

Minnesota Orchestra

Thomas Søndergård, conductor

Thursday, October 20, 2022, 11 am | Orchestra Hall
 Friday, October 21, 2022, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall
 Saturday, October 22, 2022, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

Lili Boulanger	<i>D'un matin de printemps</i> (Of a Spring Morning)	ca. 5'
Maurice Ravel	<i>Ma Mère l'Oye</i> (Mother Goose) Prelude Spinning-wheel Dance Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty Conversations of Beauty and the Beast Tom Thumb Laideronnette, Empress of the Pagodas The Enchanted Garden	ca. 28'
	I N T E R M I S S I O N	ca. 20'
Igor Stravinsky	<i>The Rite of Spring</i> Part I: The Adoration of the Earth Part II: The Sacrifice	ca. 32'

pre-concert

Concert Preview with Phillip Gainsley
 Thursday, October 20, 10:15 am, Auditorium
 Friday, October 21, 7:15 pm, N. Bud Grossman Mezzanine
 Saturday, October 22, 7:15 pm, N. Bud Grossman Mezzanine

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 October 21 concert 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.





Thomas Søndergård, conductor

Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård, the newly announced 11th music director of the Minnesota Orchestra, will serve for the 2022-23 season as the ensemble's music director designate before beginning his music director role in September 2023. He is the current music director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO). Previously he served as principal conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales as well principal conductor and musical advisor of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra. In addition to his debut concerts with the Minnesota Orchestra in December 2021 and a return engagement this past April, he has appeared with many prestigious European and American orchestras and

drawn acclaim in a range of productions with Royal Danish Opera and other companies. The 2022-23 season will see him return to the Edinburgh International Festival and the BBC Proms with the RSNO, and he returns to the Danish National Symphony Orchestra to conduct the world premiere of Rune Glerup's Violin Concerto with Isabelle Faust. He also makes U.S. debuts with the Baltimore Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra and Cincinnati Symphony, alongside a return visit to the Chicago Symphony, among other engagements. On the operatic stage, he returns to Royal Danish Opera this season to conduct Strauss' *Elektra*. His discography covers a broad range of contemporary and mainstream repertoire, including Sibelius symphonies and tone poems with BBC NOW and Prokofiev and Richard Strauss with RSNO. In January 2022, he was decorated with a prestigious Royal Order of Chivalry – the Order of Dannebrog by Her Majesty Margrethe II, Queen of Denmark. He began his musical career as a timpani player. More: minnesotaorchestra.org, askonasholt.com.



Ariana Kim, broadcast host

For the concert on October 21, Ariana Kim serves as host and writer of the Twin Cities PBS broadcast and online livestream *This Is Minnesota Orchestra*. Kim, an acclaimed violinist and a tenured professor at Cornell University, earned a 2019 Grammy nomination with the Aizuri Quartet and has served as acting concertmaster of the Louisiana Philharmonic. She is in her 17th season with The Knights, a New York-based musical collective; was a member of the new music ensemble Ne(x)tworks for 10 seasons; and is in her 18th season with the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota. In 2021 she taught as a visiting artist at Seoul National University. More: arianakim.com.

one-minute notes

Boulanger: *Of a Spring Morning*

Lili Boulanger's *Of a Spring Morning* invites us into a vivid scene, one buzzing with energy and excitement. Over the span of just a few minutes, her music paints shimmering colors and showcases delicate, beautiful growth, not unlike the first few moments of a fresh spring day.

Ravel: *Mother Goose*

Ravel's simple and beautiful ballet score, based on five well-known French fairy tales, sounds like nothing so much as the innocent, easily entranced mind of a child. It is often played as a short orchestral suite, but these performances feature the complete work as Ravel originally wrote it.

Stravinsky: *The Rite of Spring*

Of this work—which drew jeers at its 1913 premiere—Stravinsky wrote: it “represents pagan Russia and is unified by a single idea: the mystery and great surge of the creative power of Spring.” Vibrant sounds of nature set the scene for the story, an imagined pagan ritual in which a sacrificial virgin dances herself to death.



