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FROM THE EDITOR

Although it’s not always evident, numbers are a critical part of music, from determining how many players are onstage to the numerology evident in the common groupings of notes and rhythms, among many mathematical aspects. This month’s *Showcase* covers concerts, dates and features that offer a 10-part countdown of sorts.

This winter marks the **tenth** anniversary of Orchestra Hall’s reopening after a renovation. It has been **nine** years since composer Texu Kim’s music was first heard here at the 2015 Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute; his *Dub-Sanjo* is performed by the Orchestra on March 8 and 9. **Eight** artists from Troupe Vertigo will perform acrobatics, dance and theater alongside the Orchestra on March 2 and 3. **Seven** annotators contributed to this month’s program notes. **Six** soloists and conductors make their Minnesota Orchestra debut during March. Pianist Yuja Wang has earned **five** Grammy nominations and won her first Grammy at last month’s ceremony; she debuts with the Orchestra on March 29 and 30. **Four** types of trumpet are played by Pacho Flores in Arturo Márquez’s *Concierto de Otoño* on March 21 and 22. **Three** interviews—with Orchestra violist Kenneth Freed, Symphony Ball Chairs Diane and Tony Hofstede, and student composer Luke Soneral—appear in this issue’s news section. The folk rock **duo** Indigo Girls will return for a performance on March 26. The Orchestra’s **first** performances of Arnold Schoenberg’s *Erwartung* on March 8 and 9 come 100 years after the work’s premiere in June 1924.

Thank you for joining us at any of the month’s nine concerts, and we hope to count on you returning soon!

Carl Schroeder
Carl Schroeder, Editor
editor@mnorch.org

ABOUT THE COVER

Associate Principal Bass Kathryn Nettleman giving a young audience member a hands-on experience prior to a Relaxed Family Concert in early January 2024. Photo: Darrell Owens.

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Yuja Wang, page 34

FROM LEFT: Kim Tae Hwan, Juan Martínez, Norbert Kniat

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Photo: Josh Kohanek

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Address correspondence and inquiries to
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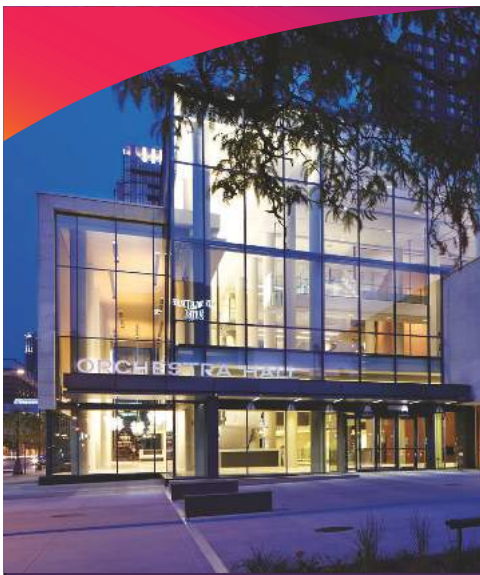


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Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård, who this past fall began his tenure as the 11th music director of the Minnesota Orchestra, is a highly regarded conductor in both the orchestral and opera spheres. He has earned a reputation for incisive interpretations of works by composers from his native Denmark, a great versatility in a broad range of standard and modern repertoire, and a collaborative approach with the musicians he leads.

Søndergård first conducted the Minnesota Orchestra in December 2021 performances, establishing an immediate rapport with musicians and audiences; he was quickly reengaged for an April 2022 concert and then announced as the next music director in July 2022. His inaugural season began this past fall with two weeks of historic concerts highlighted by Richard Strauss' *Alpine Symphony* and, with the Minnesota Chorale, Ravel's complete ballet score *Daphnis and Chloe*. Next month he will lead concerts featuring Concertmaster Erin Keefe as well as several initiatives spotlighting students and music educators.

Since 2018 Søndergård has been music director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO), a role he will continue alongside his Minnesota appointment. Prior to joining the RSNO, he served as principal conductor and musical advisor to the Norwegian Radio Orchestra and then as principal conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (BBC NOW). As a guest conductor he has led major European and North American orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Gewandhaus Orchestra, Houston Symphony, London Philharmonic, and the symphonies of London, Montreal and Toronto.

Søndergård began his music career as a timpanist, joining the Royal Danish Orchestra after graduating from the Royal Danish Academy of Music. He made his conducting debut in 2005, leading the Royal Danish Opera in the premiere of Poul Ruders' *Kafka's Trial* to wide acclaim; he has returned



Zoe Prinds-Flash

subsequently many times to the Royal Danish Opera. His discography on the EMI, Dacapo, Bridge Records, Pentatone and Linn Records labels includes Vilde Frang's debut recording of violin concertos by Sibelius and Prokofiev with the WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne; numerous works by Poul Ruders; the Lutosławski and Dutilleux concertos with cellist Johannes Moser and the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra; Sibelius symphonies and tone poems with BBC NOW; and works by Prokofiev and Strauss with RSNO.

After launching the Minnesota Orchestra's 2023-24 season in September, Søndergård opened the RSNO's season the following month with piano soloist Lise da la Salle performing concertos by Grieg and Beethoven. His busy slate with both ensembles is complemented by guest engagements with major orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Aalborg Symfoniorkester, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Danish National Symphony Orchestra and Iceland Symphony Orchestra.

Søndergård is the 2023 recipient of the prestigious honorary award from the Carl Nielsen and Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen Foundation in Denmark. For more information, visit minnesotaorchestra.org.

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AUDIENCE SPOTLIGHT SHARE YOUR ORCHESTRA HALL MEMORIES

When you think of Orchestra Hall, does an extraordinarily special memory come to mind?

The fall of 2024 marks a half-century since the Minnesota Orchestra's home in downtown Minneapolis opened in October 1974. Generations of audiences, performers and visitors have experienced unforgettable concerts, shared special traditions with families and friends, forged a lifelong passion for music, set in motion a personal dream—and enjoyed the many other ways a trip to the Hall can leave a small or large imprint on a life.

As we prepare to celebrate the venue's 50th anniversary, we invite you to share your special memories of Orchestra Hall by emailing them to OrchHall50@mnorch.org. Selected stories will be shared in future issues of *Showcase* magazine and on the Orchestra's website.

When Thomas Søndergård picked up the baton this past fall as the Orchestra's 11th music director, he ushered in an era of new musical memories—ones we hope will stick with you long after the last sounds of today's concert have faded from the Hall. We look forward to hearing and sharing your memories as the half-century milestone approaches!



The inaugural concert at Orchestra Hall—a performance on October 21, 1974, led by the Orchestra's sixth music director, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski.

MEET A MUSICIAN: KENNETH FREED



Minnesota Orchestra musician since: **1998**

Section: **Viola**

Hometown: **White Plains, New York**

Education: **Yale College, Yale School of Music**

Travis Anderson

How did you get your start in music and find your way into the viola world?

When I was 6 and my family lived in Flushing, Queens, I started violin lessons with Elizabeth Weickert, who was a Hungarian refugee who came to New York City after 1956. I studied with her at the Henry Street Settlement Music School. A few years later I went to Westchester Music and Arts Camp and heard a fellow camper, Lisa Bressler, play the Boccherini Cello Concerto and was blown away. I asked her where she learned to play like that, and she told me it was at Juilliard Prep. I talked to my teacher about it, and she said I'd have to get serious and start practicing at least three hours a day. I played an audition at the end of the year, got in and studied violin with Louise Behrend, a major force of the Suzuki method in this country. My high school orchestra didn't have any violists, so I asked if I could give it a try, and I loved the chocolatey, dark sound. I went on to Yale and earned degrees in English literature and music, and started conducting for fun.

Were you always focused on performing music as a profession?

I could always see myself becoming a musician. However, I've also been drawn to education and kids, growing out of my own experience as a young musician, particularly musical literacy. I started a non-profit for elementary school students called Learning Through Music, where we integrated music with math, history, language, language arts and social studies. The older kids even wrote and performed an opera with some help. For years I conducted the Mankato Symphony as well as the Kenwood Symphony.

What do you like most about the Minnesota Orchestra viola section?

We inhabit sort of a parallel universe from the rest of the Orchestra. Everyone works selflessly together as a team while possessing strong individual personalities. The fact that we're providing rhythm and harmony means we have to be hyper-aware of the melody we're accompanying, as well as the viola's role in the inner voice. Philosophically, we develop a sense of humor almost as a necessity. It's a wonderful group, and we like to have our own parties and go bowling. Personally I find it a lot of fun to make people

laugh, sometimes by singing a falsetto line *sotto voce* in rehearsals, or perhaps giving a deranged BBC announcer's introduction of that evening's maestro just before the conductor walks out. Occasionally the violas have been known to crack up in response to this levity, leaving the hapless conductor confused.

You're also a frequent chamber music performer. What do you enjoy about that art form?

Going back to my days in the Manhattan Quartet, I've always enjoyed the sense of ownership in chamber music, where there's no conductor and a strong sense of personal ownership and agency in the sound and the interpretation. When I show up at a string quartet rehearsal, I have to come with a good idea of the interpretation, tempos and mood changes. Shameless plug here: I'm also a member of the Isles Ensemble chamber group, and we invite you to come to our next concerts on March 5 and 10! [See page 16 for details.]

What are your favorite things outside of music?

My wife Gwen and I raised our family here in this great community, and we've just welcomed a new grandson. Going out with my friends makes life very rich too. I'm on season 7 or 8 of *The Blacklist* and really like spy movies and reading poetry and novels. I also enjoy swimming and I love to cook. A few months ago I decided that rather than reading so many news outlets to start the day, I would try to read seven poems.

