SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2024



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CONCERTS

- 23 Søndergård, Lim and Rachmaninoff **Ameriprise Financial Classical Season**
- 31 Søndergård, Josefowicz and Ravel **Ameriprise Financial Classical Season**
- 39 Star Wars: A New Hope in Concert U.S. Bank Movies and Music
- 43 Holst's The Planets **Ameriprise Financial Classical Season**
- 49 Shostakovich Symphony No. 12 Ameriprise Financial Classical Season
- 54 Artist Profiles



- 4 Minnesota Orchestral Association
- 6 Minnesota Orchestra
- Minnesota Orchestra Staff and Volunteers
- 12 Profile: Music Director Thomas Søndergård
- 14 Essay: Orchestra Hall at 50, by Michael Anthony
- 20 Orchestra News
- 59 Thank You, Donors!









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ABOUT THE COVER: Music Director Thomas Søndergård and the Minnesota Orchestra outside its home of Orchestra Hall. Photo: Travis Anderson Photo.

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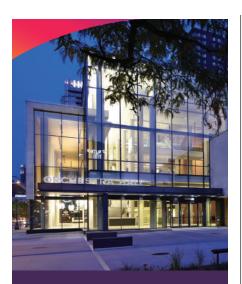
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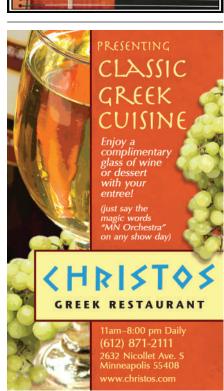
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PROFILE THOMAS SØNDERGÅRD

Danish conductor Thomas
Søndergård, who this fall begins
his second season as 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 repertoire, and a collaborative
approach with the musicians he leads.

Søndergård first conducted the Minnesota Orchestra in December 2021, establishing an immediate rapport with musicians and audiences; he was announced as the next music director in July 2022 and began his tenure in September 2023. Highlights of his 2024–25 season in Minnesota include season opening concerts with Yunchan Lim and Leila Josefowicz, performances of Mozart's Requiem and Puccini's *Turandot* and a January festival of music from Nordic countries.

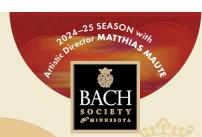
Since 2018 Søndergård has been music director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO). Prior to joining the RSNO, he served as principal conductor and musical advisor to the Norwegian Radio Orchestra and then as principal conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (BBC NOW). As a guest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



London Symphony and New York Philharmonic. This season, in addition a full slate of RSNO concerts, he leads Strauss' *Elektra* with the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Grieg's *Peer Gynt* with Den Norske Opera and Ballet, and appears as guest conductor with the City of Birmingham Symphony and Aarhus Symfoniorkesterlektra.

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 subsequently many times to the Royal Danish Opera. His discography 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 works with BBC NOW; and works by Prokofiev and Strauss with the RSNO.

For more information, visit minnesotaorchestra.org.



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ORCHESTRA HALL AT 50 BY MICHAEL ANTHONY

Could it be, as Orchestra Hall celebrates its first half-century, that we've become just a trifle blasé about the Hall's most striking qualities?

To answer that, we might start by turning back the clock. Forty or so of the nation's music and architecture critics attended the Hall's dedication concert the evening of October 21, 1974, and wrote reviews of the Hall's acoustics that bordered on the ecstatic.

"The sound is marvelous," wrote Andrew Porter in The New Yorker. "It can bear comparison with the best halls in the world—with, say, Vienna's Musikvereinsaal, Boston's Symphony Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw. This is a place where one can literally hear a pin drop."

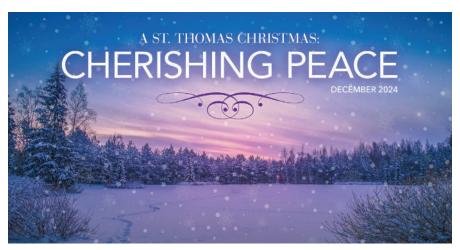
Harold Schonberg of The New York Times focused his attention on the Hall's most unusual visual motif, the huge white cubes, 128 of them, tilted in various directions, that protruded from the ceiling and the back wall of the stage. The cubes were conceived by Cyril Harris, the Hall's acoustical consultant who was at that time perhaps the most admired acoustician in the world. "The cubes work," wrote Schonberg. "Orchestra Hall has a brilliant acoustic ambience."

