Born in Albany, New York, conductor, composer, and trumpet player **Leonard Bopp** is currently a senior at Williams College. At Williams, Leonard is Assistant Conductor of the Berkshire Symphony, with whom he made his conducting debut in April 2017. Leonard is also Music Director of the Chamber Orchestra of Williams, a student-led, flexible-instrumentation ensemble dedicated to innovative programming and engaging performance experiences. Performances with the Chamber Orchestra of Williams have included “Coming Together,” a program dedicated to the idea of building inclusive communities through engagement in the arts, at the Clark Art Institute in May 2017, and a semi-staged production of Mozart’s *La Clemenza di Tito* in April 2018. In April 2019, the Chamber Orchestra returns to The Clark for a performance of works by Nico Muhly and Copland’s *Appalachian Spring*. Passionate about performing new music, Leonard is Student Director of the Williams College I/O Festival of Contemporary Music, where he has conducted major works by Michael Gordon, Julia Wolfe, Bryce Dessner, as well as George Lewis’s *Anthem* with vocalist and composer Kate Soper. This year, Leonard will conduct Caroline Wiener’s *To The Hands* at the I/O Festival, where he will also perform Toru Takemitsu’s *Paths* for solo trumpet and premiere one of his latest composition projects, a setting of Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* for soprano and two percussionists.

Leonard is the Founder and Artistic Director of the New York-based Blackbox Contemporary Music Ensemble, a group devoted to critical engagement in contemporary social and political discourse through interdisciplinary and experimental creative work. The ensemble gave its debut performance in August 2018 in a program featuring the music of Paul Novak, Sato Matsui, and George Lewis that explored the impact of social identity on creative practice. The ensemble gives its next concert in December with a program of music by Pauline Oliveros and Zosha di Castri.

In August 2016, Leonard studied in Vienna, Austria, at a masterclass with Johannes Wildner, Professor of Conducting at the University for Music and Performing Arts Vienna, and was a prizewinner at the Wiener Musikseminar International Conducting Competition, where he was the youngest competitor. In September 2017, Leonard studied with Ulrich Windfuhr at the conducting masterclass of the International Mendelssohn Festival at the Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg, Germany. As a trumpet player, Leonard has also studied at the Chosen Vale International Trumpet Seminar in Enfield, New Hampshire, where he worked with many of the world’s foremost trumpet soloists. Leonard currently studies trumpet with Allan Dean, Professor of Trumpet at the Yale School of Music, and conducting with Ronald Feldman, Music Director of the Berkshire Symphony.

Leonard began his conducting studies as a student at The Juilliard School Pre-College Division, where he studied conducting with Adam Glaser and trumpet with Ray Mase. In addition to his musical life, Leonard is an English major at Williams, and has worked as a research assistant in the English Department. This year, Leonard will conduct works by Britten, Shostakovich, and Prokofiev with the Chamber Orchestra of Williams and the Berkshire Symphony as a part of his thesis project on tragic narratives and representations of death in music from the era of World War II, combining his academic and musical interests from throughout his time at Williams. This past summer, Leonard lived in the United Kingdom as a recipient of the Williams College Wilmers Research Fellowship to conduct research for his thesis.
Shulamit Ran (b. 1949)

Vessels of Courage and Hope

The S.S. President Warfield was a battle scarred, Baltimore based luxury steamer turned naval vessel during World War II when it was secretly bought by the Jewish underground movement Haganah, with funding by the American Jewish community. Under a mostly American volunteer crew it sailed in 1947 to the Mediterranean, loading at the French port of Sète 4,515 Jewish Holocaust refugees (a number ten times the ship’s intended capacity) on to her decks, heading to the port city of Haifa. The British, who had then occupied the land of Israel, (Palestine, as it was then called), attacked the ship upon its arrival in Haifa; and, following a hopeless struggle where the ship’s unarmed crew and passengers fought using potatoes, canned goods and pieces of railing, the Warfield surrendered, suffering major casualties. The ship’s weeping passengers were loaded on to prison ships and forcibly returned to Germany. It was this final stroke of cruelty, though, which caused enormous international outcry, and was one of various factors which led to the U.N. declaration of November 1947 calling for the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, resulting in the creation of the State of Israel in May 1948.

