Bard College Conservatory of Music

Third Year Recital

Robert E. Santini Meléndez, Horn

Saturday, November 14th, 2026, 7:30 PM

Olin Hall

Nocturno, op. 7 — Franz Strauss (1822-1905)

Jingwen Tu, *piano*

Sextet in C Major, op. 37 — Ernst Von Dohnányí (1877-1960)

I. Allegro appassionato

Cong Wang Wang, *piano*
Jiani Dong, *violin*
Qijia Liu, *viola*
Yushi Yao, *cello*
Lilla Pókai, *clarinet*

Concerto in B-flat Major, op. 91 — Reinhold Glière (1875-1956)

I. Allegro

Ian Abbott, *percussion*
Jingwen Tu, *piano*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Robert Edevian Santini Meléndez is a French horn player born in Puerto Rico. He started his musical education with his instrument at the age of nine in the *Escuela Libre de Música Antonio Paoli de Caguas* with Benito Díaz Piñero, Principal Horn of the *Orquesta Sinfónica de Puerto Rico*. Robert is currently in his third year pursuing a Double Degree in French Horn Performance at Bard Conservatory of Music and Economics at Bard College. His professors are Barbara Jöstlein Currie, Fourth Horn of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, and Hugo Valverde, Second Horn of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Robert participated and got selected three consecutive times to play with the *Orquesta Sinfónica de Puerto Rico* under the program *Experiencia Sinfónica* which, after a process of auditions, gave the opportunity to young musicians to play with the orchestra. He participated in the summer program in Puerto Rico held by Berklee College of Music in Boston where he got the opportunity to acquire experience in jazz and improvisation. Robert also participated in the *Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival* in Vienna with the *Orquesta Sinfónica Antonio Paoli* where he had the opportunity to play in very important venues such as *Musikverein Wien,* home of the Vienna Philharmonic, also known as The Golden Hall.

Cong Wang received his undergraduate degree from the School of Music at Shanxi University and is currently pursuing a Master of Music in Piano Performance at Bard College Conservatory of Music, where he studies with Professor Blair McMillen. He has served as a collaborative pianist for more than 40 master's degree recital performances. In 2025, he advanced to the final round of the Steinway Piano Competition in China. He was also invited to participate in the Sound of Northern Land Music Week.

Jiani Dong is currently pursuing her Bachelor of Music degree in Violin Performance at the Bard College Conservatory, where she studies under renowned violinist Mira Wang. She is also double-majoring in Literature. Before coming to Bard, she studied at The Tianjin Juilliard School Pre-College, where she served as concertmaster of the Pre-College Orchestra and actively participated in various ensemble and choral performances. In May 2024, she was interviewed as one of the outstanding graduate representatives of The Tianjin Juilliard School.
Jiani has studied with many distinguished violinists, including Li Weigang, Tong Weidong, Ning Fangliang, Song Yang, and TzuTi Daniel Chang.

Qijia Liu was admitted to the Affiliated Primary School of Central Conservatory of Music in China in 2015. In 2021, he and his group won the award at the 5th Central Conservatory of Music Piano Chamber Music Competition, becoming the youngest winners in the competition. During his middle school years, he has held solo and chamber music concerts multiple times at well-known venues such as the Opera Hall of the Central Conservatory of Music, the Beijing Music Hall, the Rubinstein Music Hall, and Changsha Music Hall. He was admitted to Bard College with a full scholarship in 2024, now studying under Gil Shaham and Adele Anthony.

Yushi Yao, born in January 2006 in Wuhan, began studying cello at the age of seven. In 2015, she was admitted to the cello major at the Wuhan Conservatory of Music Affiliated Middle School. In 2018, she placed second in her major. She studied under teachers such as Long Man, Pan Yan, and He Sihao, and received guidance from famous artists such as Matti Rousi and Qin Liwei. During this period, she participated in major domestic and international competitions and achieved excellent results. She also performed at high-level venues such as Wuhan Qintai Concert Hall and Wuhan Theater. She is currently pursuing a dual degree at Bard College and has received a full scholarship from Bard Conservatory of Music, studying under the renowned cello master Professor Peter Wiley. During this period, she actively participated in music ensemble performances across different genres, including Chinese traditional music, contemporary music, and traditional Baroque ensembles.

Lilla Pókai is a Hungarian clarinetist currently in her third year at Bard College, where she is pursuing a double degree in Clarinet Performance at the Bard Conservatory of Music and Biology and Chemistry majors at Bard College. She studies clarinet with David Krakauer and Pascual Martínez-Forteza, having previously studied with Csaba Klenyán in Budapest.
Lilla has received numerous awards in national and international competitions, including first and festival prize at the Hungarian National Clarinet Competition and the Helikon Festival of Arts, as well as first and second prizes at the FEMUS International Woodwind Competition in Serbia. At Bard, she performs regularly in chamber ensembles and with the Bard Conservatory Orchestra. Beyond performing, she helps organize classical music events with Altalena and teaches clarinet to students in Kenya through the Music Mentorship Initiative. Alongside her musical studies, she is particularly interested in veterinary medicine and scientific research.