In planning the Hall's acoustics, Harris' chief principles were uncomplicated. The shape of the hall needed to be rectangular, what came to be known as the shoebox with three balconies. The materials should chiefly be wood and plaster—no concrete or vinvl—and a minimum of carpeting and plush upholstery on chairs. Winter coats, Harris hoped, would go into lockers along the ring corridor, helping absorb sounds from the lobby. Another key element was the now-famous cubes.

"What the cubes do is scatter the sound, which makes the distribution of sound as even as you can get it," Harris said. "It bounces the sound around in all directions so that it arrives at your ears at all angles. That's called perfect diffusion."

It's worth pondering at this late date: what was the effect of the city's "hi-fi hall," as it came to be known, especially in the first decade?

Continued on page 16

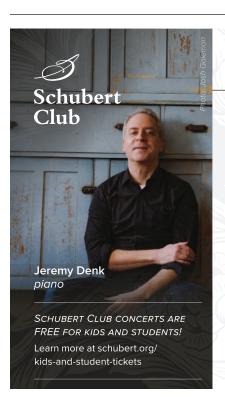


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The University of St. Thomas **Department of Music** will be performing choral and instrumental Christmas selections on **Sunday, December 8th** at **4 p.m.** and **7:30 p.m.** in Minneapolis' Orchestra Hall.

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Orchestra Hall's auditorium under construction.

For one thing, the Orchestra had to learn to play in this new sound world, one far removed from its prior home of Northrop Auditorium at the University of Minnesota. Brass players, which tended to over-blow, had to be toned down. Playing softly on any instrument became an ongoing challenge. (It wasn't really until Osmo Vänskä took over as music director in 2003 that pianissimos became a signature part of the Orchestra's expressive range.) It was as if a musician suddenly has a Stradivarius in hand, having played for years on a \$100 fiddle. Subtleties were now called for that would never have been heard at Northrop.

While the Orchestra was

learning to play in its sensitive new environment, audiences were learning not just to listen but to stop making so darn much noise. Coughing, wheezing, sneezing—those expressions of bronchial distress commonly heard north of the Iowa border—were barely noticed at Northrop. At Orchestra Hall they were artillery. They were hand grenades flung onstage and exploding, almost always, during the softest, most delicate moments of a symphony or a concerto.

And guess what? It got better. It took a couple of decades, but today's audience doesn't make that kind of noise. They've learned to stifle and suppress while listening to a Bruckner symphony. If they're desperate to cough, they do it between the movements of that Bruckner symphony and at intermission they could open up and let it roar. Was the improvement due to the cough drops that were at one time handed out in the lobby? Or was it something more mysterious? Will we ever know?

What else? Couldn't we say that Orchestra Hall was at least partially responsible for the substantial increase in the Orchestra's budget and in the size of the audience, as well as in the increased variety of programming

Continued on page 18

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ORCHESTRA HALL AT 50



Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, the Minnesota Orchestra's music director from 1960 to 1979, "conducting" the groundbreaking ceremony for Orchestra Hall.

and presentations?
Surely the wonderful
Sommerfest couldn't have
existed at Northrop. And
it's hard to imagine that
developments along
upper Nicollet Mall—
various restaurants,
shops and nightlife—
would have taken place
without the stimulus of
Orchestra Hall.

The renovation of the Hall, completed in 2014, added touches of comfort and elegance to the

facility. The lobby, always cramped, was doubled in size. Nowadays it's rare that anyone standing in the lobby spills a drink after getting bumped in the elbow, which seemed to be an inevitability in the old lobby.

Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, the Minnesota Orchestra's music director in the 1960s and '70s who prioritized the Hall's construction, spoke to me about it in 2014, in what was one of his last interviews. He died three years later at the age of 93.

"The Hall was supposed to be a temple of music, a temple of meditation, of spiritual experience....when you open the inner door, there suddenly is this wonderful, brilliant Hall. Everything changes—spirit and everything. This was the idea and I carried it with me....I still love it and I still feel it."

