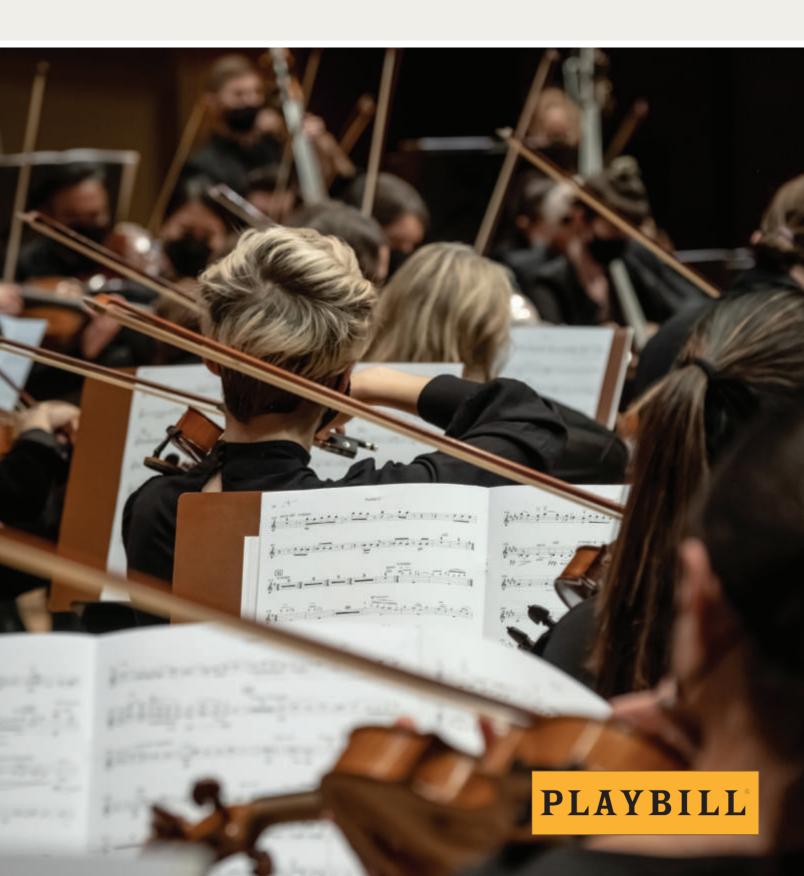


SHOWCASE | FEBRUARY 2022



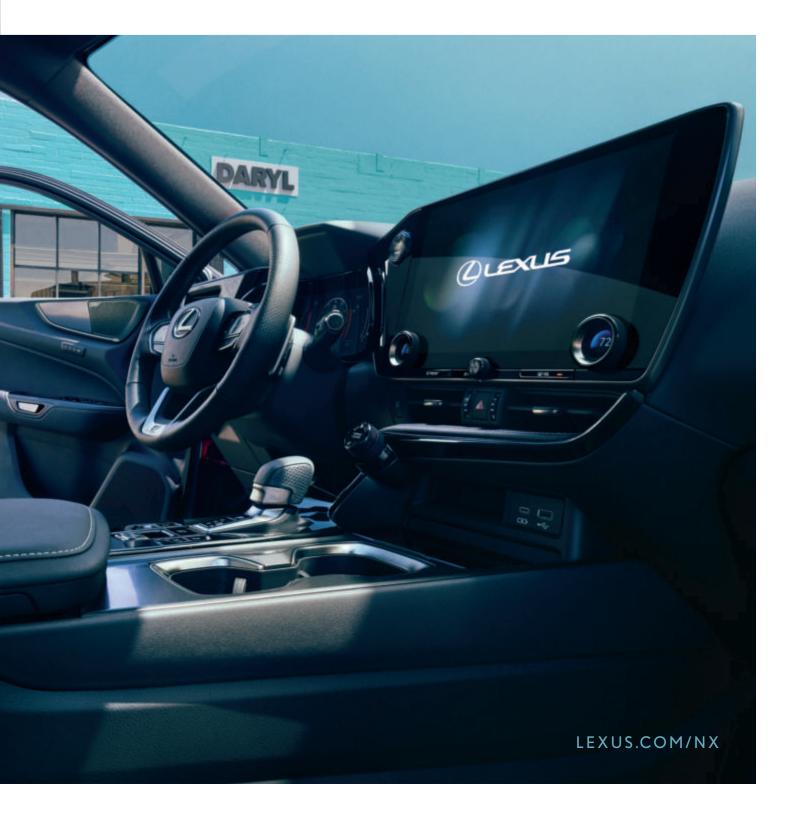




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February 2022

from the editor

Classical music is an art form that, in many ways, begins with long periods of solitary work, from the composers who write the music on their own to the performers who spend many thousands of hours toiling at home and in practice rooms honing their craft during formative years. But in the orchestra world, when it comes time to put everything together, the individual becomes collective, and across the years, an orchestra can become something of a family.

The sense of family and interconnectedness is a throughline connecting many of this month's performances, none more so than a pair of Lunar New Year concerts of music that celebrates family, unity and gathering together. The music-making itself is a family affair, as several members of the Orchestra's Principal Bassoon Fei Xie family take the Orchestra Hall stage, and the February 6 concert is the Orchestra's first Family Concert in nearly two years. Also in this issue, a new essay by awardwinning writer Kao Kalia Yang reflects on family memories and traditions.

In the past two years' time of pandemic, immediate family relationships have often taken greater importance in our lives, with many of us spending more time at home. As we appreciate and nurture those family connections, we also have greater appreciation for outings into the world that once seemed routine. Here at the Minnesota Orchestra, we thank you for your ongoing support and for being an important part of our musical family.

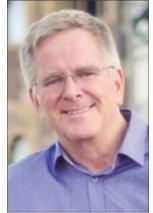
Carl Schrader

Carl Schroeder, Editor editor@mnorch.org

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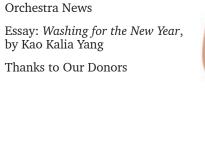
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A view from the Minnesota Orchestra's violin section in October 2021. Photo: Caroline Yang.



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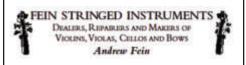
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profile Osmo Vänskä, music director innish conductor Osmo Vänskä, the Minnesota Orchestra's tenth music director, is renowned internationally for his compelling interpretations of the standard, contemporary and Nordic repertoires. Throughout the 2021-22 season, as Vänskä's 19-year leadership tenure comes to a close, the Orchestra will celebrate his lasting impact through performances of Sibelius symphonies and other signature repertoire, reconnections with favorite guest soloists and the continuation of a project to perform and record all ten Mahler symphonies. Vänskä has led the Orchestra on five major venues across Minnesota.

European tours, as well as a 2018 visit to London's BBC Proms, and on historic tours to Cuba in 2015 and South Africa in 2018. He has also led the Orchestra in appearances at New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, Chicago's Symphony Center and community

Vänskä's recording projects with the Orchestra have met with great success, including a Sibelius symphonies cycle, one album of which won the 2014 Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance. In February 2021 BIS released the Orchestra's newest album, featuring Mahler's Tenth Symphony—part of a Mahler series that includes a Grammynominated Fifth Symphony recording. Other recent releases include an album of in-concert recordings of Sibelius' Kullervo and Finlandia and Kortekangas' Migrations; albums of Beethoven and Tchaikovsky piano concertos with Yevgeny Sudbin and Stephen Hough, respectively; To Be Certain of the Dawn, composed by Stephen Paulus with libretto by Michael Dennis Browne; and a particularly widely-praised Beethoven symphonies cycle.

As a guest conductor, Vänskä has received extraordinary praise for his work with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the Boston and Chicago symphony orchestras, Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Vienna Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic and Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra. In January 2020 he became music director of



the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2014 he became the Iceland Symphony Orchestra's principal guest conductor; since then he has been named the ensemble's honorary conductor. He is also conductor laureate of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, which, during two decades as music director, he transformed into one of Finland's flagship orchestras.

Vänskä began his music career as a clarinetist, holding major posts with the Helsinki Philharmonic and the Turku Philharmonic. Since taking up the instrument again for Sommerfest 2005 he has performed as clarinetist at Orchestra Hall, other Twin Cities venues, the Grand Teton Festival, the Mostly Mozart Festival, La Jolla Summerfest, the Seattle Chamber Music Festival, and several festivals in Finland. He has recorded Bernhard Henrik Crusell's three Clarinet Quartets and Kalevi Aho's Clarinet Quintet for the BIS label and is in the process of recording several duos for clarinet and violin which he has commissioned with his wife, violinist Erin Keefe.

During the 2021–22 season he is scheduled to conduct ensembles including the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony, Orchestra Orchestre National de Lyon, Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra and Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra. In addition, he will be in residence at the Curtis Institute, where he will work with conducting fellows across a fourmonth span. For more information, visit minnesotaorchestra.org.

Minnesota Orchestra

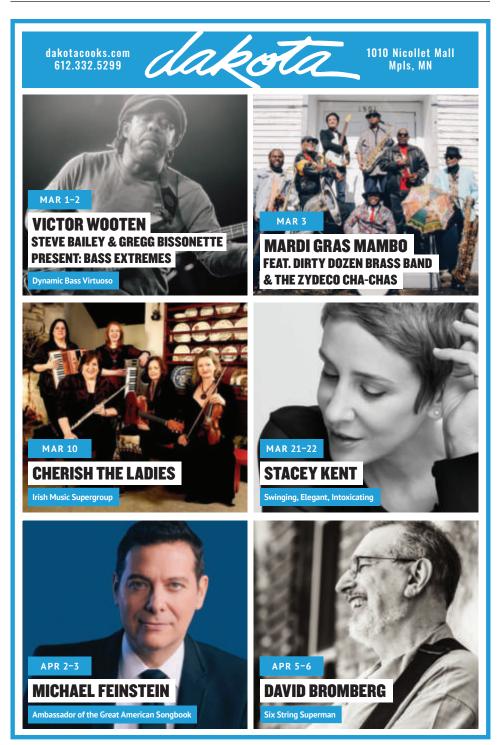
profile

he Minnesota Orchestra, led by
Music Director Osmo Vänskä, ranks
among America's top symphonic ensembles,
with a distinguished history of acclaimed
performances in its home state and around
the world. Founded in 1903, it is known
for award-winning recordings as well as for
notable radio broadcasts and educational
engagement programs, and a commitment to
new orchestral repertoire.

music director spotlight: Antal Dorati

- In 1949 the Minnesota Orchestra, then known as the Minneapolis Symphony, welcomed its fifth music director, Antal Dorati, after Dimitri Mitropoulos' departure to the New York Philharmonic. Like the Orchestra's third music director, Eugene Ormandy, Dorati hailed from Budapest. He began his career as a pit conductor for opera companies, then focused on ballet and guest conducting orchestras. In 1945 he took charge of the Dallas Symphony—assigned the task of rebuilding an ensemble which had shut down during World War II.
- The hallmarks of Dorati's 11 seasons with the Minnesota Orchestra included a clean, clear orchestral sound, as well as diversified programming, striking a balance between established repertoire and provocative new works.
- During Dorati's tenure, the Orchestra generally spent at least seven weeks on the road each year. In 1957 he led the ensemble on its first major overseas tour, a five-week, 34,000-mile excursion sponsored by the U.S. State Department that included concerts in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and India.
- Dorati and the Orchestra recorded extensively for Mercury Records, and their 1954 album of Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture—the first to use an authentic bell carillon and military cannon—remains the most popular album in the Orchestra's entire history, selling more than a million copies, and is still in print today.
- Dorati departed from the Orchestra in 1960 and later led orchestras in London, Washington, D.C., and Detroit.







