CONCERT 6 ▸ SUNDAY, AUGUST 3 | 2:45, 4:00 PM

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND EDWARDS HALL

CELEBRATING 37 YEARS OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE

SPONSORED BY THE **URI COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING**

PRE-CONCERT PERFORMANCE ▸ 2:45 PM
URI SUMMER MUSIC ACADEMY STUDENT SHOWCASE

FÉ / TATE — **"Rattle Songs"**

DOVER QUARTET ▸ JOEL LINK, VIOLIN; BRYAN LEE, VIOLIN; PIERRE LAPOINTE, VIOLA; CAMDEN SHAW, CELLO

BRAHMS — **Clarinet Quintet in B minor, Op. 115**

Allegro
Adagio
Andantino
Con moto

CLARINET: RICARDO MORALES; **DOVER QUARTET**

INTERMISSION

MENDELSSOHN — **String Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20**

Allegro moderato ma con fuoco
Andante
Scherzo allegro leggierissimo
Presto

DOVER QUARTET; **VIOLIN:** JASMINE LIN, AMY OSHIRO-MORALES; **VIOLA:** CHE-HUNG CHEN; **CELLO:** CLANCY NEWMAN

THE DOVER QUARTET APPEARS BY ARRANGEMENT WITH THE CURTIS INSTITUTE OF MUSIC, WHERE IT SERVES AS THE PENELOPE P. WATKINS ENSEMBLE IN RESIDENCE

ALL PROGRAMS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

"Rattle Songs"

PURA FÉ (B. 1959) | JEROD IMPICHCHAACHAAHA' TATE (B. 1968)

Originally sung by a vocal trio, these contemporary songs demonstrate the power of alliances between African American and Native American artists, according to Beverley Diamond, writing in *Native American Contemporary Music: The Women*. She describes Pura Fé's music as "a perfect synchronicity of close harmony, sliding chord changes, virtuosic phrasing, and polyrhythms played sometimes on frame drums… on can rattles or cow horn shakers shifted from delicacy to fierce strength, from sweetness to rough-edged energy."

After premiering *Woodland Songs* on August 2, 2024, the Dover Quartet again returns to gift us with Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate's melodically intriguing and rhythmically complex expression of Pura Fé's songs. Listen for the moods that are expressed over the seven different songs. The tone, texture and rhythmic devices employed by the strings bring forward the traditions of melody, drum, and dance from the Native nations that inhabited the continent prior to the arrival of Europeans.

From the composer's website: Pura Fé (Tuscarora/Taino) is an Indigenous activist, singer-songwriter, and storyteller known for her distinct, soulful vocals. She has performed in festivals, benefits, in classrooms, online, and in the studio. She strives to restore Native traditions, build community, fight corporate takeover of Native land, and give a voice to those facing social injustice. As the founding member of the internationally renowned Native Women's a cappella trio Ulali, Pura Fé helped to create a movement throughout Indian Country, to both empower Native women's hand drum and harmony and bridge Native music into mainstream music. Pura Fé's solo career has produced six studio albums with her Native Blues and lap-steel slide guitar work. Pura Fé and Ulali appeared in the Rezolution Pictures Documentary *RUMBLE: The Indians That Rocked The World*, which won first place at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.

Born and raised in New York City, Pura Fé was classically trained in dance and vocals. She was raised by her mother, Nanice Lund, who also sang professionally, performing for Duke Ellington's Sacred Concert Series. Pura Fé later went on to sing with the Mercer Ellington Orchestra. The influence of her grandparents' mixed-race ancestry with at least eight generations of women singers, continues to be the doorway to her musical creativity. Pura Fé and her family hail from the North Carolina Indigenous Tuscarora Deer Clan, who have black and Scotch-Irish ancestry as well. Her black ancestry stems from African banjo pickers. Today, Pura Fé lives in Canada and is writing a film for Rezolution Pictures and working with First Nations dance and theater troops.

Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate, a classical composer and a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, is dedicated to the development of American Indian classical composition. *The Washington Post*'s review reports that "Tate is rare as an American Indian composer of classical music. Rarer still is his ability to effectively infuse classical music with American Indian nationalism."

Tate is guest composer/conductor/pianist for San Francisco Symphony Currents program, "Thunder Song: American Indian Musical Cultures," and was recently guest composer for Metropolitan Museum of Art's Balcony Bar program, "Home with ETHEL and Friends,"

featuring his commissioned work *Pisachi* (Reveal) for String Quartet. Recent commissions include *Shell Shaker: A Chickasaw Opera* for Mount Holyoke Symphony Orchestra, *Ghost of the White Deer*, Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra for Dallas Symphony Orchestra, *Hózhó* (Navajo Strong) and *Ithánali* (I Know) for White Snake Opera Company. His music was recently featured on the HBO series *Westworld*. His commissioned works have been performed by over eight symphonies and numerous chamber groups, including the Concordia Chamber Players.

