

2024–2025 | 125th Season
Marian Anderson Hall

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Wednesday, April 23, at 7:30

Eric Jacobsen Conductor

Chris Thile Mandolin and Vocalist

Claire Coffee Director

Juliette Kang Violin

Alex Sopp Vocalist

Members of the Philadelphia Symphonic Choir

Paul Rardin Director

Copland *Appalachian Spring* Suite (1945 version)

Thile Solo selection to be announced from the stage

Barber from Violin Concerto, Op. 14 (performed on mandolin):

III. Presto in moto perpetuo

Intermission

Thile *ATTENTION!* A narrative song cycle for extroverted mandolinist and orchestra

I. Attention

II. Lord Starbucks

III. The Rooftop

IV. Carrie Freaking Fisher

First Philadelphia Orchestra performance

This program runs approximately two hours.

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Jeff Fusco

The Philadelphia Orchestra

The world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust education initiatives, a commitment to its diverse communities, and the embrace of digital outreach, the ensemble is creating an expansive and inclusive future for classical music and furthering the place of the arts in an open and democratic society. In June 2021 the Orchestra and its home, the Kimmel Center, united. Today, The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts brings the greatest performances and most impactful education and community programs to audiences in Philadelphia and beyond.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 13th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community. In addition to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today's composers, Yannick and the Orchestra are committed to performing and recording the works of previously overlooked composers.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, around the community, over the airwaves, and online. The Kimmel Center has been the ensemble's home since 2001, and in 2024 Verizon

Hall at the Kimmel Center was officially rededicated as Marian Anderson Hall in honor of the legendary contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. The Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as PlayINs; side-by-sides; PopUP concerts; Our City, Your Orchestra Live; the free annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Tribute Concert; School Concerts; sensory-friendly concerts; open rehearsals; the School Ensemble Program; All-City Orchestra Fellowships; and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador and one of our nation's greatest exports. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Mann Center, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich touring history, having first performed outside Philadelphia in its earliest days. In 1973 it was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, launching a now-five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 14 celebrated releases on the Deutsche Grammophon label, including the GRAMMY® Award-winning *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit www.philorch.org.

Conductor

Ben Van Hook



Eric Jacobsen makes his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with this performance. Already well-established as one of classical music's most exciting and innovative young conductors, he combines fresh interpretations of the traditional canon with cutting-edge collaborations across musical genres. As both a conductor and a cellist, he has built a reputation for engaging audiences with innovative and collaborative programming.

Mr. Jacobsen joined the Virginia Symphony as music director in 2021, the 12th person to hold the position in the orchestra's

100-plus year history. Current and recent projects include recordings of works by Dvořák and Coleridge-Taylor with violinist Gil Shaham and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* on banjo with Béla Fleck. He is entering his 10th season as music director of the Orlando Philharmonic and continues to pioneer the ensemble's programming and community engagement in new and exciting directions. Highlights of the current season include concerts such as "An Evening with Jamie Bernstein" and the world premiere of Gabriel Kahane's clarinet concerto, *If love will not swing wide the gates*, for Anthony McGill. Mr. Jacobsen is also artistic director and co-founder of the Knights, the NYC-based chamber orchestra. The ensemble, founded with his brother, violinist Colin Jacobsen, grew out of late-night music-reading parties with friends, good food and drink, and conversation. Current endeavors include a multi-year *Rhapsody* project as well as a residency at Carnegie Hall. Under Mr. Jacobsen's baton, the Knights have developed an extensive recording collection, including albums with longtime collaborators Yo-Yo Ma, Aaron Diehl, Anna Clyne, Mr. Shaham, and Mr. Kahane.

Mr. Jacobsen's musical life started at a very young age surrounded by a musical family, where he discovered his love of pulling a bow across a string as a cellist. He and his brother founded the string quartet Brooklyn Rider and also performed regularly with Mr. Ma as a member of the Silkroad Ensemble, touring around the world. This collaborative spirit and sense of music is something that he strives to bring to every concert and project. A frequent guest conductor, he has established continuing relationships with the Colorado and Detroit symphonies, the Oregon Bach Festival, and the Dresden Musikfestspiele. Upcoming engagements include concerts with Classical Tahoe and the Grant Park Music Festival, and special performances with Mr. Ma and the Atlanta and Utah symphonies. Mr. Jacobsen is married to GRAMMY-winning singer-songwriter Aoife O'Donovan and together they have a daughter.

Soloist



Acclaimed GRAMMY Award–winning mandolinist, singer, songwriter, and composer **Chris Thile** makes his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with this performance. A MacArthur Fellow recipient of the prestigious “Genius Grant,” he is a multifaceted musical talent, described by the *Guardian* as “that rare being: an all-round musician,” and hailed by NPR as a “genre-defying musical genius.”

