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FROM THE EDITOR

When you arrive at Orchestra Hall, you may have a rough idea of how the concert will unfold—as the conductor, soloist and pieces on the program have been in place for many months. And yet, something almost certainly will come as a surprise, be it the contents of a composition you don’t know as well, a chance encounter in the lobby or an enlightening conversation with a fellow attendee. And of course, much like the Minnesota snowflakes that were in short supply this year, no two performances of a piece are precisely the same.

The comfort of familiarity and the joy of discovery are both integral to the human experience, and the survival of any art form requires jolts of the unknown—what we may call surprise twists, or in a phrase that has come into contemporary parlance, “subversion of expectations.”

You’re sure to experience both predictable and unexpected elements at today’s concert, at which well-known symphonies and concertos are paired with music of the 20th and 21st centuries, periods in which many composers were interested in shaking things up—or you’ll be enthralled by a presentation of *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, one of the franchise’s least predictable entries. You’ll hear music with famous openings and lesser-known subsequent material, such as Richard Strauss’ *Also sprach Zarathustra*. The Orchestra performs one of Tchaikovsky’s least-heard symphonies, the Second, built around Ukrainian folk melodies we hear now in the context of war in Eastern Europe. And the Orchestra plays a ballet by Bartók that so shook audiences that additional performances were banned for years. Whichever concert you’re attending, we hope it brings discovery and illumination.

Carl Schroeder

Carl Schroeder, Editor
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ABOUT THE COVER

Cellist Pitnarry Shin—a Minnesota Orchestra musician who was first in the ensemble 2001 to 2006, then returned starting in 2012—standing alongside her section colleagues in September 2023. Photo: Emma Redinger.

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FROM LEFT: Marco Borggreve; Simon Pauly; Giorgia Bertazzi

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Photo: Josh Kohanek

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Address correspondence and inquiries to the Minnesota Orchestral Association
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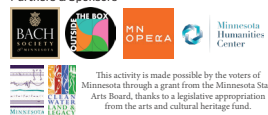
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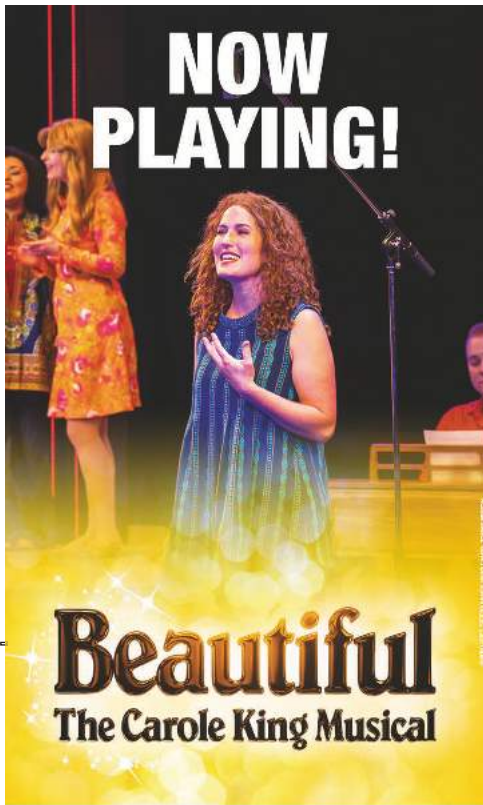
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Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård, who this past fall began his tenure as the 11th music director of the Minnesota Orchestra, is a highly regarded conductor in both the orchestral and opera spheres. He has earned a reputation for incisive interpretations 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*. This month he leads concerts featuring piano soloist Kirill Gerstein, and next month he will lead Season Finale concerts spotlighting LGBTQ+ composers.

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 Lutoslawski 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.

SPECIAL FUNDS

Accelerator Funds

The funds below support the research, development and implementation of new projects and initiatives at the Minnesota Orchestra and allow the Orchestra to seize on opportunities that will greatly benefit our audiences and community.

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Funds support the Minnesota Orchestra's ability to attract and program phenomenal guest artists as part of its classical concert series, ensuring outstanding musical experiences for our audiences each season.

Major Restricted Funds

The major restricted funds below are dedicated to supporting an array of initiatives, artistic collaborations, education and outreach programs, Orchestra musicians, and guest artists and conductors.

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AUDIENCE SPOTLIGHT — ORCHESTRA HALL AT 50

The fall of 2024 marks a half-century since the Minnesota Orchestra's home in downtown Minneapolis opened in October 1974. To mark the 50th anniversary, we invite you to share your special memories of Orchestra Hall by emailing them to OrchHall50@mnorch.org. This month's memory comes from audience member Trish Brock, who recalls a Sommerfest concert on July 23, 1987—the night of a record-setting Twin Cities superstorm.

"I needed to transfer buses going home on a stormy evening in Minneapolis. I stepped off a bus into a swiftly flowing street river that almost swept me away. I had landed at Peavey Plaza in front of Orchestra Hall. I could see the lit entry of the concert hall, and someone approached me where I stood and invited me to come inside and watch a concert. Apparently, the storm had kept away ticket-holding audience members and the Minnesota Orchestra was inviting random people off the street to fill the venue.

"Conductor Leonard Slatkin was conducting a program titled 'The Devil Made Me Do It.' The demonic musical scenes and themes were further enlivened by dramatic live storm effects taking place outside, loud enough to reverberate throughout the concert hall. The finale, Tchaikovsky's *Francesca da Rimini*, was especially memorable as the dynamic drum orchestration was accompanied by monumental rumbles of thunder on that enormously stormy evening. A happy memory like that can never be forgotten."



Leonard Slatkin conducting an outdoor concert in summer 1983.

MEET A MUSICIAN: ERIC SJOSTROM

Zoe Prinds-Flash



Minnesota Orchestra musician since: **1978**
 Position: **Associate Principal Librarian**
 Hometown: **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**
 Education: **Curtis Institute of Music**

How do you find your way to a career as a music librarian?

The first thing to know about orchestra librarians is that we generally start out as performers. During high school, while I was studying at the Settlement Music School in Philadelphia, I played bassoon in a woodwind quintet, and the oboist connected me with a part-time job in the Philadelphia Orchestra's library. I went on to Curtis to study bassoon with Sol Schoenbach, along with music theory, but after I graduated there weren't any full-time bassoon jobs available. I interviewed for a librarian position at the Milwaukee Symphony and didn't get the job—but the winner was Paul Gunther, who came from the Minnesota Orchestra, which freed up that position, and I won it in 1978. Eight years later Paul came back to Minnesota, and we worked together in the library for about three decades until his retirement.

Tell us a bit about the Orchestra's other current librarians—Maureen Conroy and Valerie Little.

We're a great team because I have a woodwind background, Maureen played a brass instrument, horn, and Valerie is a violist—so we have three major areas of expertise covered. But we have no qualms about going to our performer colleagues who are best able to answer questions about their particular sections.

How have developments in technology changed the work of the librarian?

A big part of the job is copying and preparing musicians' parts and putting in things like string bowings, and computers are a great tool for that. We can work with Photoshop and music notation software to fix things instead of the old method: using whiteout, one part at a time. Photocopiers are also much more sophisticated than they used to be, and the sharing of files via PDF makes things so much easier.

Sometimes at concerts a librarian will come onstage between pieces. What are you doing then?

Often one of us will pick up a score from the conductor's dressing room and put it on their stand at transition moments like intermission or while stagehands are moving a piano. It's a simple but important task. Once while Leonard Slatkin was conducting the Orchestra at O'Shaughnessy, he went onstage, one of my colleagues hadn't brought out the score yet, and Leonard turned to the audience and explained

that although he could conduct many pieces from memory, this wasn't one of them.

Do you have any other standout concert memories?

I like to say that I once conducted part of the Orchestra at St. Benedict's with Neville Marriner doing Mahler's First Symphony, which calls for three offstage trumpet players. They were supposed to follow along on a closed-circuit camera, but it had been knocked out of position, so I peeked through a shell and mirrored Neville's conducting so the trumpet players could see the beat for their entrance. Situations like that are one more reason you need to have a performance background to do this job.

What do you enjoy doing for fun?

I like to cook all the food in our house, which my wife really loves. She's an active outdoors person and an avid bird watcher, so we do a lot of birding together. We also like to travel, sometimes to meet extended family members I've learned about through online ancestry sites. My paternal ancestral roots come from Åland, an autonomous region of Finland, and I've also connected with ancestors in Scotland on my mother's side. I met a cousin for the first time at a concert on the Orchestra's 2016 European tour, and that was really cool. I also listen to several podcasts about mysteries and spies.

From a librarian's perspective, what makes a great concert?

It's very different from other viewpoints: for the audience, a great concert is when it's exciting and they're just on the edge of their seat. For a librarian, a great concert is when nothing of note happens—that means we've done everything right in advance!

Speaking of audiences, what do you think makes Minnesota Orchestra concertgoers special?

