



# PRINCE GEORGE'S PHILHARMONIC

SEASON 55 | 2020-2021

*Jesus Manuel Berard, Music Director*



*Saturday, October 10, 2020 • 7:30 pm*

*Grand Theater, Center for Performing Arts  
Prince George's Community College  
Largo, Maryland*

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Jesus Manuel Berard, *Music Director*

Tiffany Lu, *Assistant Conductor*

Saturday, October 10, 2020 • 7:30 pm

Virtual Concert

Grand Theater, Center for Performing Arts

Prince George's Community College, Largo, MD

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Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

## **Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G Major, BWV 1048**

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

## **Holberg Suite, Op. 40 (From Holberg's Time)**

- I. Praelude
- II. Sarabande
- III. Gavotte and Musette
- IV. Air
- V. Rigaudon

Made possible in part through funding provided by the Prince George's County Council; the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County; and the Maryland State Arts Council.

**Program Notes**  
by Max Derrickson



Johann Sebastian Bach

**Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G Major, BWV 1048**

Born: Eisenach, March 21, 1685

Died: Leipzig, July 28, 1750

Though cherished today as one of the great composers in all of Western musical history, music as a career for Bach was not always easy. He moved around a fair amount, was dissatisfied in several courts of employ, and for the first half of his career was often on the lookout for new opportunities. Such was the case when Bach compiled and edited his six Brandenburg Concertos in 1721 – he created the set to use as a kind of personalized portfolio for a job possibility in Brandenburg. Some years earlier he had met Christian Ludwig who was the Margrave (municipal ruler) of Brandenburg-Schwedt, as well as being the uncle of King Fredrick-William I of Prussia. The music-appreciating governor asked Bach to send him some samples of his music, and so Bach, who was currently working in Cöthen (where he was paid and treated well, but also where he had endured some tragedies) was ready to move on and, hopefully, up.

In Cöthen between 1717-1723, Bach wrote some of his most magnificent instrumental works, including many concertos from which he would select some gems for the Brandenburg Margrave. After his initial meeting with the Margrave, however, several of Bach's children died, and then, most tragically for Bach, his wife Maria Barbara Bach, only 43, fell ill and died while Bach was away travelling. These circumstances postponed his sending the concertos to Brandenburg for several years. But he sat down to finalize them in 1721, choosing six samples of his finest works in the genre for his hoped-for employer. The result became a collection of some of Bach's greatest, and most beloved instrumental works – his so-called "Brandenburg" Concertos. It's unknown, however, if the Margrave ever heard these six concertos. We know that Bach was not hired there, and in 1723, he moved on to a different position in Leipzig where he spent the rest of his life. And those beloved Brandenburg Concertos essentially languished unknown until they were discovered again in Berlin in 1849, a century after Bach's death – although they were understood as masterpieces by 1850, their modern worldwide popularity would not occur for more than another century, in the 1960s and '70s, when period-instrument performances became more prevalent.

The Concertos that Bach compiled were not the kind of solo instrumental concertos that we have become accustomed to. Rather, the Brandenburgs were concerti grossi ("big concertos") which were works for several groups of instruments. A concerto grosso followed fairly clearly defined structures, and was designed to illuminate different kinds of instrumental colors, sounds and abilities, and "orchestral" textures. These concertos are more the precursors to the Symphony as

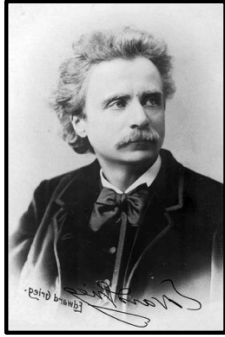
we know it, rather than to solo concertos that would emerge as a genre in the Classical period. Bach's Brandenburgs were comprised of strings and wind instruments, and although they included some individual solo playing, the point of the music was less about showcasing individual instruments than exploring contrasts between sections of instruments.

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 is different from the other five – a bit like a musical breath. It is fleet, its second movement is one of the most curious movements in all of Western music, and it is scored sparsely – with only strings without any winds. The string instrumentation, too, is unique (though it can easily be added to without musical harm) – three violins, three violas, and three cellos, and of course, the bass and harpsichord that are essential to the “continuo”, or bass structure, to nearly all Baroque ensemble music. It also, as a whole, is almost a riot of virtuosity and music making. No. 3 is one of the set's most cherished wonders.

