



Georgia Markakis Mills is an American conductor, pianist, and maker of classical and contemporary music. Showcasing versatility across orchestral repertoire, opera, and new music, Mills has conducted acclaimed ensembles and collaborated with such artists as Chris Thile, George Lewis, Nico Muhly, Augusta Read Thomas, Dylan Mattingly, Darian Donovan Thomas, Modney, Julia Wolfe, Louis Andriessen, Judd Greenstein, and Courtney Bryan. In 2024, Mills has led the New Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra in a concert featuring Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony and

conducted the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra in a program of works by Stravinsky, Copland, Nardi, and Mozart. She led the award-winning new music group Alarm Will Sound as their first Guest Conductor in a program of premieres along with Steve Reich's "Radio Rewrite," and conducted the International Contemporary Ensemble in their program featuring works by Courtney Bryan for the Bang on a Can Long Play Festival. In the coming months, Mills is scheduled to lead the New Conductors Orchestra in Ravel's *Ma mere l'Oye* and conduct the New York premiere of Christopher Cerrone's opera *In a Grove* with Metropolis Ensemble and Beth Morrison Projects.

Mills completed her Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) in Conducting at the Eastman School of Music in May 2024, when she was awarded the Walter Hagen Conducting Prize and was nominated for the Lecture Recital Prize in recognition of her research on micropolyphonic transformations in the music of György Ligeti. At Eastman, she served as Assistant Conductor of the Musica Nova Ensemble under the direction of conductor Brad Lubman. Mills held graduate teaching awards in conducting and music theory at Eastman, and was an Adjunct Professor of Orchestration at Roberts Wesleyan University.

Highlights from 2023 include serving as Cover Conductor with the New York Philharmonic, Cover Conductor with the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, Guest Conductor of the Grossman Ensemble, and Guest Conductor of Contemporaneous. Mills appeared as the Cover Conductor for the premiere of Dylan Mattingly's opera *Stranger Love* presented by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Associate Music Director for the premiere of Judd Greenstein's opera *A Marvelous Order* with NOW Ensemble. In 2022, Mills conducted Nico Muhly's world premiere ballet *Third Bird*, directed by Isaac Mizrahi and John Heginbotham with Ensemble Signal in collaboration with the Guggenheim Museum's Works & Process performing arts series. She conducted the premiere studio recording of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Julia Wolfe's *Oxygen*, presented by Carnegie Hall, and served as Assistant Conductor for the premiere of George Lewis' *Tales of the Traveller* at the TIME:SPANS festival.

During her studies at the Eastman School of Music, Mills was the Assistant Conductor of the Eastman Opera Theatre under direction of Timothy Long in staged productions of Kate Soper's *Here be Sirens* and Stephen Sondheim's *Into the Woods*. Mills has held numerous artistic direction and arts administration positions, including: Assistant Conductor of the Eastman Opera Theatre; Associate; Music Director of the Rochester Summer Opera; Vice President of OSSIA New Music; Co-Artistic Director of the Pulsing & Shaking Festival; Administrative Associate with The Knights orchestra in Brooklyn; Publicity Assistant for Dotdotdot Music; and Production Assistant with Metropolis Ensemble. Mills received her undergraduate degree in piano performance from New York University in the studio of Eduardus Halim.

**~Program Notes~**  
**Berkshire Symphony**  
**September 27, 2024**

Welcome to the opening concert of the Berkshire Symphony Orchestra's 78th season!

Tonight's program spans three centuries, beginning with Ludwig van Beethoven's raucous "Symphony No. 7," followed by Missy Mazzoli's cosmic "Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)" and culminating in the bombastic finale of Igor Stravinsky's ballet "Firebird." I am elated to be invited to lead tonight's concert. The program represents my values in presenting music that threads musical connections over time.

We open with Beethoven's "Symphony No. 7," completed in 1812. It premiered the next year, conducted by the nearly-deaf composer at a benefit in Vienna for wounded Austrian and Bavarian soldiers fighting in the Napoleonic Wars. Richard Wagner revered the symphony, referring to it as the "apotheosis of dance," even with its deeply contrasting sober and somber moments. John Eliot Gardiner aptly described each movement: the first is euphoric, containing A major scales that exude excitement, joy, and purity. The second is ritualistic, following a dactylic rhythm as though set to the sacred text "Sancta Maria." The third, a zesty and wild dance with preposterous energy. And the fourth remarkably outshines the third with a raucous bacchanal.

Mazzoli's "Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)," completed in 2014, was inspired by the vastness of space and the interconnectedness of celestial bodies, drawing motivic connections over far distances. You'll notice many musicians playing harmonicas, which illustrate a sense of the breathing cosmos. The composer likens the form of the piece to the revolutions of a planet: it ends much like it begins, like a planet returning to its initial orbital position. But time has passed and much has changed.

We send you off with the final movements of Stravinsky's "Firebird," premiered in 1910. The formidable director Sergei Diaghilev famously took a chance on the young composer, commissioning him for his Ballet Russes, and the result was a story rooted in Russian folklore that symbolized rebirth, beauty and magic: the Firebird. The Berceuse is a lullaby movement with serene and gentle melodies that capture a sense of tranquility, contrasted by a jubilant and explosive Finale that celebrates the restoration of peace in the story.

Thank you for joining us this evening. We hope you are as exhilarated by experiencing this program as we are performing it for you.