and teaches privately in her own studio.



Joseph Jacovino

Joseph J. Jacovino, Jr. graduated from the Hartt College of Music with a Bachelor of Music degree in Piano Performance and from the Manhattan School of Music with a Master's Degree in Music Education. He retired in 2014, after 35 years, as the Music Director at Holy Cross High School in Waterbury, where he directed the concert band, jazz band, guitar ensemble, handbell choir, piano keyboard class, and taught music theory.



Since 2000, Mr. Jacovino has been the organist/cantor/choir director at St. Rose of Lima Church in Newtown, where he has conducted numerous concerts involving the St. Rose Festival Chorus and Orchestra. In 2005 the choir traveled to Italy performing concerts in Rome, Florence, and at the Vatican.

This is his 15th season as the Music Director of the Waterbury Chorale, which is celebrating its 53rd season. In addition to 21 seasons as the Connecticut Master Chorale's accompanist, he is currently the accompanist for the Collegium at the Taft School in Watertown.

As a composer, Mr. Jacovino has written several sacred choral pieces and masses, including "Christmas at the Palace" (a tribute to the Waterbury Palace Theater), "Enshrined in the Grace of God", dedicated to Waterbury's Shrine of St. Anne, "And A Happy New Year.....With A Dash of Salsa", and "Something Beautiful for God", based upon a prayer by St. Teresa of Calcutta.

Robert Cinnante

Robert Cinnante is a community-driven arts leader with more than a decade of combined experience as a performer and arts administrator. His appointment as Executive Director of the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra, beginning May 2017, came after having served as the Statewide Director of Education & Outreach at Virginia Opera. Previously he was the General Manager of Music for Food, a musician-led initiative for hunger-relief founded by Grammy Award winning violist Kim Kashkashian, a position he held from 2013 to 2015.



Mr. Cinnante also regularly acts as a consultant to artists and arts organizations. Past clients have included Emmanuel Feldman, D'Anna Fortunato, Sir James Galway, Formosa Quartet, Benoit Rolland, Triple Helix Piano Trio, and Virginia Commonwealth University's Global Summer Institute of Music. He has also written articles and delivered lectures on a variety of topics surrounding the arts, such as arts education, audience and community engagement, and career preparation for young artists. Cinnante is a graduate of New England Conservatory in Boston, MA where he received a Bachelor and Master of Music, studying with Vinson Cole and Patricia Misslin.



Dr. Mijin Choi

Dr. Mijin Choi is a versatile pianist and vocal coach, with more than a decade of experience working in the field of vocal and instrumental music. This includes having worked as a pianist and vocal coach in more than a dozen opera and opera scenes productions throughout the United States and Europe.



Dr. Choi is currently a staff pianist and vocal coach at the University of Connecticut. Prior appointments include Binghamton University, Boston University Tanglewood Institute, Fargo-Moorhead Opera, La Musica Lirica, and Franco-American Vocal Academy.

Choi holds a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Minnesota, in Collaborative Piano and Coaching, a Master of Music from the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University, with emphasis on Vocal Accompanying, and a Bachelor of Music in Piano from Kyung Hee University.



Mary Costanza

Cellist **Mary Costanza** enjoys a multifaceted career as a teacher, performer and recording artist. She has developed a thriving private studio for students of all ages and currently serves as Instructor of Cello at the Kent School and the Gunnery. Mary is also a teaching artist for the ASAP Inter-district Strings Project with the Waterbury Symphony. She previously served on the music faculty at the Hotchkiss School.



Ms. Costanza is assistant principal cello in the Greenwich Symphony Orchestra and performs with other regional ensembles such as the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, the Berkshire Lyric and the Windham Chamber Music Festival. She played for many years with the Hudson Valley Philharmonic and previously performed with the National Orchestra of New York, the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Canton Symphony. Her recording of the complete Cello Suites of J.S. Bach (MSR Classics) has received critical acclaim, including Music Web International's designation as a Recording of the Month.

Ms. Costanza holds a B.M. from the Cleveland Institute of Music (Case Western Reserve) and a M.M. from the Juilliard School, where she studied with Zara Nelsova.

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Libby Larsen

(B. 1950)

Libby Larsen (b. 24 December 1950, Wilmington, Delaware) is one of America's most performed living composers. She has created a catalogue of over 400 works spanning virtually every genre from intimate vocal and chamber music to massive orchestral works and over twelve operas. Grammy Award winning and widely recorded, including over fifty CD's of her work, she is constantly sought after for commissions and premieres by major artists, ensembles, and orchestras around the world, and has established a permanent place for her works in the concert repertory.



