

Baltimore Chamber Orchestra

# PRESS PACKET

*markand thakar, music director*



2015-2016

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# HISTORY



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Baltimore Chamber Orchestra's first performance, led by Maestra Anne Harrigan, was on January 29, 1984. She introduced the audience to a classical orchestra offering virtuoso performances that touch the heart.

From its beginning, Baltimore Chamber Orchestra has grown to occupy an essential niche in the thriving arts scene of greater Baltimore. Our core repertoire is the overtures, concertos, and symphonies of Classical Era masters Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Schubert, which we perform with the actual sized ensemble for which it was composed. BCO remains a group of exceptional musicians who are passionate about their performances. Indeed, the orchestra strives to meet the same standard established at its inception in 1984: to provide accessible, high-quality, classical music with an intimate touch.

Markand Thakar joined BCO as music director in June 2004. Maestro Thakar made his debut with the New York Philharmonic in 1997 and has since appeared with that orchestra multiple times, along with numerous orchestras across North America. Former music director of the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra and principal conductor of Duluth Festival Opera, he is co-director of graduate conducting at the Peabody Conservatory and the author of two seminal works: *Counterpoint: Fundamentals of Music Making* (Yale University Press, 1990) and *Looking for the "Harp" Quartet: An Investigation into Musical Beauty* (University of Rochester Press, 2011). Since the 2009-10 season, Maestro Thakar's annual intensive conducting programs bring dozens of conductors from around the world to work with him and the BCO musicians.

Jonathan Leshnoff joined the orchestra as Composer in Residence in 2007, and BCO welcomed Baltimore Symphony associate concertmaster Madeline Adkins as our concertmaster in 2009.

BCO continues to achieve new heights. In recent seasons the orchestra has recorded three CDs for the Naxos label, given five concerts on tour in China, presented a New York debut warmly received by *The New York Times*, and performed on University of Delaware Masterplayers series.

The orchestra comprises 40 of the area's best professional musicians performing in concert venues seating fewer than 1,000, which offers each audience member the opportunity to experience music-making at an intimate level. A committed and enthusiastic Board of Trustees includes community leaders, philanthropic advisors, and music lovers. Creative partnerships with businesses and media in the region contribute to the visibility and accessibility of the orchestra.



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# REVIEWS

FEBRUARY 21, 2012 - TIM SMITH'S CLEF NOTES, THE BALTIMORE SUN

## Lyrical afternoon with Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, Ana Vidovic

The **Baltimore Chamber Orchestra** has only three concerts listed this season, each scheduled a few months apart. It would be perfectly understandable if things sounded a little, well, unpolished, when the ensemble takes the stage, but that's not the case. If anything, the BCO sounds better each time I hear it.

The group boasts some fine musicians, a mix of free-lancers and Baltimore Symphony veterans (including Madeline Adkins, who clearly has much to offer as BCO concertmaster), so I realize that a certain level of technical quality is to be expected.

Still, it was remarkable to hear such impressive work during Sunday afternoon's performance at Goucher College, as if the orchestra had been giving concerts every week since opening the season last October.

Music director Markand Thakar, who evident knows how to maximize rehearsal time, had the players producing a consistently well-balanced sound.

Thakar knows how Wagner's "Siegfried Idyll" goes, and he had it going very well at the start of the program. Tempos were spacious, dynamic contrasts beautifully attended to, phrases sensitively molded.

The strings summoned a velvety tone throughout, while woodwinds and brass likewise offered subtlety and warmth.

It was much the same at the end of the evening, in Schubert's Symphony No. 5. Thakar got the music percolating nicely, and the musicians again paid keen attention to details of color and contrast.

In between came Rodrigo's exquisitely atmospheric Concierto de Aranjuez, with Ana Vidovic as soloist. The Peabody-trained guitarist demonstrated much more than effortless technique. Her phrasing, seemingly spontaneous and filled with delicate touches, communicated richly.

Thakar provided smooth support from the podium, and the orchestra purred nicely, with many a telling solo effort within the ensemble.

The famous Adagio, which enjoyed a whole new life years ago as soundtrack to a Chrysler TV ad featuring Ricardo Montalban and the ad man-created "rich Corinthian leather" (see below), emerged with particular care and tonal beauty; Leslie Starr's English horn solo here matched Vidovic's playing for elegance.



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# REVIEWS

FEBRUARY 13, 2013- TIM SMITH'S CLEF NOTES, THE BALTIMORE SUN

## Fine concerts from Music in the Great Hall, Baltimore Chamber Orchestra

I made a dash for it at intermission to Kraushaar Auditorium for the **Baltimore Chamber Orchestra's** concert, which was in progress when I arrived.

The portion of the Mozart Divertimento I caught found the ensemble's fine string section maintaining a cohesive tone and phrasing with a good deal of nuance. On the podium, Markand Thakar demonstrated the art of the unobtrusive conductor -- minimal gestures, maximum expression.

Things were likewise polished and vivid at the program's close in the deliciously neo-baroque Concerto Grosso No. 1 by Bloch. Thakar had the ingenious music percolating nicely and drew finely detailed efforts from the orchestra and the various soloists within.