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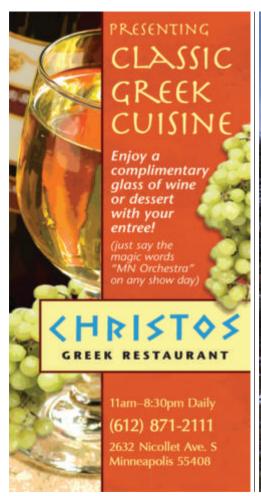


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Q&A with the Chairs of Symphony Ball 2022: "Brilliance"

The Minnesota Orchestra's Symphony Ball gala fundraiser is returning to Orchestra Hall on Saturday, May 7-and you're invited to attend a very special evening. This year's Ball, "Brilliance," will celebrate the Orchestra's remarkable string of accomplishments during Osmo Vänskä's 19-year tenure as music director, featuring a performance by the full Orchestra along with special guest Cory Wong. Symphony Ball Chairs



Symphony Ball Chairs Bruce and Lisa Paradis

Lisa and Bruce Paradis answered a few questions about the Ball and their connection with the Orchestra.

How did you first get involved with the Minnesota Orchestra? We've attended subscription concerts at Orchestra Hall since moving to the Twin Cities in 1981. Lisa played

classical piano and violin growing up and performed in school and community orchestras, and Bruce is an avid listener. The Minnesota Orchestra enriches our lives and the concerts nourish our souls—it's a jewel that serves our community and brings recognition to our state by its outstanding excellence, reputation and outreach.

What has been the most exciting thing about planning Symphony Ball?

When we were asked to chair the 2022 Symphony Ball, what made it most appealing to us was the theme centering around honoring

and thanking Osmo Vänskä for his 19-year tenure as music director and Erin Keefe for her first ten years serving as concertmaster. We love working with our brilliant Symphony Ball Committee making this come to life, and we're thrilled and honored to be a part of celebrating with the Orchestra and giving back a small piece of what we receive with every performance.

How will the theme of Brilliance come through in the Ball's activities?

The theme of Brilliance encapsulates all that Osmo and the musicians have accomplished together over the past 19 years. We have the opportunity to relive the remarkable! Brilliance will be reflected in all aspects of the evening-from iridescent décor, multi-cultural food and highlights of music from past tours, recordings, festivals and awards, along with musical pop-ups and guest artists. We're delighted to have Cory Wong as our featured guest soloist.

What is your favorite moment of Osmo's tenure with the Orchestra?

In August 2018, everyone in attendance at the concert in the Regina Mundi Catholic Church in Soweto, South Africa, felt the power of music come alive. The audience and musicians alike were united by the common language of music, crossing all cultural and racial divides. Music heals and unites people!

Is everyone welcome at Symphony Ball?

Yes, please come and join us! This is a time to dress up, celebrate together and feel connected to the Minnesota Orchestra family. Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/symphonyball to learn more and get your tickets!

experience Lunar New Year



Junping Qian

This month the Minnesota Orchestra is celebrating Lunar New Year with concerts in multiple formats both in-person and digitally, including two live performances in the first weekend of February, with Junping Qian conducting music that honors family traditions and themes of unity and health. The concert on Saturday, February 5, will be broadcast live on Twin Cities PBS and YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio and streaming online, while the concert on Sunday, February 6 is presented in-person only, in a slightly shorter version geared toward families. Then, beginning on February 14, the Orchestra will share a free, onlineonly Lunar New Year Young People's Concert incorporating video from the February 5 concert and other content, complemented by online curriculum materials. Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/stream to view all of the Orchestra's digital concerts, clips and behindthe-scenes footage.





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Kathryn Nettleman appointed associate principal bass

The Minnesota Orchestra's bass section has a familiar face as its official new second-in-command: Kathryn Nettleman, a member of the Orchestra since 2009, was appointed associate principal bass as the calendar turned to 2022. In the past decade she has served the section in a variety of leadership capacities, including as acting co-principal bass from summer 2012 to February 2015 and acting associate principal bass from April 2015 through August 2021. She is also one of the Orchestra's leading advocates for reaching out to younger audiences and, before arriving in Minnesota, was principal bass of the Hong Kong Philharmonic under former Minnesota Orchestra Music Director Edo de Waart.

"I am so happy to be appointed associate principal bass," said Nettleman. "Our section plays with power, precision, and a thrilling intensity that distinguishes it, and I'm unaware of another major orchestra with two women leading its bass section. I am proud and deeply honored to serve as associate principal bass for the amazing Minnesota Orchestra."

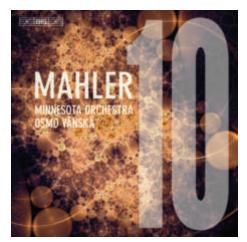


Kathryn Nettleman

That second leader is Kristen Bruya, the Orchestra's principal bass, who commented: "I am thrilled with the appointment of Kate to the permanent position of associate principal bass. In her many years in an acting capacity in this position, Kate has demonstrated her dedication, skilled leadership, musicianship, and many other wonderful qualities that make her an excellent fit for me and the section. I'm so pleased to continue making music and leading this great bass section into the future with Kate on the first stand."

William Schrickel, a longtime Minnesota Orchestra bass player who has also served in a variety of titled roles, had been serving as acting associate principal bass for the first part of this season, and he is now returning to the assistant principal position. In addition, a new musician will be joining the Orchestra's bass section in September 2022: Kyle Sanborn, currently a member of the Calgary Philharmonic. Congratulations to one and all!

Minnesota Orchestra wins Limelight Recording of the Year Award



As Music Director Osmo Vänskä's tenure with the Minnesota Orchestra nears its close, new accolades are continuing to roll in-including the 2021 Recording of the Year Award from Australia's Limelight magazine for the Orchestra's disc of Gustav Mahler's Tenth Symphony that was released by BIS Records in January 2021. The honor was announced by Limelight magazine and its Editor at Large Clive Paget, who interviewed Vänskä in a video that can be viewed at minnesotaorchestra.org/stories. In addition, last month the U.K.'s Guardian newspaper named the same album one of the "best classical releases of 2021."

Vänskä and the Orchestra will continue the Mahler symphony cycle in March and June 2022 with recording sessions featuring the Ninth and Eighth symphonies. After Vänskä's tenure with the Orchestra concludes in summer 2022, they will reunite to record the Third Symphony in a future season to complete the cycle. For more information and to add to your collection of recordings, visit minnesotaorchestra.org/shop.

news

critics' column: recent concert reviews

"[W]henever Osmo Vänskä strides to the podium at Minneapolis' Orchestra Hall to conduct a symphony by his favorite composer, Jean Sibelius, audience members may be compelled to contemplate that this moment will never be duplicated...[In the Seventh Symphony] a weighty darkness wrestled with an exhilarating transcendence, Douglas Wright's trombone majestically soaring above the rich landscape of strings....When a liberating catharsis burst forth from the strings on the finale [of the Second Symphony], Vänskä seemed overflowing with passion on the podium, arms outstretched and upraised. It's a work that ends in triumph, and this performance deserved that description."

> —Rob Hubbard, *Star Tribune*, January 1, 2022

"[T]he elegant and masterful Finnish violinist Elina Vähälä...brought the rare [original version of Sibelius' Violin Concerto] thrillingly to life...In the end, even if the final version of Sibelius's concerto is more concise and edited down, the earlier version had its own fire, and certainly meaty stuff for the virtuosic Vähälä to spin her magic."

—Sheila Regan, *Pioneer Press*, January 8, 2022

"Although masked, the Minnesota Chorale was magnificent [in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony], and the four vocal soloists soprano Melody Moore, mezzo Kelley O'Connor, tenor Sean Panikkar and bass Mark S. Doss—intertwined their voices beautifully, especially on their transporting final slow section....[The] performance [featured] a precise and propulsive take on the concert-opening Sinfonietta No. 1 by 20th-century American composer Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson. It's a work for which [guest conductor Juraj] Valčuha clearly has a passion, as he's requested it on programs he's conducted elsewhere. He was flamboyant and demonstrative in leading the orchestra's strings, which responded with a thrilling performance that was sad and lovely in its central slow movement."

> —Rob Hubbard, *Star Tribune*, November 17, 2021





essay

Washing for the New Year

by Kao Kalia Yang

"In the gray dusk, the whole of the village gathered by the river's edge. Its banks were wide and shallow. Family groups stood together.

"As the mountain clouds fell low and a coolness swept across the land, the fog rose off the water. Cloaked in the moist evening air, the people lathered themselves with soap and rinsed with water. The children splashed around like puppy dogs at the feet of their older siblings and parents.

"Only the elders waited at home. The young will come with pails of water to heat up in the fire pots so they can bathe in warmth later. On low stools by the evening fires, they heated rounds of pounded sticky rice cakes wrapped in banana leaves.

"When the family gathered, each clean, they anticipate the coming of the lunar new year celebrations around their fire rings, hands warmed by hot rice cakes, tongues sweetened by cane syrup."

Our mother spoke quietly as she washed each of the younger children, each standing in their line in the bathtub, their knees covered by soapy water. Her words brought back her childhood. My older sister and I leaned on either side of the frame of our bathroom door to watch her bathe the children before our new year celebrations. When we were younger, we, too, knew the feel of her light fingers massaging our heads, her hands made slippery with shampoo. Outside the warmth of the small room the house felt cool and damp. The scent of freshly steamed jasmine rice filled the air. From the kitchen, we heard the whistling of our father, a tune we don't recognize, a song we don't know fills our consciousness.