Moments before the Warfield surrendered, she raised the Star of David flag in bold defiance, revealing EXODUS 1947 as her new name. It was under that name that the ship’s tale of heroism captured the world’s imagination in the fifties and sixties, having been further popularized by Leon Uris’ famous book and subsequent motion picture of the same name.

Composing Vessels of Courage and Hope was, from its very inception, a most unusual and thought-provoking challenge for me. In my purely instrumental, “abstract” music, I have tended to avoid what might be called overtly programmatic writing. Here, however, I was confronted by a specific historical moment, one that for me – as an Israeli and a Jew – holds special emotional meaning. What made the challenge all the more daunting was the complexity of the story, the many points of view through which the story needed to be told, the broad range of human situations and emotions it brought into focus, and the significance – historical and symbolic – of its outcome.

Rather than narrating the events literally through music, I decided to focus my attention on two or three key points in this story, using them as points of entry into the emotional world this event
evoked in my own mind. The word “vessel” in the title is for me a very special word. It, of course, refers to a boat, but I am also using it in its broader meaning of “a container”, or “receiver” – in this case of the participants’ complex emotions and of things of the spirit.

The work starts with a fanfare-like opening, rather removed from the actual events and more concerned with a sense of occasion, or ceremony, of writing a commemorative musical statement. Quickly, though, a menacing, nervous little figure takes over and crescendos through the entire orchestra, leading one into the beginning proper of Vessels’ stormy voyage.

My imaginary subtitles for the two main sections that follow would be “fleeing” and “yearning”. The first of these touches on the sheer terror the Warfield’s human cargo must have experienced. Having barely escaped death in concentration camps, these Holocaust survivors have been dispossessed of all that was theirs: family, home, belongings; their past, present, sense of the future. There was only the here and now – uncertain, perilous, terrifying. Sailing the Warfield were their saviors: a handful of heroic men and women whose vision of fighting a cruel and indifferent world’s wrongs must have filled them with death-defying courage and determination. The mingling of different states of being and emotions as the ship made its fateful voyage, and the expression of tragedy and heroism – generalized as well as personalized – together define the musical landscape of much of the work’s center part.

When Dr. Barry Lever [the Baltimore dentist who spearheaded this commissioning project] first talked to me, he said something that left an indelible impression: “The one thing all these people must have had in common was a desire for peace, seeking a place on this earth that would be a home, a haven.” This idea is at the core of the latter part of Vessels of Courage and Hope – a long, continuous melody expressive of great yearning, longing, seeking.

Quite unexpectedly, in composing the final stretch of music I found myself quoting in a modified form a melody which some audience members might recognize. It is “Ha-tikva”, the Israeli national anthem, a word which in Hebrew means ‘the Hope’.

—Shulamit Ran

**Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)**

**Romeo and Juliet, Selections from Suites 1 and 2**

Of all the many musical adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays, none have served as inspiration to as many musical works as *Romeo and Juliet*. Perhaps Shakespeare’s most famous play, the story has been adapted by a number of different composers into many different musical forms - a grand opera by *Berlioz*; the “Overture-Fantasy” by Tchaikovsky; Leonard Bernstein’s famous
musical *West Side Story*. Alongside *West Side Story*, however, the ballet by Prokofiev has proven the most popular and enduring. The ballet itself is a staple of nearly every major ballet company; meanwhile, the orchestral suites, from which we hear selections this evening, have become standards of the orchestral repertoire.

