

CAPE SYMPHONY

“Storytellers” Show Notes

The Cape Symphony presents [Storytellers](#) on Saturday, May 13 at 7:30 PM and Sunday, May 14 at 3:00 PM at the [Barnstable Performing Arts Center](#).

Cape Symphony

[Jung-Ho Pak](#), Conductor

[Cape Symphony Musicians](#)

[Board and Staff](#)

Guest Artists

[Niloufar Shiri](#), Kamāncheh

[Wang Ping](#), Storyteller

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Carl Nielsen

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Niloufar Shiri, Composer & Kamāncheh Soloist

THE BOOK WAR

In Collaboration with The Moth

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Laura Benjing Fan, Composer

Meg Bowles, Director

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SCHEHERAZADE

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

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About Today's Program

"The Marketplace in Isfahan" is a movement from composer Carl Nielsen's suite called *Aladdin*. The piece depicts the story of Aladdin in the busy marketplace in the city of Isfahan. It's unusual because it's a form of controlled aleatoricism (in which some elements of the composition are left to chance) where different sections of the orchestra perform music in different speeds and melodies, giving the impression of competing sellers singing about their wares in a busy, cacophonous, and rich aural setting. Carl Nielsen was Denmark's most prominent composer. Born in 1865, he presented the premiere of his first work at age 23. He also played violin in the Royal Danish Orchestra for many years and taught at the Royal Danish Academy. *Aladdin* was initially written for a 1919 Danish play entitled "Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp," based on the story from *One Thousand and One Nights*, the famous collection of Middle Eastern folk tales. The play was one of many Western interpretations of Middle Eastern images and stories, versus the region's actual culture and people. Nielsen and the play's director clashed and he withdrew his name from the production (which was a flop). Throughout the 1920s, Nielsen conducted *Aladdin* across Europe, and today it is one of his most widely performed works.

The Cape Symphony commissioned the Iranian composer Niloufar Shiri to create a new and updated "Scheherazade" story from a woman's point of view. Niloufar's piece entitled "Within My Soul: Scheherazade Reimagined" connects *Scheherazade* with the stories of contemporary women. With the orchestra, Niloufar will perform this world premiere on the kamāncheh, a traditional Iranian string instrument.

Niloufar's music carefully weaves the musical and poetic structures of traditional Iranian music with noise and electronics to produce music that explores the contemporary soundscape of a displaced Iran. Niloufar has collaborated and performed with numerous ensembles and festivals as a performer and composer, including Mostly Mozart, Tehran Contemporary Music Festival, Ojai Music Festival, and Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. Niloufar received her B.A. with Honors in composition at UC San Diego in 2017 and a M.A. in Integrated Composition, Improvisation, and Technology from UC Irvine in 2022. In conjunction with her studies, she performed research, funded from a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts, on Iranian classical music.

For the first time, the Cape Symphony is collaborating with the renowned public radio program [The Moth](#). Since its launch in 1997, [The Moth](#), produced in Woods Hole and New York City, has presented thousands of stories told in front of live audiences around the country. Many of us are familiar with [The Moth](#) through the Peabody Award-winning [The Moth Radio Hour](#), which airs on over 500 stations nationwide including Cape Cod's own [CAI](#), and [The Moth Podcast](#).

Our Moth storyteller is award-winning writer, photographer, performance and multimedia artist [Wang Ping](#). A recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship, Ping was born in Shanghai, China. She will share her Moth piece, "The Book War," about how she survived the oppression of the Chinese cultural revolution by starting a banned book club. In 1985, she left China to study in the U.S., earning her master's degree from Long Island University and Ph.D. from New York University. Ping's publications

have been translated into multiple languages and include poetry, short stories, novels, cultural studies, and children's stories. She lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, and is an emeritus professor of English.

Ping will be accompanied by the Cape Symphony performing an original score by Chinese-American composer Laura Benjing Fan. Laura is a Chinese-American musician based in Queens, New York. Their background in Western and Chinese traditions has heavily influenced their musical expression, resulting in emotional, atmospheric, motif-driven music. They graduated summa cum laude from Berklee College of Music as a double major in Film Scoring and Contemporary Writing and Production, with a specialized minor in Writing for Television and New Media. Currently, they are in the first cohort of the Ghetto Film School's Emerging Composers Program. Laura's unique life experiences have made them value representation and diversity, and they pride themselves on their versatile skill set and ability to collaborate with like-minded artists. Laura provided this program note:

"As a first-generation Chinese-American, 'The Book War' is a story close to my heart. Having family members detail their experiences during the Cultural Revolution, Ping's story shed light on a different perspective. 'The Book War' is not about suffering, but rather finding joy, strength, and community. In Ping's own words, 'If you only cry, it's like a hammer, so what's the point of crying without laughter?' With my background in traditional Chinese music, I aimed to create a score that was heavily influenced by emotions, as well as nature, so the orchestra can blend seamlessly with Ping's storytelling. I am extremely grateful to uplift and collaborate with Ping - to work with such a wise and inspirational Chinese woman has been a great honor, and I will continue to be motivated by this experience. Happy Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month!"

Scheherazade is a symphonic suite in four movements by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, based on the tales from *One Thousand and One Nights*, also known as *The Arabian Nights*, a collection of stories that include the adventures of Aladdin and Sinbad the Sailor. This classic favorite is famous for big, bold sonic colors and sweeping melodies, and features the violin as the imaginative Scheherazade herself, the main character in *One Thousand and One Nights* who, according to the legend, told these stories to postpone her execution by her husband the Sultan. Rimsky-Korsakov said that he wanted the listener to take away the impression of "numerous and varied fairy-tale wonders." Written during the summer of 1888, *Scheherazade* premiered in St. Petersburg in the fall, conducted by Rimsky-Korsakov himself. Fun fact: figure skaters have often used *Scheherazade* in competition, including Midori Ito, Michelle Kwan, and Evan Lysacek (who won the gold medal at the 2010 Winter Olympics, using the music in his free skate). Standout performances to watch for during this piece include Cape Symphony Concertmaster Jae Cosmos Lee and Principal Harp Sandra Bittermann.

Enjoy "Storytellers"

Join the Cape Symphony for [Storytellers](#) on Saturday, May 13 at 7:30 PM and Sunday, May 14 at 3:00 PM at 3:00 PM at the [Barnstable Performing Arts Center](#), 744 West Main Street, Hyannis MA 02601.

To purchase tickets for [Storytellers](#), visit capesymphony.org, call the Box Office at 508-362-1111, email tickets@capesymphony.org, or visit 2235 Iyannough Road in West Barnstable, MA.

With thanks to Wikipedia.