

MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Thomas Søndergård, conductor
Minnesota Chorale, Kathy Saltzman Romey, artistic director

Thursday, September 28, 2023, 11AM
Friday, September 29, 2023, 8PM
Saturday, September 30, 2023, 2PM

Orchestra Hall

With these concerts we offer our deepest gratitude to the more than 14,000 Guaranty Fund donors who help the Orchestra enrich, inspire and serve the community through outstanding musical experiences.

Lera Auerbach *Icarus* CA. 12'

Claude Debussy *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* CA. 10'

Samuel Barber *Medea's Dance of Vengeance, Opus 23a* CA. 12'

I N T E R M I S S I O N CA. 20'

Maurice Ravel *Daphnis et Chloé*
Minnesota Chorale CA. 43'

PRE- AND POST-CONCERT

Open House

Saturday, September 30, 10am to 2pm, locations throughout Orchestra Hall
Free and open to the public; no tickets required. Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/openhouse for details.

Conversation with Thomas Søndergård

Saturday, September 30, post-concert, Auditorium

THANK YOU

The 2023–24 Classical Season is presented by Ameriprise Financial.

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 September 29 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

Profile appears on page 8.



SARAH HICKS,
BROADCAST HOST

Profile appears on page 34.



KATHY SALTZMAN ROMEY,
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

BARBARA BROOKS,
ACCOMPANIST AND
ARTISTIC ADVISOR

The Minnesota Chorale, principal chorus of the Minnesota Orchestra since 2004, marks the 50th anniversary of its first appearance with the Orchestra this year. Its most recent appearance with the Orchestra was at the May 2023 world premiere of *bread(th)* by Carlos Simon and Marc Bamuthi Joseph. Its upcoming collaborations with the Orchestra include performances of Handel’s *Messiah* in December and two works in June 2024: Eleanor Alberga’s *Rise Up, O Sun!* and Johannes Brahms’ *Schicksalslied*. Founded in 1972 and led since 1995 by artistic director Kathy Saltzman Romey, the Chorale is Minnesota’s preeminent symphonic chorus and ranks among the foremost professional choruses in the U.S. Away from Orchestra Hall this season it will present two editions of its acclaimed Bridges program, one featuring a new work by Alberto Grau and the other collaborating with the Border CrosSing ensemble, and it will also collaborate with Minnesota Dance Theater in choreographed performances of Orff’s *Carmina burana*. More: mnchorale.org.

soprano

- Laura E. Amos
- Jessica Belt
- Kristi Bergland*
- Deborah Carbaugh*
- Deborah Croker Treece
- Monica deCausmeaker*
- Deyhdra Dennis-Weiss*
- Laurel E. Drevlow*
- Alyssa Ellson*
- Heather Ford
- Emma Goecks
- Michelle Hayes*
- Sarah Jennings
- Wendy Lukaszewski
- Amy Madson
- Katherine McCord
- Morales Serafin
- Shannon McGuire*
- Merilu Narum
- Linda Neuman
- Alyssa Northrop
- Sara Payne*
- Sara Ann Pogorely
- Adriana Pohl
- Kristin Schmitz*
- Natalie Scholz
- Shari M. Speer*
- Polly Strege
- Amelia Tesdahl
- Maya A. Tester
- Shekela Wanyama*
- Kelly Webb*
- Jena Wilhelmi

alto

- Jaime Anthony
- Cherelle-René Childs*
- Ruth Dalager Buuck
- Elisabeth M. Drost*
- Susan Druck*
- Kristina Dudley*
- Michelle Hackett
- Mallory Harrington
- Sarah Harris
- Lindsey Hartjes
- Dee Hein
- Heather A. Hood*
- Suzanne Kennedy*
- Jenny Kisner
- Claire M. Klein
- Cassie Noll Kopietz
- Megan Kosse
- Linnea Lee
- Maureen Long
- Celia McCoy
- Mary Monson*
- Damara O’Malley*
- Molly Palmer
- Barbara S. Prince*
- Sydney Rabata
- Deborah E. Richman
- Joy E. Roellinger
- Mitra Sadeghpour*
- Mary Schultz
- Kristen Schweiloch
- Elizabeth Sullivan*
- Marcia VanCamp
- Suzanne Wiebusch
- Courtney Wiley