Despite its enormous success, however, the story behind the creation of the ballet and the suites is nearly as tragic as the plot of the ballet itself. In 1935, after living and working abroad for nearly twenty years, Prokofiev was invited to return to Russia on the basis of a commission to write an opera or ballet. After considering a number of popular stories, Prokofiev settled on an adaptation of the infamous Shakespeare play, and spent the following summer writing the complete score in the spa town of Polenovo outside of Moscow. The score was then acquired by the Bolshoi Theatre, under the leadership of Vladimir Mutkhn, and was programmed for their 1937 season. However, these plans soon began to unravel as fast as they were drawn. When the newly-formed Committee on Arts Affairs called for a state assessment of the Bolshoi’s repertory, the premiere of the ballet was postponed as Mutkhn was arrested as part of Stalin’s Great Purge - during which many of Prokofiev’s other collaborators and colleagues were also arrested and often executed. Due to the ballet’s association with Mutkhn, the premiere was postponed. When it was finally premiered on the Russian stage in 1940, many changes to the score had been made without Prokofiev’s permission, or, at the very least, with his resistant submission.

In addition to the changes made to the score, the most obvious change was an alteration to the plot. It was Prokofiev’s intention, in his original score, to alter the ending of Shakespeare’s play, offering, instead of a tragic ending, a happy one, in which Juliet begins breathing and comes back to life just before Romeo stabs himself. But in the ultimate production, Prokofiev was forced to rewrite the ending to follow the tragic ending of the original Shakespeare play; it is this version of the ballet that lives on in performances today.

It was after the original premiere of the ballet was postponed - at which point it appeared that the ballet might never be performed - that Prokofiev adapted selections from the score into two popular orchestral suites and transcriptions for solo piano. These suites were then performed by orchestras around the US and Western Europe, before the premiere of the ballet itself. As such, the suites capture fragments of the ballet in its original version, before it underwent forced editing and unauthorized revision.

The four movements performed on this evening’s program capture, in brief, the tragic plot of *Romeo and Juliet*. The ominous opening of “Montagues and Capulets,” the first movement on tonight’s performance, foreshadows the tragedy to come. This is followed by a brisk, dance which, in the ballet, accompanies the Montagues’ entrance to the ball where Romeo and Juliet meet. The musical accompaniment to the couple’s first encounter - a solo flute accompanied by
pizzicato strings - follows, before the movement concludes with a return to the earlier dance music. The next movement is the accompaniment to the Balcony Scene. The first part of the movement captures Juliet’s surprise at Romeo’s calls; eventually, a soaring melody emerges, which corresponds choreographically to Romeo lifting Juliet as they dance together.

This movement is followed by The Death of Tybalt, in which the music mimics the on-stage sword fight between Romeo and Juliet’s cousin. In the middle of the movement, 15 strokes of the timpani and low strings signal the blows dealt to Tybalt by Romeo’s sword; this gives way to a painstaking funeral march as the corpse of Tybalt is carried away. The final movement captures the moment Romeo discovers what he believes to be Juliet’s corpse. As we know, however, the true tragedy is that Juliet has not actually died. With the final timpani strikes and brass chords, Romeo stabs himself and dies; in the final measures, Juliet wakes up to discover Romeo’s body, before herself committing suicide.

—Leonard Bopp

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
Symphony No. 3 “Rhenish”

One of the more crucial turning points in Schumann’s musical career occurred during the course of a nearly half-year sojourn in Vienna in late 1838 and early 1839, when he was introduced to Franz Schubert’s Symphony in C (the so-called Great C major, D.944) by the composer’s brother Ferdinand. In addition to arranging for the work’s long overdue premiere, with Mendelssohn and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra in December 1839, Schumann dashed off an enthusiastic review of the virtually unknown masterpiece for publication in his journal, the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik. Extolling the symphony for its “heavenly length” and its independence from the long shadow of Beethoven, Schumann also speculated on the external factors that may have influenced its creation: “Put together the Danube, the spire of St. Stephen’s Cathedral, and the distant Alps—the whole terrain bathed in a delicate Catholic incense—and you have a fair picture of Vienna. . . . On hearing Schubert’s symphony, with its scintillating romantic life, the city hovers before me now with greater clarity than ever before, and I can easily understand how such a work arose from precisely these surroundings.”