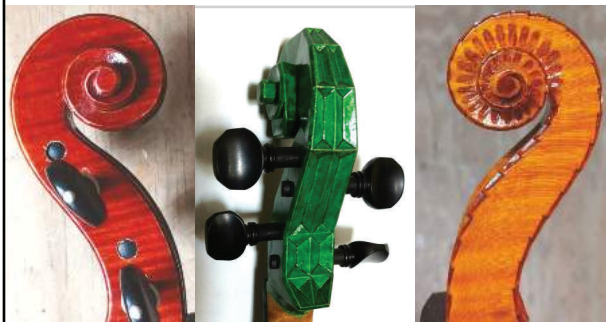
When I look out, it seems we have a generous percentage of young people, and that bodes well for the future. There also seems to be a wide mix of some people who are very knowledgeable about the music and others who are just open to everything, and that's really good too. We're fortunate to live in an area where the public appreciates the quality of music. It makes us feel that what we're doing is worthwhile.

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

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NEWS

MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

CRITICS' COLUMN: RECENT REVIEWS

“[I]t’s probably safe to say that the reason almost every seat was occupied was [pianist Yuja] Wang. And she did not disappoint... Wang negotiated [Sergei Prokofiev’s First Piano Concerto’s] many mood swings admirably, particularly when she fairly frolicked on the first movement and made the finale a maniacal musical chase scene that nevertheless ended in a place of profound gentleness. The resultant standing ovation inspired the pianist to present...Franz Liszt’s arrangement of Franz Schubert’s song, ‘Gretchen am Spinnrade (Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel).’ It proved a lovely meditation reminiscent of a flowing stream, gradually growing in turbulence. By contrast, she returned to Prokofiev’s more anxious side for her second encore, bringing a frenetic and thunderous spirit to the third movement of his Piano Sonata No. 7. Yet her evening ended in the effervescent spirit of a Latin dance party on Mexican composer Arturo Márquez’s *Danzón* No. 2, via a Leticia Gómez-Tagle transcription, Wang dancing upon the keys and bouncing on the bench.”

—Rob Hubbard, *Star Tribune*,
March 30, 2024

“The worst snowstorm of the season couldn’t stop a few thousand diehard fans from making it downtown to see one of the region’s best shows of the year....The Indigo Girls are seasoned, veteran performers, but came across as very down-to-earth, imbuing each song with the authentic passion they’re known for. The setlist likely pleased longtime fans, drawing heavily from their late ’80s and ’90s commercial heyday...‘Kid Fears,’ ‘Closer to Fine,’ and ‘Galileo’ all got prime setlist positions, with the latter two leading to bombastic singalongs resonating from the beautiful space. Those moments, like many throughout the show, won’t soon be forgotten.”

—Aaron Williams, *Music In Minnesota*,
March 28, 2024

NORDIC FESTIVAL AND ORCHESTRA HALL ANNIVERSARY AMONG 2024-25 HIGHLIGHTS

Last month the Minnesota Orchestra announced the details of an exciting 2024-25 season filled with highlights across many genres, from the Baroque stylings of Bach to the time-travel adventure *Back to the Future* to the return of the Composer Institute spotlighting the next generation of orchestral composers. Beginning in September 2024, it will be Thomas Søndergård's second season as music director and will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Orchestra Hall's opening in the fall of 1974, with a recurring theme of works that the ensemble performed during the historic first season here a half-century ago.



Music Director Thomas Søndergård

The Orchestra's flagship classical season will showcase a range of favorite symphonies, concertos and numerous works new to the Orchestra's repertoire by composers ranging from Margaret Bonds to Carlos Simon. Søndergård will lead an Italian-themed Season Opening spotlighting a rising young star, 20-year-old Van Cliburn International Piano Competition winner Yunchan Lim; a two-week Nordic Soundscapes festival spotlighting Nordic composers and culture; and vocal-orchestral masterpieces from an opera-in-concert performance of Puccini's *Turandot* to Mozart's epic final work, the Requiem, among numerous other programs. The classical season will feature virtuosos such as violinists James Ehnes and Leila Josefowicz, pianists Ingrid Fliter and Alice Sara Ott; and seven Minnesota Orchestra musicians performing as soloists.

The Orchestra's highly varied Live at Orchestra series, conducted primarily by the series' principal conductor Sarah Hicks, includes programs dedicated to the music of John Williams, John Denver, the Beatles and a fusion of Johannes Brahms and Radiohead, as well as the return of the trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. Five movies will be shown in full as the Orchestra performs the scores live: the final film in the Harry Potter series, the original *Star Wars* movie that launched the franchise in 1977, *Hocus Pocus*, *Elf* and *Back to the Future*.

Programs marking a variety of holidays include the return of the popular Lunar New Year and Juneteenth concerts, a New Year's program led by William Eddins and a lineup of concerts in December. The Orchestra's chamber music series will move to the Hall's auditorium and will include repertoire ranging from Arnold Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* to Orchestra trombonist Kari Sundström's Chromatic Fantasy for solo cello. Also returning are the Symphony in 60, Sensory-Friendly Concerts, Young People's Concerts and Relaxed Family Concerts—including a family program led by Søndergård for the second consecutive year.



Star Wars heroes Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia Organa and Han Solo

Ticket packages of three or more concerts are on sale now, and tickets for single concerts will be available starting July 29. Visit minnesotaorchestra.org for full details—we hope to see you often in the new season!

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NEWS ——— MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

ARRIVING ON BOARD



Earlier this year 16 new members were elected to the Minnesota Orchestra's volunteer Board of Directors. Pictured above from left to right are Patrick R. Warfield, Ph.D.; Michael Maeser; Lauren W. Routhier; Karla Robertson; Robert E. Tunheim; Benhong Rosaline (Roz) Tsai, Ph.D.; Martin R. Lueck; Lindsey Main; Brandon Carmack; Julie Howe Stewart; Eric J. Snustad; Linda D. Murrell; Jeannine Befidi; and Barbara Burwell. Two additional new Board members not pictured here are Jay V. Ihlenfeld, Ph.D., and Kelly McQueen. We welcome and thank them all for their service to the Orchestra!

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 performances. Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/aroundtown or scan the QR code for a continually updating list of events—including these performances early this month:

On Sunday, May 5, at 2 p.m. at Lake of the Isles Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, a performance of the Isles Ensemble features three Minnesota Orchestra musicians—violinists **Natsuki Kumagai** and **Emily Switzer** and violist **Sarah Switzer**—in a program of music by Joseph Haydn, Giacomo Puccini, Richard Strauss and Frédéric Chopin, featuring musical selections that contrast with the styles these composers are best known for. Additional musicians joining the performers are violist Leslie Shank, cellists Laura Sewell and Tom Rosenberg and pianist Denis Evstuhin. Visit islesensemble.org for more information and tickets.

On Sunday, May 5, at 3 p.m. at Westminster Church in Minneapolis, a special concert continues the legacy of two late members of the Minnesota Orchestra family: former Concertmaster Jorja Fleezanis and her husband, musicologist Michael Steinberg. The program's centerpiece is the world premiere of Roydon Tse's *Stone Pond* setting text by Ellen Bryant Voigt, performed by four Minnesota Orchestra musicians—violinist **Alan Snow**, cellists **Anthony Ross** and **Beth Rapier** and **Timothy Zavadil** on saxophone—along with narrator Stephen Yoakam. Also on the program is Franz Schubert's String Quintet in C major, with Concertmaster **Erin Keefe** and former Minnesota Orchestra violist **Sabina Thatcher** joining Snow, Ross and Rapier. For more information and tickets, visit steinbergfleezanisfund.org.

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SPOTLIGHT ON RETIRING STAFF LEADER BETH KELLAR-LONG



Beth Kellar-Long (center) with composer Carlos Simon (left) and librettist Marc Bamuthi Joseph (right) in May 2023.

This month marks the retirement of the Minnesota Orchestra's Vice President of Orchestra Administration Beth Kellar-Long, a longtime staff member who started in 1991 as Operations Coordinator, was quickly promoted to Orchestra Operations Manager and has held her current leadership position since 2014. She headed the artistic department during high-profile tours and commissions, programming innovations during the pandemic and the arrival of Music Director Thomas Søndergård. Here she reflects on her career—join us in congratulating her!

What memories do you have from when you started out on the Orchestra staff in 1991?

When I first started, I didn't have a computer in my office, just a typewriter! Some early Sommerfest assignments included finding a rubber chicken for conductor David Zinman to throw out to the audience and finding overalls for violinists Pam Frank and Joshua Bell to wear for some silly fiddling gag. (One pair of overalls was my grandfather's!)

In your time as VP of Orchestra Administration, which projects have you been most proud of?

I'm proud of our South Africa tour, along with the Cuba tour that came before I was in my current role. In partnership with Classical Movements, these groundbreaking initiatives transformed the way we approached touring—by engaging in meaningful ways with local musicians and community. I'm grateful to Osmo [Vänskä], [former President and CEO] Kevin Smith, the board and musicians for thinking outside the box. I'm also proud of our work and mutually beneficial relationships with community partners on projects like Send Me Hope, Music for Mandela, *La Pasión según San Marcos*, *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*, the North Minneapolis Common Chords week and the commissioning of *brea(d)th*.