Is there anything else you want to share with the audience?

I love playing for our hometown crowd. They are the most enthusiastic listeners in the world. The fact that so many young people come to hear music is a testament to the support and love this city and this state shows its musicians and orchestra. I'm ever mindful of the people who think of our Orchestra as their spiritual lifeblood and center. The future of this Orchestra is in great hands, not just onstage, but out there in the audience.

Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/stories for an extended version of this interview.

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NEWS — MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Q&A WITH SYMPHONY BALL CHAIRS DIANE AND TONY HOFSTEDT

As co-chairs of “River Rhapsody,” the Minnesota Orchestra’s 2024 Symphony Ball gala fundraiser, Diane and Tony Hofstede have exciting plans in store for the can’t-miss event of the season. On Saturday, May 4, at Orchestra Hall and the Minneapolis Hilton, the Ball will celebrate the soul-nourishing, life-giving currents of music and water that flow through all of us. You’re invited to join the evening of music, dancing, dining, drinks, auctions and good company—all celebrating the Orchestra, the Mississippi River and Music Director Thomas Søndergård, and raising funds for the Orchestra’s artistic and educational missions. Diane and Tony previewed the Ball and reflected on their connections with the river, the Orchestra and the Minnesota community.

What have been some of your memorable connections with the Mississippi River over the years?

Diane: When I was growing up, my grandmother and I would walk across the Lowry Avenue Bridge to visit my aunt and cousins, and I could look down and see the mighty, magnificent river. Tony and I have walked along it together as far back as our high school sweetheart days, when we’d go to dances at his school, DeLaSalle. We’ve gone down it on river boats and canoes, and today we live near the Mississippi River. It’s an important part of our lives. The river is important to me, to our city and our state’s history—as an industrial river, a means of transportation, a tourist attraction for people from around the world and a place to live.

Tony: We’ve both worked on projects for the river. I was Chair of the Capital Long Range Improvement Committee for the City of Minneapolis for 24 years. Diane worked most closely through her time as an elected official on the Minneapolis City Council and with the environmental non-profit she directs, the Great River Coalition. She’s worked on many projects that have impacted our community such as saving the Pillsbury A-Mill and enhancing the riverfront with improved housing, parks and bridges.

What links do you see between the river and music?

Diane: One reason we picked River Rhapsody as this year’s Symphony Ball theme is that the Mississippi River is a national treasure, as is our Orchestra. I believe that music nourishes and soothes the soul, as does being on the river.

How did your connections with the Orchestra begin, and what have been your favorite concerts?

Diane: We’ve been attending concerts for a long time, and Tony and I like to say that each time we come to Orchestra Hall, *that* becomes our new favorite memory of the Orchestra. Each performance is extraordinary!



Diane and Tony Hofstede, chairs of the Minnesota Orchestra’s 2024 Symphony Ball, “River Rhapsody: Magnificent Music on the Mississippi.”

NEWS — MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Tony: When I was 14, my brother Al, former Mayor of Minneapolis, dedicated Orchestra Hall at its grand opening in 1974. He also took me to a concert to hear Van Cliburn, and I have never forgotten it! What we most love today is seeing the exuberance of young people at concerts, and their laughter and engagement at performances such as *Home Alone*. It's so important to bring in young people, whether it's through the movie concerts or with school groups. Seeing their enthusiasm brings us back to our early days with music, singing in choirs and coming to appreciate music.

What makes the Orchestra important enough to you to serve as Symphony Ball Chairs?

Diane: I firmly believe that it's the arts that will help restore the cities of our state. Minneapolis means a lot to us—we've been here our whole life, and the Orchestra is an important part of it. This is one important thing that we can do to help.

What experience will people have at this year's Symphony Ball?

Tony: Our vision is that the Ball will be an exciting and fun event! Musical styles and food from up and down the river will be featured. Get ready to enjoy!

Diane: The evening will be full of highlights, whether it's making new friends at the icebreaker, auction items related to the river, some of which people will be able to bid for online, music by the Orchestra, guest artists, great food, beautiful décor and even a parade!

A major part of the Ball will be celebrating our new music director, Thomas Søndergård.

Tony: That's right, we want to introduce Thomas to the city, but more importantly, we want the city and the state to be introduced to him. And what better avenue than to have a party? When you see him conduct, you feel the energy and the chemistry that he not only has with his Orchestra, but also with the audience. He moves with rhythm and energy, and we want more people to experience and appreciate it. The water theme will resonate on a personal level, too, since Thomas often talks about going to the sea as a place where you can get close to nature and feel the calmness.

What other activities are important to you?

Diane: Since I left public office, I've been committed to environmental causes, including directing the Great River Coalition. One of our major events is an annual Earth Day 5K Bee Run, Walk and River Cleanup, in collaboration with 40 other organizations. Our mission is to promote a healthy ecosystem to support a more hospitable environment along the river for birds, bees, butterflies and other pollinators. I also serve on the boards of the Minnesota Orchestra, Guthrie Theater and Minneapolis Audubon Society, and Chair of the Board of Directors of Event Sales.

Tony: I am President of Event Sales, which is an international corporation that I've owned for 37 years and which employs about 75 people. For 32 years I was also fortunate to be appointed to the Capital and Long-Range Improvement Committee for the City of Minneapolis. Many of our projects had to do with water, the river and infrastructure. I worked on many of Diane's campaigns and we've both worked on other campaigns, too, because we're invested in where the city and state are going, and we've tried to make a difference as a team.



Learn more about Symphony Ball and purchase tickets by scanning the QR code or by visiting minnesotaorchestra.org/symphonyball.

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NEWS — MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: LUKE SONERAL'S "NON-MAGIC" MARCH

Each season the Minnesota Orchestra welcomes tens of thousands of students to Orchestra Hall for its Young People's Concert series—usually as audience members, but occasionally as integral parts of the performance itself. A late-January “Students Center Stage” program shone the spotlight on students in myriad ways. YPSCA Young People's Concerto Competition winners Esme Arias-Kim and Izaiah Cheeran each performed a concerto movement, Anoka High School junior Luca La Hoz Calassara was the onstage host and, for the first time in over a decade, the Orchestra performed the world premiere of a new composition by a Minnesota high school student: Luke Soneral's *Muggle's March*.

Soneral, a ninth-grader at Minnetonka High School who studies bass with longtime Orchestra musician Robert Anderson, attended the performances and was thrilled with the outcome. “It is hard to describe the experience of hearing your music performed live by an amazing orchestra—nothing in life compares to it,” he says. Although

Soneral has been composing only since 2020—when “there wasn't a whole lot to do because of the pandemic,” he recalls—his skills and achievements have grown quickly in Minnesota and beyond. He was a small-ensemble winner of the 2022 National Young Composer's Challenge as well as the winner of the 2022 Minnesota Sinfonia Young Composer Competition, and he has honed his skills studying with Dr. Eric Ewazen as a music composition major at the Juilliard School Pre-College in New York City, and with Drs. Andrew Martin Smith and Amanda Harberg at Interlochen Center for the Arts.

Like many of Soneral's projects, *Muggle's March* came together quickly after the initial spark of an idea. “*Muggle's March* took me about six weeks to write,” he comments, adding that the title has a literary and musical twist. “The term ‘Muggles’ comes from the Harry Potter series, describing ‘non-magic’ folk. When I consider the new classical music that is written today, much of it is atonal music that appeals to many people trained in music, but isn't always relatable to everyone. While I have written atonal music and find it interesting, I wrote *Muggle's March* to be accessible to as many people as possible. It replicates many elements you might find in folk or pop music, and even Mozart symphonies and Sousa marches—stuff that ‘Muggles’ like you and me enjoy!”



Minnetonka High School student Luke Soneral, whose composition *Muggle's March* was premiered by the Orchestra in January.

In addition to expressing gratitude to the Orchestra for the January premiere, Soneral encourages other young people to try their hand at creating music. “Anyone who has an interest in music should at least experiment with composing, because it is a great way to express creativity through music,” he says. “It was an incredible experience hearing the Orchestra bring to life every last detail of *Muggle's March*, and I am truly grateful.” Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/stories to read an extended Q&A with Soneral.



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NOW AVAILABLE: 2023 LISTENING PROJECT RECORDINGS

Now in its third season, the Minnesota Orchestra's Listening Project is a recording and performance initiative with the dual intention of expanding the ensemble's knowledge of great orchestral works by historically underrepresented composers, while performing and recording these scores so that they may become more familiar to audiences and other orchestras alike. The most recent Listening Project concert was held in November 2023, when Kensho Watanabe conducted music by Julia Perry, Carmen Brouard, Brian Raphael Nabors, Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, Alvin Singleton and Errollyn Wallen. The concert was hosted by Dr. Louise Toppin, a musicologist, educator, soprano and founder of the African Diaspora Music Project, while mezzo Catherine Daniel served as soloist in Carmen Brouard's *Trois monologues d'Émilie*.

If you missed the performance—or attended and want to relive the experience—we have good news: recordings from the concert, produced in collaboration with YourClassical MPR, are now available for free listening on YouTube. We invite you to enjoy the music and share with others—visit minnesotaorchestra.org/lp2023 for a link to the playlist.



Conductor Kensho Watanabe leading the Minnesota Orchestra's most recent Listening Project concert in November 2023.