Lili Boulanger

Born: August 21, 1893,
Paris, France

Died: March 15, 1918,
Mézy-sur-Seine, France

D'un matin de printemps (Of a Spring Morning)

Composed: 1918

Upon hearing the phrase “Of a spring morning,” one might envision dew on blades of grass, a gentle sunrise, colors budding in a garden bed and birds chirping in the trees. The essence of spring—the start of something new—is what Lili Boulanger captured in her orchestral work titled with that phrase in French, *D'un matin de printemps*. The tragic twist is that this was one of her final compositions, marking the end of a career, and of her too-short life. Boulanger’s battles with illness aren’t apparent in her music. Instead, she composed with a freshness that embraced the joy of life, even if she only experienced it for a brief time.

the sibling connection

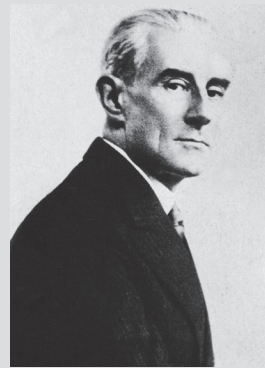
Lili Boulanger was born the youngest daughter in a musical family; her father was a professor of music at the Paris Conservatory and her mother and grandparents were also musicians. It was her sister Nadia, however, who made the family name famous by becoming one of the pre-eminent composition teachers of the 20th century, a pedagogue to pupils such as Aaron Copland, Elliott Carter and Philip Glass, among many others.

Lili’s star burned bright in its own way. She was the first woman ever to win the top composing prize at the Prix de Rome in France, doing so at just 20 years of age. In the years immediately following her Prix de Rome win, her health was in rapid decline, and she knew that her time was limited. She worked rapidly to finish a few of her incomplete projects, with the help of her sister, and then dove into a pair of new orchestral works: *D'un matin de printemps* (Of a Spring Morning) and *D'un soir triste* (Of a Sad Evening)—the second of which the Minnesota Orchestra will perform next April. These two pieces would be her final compositions before succumbing to Crohn’s disease at age 24.

Of a Spring Morning invites us into a vivid scene, one buzzing with energy and excitement. Over the span of five minutes, the music paints shimmering colors and showcases delicate, beautiful growth, not unlike the first few moments of a fresh spring day.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, small snare drum, suspended cymbal, triangle, harp, celesta and strings

Program note by *Emma Plehal*.



Maurice Ravel

Born: March 7, 1875,
Ciboure, France

Died: December 28, 1937,
Paris, France

Ma Mère l'Oye (Mother Goose)

Premiered: January 29, 1912

Maurice Ravel loved children and had a gift for storytelling. His friendship with the Polish emigré couple Xavier and Ida Godebski, which began in 1904, flourished in part because he doted on their two children, Jean and Mimi. By 1908 Ravel had become a frequent visitor at their country house in Valvins, near Fontainebleau. There he spent long hours with Jean and Mimi, reading to them from classic 17th- and 18th-century French fairy tales.

Doubly attracted by the elegant illustrations in the fairy tale books and the rapt attention of the two Godebski children, Ravel focused his energy on a musical outlet for his storytelling. Between 1908 and 1910, he composed a suite for one piano, four hands, with the intent that Jean and Mimi would enjoy it and perhaps play the first public performance. In 1911 Ravel’s publisher Jacques Durand suggested that he orchestrate the suite. Shortly afterward, the new director of the Théâtre des Arts, Jacques Roché, approached Ravel about adapting *Ma Mère l'Oye* as a ballet *divertissement* for his theater. Ravel devised his own scenario for the ballet, adding a prelude, a *Dance of the Spinning Wheel* and several interludes. In that expanded form, *Ma Mère l'Oye* had its premiere in January 1912. The ballet has enjoyed great success.

a musical storybook

Following the Prelude, Ravel’s first scene introduces an old woman at the spinning wheel. Princess Florene enters, skipping rope. She stumbles and falls against the wheel, pricking her finger on its spindle. That incident sets the stage for her to fall into the deep slumber of the familiar *Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty*. Saddened courtiers dance sedately, recalling the curse that has prophesied Princess Florine’s fate.