Right away you will recognize the main theme in the first of No. 3's three movements, so well-known and famous it's almost iconic for Bach's Brandenburgs. But be sure to listen at around 4:30 minutes or so into the movement. In these Concertos, Bach was showing off his inventiveness as a composer (to his prospective employer). The whole Brandenburg set explores virtuosic pairings in the concerto grosso genre, and with exceptional craft and ingenuity. At this moment in No. 3, a small kernel of the main theme is traded from the first violin all the way down the musical chain, and along the way, the other instruments create a hubbub of music.... by the end of the entire sequence, Bach has captured a frenetic and thrilling musical madness.

The second movement is indeed an enigmatic expression – it is an evanescent moment made up of only two chords. Performers, historians and conductors alike have pondered what Bach had in mind here. Because the Concertos were more-or-less ignored for nearly two centuries, we'll never know if Bach expected the two chords to be the basis of a raft of soloistic improvisations, or a simple, two-chord bridge between the equally brisk first and third movements, or yet something else. Today, musicians and conductors allow themselves to make informed musical decisions about this movement, the beauty of it being that you are likely never to hear the second movement performed the same way twice. However it is played, its brevity and its unresolved chords create a moment of mysterious reflection before the next whirlwind movement of music.

The third movement completes this Baroque masterwork, filled with light and joyfulness and dance. Bach uses the structure of the “gigue” for this finale, a dance form that he knew in its French variation at that time, but he infuses it with contrapuntal loftiness – listening carefully, you'll hear right from the beginning how Bach creates a canon, or a “round,” first in the upper strings then repeated in the lower. But immediately we are swept up in the spinning and dancing triplets of the gigue, and it continues unabated and deliriously until the last bar. This movement, too, is rather short, but is potent with energy – its last bars leave us breathless, and grateful that these great Concertos were created and rediscovered.



Edvard Grieg

**Holberg Suite, Op. 40 (From Holberg's Time)**

Born: Bergen, June 15, 1843

Died: Bergen, September 4, 1907

The marvelous works of Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg seem to capture an ineffable sweetness and nostalgia as few other composers could. Grieg's music somehow always satisfies the soul. And so it is with one of Grieg's most popular works, his Holberg Suite, written in 1884.

Its inspiration and namesake, Baron Ludvig Holberg, was born in Bergen, Norway, in 1684, but spent much of his life in Denmark following a tragic fire in his Norwegian hometown. Besides being known as a remarkable historian and scientist, Holberg also had a great talent for writing satires and comedies, such that he became known as "the Molière of the North." Two-hundred years later, in 1884, Norway and Denmark held a bicentennial celebration for their famous, shared native son. Several composers were commissioned to write a grand cantata for the celebration, for which Grieg obliged with his Holberg Cantata (EG 171), but he additionally created a delightful piano suite, *Fra Holbergs tid*, Op. 40 ("From Holberg's time"). Grieg soon orchestrated and revised that piano suite for strings which is the version almost exclusively performed today.

Grieg nicknamed his "From Holberg's Time" suite his "powdered-wig piece," and he crafted it with a surprising twist. Realizing that Holberg was a contemporary of the Baroque era's musical giants – Bach, Handel and Domenico Scarlatti (all born in 1685, and Holberg just one year prior) – Grieg fashioned his homage to echo the music that Holberg would have heard in his times, i.e., like a Baroque dance suite. Although Holberg and his contemporaries would have recognized the Baroque dance suite that Grieg used in this piece, Grieg's particularly gorgeous Romantic melodies and harmonies would have been something of a shock in 1700.

But not to our modern ears – Grieg's Holberg Suite is one of his most cherished works. Beginning with the bracing Praeludium, which is like a horse race in its driving rhythms, Grieg uses the Baroque dance forms only as a launching point for his Romantic music making. The Sarabande is almost Mahler-esque in its beauty, and is followed by the Gavotte/Musette that gives pride to Grieg's Norwegian folk song and dance. The Air is one of Grieg's most lovely themes – its simplicity fittingly echoes the exquisite slow movements of Scarlatti and Bach's works, but is infused with a beautiful melancholy. At the finale, Grieg again chooses a form (Rigaudon) that will showcase his love of Norwegian dance – with a weighty and slow middle section that almost seems like a soft love song – the movement is otherwise surrounded by a rustic round dance with virtual foot stomping, fancy fiddling and collective merriment.