Can you talk more about *brea(d)th* and your role in that project?

I was part of the small sub-committee of board, musicians and staff that worked on the commissioning process. [Orchestra musicians] Susie Park and Kai Rocke put together a list of composers to consider, and we quickly coalesced around Carlos Simon. [Director of Artistic Planning] Kari Marshall and I had a Zoom call with Carlos in January 2021 to pitch the idea. We envisioned a work for orchestra and chorus on the theme of breath or breathing, broader than George Floyd's murder, something inspiring that included hope.

After Carlos invited Marc Bamuthi Joseph to be the work's librettist, I hosted them for their Minneapolis visits and became their liaison with the Orchestra and with the community here in Minneapolis—I would even say their co-collaborator in a way, dreaming with them about the piece and how to anchor it in our community. I helped the Orchestra connect with individuals and organizations in Minneapolis to partner and co-create what was happening around *brea(d)th*—including the George Floyd Global Memorial, Juxtaposition Arts, Memorialize the Movement and many others. When they sat in on the first rehearsal of *brea(d)th*, the community members all heard something of what they had shared. Their reaction was, "Carlos and Bamuthi really listened to us. They get it."

What do you hope will be your legacy at the Orchestra?

I'm proud of the part I've played, along with many others on the staff, in building a strong relationship with our musicians, based on mutual respect and collaboration. I can't think of a better leader with more integrity in this area than [President and CEO] Michelle Miller Burns. I'm very proud of the leadership role I've played in our DEI and anti-racism work, and I'm also proud of the board for having the courage to approve the anti-racist guiding principles in October 2021. Many board members, staff and musicians put their thought and care into the principles, and I'm excited to see how they continue to be applied.

What plans do you have in mind for retirement?

First I want to catch my breath, relax, hang out with my family, do some cooking and gardening and try to train my naughty dogs. I'll be an Orchestra super-fan in the audience, and after some decompressing I'll be looking for how I can contribute to making the world a better place. I'm especially focused on racial justice. Quoting from *brea(d)th*: "So much work has been done, who does the work that's still left?" I hope to be one of those people doing the work that's still left.

Is there anything you'd like to say to our audience on behalf of the administrative staff?

Thank you for learning and growing with the Orchestra as we evolve to better reflect the full range of orchestral music past and present. Thank you for coming to concerts! We wouldn't be here without you!

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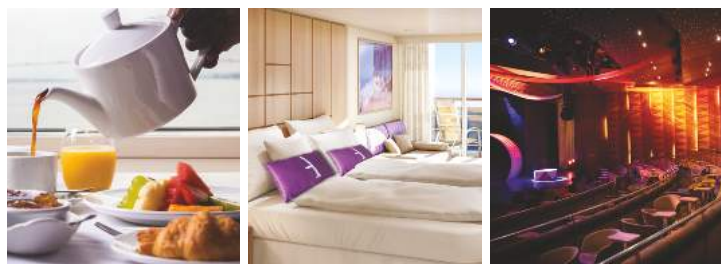


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Clockwise from left: Sophie's Surprise 29th. Photo: Heather Gersthorowitz, Josephine. Photo: David Morieth-Hodge; Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Photos: Heather Gersthorowitz; Rebekah Hinds and Bronie Barbi, Kathy and Dabla Soker a Murder. Photo: Mirabela Bodovic; What Gets You Made Of: Rose Material | Traverse Theatre. Photo: Mirabela Bodovic.

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PHOTO Zoe Prinds-Flash.

MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Thomas Søndergård, conductor
Kirill Gerstein, piano

Thursday, May 2, 2024, 11AM
Friday, May 3, 2024, 8PM

Orchestra Hall

Qigang Chen	<i>The Five Elements</i> Water Wood Fire Earth Metal	CA. 10'
Sergei Rachmaninoff	Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp minor for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 1 Vivace Andante Allegro vivace <i>Kirill Gerstein, piano</i>	CA. 26'
	I N T E R M I S S I O N	CA. 20'
Richard Strauss	<i>Also sprach Zarathustra</i> , Opus 30	CA. 32'

PRE-CONCERT

Concert Preview with Phillip Gainsley

Thursday, May 2, 10:15am, Auditorium | Friday, May 3, 7:15pm, N. Bud Grossman Mezzanine

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THOMAS SØNDERGÅRD,
CONDUCTOR

Profile appears on page 8.



KIRILL GERSTEIN,
PIANO

Kirill Gerstein's playing is distinguished by a ferocious technique and discernment, matched with an energetic, imaginative musical presence. His solo and concerto engagements take him from Europe to the U.S., East Asia and Australia. In the current season, he is a Spotlight Artist with the London Symphony, performing in London and on tour. Elsewhere he returns to orchestras such as the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Boston Symphony and Los Angeles Philharmonic, among many others. He also appears in recital with violinist Christian Tetzlaff, performing a Thomas Adès suite written for them. In recent seasons he has premiered concertos by Adès and Thomas Larcher, and his 2020 recording of Adès' concerto with the Boston Symphony was nominated for three Grammy Awards. His newest recording will pair music by Debussy with that of Armenian priest, musicologist and composer Komitas. In 2023 he released a Rachmaninoff album in honor of the composer's 150th birthday. An avid educator, he is professor of piano at Berlin's Hanns Eisler Hochschule and serves on the faculty of Kronberg Academy. In 2021 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Manhattan School of Music. Born in Russia, he is now an American citizen based in Germany. More: enticottmusicmanagement.com, imgartists.com, kirillgerstein.com.

ONE-MINUTE NOTES

Chen: *The Five Elements*

In depicting water, wood, fire, earth and metal, Qigang Chen's *The Five Elements* explores this core quintet of elements and their relationship to one another through a series of short tone poems, ranging from tranquil water to the strength of metal.

Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 1

This youthful, exuberant work is filled with heroic gestures and solo virtuosity. An expressive opening gives way to a nocturnal slow movement, which leads to a wild, capricious *Allegro vivace*.

Strauss: *Also sprach Zarathustra*

Throughout this mighty tone poem, the striving theme of humans—presented first by low woodwinds—opposes that of nature, heard in the trumpets' rising three-note figure that famously heralds the dawn of time in the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. We hear eight stages of human development, climaxing in an exuberant waltz, before a mysterious fade into silence.

**QIGANG CHEN**

B: August 8, 1951
Shanghai, China

The Five Elements

PREMIERED: May 21, 1999

— What are the forces that make up nature, the tools that make life possible and the elements that comprise the universe at the chemical level? Science, religion and art offer various lenses with which to view these fundamental questions, from the periodic table to films such as *The Fifth Element*—and a late 20th-century entry in this list is contemporary Chinese-French composer Qigang Chen’s orchestral work *The Five Elements*. Composed in 1998 and 1999, this 10-minute composition illustrates what ancient Chinese philosophers recognized as our world’s building blocks: water, wood, fire, earth and metal.

Appropriately broken into five brief movements, *The Five Elements* was chosen as one of five finalists out of over 1,000 entrants for the 2001 Masterprize Award administered by several organizations, including the BBC. It was commissioned by a different European broadcasting service—Radio France—and received its premiere on May 21, 1999, by the Orchestre National de France under the direction of Didier Benetti.

WORDS FROM THE COMPOSER

Chen has provided the following comments on his piece:

“The ‘Five Elements’ describes a system of thought originating in ancient Chinese Daoist philosophy. These elements represent five basic stages along the Yin-Yang developmental process: water, fire, metal, wood and earth. Ancient Chinese philosophers used this concept to explain the form of everything on earth and the mutually interdependent relationship between all objects and beings. This way of seeing the world emphasized unity and described the changeable quality of matter as well as the transformations it could undergo. This is China’s oldest theoretical system.

“In this work, I wanted not only to express the individual character of each element, but also the logical series of transformations that connects them. I sought to use music to explore the interdependent evolution that connects human beings to the physical world. These two domains at times seem completely separate, while at other times they seem to complement one another. Finally, they coalesce into

a unified vision of the world, boundless and encompassing both domains of existence.

“I also decided to express my personal view of the relationship between these elements, to propose a musical interpretation of what I consider each element’s symbolic meaning, and thus to suggest an ordering of the five elements based on their successive generation. I decided on the order of water, wood, fire, earth and, finally, metal. For me, water is the strongest element, but it is also characterized by tranquility. Wood is the richest element, and the most varied. Fire represents life and warmth, but it is not aggressive. Earth is the basic substance, a starting point, a generative principle. Metal refers to strength and light.”

FROM BEIJING TO PARIS

Chen’s early life was shaped by major political forces in his native China, as his early studies in music were interrupted by the Cultural Revolution. For three years he underwent “ideological re-education” in a locked-up barracks. In spite of these restrictions, he found a path to an international career when, after studying composition at the Beijing Central Conservatory, he won a national competition and was allowed special dispensation to travel abroad for graduate studies. In 1984 he moved to France, where he studied with the renowned composer Olivier Messiaen for five years. In 1992 he attained French citizenship.