MUSICIANS AROUND TOWN



When Minnesota Orchestra musicians aren't at Orchestra Hall, you can find many of them around the Twin Cities and beyond in other types of musical performances such as solo recitals and concerts with chamber music groups, concerto appearances with other orchestras, forays into rock music,

stage productions and more. Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/aroundtown or scan the QR code for a continually updating list of events—including these performances in March and April:

On Tuesday, March 5, at 7:30 p.m. at James J. Hill House in St. Paul, as well as a repeat performance on Sunday, March 10, at 2 p.m. at Lake of the Isles Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, the Isles Ensemble—including Minnesota Orchestra string players Kenneth Freed, Hanna Landrum, Natalia Moiseeva and Emily Switzer; cellists Laura Sewell and Tom Rosenberg; and pianist Nicola Melville—will perform a program of music by Teresa Carreño, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Joaquín Turina, Astor Piazzola and Alberto Ginastera. (Turn to page 11 of this issue for an interview with Kenneth Freed.)

On Sunday, April 7, at 4 p.m. at MacPhail Center for Music's Antonello Hall in Minneapolis, Minnesota Orchestra cellist Pitnarry Shin, joined by two former Orchestra musicians, violinist Stephanie Arado and violist Sabina Thatcher, along with pianist Tim Lovelace and violist Daniel Orsen, will perform a concert of music by Kaija Saariaho, Tōru Takemitsu, Stephen Hartke and Camille Saint-Saëns with the Bakken Ensemble.

On Sunday, April 21, at 3 p.m. at Gideon Ives Auditorium at the Minnesota Masonic Heritage Center in Bloomington, Minnesota Orchestra Principal Trumpet Manny Laureano will lead the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra in "Out of this World," a program of music by Leonard Bernstein and Gustav Holst. The orchestra will be joined by the Normandale College Concert Choir, Angelica Encore Choral Ensemble and the winner of the MNSOTA Mary West Solo Competition.

MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA



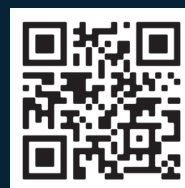
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TROUPE VERTIGO

WITH THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Nicholas Koo, conductor

Saturday, March 2, 2024, 7PM
Sunday, March 3, 2024, 2PM

Orchestra Hall

Maurice Ravel	Suite from <i>Mother Goose</i> , Opus 62 Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty Little Tom Thumb Laideronnette, Empress of the Pagodas Conversations of Beauty and the Beast The Enchanted Garden <i>Minnesota Orchestra</i>	CA. 16'
Sergei Prokofiev	Selections from <i>Cinderella</i> <i>Troupe Vertigo and Minnesota Orchestra</i>	CA. 20'
	I N T E R M I S S I O N	CA. 20'
Felix Mendelssohn	Overture to <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> <i>Minnesota Orchestra</i>	CA. 11'
Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky	Selections from <i>Swan Lake</i> <i>Troupe Vertigo and Minnesota Orchestra</i>	CA. 25'



TROUPE VERTIGO

Fusing elements of cirque acrobatics, classical dance and contemporary theater, Troupe Vertigo consists of world-class aerial artists, contortionists and ballet dancers, and was founded in 2009 by Artistic Director Aloysia Gavre and Technical Director Rex Camphuis. The ensemble has performed with major orchestras across North America, and its 2023-24 season includes performances with the symphonies of Baltimore, Dallas, Kansas City, Indianapolis, Oregon, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, San Francisco and Winnipeg, among numerous other orchestras. Troupe Vertigo is known for its collaborative thematic programs including *Cirque España*, *Cirque Noir*, *Cirque Goes to Broadway*, *Cirque Goes to Hollywood*, *Cirque Dances featuring The Firebird*, and complete ballet presentations of *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake* and *Cinderella*. The company's unique perspective on the circus arts have led to a variety of speaking engagements including a TEDx Talk. Troupe Vertigo's facility is also home to Cirque School Los Angeles, which uses training, performance and community outreach to foster passion for the circus arts, encompassing over 50 weekly classes to the public, student performances, team building workshops, pre-professional intensives, and television and film projects. More: troupevertigo.com.

Aloysia Gavre, artistic director and choreographer
 Rex Camphuis, technical director
 Ganchimeg Oyunchimeg, Cirque artist
 Helen Wonjila, Cirque artist

Nata Ibragimov, Cirque artist
 Vladislav Myagkostupov, Cirque artist
 Caitlin Quinn, Cirque artist
 Ernesto Lea Place, Cirque artist



NICHOLAS KOO, CONDUCTOR

Nicholas Koo is a Korean-American conductor who has made numerous appearances leading the Colorado Symphony, among many other ensembles, and is active in the Chicago area both on and off the podium. He works with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in artistic media and video production, and has worked alongside soloists such as Emanuel Ax, Hélène Grimaud, Joyce Yang, Jörgen van Rijen and Minnesota Orchestra Principal Cello Anthony Ross. This month, he will be featured alongside violinist Hilary Hahn, who will perform the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. In 2023 he was recognized by the Solti Foundation with a prestigious Career Assistance Award for young conductors. That same year he was an active conductor of the Riccardo Muti Italian Opera Academy in Ravenna, Italy, which culminated in a performance of Verdi's *Messa da Requiem*. In 2022 he was invited to be assistant conductor for the Peninsula Music Festival as the Karen Smuda Emerging Conductor, and he also joined the artist roster of Festival Mozaic. More: nicholaskoo.com.

MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Eun Sun Kim, conductor
Heidi Melton, soprano

Friday, March 8, 2024, 8PM
Saturday, March 9, 2024, 7PM

Orchestra Hall

Texu Kim *Dub-Sanjo* CA. 8'

Arnold Schoenberg *Erwartung*, Monodrama in One Act, Opus 17 CA. 31'
 Hier hinein? Man sieht den Weg nicht
 Ist da noch der Weg?
 Da kommt ein Licht! Ach, nur der Mond
 Er ist auch nicht da
Heidi Melton, soprano

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

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky *Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Opus 64* CA. 47'
 Andante – Allegro con anima
 Andante cantabile con alcuna licenza
 Valse: Allegro moderato
 Finale: Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace –
 Moderato assai e molto maestoso

During the performance of Schoenberg's *Erwartung*, an English translation of the text will be projected as surtitles. Surtitles translations by Mark Streshinsky for West Edge Opera.

PRE-CONCERT

Concert Preview with Loki Karuna
 Friday, March 8, 7:15pm, Target Atrium | Saturday, March 9, 6:15pm, Target Atrium

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EUN SUN KIM,
CONDUCTOR

Korean conductor Eun Sun Kim is the Caroline H. Hume Music Director of San Francisco Opera, where she began her tenure in 2021. She is a regular guest conductor at prestigious opera houses including the Metropolitan Opera, Wiener Staatsoper, Bayerische Staatsoper, Semperoper Dresden, Staatsoper Berlin and Teatro alla Scala in Milan. In the 2023-24 season she debuts with the Berlin Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and Opéra national de Paris, in addition to her first appearance with the Minnesota Orchestra this week. At San Francisco Opera, she leads *Il trovatore*, *Lohengrin* and *The Magic Flute*, as well as Opera Ball and Opera in the Park. She also conducts *Parsifal* at Houston Grand Opera as well as concerts with Colorado Symphony and Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona. Her recording of a new arrangement of Wagner's *Ring* with the National Brass Ensemble has just been released by Pentatone on the album *Deified*. Among the highlights of her tenure with San Francisco Opera is the world premiere of John Adams' *Antony and Cleopatra*. Her honors include first prize in the International Jesús López Cobos Opera Conducting Competition at the Teatro Real Madrid. More: arsis-artists.com, eunsunkim.com.



HEIDI MELTON,
SOPRANO

American dramatic soprano Heidi Melton, now welcomed for her Minnesota Orchestra debut, has earned special acclaim for her interpretations of Wagner's music and for her resplendent voice. She opened the 2023-24 season with a debut at the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra for concert performances of *Cavalleria rusticana* in the role of Santuzza, conducted by James Gaffigan. Other season highlights include a return to Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra for Unsuk Chin's *Alice in Wonderland* as the Queen of Hearts. Last season Melton debuted at Seattle Opera in *Tristan and Isolde* as Isolde. On the concert stage, she debuted with the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona in Richard Strauss' Four Last Songs, with the New World Symphony for a program of Wagner selections and with the Colorado Springs Philharmonic for Beethoven's *Egmont*. She returned to the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra to sing Mescalina in *Le grand macabre*, followed by a return to Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra for Act II of *Tristan and Isolde* with conductor Karina Canellakis. She is the recipient of many prestigious awards and prizes; among them are the George London Foundation's George London/Kirsten Flagstad Memorial Award. More: opus3artists.com.

ONE-MINUTE NOTES

Kim: *Dub-Sanjo*

This work from the pen of 2015 Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute alumnus Texu Kim draws on melodic patterns common in *sanjo*, a virtuosic Korean folk music tradition featuring a soloist with barrel drum accompaniment—bringing together varied *sanjo* traditions and the large-scale forces of a symphony orchestra.

Schoenberg: *Erwartung*

Arnold Schoenberg charted a new course in Western classical music history with his groundbreaking monodrama *Erwartung*, a work which bears the influence of both the Expressionist art movement and the writings of Sigmund Freud.

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's very popular Fifth Symphony—which journeys from minor to major and darkness to hope—is filled with wonderful mottos, orchestral color, balletic beauty and high drama. Watch for the finale's false conclusion, a great climax that tricks many listeners into thinking the performance is complete.