## MUSIC DIRECTOR



**JESUS MANUEL BERARD** was born in Havana, Cuba, and raised in New York City. His conducting teachers include Otto-Werner Mueller (Yale), Harold Farberman (Conductors Institute at Bard), David Epstein (M.I.T.), and Piero Bellugi and Frank Battisti (New England Conservatory). He studied piano with Carol Rankin, Carolyn Kleiner and Thomas Vogelmann, and voice (bass-baritone) with Marian Thompson, Margarethe Mueller, George Fiore and Lorna Cooke DeVaron. Studies in composition, theory and analysis include Donald Martino and Robert Cogan at the New England Conservatory of Music (B.M., M.M.), and Patricia Carpenter, Jonathan Kramer and Fred Lerdahl at Columbia University (M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.), for which he wrote his dissertation on the music of Gustav Mahler. Conducting and composition masterclasses include Larry Rachleff, Carl St. Clair, Pierre Boulez, Aaron Copland and Roger Sessions.

A passionate, dynamic and seasoned performer, teacher and scholar, Berard has conducted and taught at the New England Conservatory, Columbia University, American University, Hofstra University and Connecticut College. He has served as music director and conductor of professional organizations such as the Peconic Chamber Orchestra in the Hamptons (New York) and the resident Chamber Players at Connecticut College, as well as the American University Symphony Orchestra, Columbia University Chamber Orchestra, Connecticut College Orchestra, Hofstra University Symphony Orchestra, and the DC Youth Orchestra. Guest conducting engagements have included the Bulgarian State Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra (Burgas), Teatro Lirico of DC, the Embassy Series (Washington, DC), Ridotto (New York), the Richmond Philharmonic Orchestra (Virginia), the New Music festivals at the University of Maryland School of Music and UNC East Carolina University School of Music, the orchestras of Georgetown University, Long Island University and the University of Maryland, and the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association State Orchestra Festival. He is also in demand as a clinician, adjudicator and competition judge.

Recent U.S. venues include the Kennedy Center Concert Hall, Terrace Theatre and Millennium Stages, The White House (for President Barack Obama), The State Department (for Secretary of State Hillary Clinton), The Washington National Cathedral, The Smithsonian Institution, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center (University of Maryland), Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center (New York), Temple University Performing Arts Center (Philadelphia), Jordan Hall (Boston), and the GALA Hispanic Theatre, the Austrian Embassy and THEARC in Washington, DC. Berard has collaborated with Marvin Hamlisch, Lorin Maazel, Leonard Slatkin, Benjamin Zander and Carlos Miguel Prieto, and he has performed with Antal Dorati, Seiji Ozawa, Gunther Schuller, Robert Craft and Robert Shaw, among others. Media appearances include articles in The New York Times and The Washington Post, as well as ABC's Good Morning America, National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," and WTOP Radio and WETA Classical Radio in Washington, DC. He lives in Savage, Maryland, New York City and on Long Island, NY.

## ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR



This season, conductor **TIFFANY LU** celebrates her fourth year as Music Director of the Wilmington Community Orchestra. She also holds the position of assistant conductor with the Capital City Symphony and the Prince George's Philharmonic. This past summer, she returned for her third year as Conducting Associate on the staff of the Pierre Montoux School and Music Festival in Hancock, Maine.

Tiffany will make her debut as guest conductor on the subscription concert series with Symphony New Hampshire later this season. She is also honored to have been selected as a Conducting Fellow for the Allentown Symphony for their 2019-2020 concert season.

In 2019, Tiffany directed Kurt Weill's ballet pantomime *Zaubernacht* in a series of fully-staged performances co-sponsored by the Kurt Weill Foundation and the University of Maryland. From 2015-2019, Tiffany was Music Director of the University of Maryland Repertoire Orchestra, and assistant conductor of the University of Maryland Symphony Orchestra as well as the Maryland Opera Studio. Tiffany has acted as cover conductor with Symphony New Hampshire and the Princeton Symphony as well as the orchestras of Georgetown University and Cornell University. She has also served as producer on recordings by the Virginia Symphony Orchestra and the Smithsonian Chamber Players. Previous positions include cover conductor and principal librarian at the 2016 and 2017 National Orchestral Institute, and conductor of the Young Artists' Orchestra at the DC Youth Orchestra Program.

Tiffany holds degrees from Princeton University, Ithaca College, and the University of Maryland.



## **A Short History of the Prince George's Philharmonic**

The Philharmonic had its beginnings in Bowie, when, in December 1965, the Prince George's Civic Orchestra, under the direction of Lloyd Farrar, gave its first concert at the new Bowie High School. In May 1968, the orchestra performed for the dedication of Prince George's Community College, in the new Queen Anne Fine Arts auditorium, which then served as a principal venue for Philharmonic concerts. At the beginning of the 1969-70 season, the orchestra, renamed the Prince George's Symphony, gave the first concert under its new conductor Emerson Head, Associate Professor of Music at the University of Maryland. The Symphony presented five to ten concerts each season at many different locations in the County, its principal funding support coming from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC).