tenor

- Sam Baker*
- Jonathan Burnett
- Jared Campbell*
- Ryan Cogswell*
- Patrick L. Coleman
- Paolo Debuque*
- Dominic Detwiler
- Mark Ertl
- Thomas Jermann
- Tom Knabel
- Andrew Kreye*
- Andy McCullough*
- Scott D. McKenzie
- David Mennicke*
- Geoff Michael
- Kevin Navis
- Matt Neeser
- Jeffrey Nielsen
- Mark Pladson
- Jeffrey J. Raehl*
- Anthony T. Rohr*
- Patrick Romey*
- Scott Sandberg
- Luke Slivinski
- Erick Sood
- Walter Tambor
- Ty Wottrich

bass

- Matthew Abbas
- Peder Bolstad
- Scott Chamberlain
- Mark Countryman
- Steve Cramer*
- Declan Dahlberg
- James D’Aurora
- Mark Garner*
- Stefan Gingerich
- David Goudzwaard-Vaught*
- Steven Hodulik*
- Jon C. Lahann*
- Bob Magil
- William Marrujo
- Louis McCoy
- Robert Oganovic
- Bob Peskin*
- Nathan Petersen-Kindem*
- Steve Pratt
- Robert Rynkiewicz
- Bemjamin Shermock*
- William B. Smale
- Michael R. Tomlinson*
- Rick Treece
- Russ Vander Wiel
- Jacob Hurley Weindling
- Tony Zuchora-Walske

* section leader



LERA AUERBACH

B: October 21, 1973
Chelyabinsk, Russia

Icarus

PREMIERED: July 18, 2011

— In the creative arts, excellence in three areas—say composing, performing and conducting—is a rare feat that might earn someone the moniker “triple threat.” Doubling that and more is Russian-born Lera Auerbach, whose musical efforts are enriched by her expression in poetry, literature, drawing and painting. In addition to collaborating with some of the world’s top orchestras, she has written several award-winning books of poetry and the children’s book *A is for Oboe*—a witty reference to the pitch the instrument plays to tune an orchestra—and her artwork is displayed in galleries around the world. Next month, to mark her 50th birthday, her artistic talents will be honored in a weeklong Auerbach Festival in the Netherlands.

“WHEREVER IT TAKES YOU”

In 2011 Auerbach revised the final two movements of her first symphony *Chimera*, which was composed five years earlier, to create the standalone symphonic poem *Icarus*. The title came after the work was written, and the composer offers audiences full freedom to interpret the music. “All my music is abstract,” she explains, “but by giving evocative titles I invite the listener to feel free to imagine, to access [their] own memories, associations...You

don’t need to understand how or why—just allow the music to take you wherever it takes you.”

Nevertheless, Auerbach’s title choice is powerful; her music sets in motion an epic adventure, one wrought with turbulence and danger, matching the mood of the ancient Greek myth of Icarus. In the story, Icarus and his father Daedalus use creative means to escape captivity on island of Crete, crafting two sets of wings using bird feathers and beeswax. The father-son pair are to fly across the sea to safety together, but only by following Daedalus’ rules: fly too low and the moisture of the sea will weigh down the wings’ feathers; fly too high and the sun will heat the wax that holds them together. The only safe way is to travel between the extremes. Unfortunately, Icarus defies his father, flying higher and higher, until his hubris ultimately leads to his demise.

“What makes this myth so touching,” says Auerbach, “is Icarus’ impatience of the heart, his wish to reach the unreachable, the intensity of the ecstatic brevity of his flight and inevitability of his fall. If Icarus were to fly safely—there would be no myth. His tragic death is beautiful.”

A DRAMATIC JOURNEY OF EXTREMES

Icarus bursts to life with an unsettling and raw opening, sparking curiosity about where the experience will lead. When the sky clears, only for a brief moment, a solo violin sings a mysterious recitative. Then, a ghostly trio comprising flute, cello and bass clarinet continues to spin the tale before the unrelenting opening motive returns with a fury.

Accented, dissonant trills across the ensemble introduce a new soundscape that is darker still and even more brooding. Solo violin and upper woodwinds emerge from the darkness, juxtaposing a lyrical melody with a sense of

ONE-MINUTE NOTES

Auerbach: *Icarus*

Contemporary composer Lera Auerbach’s *Icarus* is abstract music, but its title beckons the listener to reflect on the mythical Icarus, his fatal flight and the human desire to transcend limits.

Debussy: *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*

A sleeping faun, represented by a languid, sensual flute solo, dreams of a romantic tryst with forest nymphs.

Like the poem it is based on, this music is impressionistic—offering a series of sensations without formal structure.

