



with Yaniv Attar, Music Director



Jonathan Dexter, Cello

Sunday, January 29, 3:00 at Penn State Recital Hall

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#### About Our Conductor

# **Yaniv Attar**

A native of Israel, Yaniv Attar is the 1st prize winner of the Duna Szimfonikus Conducting Competition Budapest, multiple recipient of the Sir Georg Solti Foundation Award, and the 2009 Bruno Walter Memorial Foundation Award.

Attar is the Music Director of the Pennsylvania Chamber Orchestra, the Bellingham Symphony Orchestra, and Artistic Partner with Northwest Sinfonietta. Highlights of past seasons included collaborations with artists such as Alesio Bax, James

Ehnes, Tine Thing Helseth, Sharon Isbin, Alex Klein, Jennifer Koh, Johannes Moser and Gil Shaham. Attar was also one of 10 conductors from around the world who were invited to INTERACTION, and conducted an orchestra composed of all of Germany's top orchestras, including the Berliner Philharmoniker, Konzerthaus Orchestra, German Symphony Orchestra, and the Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin. Prior to his current music directorships, Attar completed his two years residency as the Assistant Conductor of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, where he conducted nearly 100 performances, and worked extensively with Maestro Justin Brown.

Drawn to orchestral conducting from early age, Attar has studied with Israel Edelson in Jerusalem, Virginia Allen at the Juilliard School in New York and Neil Thomson at the Royal College of Music in London, where he was also the Associate Conductor and co-founder of the Tempus Chamber Orchestra. In 2008, Attar earned his Doctor of Music degree from McGill University where he studied under the tutelage of Alexis Hauser. Attar also studied with Kurt Masur,



Leonard Slatkin, Janos Fürst, Jorma Panula, Gustav Meier, Johannes Schlaefli, Peter Gülke, Gabor Hollerung, Neil Varon, Carl St. Clair, David Effron, Donald Thulean and Michael Jurowski.

Attar has worked with the Cincinnati Symphony, Duna Szimfonikus Budapest, Dohnanyi Orchestra Budapest, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Haifa Symphony, Hamburg Symphony, Israel Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra I Pomeriggi Musicali Milan, Jerusalem Symphony, Lithuanian State Symphony, London Solists Chamber

Orchestra, Memphis Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Manhattan School of Music Orchestra, Mihail Jora Philharmonic Romania, National Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Northwest Sinfonietta, Reno Chamber Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic , Russe Philharmonic Bulgaria, Salzburg Chamber Soloists, and Virginia Symphony.

Attar is also an accomplished classical guitarist. He has studied under Irit Even-Tov, Charles Ramirez and Sharon Isbin, for whom he served as teaching assistant at the Aspen Music Festival from 2003 to 2005. Attar was the first guitarist to win the Aviv Competition Prize in Israel and the Concerto Competition at the Juilliard School. Attar plays a 2014 Dake Traphagen Guitar. His studies have been generously supported by the America and Canada Israel Cultural Foundations, The Williamson Foundation for Music. Ronen Foundation, The Olga Forrai Foundation New York, the Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation, AVI Fellowships Switzerland, the Rislov Foundation, and the ISEF Foundation.





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## Our Soloist

#### Jonathan Dexter, cello

Jonathan Dexter, cellist, has been featured in recordings and performances with multiple grammy

award winning artists and producers in classical, rock, pop, and country music. Performance highlights include appearances on the Jimmy Fallon Show, The View, VH1, Billboard Music Online, Fox and Friends, and Rachel Ray.