In 1977, Conductor Head and most members of the orchestra split from the Prince George's Symphony Board of Directors, and incorporated under the name of Prince George's Philharmonic. Both the Symphony and the Philharmonic continued performing for several more years, until the Prince George's Symphony closed its books in 1984.

The Philharmonic has continued to provide music for Prince George's County since that time. Emerson Head was succeeded, for the 1979-80 season, by Kenneth Kiesler, now director of the University Orchestras at the University of Michigan. Then, at the beginning of the 1980-81 season, Ray Fowler became conductor and music director of the Philharmonic, continuing at the helm for just over 20 years. During these years, the Philharmonic developed its outstanding "Symphony Kids" program, which provides instrumental music lessons to young students. In 2001, Charles Ellis succeeded Maestro Fowler as conductor and music director; he enlarged the size and repertoire of the orchestra, and initiated the Side-by-Side program whereby selected student instrumentalists from County schools perform with the orchestra in one selection at each season's February concert.

In the fall of 2015, the Philharmonic began its celebratory 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season, to include, in addition to six concerts, two special recitals and a *grande finale* reception at the end of the season. The orchestra was stunned by the death of Charles Ellis on New Year's Day 2016, but named Blair Skinner as resident conductor, and under his leadership, finished the 50<sup>th</sup> season as Maestro Ellis had planned it. The Philharmonic began the search process for a new music director, and selected Jesus Manuel Berard as its new conductor and music director. Maestro Berard begins his fourth season this fall.

Over 55 years, the Philharmonic has grown in the breadth of music that it presents and in its collaboration with talented guest artists and choruses, it has received critical acclaim for its performances. We perform 5 or 6 concerts each season at various venues in Prince George's County; with the Covid-19 pandemic, however, our 54<sup>th</sup> season came to an abrupt halt in March 2020. We begin our 55<sup>th</sup> season, bringing to you, virtually, delightful music written for stringed instruments and performed by a small ensemble of the Philharmonic strings. We look forward to resuming, as soon as possible, our regular schedule, and providing outstanding musical entertainment and education to Prince George's County and the surrounding area.

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Suzanne Lomax

Michelle Ruiz

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Michael Garrahan \*

Victor Lin \*

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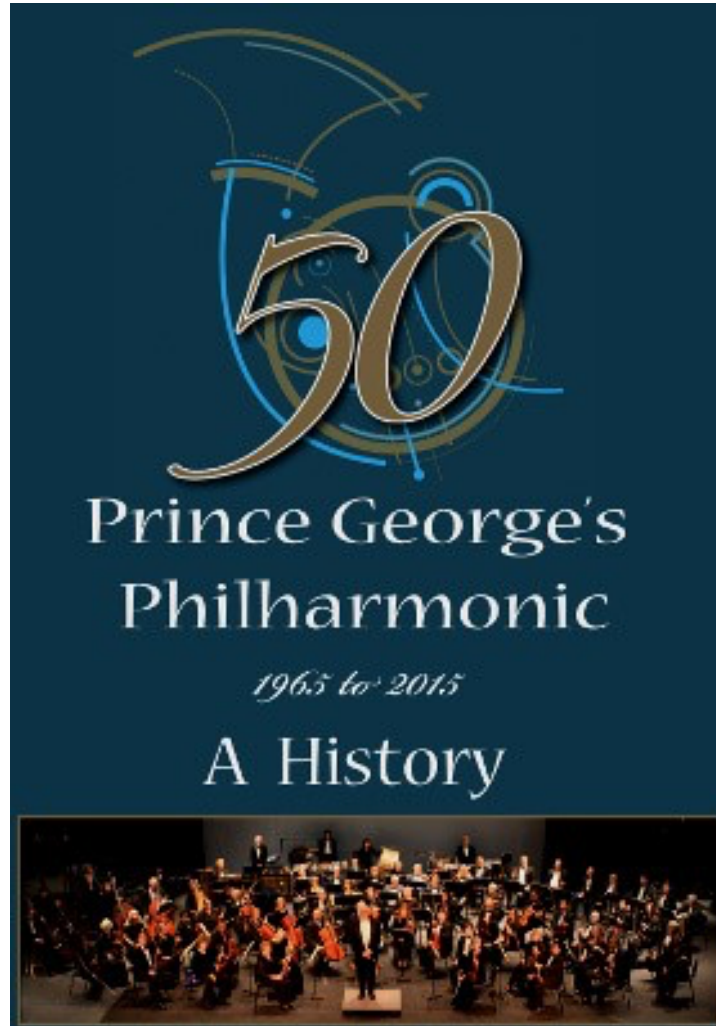
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