

RUTGERS

Mason Gross School
of the Arts

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Rutgers Symphony Orchestra

Ching-Chun Lai, Conductor

Friday, March 8, 2024 | 7:30 p.m.

Nicholas Music Center
Mason Gross Performing Arts Center
Douglass Campus

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

PROGRAM

Fandangos (2000)

Roberto Sierra
(b. 1953)

Annabelle Bowman, Ellanora Cabrera, Emily Cornish, Isabel Dadulla, Meira
Klafter, Laura Luzardo, Lyla McLeod, Erin Meiklejohn, Rachel Mendoza, Auri
Monteiro, Willa O'Connor, Charlotte Perret,
Isabella Serman, Molly Weidmaier †

Nathan Sawyer, graduate student conductor
Evelyn Wang, faculty choreographer

Tap Dance Concerto (1952)

Morton Gould
(1913-1996)

I. *Toccata*

Trent Kowalik, soloist

II. *Pantomime*

Michelle Esch, Trent Kowalik, Laura Neese, soloists

III. *Minuet*

Mia Canzonieri, Michelle Esch,
Kaylyn Gilchrist, Laura Neese, soloists

IV. *Rondo*

Trent Kowalik, soloist

Darrah Carr, choreographer
Darrah Carr Dance

(This residency is sponsored by
The Mason Gross Integrated Dance Collaboratory)

Intermission

Symphonic Dances, Op. 45

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

I. Non allegro

II. Andante con moto (Tempo di valse)

III. Lento assai – Allegro vivace

† *Dance Captain*

RUTGERS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

Orchestra Personnel, other than concertmaster, are listed alphabetically

Violin I

Diana Kim**
Hyerim An
Chih-Yi Chen
Ana Constantin
Amelia Cunningham
Morning Doleon
Yu-Pei Lai
Emiliano Moreno Salazar
Ann-Frances Rokosa
Chenxiang Wang
Eunmin Woo

Violin II

Wenting Bian
Ruihong Chang
Maggie Faulkner
Maya Grove
Elly Ha
Wan-Chun Hu
So Yeong Kim
Haokun Liang
Olivia Moaddel*^#
Huyan Nguyen

Viola

Hsuan Chen*^#
Ana María Díaz Herrera
Anzhi Ji
Pietro Moltini
Hyunjung Song
Mia Yicong Zhang
Yujie Wang

Cello

Yoojin Lee
Li Pang*^#
Euijin Park
Mark Serkin
Tsung-Yu Tsai
Elliott Wells
Shuyi Zhang
Michael Ziegler

Bass

Seojin Kim*^#
Xingyuan Weng
Mengjiao Zhang

Flute

Sarah Beaird^
Pavana Karanth#
Boeun Lee
Clara Lee*
Ross Matos

Piccolo

Sarah Beaird
Boeun Lee
Clara Lee

Oboe

Tyler Selvig*
Dan Shengquan^#
Kathy Yu

English Horn

Tyler Selvig
Kathy Yu

Clarinet

Andy Cho#
Will Doh
Tim Hanley*
Greg Marsh^
Dan Spielman

Bass Clarinet

Tanner Age

Bassoon

Arun Felix*
Jonathan LiVolsi^#

Contrabassoon

Hannah Stroh

Alto Saxophone

Jarod Apple

Horn

Kayla Gater
Rebecca Karu
Xiangyu Liu
Will Sizemore#
Christine Stinchi*^

Trumpet

Ryan Colarusso#
Julia Guarnaccia*^
Nate Kimmick
Joe Marta
Nicholas Del Rosso

Trombone

TL Hung*
Chris Toto^#
Erol Yilmaz

Bass Trombone

Matthew Wall

Tuba

Benjamin Kauffmann
Yale Rosin

Harp

Shenna Yang

Piano

Jorge Tabarés García

Timpani

Siyoung Lee

Percussion

Liang Dong
Graham Harris
Jenna Manalastas
Josh Persad*#
Luke Waitkus

Librarian

Claire Oplinger
Will Sizemore

***Concertmaster*

**Principal on Sierra*

^Principal on Gould

#Principal on Rachmaninoff

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Roberto Sierra

Fandangos (2000)