Barber: *Medea’s Dance of Vengeance*

Samuel Barber’s music captures the essence of a tragic Greek myth—Medea and her murderous revenge after being abandoned—in emphasizing the psychological states of vengeance and jealousy rather than a literal retelling of the story.

Ravel: *Daphnis et Chloé*

This ballet reveals Classical myth as seen through the lens of French impressionism. Daphnis and Chloé (“Chloé” in French) dance to opulent music, spurning all rivals—but pirates attack and carry off Chloé. The god Pan responds to the entreaties of onlookers and, with a flash of the supernatural, he drives off the enemy. The reunited lovers thank him, and the entire crowd takes part in a joyful dance.

impending doom. The music swirls higher and higher, as a listener might imagine Icarus’ ascent towards the sun. As the strings reach the upper extreme of their range and disappear into the heavens, the lowest instruments in the orchestra quietly and carefully move in the other direction, reaching down into the depths of the earth.

Icarus employs an electronic instrument rarely seen on the Orchestra Hall stage—the theremin—that is more typically at home in scores of films and TV shows containing otherworldly elements, such as 2018’s *First Man* and the current Apple TV+ series *The Big Door Prize*. Its haunting, ethereal waves of sound push the orchestra into a fantastical musical realm.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, crystal glasses, tamtam, glockenspiel, vibraphone, chimes, 2 harps, piano, celesta, theremin and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY EMMA PLEHAL.



CLAUDE DEBUSSY

B: August 22, 1862
Saint-Germain-en-Laye,
France
D: March 25, 1918
Paris, France

*Prelude to the Afternoon
of a Faun*
PREMIERED: December 22,
1894

— This shimmering, endlessly beautiful music is so familiar to many of us—particularly the famous opening flute solo played in its lowest register—that it is difficult to comprehend how problematic it was for audiences in the years after its premiere in December 1894. Saint-Saëns was outraged: “[It] is pretty sound, but it contains not the slightest musical idea in the real sense of the word. It’s as much a piece of music as the palette a painter has worked from is a painting.”

We smile, but Saint-Saëns had a point. Though it lacks the aggression of Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*, the *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* may be an even more revolutionary piece of music, for it does away with musical form altogether. This is not music to be grasped intellectually, but simply to be heard and felt.

Debussy based this work on the poem “L’après-midi d’un faune” by his close friend, the Symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé. The poem itself is dreamlike, a series of impressions and sensations rather than a narrative. It tells of the languorous memories of a faun on a sleepy afternoon as he recalls an amorous encounter the previous day with two passing forest nymphs. This encounter may or may not have taken place, and the faun’s memories—subject to drowsiness, warm sunlight, forgetfulness and drink—grow vague and finally blur into sleep.

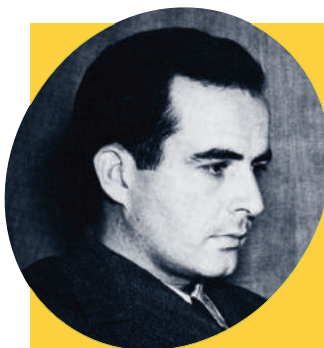
A SOFT AND SENSUAL WORLD

Like the faun’s dream, Debussy’s music lacks specific direction. The famous opening flute solo (the faun’s pipe?) draws us into this soft, sensual world. The middle section, introduced by woodwinds, may be a subtle variation of the opening flute melody—it is a measure of this dreamy music that we cannot be sure. The opening theme returns to lead the music to its glowing close.

Audiences have come to love this music precisely for its sunlit mists and glowing sound, but it is easy to understand why it troubled early listeners. Beneath its shimmering and gentle beauties lies an entirely new conception of what music might be.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, antique cymbals, 2 harps and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



SAMUEL BARBER

B: March 9, 1910
West Chester, Pennsylvania
D: January 23, 1981
New York City

*Medea’s Dance of
Vengeance, Opus 23a*
PREMIERED: December 22,
1894

— The Greek myth of Medea—who helped Jason steal the Golden Fleece, bore his children and was abandoned for a younger woman, then took her revenge by murdering those children—has haunted artists over the last 25 centuries. This account of jealousy and horrific vengeance gets at something deep in our imagination. Playwrights as different as Euripides, Appollonius and Robinson Jeffers have dramatized the myth, and Luigi Cherubi, Marc-Antoine Charpentier and Mikis Theodorakis are among at least 10 composers to write an opera based on it.