Mr. Thile is a founding member of the highly influential string bands Punch Brothers and Nickel Creek. He has collaborated with countless luminaries from Yo-Yo Ma to Fiona Apple and Brad Mehldau. For four years he hosted public radio favorite *Live from Here with Chris Thile* (formerly known as *A Prairie Home Companion*). With his broad outlook, he creates a distinctly American canon and a new musical aesthetic for performers and audiences alike, giving the listener “one joyous arc, with the linear melody and vertical harmony blurring into a single web of gossamer beauty” (*The New York Times*).

Over the last year Mr. Thile has been touring with Nickel Creek in support of the critically acclaimed 2023 release *Celebrants*, as well as captivating audiences with a playfully ambitious biographical composition entitled *ATTENTION!*: A narrative song cycle for extroverted mandolinist and orchestra. Additionally, he has been focused on the production of a new musical variety show, *The Energy Curfew Music Hour*. Created with actress Claire Coffee and featuring Punch Brothers, season one is available on Audible and all podcasting platforms. Most recently, he debuted a new one-man show, “The Manhattan Variations,” in New York City’s Little Island, about finding oneself in a little cocktail bar on the Lower East Side.

Soloists

Jeff Moon



Appointed first associate concertmaster of The Philadelphia Orchestra in 2005, Canadian violinist **Juliette Kang** (Joseph and Marie Field Chair) enjoys an active and varied career. Previously assistant concertmaster of the Boston Symphony and a member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, she has appeared in solo engagements with the San Francisco, Baltimore, Omaha, Syracuse, Singapore, and KBS (Seoul) symphonies; l'Orchestre National de France; the Boston Pops; the Czech and Hong Kong philharmonics; the Vienna

Chamber Orchestra; and every major orchestra in Canada. She has given recitals in Philadelphia, Paris, Tokyo, and Boston. Ms. Kang won first prize at the 1994 International Violin Competition of Indianapolis and was presented at Carnegie Hall in a recital that was recorded live and released on CD. In 2012 she was again a featured soloist at Carnegie Hall with her hometown orchestra, the Edmonton Symphony, and that season made her Philadelphia Orchestra subscription debut. After receiving a Bachelor of Music degree at age 15 from the Curtis Institute of Music, she earned a Master of Music degree at the Juilliard School. She was a winner of the 1989 Young Concert Artists Auditions, and she subsequently received first prize at the Menuhin Violin Competition of Paris in 1992.



Vocalist **Alex Sopp** makes her Philadelphia Orchestra debut with tonight's performance. Her debut album of original songs, *The Hem & The Haw*, was released on New Amsterdam Records in April 2024. She is a founding member of yMusic, the Knights, the NOW Ensemble, and the Berlin-based Between Worlds Ensemble, and she has played principal flute in the New York Philharmonic and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra at venues such as Suntory Hall, the Ojai Festival, and the Lucerne Festival. As a soloist, she has played works written

for her by Judd Greenstein, Gabriel Kahane, Nico Muhly, Chris Thile, and Allison Loggins-Hull. Performing iconic vocal lines and whistle solos, she toured the world with yMusic in support of its album with Paul Simon. yMusic redefines the chamber ensemble as a creative voice in its own right, debuting a self-titled record of original compositions at Carnegie Hall, while creating an outpouring of arrangements and collaborations with artists such as John Legend, Ben Folds, and Anohni. Her unique visual artwork, ranging from meticulously detailed pen drawings to evocative paintings, has been used by musicians such as Joshua Bell and cutting-edge organizations like Castle of Our Skins to bring their projects to life.

Choir



Jessica Griffin

The Philadelphia Symphonic Choir made its debut in December 2016, performing in three programs with The Philadelphia Orchestra that season. Consisting of talented vocalists auditioned from around the country, the ensemble was created to marry gifted and unique voices of Philadelphia and beyond with the legendary Philadelphia Sound. Performance highlights with the Orchestra include the world premiere of the concert version of Kevin Puts's opera *The Hours* and Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* in Philadelphia

and at Carnegie Hall. The ensemble has also sung holiday performances of Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and Handel's *Messiah*. The Philadelphia Symphonic Choir is directed by Paul Rardin, the Elaine Brown Chair of Choral Music and chair of the Vocal Arts Department at Temple University, where he conducts the Concert Choir and teaches graduate conducting. He previously taught at the University of Michigan and Towson University. He was also artistic director of the Mendelssohn Club (now Chorus) of Philadelphia. The American Guild of Musical Artists, AFL-CIO, the union of professional singers, dancers, and production personnel in opera, ballet, and concert, represents the choral artists in these performances.

