

# Bard College Conservatory of Music

*presents*

## A Degree Recital: Javen Lara, *viola*

Sunday, May 16, 2021, at 2:00 PM

View the concert on: <https://youtu.be/zm1s8MAT5TE>

Passacaglia for Violin & Viola  
from the Suite in G minor, HWV 432  
by George Friedrich Handel

Johan Halvorsen  
(1864-1935)

*with*  
Gigi Hsueh, *violin*

Drei Suiten für Bratsche allein  
(Three Suites for Viola) Opus 131, No. 1 in G minor  
Molto sostenuto  
Vivace  
Andante sostenuto  
Molto vivace

Max Reger  
(1873-1916)

Intermission

Der Schwanendreher  
I. Langsam: "Zwischen Berg und tiefem Tal"  
II. Sehr ruhig: "Nun Laube, Lindlein, Laube" - Fugato: "Der Gutzgauch auf dem Zaune saß"

Paul Hindemith  
(1895-1963)

*with*  
Diana Borscheva, *piano*

Pizziquitiplas

Paul Desenne  
(b.1959)

*with*  
Lily Moerschel, *cello*  
Nick Scheel, *cello*

## Program Notes:

### Passacaglia

For the first half of the Program, I decided to pair romantic pieces that pay homage to the Baroque, starting with Passacaglia. Johan Halvorsen was an accomplished violinist and conductor born in Drammen, Norway on March 15, 1864 and died in Oslo, Norway on December 4, 1935. He played as concertmaster in The Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra as well as Bergen, later becoming the conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic. Passacaglia is one of his most notable and highly acclaimed works. It is a theme and variation based on Handel's last movement of his Harpsichord Suite in G minor; a free reworking, using the theme and running with it. The Passacaglia form originated in Spain and similar to the chaconne, it usually has a bass-ostinato present under variations built off of the theme. Halvorsen took this keyboard piece and recomposed it for string virtuosity. There's a certain flashiness to playing it as well as holding oneself with bravado. From the starting variation, stating the theme with gusto; to the middle variation's slow, passionate, slightly dissonant harmonies pulling at the heartstrings; to the very end where there is a clear climactic progression. Halvorsen showcases the player's skill throughout the piece in such a beautiful and quite fun way. Passacaglia was composed in 1894 and premiered in 1897.

### Viola Suite in G minor

Next, we have the Viola Suite No. 1 in G minor. Max Reger was born on March 19, 1873 in Brand, Germany and died on May 11, 1916 in Leipzig, Germany. He, like Halvorsen, was a Pisces. As a pianist, organist, conductor, and teacher, Reger has a vast musical vocabulary composing for piano, strings, and many vocal works. His skill in writing beautiful melodies can be heard throughout this Viola Suite. Reger shows a late romantic influence in the harmonic language, through chromaticism and powerful harmony. As well as being influenced by Bach, Reger is known almost as a Bach meets Wagner. His viola suites, particularly his stringed solo pieces, nod at Bach's unaccompanied violin and cello works in a few places, although Reger's suite only has four movements. Opening with a prelude-like first movement, the *molto sostenuto*, establishing the beautiful key of G minor with heartfelt chords. The harmonies lead the listeners to places yet land on unpredictable melodies. The second and third movements give me a sense of dance as they have pulses in three. The *Vivace*, a faster, more energetic three and the *Andante sostenuto* reminds me of a Sarabande in its slower paced movement. The last movement ends the entire piece with a storm of notes. Reger showcases the player, similarly to Halvorsen, in speed and virtuosity. The Viola Suites were composed near the end of Reger's life and premiered the year of his death, 1916. He dedicated the Three Suites for Viola to one of his friends, Dr. H. Walther.

### Der Schwanendreher

For the second half of my program, I decided to pay homage to my past by playing pieces that were milestones for me. This was the first concerto I played for a competition and ended up winning. A bit about the composer first: Paul Hindemith was born in Hanau, Germany on November 16, 1895, making him a Scorpio, and he died in Frankfurt, Germany on December 28, 1963. A prolific composer for writing in various genres, reigning in a clearly new era of modern music. His choice of harmony using dissonance and unsettled feeling tunes, only to be met with triumphant cadences can be found throughout his arsenal of works. Der Schwanendreher "The Swan Turner", is by far one of his most popular pieces, becoming part of the standard repertoire of viola pieces. The premiere of it was in Amsterdam, in November, 1935. The piece is based off of an ancient song, referring to the street musician who walked around, singing along to a hurdy-gurdy. The first movement, "Between Mountain and deep Valley" opens with a cadenza that leads to the orchestral statement of the ancient tune. Throughout the movement, the soloist plays restatements of the tune in varied modes and closes with the opening cadenza to a grand finish. The second movement is in ABA form. It starts with "Leaf out Little Linden Tree", with a subdued setting, sounding like a folk

song. This leads to the fugato, “The Cuckoo Sat on The Fence”, starting with an orchestral introduction that is then joined in by the soloist. The movement closes with a restatement of “Leaf out Little Linden Tree”. Playing this piece is invigorating. Paul Hindemith, as a violist, composes like one, with such fitting chords, that are comfortable to play and just make sense.

