



MINNESOTA  
ORCHESTRA

Osmo Vänskä // MUSIC DIRECTOR

GUARANTORS' WEEK:

## VÄNSKÄ CONDUCTS ROMEO AND JULIET

THU SEP 30, 2021 11AM  
FRI OCT 1, 2021 8PM  
SAT OCT 2, 2021 8PM

Minnesota Orchestra  
Osmo Vänskä, conductor  
Lorna McGhee, flute

The program for this week's concerts has changed. Kari Kriikku's performance of Kaija Saariaho's Clarinet Concerto, *D'OM LE VRAI SENS*, is being postponed to a future season. Instead, Lorna McGhee will perform Saariaho's Flute Concerto, *Aile du songe*. In addition, Anders Hillborg's *Through Lost Landscapes* will be performed later this season on a date to be announced. A program note on *Aile du songe* appears in this insert; other information on the program can be found beginning on page 29 of *Showcase*.

*With these concerts we offer our deepest gratitude to the nearly 9,000 Guaranty Fund donors who help the Orchestra enrich, inspire and serve the community through outstanding musical experiences.*

*The broadcast and livestream series is made possible in part by generous lead gifts from **Kathryn and Charles Cunningham** & **Nancy and John Lindahl**.*

Valerie Coleman	<i>Umoja</i> , Anthem of Unity for Orchestra	ca. 11'
Kaija Saariaho	<i>Aile du songe</i> , Concerto for Flute and Orchestra I. Aérienne Prélude Jardin des oiseaux D'autres rives II. Terrestre Oiseau dansant L'oiseau, un satellite infime de notre orbit planétaire <i>Lorna McGhee, flute</i>	ca. 18'
INTERMISSION		ca. 20'
Sergei Prokofiev	Selections from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , Ballet Music, Opus 64 Introduction The Duke's Decree The Young Girl Juliet Masks The Knights' Dance The People Make Merry The Duel: Tybalt and Mercutio Fight Romeo Resolves to Avenge Mercutio's Death Tybalt's Funeral Cortège Juliet's Bedroom Juliet's Funeral and Death of Romeo The Death of Juliet	ca. 37'

The concert on Friday, October 1, is broadcast live beginning at 8 p.m. on **Twin Cities PBS** (TPT MN Channel) and on stations of **YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio**, including KSJN 99.5FM in the Twin Cities, and is streamed online at [minnesotaorchestra.org](http://minnesotaorchestra.org).

## Lorna McGhee, flute

Lorna McGhee, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's principal flute since 2012, is equally at home in a solo, chamber or orchestral setting. She has performed concertos with the London Symphony Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in the U.K.; the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, Toronto Philharmonia and Victoria Symphony in Canada; the Nashville Chamber Orchestra, Oregon Bach Festival Orchestra, San Luis Obispo Symphony and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in the U.S.; the Kyushu Symphony in Japan; and the Evergreen Symphony in Taipei.

As a chamber musician and recitalist, she has performed on four continents in such venues as London's Wigmore Hall, the Louvre in Paris, the Schubertsaal of Vienna's Konzerthaus, and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. She has appeared at festivals such as the Edinburgh International Festival, Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival, Seattle Chamber Music Society, Cleveland Chamberfest and Australian Festival of Chamber Music.

McGhee has made chamber music recordings for EMI, Decca ASV, Naxos and Meridian. Her recording for Naxos of Sir Arnold Bax's chamber music with the group 'mobius' was selected as Editor's Choice in *Gramophone* magazine and received a five-star rating from *BBC Music Magazine*. Along with duo partner Heidi Krutzen, McGhee has released two CDs on Skylark Music. She has also recorded two CDs as a member of Trio Verlaine, with her husband, violist David Harding and harpist Heidi Krutzen. The Trio and Duo have commissioned eight new works. Her first flute and piano recital disc, recorded with pianist Piers Lane, was released on the Beep label in 2014. A new recital CD, *Songs without Words*, recorded with pianist Naoko Ishibashi, was released on the Live Notes label this past summer.