Chen has kept up ties with his native country through the use of traditional Chinese musical elements in his compositions and through initiatives such as working as music director of the 2008 Olympic Games’ Opening Ceremony in Beijing, which was seen by an estimated two billion viewers around the world. In 2015 he established a composition workshop for young musicians at Gonggen College in China. His other major projects include music for the ballet *Raise the Red Lantern*, which was toured internationally by the National Ballet of China, and a 2016 album of his music recorded by the Taiwan Symphony. Forthcoming projects including a double concerto for violin and cello set for premiere in 2025. After hearing *The Five Elements* today, Minnesota audiences can hope that the wait is not long for more from Chen’s musical voice.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 3 clarinets (1 doubling E-flat clarinet and 1 doubling bass clarinet), 3 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, bamboo chimes, metal chimes, suspended cymbal, log drum, tamtam, temple blocks, triangle, tubular bells, wood blocks, xylophone, marimba, vibraphone, glockenspiel, harp, piano (doubling celesta) and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER.



SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

B: April 1, 1873
Semyonovo, district of
Starorussky, Russia

D: March 28, 1943
Beverly Hills, California

Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp minor for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 1

PREMIERED: 1891 (original
version); 1917 (revised version)

Sergei Rachmaninoff was an 18-year-old student of piano and composition when he completed the first version of this concerto in 1891. But in 1917 he reworked it, tightening the design, making the textures more transparent and the piano writing less cumbersome. Thus, in spite of the “Opus 1” designation, this is not an apprentice work. In its final form, though it uses material invented by a prodigiously gifted teenager, it is a composition by a man of 44, a musician of fully achieved maturity.

Rachmaninoff’s first important teacher was Nikolai Sergeyeovich Zverev, who ran a sort of pianists’ hothouse in his Moscow apartment. Rachmaninoff stretched his horizons by taking some lessons with his cousin Alexander Siloti; as he became increasingly interested in writing music, he studied composition at the Moscow Conservatory. The completion of the Piano Concerto No. 1 and the tone poem *Prince Rostislav*, also in 1891, made it clear that the young man had a future as a composer.

Rachmaninoff wrote prolifically during the next few years, completing, among many other works, the Symphony No. 1. The brutal reception accorded that work in 1897, when it was horrendously conducted by Alexander Glazunov at its premiere, threatened to silence Rachmaninoff for good, but after a long course of psychotherapy and hypnosis with a wonderfully empathetic physician, the composer could once again face the sight of blank manuscript paper.

A FAREWELL TO RUSSIA

By 1917, when he wrote the version of the Concerto No. 1 we hear today, Rachmaninoff had composed another symphony, two concertos, major choral works and a treasury of piano pieces and songs. He had made a reputation as one of the great pianists of the day and was regarded as a conductor of great importance. The revision of the Concerto No. 1 was the last compositional task Rachmaninoff undertook before leaving Russia in the aftermath of the Revolution.

He went to the United States, lived in Switzerland for a time, then returned to America. He composed less, and, except for the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, with less immediate success—although his later works, notably the Symphony No. 3 and the Symphonic Dances, have come to be highly regarded. To support his family, he became a pianist nearly full-time, but except for occasional performances of his own works he gave up conducting, even though he had been offered permanent posts with the Boston and Cincinnati symphonies soon after his arrival here.

Rachmaninoff appeared as soloist with the Minnesota Orchestra, then known as the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, seven times between 1920 and 1942. In December 1938 he took center stage in his First Piano Concerto under the direction of Dimitri Mitropoulos.

THE MOST EXCITING OPENING OF ALL

Rachmaninoff certainly knew how to find arresting beginnings for his works for piano and orchestra: the solemn series of sonorous piano chords that lead to the entry of the orchestra in the Second Concerto; in the Third, a haunting chant, presented with utter simplicity; the firestorm orchestral crescendo in No. 4; the diabolic spring-loaded mechanism that sets the Paganini Rhapsody in motion.

VIVACE. The Concerto No. 1 has the most exciting opening of all, a stern fanfare for the brass introducing the soloist in a cascade of double octaves, crashing chords and tumbling arpeggios. If we want to look for models, we could say that here is the opening of Schumann’s Piano Concerto, and Grieg’s, but raised to the nth power in exuberant post-Lisztian virtuosity and flamboyance. The tempo slows to *moderato*, and the violins introduce an intense melody instantly recognizable as Rachmaninoff and soon taken up by the piano. A second theme is more capricious. The brass fanfare returns near the end of the movement to announce a grand cadenza.

ANDANTE. The second movement is a lovely nocturne, almost startlingly brief, and beautifully scored both for the piano and the orchestra. Like the first movement, the finale is based on two contrasting themes. The big departure here is a sweetly melancholic episode in the middle of the movement, set apart from its surroundings not only in mood but harmonically.

ALLEGRO VIVACE. In the finales of his Second and Third piano concertos, Rachmaninoff creates an exciting climax by bringing back the lyric second theme in a huge apotheosis. That was his original plan in this concerto, too, but in the leaner 1917 revision he resists the temptation to repeat himself; instead, the pianist seizes the reins and leads the music to a barn-burner of a conclusion.

Instrumentation: solo piano with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, cymbals, triangle and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY THE LATE MICHAEL STEINBERG; USED WITH PERMISSION.



RICHARD STRAUSS

B: June 11, 1864
Munich, Germany
D: September 8, 1949
Garmisch, Germany

Also sprach Zarathustra,
Opus 30

PREMIERED: November 27, 1896

— “Abstruse” used to be the favorite adjective of critics trying to characterize *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Then, in 1968, Stanley Kubrick co-opted its opening to serve as part of the brilliantly chosen sonic landscape in his *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and ever since, *Zarathustra* has been a big box-office piece in the symphonic repertoire. I imagine the surprise of the people who first encountered the piece in that movie, bought a recording, and discovered that it went on for another half hour after the magnificent sunrise that had sent them to the record store in the first place. I imagine too, that seeing the name of Friedrich Nietzsche must have caused some rolling of eyes.

Like many Strauss tone poems, *Also sprach Zarathustra* sprang from a literary source. In 1896, when Strauss introduced his *Zarathustra* to the world, Nietzsche’s book *Also sprach Zarathustra* was hardly more than ten years old. Strauss had at first been overwhelmed by Nietzsche’s book: it was full of new ideas and even new words, and Strauss let it sink in slowly. In a long prose poem, Nietzsche uses the figure of the ancient Persian prophet Zoroaster to speak for him on an immense range of subjects. The book consists of 82 short sections with such titles as “On the Pale Criminal,” “On the Flies of the Market Place,” “On Chastity” and “At Noon,” and each section ends with the phrase “Also sprach Zarathustra” (Thus Spake Zarathustra).

A FAMOUS BEGINNING

Strauss had an extraordinary knack when it came to figuring out how to begin pieces. Here he begins with the famous sunrise. In Nietzsche, Zarathustra, who has dwelled on a mountaintop for ten years, watches a new day begin. Strauss first gives us a long suspended moment of indeterminate rumble on C, but so low that we hardly register a specific pitch. From this emerges the simplest three-note trumpet call. Immediately this gives way to

muttering low strings. These are the *Hinterweltler*—the After-Worldly or Backworldsmen—humankind in its most undeveloped stage, which to Nietzsche is exemplified by those whose goal is the afterlife rather than a richly fulfilled here and now.

When the music gets faster, we are in a section Strauss heads *On the Great Longing*—longing, that is to rise beyond the limitations of the *Hinterweltler*. “Inquiring” arpeggios in the key of B minor combine with the rising three-note motif in C that the trumpets played at the opening. This combination brings about the juxtaposition—and sometimes collision—of the two keys.

A great sweeping glissando for both harps propels the music into *On Joys and Passions*, a conflict between sensual and spiritual elements. A darker variant of this music is marked *Funeral Song*. The music then slows to a halt and fades to the edge of inaudibility. Cellos and basses proffer a strangely groping theme, encompassing all 12 notes of the chromatic scale. This is *On Science*. Nietzsche’s word is *Wissenschaft*, which carries broad meanings of learning, scholarship, erudition and knowledge. Strauss does the most “wissenschaftlich” possible thing: he writes a fugue. It is one of my favorite pages in all of Strauss—mysterious, visionary, dissonant in rhythm as well as in harmony. Again the music comes to a halt, and some hesitantly exploring sounds leads to an energetic, thrusting passage, *The Convalescent*. *Zarathustra* has a kind of breakdown.

SONGS AND A MAGICAL CLOSE

Next, Strauss evokes Nietzsche’s *Dance Song*, a kind of rivalry of life and wisdom, which Strauss expresses as a waltz. The solo violin is prominent here. It is well known that Strauss loved sopranos, but sometimes he appeared to love concertmasters almost as much. In Nietzsche’s “Other Dance Song,” which Strauss titles *Sleepwalker’s Song*, a bell tolls 12 times, with a line of the poem “O Mensch, gib Acht” (Oh Man, Take Heed) inserted after each peal.