Orchestra Hall was Skrowaczewski's imperishable gift to the Orchestra and to the city that was his home for nearly 60 years.

Michael Anthony served as music critic of the Star Tribune from 1971 to 2007, writing about a wide range of music: rock and jazz to classical and opera. The author of the biography Osmo Vänskä: Orchestra Builder, published in 2009, he has written for numerous publications ranging from The New York Times to the Los Angeles Times to Opera News, and contributes often to MinnPost. He is also the author of a forthcoming history of Minnesota Opera to published by Wise Ink.

Read an extended version of this essay at minnesotaorchestra.org/stories.



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NEWS ————— MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

AUDIENCE SPOTLIGHT

The fall of 2024 marks a half-century since Orchestra Hall opened. Luella Goldberg, the Minnesota Orchestra's Board Chair from 1980 to 1983 and now a Life Director, shares a special memory from the dedication concert on October 21, 1974.

"It doesn't seem possible that 50 years have passed since I first sat with my husband, Dr. Stanley Goldberg, in the Balcony A seats that we've occupied for most classical concerts since the dedication concert. We remember vividly the excitement and success of that first concert! Fifty years later, we refer to those seats as 'our seats'!

"A few weeks earlier, I was very fortunate to be among a small group including Music Director Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Board Chair John Pillsbury, Jr., Board member Kenneth Dayton and Vice President Richard Cisek, who gathered in the Hall to hear the first notes played by the entire Orchestra in the new Hall. What a breathtaking and exciting moment! Stan and I were also fortunate to be invited to a concert ahead of the official Hall opening dedicated to all who worked on building the Hall. The workers saw and heard that the product of their work was enormously successful. How excited they were to share with their families the results of the work they had done to build the Hall. What glorious music from our superb Orchestra we have enjoyed and appreciated from 'our seats' since the Hall's opening night 50 years ago!"

NEWS ———— MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

PRE-CONCERT ACTIVITIES

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interviews with conductors, soloists
and Orchestra musicians, among
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On Friday, September 20 (7:15 p.m.) and Saturday, September 21 (6:15 p.m.), Samba Meu performs Brazilian music on the N. Bud Grossman Mezzanine.

On Thursday, September 26 (10:15 a.m.), Friday, September 27 (7:15 p.m.) and Saturday, September 28 (1:15 p.m.), the Peter Kogan Quintet performs jazz on the N. Bud Grossman Mezzanine.

On Thursday, October 10 (10:15 a.m., Auditorium) and Saturday, October 12 (7:15 p.m, Target Atrium), host Phillip Gainsley gives a concert preview, including musician interviews.

On Friday, October 18 (7:15 p.m.) and Saturday, October 19 (6:15 p.m.), Phillip Gainsley gives a concert preview, including musician interviews, in the Target Atrium.

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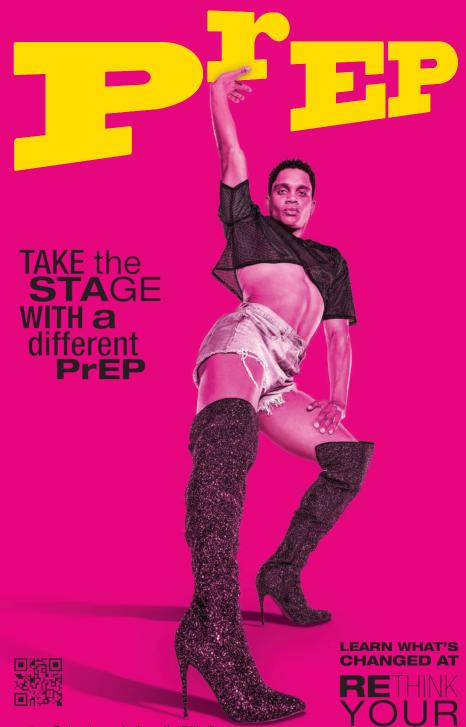
September 26Cello Duo Anthony
Ross & Beth Rapier

November 15 Unfinished Creature James Sewell Ballet and MPLS (imPulse)

February 2
Uptown Brass

March 8 A Grain of Sand Revisited, MN Chorale & A Thousand Tongues May 3 Okee Dokee Brothers

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HVUADVT230010 April 2023 Produced in USA.