In 1944, choreographer Martha Graham—at that time very interested in ballets based on myths from Ancient Greece and elsewhere—received a commission from the Ditson Fund of Columbia University for a new ballet, and she took up the story of Medea. Her first choice to write the music was Mexican composer Carlos Chávez, but when she did not like his early ideas for the project, she turned to Samuel Barber. He began work on the ballet in November 1945, just after completing his Cello Concerto, and he had to work fast—the premiere had been announced for the following May, and the music was due in February.

FINDING THE RIGHT NAME

Graham had trouble deciding on a name for the new ballet. It was premiered at Columbia on May 10, 1946, under the title *Pain and Wrath Are the Singers*; she later changed this to *Serpent Heart* and finally to *Cave of the Heart*. Barber, however, thought of the score in terms of its protagonist. When he arranged the original ballet, which had been scored for only 13 instruments, as a seven-movement suite for full orchestra, he called it simply *Medea*. Eugene Ormandy led the Philadelphia Orchestra in the first performance of *Medea* on December 5, 1947, but as Barber conducted this music with various orchestras, he came to feel that it would be more effective if condensed and focused. He made this revision in 1955, and the final version (now a single, 13-minute movement) was premiered by Dimitri Mitropoulos and the New York Philharmonic on February 2, 1956, under the title *Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance*. The music was finally fixed in place, but Barber simplified the title shortly before his passing in 1981 to *Medea's Dance of Vengeance*.

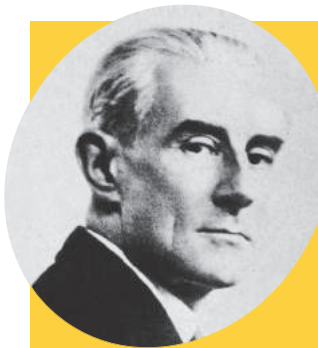
A note in the score to the ballet points out that neither Barber nor Graham intended that it should be a literal interpretation of the story of Medea and Jason. Instead, they used those mythical figures “to project psychological states of jealousy and vengeance which are timeless,” and listeners should approach this music as a generalized depiction of those states.

Barber drew the general structure of *Medea's Dance of Vengeance* from three movements of the suite: the opening *Parados*, which introduces the characters; the fourth movement, *Choros*, which depicts Medea's meditation; and the fifth movement, *Medea*, which is the music that accompanies her deadly dance. However, Barber made a number of changes as he revised—not only did he completely rescore the music, he essentially recomposed these excerpts into what is virtually a new piece. He used only the first few measures of the *Parados*, where the eerie opening chord and the steely sound of the xylophone establish the ominous atmosphere for what will follow; the *Choros*—the meditation—survives essentially intact.

The concluding *Dance of Vengeance*, however, was completely rewritten. In the score, Barber quotes a passage from Euripides' *Medea* as she plunges into her act of horrifying violence, and one line from this might stand as key to this final section: “Now I am in the full force of the storm of hate.” Barber composed a new transition, marked *mysterious*, into this dance and then revised the dance itself to take advantage of a large orchestra—the final version employs a large complement of winds as well as xylophone, harp, piano and a huge percussion section. Medea's dance itself, marked *agitado* and energized by the piano's relentless repeating pattern, gradually accelerates (Barber instructs that this should be *with mounting frenzy*) to a furious climax, and for his final version he composed a new 40-measure coda that truly does conclude “in a storm of hate.”

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, tamtam, tom-toms, triangle, whip, xylophone, harp, piano and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



MAURICE RAVEL

B: March 7, 1875
Ciboure, France

D: December 28, 1937
Paris, France

Daphnis et Chloé

PREMIERED: June 8, 1912

— In 1909 the impresario Serge Diaghilev brought the Ballets Russes to Paris as part of his ongoing presentation of things Russian (art, sculpture, icons, opera, ballet) in the City of Light. That summer, Diaghilev asked Ravel to write a score for the Ballets Russes. The French composer, then 34, could not have had more distinguished collaborators: Diaghilev oversaw the project, Mikhail Fokine was choreographer, Leon Bakst designed the sets, and Vaclav Nijinsky and Tamara Karsavina would dance the lead roles.

“IN THE GREECE OF MY DREAMS”

For the subject, Diaghilev proposed the story of Daphnis and Chloe (the latter rendered “Chloé” in French), a pastoral by the Greek Longus from the fourth or fifth century B.C.

This is a gentle tale of love: a young man and woman fall in love. She is kidnapped by pirates but rescued by the intercession of the god Pan, and the ballet concludes with general rejoicing.