**TEXU KIM**

B: December 22, 1980
Seoul, South Korea

Dub-Sanjo

PREMIERED: September 15,
2017

— The impact of the Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute has been felt in countless ways since the program's founding in 2002—as its 155 emerging composer participants have helped shape 21st-century orchestral music in the U.S. and beyond through major performances, commissions, awards and innovative projects. Texu Kim, a 2015 Institute participant, found the week so pivotal in his career that he has helped make sure other composers can follow the same path. In 2021, several years after his residency with the Korean National Symphony Orchestra, he initiated and facilitated that orchestra's Composers' Atelier program, which he notes was “primarily modeled after the Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute.”

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Kim, a native of South Korea who is now based in San Diego—where he is an associate professor of music at San Diego State University—has drawn on his Korean heritage in several works, including *Dub-Sanjo*, which the Minnesota Orchestra performed at last month's Lunar New Year concert and reprises this week. Kim explains that titling his compositions is “an essential part of my creative process” as well as an effective means of communicating with audiences. A handful of his work titles end whimsically with two exclamation points, building something of a compositional brand, such as the piece featured at the 2015 Composer Institute, *Splash!!* (In an onstage interview with host Fred Child at that concert, Kim explained that “three exclamation points felt too much, and having one felt too lonely.”) Other titles such as *Dub-Sanjo* employ a hyphen to emphasize how the music links two images or concepts.

“*Sanjo* is a virtuosic Korean folk music tradition performed by an instrumentalist with a barrel drum accompaniment,” Kim explains. “The first ones were created by players of the Korean plucked instrument *gayageum* and have been aurally transmitted with many variations (now there are also written scores). I combined various melodic patterns in diverse *gayageum sanjos* and arranged them into a short orchestral overture. (Original *sanjos* are 30–60 minutes long.) *Dub-* is a short form of *duboo* (meaning “together” in Korean) and *Dub-Sanjo* indicates that this piece connects

different traditions and is played by multiple players, as opposed to a solo instrumentalist.”

Dub-Sanjo was commissioned by the Korean National Symphony Orchestra, which premiered it under the direction of Kwanghyun Kim on September 15, 2017. That orchestra took the work on an international tour in 2022; other ensembles to perform it include the New World Symphony, Oakland Symphony and Detroit Symphony, which played the work under this week's conductor Eun Sun Kim in February 2022. This weekend alone sees two different ensembles performing *Dub-Sanjo*; on March 10 it will be played by the New York Youth Symphony at Carnegie Hall.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Kim's works have been performed by the likes of the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Opera Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, San Diego Symphony and Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, along with a plethora of chamber and new music ensembles and at major festivals. His arrangements were featured at the Opening Ceremony of the 2014 Paralympic Winter Games and the Piece & Piano Festival, and he collaborates frequently with choreographers, filmmakers and educators. He earned a doctorate from Indiana University and prior degrees from Seoul National University, and counts among his mentors Unsuk Chin, David Dzubay, Sven-David Sandstrom, Claude Baker and Sangjick Jun.

The Minnesota Orchestra is one of three Minnesota institutions to feature Kim's music in the 2023–24 season. Last September he visited St. Olaf College in Northfield to participate in its inaugural Korean Composers Festival, which featured two of his chamber works, and in May he will return to the Twin Cities for the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra's performances of his newest orchestral work *Lilā*, which was commissioned by the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition. Other upcoming renditions of his music include the London Philharmonia's performance of his *Spin-Flip*, a performance of *Lilā* at Carnegie Hall by Alarm Will Sound and the Sejong Soloists' world premiere of *with/out*, a quadruple concerto featuring violin soloists Frank Huang, David Chan, Andrew Wan and Daniel Cho.

Audiences around the world are sure to hear much more of Kim's music in the coming years—a journey the composer couldn't have imagined in his first visit to Orchestra Hall. “I did not know how many orchestral performances I would have when participating in the Minnesota Orchestra Composers Institute in 2015,” Kim reflects. “I feel like I am living in a dream—and I feel indebted to the Institute for many of my achievements.”

Scan the QR code below or visit minnesotaorchestra.org/kimqa for an interview with Texu Kim.



Instrumentation: 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), oboe, English horn, clarinet, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, crotales, tambourine, marimba, harp and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER.



ARNOLD SCHOENBERG

B: September 13, 1874
Vienna, Austria

D: July 13, 1951
Los Angeles, California

Erwartung, Monodrama
in One Act, Opus 17

PREMIERED: June 6, 1924

— One hundred years ago, when audiences first encountered *Erwartung*—Arnold Schoenberg’s monumental one-act monodrama for soprano and orchestra—few could claim to fully understand the music and its influences. Gone were the sumptuous melodies and other late-Romantic ideals Schoenberg inherited as a young, mostly self-taught composer, perfectly captured in early works like *Verklärte Nacht* or *Gurre-Lieder*. Instead, those glorious long-spun lines and rich harmonies were replaced with music that screams, terrifies and haunts. Here Schoenberg did away entirely with traditional harmony and fully embraced the use of dissonance—the deliberate clash of notes—as a means of expression. Alongside other myriad works he wrote during the same creative period, *Erwartung* represented a complete break from the past in order to form a bold new style capable of expressing the anxieties of Schoenberg’s lifetime.

UNDERSTANDING THE MUSIC

The first step in understanding this new sonic world is to observe that *Erwartung* is an outgrowth of the Expressionist art movement. In the arts, Expressionism was concerned not with objectivity or beauty; instead it aimed to express the innermost subjective state of the artist in relation to the world around them. Artists like Vincent van Gogh and Edvard Munch (most famous for *The Scream*) are early

examples of the style, which emphasized bold use of line and color to distort reality in unsettling ways. Schoenberg, himself a painter, made a number of self-portraits in the Expressionist tradition, all striking examples of the style—monochromatic with exaggerated features and rich with an atmosphere of melancholy.

On a more personal level, there were several key reasons for Schoenberg’s adoption of this aesthetic ideal in his music. Of primary concern, Schoenberg’s wife Mathilde left him in 1908 to have an affair with the painter Richard Gerstl, which ended in Gerstl’s horrific suicide by the end of that year. Though Mathilde would eventually return, scholar Alexander Carpenter writes that this deeply upsetting development was “exacerbated by Schoenberg’s depression over his lack of success and the concomitant financial stress.”

One of the last key influences on *Erwartung* was the groundbreaking work of Sigmund Freud, whose psychoanalytical writings were in vogue during this period. Both Schoenberg and Marie Pappenheim—the poet and medical student who wrote the libretto to *Erwartung*—were familiar with Freud’s work. In fact, Carpenter says that within Schoenberg’s atonal period there are five years from 1908 to 1913 that can be understood as the composer’s “psychoanalytic period...a time in which the composer was preoccupied with his own psychic unrest and exploring a compositional aesthetic predicated on the expression of the unconscious.” From this period onward, Schoenberg’s music takes on new meanings of autobiography, as his works “articulate his own preoccupation with his own neurosis—a kind of hysteria manifest in repressed memory—and reflect a compositional approach that echoes Freud’s contemporary writings on the nature of the unconscious.”

SOUNDS OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS

The demands Schoenberg placed on his music to become a vehicle for the expression of the unseen corners of the human mind, in combination with intense personal struggle he suffered in his married life, almost certainly paved the way for the creation of *Erwartung*. Schoenberg commissioned the libretto from Pappenheim in the summer of 1909. The work lasts about 30 minutes and contains four scenes that flow seamlessly from one to the next. There is only one character, “the Woman,” who wanders alone through a wood in an intense state of fluctuating emotions—despair, anxiety, confusion, horror, relief—as she searches for her lover in the night. Expressionism was not concerned with individual characters, but rather nameless figures who represent universal truths about humanity.

Erwartung is through-composed, meaning that no material is repeated; throughout its runtime the music unfolds as a stream of consciousness, aurally depicting the setting and the Woman’s heightened emotional state. Schoenberg makes great use of text-painting, where distinct musical ideas are employed to depict specific pieces of text; one such

example is Schoenberg's use of the celesta every time the Woman references the moon. In the opening minutes of the work, Schoenberg adds a brief violin solo during one such reference, as the Woman laments how that celestial body has lost its once wondrous luster—a memory of a happier time that quickly fades into ghostly terror.

Erwartung was written in 1909 but not premiered until 1924 in Prague, when soprano Marie Gutheil-Schoder was the soloist and Schoenberg's brother-in-law Alexander Zemlinsky conducted. This week's performances, a little less than 100 years after the premiere, are the Minnesota Orchestra's first.

Instrumentation: solo soprano with orchestra comprising 3 flutes, piccolo (1 flute also doubling piccolo), 4 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 3 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 4 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, ratchet, tamtam, triangle, xylophone, glockenspiel, harp, celesta and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY MICHAEL DIVINO.



PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

B: May 7, 1840
Votkinsk, Russia
D: November 6, 1893
St. Petersburg, Russia

Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Opus 64

PREMIERED: November 17, 1888

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony came from a moment of supreme personal tension for the composer—his disastrous and short-lived marriage to Antonina Miliukova—and in the process of completing it he collapsed. He suffered a nervous breakdown from which he recovered slowly, and this was followed by a creative dry spell that lasted nearly a decade.

CREATIVE ONCE AGAIN

Then, in the winter of 1887–88, Tchaikovsky made a tour of Western Europe, and with his confidence somewhat bolstered, he returned to Russia ready at last to attempt a new symphony. He led the premiere in St. Petersburg on November 17, 1888. Despite some initial misgivings, he was finally convinced that he had regained his creative powers.