She has performed as guest principal with the Minnesota Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Academy of St. Martin in the Fields and Chamber Orchestra of Europe. Before immigrating to North America in 1998, she was co-principal flute of the BBC Symphony Orchestra in England. A committed educator, she has taught at the University of Michigan and the University of British Columbia, and she is now an artist lecturer at Carnegie Mellon University as well as an honorary Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music. She has given master classes at universities conservatoires around the world and has been a featured guest artist at flute conventions in Europe, Australia, Asia and North America, and she often teaches at summer schools. She is an Altus Flute Artist. More: [lornamcghee.com](http://lornamcghee.com).

PHOTO: Todd Rosenberg



## one-minute notes

### Coleman: *Umoja*

Valerie Coleman's *Umoja*, which exists in several versions for vocal and instrumental ensembles, is a stirring anthem that draws its title from the Swahili word for "unity." The composer states: "Now more than ever, *Umoja* has to ring as a strong and beautiful anthem for the world we live in today."

### Saariaho: *Aile du songe*, Flute Concerto

Kaija Saariaho's Flute Concerto speaks musically of shadows, landscapes and the wonders of a bird in flight. It has five sections—the first three falling under the heading *Aérienne* (Aerial) and the last two under *Terrestre* (Earthly).

### Prokofiev: Selections from *Romeo and Juliet*

These *Romeo and Juliet* selections from Sergei Prokofiev's ballet, chosen by Osmo Vänskä in the story's chronological order rather than in one of Prokofiev's more standard concertos suites, summon vivid images, from a masked ball to a violent duel to a blissful wedding night. The somber closing music reflects the star-crossed lovers' tragic end.



## Valerie Coleman

**Born:** 1970,  
Louisville, Kentucky

### *Umoja*, Anthem of Unity for Orchestra

**Premiered:** September 19, 2019

**b**orn and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, in the same neighborhood as Muhammad Ali, Valerie Coleman was introduced to classical music by her mother very early—in fact, before her birth. (Coleman’s mother would often play classical music, especially Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony, for her unborn child.)

By her teenage years, Coleman was composing complete symphonies and studying flute performance. Today, she is Grammy Award-nominated, was named the 2020 Classical Woman of the Year by the radio program *Performance Today* and was named one of the “Top 35 Female Composers in Classical Music” by the *Washington Post*. She has performed with numerous orchestras, is the founder of the highly influential Imani Winds ensemble, and is active as a composer, arranger, performer, educator and adjudicator. She is also the creator of the Imani Winds Chamber Festival, an annual event in New York City that brings artists from around the world together for chamber music training and performances.

### a signature work with many versions

Coleman’s *Umoja* first began as a work for women’s choir, composed in 1997, and then revised for woodwind quintet in 1999, becoming one of the Imani Winds’ signature works over the last two decades. A few years ago the Philadelphia Orchestra commissioned Coleman to expand and re-orchestrate *Umoja* for a full symphonic ensemble; the work as you hear it this weekend was premiered just two years ago on September 19, 2019.

Coleman’s musical visions often stem from inspiration she finds in poetry, paintings, and biographies about unique individuals and cultures throughout history. *Umoja*, a Swahili word meaning “unity,” is also the first principle of Kwanzaa—encouraging people to strive for and maintain unity in family, community, nation and race. Coleman explains: “This work is through a traditional call-and-response, and the call-and-response tradition was a way of passing on history, messages, stories, whatever it may be. As a composer, I’m a storyteller, so *Umoja* is going to take the listener on a story about unity.”

Coleman’s introductory note in the *Umoja* score also includes the following lyrics:

Listen my people,  
Children of ALL  
It’s time for Unity  
Hear the Winds call.

Oh a-hum, a-hum Nkosi ah.  
Oh a-hum, a-hum Nkosi ah.

### “the meaning of freedom and unity”

What started as a short, yet mighty anthem for choir has been expanded into a 10-minute orchestral poem that grows beautifully out of a sustained, songful introduction. Vivid patterns and rhythms dance throughout the winds and strings, and aggressive musical gestures represent conflict and clashes of injustice, racism and hate throughout history and into our modern day. Woven throughout the piece is the constant reminder of the value of unity, through gentle brass chorales and shared melodies across the ensemble.