Larsen has been hailed as "the only English-speaking composer since Benjamin Britten who matches great verse with fine music so intelligently and expressively" (USA Today); as "a composer who has made the art of symphonic writing very much her own." (Gramophone); as "a mistress of orchestration" (Times Union); and for "assembling one of the most impressive bodies of music of our time" (Hartford Courant). Her music has been praised for its "clear textures, easily absorbed rhythms and appealing melodic contours that make singing seem the most natural expression imaginable." (Philadelphia Inquirer) "Libby Larsen has come up with a way to make contemporary opera both musically current and accessible to the average audience." (The Wall Street Journal). "Her ability to write memorable new music completely within the confines of traditional harmonic language is most impressive." (Fanfare)

As a vigorous, articulate advocate for the music and musicians of our time, in 1973 Larsen co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum, now the American Composer's Forum, which has become an invaluable aid for composers in a transitional time for American arts. A former holder of the Papamarkou Chair at John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress, Larsen has also held residencies with the Minnesota Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony and the Colorado Symphony.

Biography courtesy artist website

Dame Ethel Smyth

(1858 - 1944)

Smyth was born to a wealthy bourgeois family, daughter of Major-General John Hall Smyth and Emma Struth Smyth. Against her father's wishes she decided to pursue a musical career. In 1887 Smyth entered the Leipzig Conservatory, staying for one year only after becoming disenchanted with the tuition and staff. Remaining in Leipzig, Smyth then took harmony and counterpoint lessons with Heinrich von Herzogenberg. During this period she met many of the most significant composers of the day, including Johannes Brahms, Antonín Dvořák, Clara Schumann and Pyotr Tchaikovsky. The latter was especially encouraging, describing Smyth in his memoirs as 'one of the few women composers whom one can seriously consider to be achieving something valuable in the field of musical creation'.



Over the following decade Smyth lived and worked in several countries around Europe, gaining a breadth of experience that invested her compositions with a distinctly European character. In 1882 while in Florence, she met French American philosopher and poet Henry B. Brewster (1850–1908), who would become one of her closest friends and collaborators.

In 1890 Smyth returned to England, making her debut as a composer of orchestral music with a Serenade in D at the Crystal Palace Concerts, while her Mass in D (1893) brought her wide public recognition.

From 1893 to 1910, Smyth focused much of her creative energies on composing a series of operas, which were performed with some success in Europe and North America – a considerable achievement for a female composer at that time. In 1898, her first opera *Fantasio* was first performed in Weimar. Four years later, *Der Wald* was heard first in Berlin and then at the Royal Opera House in London. *Der Standrecht* was performed in Leipzig and Prague in 1906 before being performed in English translation as *The Wreckers* in London under the baton of Thomas Beecham in 1909. However, for each of these works Smyth had to work tirelessly to obtain performances.

From 1911 to 1913 Smyth was closely involved with the English suffragette movement led by Emmeline Pankhurst (1858–1928). One of her compositions, *The March of Women*, was adopted as the anthem to The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). She was one of more than 100 feminists arrested for breaking windows in March 1912, for which she served two months in Holloway Prison. When her friend Thomas Beecham paid her a visit, he found her directing a memorable performance of *The March of the Women*, sung by fellow suffragettes.

During the First World War the suffragette movement suspended its activities and Smyth worked as an assistant radiologist in a French military hospital in Vichy from 1915 to 1918. These years were particularly difficult as she became increasingly deaf. She then concentrated much of her efforts on writing, becoming a prolific author of memoirs. The first of a total of eight volumes, entitled *Impressions That Remained*, appeared in 1919.

This last period of Smyth's life also saw her receive several notable accolades, in recognition of her achievements as a composer. In 1922, she was appointed D.B.E. for services to music, becoming known as Dame Ethel Smyth. She was also the recipient honorary degrees from the universities of St. Andrews (1928) and Manchester (1930), while in 1926 she became the first female recipient of an honorary doctorate in music from Oxford University.

Biography courtesy of the British Library

Cécile Chaminade

(1857-1944)

One of the relatively few women composers of her time to achieve great popularity, Cécile Chaminade was a child prodigy; she began playing the piano very early, and her first compositions date from the age of eight. Her father wouldn't allow her to attend the Paris Conservatoire, but she did work privately with many instructors, including Benjamin Godard, with whom she studied composition. She gave her first public recital at age 18, and from then on appeared frequently as a pianist in France and Belgium, often playing her own music. She was a regular on British concert stages from the early 1890s, and was a guest of Queen Victoria during one of her British tours. Chaminade made her American debut in 1908, playing her *Concertstück*, Op. 40 (written around 1896) with the Philadelphia Orchestra. She was a big hit in America, and within a few years many Chaminade clubs sprang up around the country. In 1913 she was the first woman to receive the Legion of Honor from the French government. A large percentage of Chaminade's nearly 400 compositions were published during her lifetime. About half of those are short piano pieces, some of which, like *The Scarf Dance* and *The Flatterer*, were once quite popular. She also wrote about 125 songs, as well as a few larger, more ambitious pieces like the ballet *Callirhoë* (1888), the comic opera *La Sevilane*, and the dramatic symphony *Les Amazones*, Op. 26, for chorus and orchestra (1888). She also composed two orchestral suites and a handful of chamber works, including two trios.



Biography by Chris Morrison, AllMusic



Maria Theresia von Paradis

(1759-1824)

Maria Theresia von Paradis was a remarkable figure in music history, for not only did she attain significant triumphs as both a composer and performer -- rare enough achievements for a woman living in eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe -- but she had to cope with the dreadful handicap of blindness.