In addition to his work based upon his Chickasaw culture, Mr. Tate has worked with the music and language of multiple tribes, such as: Choctaw, Navajo, Cherokee, Ojibway, Creek, Pechanga, Comanche, Lakota, Hopi, Tlingit, Lenape, Tongva, Shawnee, Caddo, Ute, Aleut, Shoshone, Cree, Paiute and Salish/Kootenai.

Tate has held composer-in-residence positions for Music Alive, a national residency program of the League of American Orchestras and was the founding composition instructor for the Chickasaw Summer Arts Academy. He has taught composition to American Indian high school students. Tate earned his Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from Northwestern University and his Master of Music in Piano Performance and Composition from The Cleveland Institute of Music. He has performed as first keyboard on the Broadway national tours of *Les Misérables* and *Miss Saigon* and been a guest pianist for numerous ballet and dance companies.

Tate's middle name, Impichch<u>a</u>achaaha,' means "his high corncrib" and is his inherited traditional Chickasaw house name. A corncrib is a small hut used for the storage of corn and other vegetables — built high off the ground on stilts to keep its contents safe from foraging animals.

Clarinet Quintet in B minor, Op. 115

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

The Quintet was written for clarinetist Richard Muhlfeld, who so impressed Brahms that he emerged from his "retirement" to compose the piece at the Bad Ischi spa in Austria. Performed first in November of 1891, the Clarinet Quintet was quickly on demand and toured Europe. It consists of four movements:

In *Allegro*, Brahms introduces the clarinet by offering gentle musical statements, underpinned by his characteristic harmonizations and orchestral punctuations. Mental images of the Fall season come to mind in *Allegro*, indicative of a quieter season replacing the prior season of heat and exuberance. *Allegro* also offers opportunities to feel foreboding: worry about a Winter ahead.

Adagio calls for the strings to play with mutes (con sordino) and invites the listener to an almost "day-dreaming" state of relaxation, yet occasionally jolting us to be fully present with ourselves — it is introspective but also interpersonal. Stephen Miller from the BBC aptly describes the *Adagio* as "The private Brahms, the sensitive, lonely melancholic, carefully concealed in public behind barbed humour and that imposing patrician beard… [he] speaks to us directly, as though Brahms was no longer talking to an audience but to trusted friends."

Andantino is a short movement introducing the listener to a new set of feelings: industrious personal effort along with some spunky playfulness, as this is as playful as Brahms

will venture to express. Yet the mature Brahms modulates the sound between major and minor relative keys, as if to remind us of the basic insecurity of the human endeavor. Edgar Elgar summed up the feeling about Brahms' compositions, which he admired: "beautiful, but smiling with a sigh."

Con moto (with motion) offers variety as Brahms introduces a theme and provides several truly excellent variations, each expressing a different emotional state. It is as if Brahms, in his mature stage, is touching all the "core feelings groups." These are identified by psychologists as: peaceful, powerful, joyful, sad, mad, scared. As you listen to Brahms and think of his times and health, the listener can appreciate Brahms' honest and inclusive exploration of feelings.

An aspect of this performance that listeners anticipate is Ricardo Morales' deployment of clarinet vibrato. Richard Muhlfeld's renown vibrato was an aspect of his clarinet playing that attracted Brahms and motivated him to write the Quintet: but most players since have not leaned into vibrato so much. This author had the opportunity to be fully awed by the wide range of timbre and tone the clarinet can produce by performing with clarinetists Bob Snyder ("Amazing Grace" recording, 1988) and Laura Ardan (Principle, Atlanta Symphony 1982–2022). Especially with the clarinet, virtuoso musicians have been able to express many textures. At times the listener can barely recognize the clarinet because of the way it transforms sound into a sense of presence that transcends any one instrument — it can be flute-like, brass-like, saxophone-like and even string-like. Upon research, I think Brahms heard this expressiveness in Mulhfield's playing — his tone and vibrato were so comprehensive and multifaceted, that he could make the clarinet sound like another stringed instrument in the Quintet when he desired such an effect. It will be inspiring to observe Ricardo's approach in this performance.

Brahms is a composer who occupies the "middle spot" in the era of Romantic music. He was born in Hamburg, Germany to a musical, Lutheran family and was encouraged in cello and piano at a young age. The young Brahms was about more than these instruments: his piano teacher, Otto Friedrich Willibald Cossel lamented in 1842 that Brahms "could be such a good player, but he will not stop his never-ending composing." His parents believed he would be better performing than composing. Brahms continued to compose, and perform, in that order! He was served well in his recital tours with Hungarian violinist Ede Remenyl, who exposed him to a wide variety of folk and "gypsy-style" music. The touring also served as an entrée to major composers and soloists of the period.

Brahms's career was characterized by writing and performing. He composed symphonies, concerti, chamber music, piano works, choral compositions among other pieces of unknown numbers — because Brahms had a penchant for destroying music he had written if he did not consider it "worthy." He promoted the Classical tradition while both complementing and opposing the Romantic movement of the second half of the 19th century.

