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BARD CONSERVATORY ORCHESTRA

**FISHER
CENTER**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24 AT 7 PM
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25 AT 2 PM
SOSNOFF THEATER**

Bard

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Presents

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**Conducted by Zachary Schwartzman
with Marcus Roberts Trio**

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, Op. 60

Adagio—Allegro vivace

Adagio

Scherzo and Trio: Allegro vivace

Allegro ma non troppo

James P. Johnson (1894–1955)

Yamekraw, arr. Marcus Roberts

with Marcus Roberts Trio

INTERMISSION

Edward Elgar (1857–1934)

Symphony No. 1 in A-flat Major, Op. 55

Andante. Nobilmente e semplice—Allegro

Allegro molto

Adagio

Lento—Allegro

Saturday, October 24 at 7 pm

Sunday, October 25 at 2 pm

Sosnoff Theater

These performances of *Yamekraw* are made possible through the support of an anonymous donor.

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, Op. 60 (1806)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born in Bonn, December 17, 1770

Died in Vienna, March 26, 1827

Beethoven's career as a composer spanned some 40 years, from his youthful essays to the last string quartets. His output, however, was not evenly distributed over those decades. There were years when he composed little or nothing at all, while at other times he wrote vast amounts of music over a remarkably short period of time. During such latter periods, it is hard to reconcile Beethoven's extreme speed with the common image of the composer toiling endlessly over his sketches.

The year 1806 was one of the most prolific in Beethoven's life. He completed his three Razumovsky quartets, the Fourth Piano Concerto, the Fourth Symphony, and the Violin Concerto all in the space of those 12 months. He also started work on what would later become the Fifth Symphony (actually, he began the C-minor work first, and then set it aside in favor of the symphony in B-flat).

The 36-year-old Beethoven was in the middle of his so-called "heroic" period, shortly after the "Eroica" and just before the no-less-heroic Fifth. The Fourth has traditionally been seen as a kind of respite between these two mighty works—according to a view that was once widely shared, the dramatic odd-numbered (and really "heroic") symphonies contrasted with the more lyrical even-numbered ones.

Yet this view misses some important facts about the Fourth Symphony. Upon closer listening, we will find that this work is animated by the same incessant flow of energy and the same irresistible pull to move forward as its more tempestuous neighbors. It is just as perfect a representative of the "heroic period" as any other work from those years. The emotions may be lighter and less tragic, but they are expressed with the same force throughout.

The first movement opens with what is certainly one of the most suspenseful slow introductions Beethoven ever wrote. The idea of starting a B-flat-major symphony with a slow-moving unison theme in B-flat minor may have come from Haydn's Symphony No. 98, but the polarity is much more extreme in Beethoven, whose introduction is full of a sense of mystery that was entirely new in music. One finds it hard to believe that Haydn had written his London symphonies only a decade earlier and was still alive in 1806!

Slow introductions are usually linked to the subsequent allegros by means of some transition that builds a bridge between the two tempos. In Beethoven's Fourth, there is a clear separation instead of a bridge. A drastic shift of keys and a sudden general rest bring the music to a virtual standstill before the energetic Allegro vivace is launched. Now there will hardly be a moment of pause until the end of the movement. The concise exposition begins with a brisk and vibrant theme, and even the more lyrical moments are full of motion and excitement.

The development section employs one of Beethoven's favorite musical techniques: thematic fragmentation. The first theme is "decomposed" almost to its atoms; for a while, it receives a new lyrical counter-melody that is, however, soon brushed aside by a tutti outburst. The recapitulation is prepared by a long tremolo on the kettledrum, over which the strings gradually put the thematic "atoms" back together for the triumphant return of the theme.

The second movement is the only large-scale lyrical Adagio in a Beethoven symphony before the Ninth. (The slow movements of the other symphonies are all faster, with the exception of the Funeral March of the Third.) In the Fourth Symphony, Beethoven unfolds a beautiful cantabile ("singing") theme over a characteristic rhythmic accompaniment that eventually rises to the status of a theme in its own right. The cantabile theme returns several times, with more and more ornaments added. The movement ends with a timpani solo followed by two powerful orchestral chords.