CA. 36'

SØNDERGÅRD, LIM AND RACHMANINOFF

Thomas Søndergård, conductor **Yunchan Lim,** piano

FRI SEP 20 8PM | SAT SEP 21 7PM

With this concert we gratefully recognize Kathy and Al Lenzmeier for their generosity as lead sponsors of this program.

Hector Berlioz Roman Carnival Overture CA. 9'

Sergei Rachmaninoff Concerto No. 2 in C minor for

Piano and Orchestra, Opus 18

Moderato

Adaaio sostenuto Allegro scherzando

Yunchan Lim, piano

INTERMISSION CA. 20'

Andrea Tarrodi Liguria CA. 12'

The Pines of Rome Ottorino Respighi CA. 26'

> The Pines of the Villa Borghese Pines Near a Catacomb The Pines of the Janiculum The Pines of the Appian Way

Conductor and soloist profiles appear on pages 12 and 55. Turn to page 21 for information about pre-concert activities.

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PROGRAM NOTES



HECTOR BERLIOZ

B: December 11, 1803 La Côte-St. André, France

D: March 8, 1869 Paris, France Roman Carnival
Overture

PREMIERED: February 3, 1844

Hector Berlioz made a characteristic choice when he decided to write his first opera about Benvenuto Cellini, the 16th-century goldsmith, sculptor, adventurer and author of a self-conscious autobiography. Berlioz, who would later write his own splendidly self-conscious autobiography, was strongly drawn to the figure of Cellini, but the opera was a failure at its premiere in Paris in September 1838. It had only four performances, French audiences sneered at it as "Malvenuto Cellini," and Berlioz noted, with typical detachment, that after the overture "the rest was hissed with admirable energy and unanimity."

OUTSHINING THE OPERA

Berlioz was stung by the failure of the opera, but he continued to love its music. In 1843, five years after the failed premiere, he fashioned two of its themes into an overture that he planned to use as an introduction to the second tableau of the opera set in Rome's Piazza Colonna during carnival season. Those two themes are the aria "O Teresa, vous que j'aime plus que la vie," which Benvenuto sings to his young lover in the first tableau, and the *saltarello* from the second tableau, which the players from Cassandro's theater dance to attract crowds during the pre-Lenten festivities.

Berlioz may have intended that his new overture would serve as part of the opera, but when he led the overture as a concert piece in Paris on February 3, 1844, it was such a success that it had to be encored, and it has become one of his most popular works on its own, entirely divorced from the opera.

The Roman Carnival Overture, as this music was eventually named, opens with a great flourish that hints at the saltarello theme to be heard later—Berlioz marks this flourish Allegro assai and further specifies that it should be con fuoco, "with fire." The music quickly settles as the English horn sings Benvenuto's plaintive love song, and this is extended briefly before the music leaps ahead at the saltarello, originally a dance from the Mediterranean area in a lively 6/8 meter. The crispness of Berlioz's rhythmic energy is nicely underlined by his decision to keep the strings muted during the first part of the saltarello—an energetic dance characterized by leaps and skips.

Along its spirited way, Berlioz brings back the love-song theme and turns it into a fugato, and there is some deft combination of the main ideas. Finally, though, it is the dance that triumphs, and the ending explodes with all the sonic fireworks appropriate to a carnival in Rome.

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

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



- **B:** April 1, 1873 Semyonovo, district of Starorusky, Russia
- D: March 28, 1942 Beverly Hills, California

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF Concerto No. 2 in C minor for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 18 PREMIERED: November 9, 1901

 Sergei Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto may be one of the world's best-loved piano concertos, but it almost didn't get written, and the tale of its creation is remarkable. Rachmaninoff graduated from the Moscow Conservatory in 1892 and quickly embarked on a career as a touring pianist. But he wanted to compose. In 1895 the young composer took on the most challenging of orchestral compositions, a symphony. Its premiere, on March 27, 1897, was a catastrophe. Conductor Alexander Glazunov was unprepared, the orchestra played badly, and audience and critics alike hated the music. What should have been a moment of triumph for the young composer instead brought humiliation.