"In the old country, we really believed that one had to begin the new year celebrations clean of body and heart. My mother used to tell all of us, 'How your new year's day goes, is how the rest of your year will go.'

"It was a warning so that we would be on our best behaviors. In all the moments of familial angst, when the rough words could slip easily through our lips, we made an earnest effort to soften them, to avert our gazes, and at the very least to lower our voices and gentle our tones."

Far away from the past, my siblings and I grew up celebrating the new year with the stories of our mother and father's memories. The ghosts of their fathers, men we'd never met, men who had died when our parents were just children, sat around us in our living rooms. We imagined one grandpa: tall and thin, bent over, elegant hands clasped on his knees on the soft cushion of our couch, watching television. We imagined the other, short and stout, sitting on grandma's old woven bamboo stool close the ground, supervising our youngest sibling in her play with wooden blocks. In the fog of family, with the nostalgia-soaked voices of our mother and the song of our father guiding us, we adventure to the parts of our stories we've never lived.

"It was a special time to be young. How we anticipated the village gatherings in the morning, the songs and the dance. How happy it made us. How warm our hearts felt despite the cool that enveloped our homes.

"All around our village, there was a flower that bloomed only around the lunar new year. It belonged to a tree. Common enough year-round with its brown trunks and fingers, each new year these trees became something other than themselves: cloaked in petals of white, they scented the entire mountainsides with a blend of citrus and sugar."

Like our mother and father, we stand in our finest clothes at the new year community celebration. We look from the youngest to the oldest and celebrate the fact that we remain one people despite the winds of war, the forces of poverty, and the other injustices. There is a peacefulness that fills our hearts, a knowledge that somehow, even away from that river, memory flows, that far from the flowering trees, we continue to blossom. That in all the bitterness of the world, there remains: a source of sweetness in our lives, love. Always the love, first and last, a love that lasts.

Kao Kalia Yang is an award-winning writer. She authored the memoirs: The Latehomecomer, The Song Poet and Somewhere in the Unknown World. She co-edited the groundbreaking anthology What God is Honored Here?: Writings on Miscarriage & Infant Loss by and For Native Women & Women of Color. Her children's books include A Map Into the World, The Shared Room, The Most Beautiful Thing, Yang Warriors and From the Tops of the Trees.







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Minnesota Orchestra

Junping Qian, conductor
Roz Tsai, host | Rui Du, violin | Gao Hong, pipa
Zhengang Xie, jing hu | Mei Hu, yue qin
Fei Xie, artistic consultant | Asian Media Access, artistic partner
William Eddins, broadcast host

Saturday, February 5, 2022, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

Choi Sunghwan	Arirang Fantasy	ca. 8'
Chen Gang/He Zhanhao	The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto Adagio cantabile Allegro Adagio assai doloroso Pesante - Piu mosso - Duramente Lagrimoso Presto resoluto Adagio cantabile Rui Du, violin	ca. 27'
	INTERMISSION	ca. 20'
Trinh Cong Son/ arr. Jaakko Kuusisto	Circle of Unity*	ca. 3'
Wu Hua	In the Dark Night for Jing Hu and Orchestra Zhengang Xie, jing hu Mei Hu, yue qin	ca. 7′
Kelly Tang	Sketches of Singapore	ca. 9'
Gao Hong	Guangxi Impression, Concerto for Pipa and Orchestra * Dance of Tiaodan Summer Cicadas Celebrating the Harvest Gao Hong, pipa	ca. 10'
Li Huanzhi	Spring Festival Overture	ca. 6'

This concert will be broadcast live on Twin Cities PBS (TPT MN Channel) and YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio and available for streaming at minnesotaorchestra.org and on the Orchestra's social media channels.



^{*} World premiere; commissioned by the Minnesota Orchestra



Junping Qian, conductor

Conductor Junping Qian recently completed his second year as assistant conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. He also serves as a visiting faculty member at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. His recent engagements include conducting the COVID-19 recovery rehearsal camp of Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra; a tour of China with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Teatro del Giglio Lucca; a South American debut with Orchestra SODRE in Montevideo, Uruguay; a North American professional debut with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra; an open-air summer concert at the Summer Classics Festival Sibiu: and re-invitations with the Toronto, Macau, Kunming, Xi'An, Bucharest, Iasi and Tirgus Mures orchestras. From 2018 to 2020 he served as the strategic advisor and residential artist of the Shanghai and Royal College of Music London Joint Institute. He is also an accomplished violist, having won many prizes and scholarships including second place at the Johansen International Competition in Washington D.C., as well as first place at both the China National Viola Competition and the Morningside Music Bridge Chamber Music Competition. More: junpinggian.com.



Roz Tsai, host

Dr. Benhong Rosaline Tsai is Vice President, Talent, Learning, and Org Effectiveness at Thrivent, a Fortune 500 financial services firm based in Minneapolis. Previously, she served as vice president of HR and chief learning officer at Ecolab, leading performance management, career development, leadership and enterprise learning initiatives for its 49,000-member global workforce. She has also held transformative leadership roles in Honeywell, Lawson Software (now Infor) and Northern States Power Company (now Xcel Energy). Tsai is a long-time community volunteer for youth development and arts and culture organizations, most recently completing her term as board chair for Minnesota non-profit BestPrep. A native of Tianjin, China, Tsai completed her undergraduate studies at Nankai University and obtained her Master of Science degree at St. Cloud State University. She holds a doctorate degree from University of Minnesota, where she currently serves as adjunct faculty for the Carlson School of Management.



Rui Du, violin

Rui Du has been the Minnesota Orchestra's assistant concertmaster since 2015, has been featured in numerous chamber music concerts at Orchestra Hall, and was the soloist in Alyssa Weinberg's in somnis at the 2019 Future Classics concert that concluded that year's Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute. He was previously a member of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, concertmaster of the Annapolis Symphony, associate concertmaster of the Aspen Music Festival Orchestra and concertmaster of the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra. In addition, he has served as guest concertmaster of the Qingdao and Hebei symphony orchestras in China. Born and raised in Heifei in China's Anhui Province, Du began violin studies at age 6. He studied initially with Zhou Binyou at the Shanghai Conservatory, then with Qian Zhou at the National University of Singapore's Yong Siew Toh Conservatory, where he won the artistic achievement award. He emigrated to the U.S. in 2008 and studied with Victor Danchenko and Herbert Greenberg at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, earning a master's degree and graduate performance diploma.

More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



Gao Hong, pipa

Chinese performer and composer Gao Hong is a master of the pear-shaped lute, the pipa. She began her career as a professional musician at age 12, and later graduated from China's premier music school, the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Gao has received numerous top awards and honors, including first prize in the Hebei Professional Young Music Performers Competition; an International Art Cup in Beijing; the prestigious Bush Artist Fellowship; five McKnight Artist Fellowships for Performing Musicians; numerous grants and fellowships from the Minnesota State Arts Board; and a Sally Award. Gao has performed throughout Europe, Australia, Argentina, Japan, Hong Kong, China and the U.S. in solo concerts, and with orchestras, jazz musicians and performers from many cultures. She is a guest professor at the Central Conservatory of Music, China Conservatory of Music, Tianjin Conservatory of Music and Hebei Vocational Arts College. She teaches Chinese Musical Instruments and is director of the Chinese Music Ensemble and Global Music Ensemble at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. Gao's most recent recording of live compositions and improvisations with oudest Issam Rafea, From Our World to Yours, was released in 2020 and was awarded Gold Medals in two categories by the Global Music Awards. More: chinesepipa.com.



Zhengang Xie, jing hu **Mei Hu**, yue qin

Jing hu master Mr. Zhengang Xie and yue qin master Ms. Mei Hu, a husbandand-wife team, are listed as members of the elite group among the musicians in the Directory of Current Chinese Artists of 1998, which Ms. Hu participated in editing. While in China, as the top "Cheng" style Peking Opera fiddlers, Mr. Xie and Ms. Hu performed and recorded as solo jing hu and yue qin players with many top Beijing Opera houses, including the Beijing Opera House and National Opera House. In addition to performing traditional Peking Opera repertoire, Xie has participated in many new opera productions, such as the Peking Opera TV show Cao Xueqin and the new opera The Legend of The White Snake. Xie has also performed in the Great Hall of People in Beijing during a Lunar New Year celebration, and was greeted by the Chairman Jiang Zemin, among other top Chinese government officials.

Since moving to the U.S. in 1999, the couple has brought Chinese music, particularly Peking Opera, to their community. While living in Cincinnati from 2000 to 2020, Xie and Hu performed in concert halls, schools, and universities around the region. In collaborations with the University of Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, they performed concertos such as *In the*

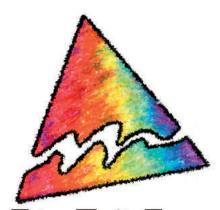
Dark Night, The Qiao Family Compound and The God of Mountain. Xie and Hu currently reside in Plymouth, Minnesota, near their son, Minnesota Orchestra Principal Bassoon Fei Xie, and his family.



Fei Xie, artistic consultant

Fei Xie joined the Minnesota Orchestra as principal bassoon in the 2017 season after serving as principal bassoon of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, an ensemble he first joined as second bassoon in 2008. When he won the principal role in 2012, Xie became the first Chinese-born bassoonist to hold such a position in a major American symphony orchestra. An avid educator, Xie has taught masterclasses at conservatories and festivals throughout the U.S., China and Brazil. He has recently served on the faculty at the University of Maryland and was the bassoon coach for the inaugural season of the National Youth Orchestra of China. He was recently appointed to the faculty of the School of Music at the University of Minnesota. A native of China, Xie comes from a musical family; his parents, Zhengang Xie and Mei Hu, and his uncle are renowned Peking Opera musicians. His parents are performing as soloists in the Minnesota Orchestra's Lunar New Year concerts this week. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.





Asian Media Access

Asian Media Access, artistic partner

Incorporated in 1992, Asian Media Access, Inc. (AMA) is a multimedia arts agency whose mission is to "Connect the Disconnected" by using multimedia arts and technology as tools for social betterment. AMA recognizes that multimedia and technology are essential for advocacy, communication and education, and by effectively utilizing these different mediums, AMA creates as well as presents programs that educate, enrich the communities, and empower all of us with critical thinking and promote good citizenship-placing special importance on preparing young people to be tomorrow's leaders. AMA's thought-provoking multimedia education, productions, exhibitions, stage performances, resourceful educational products and youth afterschool programs encourage deep reflection, challenge previous assumptions, provide solace, and allow participants to develop their own way of connection in timeless works of creation, communication and community building. More: amamedia.org.