The third movement is a Scherzo, although Beethoven didn't use that word as a title. The music abounds in playful elements such as subtle interplays of duple and triple meter, sudden modulations (or, rather, jumps) into distant tonalities, and a general mood of exuberant joy. The Trio moves in a slower tempo and has a simpler melody; it is based on the juxtaposition of the

orchestra's wind and string sections. Beethoven added an interesting twist to the usual scherzo form here: he expanded on the standard form (Scherzo-Trio-Scherzo) by means of a second appearance of the Trio and a third Scherzo statement (he was to repeat this form in the Seventh Symphony).

The finale, marked "Allegro ma non troppo," begins with a fast-moving theme in sixteenth notes, only briefly interrupted by more expansive melodies. This movement is light in tone and cheerful in spirit. Like the slow introduction to the first movement, the finale also shows how much Beethoven had learned from Haydn (less during his brief apprenticeship with the older composer than from studying Haydn's symphonies). But, once again, most of the music sounds like no one but Beethoven. The repeated and unresolved dissonances at the end of the exposition (duly brought back in the recapitulation) sound rather close to a similar passage in the first movement of the "Eroica." Also, Haydn probably wouldn't have entrusted the return of the fast-moving theme to the solo bassoon, in what is one of the most difficult passages for the instrument in the classical repertoire. In general, Haydn's cheerfulness has been stepped up to a state of near euphoria. One feels that this music could go on *ad infinitum*, but it is suddenly interrupted by a hesitant, slower rendition of the main theme in the violins, continued by the bassoons, and cut off by a few energetic chords played by the entire orchestra.

Yamekraw (1927)

James P. Johnson

Born in New Brunswick, New Jersey, February 1, 1894

Died in New York City, November 17, 1955

Arranged by Marcus Roberts

Born in Jacksonville, Florida, August 7, 1963

One can say without exaggeration that George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) revolutionized American music. Originally billed as an "experiment" in combining symphonic music and the emerging art form of jazz, it was brilliant proof that the experiment was successful, and it soon inspired other musicians to contribute to this new "fusion" genre.

James P. Johnson, known as the "father of stride piano," presented his *Yamekraw* concerto, orchestrated by William Grant Still, at Carnegie Hall on April 27, 1928, four years after Gershwin's historic premiere had taken place just a few blocks south in Aeolian Hall, on West 42nd Street. The piano soloist was the legendary Fats Waller, and the orchestra was led by W. C. Handy, sometimes called the "father of the blues." The title *Yamekraw* is a form of "Yamacraw," a historic Black neighborhood in Savannah, Georgia, itself named after a Native American tribe that used to live in the region.¹ James Weldon Johnson, the author of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" (the Black national anthem), mentioned the neighborhood in a poem he published in 1927, the same year James P. Johnson (no relation) wrote his "Ebony Rhapsody," originally for piano solo.

Marcus Roberts has now created a new version of *Yamekraw*, adding to a growing repertoire for jazz trio and orchestra that already includes a Roberts version of *Rhapsody in Blue* (2016), as well as with his original *Concerto in D*, another Gershwin homage written at the request of Seiji Ozawa. His *Rhapsody* received its premiere at Ozawa's festival in Matsumoto, Japan and has been widely performed since.

Symphony No. 1 in A-flat Major, Op. 55 (1908)

Edward Elgar

Born in Broadheath, England, June 2, 1857

Died in Worcester, England, February 23, 1934

Like his contemporaries Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss, Edward Elgar belongs to the generation of the “last Romantics.” Elgar’s Romanticism, however, is different from that of his continental colleagues. Both Mahler and (the young) Strauss were, in a sense, revolutionaries and challengers of traditions. Elgar, on the other hand, while he certainly did not lack originality, was no iconoclast. He aspired to, and attained, the status of his country’s unofficial “composer laureate.” (In this respect, he resembled another contemporary, Jean Sibelius.) To Elgar, whose father was a piano tuner and church musician, it was a matter of the utmost importance to rise through the ranks of society, be elevated to knighthood, and, later, baronetcy. In addition to symphonies, concertos and oratorios, Elgar wrote marches for state celebrations, something that few composers of his rank would do around the turn of the twentieth century. He was inspired by royalty, as he was by the scenery of his country with its rivers and woodlands. He is often described as an “Edwardian,” a representative of the era of King Edward VII (1901–10), often considered a “golden age,” and an inhabitant of the (supposedly) idyllic world that was forever destroyed in World War I.