Meanwhile, the old woman removes her cape and reveals herself to be the Good Fairy. She ensures that the Princess will dream sweetly while trapped in her enchanted sleep. Her dreams constitute the three scenes that follow, reordered from the original suite. First is *Conversations of Beauty and the Beast*, a tale that needs no introduction thanks to Disney's animated movie on the mid-1990s and the more recent live-action version. Ravel's movement contrasts the grace of Beauty's waltz with the low growling of the enchanted prince imprisoned within the Beast.

Petit poucet is Tom Thumb. Ravel's music imitates the lost child wandering aimlessly, as he tries to locate the trail of breadcrumbs that will lead him home. He is cruelly mocked in the chirping of the birds who have eaten the crumbs.

In the following scene, *Laideronnette*, the eastern empress (whose name means "Little Ugly") appears in a Chinese garden tent. Pagoda attendants wait on her. She dances with an enchanted green serpent, and all the attendants join their dance. The air fills with the tinkle of bells—pentatonic bells, of course—along with suggestions of Renaissance lutes and theorbos.

The ballet concludes with the arrival of Prince Charming, escorted by a cupid. Their entry into the fairy garden coincides with the dawn, a musical breaking of the spell. Princess Florine awakens and Cupid unites the happy couple as the courtiers all gather in celebration. The Good Fairy blesses their union and the ballet concludes with a musical apotheosis.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 2 horns, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, tamtam, triangle, xylophone, celesta, keyboard glockenspiel, harp and strings

Program note by **Laurie Shulman**.



Igor Stravinsky

Born: June 17, 1882,
St. Petersburg, Russia
Died: April 6, 1971,
New York City

The Rite of Spring

Premiered: May 29, 1913

In the spring of 1910, while completing the orchestration of *The Firebird*, Igor Stravinsky had a dream that changed the course of music history: "I saw in imagination a solemn pagan rite: wise

elders, seated in a circle, watching a young girl dancing herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of spring." This idea became *The Rite of Spring*, which Stravinsky began composing in the summer of 1911, immediately after the premiere of *Petrushka*. This story of violence and nature-worship in pagan Russia—inspired in part by Stravinsky's boyhood memories of the thunderous break-up of the ice on the Neva River in St. Petersburg each spring—became a ballet in two parts, *The Adoration of the Earth* and *The Sacrifice*.

ancient and modern

In the music, Stravinsky drew on the distant past and fused it with the modern. His themes, many adapted from ancient Lithuanian wedding tunes, are brief, of narrow compass, and based on the constantly changing meters of Russian folk music, yet his harmonic language can be fiercely dissonant and "modern," particularly in the famous repeating chord in *Dance of the Adolescents*, where he superimposes an E-flat major chord (with added seventh) on top of an F-flat major chord. Even more striking is the rhythmic imagination that animates this score: Stravinsky himself confessed that parts were so complicated that while he could play them, he could not write them down.

And beyond all these, *The Rite of Spring* is founded on an incredible orchestral sense: from the eerie sound of the high solo bassoon at the beginning through its use of a massive percussion section and such unusual instruments as alto flute and piccolo trumpet (not to mention the eight horns, two tubas and quadruple woodwinds), this score rings with sounds never heard before. The premiere may have provoked a noisy riot, but at a more civilized level it had an even greater impact: no music written after the riotous premiere on May 29, 1913, would ever be the same.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), alto flute, piccolo, 4 oboes (1 doubling English horn), English horn, 3 clarinets (1 doubling bass clarinet), E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, 4 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), contrabassoon, 8 horns (2 doubling tenor Wagner tuben), 4 trumpets (1 doubling bass trumpet), piccolo trumpet, 3 trombones, 2 tubas, 2 sets of timpani, antique cymbals in B-flat/A-flat, cymbals, bass drum, guiro, tamtam, tambourine, triangle and strings

Program note by **Eric Bromberger**.