William Eddins, broadcast host

For the concert on Saturday, February 5. William Eddins serves as host and writer of the Twin Cities PBS broadcast and online livestream, This Is Minnesota Orchestra. Eddins is the music director emeritus of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and a frequent guest conductor of major orchestras throughout the world. He is a former associate conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra and last conducted the ensemble in November 2020. His engagements in the U.S. have included concerts with the New York Philharmonic, St. Louis Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra; the symphony orchestras of Boston, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Detroit, Dallas, Baltimore, Indianapolis, Milwaukee and Houston; and the Los Angeles and Buffalo philharmonics. Internationally, he was principal guest conductor of the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra (Ireland), and has led numerous major orchestras around the world. Eddins is an accomplished pianist and chamber musician, and next July he will perform in a Grand Piano Spectacular concert at the Minnesota Orchestra's 2022 Summer at Orchestra Hall series, sharing the stage with fellow pianists Jon Kimura Parker, Scott Cuellar and Andrew Staupe. He is the co-founder of MetroNOME Brewery LLC, a socially-missioned brewery established in the wake of public unrest in the summer of 2019 with the objective of nurturing outstanding music education in the Twin Cities metro. More: williameddins.com.

SHOWCASE

Choi Sunghwan Arirang Fantasy

The Korean folk song *Arirang*, an expression of nostalgia in the face of separation, is popular throughout the divided peninsula, serving as an unofficial national anthem. It is heard at this concert in a version written in the 1970s by North Korean composer Choi Sunghwan that was notably performed by the New York Philharmonic on its 2008 tour to North Korea and South Korea. Featuring lush Romantic harmonies and key solo moments for harp and flute, *Arirang Fantasy* opens with the lyrical *Arirang* melody, which is varied freely in the opening section, gradually increasing in speed. After a plaintive digression into minor harmonies, the music returns to a happier major key, grows faster and triumphant, then dials back to a slow, calm close.

Arirang is a song of great flexibility: its lyrics and melody have been modified over the years to such an extent that musicologists have identified about 60 principal versions and at least 3,600 variants. Its malleability has led to a variety of uses in the North and South, from protest to solidarity to sporting events. At the Opening Ceremonies of the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, athletes from South Korea and North Korea marched together in unity as the song's most common version, Jeongseon Arirang, was played.

Chen Gang/He Zhanhao The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto

The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto is credited jointly to two composers—Chen Gang (b. 1935) and He Zhanhao (b. 1933), who collaborated on its composition in 1959 while they were students at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Cast in one long movement and subdivided into seven sections, the concerto is a musical representation of the Chinese legend of the Butterfly Lovers, with the solo violin representing the protagonist Zhu Yingtai, and the cello part symbolic of her lover Liang Shanbo. Chen was responsible for the majority of the concerto's scoring, while He's primary contribution was the work's famous opening theme.

The concerto is scored for a standard-sized Western orchestra, and utilizes a variety of traditional Chinese techniques and styles to create a sound world suitable for its story. Among them are the use of a five-pitch pentatonic scale and a number of melodies from Chinese folk songs and from a well-known Chinese opera version of the Butterfly Lovers story. Across the concerto we follow Zhu and Liang as they meet in childhood, attend school and grow closer. The tale turns tragic as Zhu is betrothed to another man, Liang becomes ill and dies, and Zhu throws herself into Liang's grave. In closing, the lovers' spirits emerge as butterflies.

The Butterfly Lovers, which premiered in 1959, is often used in figure skating routines, memorably for Chen Lu's free skate performance at the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan, at which she became the first Chinese athlete to win a medal in figure skating.

Trinh Cong Son/arr. Jaakko Kuusisto Circle of Unity

The first of this concert's two world premieres is Finnish composer Jaakko Kuusisto's arrangement of *Circle of Unity* by Vietnamese composer, performer and artist Trinh Cong Son (1939-2001). Kuusisto's arrangement, based on the version by Vietnamese musician Hô Quang Hiêu, is energetic and fast-paced, with effects including muted brass, strings sliding from one pitch to the next, shouting from the musicians, and a percussion part that imitates the sound of a high-frequency EDM-style snare.

Son, one of the great figures in 20th-century Vietnamese music and art, wrote more than 500 songs and poems, many relating to love and the hope for a peaceful Vietnam. *Circle of Unity* dates from 1968, in the midst of the Vietnam War, with lyrics outlining the dream of reconciliation between North and South Vietnam. In 1975, as the war was coming to an end, Son accepted an invitation to perform *Circle of Unity* on a radio broadcast from Saigon, urging all Vietnamese people to join hands and unite.

Wu Hua

In the Dark Night for Jing Hu and Orchestra

For *In the Dark Night* by Chinese composer Wu Hua (1943-2020), the Minnesota Orchestra welcomes jing hu master Mr. Zhengang Xie and yue qin master Ms. Mei Hu, a husband-and-wife team who are the parents of the Orchestra's Principal Bassoon Fei Xie. Wu's composition, heard here in an orchestration by Ma Jun and Han Guang, has its origins in a famous melody from the Peking Opera and showcases the jing hu—a bowed instrument with two strings—as well as the yue qin, a four-stringed lute with a distinctive round, hollow wooden body.

In the Dark Night comes from a suite by Wu describing the ill-fated story of Xiang Yu, a rebel leader during the fall of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 B.C.), and his concubine Yuji. The music begins with a low-pitched flute solo and continues with a Chinese drum passage, over which the orchestra crescendos and stops, leading to the entrance of the jing hu and yue qin. Those two featured instruments play continuously in free-flowing melodies for the rest of the piece, through varying textures, tempos and meters until the final measures, marked fff with trills and tremolos abounding.



Kelly Tang Sketches of Singapore

Contemporary Singaporean composer Kelly Tang (b. 1961), who writes in genres ranging from classical and jazz to symphonic and popular music, composed the colorful *Sketches of Singapore* in 2008 on a commission from the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. The score bears the following note:

"Sketches of Singapore utilizes the broad musical palette of the symphony orchestra to unlock expressive possibilities lying latent within four popular Singaporean melodies. The simple elegance of these tunes provides the ideal foundation upon which to weave elaborate textural layers, lively rhythmic elaborations, colorful tonal shading and flavorful harmonic tapestries. The development and transformation of fragments derived from these tunes generates fresh dramatic dimensions that unfold upon a symphonic canvas...The work begins with the triumphant energy of Stand Up for Singapore. Next, the folk tune Rasa Sayang is presented in the comic style of a scherzo. Cast in a passionate yet elegant orchestral glow, the deep Romantic essence of the third tune, Where I Belong, is fully unveiled. In the grand finale, the venerable Di Tanjong Katong is symphonically expanded to radiate all its innate glory."

Gao Hong

Guangxi Impression, Concerto for Pipa and Orchestra

In the second of this week's two world premiere performances, both commissioned by the Minnesota Orchestra, the composer herself, Gao Hong, takes the stage as the soloist in her *Guangxi Impression*, Concerto for Pipa and Orchestra. A full profile of Gao appears on page 21. The composer-soloist has provided the following comments on her work:

"Guangxi is a province in southern China that sports a rich diverse population that includes 48 different ethnic groups. This piece is in three movements: *Dance of Tiaodan*, *Summer Cicadas* and *Celebrating the Harvest*.

Dance of Tiaodan. "The first movement depicts Tiaodan people as they carry goods on their shoulders with bamboo sticks. The music describes the people as they work happily in the field. People one-by-one come from far away with the bamboo sticks on their shoulders, creating 'biandan' up and down movements which simulates dancing.

Summer Cicadas. "In Guangxi, the weather is very hot and the cicadas are very noisy. But in the Dong minority, the most famous song is inspired by the sounds of the cicadas. The music describes a hot summer day, with young men and women looking for lovers during work breaks in the field.

Celebrating the Harvest. "A plentiful harvest is cause to celebrate in Guangxi, and I depict this celebration with sounds of percussion bands and celebratory words near the movement's end."

Li Huanzhi Spring Festival Overture

Spring Festival Overture is the most famous composition of Chinese composer Li Huanzhi (1919-2000)—music so beloved that it was among a small number of musical works launched into space in 2007 on China's first lunar probe, Chang'e 1.

The overture is the first and best-known movement of Li's four-part *Spring Festival Suite*, composed in 1955 and 1956. It depicts a scene in the Shanbei region of revelers celebrating the Lunar New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, and the music's themes come from that region's folk music. In the overture we hear sounds reminiscent of fireworks and parades, along with a gentler inner passage that is built on a traditional melody conveying greetings for the New Year as well as prayers for peace and good fortune.

Program notes by Carl Schroeder.





Minnesota Orchestra

Junping Qian, conductor Roz Tsai, host | Rui Du, violin Zhengang Xie, jing hu | Mei Hu, yue qin Fei Xie, artistic consultant | Asian Media Access, artistic partner

Sunday, February 6, 2022, 2 pm | Orchestra Hall

Li Huanzhi	Spring Festival Overture	ca. 6'
Choi Sunghwan	Arirang Fantasy	ca. 8'
Chen Gang/He Zhanhao	Selections from <i>The Butterfly Lovers</i> Violin Concerto Lagrimoso Presto resoluto Rui Du, violin	ca. 6'
Wu Hua	In the Dark Night for Jing Hu and Orchestra Zhengang Xie, jing hu Mei Hu, yue qin	ca. 7′
Kelly Tang	Sketches of Singapore	ca. 9'
Trinh Cong Son/ arr. Jaakko Kuusisto	Circle of Unity	ca. 3'

Profiles of today's artists and artistic partner, along with program notes of works in the order they are performed on February 5, begin on page 20.

thank you

Relaxed Family Concerts are sponsored by PNC Bank.