Hayley Abramowitz, soprano

Marisa Curcio, soprano

Rebecca Roy, alto

Kathryn Whitaker, alto

Joshua John, tenor

Daniel Taylor, tenor

Matthew Marinelli, bass

John T.K. Scherch, bass

The Music

Appalachian Spring Suite

Aaron Copland

Born in Brooklyn, November 14, 1900

Died in North Tarrytown, New York, December 2, 1990



Aaron Copland, born in 1900, lived a long and distinguished life not just as a composer, but also as a conductor, writer, concert organizer, and teacher. He was justly hailed as the “Dean of American Composers” and always seemed to be in the center of things, a generous colleague and an inspiring model. His compositional style changed noticeably over the decades and yet somehow always remained distinctively Coplandesque, now a word often used to describe the music of other composers.

At the age of 20 he went to Paris to study, and the music of Igor Stravinsky exerted an enormous impact on him; next jazz emerged as another important influence. During his early 30s Copland went through a phase in which he wrote quite challenging Modernist pieces, angular and dissonant, even if never as extreme as those associated at the time with Arnold Schoenberg and his colleagues in Vienna. Near the end of his career he even wrote some twelve-tone compositions.

There was a decade or so, beginning in the late 1930s, when Copland composed his most popular and enduring compositions, works such as the ballets *Billy the Kid* and *Rodeo*, the *Fanfare for the Common Man* (which he incorporated into his magnificent Third Symphony), and *Lincoln Portrait*. These pieces seemed to capture the American experience in vital and unexpected ways. In the summer of 1943 he started a collaboration with the noted choreographer and dancer Martha Graham for a new ballet that was eventually given the title *Appalachian Spring*.

Ballet for Martha Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge commissioned the ballet for Graham to choreograph, accompanied by a small ensemble of a dozen performers. She initially sought works from Copland and Mexican composer Carlos Chávez, but when the latter got delayed she invited Paul Hindemith and Darius Milhaud. Copland’s ballet premiered in October 1944 at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. It was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in music the following year.

Copland had no clear scenario when he began composing the piece, which for quite a while he simply called *Ballet for Martha*. When he finally saw what she had done just a few days before the premiere he did not think it reflected what he had in mind with the music but was magnanimous: “Music composed for one kind of action had been used to accompany

something else. ... But that kind of decision is the choreographer's, and it doesn't bother me a bit, especially when it works." Copland enjoyed recounting the story of the title, which was Graham's late addition inspired by a Hart Crane poem. The composer recalled how people would endlessly come up to him remarking that they saw the Appalachians and felt spring in the music, neither of which had been part of the conception. He confessed: "I have even begun to see the Appalachians myself a bit."

A Closer Look Graham provided a very short description of the story for the Washington premiere: "Part and parcel of our lives is that moment of Pennsylvania spring when there was 'a garden eastward of Eden.' Spring was celebrated by a man and woman building a house with joy and love and prayer; by a Revivalist and his followers in their shouts of exaltation; by a pioneering woman with her dreams of the Promised Land."

Copland originally composed the complete ballet for just 13 instruments, from which he later extracted a concert suite of eight continuous movements scored for large orchestra, which is how the piece is most often performed.

While some sections of the ballet have a folkish feel, in fact Copland used just one borrowed tune, the Shaker song "Simple Gifts." The composer provided the following description of the Suite:

1. Very slowly—Introduction of the characters, one by one, in a suffused light.
2. Fast—Sudden burst of unison strings in A-major arpeggios starts the action. A sentiment both elated and religious gives the keynote to this scene.
3. Moderate—Duo for the Bride and her Intended—scene of tenderness and passion.
4. Quite fast—The Revivalist and his flock. Folksy feelings—suggestions of square dances and country fiddlers.
5. Still faster—Solo dance of the Bride—Presentiment of motherhood. Extremes of joy and fear and wonder.
6. Very slow (as at first)—Transition scenes reminiscent of the introduction.
7. Calm and flowing—Scenes of daily activity for the Bride and her Farmer-husband. There are five variations on a Shaker theme. The theme—sung by a solo clarinet—was taken from a collection of Shaker melodies compiled by Edward D. Andrews, and published under the title *The Gift to Be Simple*. The melody I borrowed and used almost literally is called "Simple Gifts."
8. Moderato—Coda—The Bride takes her place among her neighbors. At the end the couple are left "quiet and strong in their new house." Muted strings intone a hushed, prayer-like passage. We hear a last echo of the principal theme sung by a flute and solo violin. The close is reminiscent of the opening music.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Christopher H. Gibbs is James H. Ottaway Jr. Professor of Music at Bard College and has been the program annotator for The Philadelphia Orchestra since 2000. He is the author of several books on Schubert and Liszt, and the co-author, with Richard Taruskin, of The Oxford History of Western Music, College Edition.