In the course of its 12 strokes, Strauss’ bell describes a long decrescendo from *fff* to *ppp*. Everything seems settled in C major, but then the violins, backed by horns and harp, with infinite gentleness begin the coda—in B major. The two tonalities rock back and forth.

The last word is uttered by the cellos and basses with their pizzicato C-natural. It is one of the most magical closes ever devised by Richard Strauss, that master of great endings.

Instrumentation: piccolo, 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 6 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, 2 tubas, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tubular bells, glockenspiel, 2 harps, organ and strings

EXCERPTED FROM A PROGRAM NOTE BY THE LATE MICHAEL STEINBERG; USED WITH PERMISSION.

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JUNE HIGHLIGHTS

BRONFMAN PLAYS BEETHOVEN PIANO CONCERTO NO. 4

JUN 7-8

David Robertson, conductor
Yefim Bronfman, piano

JUNETEENTH WITH THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

JUN 14

Jonathan Taylor Rush, conductor
Jovonta Patton, vocals
Wordsmith, vocals

BEN RECTOR AND CODY FRY WITH THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

JUN 15-16

Sarah Hicks, conductor

SEASON FINALE: CELEBRATING PRIDE WITH THOMAS SØNDERGÅRD

JUN 20-22

Thomas Søndergård, conductor
Francesco Piemontesi, piano

MUSIC DIRECTOR THOMAS SØNDERGÅRD



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MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Elim Chan, conductor
Benjamin Beilman, violin

Thursday, May 9, 2024, 11AM
Friday, May 10, 2024, 8PM

Orchestra Hall

Unsus Chin	<i>subito con forza</i>	CA. 6'
Erich Wolfgang Korngold	Concerto in D major for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 35 Moderato nobile Romance: Andante Finale: Allegro assai vivace <i>Benjamin Beilman, violin</i>	CA. 23'
I N T E R M I S S I O N		CA. 20'
Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky	Symphony No. 2 in C minor, Opus 17, <i>Little Russian</i> Andante sostenuto – Allegro vivo Andantino marziale, quasi moderato Scherzo Finale: Moderato assai	CA. 33'

PRE-CONCERT

Concert Preview with Loki Karuna

Thursday, May 9, 10:15am, Target Atrium | Friday, May 10, 7:15pm, Target Atrium

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ELIM CHAN,
CONDUCTOR

One of the most sought-after artists of her generation, Elim Chan conducts a repertory ranging from Classical to contemporary symphonic works. She was guest conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra from 2018 to 2023 and has been chief conductor of the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra since 2019. This season—her final as chief conductor—she will present that orchestra in the Benelux with soloists including Sol Gabetta and Midori. Other highlights of her 2023-24 season include debuts with the Salzburg Festival, Orchestre de Paris, Staatskapelle Berlin, Staatskapelle Dresden, New York Philharmonic, Orchestre Métropolitain in Montreal, Seattle Symphony and Minnesota Orchestra. She also returns to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic, Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Philharmonia Orchestra. In spring 2023, the Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León announced a three-year collaboration with Chan as associate conductor, focusing on Stravinsky’s ballets. A native of Hong Kong, in 2014 she was the first female winner of the Donatella Flick Conducting Competition, enabling her to spend the 2015-16 season as assistant conductor at the London Symphony Orchestra, working closely with Valery Gergiev. The following season she joined the Dudamel Fellowship program of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. More: ccm-international.de, elimchan.nl.



BENJAMIN BEILMAN,
VIOLIN

Benjamin Beilman, one of the leading violinists of his generation, has won international praise for his passionate performances and deep rich tone. His 2023-24 season includes his debut with the St. Louis Symphony and returns to the Minnesota Orchestra, Oregon Symphony and Pacific Symphony, with which he will perform and conduct a program of Vivaldi. In Europe, he performs with the SWR Symphonieorchester Stuttgart, Kölner Philharmonie, Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken, Tonkünstler Orchestra and BBC National Orchestra of Wales, among other ensembles. In 2022 he became one of the youngest artists to be appointed to the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music, and this season he leads a Curtis string ensemble in a national tour. In recent seasons his passion for contemporary music has led to new works written for him by Frederic Rzewski and Gabriella Smith, the latter co-commissioned by the Schubert Club in St. Paul. He has given multiple performances of Jennifer Higdon’s Violin Concerto and recorded Thomas Larcher’s concerto with the Tonkünstler Orchester; he also premiered Chris Rogerson’s Violin Concerto, *The Little Prince*, with the Kansas City Symphony. He also performs in recital and chamber music settings at major halls across the world. More: opus3artists.com, benjaminbeilman.com.

ONE-MINUTE NOTES

Chin: *subito con forza*

To mark Beethoven’s 250th birthday in 2020, Unsuk Chin composed *subito con forza* (“Suddenly, with force”), inspired by the conversation books that helped Beethoven communicate in person as his hearing diminished. Brief, visceral and powerful, it includes hidden and overt references to Beethoven’s music.

Korngold: Violin Concerto

Erich Wolfgang Korngold, one of great film composers early in the history of cinema, also created rich drama in the concert hall—and one shining example is this glorious, eloquent violin concerto, written for virtuoso Jascha Heifetz.

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 2, *Little Russian*

A solo horn sings the opening melody of Tchaikovsky’s Second Symphony, which—in typical Tchaikovsky fashion—quotes a variety of Eastern European folk tunes. Traditional melodies from Ukraine, or “Little Russia,” as it was then called, inspired both the musical ideas and the nickname for this work. Sadly, the music and title take on a new context due to the present Russia-Ukraine war.



UNSUK CHIN

B: July 14, 1961
Seoul, South Korea

subito con forza

PREMIERED: September 24,
2020

In the classical music world, some popular pieces from the so-called “standard repertoire” are in steady rotation, with the same work appearing on a program every few seasons. Newer compositions are rarely given repeat hearings so quickly, but this week’s concerts bring a welcome exception: the second set of concerts at Orchestra Hall to feature Unsuk Chin’s *subito con forza*, of which the Minnesota Orchestra gave the U.S. premiere in October 2021.

Chin’s *subito con forza* is a concert opener composed to mark the 250th anniversary of Ludwig van Beethoven’s birth in 2020. The composition’s title means “suddenly, with force”—given in Italian, the language used for tempo markings and other performance indications in many scores of Western classical music. The piece takes an unexpected approach to honoring Beethoven: it is inspired not solely by his music, but rather by the written “conversation books” he began to accumulate as his deteriorating hearing impacted his life and work. Beethoven carried these blank booklets with him for his acquaintances to write their sides of conversations, while he answered aloud; he also jotted his own thoughts and reminders along with occasional musical sketches.

The concept of using Beethoven’s conversation books as a basis for a composition came from the “non bthvn projekt” of the Kölner Philharmonie’s KölnMusik. It co-commissioned *subito con forza* along with BBC Radio 3 and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra—which premiered the piece in September 2020.

“BREAKING THROUGH FORMS”

In 2020, Chin related to musicologist and writer Thea Derks that she was particularly drawn to Beethoven’s remark “Dur und Moll. Ich bin ein Gewinner,” which translates as “Major and minor. I’m a winner.” Beethoven, Chin says, is one of her favorite composers because “he was constantly looking for new directions. He was the first consciously modern composer, in the sense that every piece asked for original solutions, even if this meant breaking through existing forms...What particularly appeals to me are the enormous contrasts: from volcanic eruptions to extreme serenity.”

Chin’s composition is scored for an orchestra that is in part typical of Beethoven’s early symphonies and several of his concertos—winds and brass in pairs (with no trombones or tuba), timpani and strings—but augmented by piano and a large percussion array. It begins—as advertised—suddenly, with force, and the composer reports that it “contains some hidden references to Beethoven’s music.” Some of those references are more overt, such as a brass aside on the Fifth Symphony’s famous opening rhythm, and the harmonic language is distinctly modern.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Born in Seoul in 1961, Chin has lived in Berlin since 1988, and her music is described by her publisher Boosey & Hawkes as “modern in language, but lyrical and non-doctrinaire in communicative power.” She is routinely commissioned by leading musical organizations, and her works have been showcased at major festivals and concert series in Asia, Europe and North America by ensembles such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic and Tokyo Symphony. She has also composed an opera, *Alice in Wonderland*, along with works for chamber ensembles, solo piano, voices and electronics. Initially self-taught in music, she studied composition at Seoul National University as well as with György Ligeti at the Hochschule für Musik and Theater Hamburg.

Chin has been a composer in residence for numerous ensembles, most notably serving an 11-year tenure with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, where she founded and oversaw its contemporary music series. From 2011 to 2020 she served as artistic director of the “Music of Today” series of the Philharmonia Orchestra in London, and in 2022 she began a five-year appointment as artistic director of the Tongyeong International Festival in South Korea. Later this month she will accept the Ernst von Siemens Music Prize in a Munich ceremony, adding to her long list of honors that includes the prestigious Grawemeyer Award, conferred in 2004 for her Violin Concerto.