Minnesota Orchestra

Dima Slobodeniouk, conductor Baiba Skride, violin

Friday, February 11, 2022, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall Saturday, February 12, 2022, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

Unsuk Chin	Frontispiece for Orchestra	ca. 8'
Wolfgang Amadè Mozart	Concerto No. 4 in D major for Violin and Orchestra, K. 218 Allegro Andante cantabile Rondeau: Andante grazioso – Allegro ma non troppo Baibe Skride, violin	ca. 24'
	INTERMISSION	ca. 20'
Igor Stravinsky	The Firebird, complete ballet (original 1910 version)	ca. 44'

pre-concert

Concert Preview

Friday, February 11, 7 pm, Auditorium Saturday, February 12, 7 pm, Auditorium

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live on Friday evenings on stations of YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio, including KSJN 99.5 FM in the Twin Cities.



Dima Slobodeniouk, conductor

Dima Slobodeniouk has held the position of music director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia since 2013, in addition to his positions as principal conductor of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra and artistic director of the Sibelius Festival. He works with orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Chicago, Baltimore, Sydney and NHK symphony orchestras. His discography

was recently extended with recordings of Prokofiev suites with the Lahti Symphony Orchestra. He previously recorded works by Kalevi Aho, also with the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, which received the BBC Music Magazine award in 2018. He has begun a conducting initiative with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, providing an opportunity for students to work on the podium with a professional orchestra. More: kdschmid.co.uk, dima-slobodeniouk.com.



Baiba Skride, violin

Violinist Baiba Skride first performed with the Minnesota Orchestra under the direction of Osmo Vänskä in April 2008, performing Mendelssohn's

Violin Concerto. She has also worked with orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestras New York Philharmonic, Concertgebouworkest, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Orchestre de Paris, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra and NHK Symphony Orchestra. A highlight of Skride's 2021-22 season included the season opening of the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, with which she performed Sofia Gubaidulina's Triple Concerto with Harriet Krijgh (cello) and Martynas Levickis (bajan) under the baton of Andris Nelsons. She is anticipating the release of her latest solo recording, adding to her prolific discography including a recently released Mozart recording with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra and a Bartók recording with the WDR Sinfonieorchester. More: kdschmid.co.uk, baiba-skride.com.

one-minute notes

Chin: Frontispiece

Contemporary composer Unsuk Chin describes Frontispiece as "a time lapse...of the history of music" comprising countless tiny musical fragments and gestures that are sometimes jarring, sometimes calm and never predictable. Among the composers alluded to-but not quoted—are Bruckner, Ives, Webern and Boulez.

Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 4

Mozart's penultimate violin concerto is virtuosic music packed with surprises. In the opening movement, the orchestra recedes and the soloist takes command, gracefully elaborating on the themes; the Andante cantabile is pure song with the second of the work's two cadenzas; and the Rondeau finale is music fit for a French court, incorporating a tune Mozart encountered in Strasbourg.

Stravinsky: The Firebird

The heroic Prince Ivan and a magical Firebird are revealed with brilliant orchestral colors. The gentle dance of captive princesses, the prince's effort to free them, and the evil sorcerer's defeat by the Firebird—all is painted in the most vivid musical imagery.



Unsuk Chin

Born: July 14, 1961, Seoul, South Korea

Frontispiece for Orchestra

Premiered: September 6, 2019

rtistic meditations on the music of past generations can take all shapes and sizes. Late last year, for instance, fans of the Beatles partook in a new eight-hour-long documentary on the recording of just a single album, Let It Be. Unsuk Chin's 2019 orchestral work Frontispiece swings in the other direction, combining a sweeping scale of ambition with a brevity of expression, presenting a time lapse of symphonic music history across a mere eight minutes.

looking to the past

Frontispiece is the second work by the South Korean-born composer to receive its American premiere by the Minnesota Orchestra this season; Chin's subito con forza was featured at a pair of concerts in late October. These two pieces share some conceptual DNA in that both look to great composers of the past. In the case of *subito con forza*, the scope is limited to just one composer, Ludwig van Beethoven, whereas Frontispiece references classical composers as disparate as Anton Bruckner, Charles Ives, Pierre Boulez and Anton von Webern, among others.

Chin is quick to emphasize that Frontispiece is built not on direct musical quotations, but rather on allusions, subtle references and unexpected interactions as various composers and styles cross paths and mingle. Like many of her works, it is music of high difficulty—fitting her stated belief that when she is composing for high-caliber ensembles, she wants "to drive these good musicians to their limits." It is scored for a large orchestra, most notably including a super-sized brass section that includes six horn players, four trumpets and four trombones. Also featured are a wide array of percussion instruments and piano, the instrument Chin played in her youth before turning to composition.

the music: "poured into new moulds"

Frontispiece was commissioned by Germany's NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester and premiered by that ensemble on September 6, 2019, with the work's dedicatee Alan Gilbert conducting. The word referenced in the title is both an architectural term as well as the name of an illustration facing a book's title page. The composer has provided the following comments:

"Frontispiece for Orchestra was commissioned by the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra to open Alan Gilbert's inaugural season as their Chief Conductor. This occasion prompted me to write a short piece which presents a time lapse of a kind of the history of music: certain aspects of a number of key symphonic works of different epochs are being evoked and poured into new moulds by letting them interact and comment upon each other. These are never actual style quotations—mere allusions, and faint references.

"On the level of details, the work consists of many tiny fragments which all refer to gestures typical to certain works and composers, and these are being 'translated' to each other in numerous different and occasionally unexpected ways. As to give but a few examples: certain chord sequences by Anton Bruckner are interpreted in a manner akin to Anton von Webern, splinters of Strauss, Scriabin and Stravinsky collide, Brahmsian harmony passes through the prisms of, say, Charles Ives, and certain material from Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony—Heaven forbid—is being presented a la manière de Pierre Boulez.

"This process of 'translating' happens on several levels: diverse materials and gestures, ranging from Baroque music all the way to the avant-garde, are being transcribed and transformed in an alienating manner so that something very different arises as a sum of their interactions. All of this happens at a rather microscopic level: all aforementioned allusions, as well as other ones, are not immediately perceivable, and it is most certainly not necessary to trace them in order to be able to 'understand' the piece. On the level of the macrostructure, the work's form is being held together by a certain chord, which could be called its supporting pillar—a chord which, by way of exception, is completely autarchic.

"Frontispiece reflects on my decades-long experiences with landmark works of the symphonic literature as composer and recipient. In extracting distinct aspects of works of certain composers, Anton von Webern's art of revealing a 'universe in a nutshell' by means of extreme compression served as a particular inspiration."

about the composer

Born in Seoul in 1961, Chin has lived in Berlin since 1988, and her music is described by her publisher Boosey & Hawkes as "modern in language, but lyrical and non-doctrinaire in communicative power." She is routinely commissioned by leading musical organizations, and her works have been showcased at major festivals and concert series in Asia, Europe and North America by ensembles such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, New York



Program Notes

Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic and Tokyo Symphony. She has also composed an opera, Alice in Wonderland, along with works for chamber ensembles, solo piano, voices and electronics. Initially self-taught in music, she studied composition at Seoul National University as well as with György Ligeti at the Hochschule für Musik and Theater Hamburg.

Chin has been a composer in residence for numerous ensembles, most notably serving an 11-year tenure with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, where she founded and oversaw its contemporary music series. From 2011 to 2020 she served as artistic director of the "Music of Today" series of the Philharmonia Orchestra in London, and in 2022 she is beginning a five-year appointment as artistic director of the Tongyeong International Festival in South Korea. She recently earned the 2021 Leonie Sonning Music Prize, adding to her long list of honors that includes one of the most prestigious and lucrative prizes in classical composition, the Grawemeyer Award, conferred in 2004 for her Violin Concerto.

In addition to Frontispiece and subito con forza, Chin's recent large-scale works include Chant des Enfants des Étoiles for choirs and orchestra, premiered within the inaugural events at the Lotte Concert Hall in Seoul in 2016; Chorós Chordón, which the Berlin Philharmonic took to Asia in 2017; and SPIRA, a concerto for orchestra premiered in 2019 by the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Her newest work, Violin Concerto No. 2, Scherben der Stille, was scheduled to receive its world premiere last month by the London Symphony Orchestra and soloist Leonidas Kavakos under the direction of Sir Simon Rattle.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling alto flute and 1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 3 clarinets (1 doubling E-flat clarinet), 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 6 horns, 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, tuba, timpani, 2 snare drums, bass drum, cymbals, 3 suspended cymbals, cencerros, crotales, pitched gong, guiro, metal blocks, 2 tambourines, tamtam, temple blocks, triangle, glockenspiel, vibraphone, chimes, marimba, harp, piano (doubling celeste) and strings

Program note by **Carl Schroeder**.



Wolfgang Amadè Mozart

Born: January 17, 1756, Salzburg, Austria Died: December 5, 1791, Vienna, Austria

Concerto No. 4 in D major for Violin and Orchestra, K. 21

Composed: ca. October 1775

olfgang Amadè Mozart's father Leopold—an eminent violinist and pedagogue—believed that his prodigiously talented son could be "the greatest violinist in Europe," and things got off to a promising start. By the age of seven, young Mozart was playing the violin in family trios, though he later expressed a preference for the viola, so that he could get into the center of the harmonies. Before long, however, he gravitated to the great new invention of the day, the piano, and his preference for the keyboard led him to compose a cache of piano concertos of a quantity—23 mature works—equaled by none other.

Although the majority of Mozart's concertos are for piano, violin soloists were not left empty-handed. There are five violin concertos, plus a couple of miscellaneous movements, the Concertone for Two Violins, and the Sinfonia concertante for violin and viola. Mozart was just 19 when he produced his five violin concertos, all dating from 1775. The first two, now seldom displayed, tend to be conventional in nature, reflecting the works he grew up with in his father's household. But No. 3, finished in September of that year, shows a spurt in Mozart's musical growth, which he continued to exhibit in the Nos. 4 and 5, finished in October and December respectively. The D-major Concerto No. 4 is crammed with surprises, the first of which is that it is more virtuosic that its predecessors.

the music: surprises, song and dance

allegro. Already the opening *Allegro* abounds with opportunities for display, affording us some idea of the composer's prowess, for these works were written for his own use. Once the orchestra has introduced the principal ideas, it takes a definite backstep to the soloist, accompanying and doubling rather than asserting itself in genuine dialogue fashion. When the themes return with the soloist, for whom they were designed all along, the lines wear their new adornments quite naturally, as if the laces of violin arpeggios and figurations should have been there in the first place. andante cantabile. The *Andante cantabile* is pure song from beginning to end, and once the violin joins the singing, it will not be stopped. Like the first movement, this one offers a place for a cadenza. Alas, Mozart's own cadenzas are lost; those of Joseph Joachim (for whom Brahms wrote his only violin concerto) are a frequent choice.

rondeau: andante grazioso-allegro ma non troppo. The finale is a true *Rondeau*—that is, in the French manner, relaxed and full of caprice and wit. It steps forward from a genuine gavotte tune, such as might have been danced to at a French court. The theme promptly gives way to a caper that is nothing more than a variant of itself. A second episode introduces a typically French bagpipe ditty known as the musette; you will hear the drone on the low G string of the violin as it pipes a tune that had tantalized Mozart on a visit to Strasbourg.