In 2022, Jonathan was a featured cellist with the Lorelei Ensemble. the Boston-based chamber-choir, in their recording Antigone available from New Focus Recordings. Gramophone Magazine reviewed the recording, "Stunning precision of harmony, intonation, and... spectacular virtuosity." In 2015, Jonathan was the cellist in the recording "Irving Berlin: This is the Life" with the Paragon Ragtime Orchestra produced by three-time Grammy award winner for Best Classical Music Producer. Judith Sherman. Working from his home studio, Jon records strings for



projects around the world. Customers have ranged from SONY Masterworks, Columbia Records,

Castlerock Entertainment, and multiple classical labels. Jon contributed strings produced in his home-studio for the 2011-2013 seasons of Steven Spielberg's TV series "Smash" on NBC. Jon also composed, performed, and recorded

the original score to short film Recess. an official selection at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival. Recently and more locally, Jon has been engineering audio recordings for PennState faculty. Jonathan joined the Pennsylvania Chamber Orchestra in 2012: the same year he moved to State College with his wife, flutist, Naomi Seidman. As the Jano Duo. Jon and Naomi have performed around the country for over a decade and are headed to Bangkok in April to perform at the Thailand Flute Festival 2023.





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## Today's Program

January 29, 2023

Elegy (2021) East Coast Premiere

(b.1973)

Jonathan Leshnoff

Concerto for Cello and Orchestra "Never Give Up" (2017) Fazil Say

**United States Premiere** 

(b. 1970)

I. Never give up II. Terror elegy

III. Song of hope

Jonathan Dexter, Cello

- Intermission -

Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

I. Adagio molto—Allegro con brio II. Andante cantabile con moto III. Menuetto. Allegro molto e vivace IV. Adagio—Allegro molto e vivace



Thank you Hyatt Place State College for hosting Maestro Attar for this concert.

Live streaming of today's program is sponsored by PNC and produced by CW Studios.

Smoking is not permitted in any of the School of Music facilities.

Food and beverages are not permitted in the audience seating area.



This project was supported by the PA Council on the Arts, a state agency, through its regional arts funding partnership, PA Partners in the Arts (PPA). State government funding for the arts depends upon an annual appropriation by the Commonwealth of PA and support from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.



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#### ELEGY

Jonathan Leshnoff was born in 1973, in New Brunswick, New Jersey to Susan Leshnoff, an artist, and Stephen Leshnoff, an engineer. He attended Johns Hopkins University and the Peabody Conservatory concurrently, earning bachelor's degrees in anthropology and music. A Grammy-nominated composer, Jonathan Leshnoff is renowned for his music's striking harmonies, structural complexity, and powerful themes. Ranked among the most performed living composers by American orchestras in recent seasons, the Baltimore-based composer's works have been performed by over a hundred orchestras worldwide.

Elegy is a 10-minute composition cocommissioned by the Bellingham Symphony Orchestra and the Tennessee Holocaust Commission. The commission derived from Music Director Yaniv Attar's long friendship with Leshnoff. Attar approached Leshnoff in 2018 about writing a work for BSO's Harmony from Discord initiative, which celebrates music that transcends oppression. Elegy is a work that is written especially for this initiative.

Leshnoff writes: "Elegy is written in memory of the thousands of

nameless people who suffered under oppression.

"Writing a new composition for the Harmony from Discord series, I chose to musically depict these two contrasting moods with two contrasting ideas: a somber, dark theme that dominates the beginning of the work and a hopeful, brighter theme that is

heard in the middle. Elegy starts with this lonely and contemplative theme first played by the violins and then slowly spreading throughout the string section, with the harp offering a haunting echo. After a brooding cadence, the hopeful theme is introduced in the horns.

"Full of moving lines and sweeping harmonies the music builds to a resounding climax, accompanied by the timpani grounding the ensemble in successive strikes. After a cascading cadence, the dark opening theme again returns, but this time, the hopeful theme intertwines itself with the darker theme, symbolic of the hope that has emerged through the dark, discordant eras of history. The piece notably ends on a major chord."

Maestro Attar presents the work in a version re-imagined for the PCO by composer Jonathan Leshnoff himself.