Antonio Soler's *Fandango* for keyboard has always fascinated me, for its strange and whimsical twists and turns. My *Fandangos* is a fantasy, or a "super-fandango," that takes as point of departure Soler's work and incorporates elements of Boccherini's *Fandango* and my own Baroque musings. Some of the oddities in the harmonic structure of the Soler piece provided a bridge for the incorporation of contemporary sonorities, opening windows to apparently alien sound worlds. In these parenthetical commentaries, the same materials heard before are transformed, as if one would look at the same objects through different types of lenses or prisms. The continuous variation form over an ostinato bass gave me the chance to use complex orchestration techniques as another element for variation.

~ by Roberto Sierra

Morton Gould

Tap Dance Concerto (1952)

Composed in 1952 and premiered in Rochester, NY, Gould's *Tap Dance Concerto* offers a new conception of an orchestra concert piece. Traditionally, the orchestra concerto features a solo instrument accompanied by the orchestra in a three-movement format. This work consists of four movements (similar to a symphony) and features a dancer. The soloist's part, provided by the composer, encourages a free-reign approach to the choreography; it only notates the rhythm. The dance is completely up to the performer on what step to apply to the rhythm given. This allows for an abundance of interpretation enhanced by facial expressions, variety of characters, and storytelling with the performer's feet. Gould uniquely captures an American quality unlike any other symphonic work. Tap dance was prominent in America during the 1930's-50's and was a source of entertainment and joy that combatted the struggles of the Great Depression. Artists such as Bill Robinson, Fred Astaire, and Ann Miller brought tap to the stage and screen. Each movement of this work will showcase the dancer in a different light. A fiery, extravagant, fast-paced finale alongside a contemplative, placid, shuffling of the slower second movement.

~ by Nathan Sawyer

Sergei Rachmaninoff
Symphonic Dances, op. 45

This final work of Rachmaninoff's, originally titled *Fantastic Dances*, was composed for two pianos then orchestrated a few months later. Dedicated to Eugene Ormandy and premiered by the Philadelphia Orchestra, the work initially was overlooked by critics. However, it is now considered one of Rachmaninoff's finest works and an example of experimentation in the symphonic use of the saxophone alongside the piano. Although the '*Symphonic*' *Dances* are intended for concert performance, some of the musical material is from Rachmaninoff's unfinished ballet score, *The Scythians*, and was intended to be choreographed by Mikhail Fokine. The work consists of three dances that had titles but were removed to discourage any programmatic reading. Each dance contains its own flavor: the first is a serious march, the second is a waltz, and the third (described by Malcolm MacDonald) a fast dance with gigue-like rhythms. Rachmaninoff also quotes elements from his own earlier works, including the melody of his first symphony, the *Dies Irae* plainsong, and the Resurrection Hymn from his choral *Vespers*.

~ by Nathan Sawyer

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Evelyn Wang, faculty choreographer

Evelyn (Chien-Ying) Wang, a choreographer, dancer, and film maker, hails from Taiwan and is Co-Artistic Director of OcampoWang Dance. She received her MFA degree in Dance from The Ohio State University. Wang was a finalist of Bogliasco Fellowship and recipient of the Mixtures Artistic Creation Grant from the Consulate General of Spain, SLC Arts Council Grant, Dance New Jersey Mini-Grant, and the YongLin Foundation in Taiwan. Her performing experience includes solo roles in classical ballets, plus works by Isadora Duncan, Doris Humphrey, José Limón, Anna Sokolow, Yvonne Rainer, Lar Lubovitch, Lucas Hoving, Gideon Obarzanek, Zvi Gotheiner, Shapiro & Smith, Tandy Beal, Stephen Koester, Molissa Fenley, Douglas Nielsen, and Susan Hadley. Wang has been commissioned by Ballet Philippines, Juedai Contemporary Dance Theater (Taiwan), Lustig Dance Theatre, RDT, OSU, Boston Conservatory, and Beijing Normal University, to name a few. Wang's choreographic works has been presented in Manhattan Movement & Arts Center, Ailey Citigroup Theatre, Gelsey Kirkland Arts Center, Dixon Place, Judson Memorial Church and 92 nd Street Y in NYC, Cultural Center of the Philippines, National Chiang Kai-Shek Cultural Center, and other performance venues. Her films have been presented in film and dance festivals. Wang is an Associate Professor at Rutgers University.