Appalachian Spring was composed from 1943 to 1944.

Eugene Ormandy conducted the first Philadelphia Orchestra performance of the work, on a Student Concert in November 1954, to accompany a performance with the Martha Graham Dance Company. The most recent subscription performances of the Suite were in October 2024, with David Robertson on the podium.

The Philadelphians have recorded Appalachian Spring twice: the full ballet in 1954 for CBS and the Suite in 1969 for RCA, both with Ormandy.

Copland scored the Suite for pairs of flutes (II doubling piccolo), oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, and trombones; timpani; percussion (bass drum, claves, orchestra bells, snare drum, suspended cymbal, tabor, triangle, woodblock, xylophone), harp, piano, and strings.

The Appalachian Spring Suite runs approximately 25 minutes in performance.

The Music

Third Movement from Violin Concerto

Samuel Barber

Born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, March 9, 1910

Died in New York City, January 23, 1981



The 1930s proved to be a golden decade for the composition of violin concertos, beginning with Stravinsky, continuing with Szymanowski, Prokofiev, Berg, Schoenberg, and Bartók, and concluding with Samuel Barber. While all the other composers were distinguished figures by this time (Berg's Concerto is his last completed work), Barber was in his late 20s and just building his reputation. He had written his *School for Scandal* Overture (which The Philadelphia Orchestra premiered in 1933) before graduating from the Curtis Institute

of Music in 1934. His *Symphony in One Movement* (1936) had already been performed by major American orchestras and at the prestigious Salzburg Festival. Arturo Toscanini's performances with the NBC Symphony of the first Essay for Orchestra and the Adagio for Strings, nationally broadcast on a concert in November 1938, had cemented Barber's fame.

A commission the following year to write a violin concerto came from Samuel S. Fels, magnate of Fels Naptha soap, Philadelphia philanthropist, and a Curtis Institute Board member, for Iso Briselli, a talented violinist and former classmate of Barber's. Barber began composing the work in Switzerland during the summer of 1939 and continued in Paris, which he left earlier than planned as the war broke out. He completed the Concerto the following summer. Although accounts vary as to the exact reasons, the commissioners were apparently not entirely pleased with what they saw of the piece. Barber tested the Concerto privately with piano accompaniment for friends and colleagues, and then arranged for the Curtis Institute Orchestra, conducted by Fritz Reiner, to read it through with a student named Herbert Baumel, who soon thereafter joined The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Lush Lyricism and a Pure Heart The Concerto received its official premiere in February 1941 with the American violinist Albert Spalding and The Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. The work appeared on the second half of a program that also featured Spalding's performance of Mozart's D-major Concerto, K. 218. The critic for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* remarked: "The enduring beauty, grace, and freshness of the Mozart work provided a formidable challenge to the young American composer's offering in the same form. But it scored an exceptional popular success as was abundantly evident in the storm of applause that was showered on both the soloist, and the composer when he appeared on the stage." Other reviews likewise commented on the unusually enthusiastic

audience response to this work that fell so “pleasantly upon the ear.”

A few negative critical remarks echoed some made earlier about the Adagio for Strings: Barber’s music was not modern enough. The lush Romanticism, predominantly tonal harmonic language, and adherence to traditional forms were embraced by audiences and some critics, while dissenters complained that the music was old fashioned and pretentious. In his review of the Concerto, critic Henry Pleasants called Barber “one of the youngest and also one of the most ablest of what might be called the right wing of American composers.” Reacting to a performance in New York a few days after the Philadelphia premiere, critic and composer Virgil Thomson wrote that “the only reason Barber gets away with elementary musical methods is that his heart is pure.”

A Closer Look More than 80 years later it is clear that the extraordinary success of the Concerto was not ephemeral. Barber’s unusual lyricism (he was a singer himself) made for especially memorable opening movements, which at times share the elegiac quality that had already proved so effective in the Adagio for Strings. The perpetual motion finale, written back in America as the war broke out, is more spiky in its harmony and rhythm.