With the orchestral arrangement, Coleman shares that this music “...honors the simple melody that ever was, but is now a full exploration into the meaning of freedom and unity. Now more than ever, *Umoja* has to ring as a strong and beautiful anthem for the world we live in today.”

**Instrumentation:** piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, trombone, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, ride cymbal, suspended cymbal, tambourine, temple blocks, triangle, glockenspiel, vibraphone, xylophone, marimba, harp, piano and strings

Program note by **Emma Plehal**.



## Kaija Saariaho

**Born:** October 14, 1952,  
Helsinki, Finland

### *Aile du songe*, Concerto for Flute and Orchestra

**Premiered:** October 12, 2001

This week's program includes the Minnesota Orchestra's first performances of *Aile du songe*, a flute concerto composed in 2001 by renowned contemporary Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho. Saariaho's work *Asteroid 4179: Toutatis* was part of the Orchestra's Symphony Ball in 2019, but this week's program marks the ensemble's initial performances of her music on its main Classical series.

Saariaho has recently drawn wide acclaim, including highly favorable notices in *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*, for the world premiere this past July of her newest opera, *Innocence*—one of the first premieres of an opera by a major composer in the COVID-19 pandemic era. It premiered at the Festival International d'Art Lyrique d'Aix-en-Provence in southern France, and future stagings are planned by the Metropolitan Opera and San Francisco Opera.

Born in 1952 in Helsinki, Saariaho studied composition in Helsinki, Freiburg and Paris, where she has lived since 1982. Although many of her works are for chamber ensembles, in the past three decades she has produced several works for larger forces, including the operas *L'Amour de Loin*, *Adriana Mater*, *Emilie* and *Only The Sound Remains*, as well as the oratorio *La Passion de Simone*, portraying the life and death of the philosopher Simone Weil. In 2003 she was awarded one of the highest honors for classical composers, the Grawemeyer Award, one of her many awards. She is also an active educator, including a recent residency at the University of California, Berkeley.

### "Wing of the Dream"

Saariaho has composed some 15 works for soloist and orchestra, all of which bear programmatic titles rather than simply being labeled concertos—though the word sometimes appears in a subtitle. The work on this week's program is the flute concerto *Aile du songe*, French for "Wing of the Dream." It was composed in 2001 and premiered on October 12 of that year at the Flanders Festival by the Vlaams Radio Orchestra, with Camilla Hoitenga as the soloist and Marin Alsop conducting. The score bears the dedication "For Camilla" on its opening page—appropriately as Saariaho worked with Hoitenga on many details in the concerto's solo part.

*Aile du songe* is structured in two parts, the first of which is *Aérienne* (Aerial) and the latter *Terrestre* (Earthly). The first section is further divided into three sections, while the second part

comprises two sections. The work, which spans about 18 minutes, is scored for a unique combination of instruments. Alongside the flute soloist and a typical string section, it calls for timpani, harp, celesta and three percussionists playing a battery of 19 different pitched and non-pitched instruments. Other than the soloist, no wind players take the stage; brass are also absent.

### a note from the composer

Saariaho describes her composition in the following program note:

"I have been very familiar with the flute since my earliest pieces. I like the sound in which breathing is ever present and with timbral possibilities that befit my musical language: the instrument's body makes it possible to write phrases that go through grinding textures colored with phonemes whispered by the flutist which gradually go towards pure and smooth sounds.

"The concerto's title and the general mood of the piece derive from Saint-John Perse's collection of poems 'Oiseaux: Aile falquée du songe, vous nous retrouverez ce soir sur d'autres rives!' This is not the first time I combine my music with Saint-John Perse's verses. In these poems, Saint-John Perse does not describe the singing of the birds. He rather speaks of their flight and uses the rich metaphor of the birds to describe life's mysteries through an abstract and multidimensional language.

"The concerto is composed of two main parts: *Aérienne* and *Terrestre*.

**Aérienne.** "The three sections of *Aérienne* describe three different concerted situations. In *Prélude* the flute gradually pervades space and generates the orchestra's music. In *Jardin des oiseaux* the flute interacts with individual instruments of the orchestra, while *D'autres rives* compares the flute to a lone, high flying bird whose shadow forms different images played by the strings over the unchanged landscape of the harp, celesta and percussion.