Darrah Carr, Darrah Carr Dance Artistic Director

Darrah Carr (Artistic Director) holds a PhD in dance from Texas Woman's University. She received her MFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Wesleyan University. Named one of the "Top 40 Under 40" by the Irish Echo, one of the "Top 100 Irish Americans of the Year" by Irish America magazine, and one of the "Most Influential Women" by the Irish Voice, Carr has been active for 25 years in both the Irish and modern dance communities as a choreographer, dancer, educator, and writer. In addition to her work as the artistic director of Darrah Carr Dance, Carr and her Irish step dance partner, Niall O'Leary, have performed their duet act in a variety of locations ranging from Disney World to the Osaka Festival Hall in Japan. They are featured dancers in Absolutely Irish!, a PBS documentary directed by Academy Award-winner Paul Wagner with a cast of traditional Irish musicians led by Dr. Mick Moloney. Darrah Carr Dance is represented exclusively by Siegel Artist Management.

Michelle Esch, performer

Michelle Esch graduated Magna Cum Laude with a BFA in dance from Rutgers University Mason Gross School of the Arts and studied jazz/musical theater at the Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival. Michelle has taught and choreographed for the Discover Opera graduate program at Manhattan School of Music, the Buck Hill Skytop Music Festival, Arts Horizons, the Laurie Berkner Band Greatest Hits Tour and several music videos. Michelle has worked with Syncopated City Dance Company/Swing FX, Flexicurve, Meagan Woods Company, and EDP Dance Project. Additional dance credits include A Jazz Happening with Chet Walker, Flightless Birds at the Joyce Soho, Cirque du Soleil's Poetic Social Mission, Jazz at Lincoln Center Spring Gala, Monday Night Entertainment at the Rainbow Room, Microsoft's launch party for X-Box Kinect, Midsummer Night Swing at Lincoln Center, Frankie's 100 Celebration at the Edison Ballroom, and Dance Legends at the Hammerstein Ballroom.

Laura Neese, performer

Laura Neese is a dance artist and educator from Staten Island, NY, where she developed a love for dance under the mentorship of Rosemary Cappozalo and studied Irish dance with Niall O'Leary. Described as "ethereally romantic" by the Dance Enthusiast, Neese has performed works by artists including Darrah Carr, Melissa West, Sean Curran, Ann Carlson, Maho Ogawa, and KitchenSink Collective, among others. Performing credits range from Jacob's Pillow to the Today Show to Wexner Center for the Arts. Neese presents her own stage and site-based choreography at venues in New York City and nationally. Recent activities include a PASS Artist Residency at Snug Harbor Cultural Center, and research presentation at the International Association for Dance Medicine and Science (IADMS). She holds an MFA from the Ohio State University, BFA/BA from SUNY Buffalo, & Pilates certification from Kinected. Neese is currently on faculty at the University of Kentucky Department of Theatre and Dance. Teaching credits include Irish Arts Center, Hofstra University, Kinected, & the Ohio State University, and University of Kentucky. lauraneese.com

Trent Kowalik, performer

Trent Kowalik was just three years old when his parents enrolled him at DSD, the local dance studio. There he took ballet, jazz, and tap classes, but having seen a video of Riverdance, was eager to explore Irish dance and rhythms. Trent won

the Irish Dancing World Championships for his age group when he was 12. Shortly afterwards, he played the lead in Billy Elliot the musical on the West End and Broadway, winning a TONY award for best performance by a leading actor in a musical. Trent studied ballet throughout high school at ABT's Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis school. He holds a degree in philosophy and a certificate in dance from Princeton University. Trent is a proud member of Darrah Carr Dance. He has also toured with Michael Lóndra and recently finished a season with Celtic Fyre at Busch Gardens. Trent has a passion for music production and is currently helping a number of artists independently release music.