### Pizziquitiplas

Based off of Quitiplas, an Afro-Venezuelan traditional instrument made of bamboo, Pizziquitiplas was originally written for three cellos (the viola is cello I) as a cello trio, using the cello in a mode that transcends the tradition of classically played instrument. There is an emphasis on percussive sound, “aerophonic color,” as said by the composer himself. Cello I uses harmonics most of the duration of the piece as well as hits the body of the instrument and the other two cellists solely use pizzicato. Paul Desenne was born in Caracas, Venezuela on December 7, 1959 of French and American ancestry. He is a Sagittarius. His style is an eclectic infusion of his heritage but he was inspired largely by this Afro-Venezuelan tradition into all of his pieces, filling the works with percussive, polyrhythmic energy. Released on CD in 1995. I decided to play this piece because it was the first chamber piece I have ever played, back when I was 10 years old. I wanted to do it justice now, a little over 13 years later so I reached out to the composer to find a score of this. Surprisingly, he remembered me from long ago and sent me the music. The reason I chose this piece as my final work that I’ll be playing is to end my time at Bard on a note of chill energy. The first half of Pizziquitiplas is active, very easy to bop one’s head to. The second part is almost meditative, re-enacting a set that would be played at a Venezuelan cafe and that vibe is exactly how I want to leave Bard College and Conservatory.

### About the Artists:

**Javen Lara**, from New York City, is a fifth-year student at the Bard Conservatory and studies viola with Honggang Li, of the Shanghai Quartet. Lara’s double major is in Italian Studies, with a thesis focus on Dante’s Inferno. She began studying violin at the age of three and switched to the viola seven years later. Lara attended Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School and was principal violist of the symphony orchestra. She joined the Face the Music ensemble, a group of young artists who play music exclusively by living composers. Within the ensemble, Lara was guided under the mentorship program with the Kronos Quartet, as a founding member of the Pannonia String Quartet and the Face the Music Quartet, having the privilege of working with as well as receiving coachings from David Herrington and Hank Dutt. She has performed at multiple venues in New York City including Lincoln Center, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Le Poisson Rouge, The Brooklyn Lyceum, and Carnegie Hall. Lara studied at the Kaufman Music Center with Suzanne Wagor, receiving the Van Lier Scholarship 2012-2015 as part of the Young Artist Program as well as receiving third prize at the 2016 VIVO International Competition. She won the 2016 Fiorello LaGuardia Concerto Competition. Lara was a three time winner of the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Competition 2014-2016. She was the assistant principal violist for the New York Youth Symphony’s 2016-2017 season. She studies with Honggang Li of the Shanghai Quartet and has had the honor of studying under Luis García-Renart, Robert Martin, Blair McMillen, Ira Weller Raman Ramakrishnan, Melissa Reardon, and Peter Wiley in chamber music. She holds the Conservatory’s George Martin/Hans Thatcher Clarke Scholarship. Lara will be one of two of the first African-American graduates of Bard College Conservatory.

**Gigi Hsueh** is a fifth-year violinist in the Bard Conservatory of Music Double Degree Program majoring in computer science and music performance. She has had the honor to study with Daniel Phillips for four years who she considers as one of her greatest mentors in life. At Bard, she also had the privilege to study with Gil Shaham and Yi-Wen Jiang, and to be coached by Peter Serkin, Luis García-Renart, Robert Martin, Raman Ramakrishnan, Melissa Reardon, Blair McMillen, Marka Gustavsson, and Ira Weller in chamber music.

Gigi began studying violin at the age of six in Taiwan. Before Bard, she graduated from LaGuardia High School of Music and Manhattan School of Music Pre-College, where she studied with Krzysztof Kuznik. She played as Concertmaster and Principal of Bard Conservatory Orchestra, LaGuardia Symphony orchestra, NSO Institute Orchestra, Kinhaven Symphony Orchestra, and CYCNY Youth Orchestra. In 2009, she made her solo debut in Merkin Concert Hall. She had performed in Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and around the world on various orchestra tours. In 2012, She was invited to perform at First Lady Michelle Obama's luncheon in the United Nations General Assembly. In 2013 and 2014, She won the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Young Musicians' Competition with her chamber group.

In addition to her violin career, Gigi also plays the piano and was a winner of the Steinbach Taiwan Piano Competition and Baroque Piano Music Competition. Just last week, she performed Bach Keyboard Concerto in A Major with the Bard Community Orchestra.

Outside of the Conservatory, Gigi is a residence advisor and an athlete on the swim team. She enjoys yoga and hiking in the Hudson Valley. After graduating, she will start her new position as a Software Engineer at Etsy.

Praised for her beautiful deep sound, virtuosic skills, and immense artistry, Russian-born pianist **Diana Borshcheva's** passions lie in both solo and collaborative repertoire. As a solo pianist Ms. Borshcheva won several competitions in Russia and Europe, including the International Piano Competition in Italy (Grand Prix) and the International Piano Competition in Lithuania (First Award).

Making music with others has always been a unique passion of Ms. Borshcheva's. An active advocate for instrumental chamber music, Ms. Borshcheva participated in several music festivals and worked in the studios of highly-esteemed musicians such as Terry King, Melissa Kraut, Sharon Robinson, Richard Weiss, Mary Kay Fink, Jeffrey Irvine, Phillippe Muller and more.

In addition, Ms. Borshcheva has worked for more than a decade as a vocal coach and piano teacher. Before her position as a piano fellow at Bard College Conservatory, Diana studied with Warren Jones, the venerate pianist and vocal coach at the Manhattan School of Music.

**Lily Moerschel** is a fourth year cellist at the Bard College Conservatory of music. She holds the Mischa Schneider scholarship. At the time of this recital, she will have completed her Senior Project in the Psychology program. In her spare time, Lily enjoys reading and studying French.

**Nick Scheel** is a cellist in his third year at Bard College and Conservatory, with a second major in mathematics. Nick is from Minnesota, where he was first introduced to chamber music through the Stringwood Summer Festival and Artaria Chamber Music School. He has also been to Interlochen Arts Camp, the International Cello Institute, and the ENCORE Chamber Music Festival in Ohio. He jumps at every chance he gets to collaborate with fellow musicians, and his favorite kind of parties are chamber music sight-reading parties.