Yet, as British musicologist Michael Kennedy warned us in his study “Elgar the Edwardian,”² this image of Elgar is one-sided; it overlooks the composer’s personal side, not to mention his dark side. According to Kennedy, Elgar harbored deep-seated feelings of sadness and nostalgia that he tried hard to conceal. These feelings stemmed from the great void caused by the early death of his friend Alfred Rodewald, his guilt over his love for Alice Stuart-Wortley, whom he called “Windflower” (they were both married), and the loss around 1905 of his religious beliefs. Many of Elgar’s greatest works seem to embody the struggle to maintain a serene, Olympian exterior in the face of these inner crises.

Speaking about the First Symphony, completed in 1908 when Elgar was 51 years old, the composer said it reflected “the innumerable phases of joy and sorrow, struggle and conquest, and especially the struggle between the ideal and actual life.” In the symphony, this struggle was ultimately crowned by success. The noble tune that opens the work as a quiet hymn returns

gloriously as a triumphant march at the end. In between, however, the passions awaken, and a wide range of turbulent emotions is unleashed.

Elgar had been thinking about composing a symphony for a number of years. On October 20, 1898, he wrote to his friend August Jaeger (the “Nimrod” of the Enigma Variations) that he had a “Gordon Symphony” in mind, in memory of General Charles Gordon (popularly known as Gordon Pasha), a British military leader killed in the siege of Khartoum, Sudan, in 1885. By 1899, these plans were abandoned, and it wasn’t until 1907 that Elgar was able to summon the forces required for a symphony. That year, he proudly announced to his family that he had found the symphony’s main theme. He played it to his friend, the violinist W. H. Reed, who noticed that the same melody had already appeared in the coda of Enigma. According to Reed, Elgar was surprised when the similarity was pointed out to him.

Elgar finally set to work on the symphony in August 1907 and completed it 13 months later. Jaeger, now seriously ill, had begun to doubt whether he would ever hear a symphony by his friend. But he was able to attend the premiere, with Hans Richter and the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester on December 3, 1908. Following the performance, Jaeger wrote:

I never in all my experience saw the like. The Hall was *packed* The atmosphere was electric After the first movement E. E. was called out; again, several times, after the third, and then came the great moment. After that super Coda the audience seemed to rise at E. when he appeared. I *never* heard such frantic applause after any novelty nor such shouting. Five times he had to appear before they were pacified. People stood up and even *on* their seats to get a view.”

Some reviewers referred to Elgar’s First as England’s First, hailing the work as the greatest symphony ever composed by an Englishman. Within a year, it had no fewer than 82 performances in Great Britain and abroad. This resounding success gave Elgar the incentive to start another symphony, and he wrote his Second from 1909–11. (There is an interesting parallel with Brahms here: both composers took a long time to write their first symphonies, but once the ice was broken, a second symphony soon followed.)

The opening theme of the first movement is marked “Andante, nobilmente e semplice” (“nobilmente” was one of Elgar’s favorite performance instructions). If this theme is noble and dignified, as the marking suggests, the second, which follows immediately, is excited and passionate; it is set in D minor, a tonality as distant from the initial A-flat major as possible. A group of warmly expressive lyrical ideas completes the thematic material of the movement. With their great contrasts in character, tempo, and meter, the themes symbolized the extremes of “joys and sorrows” or “ideal versus actual life,” ideas that Elgar said informed the symphony.

In the development section, the contrasts between lyrical and dramatic characters become even sharper. Then the drama subsides as we hear a plaintive violin solo accompanied by gentle harp figurations. In the recapitulation, the order of the themes is reserved—Elgar wanted to end with the noble first theme, thereby resolving all previous tensions. He assigned the return of that theme to the last desks of the violins and violas. He explained this unusual choice to Hans Richter, the conductor of the first performance: “I have employed the last desks of the strings to get a soft diffused sound,” said Elgar. “The listener need not be bothered to know where it comes from—the effect is of course widely different from that obtained from the first desk soli: in the latter case you perceive what is there—in the former you don’t perceive that something is not there—which is what I want.