Nathan Sawyer, graduate student conductor

Nathan is a DMA student in orchestral conducting under Ching-Chun Lai at Rutgers. He has held the position of assistant conductor of the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra to Stephen Alltop. Nathan has attended conducting workshops such as the International Conducting Workshop and Festival in Bulgaria (2019), where he studied with Larry Rachleff and Donald Schleicher. At UIUC, Nathan completed his MM under Schleicher, serving as the manager for the Symphony Orchestra and also as the co-director of the Philharmonia and director of the Illini Strings. He also studied with interim professor William Eddins and conducted John Harbison's *Symphony No. 5* in the presence of the composer.

NOTES ON *TAP DANCE CONCERTO*

Darrah Carr Dance

Since 1998, *Darrah Carr Dance* has created a unique blend of traditional Irish step and contemporary modern dance. The company incorporates Irish music, step dance footwork, and spatial patterns within contemporary choreography and presents a bold new twist on conventional Irish dance. Artistic director Darrah Carr calls her style ModERIN: a playful combination of the words “Modern” (re: dance) and “ERIN” (re: an Irish American reference to Ireland). Performance highlights include: “Good Morning America,” “The Today Show,” the New York Pops at Carnegie Hall, The Duke Theater on 42nd Street, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Celebrate Brooklyn, The Irish Repertory Theater, and the company’s regular New York City season at Irish Arts Center. *Darrah Carr Dance* has performed at venues throughout the United States including: Jacob's Pillow, MASS MoCA, and The Yard. The company has toured internationally throughout Ireland and Canada.

Tap Dance, Darrah Carr Dance, Tap Dance Concerto

In 1952, composer Morton Gould premiered the *Tap Dance Concerto* in Rochester, New York. Over seventy years later, the piece remains unique as a symphonic work featuring a tap dancer and a full orchestra. For a choreographer, the *Tap Dance Concerto*, presents a remarkable opportunity to relish one of the driving goals and fundamental responsibilities of a rhythmic dancer – namely – to be the percussive instrument of a music ensemble.

The *Tap Dance Concerto* has been described by Chicago Tribune critic Howard Reich as, “The American pulse set to music.” Given tap dance’s recognition as a uniquely American art form, the description could not be more apt. Originating in the early 19th century, tap dance was born from a fusion of the West African *gioube* (or, in English translation, Juba dance) – a sacred and secular stepping dance preserved in the Southern United States by enslaved peoples - with the Irish jig – a music and dance form promulgated by Irish emigrant communities throughout the Northeastern United States. The resulting fusion of movement vocabularies was popularized on the vaudeville circuit of the early 20th century, through the nascent Hollywood film industry, on Broadway musical stages, and beyond.

This evening’s interpretation of the *Tap Dance Concerto* by *Darrah Carr Dance* explores the historical and physical connections between tap dance and Irish step through the footwork of three artists who are trained in both forms –

Michelle Esch, Trent Kowalik, and Laura Neese. In drawing from two genres, the choreographic process itself was also twofold. First – decoding the rhythms written into the score. Second – inventing the steps to manifest the desired sounds. Another layer of duality was found in the second section of the work, namely the playful *Pantomime*, wherein *Darrah Carr Dance* explores the idea of audible versus visible rhythms and shares our trademark style of ModERIN – a unique blend of traditional Irish step and contemporary modern dance.

Finally, tonight's performance marks a homecoming for Michelle Esch (née Puskas) who graduated from Rutgers with a BFA in Dance in 2008. It is a special treat to share the stage with current Rutgers Dance majors this evening!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Professor Paul C. Ocampo, rehearsal director for dancers (Sierra)

Adam Klein, stage manager and lighting

Rachel Evans, costume consultation (Sierra)

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