He composed most of his works and arranged concert tours from a Vienna home, where he met and collaborated with the major Romantic composers of his day. He had developed a close affinity to Clara Schumann who was 17 years his elder and a major collaborator. While some contemporary musicians found his music to be overly traditional and academic, he was admired by a diversity of different critics, from Arnold Schoenberg to Edward Elgar.

String Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20

FELIX BARTHOLDY MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

The Octet was composed by a 16-year-old Mendelssohn, who therein created a new genre of chamber music, all while he was preoccupied with classical studies by completing a translation of *The Women of Andros* by Terrance in metrically accurate German. This was published as well! Originally written as a birthday present for his violin teacher, the Octet embodies "the light, capricious *scherzando* writing that soon became a hallmark of his style," according to Larry Todd in the Grove Music Library. Sometimes this is referred to as a "double string quartet," and Mendelssohn wrote in the program notes for the New York Philharmonic, "The Octet must be played by all the instruments in symphonic orchestral style. Pianos and fortes must be strictly observed and more strongly emphasized than is usual in pieces of this character." It is divided into four parts: *Scherzo: Allegro leggierissimo* (very light) and *Presto*.

Allegro moderato ma con fuoco (fire) launches with a scorching fanfare, giving way for a passionate violin melody which is developed. A second theme is introduced and passed between instruments before flowering into a shimmering violin passage. The movement is repeated with a surprising embellishment for the second ending.

Andante reveals what is to become a "signature" Mendelssohn musical theme and development: from rambunctious to placid moods in quick succession.

Scherzo: Allegro leggierissimo (very light) sets in motion rhythmic figures reminding one of "pattering feet on a wooden floor." Then Mendelssohn expands into playful sounds, yet with a hint of intrigue and mystery. The overall effect in this energetic movement is to be playful, curious and expressive — for both musicians and listeners.

Presto flies at the onset with a celebration of the viola, tasked with a very athletic ascending line that is handed off to the violin and then joined by all in a broad, symphonic sound. This section allows the players to bring out the best tones of all the instruments together. Mendelssohn provides some whimsical interspersions of single notes by single instruments here and there to lighten the growing heft of the ensemble sound. The first violin is tasked with "driving the movement home" as in the first movement.

Young Mendelssohn's respect and incorporation of the forms of prior masters such as Mozart and Haydn are evident in this writing, but it also demonstrates his keen ability to understand and responsibly exploit new freedom found in Romantic music. Mendelssohn uses the heavier, dramatic aspects of Romanticism here as spice, not as the main ingredient. He therein discovers a way for music to lighten the spirit, rather than over-burden it with deep pathos.

Robert Schumann described Mendelssohn as "the Mozart of the 19th century, the most brilliant musician, the one who most clearly sees through the contradictions of the age and for the first time reconciles them."

Mendelssohn was born in the city-state now known as the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Germany. Mendelssohn's father, the banker Abraham Mendelssohn, was the son of the German Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. His mother, Lea Salomon, was a member of the Itzig family and a sister of Jakob Salomon Bartholdy. To protect his family, Abraham renounced Judaism and had his family baptized after they moved to Berlin in

1811; the father Abraham further adopted the name Bartholdy to distance the family from Moses' well-known reputation. Felix would later "fudge" his father's decision by using both Mendelsohn and Bartholdy names.

Mendelssohn grew up in an intellectually-focused home, where they established salons, bringing together leading artists, musicians and scientists of their time. He studied piano and was tutored in counterpoint and composition, especially Baroque. Besides music, Mendelssohn's education included art, literature, languages, classics and philosophy. He was introduced to the writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in 1821 — he would set a number of Goethe's poems to music. Mendelssohn was also an enthusiastic visual artist who worked in pencil and watercolour, a skill which he enjoyed throughout his life.

In 1829, Mendelssohn arranged and conducted a performance in Berlin of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, using a manuscript given to him by his grandmother. It earned Mendelssohn widespread acclaim and led to the recovery of Bach as a major composer. Mendelssohn wrote, "To think that it took an actor and a Jew's son to revive the greatest Christian music for the world!" In Leipzig, Mendelssohn concentrated on developing the town's musical life by working with the orchestra, the opera house, the Thomanerchor (of which Bach had been a director). In 1843, Mendelssohn founded a major music school, the Leipzig Conservatory.

Mendelssohn first visited Britain in 1829 and was introduced to influential musical circles. He died at age 38 after a series of strokes.

Epilogue

In what ways does music give you "permission" to feel something within that might otherwise remain buried? Tonight's offerings provide such opportunities to feel. In *Rattle Songs* some might feel a deep appreciation for this land and its Native people, evoking emotions of both serenity and grief. The Clarinet Quintet offers serenity as well, but excitement although tempered by Brahms' signature melancholy. The Octet leads to feelings of industriousness, capability, triumph, joy, and cooperation with others. Many have taken the opportunity to journal about such things after concerts, and this concert provides a panoply of opportunities to name those feelings, and who knows, maybe someday share them?

Program notes by Dr. James Wells