The story seems simple enough, but quickly the collaborators were at odds. Ravel wrote to a friend: “I must tell you that I’ve just had an insane week: preparation of a ballet libretto for the next Russian season. Almost every night, work until 3 a.m. What complicates things is that Fokine doesn’t know a word of French, and I only know how to swear in Russian. In spite of the interpreters, you can imagine the savor of these meetings.” One problem was that Bakst conceived an opulent oriental setting for the ballet, but Ravel imagined “a vast musical fresco, less thoughtful of archaism than of fidelity to the Greece of my dreams, which identifies quite willingly with that imagined and depicted by late 18th-century French artists.” Paintings of the verdant sets suggest that Ravel’s conception—described by Madeline Goss as “a typically 18th-century atmosphere of Watteau shepherdesses”—finally prevailed.

Ravel set to work. He composed the score in a quiet villa in Fontainebleau, working with great concentration. The premiere, conducted by Pierre Monteux at the Théâtre du Châtelet on June 8, 1912, had an indifferent success: the production was under-rehearsed, the participants were still bickering, and the dancers had problems with the 5/4 meter of the concluding *Danse générale*. Yet for those who could see beyond these problems, the ballet had an overwhelming impact. The poet and dramatist Jean Cocteau, then just 23, was among them: “*Daphnis et Chloé* is one of the creations which fell into our hearts like a comet coming from a planet, the laws of which will remain to us forever mysterious and forbidden.”

Ravel planned his ballet with great care, noting that “The work is constructed symphonically according to a strict tonal plan, by means of a small number of motifs, whose development assures the symphonic homogeneity of the work.” Many of these motifs are introduced in the first few measures: the muted horn’s gently swaying figure, the solo flute’s high melody, a soaring theme for solo horn that will be associated with Daphnis and Chloe themselves—all these will evolve and return in many forms throughout the ballet. More immediately impressive is the sumptuous sound of this music—Ravel makes inspired use of his extravagant forces, which include not just a huge orchestra, but an optional wordless chorus, wind machine, 14 different percussion instruments and offstage wind players.

THE ACTION

A brief summary: out of the opening mists, the seminal motifs are heard and, with statues of nymphs in the background, Daphnis and Chloe appear and feel twinges

of jealousy as others swirl around them. A dance contest is proposed, with the winner to receive a kiss from Chloe. Dorcon, a cowherd and secret rival for Chloe’s affections, offers a clumsy dance (the orchestra “laughs” at his efforts), but Daphnis’ graceful dance wins him the prize. All exit but Daphnis, and now Lyceion enters and tries to tempt him with her sensual dance—her veil falls from her shoulders repeatedly—but Daphnis cannot be swayed. A sudden outcry marks the arrival of the pirates, who capture Chloe and carry her off. The distraught Daphnis collapses.

Now the nymph statues come to life, and the god Pan begins to take shape to the eerie sound of the wind machine. The nymphs awaken Daphnis, who prostrates himself in front of Pan. The scene changes to a rugged coastline. Pirates enter by torchlight and do their barbaric dance, which Ravel marks *Animé et très rude*. Chloe is brought in, her hands bound, and seeks mercy; she tries to flee, but is returned to the pirate chieftain, who prepares to carry her off. Then, suddenly, flames spring up and fantastic creatures surround the pirates. Pan himself emerges from the earth—and all flee in terror.

We return to the landscape of the opening, but now it is night and rivulets drip from the rocks. Rippling flutes and clarinets echo the sound the water makes as Daphnis awakes and the sun comes up—in glorious music derived from the soaring horn melody heard at the ballet’s beginning. Chloe appears, and the joyful lovers are united. Told that Pan had saved Chloe in memory of the nymph Syrinx, Daphnis and Chloe now act out that tale in pantomime, and Daphnis mimes playing on reeds, represented by an opulent flute solo. The two pledge their love, and the stage is filled with happy youths, whose *Danse générale* brings the ballet to a thrilling conclusion.

Also at the premiere was Igor Stravinsky, who later would have some snippy things to say about Ravel. He called the ballet “not only Ravel’s best work, but also one of the most beautiful products of all French music.”

Instrumentation: mixed chorus with orchestra comprising 3 flutes (2 doubling piccolo), alto flute, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, E-flat clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, antique cymbals, castanets, tambourine, triangle, wind machine, glockenspiel, 2 harps, celeste (doubling keyboard glockenspiel) and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.