Rachmaninoff may have been a powerful performer, but he was a vulnerable personality, and the disaster of the premiere plunged him into a deep depression. His first act was to destroy the score to the symphony. It was never performed again during his lifetime, but after his death it was reassembled from the orchestral parts, and the painful irony is that this work is now admired as one of the finest works of his youth. However, in the aftermath of the fiasco of its premiere, Rachmaninoff lost confidence in himself and wrote no music for the next three years.

THE DOCTOR STEPS IN

Alarmed, the composer's family and friends arranged for him to see Dr. Nicholas Dahl, an internal medicine specialist who sometimes treated patients through

hypnosis. Dahl was also an amateur cellist, and Rachmaninoff's friends were hopeful that contact with such a man would improve the composer's spirits. During a lengthy series of visits, the composer heard a steady message of encouragement from the doctor: "You will begin to write your concerto....You will work with great facility....The concerto will be of excellent quality."

To the composer's astonishment, Dahl's treatment worked, and new music rushed out of the rejuvenated composer. Across the summer and fall of 1900, Rachmaninoff composed what would become the second and third movements of his Second Piano Concerto. (He had previously written a First Piano Concerto while a conservatory student.) These movements were performed successfully that December, and Rachmaninoff composed the opening movement the following spring. The first performance of the complete concerto, in Moscow on November 9, 1901, was a triumph. Rachmaninoff dedicated the concerto to Dr. Dahl.

THE MUSIC: VIRTUOSIC AND RICH WITH MELODIES

MODERATO. Throughout his life, Rachmaninoff loved the sound of Russian church bells. The concerto begins with the sound of those bells, as the solo piano alone echoes their tolling. Into that swirling sound, the orchestra stamps out the impassioned main theme; the solo piano has the yearning second subject. The orchestra reprises the main theme beneath the soloist's dancing chordal accompaniment, while the solo horn recalls the second subject in a haunting passage marked *dolce*.

ADAGIO SOSTENUTO. A soft chorale for muted strings introduces the second movement, but in a wonderful touch the solo flute sings the main theme as the pianist accompanies. The theme is repeated, first by clarinet and then strings, growing more elaborate, and only then is the piano allowed to take the lead. A brief but spectacular cadenza leads to a recall of the tolling bells from the very beginning and a quiet close.

ALLEGRO SCHERZANDO. The final movement begins quietly as well, but in a march-like manner full of suppressed rhythmic energy. Rachmaninoff makes effective contrast between the orchestra's opening—powerful but controlled with an almost military precision—and the piano's entrance, which explodes with an extraordinary wildness. The second theme, broadly sung by the violas, has become one of those Big Tunes for which Rachmaninoff was famous. This lovely music is an excellent reminder of Rachmaninoff's considerable melodic gift. The concerto rushes to its conclusion on a no-holds-barred coda that resounds in every measure with the young composer's recently restored health.

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

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



ANDREA TARRODI

B: October 9, 1981 Stockholm, Sweden

Liguria

PREMIERED: April 20, 2012

Minnesota Orchestra Music Director Thomas Søndergård decided to devote his career to conducting full-time while vacationing in Liguria, Italy—a picturesque locale perched above the sea and filled with colorful vistas. Like Søndergård, Swedish composer Andrea Tarrodi found musical inspiration in this coastal region that spurred the creation of her 2012 orchestral work *Liguria*, based on a trip she made to the area the prior year. *Liguria* was commissioned by the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, which premiered the work under conductor Daniel Harding in April 2012.

THE COMPOSER'S COMMENTS

Tarrodi offers these comments on her work: "On the northwest coast of Italy by the Ligurian Sea are five small fishing villages clinging to the steep cliffs. These are called Riomaggiore, Manarola, Corniglia, Vernazza and Monterosso, and between the villages are paths connecting them through the mountains. In August 2011, I visited this area and, as soon as we arrived, I knew that I wanted to write music about it.

"The result is a work that can be described as a 'walking tour' among the small villages: Riomaggiore with its high waves; Manarola with its clock tower; Monterosso, where sunbathers stressedly hurried to secure a place on the beach and open up their colorful umbrellas, as if in a scene in a Fellini film; Vernazza, with its watchtower and cliffs; and lastly, Corniglia, where the night sky was filled with stars."