The Fifth Symphony—full of those wonderful Tchaikovsky themes, imaginative orchestral color, and excitement—has become one of his most popular works. He builds this symphony around a motto-theme, and in his notebooks he suggested that the motto represents “complete resignation

before fate.” But Tchaikovsky supplied no program for the symphony, nor does this music seem to be “about” anything. The motto-theme returns in each of the four movements, often in quite different guises, and it may be best to understand it as a unifying device rather than as anything so dramatic as the Fourth Symphony's “sword of Damocles.” Despite the tantalizing hints about “resignation before fate,” Tchaikovsky apparently regarded his Fifth Symphony as abstract music.

MELODIES, EXCITEMENT AND SURPRISE

ANDANTE–ALLEGRO CON ANIMA. Clarinets present the somber motto-theme at the beginning of the slow introduction, and gradually this leads to the main body of the movement, marked *Allegro con anima*. Over the orchestra's steady tread, solo clarinet and bassoon sing the movement's surging main theme, and there follows a wealth of thematic material. This lengthy movement is built on three separate theme groups, full of those soaring and sumptuous Tchaikovsky melodies.

ANDANTE CANTABILE CON ALCUNA LICENZA. Deep string chords at the opening of the *Andante cantabile* introduce one of the great solos for horn, and a few moments later the oboe has the graceful second subject. For a movement that begins in such relaxed spirits, this music is twice shattered by the return of the motto-theme, which blazes out dramatically in the trumpets.

VALSE: ALLERGO MODERATO. Tchaikovsky springs a surprise in the third movement—instead of the expected scherzo, he writes a lovely waltz. He rounds the movement off beautifully with an extended coda based on the waltz tune, and in its closing moments the motto-theme makes a fleeting appearance, like a figure seen through the mists.

FINALE: ANDANTE MAESTOSO–ALLEGRO VIVACE–MODERATO ASSAI E MOLTO MAESTOSO. However misty that theme may have seemed at the end of the third movement, it comes into crystalline focus at the beginning of the finale. Tchaikovsky moves to E major here and sounds out the motto to open this movement. The main body of the finale, marked *Allegro vivace*, leaps to life, and the motto-theme breaks in more and more often as it proceeds. The movement drives to a great climax, then breaks off in silence. This is a trap, and it often tricks the unwary into premature applause, for the symphony is not yet over. Out of the ensuing silence begins the real coda, and the motto-theme now leads the way on constantly-accelerating tempos to the (true) conclusion in E major.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.

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Domingo Hindoyan, conductor
Pacho Flores, trumpet, cornet and flugelhorn

Thursday, March 21, 2024, 11AM
Friday, March 22, 2024, 8PM

Orchestra Hall

Roberto Sierra	<i>Fandangos</i>	CA. 13'
Pablo de Sarasate/ trans. Pacho Flores	<i>Zigeunerweisen (Gypsy Airs)</i> <i>Pacho Flores, trumpet</i>	CA. 9'
Arturo Márquez	<i>Concierto de Otoño for Trumpet and Orchestra</i> Son de luz Balada de floripondios Conga de Flores <i>Pacho Flores, trumpet, cornet and flugelhorn</i>	CA. 16'
I N T E R M I S S I O N		CA. 20'
Antonín Dvořák	Symphony No. 8 in G major, Opus 88 Allegro con brio Adagio Allegretto grazioso — Molto vivace Allegro ma non troppo	CA. 36'

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 March 22 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.



DOMINGO HINDOYAN,
CONDUCTOR

Domingo Hindoyan, one of today's most exciting conductors, is the chief conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. During his first season in Liverpool, he led a critically acclaimed conducting debut at the BBC Proms and embarked upon various recording projects. He has also prioritized educational programs, world premieres and commissions. His newest recordings with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic are *Verismo*—an exploration of preludes and intermezzos from Italian operas released in October 2023—and Bruckner's Fourth Symphony, released just last month. Highlights of his 2023-24 season include returns to the BBC Proms with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and performances with Aarhus Symfoniker and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He also debuts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Boston Symphony, as well as the Minnesota Orchestra in these performances. On the opera stage, he returns to the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin with a production of *Madame Butterfly* and to the Opera National de Bordeaux for a production of *Rusalka*. A native of Caracas, Venezuela, Hindoyan began his career as a violinist and member of El Sistema, and then was a member of Daniel Barenboim's West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. From 2013 to 2016 he was the first assistant to Barenboim at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin. More: askonasholt.com, domingohindoyan.com.



PACHO FLORES, TRUMPET,
CORNET AND FLUGELHORN

Pacho Flores, now welcomed for his Minnesota Orchestra debut, is a first-prize winner of the Maurice André, Philip Jones and Città di Porcia international competitions. His solo performances include appearances with orchestras such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Basel Sinfonieorchester, Orchestre National de Bordeaux-Aquitaine, Arctic Philharmonic, Taipei Symphony, Salzburger Philharmoniker, St. Petersburg Camerata, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Tokyo Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Orquesta de Valencia, Sinfónica Nacional in México, Sinfónica de Tenerife, Orquesta del Teatro Colón and Simón Bolívar Orchestra. In recital, he has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Salle Pleyel in Paris and the Tokyo Opera City. His repertoire includes premieres of works by composers such as Efraín Oscher, Arturo Márquez, Roberto Sierra, Paquito D'Rivera, Christian Lindberg, Daniel Freiberg and Gabriela Ortiz, and Flores is himself a composer whose works include two trumpet and flugelhorn concertos. He is a Deutsche Grammophon exclusive artist with five recordings to his credit: *Cantar*, *Entropía*, *Fractales*, *Cantos y Revueltas* and *Estirpe*, which was awarded a Latin Grammy. A Stomvi artist, he performs with instruments tailored specially for him. More: acmconcerts.com, askonasholt.com, pachoflores.com.



ARIANA KIM,
BROADCAST HOST

For the concert on March 22, Ariana Kim serves as host and writer of the Twin Cities PBS broadcast and online livestream *This Is Minnesota Orchestra*. A Grammy Award-nominated violinist, Kim made her New York recital debut at Carnegie's Weill Hall during her doctoral studies at Juilliard and is now a tenured professor at Cornell University. At age 16, she made her debut with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and at 24 was appointed acting concertmaster of the Louisiana Philharmonic in New Orleans. She now shares her homebase between Ithaca, New York—where she performs faculty recitals and with her bluegrass band String Theory—and New York City, where she is in her 18th season with The Knights. A champion of new music, Kim was a member of New York City's contemporary improvisation ensemble Ne(x)tworks for 10 seasons and recently returned from a concert tour in Asia, where she premiered Piyawat Louilarpprasert's Violin Concerto in Bangkok, Thailand. She spent 2021 living and working in South Korea. A Minnesota native, she returns to the Twin Cities often for appearances with the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota and was a featured artist on The Great Northern 2024. More: arianakim.com.

**ROBERTO SIERRA**

B: October 9, 1953
Vega Baja, Puerto Rico

Fandangos

PREMIERED: February 28, 2001

Contemporary American composer Roberto Sierra—who hails from the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico—is among the most prominent composers ever to come from the island, with an array of awards to his credit including the 2021 Latin Grammy for Best Classical Contemporary Composition and the Tomás Luis de Victoria Prize in 2017. His music has earned two Grammy nominations and two additional Latin Grammy nominations. Across his four-decade career, his works have been performed by major orchestras and ensembles across the U.S. and Europe and at major festivals including the BBC Proms. Commissions have come from institutions such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Orquesta de Castilla y León. He studied composition in both Puerto Rico and Europe, including with György Ligeti at the Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg, Germany.

A “SUPER-FANDANGO”

Sierra composed *Fandangos* on a commission from the National Symphony Orchestra, which premiered the work

under the baton of then-Music Director Leonard Slatkin on February 28, 2001. Slatkin, who founded the Minnesota Orchestra’s Sommerfest and served as its artistic director from 1980 to 1989, brought *Fandangos* to Orchestra Hall for a program in November 2002. Over two decades passed before the Minnesota Orchestra performed any of Sierra’s music again—with *Fandangos* appearing on a May 2023 concert in Austin, Minnesota, as part of the ensemble’s Common Chords residency week. The composer provided the following note in the score:

“Antonio Soler’s *Fandango* for keyboard has always fascinated me, for its strange and whimsical twists and turns. My *Fandangos* is a fantasy, or a ‘super-fandango,’ that takes as its point of departure Soler’s work and incorporates elements of [Luigi] Boccherini’s *Fandango* and my own Baroque musings. Some of the oddities in the harmonic structure of the Soler piece provided a bridge for the incorporation of contemporary sonorities, opening windows to apparently alien sound worlds. In these parenthetical commentaries, the same materials heard before are transformed, as if one would look at the same objects through different types of lenses or prisms. The continuous variation form over an ostinato gave me the chance to use complex orchestration techniques as another element for variation.”

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, castanets, 2 cencerros, cowbell, tambourine, tamtam, tom-toms, wood block, vibraphone, xylophone, marimba, triangle, harp and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER.

ONE-MINUTE NOTES**Sierra: *Fandangos***

Roberto Sierra’s *Fandangos*, titled after the lively partner dance from Spain and Portugal, is what the composer calls a “super-fandango” drawing on his fascination with other composers’ fandango music mixed with his own Baroque-style musings, contemporary sonorities and imaginative orchestration.

Sarasate/Flores: *Gypsy Airs*

A riveting lament, embellished with an array of trills and dramatic

ornamentation, leads to a furious, brilliant and breathtaking conclusion in the soloist’s own trumpet transcription of a showpiece originally spotlighting violin.

Márquez: *Concierto de Otoño*

Composed in 2018 specially for Pacho Flores, the *Concierto de Otoño* (Autumn Concerto) calls for four types of trumpet, merging Latin musical styles with the traditional fast-slow-fast concerto form, opening with an Afro-Cuban dance-infused dialogue between

soloist and orchestra, continuing with a love song told in continuous variations, and concluding with a blazingly brilliant rondo.