In addition to *subito con forza*, Chin’s recent large-scale works include the Violin Concerto No. 2—subtitled *Shards of Silence*—which was premiered by Leonidas Kavakos in 2021, as well as two orchestral scores given their first performances in 2023: *Alaraph* and *Operascope*. Last year the Berlin Philharmonic released an album of her music titled *The Unsuk Chin Edition*. Her second opera, *Die dunkle Seite des Mondes* (Dark Side of the Moon) is slated for a world premiere in May 2025 at the Staatsoper in Hamburg, Germany.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, 3 snare drums, 2 cymbals,

crotales, 2 pitched gongs, guiro, tambourine, large tamtam, triangle, whip, xylophone, marimba, vibraphone, chimes, piano and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER.



ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD

B: May 29, 1897
Brünn, Moravia
(now Brno, Czech Republic)
D: November 29, 1957
Los Angeles, California

Concerto in D major for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 35

PREMIERED: February 15, 1947

Erich Wolfgang Korngold was making formidable waves as he entered his teens. Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss, Giacomo Puccini and Bruno Walter were among those ready to salute him as a talent on the level of a young Mozart. The son of Julius Korngold, Vienna’s most influential music critic after the death of Eduard Hanslick, the boy played the piano well by the time he was 5 and was composing large-scale works at 10, performed by such greats as Artur Schnabel and the Austrian Imperial Ballet. These early opuses are imposing accomplishments, serious pieces still worth hearing and, some of them, more impressive than what Mozart, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer had to offer at that age.

THE LURE OF HOLLYWOOD

Korngold’s success continued into his 20s, and a 1932 poll by a Vienna newspaper determined that he was one of the two greatest living composers—but he did not turn out to be a second Mozart. Yet his music came to be heard by uncounted millions. In 1934 the producer and director Max Reinhardt invited him to Hollywood to score his film version of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. He was immediately asked to stay on and write the music for *Captain Blood*, the film that made Erroll Flynn a star. In 1938, when Austria was annexed by the Nazi regime, he moved his family, including his parents and brother, to Hollywood.

Korngold’s film scores won him two Oscars—for *Anthony Adverse* and *The Adventures of Robin Hood*—and earned additional Academy Award nominations for *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex* and *The Sea Hawk*. His last movie, from 1946, was that still-stirring drama *Deception*,

and the Cello Concerto that Paul Henreid plays in the film became a concert piece in its own right.

MUSIC FOR THE CONCERT HALL

After World War II, Korngold came back to composing for the concert hall—and the Violin Concerto marked his return. At the urging of the great Polish violinist Bronisław Huberman, Korngold composed the concerto in the summer of 1945, drawing on material from his film scores for *Anthony Adverse* and *Another Dawn* (both 1936), *The Prince and the Pauper* (1937) and *Juarez* (1939). The work, dedicated to Alma Mahler-Werfel, was first performed on February 15, 1947, by Jascha Heifetz with Vladimir Golschmann and the St. Louis Symphony.

MODERATO NOBILE. The solo violin is immediately present, and with a glorious, eloquent theme that rises through almost two octaves in just five notes, a melody Korngold rescued from his score for *Another Dawn*. After a transition of quicker music, a new theme arrives, no less lyric than the first, and beautifully supported in the orchestra. This one is taken from *Juarez*, one in the long series of Warner biopics starring Paul Muni.

ROMANCE. The second movement’s principal theme comes from *Anthony Adverse*, a movie with Frederic March and Olivia de Havilland. Korngold, along with Gale Sondergaard (best supporting actress) and Tony Gaudio (photographer) won Oscars for this one. In its demand for an elegantly poised cantabile and with its pages of suave noodling, this *Romance* gives a perfect picture of what Heifetz was all about.

FINALE: ALLEGRO ASSAI VIVACE. The finale is a playful rondo, whose second theme—the first one we hear when the music emerges from its gigue-like beginning—is the title music for *The Prince and the Pauper*. And no question about it, Korngold knows how to write a bring-the-house-down ending.

Instrumentation: solo violin with orchestra comprising 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 2 trumpets, trombone, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, deep bell in F, gong, xylophone, glockenspiel, vibraphone, celesta, harp and strings

PROGRAM NOTE EXCERPTED FROM THE LATE MICHAEL STEINBERG’S *THE CONCERTO: A LISTENER’S GUIDE* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1998), USED WITH PERMISSION.



**PETER ILYICH
TCHAIKOVSKY**

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

**Symphony No. 2 in
C minor, Opus 17,
*Little Russian***

PREMIERED: February 7, 1873

Relations between Tchaikovsky and “The Five,” that influential band of Russian nationalist composers, were always a little tender. Those five—Mussorgsky, Borodin, Cui, Balakirev and Rimsky-Korsakov—admired Tchaikovsky’s talents but were suspicious of his conservatory training and his use of Western forms. Tchaikovsky’s Second Symphony, in fact, occasioned one of their few moments of cordial contact.

Tchaikovsky composed this symphony between June and November 1872, and it was first performed in Moscow on February 7, 1873. The symphony seemed to have a popular success, but César Cui, a member of The Five, savaged it in a review. Always vulnerable to criticism, Tchaikovsky was stung by this review, and seven years later he came back to the symphony and revised it. He was now a better composer, and he knew it. To his patron Madame von Meck he wrote: “Today I set out to remodel my Second Symphony. It went so well that before lunch I had made a rough draft of nearly half of the first movement...How much seven years can mean when a man is striving for progress in his work!”

A SYMPHONY INFUSED WITH FOLKSONGS

The Second is Tchaikovsky’s shortest symphony, but what makes this music distinctive is his use of folk tunes for some of its themes. This was a technique favored by The Five, and Rimsky-Korsakov in particular was impressed when Tchaikovsky played this music for him on the piano. The authentic folk tunes that Tchaikovsky employed here come from Ukraine, which was known at the time as “Little Russia,” subsequently a state in the former Soviet Union and, ever since the USSR’s dissolution in 1991, an independent country. The nickname *Little Russian*, however, did not originate with the composer. It was coined by the music critic Nikolay Kashkin, and in Russia at the time that nickname would have been understood to mean simply “Ukrainian.” Sadly, we must view the music and the title in the context of Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine and horrific war that has followed.

ANDANTE SOSTENUTO–ALLEGRO VIVACE. The first movement opens with a long solo for horn based on the Ukrainian

folksong “Down by Mother Volga.” The music leaps ahead at the *Allegro vivo*, which itself sounds folksong-derived. Tchaikovsky may have had difficulty with the symphonic form, but this movement is beautifully-made: the development treats both the main theme of the exposition and the horn theme from the introduction.

ANDANTINO MARZIALE, QUASI MODERATO. The second movement was originally the wedding march from Tchaikovsky’s ill-fated opera *Undine*. Over the timpani’s steady tread, woodwinds sing the little march tune; a more lyric second idea follows.

SCHERZO: ALLEGRO MOLTO VIVACE. The third movement is a propulsive scherzo in ABA form. Metric units are quite short here: the outer sections are in 3/8, the trio in 2/8.

FINALE: MODERATO ASSAI. Tchaikovsky’s brassy opening theme of the finale bears a striking resemblance to the “Promenade” theme of Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition*, though the Tchaikovsky was written first—but it is in fact a derivation of the Ukrainian folk tune “The Crane.” This theme accelerates until it suddenly is transformed into the athletic main idea, and Tchaikovsky offers a lilting second idea in the violins. It is no surprise that this finale—with its imaginative ideas about structure, unusual harmonic progressions and use of folk tunes—should have delighted Rimsky-Korsakov. This movement was, in fact, Tchaikovsky’s own favorite.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, tamtam and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.

MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Elim Chan, conductor

Saturday, May 11, 2024, 6PM | Orchestra Hall

Unsuik Chin

subito con forza

CA. 6'

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Symphony No. 2 in C minor, Opus 17, *Little Russian*
Andante sostenuto – Allegro vivo
Andantino marziale, quasi moderato
Scherzo
Finale: Moderato assai

CA. 33'

A profile of Elim Chan appears on page 26. Program notes on the Chin and Tchaikovsky works begin on page 27.

POST-CONCERT

Following the concert, you're invited to remain in the auditorium and join musicians onstage for a reception.