The sound remains “soft and diffused” to the end of the movement, whose last measures Elgar described as “sad&delicate.” The conflicts have been temporarily laid to rest, but the “struggle” of which Elgar spoke has not yet been won.

Much of the music for the second and third movements originated in a string quartet Elgar began to sketch in 1907 but never finished. The second movement is a Scherzo (although not so labeled) in the key of F-sharp minor. Elgar went to great lengths to explain to Jaeger the choice of this tonality, so remote from the symphony’s main key of A-flat major. He pointed out that the thought of the A-flat/F-sharp relationship as a descent and that, despite the great harmonic distance between the two keys, the transition from one to the other was extremely smooth.

Like the first movement, the Scherzo contains three distinct themes, all of a light and playful character. It is as though the drama of the first movement were repeated by comedians rather than tragic actors. The first theme

consists of scurrying sixteenth notes, the second is a march à la *Pomp and Circumstance*, and the third, introduced in B-flat major after another surprising key shift, is hauntingly simple and pastoral. W. G. Reed reported what Elgar told the orchestra about this last theme during a rehearsal: “Don’t play it like that: play it like’—then he hesitated, and added under his breath, before he could stop himself—‘like something we hear down by the river.”

What happens to these three tunes is similar to what happened to the first movement’s three themes earlier: they alternate, interact, and develop. Finally, everything disintegrates, and the volume fades into pianissimo.

The third movement follows the second without a pause, with the first violins holding their note over from the Allegro into the Adagio. Here a surprise awaits: the notes of the opening theme are exactly the same as those of the first theme in the Scherzo, only in slow motion. (The underlying harmonies are different, however.) A second, equally lyrical idea appears, soon to dissolve into a virtuosic dialogue between solo clarinet and solo violin. The recapitulation of the first theme is followed by a quiet Coda whose theme, when Elgar first sketched it, bore a quotation from *Hamlet*: “The rest is silence.”

The last movement begins in D minor and winds its way back to the main key through a number of stages. Through much of the movement, martial and lyrical themes vie for supremacy. Elgar pointed out in a letter that “the fierce quasi-military themes are dismissed with scant courtesy” and “the coarser themes are well quashed.” That is, in fact, what happens by the end of the movement, but the martial theme does not surrender so easily. Even after being “tamed” and turned into a lyrical tune—same notes, different articulation—it makes one last appearance in its original form. But in the end, nothing can stand in the way of the triumphant return of the noble theme from the first movement, and this theme provides the grandiose ending of the symphony.

—Peter Laki, Visiting Associate Professor Emeritus of Music

1. Once a thriving community, it was turned into a public housing project in the 1940s and has recently made headlines because its buildings have deteriorated to a point where the city of Savannah is considering demolishing them and building new affordable housing for the residents—a plan that has generated some controversy.
2. In *Elgar Studies*, ed. Raymond Monk (Scholar Press, 1990).



Bard Conservatory String Quartet with Conservatory Dean, Tan Dun.

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¹ Ludwig van Beethoven, *Symphony No. 4*

² James P. Johnson, *Yamekraw*

³ Edward Elgar, *Symphony No. 1*

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FISHER CENTER ADMINISTRATION

Gideon Lester, *Artistic Director and Chief Executive*
Aaron Mattocks, *Executive Producer and Chief Operating Officer*

Scan here for the full Fisher Center at Bard staff listing:



fishercenter.bard.edu/about/staff

BARD COLLEGE CONSERVATORY PROGRAM FACULTY

Violin

Adele Anthony
Luosha Fang '11
Yi-Wen Jiang
Erica Kiesewetter
Honggang Li*
Weigang Li*
Daniel Phillips
Gil Shaham
Mira Wang
Carmit Zori