Dvořák: *Symphony No. 8*

Dvořák’s Eighth is full of luminous melodies and unexpected harmonic shifts. The second movement alludes to the funeral march of Beethoven’s *Eroica* Symphony, but lighter elements prevail in a whirlwind finale that is delightfully Czech.



PABLO DE SARASATE

B: March 10, 1844
Pamplona, Spain

D: September 20, 1908
Biarritz, France

Zigeunerweisen (Gypsy
Airs), transcribed for
Trumpet and Orchestra
by Pacho Flores

PREMIERED: ca. November 1878
(original version for violin
and orchestra)

As the opening serving of a two-course musical meal for trumpet and orchestra, soloist Pacho Flores delivers his own transcription of a virtuoso showpiece best known in its original form spotlighting violin: Pablo de Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen* (Gypsy Airs). The Spanish Romantic-era violinist-composer was known in his day primarily as a performer, but he also enjoyed success as a composer, rising to fame in the generation just after Niccolò Paganini. His music, *Zigeunerweisen* in particular, is yet more evidence that the composers who have written most perceptively and virtuosically for violin have also been violinists—among Western composers, Vivaldi, Mozart, Sibelius, Bruch, Paganini and Wieniawski come to mind.

ROYAL CONNECTIONS AND UNMATCHED TECHNIQUE

Sarasate's credentials as a violinist were formidable, earned at a very young age in spite of his origins in the musical outskirts of Pamplona, the Basque city known for its annual Running of the Bulls. As is usually true with prodigious musical talent, one of his parents was a musician—in this case, his father, a violinist and military bandmaster who taught 5-year-old Pablo the basics. Perhaps his biggest career break came when his playing caught the attention of Spain's Queen Isabella, who sponsored Sarasate's enrollment at the Paris Conservatory at the tender age 12, and gave him a 1724 Stradivarius violin. As a teen, Sarasate quickly rose to fame as a fearless virtuoso with an unmatched technique that won not only ardent fans, but major competitions in Europe as well. This launched an international touring career that brought him to America twice and regularly to London, where he took audiences by storm. Not since Paganini had a fiddler caused this kind of sensation. He inspired a number of important composers to write pieces for him, among them Max Bruch, Édouard Lalo and Camille Saint-Saëns.

Early in his career, Sarasate began to perform his own works: extended, virtuosic fantasies based on themes from

popular operas of the day. His fantasies on Georges Bizet's *Carmen* and Charles Gounod's *Faust* are bravura pieces that only the most gifted virtuosos need attempt. Regarding Sarasate's idiomatic writing for the violin, the playwright and music critic George Bernard Shaw may have said it best when he declared that though there were many composers of music for the violin, there were but few composers of violin music.

A DASH FOR THE FINISH LINE

Sarasate's best-known work is *Zigeunerweisen*, evoking the fire of Romani life. Written in 1878 and recorded by nearly every major violin virtuoso since, it has become a staple for violinists, often as a concert encore. In today's performance, it is heard in modified form in which Pacho Flores has masterfully transcribed the violin part for trumpet—one virtuoso soloist tipping his camp to the other. *Zigeunerweisen* begins with about seven minutes of slow, soulful melodies, leading into a spectacular two-minute dash for the finish line—extremely demanding of the performer—that leaves audiences breathless.

Instrumentation: solo trumpet with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, timpani, triangle and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY MICHAEL ADAMS.



ARTURO MÁRQUEZ

B: December 20, 1950
Álamos, Mexico

Concierto de Otoño for
Trumpet and Orchestra

PREMIERED: September 7, 2018

Today's orchestral composers are faced with a conundrum: ever-increasing amounts of new music must compete with centuries of familiar repertoire for space on concert programs, making it difficult for a work to become widely popular. Arturo Márquez, one of today's most highly regarded Mexican composers, has not one but two runaway hits to his credit—the *Danzón* No. 2 and *Conga del Fuego Nuevo* (Conga of New Fire), both of which were heard at Orchestra Hall during the 2019 Sommerfest focused on music from Latin countries. This week's performances bring the Minnesota premiere of a more recent work by Márquez: the trumpet concerto *Concierto de Otoño* (Autumn Concerto), featuring Pacho Flores, the same soloist who delivered the

world premiere with the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico in 2018.

"QUEEN IN THE HEART OF MEXICO"

Márquez is known for absorbing musical forms and styles of his home country and incorporating them into his original compositions. "What I do," he remarked while describing *Danzón* No. 2, "is to take up the spirit of the rhythm and the harmony and the melody and transport it to the concert hall." Among his many honors, he has received grants from the Institute of Fine Arts in Mexico, the French Government and the Fulbright Foundation. In 2006 he became the first musician to receive the Medalla de Oro de Bellas Artes (Gold Medal of Fine Arts), the highest honor given to artists by Mexico's government.

Concierto de Otoño, which was composed specifically for Pacho Flores, is cast in three movements, shining a spotlight on an instrument that has long been associated with various forms of Latin music dating to the fusion of European, African and Indigenous styles in the Americas. "The trumpet is the queen in the heart of Mexico," Márquez comments. "We find it in practically every form of popular musical expression; it is the Mexican cry of joy and of sorrow. It is also foundational in Latin American concert music, and my *Concierto de Otoño* is a compilation of all those feelings, colors, and consolations."

More specifically, the concerto spotlights four instruments from the trumpet family: the commonly heard trumpet in C in the first movement; both the flugelhorn and cornet in the second; and the more brightly toned trumpet in D in the finale. Márquez composed the work between January and June of 2018 on a joint commission from four orchestras: the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, Tucson Symphony Orchestra, Hyogo PAC Orchestra of Japan and the Oviedo Filarmonía of Spain. Flores gave the concerto's initial performances with these four orchestras between September 2018 and August 2019.

DRAMA, LOVE AND BRILLIANCE

Annotator John Henken has offered a description of *Concierto de Otoño* that is abbreviated here:

SON DE LUZ. "*Son of Light* (the son is an Afro-Cuban dance genre) is a darkly dramatic dialogue for trumpet (in C) and orchestra in classic sonata form, exploring and resolving the encounter with 'new horizons of peace and reconciliation.'"

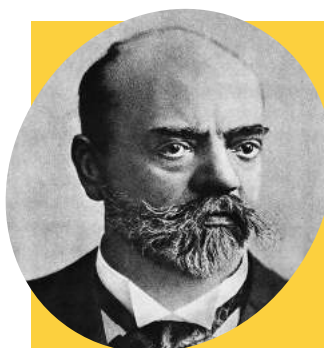
BALADA DE FLORIPONDIOS. "The middle movement...is a song without words in tribute to 'el amor brujo' ('love, the magician,' as the phrase is often translated in reference to the famous dramatic work by Manuel de Falla, but also 'enchanted love'). It develops as a set of continuous

variations, like a chaconne, crooned by the soloist first on flugelhorn, then soprano cornet (in F)."

CONGA DE FLORES. "The finale is another Cuban dance with the soloist back on trumpet (in D). It is an absurdly difficult, blazingly brilliant monothematic rondo, with a place for an improvised cadenza. It evokes the spirits of Haydn, Chopin and Rafael Méndez, the legendary Mexican American musician known as 'the Heifetz of the trumpet,' in homage to Pacho Flores' own dazzling breath control and double-tonguing technique."

Instrumentation: solo trumpet in C, trumpet in D, cornet and flugelhorn with orchestra comprising 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, bassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, snare drum, crash cymbals, suspended cymbal, claves, congas, guiro, maracas, tambourine, xylophone, chimes and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER, WITH MUSICAL DESCRIPTION BY JOHN HENKEN.



ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

B: September 8, 1841
Mühlhausen, Bohemia

D: May 1, 1904
Prague, Bohemia
(now Czech Republic)

**Symphony No. 8 in
G major, Opus 88**

PREMIERED: February 2, 1890

In the summer of 1889, Antonín Dvořák took his family to their summer retreat at Vysoka in the countryside south of Prague. There, amid the rolling fields and forests of his homeland, he could escape the pressures of the concert season, enjoy the company of his wife and children, and indulge one of his favorite pastimes: raising pigeons.

"MELODIES POUR OUT OF ME"

Dvořák also composed a great deal that summer. On August 10 he completed his Piano Quartet in E-flat major, writing to a friend that "melodies pour out of me," and lamenting: "If only one could write them down straight away! But there—I must go slowly, only keep pace with my hand, and may God give the rest."

A few weeks later, on August 25, he made the first sketches for a new symphony, and once again the melodies poured out: he began the actual composition on September 6, and on the 13th the first movement was done. The second movement took three days, the third a single day, and by

September 23 the entire symphony had been sketched. The orchestration was completed on November 8, and Dvořák himself led the triumphant premiere of his Eighth Symphony in Prague on February 2, 1890. From the time Dvořák had sat down before a sheet of blank paper to the completion of the full score, only 75 days had passed.

HARMONIC SURPRISES AND VARIATIONS

ALLEGRO CON BRIO. “Symphony in G major,” says the title page, but the beginning of this work is firmly in the “wrong” key of G minor, and this is only the first of many harmonic surprises. It is also a gorgeous beginning, with the cellos singing their long wistful melody. But—another surprise—this theme will have little to do with the actual progress of the first movement. We soon arrive at what appears to be the true first subject, a flute theme of an almost pastoral innocence (commentators appear unable to resist describing this theme as “birdlike”), and suddenly we have slipped into G major. There follows a wealth of themes; one observer counted six separate ideas in the opening minutes of this symphony. Dvořák develops these across the span of the opening movement, and the cellos’ somber opening melody returns at key moments, beginning the development quietly and later blazed out triumphantly by the trumpets at the stirring climax.