The Gershwins' *Porgy and Bess*. The Metropolitan Opera. Photo: Ken Howard/Met Opera

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STAR WARS: THE LAST JEDI

FEATURE FILM WITH THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Sarah Hicks, conductor

Thursday, May 16, 2024, 7PM

Friday, May 17, 2024, 7PM

Saturday, May 18, 2024, 7PM

Orchestra Hall

STAR WARS FILM CONCERT SERIES *STAR WARS: THE LAST JEDI*

A LUCASFILM LTD. Production
A RIAN JOHNSON Film

Starring

MARK HAMILL CARRIE FISHER
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with FRANK OZ
and BENICIO DEL TORO

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Visual Effects and Animation by INDUSTRIAL LIGHT & MAGIC
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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 original productions with collaborators such as PaviElle French, Kevin Kling, Peter Rothstein, Robert Elhai and The Moving Company. She has been an artistic leader in concerts featuring artists from Minnesota's popular music scene—including shows with Nur-D, The New Standards, Cloud Cult and singer-writer-rapper Dessa—with whom Hicks and the Orchestra made a live-in-concert recording on Doontree Records. 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. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



JOHN WILLIAMS, COMPOSER

In a career spanning more than six decades, John Williams has become one of America's most accomplished and successful composers for film and the concert stage. He remains one of our nation's most distinguished and contributive musical voices. He has composed the music for more than 100 films, including all nine *Star Wars* films, the first three *Harry Potter* films, *Schindler's List*, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, *Jaws*, *Jurassic Park*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Lincoln*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Superman* and the *Indiana Jones* films. He served as music director of the Boston Pops Orchestra for 14 seasons and remains their Laureate Conductor. He has composed numerous works for the concert stage including two symphonies and more than a dozen concertos commissioned by some of America's most prominent orchestras. He has received five Academy Awards and 54 Oscar nominations, seven British Academy Awards, 25 Grammys, four Golden Globes and five Emmys. His other honors include the Kennedy Center Honors, the National Medal of Arts, an honorary KBE from Queen Elizabeth II, the Life Achievement Award from the American Film Institute, Spain's Princess of Asturias Award for the Arts and the Gold Medal from the UK's prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society.

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MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

David Afkham, conductor
Christian Tetzlaff, violin

Thursday, May 30, 2024, 11AM
Friday, May 31, 2024, 8PM
Saturday, June 1, 2024, 7PM

Orchestra Hall

Johannes Brahms Concerto in D major for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 77 CA. 36'
Allegro non troppo
Adagio
Allegro giocoso
Christian Tetzlaff, violin

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

Henri Dutilleux *Métaboles* CA. 17'
Incantatoire
Linéaire
Obsessionnel
Torpide
Flamboyant

Béla Bartók Suite from *The Miraculous Mandarin*, Opus 19 CA. 21'

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Performance by Duo Avila

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DAVID AFKHAM,
CONDUCTOR

Known for his impeccable technique and compelling artistry, David Afkham has received worldwide acclaim and is one of the most sought-after conductors of his generation. He is the chief conductor and artistic director of the Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España, a position he has held since 2019 after five seasons as the orchestra's principal conductor. Afkham's impressive career has been marked by a series of critically acclaimed performances and collaborations with some of the world's leading orchestras. He has appeared with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony, NHK Symphony, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and Philadelphia Orchestra, among many other major orchestras. He debuted with the Minnesota Orchestra in October 2021 in a program featuring piano soloist Emanuel Ax. His recent successes at the opera pit include performances of Richard Strauss' *Arabella* at the Semperoper Dresden and a new production of the work at the Teatro Real, Madrid. Highlights of his 2023-24 season include debuts with the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Detroit Symphony. Born in Germany, Afkham began piano and violin lessons at an early age. He studied at the Freiburg Music University and Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt. More: kdschmid.de, davidafkham.com.



CHRISTIAN TETZLAFF,
VIOLIN

An artist known for his musical integrity, technical assurance and compelling interpretations, Christian Tetzlaff has for many years been internationally recognized as one of the most sought-after violinists and exciting musicians on the classical music scene. He has performed and recorded a broad spectrum of repertoire ranging from Bach's unaccompanied sonatas and partitas to world premieres of contemporary works such as the Jorg Widmann Violin Concerto. A dedicated chamber musician, he founded the Tetzlaff Quartet in 1994 with violinist Elisabeth Kufferath, violist Hanna Weinmeister and his sister, cellist Tanja Tetzlaff. He appears regularly with the orchestras of Chicago, Cleveland, Boston, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Pittsburgh, among many others in the U.S., as well as the major European ensembles. He is also a guest at the world's most prominent summer music festivals. He has received numerous awards for his recordings including the "Diapason d'or" in 2018, the Midem Classical Award in 2017 and the "Preis Der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik" in 2015. Most recently, his recording of the Bartók Violin Concertos with the Helsinki Philharmonic was chosen as the Gramophone Concerto Recording of the Year. Also of special significance are his recordings of the unaccompanied Bach Sonatas and Partitas. More: cmartists.com, christian-tetzlaff.de.

ONE-MINUTE NOTES

Brahms: Violin Concerto

One of the most beloved works for violin and orchestra, this concerto is breathtaking in its musical scope. It is also fiendishly difficult to play—requiring great technical prowess—thanks in part to the soloist for whom Brahms intended it: his friend Joseph Joachim, whose influence shows especially in passages asking for tenths, an interval requiring nimble hands.

Dutilleux: *Métaboles*

Métaboles explores the concept of transition, with five continuous movements reflecting various aspects of change. This piece marked a turning point in Dutilleux's career, incorporating unique structural experiments and soloistic percussion.

Bartók: Suite from *The Miraculous Mandarin*

The Miraculous Mandarin was a failure at its 1926 premiere, as audiences, press, civic leaders and the Catholic Church called it shockingly immoral. Bartók insisted the story was a cautionary and allegorical tale of the conflict between good and evil, with an outcome of real beauty. The music, condensed into a suite, can be appreciated on its own terms: brilliant, hard-edged, rhythmic and powerful.



JOHANNES BRAHMS

B: May 7, 1833
Hamburg, Germany

D: April 3, 1897
Vienna, Austria

Concerto in D major for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 77

PREMIERED: January 1, 1879

Like his Haydn Variations, Brahms wrote his Violin Concerto during a summer spent in a lovely location: the resort town of Pörlschach on the Wörthersee, a lake surrounded by snow-capped mountains. It was 1878, and in a letter to a friend he noted how much he felt like writing music there: “So many melodies fly about that one must be careful not to tread on them.” The composer set out to write something for his friend and colleague of 25 years, the great violinist Joseph Joachim, who was both soloist and conductor at the work’s premiere in Leipzig on January 1, 1879.

LYRIC, SPACIOUS—AND CHALLENGING

Brahms’ Violin Concerto is extraordinarily difficult for the soloist, and in a famous jibe it has been called “a concerto against the violin rather than for it.” It requires a tremendous violinist, one with the ability to make huge leaps and land with dead-center accuracy, to project the violin’s sound over a large orchestra, and to have hands nimble enough to play the tenths that Brahms frequently calls for. Yet the work is not showy or flashy. Violin and orchestra are beautifully integrated, with the melodic line flowing seamlessly between them, and the soloist’s skills always at the service of the music, rather than the reverse.

ALLEGRO NON TROPPO. Brahms stays close to classical tradition in the first movement of the concerto, where a long orchestral exposition introduces the themes before the entrance of the violinist. The very beginning, with its arching and falling main subjects, is distinctive for the way the composer manages to disguise the meter: it is in 3/4, yet the stresses of the opening phrases obscure the downbeats. Solo oboe introduces the second theme, and the full string section stamps out the third. Only when these themes have been fully presented does the solo violin enter, with a dazzling two-octave run up the scale, followed by a series of blistering string-crossings.

This big, dramatic movement can make a huge sound, with all the thrust and fire a concerto should have. But Brahms’ performance instructions make clear that he believed the true character of this music to be *dolce*, *espressivo*, *tranquillo*, *lusingando* (coaxing, charming). Much of the writing for

violin is graceful and lyric, and in particular Brahms’ transformation of the second subject into a slow waltz is a moment of pure magic.

Perhaps as a nod to Joachim, Brahms did not write out a cadenza for the first movement; Joachim produced one that is splendid, and others since have been drawn to write their own. The return of the orchestra at the end of the cadenza is another magical moment: over quiet accompaniment, the violinist lays out once again the movement’s opening theme and then takes it very high on long sustained notes as the orchestra sings far below. Gradually the music descends from these Olympian heights, gathers momentum and strength, and hurtles to the resounding D-major chord that closes the movement.

ADAGIO. The entire opening statement of the second movement, in F major, is given to the wind choir, and the solo oboe announces the movement’s main idea. When the solo violin enters, it is with music that is already a variation of the oboe’s noble song. The center section, moving to F-sharp minor, grows much more impassioned, with the violin burning its way high above the orchestra before the return of the poised opening material and a graceful close.

ALLEGRO GIOCOLO, MA NON TROPPO VIVACE. The final movement is the expected rondo, which Brahms marks *Allegro giocoso* (fast and happy), but he also specifies *ma non troppo vivace* (not too fast). Brahms loved Hungarian music more exactly, Romani music), and many have remarked on the Hungarian flavor of this movement. It is difficult for the soloist, full of extended passages in octaves and great leaps across the range of the violin, yet with wonderfully lyric interludes along the way. A great cascade of runs from the violinist introduces the coda, where Brahms subtly recasts the 2/4 rondo tune so that it seems to be in 6/8. This gathers strength, and all appears set for the expected closing fireworks. But in the last measures Brahms springs one final surprise, winding the music down so that it seems almost to have lost its way before three great chords ring out to proclaim the true close.