Despite its initial success, Barber harbored some concerns about the piece and with what he felt were “an unsatisfactory climax in the adagio and some muddy orchestration in the finale.” He revised the Concerto in November 1948, making a few cuts, recasting the end of the second movement, and scaling back the orchestration at various points. The revised version was first heard in Boston in January 1949 and published later that year. The Philadelphia Orchestra did not present the Concerto again until 1957, and it was only in the late 1970s that it began to be a staple of the ensemble’s repertoire.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Barber composed his Violin Concerto from 1939 to 1940 and revised it in 1948.

Albert Spalding, Eugene Ormandy, and The Philadelphia Orchestra gave the world premiere of Barber’s Violin Concerto in February 1941. The most recent Orchestra subscription performances were in February 2022, with Juliette Kang and Eun Sun Kim.

Barber scored the work for an orchestra of two flutes (11 doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, snare drum, piano, and strings, in addition to the solo violin.

The third movement of the Concerto runs approximately four minutes in performance.

The Music

ATTENTION!

Chris Thile

Born in Oceanside, California, February 20, 1981



I adore orchestras. Whether scaled up for grandeur, or down for intimacy, nothing makes me prouder to be human than hearing a stage full of highly skilled orchestral musicians practicing their craft together. It's magic, and it's something I've been desperate to participate in since the early aughts, when a hero of mine, Edgar Meyer, walked me through the score of a violin concerto he wrote for another hero of mine, Hilary Hahn. In the late aughts I wrote a mandolin concerto, but after performing it quite a bit for a year or so with some

truly lovely orchestras, I realized that it was basically the musical equivalent of fan fiction (like I'm tempted to rename it "Bartók meets Adès for coffee at Edgar's"). SO, I went back to admiring orchestral music from afar, even as I continued to monitor my inner ear for something that might justify another attempt.

A year or two ago, a tantalizing text from my pal, Eric Jacobsen ("Thile, whatever you wanna do with orchestra, we can make it happen!") prompted more proactive monitoring and I started hearing bits of what would eventually become *ATTENTION!* I was confused at first 'cause these little aural visions included not just mandolin and orchestra, but singing AND talking as well. Whoa, ok ... FUN. Further dreaming led to the conviction that there should be an actual STORY, not just loosely related vignettes (which has pretty much been my MO on long-form pieces with vocals up to this point). But WHAT story? I've always loved writing songs based on short stories, so I started there, widened the search to essays, then read a bunch of plays, but every time I got excited about something, a nagging little voice (probably remembering my last orchestral piece) would say "Yeah, but why would YOU be the one to musicalize this story?" Ugh. Fair. Ok, fine then: What is a story I like to tell about something that happened to me that my friends seem to like hearing? Ah HA! THIS ONE, hands down, no contest. If you've ever had a couple rounds with me at a good cocktail bar, chances are I've trotted it out, and the thought of turning it into a piece of orchestral music got my inner ear cranking like never before. It's a ridiculous story, but it's 100% true, and the more I've worked on the telling of it, the more aware I've become of what a profound impact the whole experience had on me as a person who loves to make things and show them to other people.

You can find the lyrics at christhile.com/attention, but I recommend only using it when my diction isn't up to snuff (I'm working on it, swear to God!). Now, if you'll just give me your attention ...

—Chris Thile

This is the first Philadelphia Orchestra performance of ATTENTION!

The score calls for solo mandolin and vocalist, two flutes (II doubling piccolo), two oboes (II doubling English horn), two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, trombone, timpani, drum set, vocalist, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 45 minutes.

Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

Arpeggio: A broken chord (with notes played in succession instead of together)

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Chromatic: Relating to tones foreign to a given key (scale) or chord

Coda: A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

Dissonance: A combination of two or more tones requiring resolution

Harmonic: Pertaining to chords and to the theory and practice of harmony

Harmony: The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

Legato: Smooth, even, without any break between notes

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Modernism: A consequence of the fundamental conviction among successive generations of composers since 1900 that the means of musical expression in the 20th century must be adequate to the unique and radical character of the age

Moto perpetuo (perpetual motion): A musical device in which rapid figuration is persistently maintained

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output. Opus numbers are not always reliable because they are often applied in the order of publication rather than composition.

Scale: The series of tones which form (a) any major or minor key or (b) the chromatic scale of successive semi-tonic steps

Suite: During the Baroque period, an instrumental genre consisting of several movements in the same key, some or all of which were based on the forms and styles of dance music. Later, a group of pieces extracted from a larger work, especially an opera or ballet.

Timbre: Tone color or tone quality

Tonic: The keynote of a scale

12-tone: Music constructed according to the principle pioneered by Schoenberg in the early 1920s, whereby the 12 notes of the scale are arranged in a particular order, forming a series of pitches that serves as the basis of the composition and a source from which the musical material is derived

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Moderato: A moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow

Presto: Very fast

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