ADAGIO. The two middle movements are just as free. The *Adagio* is apparently in C minor, but it begins in E-flat major with dark and halting string phrases; the middle section flows easily on a relaxed woodwind tune in C major in which some have heard the sound of cimbalom and a village band. A violin solo leads to a surprisingly violent climax before the movement falls away to its quiet close.

ALLEGRETTO GRAZIOSO. The third movement opens with a soaring waltz in G minor that dances nimbly along its 3/8 meter; the charming center section also whirls in 3/8 time, but here its dotted rhythms produce a distinctive lilt. The movement concludes with nice surprises: a blistering coda, *Molto vivace*, whips along a variant of the lilting center section tune, but Dvořák has now transformed its triple meter into a propulsive 2/4. The movement rushes on chattering woodwinds right up to its close, where it concludes suddenly with a hushed string chord.

ALLEGRO MA NON TROPPO. The finale is a variation movement—sort of. It opens with a stinging trumpet fanfare, an afterthought on Dvořák’s part, added after the rest of the movement was complete. Cellos announce the noble central theme (itself derived from the flute theme of the first movement), and a series of variations follows, including a spirited episode for solo flute. But suddenly the variations vanish: Dvořák throws in a Turkish march full of rhythmic energy, a completely separate episode that rises to a great climax based on the ringing trumpet

fanfare from the opening. Gradually things calm down, and the variations resume as if this turbulent storm had never blown through. Near the end comes lovely writing for strings, and a raucous, joyous coda—a final variation of the main theme—propels this symphony to its rousing close.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.

INDIGO GIRLS

WITH THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Sarah Hicks, conductor

Tuesday, March 26, 2024, 7PM | Orchestra Hall



INDIGO GIRLS

Since the 1989 release of their eponymous major label debut, which sold over two million units under the power of singles “Closer to Fine” and “Kid Fears,” Indigo Girls has become one of the most successful folk duos in history. Over a 37-year career that began in clubs around their native Atlanta, Georgia, the multi-Grammy-winning duo of Emily Saliers and Amy Ray has recorded 16 studio albums, sold over 15 million records and built a dedicated, enduring following across the globe. Committed and uncompromising activists, they work on issues such as immigration reform, LGBTQ advocacy, education, death penalty reform and Native American rights. They are co-founders of Honor the Earth, a non-profit dedicated to the survival of sustainable Native communities, Indigenous

environmental justice and green energy solutions. Their latest record, *Look Long*, is a stirring and eclectic collection of songs that finds Indigo Girls reunited in the studio with their strongest backing band to date, emphasizing the importance Indigo Girls’ music continues to hold in this moment. “While our lyrics and writing approach may change, our passion for music feels the same as it did when we were 25-years-old,” says Saliers. “As time has gone on, our audience has become more expansive and diverse, giving me a sense of joy.” More: indigogirls.com.



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, and has earned wide acclaim as a guest conductor in the U.S. and abroad. Her notable projects here have included co-creating the Inside the Classics series and Sam & Sarah series with Orchestra violist Sam Bergman and leading new productions with collaborators such as Dessa, Cloud Cult, The New Standards, PaviElle French, Kevin Kling, Peter Rothstein, Robert Elhai and The Moving Company. A specialist in film music and the film-in-concert genre, Hicks premiered Pixar in Concert and Disney and Pixar’s *Coco* in Concert; her live concert recording of *A Celebration of the Music from Coco* at the Hollywood Bowl can be seen on Disney+ and her work on *The Little Mermaid Live!* was broadcast on ABC. Next month she will lead the Orchestra’s first concerts with Minnesota-based hip-hop artist Nur-D and U.S. Bank Movies & Music performances of *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.

MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Hannu Lintu, conductor
Yuja Wang, piano

Friday, March 29, 2024, 8PM
Saturday, March 30, 2024, 7PM

Orchestra Hall

Kaija Saariaho	<i>Ciel d’hiver</i>	CA. 10’
Sergei Prokofiev	Concerto No. 1 in D-flat major for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 10 Allegro brioso Andante assai Allegro scherzando [The movements are played without pause.] <i>Yuja Wang, piano</i>	CA. 16’
I N T E R M I S S I O N		CA. 20’
Sergei Rachmaninoff	Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Opus 27 Largo – Allegro moderato Allegro molto Adagio Allegro vivace	CA. 60’

PRE-CONCERT

Concert Preview with Valerie Little
Friday, March 29, 7:15pm, Target Atrium | Saturday, March 30, 6:15pm, Target Atrium

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HANNU LINTU,
CONDUCTOR

Acclaimed for his dynamic podium presence and attention to instrumental color, Hannu Lintu maintains his reputation as one of the world's finest conductors. This season he becomes music director of Orquestra Gulbenkian while continuing his tenure as chief conductor of Finnish National Opera and Ballet, demonstrating his mastery of both symphonic and operatic repertoire. The appointments follow successful concerts with Orquestra Gulbenkian and productions with Finnish National Opera and Ballet including Strauss' *Salome*, Puccini's *Turandot* and Britten's *Billy Budd*. Highlights of his 2023–24 season include completing that opera house's *Ring Cycle* with Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* and leading productions of Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmelites* and Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, as well as debuts with Berlin Philharmonic, NHK Symphony Orchestra and SWR Symphonieorchester and returns to the Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI and George Enescu International Festival. Lintu studied cello and piano at the Sibelius Academy, where he also later studied conducting with Jorma Panula. He took first prize at the Nordic Conducting Competition in Bergen in 1994. More: harrisonparrott.com, hannulintu.fi.



YUJA WANG, PIANO

Yuja Wang is celebrated for her charismatic artistry, emotional honesty and captivating stage presence. She has performed with venerated conductors, musicians and ensembles, and is renowned for her virtuosity and lively performances. Her skill and charisma were recently demonstrated in a marathon performance of Rachmaninoff's four piano concertos plus the Paganini Rhapsody, all in one afternoon at Carnegie Hall with the Philadelphia Orchestra led by Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Last season she performed the world premiere of Magnus Lindberg's Piano Concerto No. 3 with the San Francisco Symphony and gave further performances across North America and Europe. This season she performs a recital tour to world-class venues across North America, Europe and Asia. Born into a musical family in Beijing, she trained in Canada and at the Curtis Institute of Music under Gary Graffman. Her international breakthrough came in 2007 when she performed as soloist with the Boston Symphony. Two years later she signed an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon, and she has since established her place among the world's leading classical artists. In 2017 she was named Musical America's Artist of the Year, and in 2021 she received an Opus Klassik Award. She won her first Grammy Award at last month's ceremony. More: intermusica.com, yujawang.com.

ONE-MINUTE NOTES

Saariaho: *Ciel d'hiver*

Kaija Saariaho, who passed away less than a year ago, adapted *Ciel d'hiver* (Winter Sky) from her earlier work *Orion*, drawing inspiration from the mythological huntsman who is immortalized as a constellation. Its complex, layered textures evoke the sensational view of a starry night.

Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No. 1

Notable features of this concerto include a grandly soaring theme for piano and orchestra in unison and, in the final movement, a thrilling display of energy and wit as piano and orchestra seem pitted against each other. Prokofiev, himself a sensational pianist, performed this exhilarating work as his final exam at the Moscow Conservatory.

Rachmaninoff: Symphony No. 2

Rachmaninoff's longest, grandest and most expansive symphony is built on the opening motif, a somber figure for low strings. The lyrical third movement is a standout, containing several gorgeous melodies and an extended clarinet solo of ardent longing. The finale is soaring and magnificent, culminating in a blaze of orchestral sound.

**KAIJA SAARIAHO****B:** October 14, 1952
Helsinki, Finland**D:** June 2, 2023
Paris, France*Ciel d'hiver***PREMIERED:** April 7, 2014

In March 2023, when the Minnesota Orchestra last played the music of Kaija Saariaho—her clarinet concerto *D'OM LE VRAI SENS*, featuring Kari Kriikku—the Finnish composer's music was at a high point of recognition, particularly in her home country, where the classical music community had recently come together to celebrate her 70th birthday. Soloists, ensembles, educational institutions and the Finnish National Opera offered more than two dozen concerts in the latter months of 2022 featuring music from throughout her career. Sadly, that professional pinnacle was counterbalanced by personal tragedy, as Saariaho had been diagnosed with glioblastoma in February 2021. After her passing early in June 2023, tributes poured in from around the world, with performers, listeners and fellow composers praising her music, humanity and commitment to supporting future generations of musicians.

HIGH HONORS AND DIVERSE INSPIRATIONS

Born in 1952 in Helsinki, Saariaho studied composition there and in Freiburg and Paris, where she lived from 1982 until her death. Although many of her works are for chamber ensembles, in the final three decades of her life she produced several works for larger forces, including the operas *L'Amour de loin*, *Adriana Mater*, *Emilie* and *Only The Sound Remains*, as well as the oratorio *La Passion de Simone*. In 2003 she was awarded one of the highest honors for classical composers, the Grawemeyer Award. She was a committed educator and oversaw opportunities for composers such as the International Kaija Saariaho Organ Composition Competition. Her final work, the trumpet concerto *HUSH*, received a posthumous premiere in August 2023 by the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra under Susanna Mälkki's direction.