As is often the case with Schumann’s criticism, what he wrote about the compositions of others can be applied to his own works with a minimum of tweaking. Substitute the Rhine for the Danube, Cologne Cathedral for St. Stephen’s, and the Siebengebirge for the Alps, add a pinch of incense, and the result is an accurate description of the atmosphere that called forth Schumann’s Symphony No. 3, commonly known as the Rhenish. Both the number and the nickname require some explanation. Composed late in 1850, the Rhenish was actually the fourth and last of the
symphonies that Schumann composed. Not long after finishing his Symphony No. 1 in B-flat (Opus 38) in 1841, he wrote a Symphony in D minor that, perhaps due to its lukewarm reception by the public, he decided to withhold from publication. The C major symphony of 1845-46 appeared as No. 2 (Opus 61), the Rhenish then fell into place as No. 3, and the D minor symphony, in a highly doctored revision, was issued last as No. 4 (Opus 120). As for the nickname, Rhenish, although it appears nowhere in the original sources, chances are that Schumann would have approved of it—which brings us to his arrival in Düsseldorf, capital of the Prussian Rhine Province, in September 1850, with his wife Clara and their five young charges in tow. With a little coaxing from Ferdinand Hiller, Schumann had agreed to take up Hiller’s position as municipal music director in Düsseldorf, in which capacity he was responsible for conducting the rehearsals and performances of the city’s largely amateur orchestral and choral societies, and for overseeing the musical offerings on feast days at two of the local Catholic churches. Schumann must have assumed the new post with some trepidation. Years before, his good friend Mendelssohn may well have shared with him some of the frustrations he encountered during his own tenure as music director in Düsseldorf between 1833 and 1835: “At best, the members of the orchestra all enter separately, in the piano passages the flute plays sharp, not a single Düsseldorfer can play a triplet evenly, every Allegro ends twice as fast as it began, and the oboe plays E-naturals when the key signature includes E-flat.”

Although Schumann found it difficult to compose during his first weeks in Düsseldorf, complaining that the “dreadful street racket” deprived him of much needed sleep, he regained his creative stride before long. An important catalyst in this process seems to have been provided by a day-long pleasure trip in late September 1850 to nearby Cologne. In the month following his return to Düsseldorf, he drafted the brooding but intensely expressive Cello Concerto in A minor and began sketching the Symphony in E-flat. His work on what would become the Rhenish, however, was interrupted by a second trip to Cologne—this time in connection with Clara’s performance of his A minor piano concerto—and another visit to the landmark that had so profoundly impressed him during his earlier excursion: the city’s magnificent gothic cathedral. By early December the new symphony was complete, the entire task having occupied him for only about a month in which his official directorial responsibilities also made considerable demands on his time. In conversation with Wilhelm Wasielewski, the concertmaster of his Düsseldorf orchestra, and later his first biographer, Schumann refused to take special credit for the rapid completion of the symphony, observing that if Handel could write a whole oratorio in a month, the drafting of a symphony in the same time span was hardly a feat worth bragging about.

If only obliquely, Schumann himself acknowledged the decisive impact exercised on the symphony’s genesis by the Rhenish milieu in general and the Cologne Cathedral in particular. Writing to the publisher Simrock in March 1851, he expressed his desire to place his latest works with a Rhenish firm, “especially my most recent symphony, which here and there reflects a bit of
local color.” Similarly, he told Wasielewski of his attempt to place “folkish and popular elements” in the forefront of the new work. Indeed, the symphony’s generally high-spirited mood turns to more sober conceits only in the penultimate, fourth movement, which, according to the designation on the autograph score, was to be rendered “In the character of an accompaniment to a solemn ceremony.” The specific ceremony Schumann probably had in mind was the elevation of Archbishop Johannes von Geissel to the rank of cardinal at Cologne Cathedral on November 12, 1850—a well publicized event that he did not witness, but about which he almost surely read in one of the Düsseldorf newspapers.