Instrumentation: solo violin with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



HENRI DUTILLEUX

B: January 22, 1916
Angers, France

D: May 22, 2013
Paris, France

Métaboles

PREMIERED: January 14, 1965

In French, *métaboles* is a musical term indicating a transition from one pentatonic scale—a unit of five different pitches—to another. While Henri Dutilleux did not fixate on the idea of a pentatonic scale in his orchestral work *Métaboles*, the concept of transition is very much a foundational idea. His piece is in five different movements, but they are all to be played continuously without pausing in between, thus reinforcing the idea of transition.

The names of the movements themselves all have a link to this foundational idea. The first movement, *Incantatoire* (Incantatory), evokes chants reminiscent of pagan rituals accompanying changing seasons. The second movement, *Linéaire* (Linear), perhaps describes the directionality of transition. The third movement, *Obsessionnel* (Obsessive), can reference feelings that may arise throughout the transition process. The fourth movement, *Torpide* (Torpido), may indicate the speed of certain transitions. The finale, *Flamboyant*, might be attributed to the final product of a transition, a perfect example being a butterfly.

A TRANSITIONAL COMPOSITION

While the musical foundation of *Métaboles* is grounded upon transition, the work itself is also a transitional piece in Dutilleux's compositional history. It was composed in 1963 and 1964 on a commission from George Szell, then conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra, who led its premiere with that ensemble on January 14, 1965.

Until 1960, Dutilleux worked mostly with traditional forms. Always self-critical, he felt that his early works were too derivative of Debussy, Ravel and Roussel, and either denounced or destroyed most of his compositions completed before 1945, thus naming his 1948 piano sonata as his Opus 1. While his more mature, post-1945 works are solidly within Dutilleux's recognizable sonic vernacular, the completion of *Métaboles* marked one of his first ventures into experimenting with structure. Dutilleux expanded his musical language for *Métaboles*, and it also marks his first foray into significant soloistic composition for percussion.

According to the scholar Thomas May, Dutilleux turns to the evolutionary process of nature itself for *Métaboles*. In this way, Dutilleux's philosophical approach is in

opposition to the goal-oriented works of Romanticism or the representational compositions of Impressionism. In *Métaboles*, the music is the process to enjoy, much like how organic processes such as the changing states of water (solid, liquid, gas) or pollination are wonders to behold in their own right. In this respect, Dutilleux's profound contribution may have influenced similar works such as *Afatsim* by Chaya Czernowin from 1996, which is about galls or abnormal plant growths; or *Sketches Set #7* by Ed Bland from 1987, which has a structure derived from Bland's manipulation of the gestures he composed using an original tone row—a lineup of 12 different pitches. Where these contemporary works employ a contemporary musical vernacular, *Métaboles* is lush, atmospheric, at times warm and at times scintillating. I personally recommend paying particular attention to the fragrant, celestial cello solo in the second section.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Born in Angers, a small town in the northwestern area of France, just southwest of Paris, Dutilleux came from a family that included a painter, a mathematician and another composer—his grandfather, Julien Koszul. In his youth, he studied harmony, counterpoint and piano at the Douai Conservatory north of Paris, then began studies at the Paris Conservatory in 1933. Five years later, his cantata *L'Anneau du Roi* (The King's Ring) won him a Rome Prize; however, he could not finish his stay in Italy because of the first World War. Consequently, he returned to Paris in 1940 and was based there for the rest of his life.

While in Paris, Dutilleux was the head of music production for Radio France for 18 years, and subsequently taught at the École Normale de Musique de Paris until 1970, also serving as the school's president from 1968 to 1974. Dutilleux received notable commissions and performances from ensembles in the United States, and was the guest composer in residence at the Tanglewood Music Center in 1995 and 1998. He maintained a private studio on Îles Saint-Louis, one of two natural islands of the Seine River in Paris. After his death at 97 years old in 2013, he was buried in the same grave as his wife Geneviève Joy, who was a pianist and the dedicatee of Dutilleux's piano sonata.

Instrumentation: 4 flutes (2 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, Chinese cymbal, suspended cymbal, cowbell, tambourine, tamtam, triangle, xylophone, glockenspiel, harp, celesta and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ANTHONY R. GREEN.



BÉLA BARTÓK

B: March 25, 1881
Sânnicolau Mare, Romania

D: September 26, 1945
New York City

Suite from *The Miraculous Mandarin*

PREMIERED: November 27, 1926

No other work looms quite as large in Bartók's career as *The Miraculous Mandarin*, and none of his other works caused him so much trouble. From the time he encountered Melchior Lengyel's story in January 1917, Bartók worked on this music for almost 10 years—the most time he spent on a single work—before it was produced on the stage. Yet the premiere in Cologne was a catastrophe. The audience jeered, the press was savage, the Catholic Church protested and the mayor of Cologne ripped into him for programming “such a dirty piece” and blocked any further performances. Efforts to produce *The Miraculous Mandarin* in Budapest in 1931, ran into such opposition that they had to be canceled.

A DISTURBING TALE

The reasons for such furious opposition are obvious. *The Miraculous Mandarin* tells a story that prompts offense even today due to its violent and racist content. The composer himself left a concise summary: “Three apaches force a beautiful girl to lure men into their den so that they can rob them. The first is a poor youth, the second is not better off, but the third, however, is a wealthy Chinese [man]. He is a good catch, and the girl entertains him by dancing. The Mandarin's desire is aroused, he is inflamed with passion, but the girl shrinks from him in horror. The apaches attack him, rob him, smother him in a quilt, stab him with a sword—but their violence is of no avail. They cannot cope with the Mandarin, who continues to look at the girl with love and longing in his eyes. Finally...the girl satisfies the Mandarin's desire; only then does he collapse and die.”

The tale could hardly be more disturbing, so Bartók's reactions to it catch us by surprise. He called it “marvelously beautiful,” and on another occasion exclaimed “how beautiful the story is.” Bartók saw it as a moral tale. Beneath the lurid surface, it is an allegory of the collision of good and evil and of the ultimate triumph of good. The evil is clear: the three robbers—always portrayed by noisy, abrasive music—represent the worst of society: money-mad, corrupt, violent, destructive. They have corrupted the innocent girl to do their bidding. Into this setting comes the powerful Mandarin. He represents an unstoppable life force beyond the understanding of the robbers. Only the girl

comes to understand, and the passion she shares with the Mandarin has what Bartók viewed as redemptive—although many listeners then and now may find the encounter disturbingly coercive.

A BALLET—OR NOT?

The Miraculous Mandarin is usually classified as a ballet, but Bartók insisted that it was not. For Bartók, the emphasis was on action rather than dance, and his music depicts that action with raw power. Some have heard the influence of Igor Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* here, while others have heard the music of Arnold Schoenberg (which Bartók had discovered after World War I), but *The Miraculous Mandarin* actually sounds like Bartók in every measure—brilliant, hard-edged, rhythmic, powerful. It has been observed that a stage performance needs no choreographer, since every action—every gesture—is clear from the music.

Onstage, *The Miraculous Mandarin* lasts half an hour, but the suite consists of about the first two-thirds of the complete score. From its first instant, this music is unsettled. Second violins swirl up and down over a “wrong” interval (octave plus a half-step), and the din of the industrialized urban setting arrives in a blast of auto-horns.

Each of the girl's seductive decoys in the window, depicted by clarinets, nets a prospective client. First, a shabby rake (Bartók's original scenario reverse the sequence of the first two johns) enters to the sound of trombone glissandos and then is graphically thrown down the stairs by the robbers. The second decoy brings a reticent young man (solo oboe), and the girl dances shyly for him before he too is found to be penniless and is cast down the stairs.

But the third decoy brings the Mandarin, who makes a magnificent entrance. The orchestra “shivers” in terror as the lower brass stamp out a stereotype of an “Eastern-sounding” theme and the acid chords that mark his arrival in the room. A moment of stunned silence follows. Terrified, the girl begins to dance for him, and her waltz gradually becomes more animated. When the Mandarin tries to embrace her, she flees in terror, and he chases her around the room. This music, the most violent in *The Miraculous Mandarin*, is a furious fugue, and at the climax of the chase—just before the robbers leap out to seize the Mandarin—Bartók rips the suite to a sudden close on three brutal chords.

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

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.

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Sarah Hicks conducting the Minnesota Orchestra's Music & Healing performance, July 2023. Photo: Greg Helgeson.

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Saxophone soloist Steven Banks performing the Minnesota premiere of Billy Child's saxophone concerto *Diaspora*, February 2024. Photo: Greg Helgeson.

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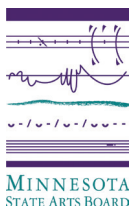
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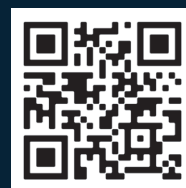
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