Saariaho's inspirations and subject matter varied greatly from work to work. Her 2018 opera *Innocence*, for instance, is of the here-and-now, addressing the aftermath of a school shooting, but her 2013 work *Ciel d'hiver* ("Winter Sky" in French) looks back to ancient times—as well as a work from earlier in her catalog. It is an arrangement of the second movement of her orchestral piece *Orion*, which was premiered by the Cleveland Orchestra in 2003. *Ciel d'hiver*

was commissioned by Musique Nouvelle en Liberté and was first heard in its standalone form on April 7, 2014, with the Orchestre Lamoureux performing under the baton of Fayçal Karoui. The Minnesota Orchestra was slated to perform *Ciel d'hiver* in May 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic scrambled the schedules of orchestras worldwide.

MUSIC FROM MYTHOLOGY

In an excerpt from musicologist Laurie Shulman's program note on *Ciel d'hiver* written for the Minnesota Orchestra for the cancelled 2020 performance, Shulman summarizes the music's content and its context in the story of Orion that inspired the larger work from which *Ciel d'hiver* is drawn:

"In ancient Greek and Roman mythology, Orion was a handsome giant and hunter. The tales of his birth vary, but he is alleged to have come from the region of Boeotia. On the island of Chios, according to the myth, he drove out all the wild beasts. He fell in love with King Oenopion's daughter Merope, but then offended the king with his cavalier treatment of the princess. Oenopion enlisted the assistance of Dionysus to blind Orion. An oracle informed him that he could only regain his sight by directly viewing the rays of the rising sun. Hephaestus provided him with a guide to the east. After his vision was restored, he lived with the goddess Artemis as a hunter. Several tales of his death exist: at Artemis' hand, at the hands of the jealous Apollo or as the victim of a scorpion sting. Following his death, Orion was placed among the stars as a constellation.

"Saariaho is known for manipulating dense blocks of sound in shifting patterns, with an emphasis on orchestral color. Each of the three movements of her work *Orion* addresses an aspect of Orion's life and legend. *Ciel d'hiver* presents a sequence of individual soloists in vivid relief above a quiet, sustained pedal point from strings, harps, piano and organ. The spotlight passes from piccolo to concertmaster, then to clarinet, oboe, trumpet and the violin section. As the texture becomes more dense, various instruments echo repeated motives. We view the firmament on a crystal clear night, far from civilization: the heavens sparkling with infinite variety against the midnight darkness. From complex textures emerge recurrent motives: the more we listen, the more layers we hear, coalescing in nature's universal order."

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, small bell, crotales, glass chimes, shell chimes, 3 suspended cymbals, tamtam, vibraphone, triangle, harp, piano, celesta and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER, WITH MUSICAL DESCRIPTION BY LAURIE SHULMAN.

**SERGEI PROKOFIEV**

B: April 23, 1891
Sontzovka, Ukraine
D: March 5, 1953
Moscow, Russia

Concerto No. 1 in D-flat major for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 10
PREMIERED: July 25, 1912

— Sergei Prokofiev showed his musical talents early. He was composing before he was 6 and produced an opera by 12, and for his application to the St. Petersburg Conservatory at 13, he submitted four operas, two sonatas, a symphony and several piano works. During his teens he studied with such luminaries as Reinhold Glière, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Anatol Lyadov and Alexander Tcherepnin. As a pianist he was no less sensational. He appeared as soloist in the premiere of his own First Piano Concerto when he was 21 (July 25, 1912, in Moscow) and less than two years later played the same work, in place of the traditional classical concerto, for his final examination at the St. Petersburg Conservatory before a panel of 20 judges, each of whom had the published score in his hands. Prokofiev considered it his first “more-or-less mature composition,” and it became his first published work.

THE CONCERTO: MUSIC WITHOUT PAUSE

The concerto is a cross between a single-movement work in several sections and a compressed concerto, its three movements played without pause. A grandly soaring theme for piano and orchestra in unison opens the work, returns at the concerto’s midpoint and again at the very end, providing a set of structural pillars. The tremendously exuberant opening material is followed by a hell-for-leather passage for the soloist before the music finally settles down to a more temperate and lighthearted theme, also initiated by the soloist, in the concerto’s home key of D-flat major. A contrasting idea, somewhat introspective and dour, is presented by the darker-colored instruments of the orchestra. The *Andante assai* passage maintains the position of the traditional slow movement, but is rather too short to fulfill this role. It is more of an episode, consisting of a single, long-breathed lyrical idea shared by orchestra and soloist in turn. The exhilarating *Allegro scherzando* pits piano against orchestra in a thrilling display of athletic prowess, motoric energy and witty interplay of ideas. For the cadenza, the piano re-engages the principal theme of the opening movement, and the concerto comes to a resplendent close with the grandly soaring subject in D-flat major with which it opened.

Instrumentation: solo piano with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, glockenspiel and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY MARY ANN FELDMAN.

**SERGEI RACHMANINOFF**

B: April 1, 1873
Semyonovo, district of Starorussky, Russia
D: March 28, 1943
Beverly Hills, California

Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Opus 27

PREMIERED: February 8, 1908

— One of the most surprising things about Rachmaninoff’s Second Symphony is that it was written at all. The premiere of his First Symphony in 1897 was a debacle, plunging the composer into a depression so profound that he wrote nothing for several years thereafter. It wasn’t just that the public didn’t like it, or the critics, or his friends, or his colleagues. No one liked it, including its own author. A long series of treatments involving hypnosis by a Dr. Dahl brought him to the point where he could write his Second Piano Concerto, completed in 1900. But it was ten years before Rachmaninoff could face the prospect of writing another symphony. And at first, he told no one about his endeavor.

A SUCCESS FROM THE START

Rachmaninoff had moved to Dresden at the time, in the fall of 1906, to escape the demands of public life in Moscow, where he was in constant demand as a pianist, conductor, committeeman, guest and collaborator on all things musical. The stately old city, where Rachmaninoff and his wife had spent their honeymoon several years earlier, appealed strongly to the composer. Also, the peace and anonymity he found in Dresden were conducive to artistic creativity. His Second Symphony was fully sketched by New Year’s Day of 1907. Revisions and orchestration took place over a longer period, both back home in Russia and during a return visit to Dresden. Rachmaninoff conducted the first performance, which took place on January 26, 1908, in St. Petersburg. He also led the Moscow premiere a week later, as well as an early American performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra in November 1909.

In each case the audience responded enthusiastically, and the symphony has enjoyed an unbroken run of popularity

to this day. The score was published in 1908, but then the manuscript went missing for nearly a century. Musical sleuths rejoiced when, in September of 2004, it turned up in a cellar in Switzerland. Until then, it was the only Rachmaninoff manuscript not accounted for, making it all the more tantalizing as a prize find. Rachmaninoff specialist Geoffrey Norris notes that “quite apart from the score’s potential monetary value, its significance for musicians and scholars is priceless, because, with the hundreds of emendations, crossings-out and annotations that Rachmaninoff made on the manuscript, it gives clues to his earlier thoughts on the symphony.”

THE MUSIC: HAUNTED BY A MOTTO

LARGO–ALLEGRO MODERATO. Most of the symphony’s melodic material derives from a single motif, heard in the opening bars in the somber colors of low cellos and basses. In a multifarious variety of guises and transformations, this “motto” haunts the entire symphony in both obvious and subtle ways, infusing it with coherence and compelling impetus. After its initial statement, the motto passes to other instruments, eventually giving birth to a sinuous violin phrase, which grows to an impressive climax as it weaves its way through lushly orchestrated textures and luxuriant counterpoint. Following the slow introduction, the main *Allegro moderato* section of the movement is ushered in with a shivering, rising figure in the strings. Violins then spin out a long, winding, aspiring theme based on the motto. The delicate, gentle second theme, divided between woodwinds and responding strings, also derives from the motto.

ALLEGRO MOLTO. The second movement, a scherzo, is built on the motif of the *Dies Irae*, the medieval Gregorian chant for the dead. Four horns in unison proclaim a boldly exuberant version of the *Dies Irae*, which itself has its seeds in the symphony’s motto. (This motif was used in the composer’s *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*.) Two contrasting ideas of note are the warmly flowing lyrical theme for the violins and a brilliant fugato section that demands the utmost in virtuosity from the strings.

ADAGIO. The third movement is one of the lyric highlights of all Rachmaninoff’s works. No fewer than three gorgeous melodies are heard, beginning with one of the most popular ever written. Following immediately on this theme of great repose and tranquility comes one of the glories of the solo clarinet repertory—an extended theme full of ardent longing.

ALLEGRO VIVACE. The enormously energetic finale too is a broadly expansive movement, beginning with a boisterously robust idea that might easily conjure up the spirit of a carnival. This is followed by a dark, grim, march-like episode, then by another of Rachmaninoff’s most famous themes—a magnificent, soaring affair that sweeps onward

over an expanse of more than one hundred measures. Rachmaninoff’s longest, grandest, most expansive symphonic work ends in a veritable blaze of sound.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ROBERT MARKOW.

River Rhapsody

SYMPHONY BALL

Saturday, May 4, 2024

Celebrating Thomas Søndergård's inaugural season with the Minnesota Orchestra.

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Join us on May 4, 2024 to support the Orchestra's artistic and educational missions as we revel in the traditions—from music to food—that the River inspires. Then, experience an exquisite river-themed concert of glorious orchestral music performed by the Minnesota Orchestra, conducted by new Music Director Thomas Søndergård. Cap off the night at our festive after-party at Orchestra Hall.

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Members of Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs performing with the Minnesota Orchestra on New Year's Eve 2023. Photo: Courtney Perry.

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Orchestra musician Kenneth Freed demonstrating viola for young audiences. Photo: Courtney Perry

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