Instrumentation: solo violin with orchestra comprising 2 oboes, 2 horns and strings

Program note by Mary Ann Feldman.



Igor Stravinsky

Born: June 17, 1882,

St. Petersburg, Russia

Died: April 6, 1971, New York City

The Firebird, complete ballet (original 1910 version)

Premiered: June 25, 1910

n 1909, following a successful visit of the Ballets Russes to Paris, the Russian impresario Serge Diaghilev and his choreographer Mikhail Fokine made plans for a new ballet to be presented in Paris the following season, based on the old Russian legend of the Firebird. They at first asked Anatoly Lyadov to compose the music, but when it became clear that the notoriously lazy Lyadov would never get around to it, they decided to take a chance on a young composer who had orchestrated some pieces for the Ballets Russes the year before. His name was Igor Stravinsky, and he was virtually unknown.

Recognizing that this was his big chance (and terrified that he would not be up to the challenge), Stravinsky set to work in November 1909 at a dacha owned by the Rimsky-Korsakov family (to which he had gone, as he said, "for a vacation in birch forests and snow-fresh air"). He finished the piano score in St. Petersburg

in March, and the orchestration was complete a month later. The first performance took place in Paris on June 25, 1910, eight days after the composer's 28th birthday, and it was a huge success. Stravinsky would go on to write quite different music over the course of his long career, but the music from *The Firebird*—now a century old—remains his most popular creation.

a magical tale

The Firebird tells of a young prince, Ivan Tsarevich, who unknowingly pursues the magic Firebird—part woman, part bird—into the garden of the green-taloned Kastchei, most horrible of all ogres: Kastchei captures and imprisons maidens within the castle and turns all knights who come to rescue them to stone. Ivan captures the Firebird, but she begs to be released, and when he agrees she gives him a magic feather and vanishes. The prince sees a group of 13 princesses playing with golden apples, and when dawn breaks and they have to return to Kastchei's castle, he follows them. Instantly he is confronted by the hideous fiends who inhabit the castle and is about to be turned to stone himself when he remembers the feather. He waves it, and the Firebird returns, putting Kastchei and all the other ogres to sleep, and showing him where a magic egg is hidden in a casket. When Ivan smashes the egg, Kastchei and his fiends disappear, the petrified knights return to life, the maidens are freed, Kastchei's castle is transformed into a cathedral, and Ivan marries the most beautiful of the princesses.

the complete ballet music

These concerts present the score of *The Firebird* as it was performed at the premiere of the ballet in Paris in June 1910—about 45 minutes of music—rather than the more frequently performed 1919 suite in which the duration is more than halved.

The ominous *Introduction*, in the unusual key of A-flat minor, hints at the music that will be associated with the monsters; near the end of this section comes one of Stravinsky's most striking orchestral effects, a series of rippling string glissandos played entirely in harmonics. *The Enchanted Garden of Kastchei* leads to music that Stravinsky omitted from the suites, the *Appearance of the Firebird*, *Pursued by Prince Ivan*, full of trills and tremolos from the strings. The music proceeds without pause into the shimmering, whirling *Dance of the Firebird* and *The Firebird's Variation*, which contained Stravinsky's own favorite music from this score. But between these comes the unfamiliar *Capture of the Firebird by Prince Ivan*, full of quick-paced staccato writing that concludes with ringing horn attacks.

Appearance of the Thirteen Enchanted Princesses is marked by shimmering string chords, followed by a series of woodwind and violin solos and culminating in a flute cadenza. As Prince Ivan watches, the princesses engage in their *Game with the Golden Apples*, which bustles along energetically on its steady rhythmic pulse. Stravinsky was later critical of this movement, calling it too



Program Notes

"Mendelssohnian-Tchaikovskyan," but it is brilliant music, and it makes an effective scene in the ballet. The Sudden Appearance of Prince Ivan, with its striking horn solos, accompanies Ivan Tsarevich's entry into the garden. The music now proceeds into the familiar Khorovod, or Round Dance. One of the intentions of Diaghilev and Fokine had been to make The Firebird as "Russian" as possible, and in The Princesses' Khorovod Stravinsky uses the old Russian folk-tune "In the Garden." Announced by solo oboe as the 13 captive princesses dance in the castle garden, the melody is taken over by the violins and extended in the ballet's most lyric section.

The Khorovod comes to a peaceful close, and it is here that listeners will find a long sequence of unfamiliar music. In the familiar suites, the Khorovod gives way to the Infernal Dance of All Kastchei's Subjects, but in the complete ballet a number of scenes separate these two movements. Daybreak, with its fierce trumpet calls, leads to the Magic Carillon: bells ring wildly as Kastchei's monsters appear—to violent music—and take Prince Ivan captive. Kastchei the Immortal then enters on a series of brass fanfares and threatens Ivan. The princesses intercede to little avail before the Firebird herself enters and gradually puts Kastchei's minions to sleep. Only now does the great Infernal Dance of All Kastchei's Subjects explode to life in one of the most violent orchestral attacks ever written. Sharply syncopated rhythms and barbaric snorts from the low brass depict the fiends' efforts to resist the Firebird's spell; without the slightest relaxation or slowing of tempo this dance powers its way to a dazzling (and ear-splitting) close on a great rip of sound. In its aftermath, solo bassoon sings the gentle, almost lugubrious Berceuse, the music with which the Firebird lulls Kastchei and his followers to sleep.

In the familiar suites, the Berceuse leads without pause into the Finale. In the ballet, however, Kastchei does not remain conveniently asleep but comes back to life to the sound of contrabassoons, then bassoons, then the entire wind and brass sections. The Firebird lulls him not to sleep but to death (deep string chords), and this leads through a magical passage for tremolo strings into the *Finale*. Here solo French horn sings the main theme, based on another Russian folksong, "By the Gate." Beginning quietly, this noble tune simply repeats, growing in strength as it recurs, and the ballet drives to its magnificent conclusion.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes, piccolo (1 flute also doubling piccolo), 3 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets (1 doubling E-flat clarinet), bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon (1 bassoon also doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine, tam-tam, triangle, glockenspiel, xylophone, 3 harps, piano, celesta and strings; offstage: 3 trumpets, 2 tenor Wagner tuben, 2 bass Wagner tuben, bells

Program note by Eric Bromberger.



In 1940 and 1966 Igor Stravinsky conducted the Minnesota Orchestra, then known as the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, in performances at the ensemble's home of Northrop Auditorium. Pictured here is Stravinsky at the 1966 performance, at which he led his Fireworks and The Fairy's Kiss.

Chamber Music with Musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra

Sunday, February 13, 2022, 4 pm | Orchestra Hall, Target Atrium

With this concert we gratefully recognize **Dr**. **Jennine and John Speier** for their generous contribution to the Minnesota Orchestra's **Investing in Inspiration** campaign.

Heitor Villa-Lobos	Jet Whistle	ca. 11'
	Greg Milliren, flute Anthony Ross, cello	
Steve Reich	Music for Pieces of Wood Jason Arkis, percussion Matthew Frischman, percussion Adam Kuenzel, percussion Brian Mount, percussion Erich Rieppel, percussion	ca. 12′
	INTERMISSION	ca. 20'
Franz Schubert	Octet in F major for Strings and Winds, Opus 166 (D. 803) Adagio – Allegro Adagio Allegro vivace (Scherzo) Andante Menuetto Andante molto – Allegro Gregory T. Williams, clarinet J. Christopher Marshall, bassoon Bruce Hudson, horn Ben Odhner, violin Hanna Landrum, violin Megan Tam, viola	ca. 60'

Erik Wheeler, cello | Kristen Bruya, bass

Minnesota Orchestra

Sarah Hicks, conductor Rick Steves, host

Friday, February 18, 2022, 8 am | Orchestra Hall Sunday, February 20, 2022, 2 pm | Orchestra Hall

Aaron Copland	Fanfare for the Common Man	ca. 3'
Kenji Bunch	Varoom, from Symphony No. 1, Liechtenstein Triptych	ca. 6′
Reinaldo Moya	Lily of the West, from Minnesota Suite for Chamber Orchestra	ca. 5'
Arturo Márquez	Danzón No. 2	ca. 10′
	INTERMISSION	ca. 20'
John Stafford Smith/ arr. Stanislaw Skrowaczewski	The Star-Spangled Banner	ca. 2'
Johann Strauss, Jr.	On the Beautiful Blue Danube Waltz, Opus 314	ca. 5′
Richard Wagner	Prelude to Act III of Lohengrin	ca. 4'
Bedřich Smetana	The Moldau, from Má vlast (My Homeland)	ca. 6′
Giuseppe Verdi	Overture to Nabucco	ca. 8′
Edward Elgar	Pomp and Circumstance, Military March No. 1 in D major	ca. 5′
Edvard Grieg	Morning Mood, from Peer Gynt, Suite No. 1, Opus 46	ca. 4'
Camille Saint-Saëns	Marche militaire française, from Suite algérienne, Opus 60	ca. 4'
Ludwig van Beethoven	Selection from Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, Choral	ca. 4'

pre-concert

Concert Preview with Phillip Gainsley and Rick Steves Friday, February 18, 7 pm, Auditorium Sunday, February 20, 1 pm, Auditorium

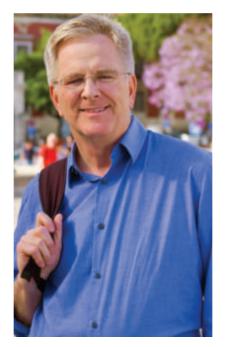




Sarah Hicks, conductor

Sarah Hicks, the Minnesota Orchestra's principal conductor of Live at Orchestra Hall, has led a broad range of programs since joining the Orchestra as assistant conductor in 2006. Her notable projects here have included co-creating the Inside the Classics and Sam & Sarah series with Orchestra violist Sam Bergman; conducting a live-in-concert recording with singer-rapper Dessa; and leading original Orchestra programs and Movies & Music concerts. Since fall 2020 she has been the on-camera host and writer of the Twin Cities PBS broadcast and online livestream series *This Is Minnesota Orchestra*. In December 2021 she worked with director Peter Rothstein, writer Kevin Kling, writer-composer PaviElle French and composer Robert Elhai in creating the Orchestra's Joyful Echoes theatrical holiday concert.