FIVE MUSICAL IMAGES

Liguria, which spans 10 minutes, is divided into five discrete sections named in the score, each with distinct musical ideas. The work opens with *Waves*, its sounds ebbing and flowing from the orchestra, evoking the splendor of the sea. The next section, *Horizon*, prominently features a lonely call first sung out by the English horn. *The Blue Path* contains a mysterious two-note figure first played by the strings, while *Mountains* recalls the musical material of the opening. The concluding section, *Stars*, shimmers away into the night sky.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

A Stockholm native, Tarrodi has composed works that have been performed the world over, including such European venues as Royal Albert Hall, the Berlin Philharmonie and the Vienna Musikverein. Among her honors, in 2018 she was awarded a Swedish Grammy for an album of her string quartets.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, crotales, large suspended cymbal, guiro, large tamtam, xylophone, vibraphone, harp and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY MICHAEL DIVINO.



OTTORINO RESPIGHI

- **B:** July 9, 1879 Bologna, Italy
- D: April 18, 1936 Rome, Italy

The Pines of Rome PREMIERED:
December 14, 1924

Ottorino Respighi's trilogy of Roman multi-movement tone poems—*The Fountains of Rome* (1916), *The Pines of Rome* (1924) and *Roman Festivals* (1928)—got off to a rocky start. *The Fountains of Rome* fell flat with audiences at its 1917 premiere, but was revived on the strength of an incandescent Arturo Toscanini-led performance the following year—and the composer's international reputation was quickly established.

In contrast to *Fountains*, which depicts Rome's fountains in sparkling motion, there is a retrospective quality to *The Pines of Rome*, as Rome's pine trees become a symbol of the city's past. A program note for a 1926

performance by the Philadelphia Orchestra explained the music's approach to storytelling: "[I]n *The Pines of Rome* [the composer] uses nature as a point of departure, in order to recall memories and visions. The century-old trees which dominate so characteristically the Roman landscape become testimony for the principal events in Roman life."

In addition to a large orchestra of typical instruments, Respighi calls for *buccine*, an obsolete brass instrument used to suggest the horn calls of the ancient Roman legions (the part is usually undertaken by modern brass instruments) and, at the end of the third movement, a recording of a nightingale—one of the first uses of recorded sound in an orchestral composition.

THE MUSIC'S STORY

Respighi himself outlined the music's scenario in specific terms:

THE PINES OF THE VILLA BORGHESE. Children are at play in the pine groves of Villa Borghese: they dance round in circles, they play at soldier, marching and fighting, they are wrought up by their own cries like swallows at evening, they come and go in swarms.

THE PINES NEAR A CATACOMB. We see the shades of the pine trees fringing the entrance to a catacomb [an underground cemetery]. From the depth rises the sound off mournful psalm singing, floating through the air like a solemn hymn, and gradually and mysteriously dispersing.

THE PINES OF THE JANICULUM. A quiver runs through the air: the pine trees of the Janiculum stand distinctly outlined in the clear light of a full moon. A nightingale is singing.

THE PINES OF THE APPIAN WAY. Misty dawn on the Appian Way: solitary pine trees guarding the magic landscape; the muffled, ceaseless rhythm of unending footsteps. The poet has a fantastic vision of bygone glories: trumpets sound and, in the brilliance of the newly risen sun, a consular army bursts forth toward the Sacred Way, mounting in triumph to the Capitol.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, 6 buccine (2 trumpets, 2 flugelhorns, 2 trombones), timpani, glockenspiel, bass drum, cymbals, small cymbal, ratchet, tambourine, tamtam, triangle, glockenspiel, harp, piano, celeste, organ and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



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CA. 24'

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Thomas Søndergård, conductor Leila Josefowicz, violin

THU SEP 26 11AM | FRI SEP 27 8PM | SAT SEP 28 2PM

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

Maurice Ravel	Valses nobles et sentimentales	CA. 18'
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Thomas Adès The Exterminating Angel Symphony

Entrances March Berceuse Waltzes

INTERMISSION CA. 20'

Thomas Adès	Violin Concerto, Concentric Paths	CA. 20'

Rings Paths Rounds

Leila Josefowicz, violin

Maurice Ravel Selections from Miroirs CA. 14'

Une barque sur l'océan Alborada del gracioso

Conductor and soloist profiles appear on pages 12 and 55. Turn to page 21 for information about pre-concert activities.