Viola

Luosha Fang '11
Marka Gustavsson
Honggang Li*
Melissa Reardon

Cello

Raman Ramakrishnan
Peter Wiley

Bass

Satoshi Okamoto

Flute

Tara Helen O'Connor

Clarinet

David Krakauer
Pascual Martínez-Forteza
Anthony McGill*

Oboe

Elaine Douvas
Keisuke Ikuma
Alexandra Knoll

Bassoon

Marc Goldberg

Trumpet

Edward Carroll

Horn

Barbara Jöstlein-Currie
Hugo Valverde

Trombone

Demian Austin
Sasha Romero
Nicholas Schwartz
Weston Sprott

Tuba

Derek Fenstermacher
Alec Mawrence
Marcus Rojas

Harp

Mariko Anraku

Percussion

Eric Cha-Beach
Jason Haaheim
Jason Treuting

Piano

Reiko Aizawa
Benjamin Hochman*
Blair McMillen
Terrence Wilson

Composition

Mark Baechle, *Film*
Da Capo Chamber Players
Missy Mazzoli
James Sizemore, *Film*
Joan Tower
George Tsontakis

Undergraduate Voice

Lucy Fitz Gibbon '15
Rufus Müller
Teresa Buchholz
Tami Petty
Erika Switzer
David Sytkowski

Chamber Music

Marka Gustavsson, *Director*
Frank Corliss
Raymond Erickson
Keisuke Ikuma
Nicholas Alton Lewis
Raman Ramakrishnan
Melissa Reardon

Music Theory and History

Christopher H. Gibbs
David Sytkowski
Ryan McCullough

Orchestral Studies

Erica Kiesewetter

Alexander Technique

Alex Farkas
Liz Reese

US-China Music Institute

Jindong Cai, *Director*
Xinyan Li, *Chinese Music History*
Qiao Jia, *Chinese Percussion*
Chen Yan, *Erhu*
Xu Yang, *Ruan*
Mingmei Yip, *Chinese Music History*
Yu Hongmei, *Erhu*
Zhang Hongyan, *Pipa*
Zhao Jiazhen, *Guqin*
Cui Junzhi, *Konghou*
Yazhi Guo, *Suona*

Graduate Conducting

James Bagwell, *Director*
Kyle Gann
Christopher H. Gibbs
Zachary Schwartzman
Joan Tower

Graduate Vocal Arts

Stephanie Blythe, *Artistic Director*
Kayo Iwama, *Associate Director*
Edith Bers
Tyler Duncan
Lucy Fitz Gibbon '15
Lorraine Nubar
Joan Patenaude-Yarnell
Tami Petty
Elizabeth Reese
Erika Switzer
Howard Watkins

Baroque Ensemble

Jonathan Salamon

Postgraduate Collaborative Piano Fellowship

Erika Switzer, *Director*

Preparatory Division

Wendy Case, *Director*

FISHER CENTER

The Fisher Center is a premier professional performing arts center and a hub for research and education that demonstrates Bard College's commitment to the performing arts as a cultural and educational necessity. To support artists, students, and audiences in the examination of artistic ideas, the Fisher Center develops, produces, and presents performing arts across disciplines through new productions and context-rich programs that challenge and inspire.

Home is the Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, designed by Frank Gehry and located on the campus of Bard College in New York's Hudson Valley. This world-class theater building will be complemented by a new studio building designed by Maya Lin, scheduled to open in 2026. More than 200 events and 50,000 visitors are hosted at the Fisher Center each year, and over 300 professional artists are employed annually. As a powerful catalyst of art-making regionally, nationally, and worldwide, the Fisher Center produces 8 to 10 major new works in various disciplines every year. The Fisher Center offers outstanding programs to many communities, including the students and faculty of Bard College, and audiences in the Hudson Valley, New York City, across the country, and around the world. Building on a 166-year history as a competitive and innovative undergraduate institution, Bard is committed to enriching culture, public life, and democratic discourse by training tomorrow's thought leaders.