A specialist in film music and the film in concert genre, Hicks premiered Pixar in Concert and Disney-Pixar's Coco in Concert. Her live concert recording of *A Celebration of the Music of Coco at the Hollywood Bowl* can be seen on Disney+ and her work on *The Little Mermaid Live* was broadcast on ABC. During the 2021-22 season she returns to the San Francisco Symphony, Dallas Symphony and Hawaii Symphony, and debuts with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, WDR Köln, RTÉ Orchestra and Grant Park Music Festival. She also makes opera appearances with the East Slovak State Opera Theater and the Curtis Opera Theater. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



Rick Steves, host

Rick Steves is a popular public television host, a best-selling guidebook author, and an outspoken activist who encourages Americans to broaden their perspectives through travel. But above all else, Steves considers himself a teacher. He taught his first travel class at his college campus in the mid-1970s—and now, more than 40 years later, he still measures his success not by dollars earned, but by trips impacted. Widely considered America's leading authority on European travel, he produces a best-selling series of guidebooks and is the author of *Travel as a Political Act*. He is the founder and owner of Rick Steves' Europe, a travel business with a tour program that brings more than 30,000 people to Europe annually. Each year, the company contributes to a portfolio of climate-smart nonprofits, essentially paying a self-imposed carbon tax. He also works closely with several advocacy groups.

Steves spends about four months a year in Europe, researching guidebooks, fine-tuning his tour program, filming his TV show and making new discoveries for travelers. To recharge, he plays piano, relaxes at his family cabin in the Cascade mountains, and spends time with his son Andy and daughter Jackie. He lives and works in his hometown of Edmonds, Washington, where his office window overlooks his old junior high school. More: <u>ricksteves.com</u>.

Upcoming Concerts

TCHAIKOVSKY'S PATHÉTIQUE SYMPHONY

THU MAR 3 11AM FRI MAR 4 8PM SAT MAR 5 8PM

Nathalie Stutzmann, conductor Tobias Feldmann, violin

GABEL AND HADELICH

THU MAR 10 11AM FRI MAR 11 8PM

Fabien Gabel, conductor Augustin Hadelich, violin

MAHLER RECORDING PROJECT: VÄNSKÄ CONDUCTS MAHLER'S NINTH

THU MAR 17 11AM FRI MAR 18 8PM SAT MAR 19 8PM

Osmo Vänskä, conductor

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Minnesota Orchestra

Karina Canellakis, conductor Jean-Guihen Queyras, cello

Friday, February 25, 2022, 8 am Orchestra Hall Saturday, February 26, 2022, 8 pm Orchestra Hall

With this concert we gratefully recognize **Dr. Mary and Jim Lawrence/Lawrence Family Foundation** for their generous contribution to the Minnesota Orchestra.

Julia Perry Short Piece for Orchestra

ca. 7'

Richard Strauss

Don Quixote, Fantastic Variations on a Theme of

ca. 41'

Knightly Character, Opus 35

Introduction

Theme: Don Quixote and Sancho Panza

Variations:

Battle with the Windmills
Battle with the Sheep

Don Quixote and his Squire Converse

Battle with the Pilgrims

The Knight's Vigil

The Meeting with Dulcinea The Ride through the Air

The Voyage in the Enchanted Boat The Combat with the Two Magicians

The Defeat of Don Quixote Finale: The Death of Don Quixote

Jean-Guihen Queyras, cello Rebecca Albers, viola

NTERMISSION

ca. 20'

Sergei Rachmaninoff Symphonic Dances, Opus 45

Non allegro

Andante con moto (Tempo di valse)

Lento assai - Allegro vivace

pre-concert

Concert Preview with Valerie Little and Karina Canellakis Friday, February 25, 7 pm, Auditorium Saturday, February 26, 7 pm, Auditorium

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live on Friday evenings on stations of YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio, including KSJN 99.5 FM in the Twin Cities. The February 25 will also be broadcast live on Twin Cities PBS (TPT-2) and available for streaming at minnesotaorchestra.org and on the Orchestra's social media channels.



Karina Canellakis, conductor

Internationally acclaimed for her emotionally charged performances, technical command and interpretive depth, Karina Canellakis regularly appears with the top orchestras of North America, Europe, the U.K. and Australia. She is the chief conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, and concurrently holds the title of principal guest conductor with both the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin. Her 2021-22 season includes significant debuts with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra and San Francisco Symphony, as well as return engagements with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. She is also active on the operatic stage and is known to many in the classical music world for her virtuoso violin playing. More: opus3artists.com.



Jean-Guihen Queyras, cello

Cellist Jean-Guihen Queyras makes his Minnesota Orchestra debut in these performances. He has given world premieres of works by, among others, Ivan Fedele, Gilbert Amy, Bruno Mantovani, Michael Jarrell, Johannes-Maria Staud, Thomas Larcher and Tristan Murail. He was a founding member of the Arcanto Quartet and forms a celebrated trio with Isabelle Faust and Alexander Melnikov; and collaborated with zarb specialists Bijan and Keyvan Chemirani on a Mediterranean programme. Queyras often appears with renowned orchestras such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestre de Paris, London Symphony Orchestra, the Gewandhausorchester and the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich. His recordings of cello concertos by Edward Elgar, Antonín Dvořák, Philippe Schoeller and Gilbert Amy have been released to critical acclaim. More: jeanguihenqueyras.com.



William Eddins, host and writer

For the concert on Friday, February 25, William Eddins serves as host and writer of the Twin Cities PBS broadcast and online livestream, This Is Minnesota Orchestra, Earlier this season Eddins served in this same role for the New Year's Eve and Lunar New Year concerts. A full profile appears on page 22.

one-minute notes

Perry: Short Piece for Orchestra

Perry's humbly named A Short Piece for Orchestra is symmetrical in form, beginning and ending with vigor. One inner episode is moderately paced and strongly melodic, and another is full of pensive melancholy and falling melodic lines.

R. Strauss: Don Quixote

Strauss captures the humor and humanity of Cervantes' great novel in a magnificent work spotlighting solo cello. With Don Quixote portrayed by the cello and his long-suffering squire, Sancho Panza, primarily by the viola, the music depicts their escapades in a series of colorful variations. Among the most famous: the Don's battles with windmills and an unsuspecting flock of sheep, and an encounter with his imagined, idealized lady love, Dulcinea.

Rachmaninoff: Symphonic Dances

Rachmaninoff's final composition is full of rhythmic energy and colorful orchestration. The alto saxophone makes a rare orchestral appearance in this three-movement work, which closes with a breathtaking setting of the Dies Irae.





Julia Perry

Born: March 25, 1924, Lexington, Kentucky Died: April 24, 1979, Akron, Ohio

Short Piece for Orchestra

Composed: 1952

entucky-born composer Julia Perry chose a just-the-facts title when writing her *Short Piece for Orchestra* in 1952 near the midpoint of her too-short life, as she was beginning music studies in Europe that spanned much of the 1950s. Despite its plain and unassuming title, *Short Piece* covers a great deal of musical ground, exploring disparate ideas, moods and textures across seven minutes that seem longer.

to Europe and back

Raised in Ohio in a musical family, Perry found childhood success as a violinist and singer. She won a scholarship to attend Westminster Choir College, where she was the orchestra's concertmaster, and after graduating she pursued further studies in composition and conducting. Like many young composers of the period, she gravitated to Paris for composition instruction with the famous pedagogue Nadia Boulanger. In the 1950s she earned several high honors including two Guggenheim Fellowships, which allowed for an extended stay in Italy studying with Luigi Dallapiccola.

After returning to the U.S. in the late 1950s, she enjoyed several high career triumphs including the New York Philharmonic's 1965 performance and recording of *Short Piece for Orchestra*, at that point revised under the title *Study for Orchestra*. Sadly she suffered from ill health and a stroke that caused partial paralysis and slowed her composing activities—though she taught herself to write left-handed to allow for continued work. When she died at age 55 in 1979 she left a varied catalog of 12 symphonies, three concertos, three operas, a particularly admired *Stabat Mater*, and an assortment of shorter orchestral pieces, chamber music and vocal compositions, among other works.

short but ambitious

Many of Perry's early works were focused on voice and influenced by the spiritual style. Her 1952 *Short Piece for Orchestra* dates from the period when her focus shifted primarily to instrumental writing, often in the modern neoclassical style and incorporating more frequent dissonance. *Short Piece* was introduced in 1952 by the Turin Symphony. Of historical significance is the New York Philharmonic's note on the piece from its 1965 performance, which marked only the third time the ensemble had performed music by a woman, and the first by a woman of color.

"The score is a strongly symmetrical structure. The introduction, with its garish, angular thematic line etched in octaves by strings and woodwinds with horns, is punctuated by heavy, syncopated brass chords. This vigorous mood and tempo provide the framework of the entire piece, returning twice to alternate with contrasting material and a third time to conclude the score.

"The first contrasting episode, in a more moderato tempo, is strongly melodic. Here a principal melody is given first by solo flute, then by oboe, clarinet and horn. The short central section is dominated by a vigorous dotted rhythm carried by the bassoons and later taken over by the viola section. The third episode is one of pensive melancholy, with flute, solo violin, oboe and other instruments imitating each other's gracefully falling melodic line. The closing page recalls once more the vigorous opening."

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, timpani, field drum, bass drum, suspended cymbal, xylophone, harp, piano (doubling celesta) and strings

Program note by Carl Schroeder.



Richard Strauss

Born: June 11, 1864, Munich, Germany Died: September 8, 1949,

Garmisch-Partenkirchen,

Germany

Don Quixote, Fantastic Variations on a Theme of Knightly Character, Opus 35

Premiered: March 8, 1898

n 1896, just after finishing *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Richard Strauss set to work on a new project, one that would take him in entirely new directions. Strauss at first planned to write a tone poem based on events from Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. But rather than writing a straightforward tone poem, Strauss made his task more complicated by casting his new work as a set of variations based on a collection of themes associated with Don Quixote, his sidekick Sancho Panza and his idealized love Dulcinea. Then, to bring yet one more dimension to this music, Strauss conceived it as a virtuoso work for cello and orchestra,

Program Notes

with the solo cellist cast in the role of Don Quixote. Strauss completed the score in December 1897, and the premiere took place on March 6, 1898, in Cologne.