The rest of the program showcased guest artist Katherine Needleman, whose work as principal oboe of the BSO has long been admired.

She soared through Bach's A major Concerto for oboe d'amore as if on one breath, sculpting the melodic lines with great flair.

The strings, led by the concertmaster, backed the soloist sensitively; the gently rocking second movement emerged with particular warmth.

Needleman was even more impressive in Vaughan Williams' Oboe Concerto. The piece, much of it in the composer's "Lark Ascending" mode, inspired exquisite, mellow-toned phrasing from the soloist, while Thakar and the ensemble provided stylish partnering.



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# REVIEWS

OCTOBER 7TH, 2014- TIM SMITH, THE BALTIMORE SUN

## Baltimore Chamber Orchestra Devotes Season-Opener to Haydn

The **Baltimore Chamber Orchestra** opened its season Sunday afternoon with a program devoted to Haydn, who is neck-and-neck with Ives for the title of Greatest Composer Most Frequently Ignored Around Here.

The program, presented at Goucher College's Kraushaar Auditorium included Symphony Nos. 6 - 8 (titled "Morning," "Noon" and "Night"), and overstuffed narration about the composer's life that consumed nearly as much time as it took to play those three pieces.

Given how similar the symphonies are in structure and flavor, I would not have minded an interpretive surprise or two from BCO music director Markand Thakar -- diverse tempos for the Menuet movements, perhaps. Still, his sensitive shaping of the scores made it easy to savor the ingenuity of Hadyn's creations.

With its mix of Baltimore Symphony members and sturdy freelancer musicians from the area, the BCO is capable of admirable work, which was the case on this occasion. Articulation was adroit, phrasing colorful from the ensemble throughout.

These pieces include lots of solos, delivered with considerable flair by principal players in the orchestra. To single out just two of the highlights: cellist Seth Low spinning out elegant lines in the second movement of Symphony No. 8; bassist Laura Ruas getting the instrument to sing brightly in the third.



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# TRAVELS

## SUZHOU, CHINA - December 28th, 2009—January 1st, 2010

Over New Year's Eve, 2009, BCO performed at The Suzhou Science and Cultural Arts Center in Suzhou, China, a 1200 seat multipurpose theater. The program featured Viennese music, with waltzes and polkas by Johann Strauss and others. Jonathan Carney was BCO's guest concertmaster for the tour and also soloed in pieces by Fritz Kreisler. BCO gave five concerts while on tour in China.

*"The best New Year's concert I have ever seen in China. The program and the quality of the orchestra are both top in the world. The soprano stunned the audience not only with her beautiful voice, but also her superb performance of Chinese song "I Love You, China". Maestro Markand Thakar and the orchestra have such a fine collaboration that the whole concert came with an amazing attraction. It is the most successful new year concert since our centre opened."* -Christopher Chen, Artistic Director, Suzhou Performing Arts Centre

## NEW YORK - November 2nd, 2008

BCO performed in New York city at Bargemusic on Sunday, November 2nd, 2008. The program included *Trombone Concerto* by Jonthan Leshnoff, Mozart's *Adagio and Fuge (K.546)* *Adagio from Bruckner's String Quintet in F* and Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge*. Christopher Dudley soloed on the trombone.

*"The orchestra held the stage for the rest of the concert, which continued with Jonathan Leshnoff's handsomely wrought, lyrical Trombone Concerto. Christopher Dudley, the soloist, played glowing melodic lines over autumnal string harmonies in the outer movements. An animated central section featured a leaping solo part and playful interplay among the string sections...the Fauxharmonic could not compete with real musicians here...for one listener, at least, the afternoon's keenest discovery was Mr. Leshnoff - Steve Smith, The New York Times*



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# TRAVELS

## NEWARK, DELAWARE— May 4th, 2010

In early May of 2010, BCO performed at the Gore Recital Hall at Roselle Center for the Arts sponsored by the University of Delaware Department of Music. The concert was part of the Masterplayers Series. BCO performed with the grand prize winners of the 2009 Delaware International String Competition, Su Xu and Courtney Chang.

*“The 2009 Delaware Idols impressively concluded last year's MPCS season with a fiery performance with the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra.”* -UDaily, University of Delaware



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# COMPOSER-IN-RESIDENCE

## JONATHAN LESHNOFF



Named by the *Washington Post* as one of the “gifted young composers” of this generation, Jonathan Leshnoff is a leader of contemporary American lyricism. His compositions have earned international acclaim for their accessible melodies, structural complexity and weighty themes.

The New Jersey-born, Baltimore-based composer’s works have been performed by classical music’s most celebrated stars, including Marin Alsop, Robert Spano, Gil and Orli Shaham and Manuel Barrueco. His works have been performed by orchestras around the world including the Baltimore, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Kansas City, Nashville, and Buffalo Symphony Orchestras. Leshnoff’s orchestral works have also been performed by over 40 additional orchestras including the Reno, IRIS, Santa Barbara, Tucson, Amarillo, Fort Wayne, Asturias, Memphis, Harrisburg, Fairfax, Reading, Grant Park and Columbus symphony orchestras, as well as by the Concert Opera de Toulon, Kyoto Orchestra and the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia.