**Terrestre.** "The first section of *Terrestre* introduces a deep contrast with the other material of the concerto. It refers to an Aboriginal tale in which a virtuosic dancing bird teaches a whole village how to dance. While writing this section, I was especially thinking of Camilla Hoitenga and her personality as a flutist. The finale—the second section of *Terrestre*—is a synthesis of all the previous aspects, then the sound of the flute slowly fades away."

**Instrumentation:** solo flute with orchestra comprising timpani, bass drum, claves, crotales, Chinese cymbal, 3 suspended cymbals, frame drum, small gong, guiro, maracas, sandpaper blocks, tambourine, tamtam, triangle, wind chimes (glass, metal and shell), xylophone, marimba, glockenspiel, vibraphone, chimes, harp, celesta and strings

Program note by **Carl Schroeder**.



## Sergei Prokofiev

**Born:** April 23, 1891,  
Sontsovka, Russia

**Died:** March 5, 1953,  
Moscow, Russia

### ***Selections from Romeo and Juliet, Ballet Music, Opus 64***

**Premiered:** December 30, 1938  
(complete ballet)

In 1934 the Kirov Theater in Leningrad approached Sergei Prokofiev with the proposal that they collaborate on a ballet based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Prokofiev completed the massive score by the end of the summer of 1935, but the project came to seem nearly as star-crossed as Shakespeare's young lovers. The Kirov Ballet backed out, and the Bolshoi Theatre of Moscow took over the project. Prokofiev's first plan had been to give the story a happy ending in which Romeo would rescue Juliet before her suicide—because, as he explained, “living people can dance, the dying cannot.” Fortunately, this idea was scrapped, but when the Bolshoi finally saw Prokofiev's score, they called it “undanceable” and refused to produce it.

While *Romeo and Juliet* languished in limbo, Prokofiev transformed excerpts from the ballet's 52 numbers into a series of orchestral suites. The first two suites were premiered in 1936 and 1937—thus much of the music from the ballet was familiar to audiences long before it was produced on the stage. The third suite was compiled in 1946.

### **a tale of woe?**

The premiere of the ballet itself took place not in Russia but in Brno in 1938. Preparations for the first Russian performance brought more trouble, including a fight between Prokofiev and the choreographer, disputes with the dancers and a threatened walk-out by the orchestra. When the Russian premiere finally took place in Leningrad on January 11, 1940, it was a triumph for all involved. Still, ballerina Galina Ulanova, who danced the part of Juliet, touched on the ballet's difficult birth when she paraphrased the play's final lines in her toast to the composer after the opening performance:

Never was a tale of greater woe,  
Than Prokofiev's music to Romeo.

For these concerts, Osmo Vänskä has opted to create his own suite rather than present one of the three assembled by Prokofiev,

because they do not follow the chronological order of the story. The 12 movements Vänskä has selected from the ballet show the plot as it unfolds—conjuring in sound, to magical effect, the characters, actions and moods of the drama.

### music tender and dramatic

The **Introduction**, set in the early morning on the quiet streets of Verona, pulls us into this tale of young love and tragedy with themes that hint at what is to come. **The Duke's Decree**, commanding the Montagues and Capulets to put down their swords and live in peace, is expressed in grinding dissonances that alternate with quiet but eerie string chords. **The Young Girl Juliet** captures the girl's sprightly energy with racing violins and teasing motifs, though wistful interludes also suggest a depth to her character.