Don Quixote is a great showpiece for the solo cello—but we should not overlook the other players Strauss assigns important solo roles in this music. The part of Sancho Panza is first announced by bass clarinet and tenor tuba and thereafter undertaken mostly by the solo viola, which plays the role of the longsuffering squire; at key moments the solo violin contributes to the portrait of Don Ouixote.

a story in variations

Don Quixote consists of an introduction, a statement of the principal themes, ten variations and a finale. Strauss depicted only a few of the many incidents in Cervantes' novel and felt free to alter their order in his own presentation.

Introduction. Here are most of the important themes that will evolve across the span of Don Quixote, initially presented not by the soloists but by the orchestra. At the very beginning comes the little flute tune that will reappear in many forms, followed by a lilting idea for second violins that Strauss marks grazioso and a clarinet swirl followed by a three-chord cadence; all of these will be associated with Don Quixote himself.

Soon the solo oboe sings a gentle melody depicting the Don's idealized lady-love and patroness, the fair Dulcinea. Trumpets mark his resolve to defend her, but quickly this noble beginning turns complex and dissonant as Quixote loses himself in dreams of knight-errantry. In Cervantes' words: "through his little sleep and much reading, he dried up his brains in such sort, as he wholly lost his judgment." The music reaches a point of shrieking dissonance—Don Quixote's mind has snapped—and heroic fanfares break off in silence.

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Out of that silence, the solo cello is heard for the first time, presenting the Don's themes, now in a minor key. Quickly we meet Sancho Panza, and it is no accident that we move to a major key for the genial sidekick: bass clarinet and tenor tuba sing a rustic duet that introduces the squire, and the viola quickly takes this up, going on and on like Sancho himself.

Battle with the Windmills. The main characters having been introduced, the music proceeds directly into Variation I. Don Quixote and Sancho's themes are sounded simultaneously as they head out for their first adventure. It comes immediately: Don Quixote mistakes windmills for giants and rides to the attack. A sharp thump knocks the aged knight from his horse, and he recovers slowly on thoughts of Dulcinea.

Battle with the Sheep. In the famous second variation, Quixote mistakes a flock of sheep for the armies of the evil Emperor Alifanfaron. Their bleating is memorably suggested by fluttertongued minor seconds from the winds, while viola tremolos depict the cloud of dust they raise. Don Quixote charges into the flock, dispersing the terrified sheep and riding off in triumph as the shepherds howl.

Don Quixote and His Squire Converse. In the third and longest of the variations, Don Quixote speaks grandly of heroic deeds while Sancho chatters incessantly. Finally the knight cuts him off with a violent gesture, and the two head off in search of new adventures.

Battle with the Pilgrims. In variation four, the pair come upon a religious procession (solemn bassoon and brass chords) and ride to the attack; they are knocked flat and left lying in the dust as the procession fades into the distance.

The Knight's Vigil. Don Quixote ruminates on his ideals in the moonlight as soft winds blow in the background.

The Meeting with Dulcinea. Variation six opens with a jaunty oboe duet: the Don and Sancho have come upon three peasant girls, and Sancho convinces the knight that they are his beloved Dulcinea del Toboso and her retinue, but that they have been transformed by an enchanter. Don Quixote tries to pay homage to this coarse country maid, but the cackling girls flee in confusion.

The Ride Through the Air. In the seventh variation, the Don and Sancho are convinced to mount a hobby horse, believing that it will carry them through the air; the wind howls around them, but the two remain firmly rooted to the earth.

The Voyage in the Enchanted Boat. Variation eight brings the pair to an abandoned rowboat. They ride out into the stream but head toward a weir, tip over and fall in; once on shore, they wring out their clothes (pizzicato notes echo the water dripping from their sopping clothes).

The Combat with the Two Magicians. Here the adventurers encounter a pair of Benedictine monks chatting happily as they come down the road (two bassoons in busy counterpoint). Don Quixote rides to the attack and sends the terrified monks fleeing.

The Defeat of Don Quixote. In variation ten, a well-intentioned neighbor dresses as a knight, jousts with Quixote and defeats him. The vanquished knight is sent home under orders to give up knight-errantry for a year, and the pounding timpani pedal suggests his homeward journey in disgrace.

Finale: The Death of Don Quixote. In the Finale, the Don's fevered imagination gradually clears—the dissonances heard during the



first presentation of his themes are here resolved—but he is now an old and frail man. He recalls some of the themes associated with his adventures, and, in the cello's beautiful final statement, Don Quixote dies quietly as a long glissando glides downward.

Strauss once claimed that he could set a glass of beer to music, and Don Quixote very nearly proves him right; his biographer Norman Del Mar has shown how virtually every note in this score pictures a particular feature of Don Quixote and his quest. Don Quixote is suffused throughout with a level of understanding that is both humorous and humane. Strauss may have set out to write a tone poem that would re-tell the story of one of the greatest characters in literature, but he achieved much more: in its difficulty and brilliance, Don Quixote ranks high among the greatest classical works ever written for cello and orchestra.

Instrumentation: solo cello and solo viola with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets (1 doubling E-flat clarinet), bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 6 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, tenor tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, bells, snare drum, tambourine, triangle, wind machine, harp and strings

Program note by Eric Bromberger.



Sergei Rachmaninoff

Born: April 1, 1873,

Semyonovo, Russia Died: March 28, 1943,

Beverly Hills, California

Symphonic Dances

Premiered: January 3, 1941

n the summer of 1940 Sergei Rachmaninoff set to work on what would be his final complete work, a set of dances for orchestra that would ultimately be known as his Symphonic Dances, premiered by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra on January 3, 1941.

opulent, sumptuous-and subtle

This score is remarkable for the opulence of its color, and Rachmaninoff seems intent on finding and exploiting new orchestral sonorities. More remarkable still is Rachmaninoff's subtle compositional method. He evolves this music from rhythmic fragments, bits of theme, simple patterns—which are then built

up into powerful movements that almost overflow with rhythmic energy.

non allegro. The music opens with some of these fragments, just bits of sound from the first violins, and over them the English horn sounds the three-note pattern that will permeate this work, reappearing across its span in endless forms. Rachmaninoff plays it up into a great climax, which subsides as the opening fragments lead to the central episode, sung at first entirely by woodwinds.

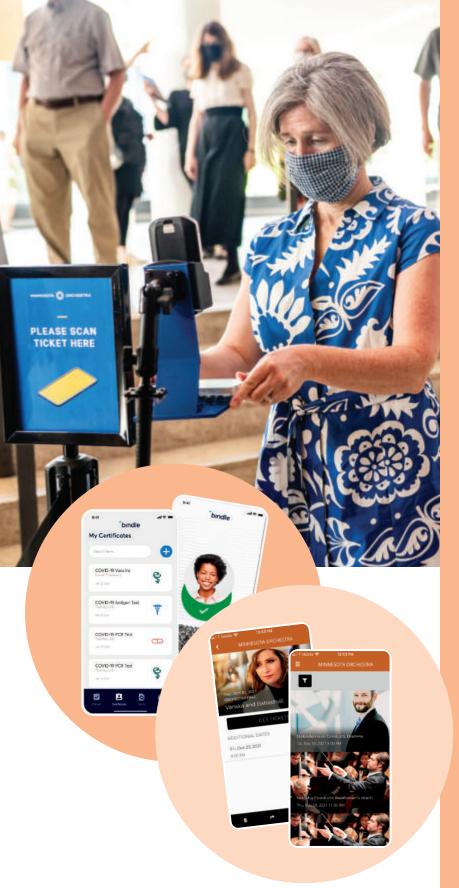
This slow interlude—the reedy sound of the alto saxophone is exactly right for this wistful music—makes its way back to the big gestures of the beginning section, now energized by explosive timpani salvos. In the closing moments, Rachmaninoff rounds matters off with a grand chorale for strings, beautifully accompanied by the glistening sound of bells, piano, harp, piccolo and flutes, and the movement winks into silence on the fragments with which it began.

andante con moto (tempo di valse). The opening of the second movement takes us into a completely different sound-world with the icy tones of trumpets and horns, played forte but stopped. Rachmaninoff calls for a waltz tempo, but he sets the music in the untraditional meters of 6/8 and 9/8 and has the waltz introduced by the unlikely sound of solo English horn. This music evolves through several episodes, some soaring, some powerful, before subsiding in a sudden, almost breathless close.

lento assai-allegro vivace. The slow introduction to the final movement is enlivened by the strings' interjections of the threenote pattern. Gradually these anneal into the Allegro vivace, and off the movement goes, full of rhythmic energy and the sound of ringing bells. A central episode in the tempo of the introduction sings darkly; after wonderful sounds including eerie string glissandos, the Allegro vivace returns to rush the Symphonic Dances to a close guaranteed to rip the top off a concert hall.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, tambourine, tamtam, triangle, glockenspiel, chimes, xylophone, harp, piano and strings

Program note by Eric Bromberger.





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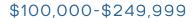
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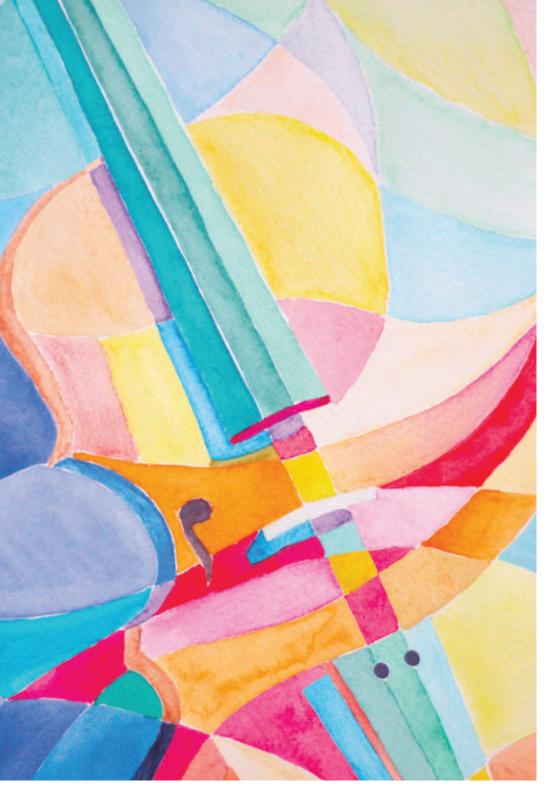
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