With four significant world premieres, the 2015-16 season will be an exciting one for Leshnoff. In April 2016, the Philadelphia Orchestra will premiere a clarinet concerto the orchestra commissioned from him in 2015. Performed by principal clarinetist Ricardo Morales, it will be conducted by the renowned Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

The spring will also usher in a new violin concerto for legendary violinist Gil Shaham and the Knights Orchestra. Commissioned by Baltimore-based Shriver Hall Concert Series, the group will premiere the work in February 2016 before it goes on tour. Commissioned by the Kansas City Symphony, Leshnoff’s *Symphony No. 3* will premiere May 2016 in Kansas City. The piece, which commemorates the 100th anniversary of America’s entrance into World War I, includes excerpts from soldiers’ letters to their loved ones sung by baritone Stephen Powell.

Last year included many highlights for Leshnoff, including the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra debut of his *Guitar Concerto*, under Music Director Marin Alsop and renowned guitar soloist Manuel Barrueco. The performance was repeated in Oviedo, Spain, with the Asturias Symphony under the baton of Andrew Grams, and subsequently with the Nashville Symphony, under the baton of Giancarlo Guerrero, and the Reno Philharmonic, under the baton of Laura Jackson. The season also included a five-city tour of Leshnoff’s new song cycle, *Monica Songs*, with soprano Jessica Rivera and conductor Robert Spano at the piano. The tour culminated with Leshnoff’s Carnegie Hall debut on October 29, 2013.

Jonathan Leshnoff has released three albums to date, all on the Naxos *American Classics* label. His recording of *Violin Concerto*, performed by Charles Wetherbee with the **Baltimore Chamber Orchestra**, led by Markand Thakar, was selected among Naxos’ Top 40 CDs of 2009. Other Naxos releases feature his *Symphony No. 1*, conducted by Michael Stern with the IRIS Chamber Orchestra, along with Leshnoff’s chamber music.



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# MARKETING

WBJC RADIO



Prior to a Baltimore Chamber Orchestra concert, WBJC, Maryland's Classical Music station, will run several 30 promotional spots as well as an interview of Markand Thakar by host Jonathan Palevsky. WBJC also gives away five pairs of tickets spread out over several days as part of BCO's promotional package.

## LIVING SOCIAL

BCO works with Living Social, a discount ticket supplier, to offer a three-concert subscription at a deeply discounted price for new subscribers. Living Social has thousands of subscribers in the Baltimore-Washington area who receive direct e-mails that advertise our season and concerts.

The screenshot shows the Living Social Merchant Center interface. The left sidebar is purple and contains navigation links: dashboard, manage offers, redeem vouchers, engage customers (marked with a 'new' tag), and view payments. The main content area is titled 'promotions' and lists three offers:

Offer Title	Location	Started On	Redeemed	Action
Ticket to Three Baltimore Chamber Orchestra Shows	Baltimore	08/27/2014	0% (0/168)	view performance
Ticket to Three Baltimore Chamber Orchestra Shows	Baltimore	10/26/2013	0% (0/57)	view performance
Four Baltimore Chamber Orchestra Shows	Baltimore	09/25/2012	0% (0/153)	view performance



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# MARKETING

## GOLDSTAR

BCO also works with Goldstar, another discount ticket supplier, to offer discount single tickets. Goldstar also has thousands of e-mail subscribers that receive information about BCO weekly.

The screenshot shows the Goldstar Supplier Center interface. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with the Goldstar logo and links for Home, Find Events, My Tickets, My Stars, and a user profile icon labeled 'Me'. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'Supplier Center' for 'Baltimore Chamber Orchestra'. A horizontal menu contains tabs for Overview, Event Listings (which is active), Sales Reports, Will-Calls, Vouchers, Remittances, Resources, and FAQs. The main content area displays two event listings. The first listing is for 'Spring Music' at the Kraushaar Auditorium at Goucher College (Towson, MD), with 1 date (February 8, 2015) and a gross revenue of \$362.50. The second listing is for 'Baltimore Chamber Orchestra: String Music' at the same venue, with 1 date (November 2, 2014) and a gross revenue of \$12.50. On the right side, there is a 'Your VRM' section featuring a profile picture of Ashley Tang, her name, and contact information: 'Hello DC and Baltimore! I can be reached at (626) 993-3482 or atang@goldstar.com. After hours, weekends, and in cases of emergency, please email venues@goldstar.com or call (626) 204-3960 x4.' At the bottom right of this section is a 'Submit A New Event' button. A URL is visible at the bottom left of the screenshot: https://www.goldstar.com/suppliers/8961/listings/93168/inventories.



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# MARKETING

## SOCIAL MEDIA

BCO maintains a Facebook page and a Twitter account. We also send out e-mails to about 1,000 addresses roughly once every two weeks. We do a quarterly e-mailed newsletter.



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