The Fisher Center was born from the Bard Music Festival, founded in 1990, which, for the first 13 years of its existence, occupied several spaces on campus, including a large tent. Each summer, the music festival focuses on the life, work, and influences of one composer, promoting new ways of understanding and presenting the history of music to a contemporary audience. When the Fisher Center and its two theaters opened in 2003, the summer festival expanded to include a fully staged opera, as well as theater and dance performances. The highly acclaimed opera program brings unjustly neglected works to the stage in major productions—often making their US debuts.

Through Fisher Center LAB, the Center's acclaimed residency and commissioning program, artists are provided with custom-made support toward their innovative projects and their work has been seen in over 100 communities around the world. Resident choreographer Pam Tanowitz's 2018 *Four Quartets* was recognized as "the greatest creation of dance theater so far this century" by *The New York Times*. In 2019, the Fisher Center won the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical for Daniel Fish's production of *Oklahoma!*, which began life in 2007 as an undergraduate production at Bard and was produced professionally by the Fisher Center in 2015 before transferring to New York City. *Illinoise*, a 2023 Fisher Center world premiere from artists Sufjan Stevens, Justin Peck, and Jackie Sibblies Drury, was recognized with a Tony Award for Best Choreography following its tour and transfer to Broadway.

The Fisher Center is home to several of Bard's academic programs in the performing arts. Year-round, it hosts performances by the undergraduate Dance Program and Theater and Performance Program; the US-China Music Institute of the Bard College Conservatory of Music; The Orchestra Now (TÖN), a Bard graduate program that is training the next generation of classical-music ambassadors; and students at the Bard Conservatory, the first (and so far only) conservatory to require all its students to pursue a bachelor of arts degree in a field other than music in addition to their specialized music studies. As a hybrid institution, the Fisher Center brings together professional and academic artmaking of the highest caliber, where student and professional artists work side by side, learning from each other and informing one another's practices.

BARD COLLEGE

Founded in 1860, Bard College is a four-year residential college of the liberal arts and sciences located 90 miles north of New York City. With the addition of the Montgomery Place and Massena properties, Bard's campus consists of more than 1,200 parklike acres in the Hudson River Valley. It offers bachelor of arts, bachelor of science, and bachelor of music degrees, with majors in nearly 40 academic programs; advanced degrees through 14 graduate programs; 10 early colleges; and numerous dual-degree programs nationally and internationally. Building on its 166-year history as a competitive and innovative undergraduate institution, Bard College has expanded its mission as a private institution acting in the public interest across the country and around the world to meet broader student needs and increase access to liberal arts education. The undergraduate program at the main campus in upstate New York has a reputation for scholarly excellence, a focus on the arts, and civic engagement. Bard is committed to enriching culture, public life, and democratic discourse by training tomorrow's thought leaders. For more information about Bard College, visit bard.edu.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR BARD COLLEGE IN ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON Developed in Cooperation with the Stockbridge-Munsee Community

In the spirit of truth and equity, it is with gratitude and humility that we acknowledge that we are gathered on the sacred homelands of the Munsee and Muhheaconneok people, who are the original stewards of this land. Today, due to forced removal, the community resides in Northeast Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. We honor and pay respect to their ancestors, past and present, as well as to future generations, and we recognize their continuing presence in their homelands. We understand that our acknowledgment requires those of us who are settlers to recognize our own place in and responsibilities towards addressing inequity and that this ongoing and challenging work requires that we commit to real engagement with the Munsee and Mohican communities to build an inclusive and equitable space for all. For more information about the Stockbridge-Munsee Community, please visit mohican.com.

SAVE THE DATES

BARD CONSERVATORY CONCERTO COMPETITION, FINAL ROUNDS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8
NOON

Sosnoff Theater, Fisher Center
Free and open to the public

BARD CONSERVATORY ORCHESTRA

HANSEL AND GRETEL

OPERA BY ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11
7 PM

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13
2 PM

James Bagwell, *Conductor*
With vocalists from the Graduate Vocal Arts program

Sosnoff Theater, Fisher Center
Tickets start at \$20, free for Bard students
*All proceeds will directly support Bard
Conservatory students.*

fishercenter.bard.edu
845-758-7900

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Join the Fisher Center's e-newsletter at fishercenter.bard.edu.**

Cover: *Reaching Waves*, Arthur Dove, 1929