In the witty **Masks**, Mercutio and Benvolio have talked Romeo, a fellow Montague, into crashing the ball at the Capulets, and this music accompanies their stealthy entrance. **Dance of the Knights** (often titled *The Montagues and the Capulets*) is one of the most famous excerpts from the ballet, forging ahead powerfully as it depicts the swagger of the rival families; its quiet central episode features several striking sounds, including a tenor saxophone solo and wispy glissandos for muted violas. **The People Make Merry** (also familiar as *Dance*) accompanies a scene from the ball. The violence that triggers the concluding tragedy explodes in the next three movements: Romeo and Mercutio encounter Tybalt, a Capulet, on the street; Tybalt kills Mercutio, and Romeo, once the voice of calm, becomes furious and kills Tybalt. These excerpts offer some of the most dramatic and most often heard music from the ballet. **The Duel** between Tybalt and Mercutio, marked *Precipitato*, is full of tense, driven music. **Romeo Resolves to Avenge Mercutio's Death** brings the terrific swordfight between Romeo and Tybalt, which rips along a furious perpetual motion from the violins. In **Tybalt's Funeral Cortege**, cellos and horns sing the funeral song above rolling drums.

With **Juliet's Bedroom** (also known as *Romeo and Juliet before Parting*), Prokofiev depicts in extraordinarily moving music the final meeting of the young lovers, before Romeo, because he killed Tybalt, must flee Verona. When the young couple's plan goes awry, Romeo, believing Juliet dead, kills himself, represented in the soaring, intense music of **Juliet's Funeral and Death of Romeo**, marked *Adagio funebre*. In the final scene, **The Death of Juliet**, the heroine finds her lover dead, and distraught, she kills herself with a dagger. In the aftermath of all this tragedy, the rival families pledge to live in peace.

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, tenor saxophone, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 6 horns, 3 trumpets, cornet, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine, triangle, xylophone, chimes, 2 harps, piano (doubling celesta) and strings

Program note by **Eric Bromberger**.

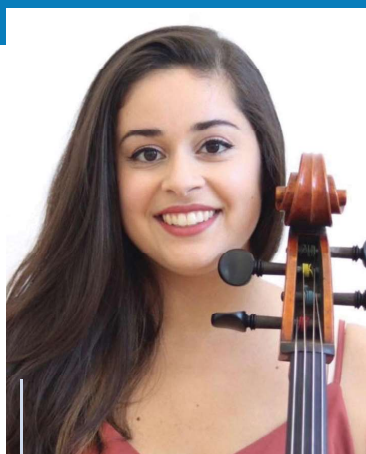




# GUARANTORS' WEEK: SEP 30–OCT 2, 2021

*Celebrating Generous Community Philanthropy for More Than a Century*

Thank you, Guarantors! During this week of joyful music, we want to acknowledge and offer our deepest gratitude to all who contribute to the Minnesota Orchestra's Guaranty Fund. This week is dedicated to our incredible donor community who have financially supported the Orchestra at all levels this past year, allowing our talented ensemble to keep the music playing and bring exciting performances to music lovers near and far. Guarantors sustained the Orchestra through the most difficult moments of the pandemic, and we are thrilled to now celebrate the 2021-22 season together in-person. Thank you!



## *Donors help sustain and grow the Minnesota Orchestra's ensemble of extraordinary musicians.*

For the just-launched 2021-22 concert season, the Orchestra has welcomed six musicians for one-year appointments, three of them through the Sphinx Orchestral Partners Auditions Excerpt Competition. In addition, cellist Esther Seitz and bass trombonist Lovrick Gary have begun their two-year residencies as the Orchestra's newest Rosemary and David Good Fellows.

## *Donors help the Minnesota Orchestra reach audiences in Minnesota and around the world.*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Orchestra created a digital concert series, *This Is Minnesota Orchestra*, that has reached more than 800,000 viewers and listeners around the world through 19 performances shared on TV, radio and streaming, and will continue for select concerts in the 2021-22 season. This past summer, the Orchestra also welcomed in-person audiences back to Orchestra Hall for 13 concerts.



## *Donors nurture future music-makers.*

Through support of programs such as Side-by-Side Rehearsals with students in local youth orchestras; the Composer Institute for emerging orchestral composers; and the Rosemary and David Good Fellowship, supporting the career development of African American, Latin American and Native American musicians, you are ensuring a bright future for classical music.



## *Donors inspire the next generation of music lovers through support of Young People's Concerts and other education programs.*

Your gifts help us present the Young People's Concert series, which most recently was presented in an all-digital format, reaching students, teachers and families across the globe with unique musical activities and concert experiences.