Maria Theresia von Paradis was born in Vienna on May 15, 1759. Her father, Joseph Anton von Paradis, was Imperial Secretary of Commerce under Empress Maria Theresia, after whom young Maria was named. When Maria was two she began losing her eyesight, and by the age of five she was blind.

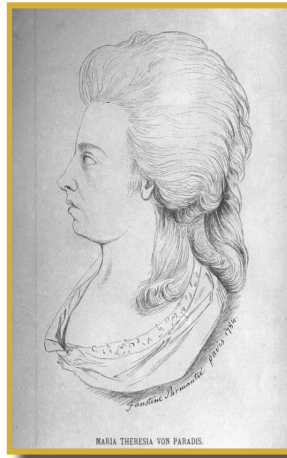
She studied with Antonio Salieri (who composed an organ concerto for her 1773), Leopold Kozeluch, and Karl Frieberth. Treatments by Anton Mesmer in 1776-1777 offered hope her vision might partially be restored, but after 1777 she had to resign herself to a life of total blindness.

By this time she had already established a career as a pianist and singer in Viennese concert halls and salons. Moreover, she had gained respect from the most prominent composers and musicians of the day, including Mozart. By some accounts, his Piano Concerto No. 18 (K. 456) was written for her.

In 1783-1784 she toured Paris, London, and various German cities. In 1785 she helped found, with Valentin Haüy, a school for the blind. Paradis would not turn to composition until the 1780s: the first work that can accurately be attributed to her is the *Zwölf Lieder auf ihrer Reise in Musik*, dating to the years 1784-1786. The process of composition for Paradis was not simple, but she was aided by use of a composition board developed by Johann Riedinger, who served as librettist for several of her stage works, including the 1791 melodrama *Ariadne und Bacchus* and the 1792 *Der Schulkandidat*.

By the late 1780s, Paradis was devoting less time to performance and more to composition. She wrote five operas between 1789 and 1797, as well as numerous other works. Unfortunately, many of her scores have been lost, including two piano concertos and 12 piano sonatas. By 1800 Paradis had begun focusing on teaching, and in 1808 founded a music school for girls in Vienna. For the last decade-and-a-half of her life she taught there and continued to turn out an occasional composition, like the 1811 *Fantasie in C* for piano.

Biography by Robert Cummings, AllMusic



Sharon Ruchman

(B. 1949)

A composer, pianist, and violist, Sharon Ruchman began taking piano lessons at eight years old. In junior high and high school, she studied with Rosetta Goodkind, a teacher at the Juilliard School of Music. She received her Bachelor of Music at New England Conservatory and Master of Music at Yale School of Music in voice.

In 2008, she released her first chamber music CD featuring "Sea Glass." Subsequently, she completed the following CDs: "Arrival of Spring," "Remembrance," "Textures," "Love and Ceremony," and "A Bit of Tango." From 2009 — 2014, Ruchman's creativity was unleashed. She produced at least one CD each year, including original classical music for solo instrumentation and chamber ensembles. Her music aired on classical radio stations in CT and several radio stations throughout the United States, Canada, and Australia.

In 2015, Ruchman's great uncle Rudy's viola finds its way to her. A virtuoso violinist who died tragically at the age of 25 in the early 1930s, Rudolph "Rudy" Fuchs' story transforms Ruchman's life personally and professionally, prompting her to write her memoir, *The Gift of Rudy*, published in 2018. Soon afterwards, she follows her passion for tango, composing five original Slow Tango compositions for Tango Berretin Dance Company in Portland, Oregon, who produced five videos showcasing her music with their dancers.

Today, she is studying viola — Rudy's gift — with Jill Pellett Levine, who plays in the New Haven Symphony and composing original work for SONORO, a musical ensemble which she founded in 2019. At the forefront of contemporary music performance, the group offers a playful and romantic mix of classical, jazz and Latin through a variety of flexible instrumentation to include piano, flute, saxophone, viola, cello and percussion.

Biography courtesy artist website



Idabelle Firestone

(1874 - 1954)

Idabelle Firestone, née Smith, was born in Minnesota City, Minnesota on November 10, 1874. She attended Alma College in Ontario, and in 1895, she married Firestone Tire and Rubber Company founder Harvey S. Firestone (1868-1938). The two were the parents of six children.

Idabelle Firestone was both a musician and composer, but her work has been overshadowed by her role as the wife of a successful industrialist. However, many of her compositions were published and recorded, perhaps most notably by the famous mezzo-soprano Risë Stevens. She also contributed several songs to *The Voice of Firestone*, a radio broadcast sponsored throughout its run by the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. Her compositions *In My Garden* and *If I Could Tell You* both were featured as theme songs for the program.

Firestone became a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (A.S.C.A.P.) in 1948, and maintained an active interest in music and *The Voice of Firestone* until her death on July 7, 1954.

Biographical Sources: New England Conservatory and Wikipedia



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