#### **Never Give Up**

Fazıl Say was born in 1970 in Angora, Turkey. His father, Ahmet Say was an author and musicologist. His mother, Gürgün Say was a pharmacist. Fazil was a child prodigy, who was able to do basic arithmetic with 4-digit numbers at the age of two. His father, having found out that he was playing the melody of "Daha Dün Annemizin" (Turkish version of Ah! vous dirai-je, maman a popular children's song in France) on a

makeshift flute with no prior training. enlisted the advice of Ali Kemal Kaya, an oboist and family friend. At the age of three, Say started his piano lessons under the tutelage of pianist Mithat Fenmen who asked the boy to improvise every day on themes to do with his daily life before going on to complete his essential piano exercises and studies. This contact with free creative processes and forms are seen as the source of the immense improvisatory talent and the aesthetic outlook that make Fazil Sav the planist and composer he is today. He has been commis-

sioned to write music for, among others, the Salzburger Festspiele, the WDR and the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, the Festspiele Mecklenburg- Vorpommern, the Konzerthaus Wien, the Dresdner Philharmonie, the Louis Vuitton Foundation, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the BBC. His works includes four symphonies, two oratorios, various solo concertos and numerous works for piano and

chamber music. As he did in his Gezi Park series, Fazıl Say makes reference to current political events in this new cello concerto. According to the composer, Never give up is an "outcry for freedom and peace," focusing on the "harrowing terror attacks in Europe and Turkey."

"My cello concerto was composed in 2016 and 2017 for Camille Thomas, a young French cellist, whose

playing I find truly beautiful with incredibly emotional [effect] ... Back in 2015, 2016 and 2017 there were many terrorist attacks in Europe, particularly in Turkey and in my hometown of Istanbul ... airports, concert halls, football stadiums and in the streets ... it seems like it was almost every day and it was a really dark time in our lives ..." the 53-year-old composer has said. "When writing this concerto amid all this turbulence, I was determined to show resilience that we will never give up - and that there will always be hope for a beautiful and peaceful world."

#### Symphony in C

Beethoven's first two symphonies grew from the world of Haydn and Mozart. Admittedly, they push the boundaries, but it is not until his third symphony, the Eroica, that he bursts into a new world of his own. However, for those who first heard these symphonies they were brilliant, passionate and surprising symphonies by a young genius.

The First Symphony received its premiere on April 2, 1800 at the Burgtheater in Vienna in a concert which Beethoven put on for his own benefit. The program also included works by Haydn and Mozart. Beethoven appears to have worked on ideas for this symphony for several years, but the main task of composing it took place during the six months before the premiere. The dedication is to the Baron van Swieten,

> the patron and connoisseur who had helped introduce Beethoven to Vienna society and the man who had introduced Haydn and Mozart to the music of Bach and Handel. The premiere was a great success with both the public and critics and considerably boosted Beethoven's reputation. In Leipzig, the Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung wrote. "... this was truly the most interesting concert we have heard for a long time. . . [The symphony] contained much art, many new

things and a wealth of ideas."

The first movement takes the expected sonata form, with a slow introduction the opening chords of which do not begin in the tonic key of C major, perhaps influenced by recent Haydn examples. The pizzicati from the strings and the dynamic, opening wind chords remind one of Mozart. Once we reach the Allegro con brio, the sprightly energy of the first theme is what we expect of a symphony in the Viennese tradition.

The Andante cantabile con moto is by no means a "slow movement," but rather what in German is called a Spaziergang—a stroll along the lane or wood that is gentle (the "cantabile") but still moves along continuously (the "con moto").

The minuet and trio, like all the other movements, manages to avoid banality with lightning quick shifts of mood, and forceful, elegant, and boisterous turns of phrase. Beethoven's finale is slightly unusual with its slow introduction, beginning with a single stentorian chord, followed by a tentative, searching series of motives from the violins. The vigorous Allegro molto e vivace, on the other hand, is clearly inspired by folk music.



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