Most tantalizing of all is Schumann’s reference to a “slip of paper” outlining the “poetic content of the symphony’s movements” and intended for distribution at a performance of the work in Cologne on February 25, 1851. Unfortunately, Schumann’s programmatic sketch for the Rhenish Symphony does not survive, but its general contents can be inferred from a review of the warmly applauded Düsseldorf premiere on February 6, 1851. (It has been suggested that a member of Schumann’s inner circle leaked the composer’s program to the press.) According to the anonymous reviewer, Schumann’s Symphony in E-flat depicts “a slice of Rhenish life.” Just as the first movement “arouses joyful expectations,” the second “paints a portrait of easygoing life on the Rhine,” conjuring up images of “pleasant boating excursions past vine-clad hills.” Whereas in the third movement “the composer, lost in reflection, rests his head on the window of an old castle,” in the fourth movement “we see Gothic cathedrals, processions, and stately figures in the choir loft.” Finally, “spirited tones from the previous movements intertwine” in the concluding Lebhaft as “everyone rushes outdoors to enjoy a merry evening of recollection.” Today such descriptions are apt to strike us as naive at best. Yet in Schumann’s time they served a useful purpose, assisting an audience to find its bearings in the unfamiliar territory of a new work, and often, as in this case, identifying the chief markers in the work’s affective course. Schumann’s listeners would have welcomed a programmatic rationale for the most striking feature of the Rhenish Symphony’s overall design: the presence of five movements instead of the canonical four. Precedents for this expanded structure include Berlioz’s Symphonie fantastique (which Schumann had subjected to a detailed analysis toward the beginning of his career as a music critic) and, even more to the point, Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony, the Pastoral. The succession of moods in the Rhenish, however, suggests that Schumann was intent on creating a more rustic counterpart to Beethoven’s symphonic idyll.

Schumann establishes the primarily celebratory tone of the Rhenish Symphony in the very opening bars of the first movement with a fanfare-like theme in the strings and upper winds. Supported by a propulsive accompaniment, this idea derives its incredible verve from an interesting rhythmic strategy: the grouping of pulses first in a broadly paced triple time and then in a pattern that moves precisely twice as fast. Schumann exploits the metrical ambiguity of his theme to the fullest, employing the broader, hemiola grouping as a kind of motto that he often
treats quite independently of its initial melodic contour. The second and third movements together comprise a contrasting pair of intermezzi, the former a heavily accented waltz, or Ländler, with two Trios, and the latter a series of gentle ruminations on three lyrical themes, each set in relief by its own distinctive instrumental color. While the second movement (scherzo), with its tipsy dance themes and obstinate drone basses, evokes a peasant atmosphere, the third movement is more reflective in character, the suave parallel intervals of its opening clarinet duo a direct import from the world of the pastoral. The mixture of “low” and “high” styles in these middle movements was fundamental to Schumann’s conception of the symphony as a whole. If his thematic building blocks were simple to the point of naïveté, their subsequent unfolding, frequently in delicately crafted contrapuntal textures, betrays an altogether more sophisticated approach.

The fourth movement and finale can also be heard as a complementary pair. Designated “feierlich” (“solemn”) and cast in the dusky key of E-flat minor, the fourth movement opens with the dignified strains of a chorale-like melody intoned by the trombone choir. As the primary object of Schumann’s contrapuntal manipulations, this melody is treated like an archaic cantus firmus, staidly migrating from one instrumental family to the next and surrounded by a dense tapestry of imitative entries that feature simultaneous statements of the melody in a variety of rhythmic guises. A last-ditch effort to dispel the somber mood with a rising brass fanfare proves unsuccessful; the movement ends with mysterious echoes of the chorale theme in the original minor key.

Solemn pageantry gives way to communal rejoicing in the finale. Initiated by a spiky dance theme in duple time, the last movement subsequently invokes almost all of its predecessors, though in ways that are not immediately apparent. A syncopated idea in the horns turns out to be a distant relative of the fourth movement’s chorale melody, while the development section opens with an understated reminder of gestures from the scherzo. In due course a rollicking variant of the short-lived fanfare from the previous movement breaks through in the horns, and the formerly doleful chorale melody reappears, transformed into a jubilant hymn, in the coda. A fitting close not only for a “merry evening of recollection,” but also for the entire work, this coda obviously made a deep impression on a Schumann devotee who also happened to be a great symphonic composer. Gustav Mahler lifted the fanfare theme heard near the conclusion of his First Symphony almost note-for-note from the closing pages of Schumann’s “Rhenish.”

– John Daverio