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MAURICE RAVEL

- B: March 7, 1875 Ciboure, France
- D: December 28, 1937 Paris, France

Valses nobles et sentimentales PREMIERED: April 22, 1912

When Valse nobles et sentimentales was introduced in its original solo piano form on May 9, 1911, only the performer, Louis Aubert, knew who the composer was. The occasion—a concert sponsored by the Société Musicale Indépendante—featured works presented anonymously, several by leading composers of the day. When the audience was asked to guess the composers of the program's music by scribbling on slips of paper, a majority had no trouble identifying Ravel as the author of Valses nobles—though some suspected it was Erik Satie or Zoltán Kodály.

EVOKING THE PAST-WITH MODERN TWISTS

Valses nobles gave Ravel the opportunity to evoke the past, using the waltz as a vehicle. The dance form, famed for its distinctive three-beat pulse, originated in 18th-century Austria and Germany, then peaked in popularity in the early-to mid-1800s. Ravel's imagining, however, takes harmonic journeys that were considered ultra-modernist early in the 20th century.

Like numerous Ravel works—including the selections from *Miroirs* that conclude this week's program—*Valse nobles* exists in more than one version. A year after the solo piano premiere, Ravel transcribed *Valse nobles* for orchestra, and a version was prepared for a ballet performance in April 1912. The revised version performed today received its premiere on February 15, 1914, by the Orchestre de Paris.

AN ARRAY OF MOODS

Each waltz in *Valse nobles* projects a different mood, excepting the eighth and final number, which recalls fragments of its predecessors. A brief introduction marked by pungent harmonies spins the vigorous first waltz in motion and projects a noisy, exuberant gaiety. The second is slow and intensely expressive at the beginning: out of this flows a languid flute strain touched with nostalgia—the "sentimentale" of the title. As deceptively naïve as a child's piece, the third waltz steps lightly and is delicately scored; you will hear the glint of celesta and harps. The fourth, quite lively, delivers alluring syncopations, while the fifth,

After the lively sixth dance, once again swift, Ravel proceeds to the longest waltz of all, and it is here that the first audience momentarily might have been deceived into thinking that the unidentified composer was Richard Strauss. This was Ravel's own favorite. He beings with a luminous introduction, slow and spacious, only to sweep into the whirl of a Viennese waltz, once removed and preserving the infectious hesitation of the imperial dance. Its brilliance is briefly suspended for a trio section, after which the glittering ballroom imagery is reprised and driven to a climax. An *Epilogue*, the eighth number, concludes with a quiet reminiscence of the music that has come before.

almost slow and not very dance-like, is the most rarefied of all, with its melodies

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine, triangle, 2 harps, celesta, keyboard glockenspiel and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY MARY ANN FELDMAN.

focused in high wind registers.



THOMAS ADÈS

B: March 1, 1971 London, England The Exterminating Angel Symphony

PREMIERED: August 4, 2021

In the world of contemporary Western classical music, few composers marry the visceral and the cerebral so perfectly as Thomas Adès. His 2020 composition *The Exterminating Angel* Symphony is a distillation of his 2016 opera *The Exterminating Angel*—which in turn is an adaptation of the cult-classic 1962 film of the same name directed by Luis Buñuel.

THE OPERATIC SYMPHONY

Although a rarity in the repertoire, a symphony adapted from an opera (as opposed to an overture or suite) has become an attractive option to composers due to the financial obstacles of staging a full opera. Another notable example, which the Minnesota Orchestra presented last June, is the *Doctor Atomic* Symphony, authored by another 21st-century compositional giant, John Adams.

The Exterminating Angel, in both film and opera, is an absurdist dark comedy depicting the secretive boorish nature of the *bourgeoisie* as they arrive at a mansion for a dinner party that they find they cannot leave. The symphony is a signature Adès production, using a large battery of percussion as well as a full complement of winds and brass. Commissioned by a consortium of orchestras led by the City of Birmingham Symphony, the symphony was first performed by that ensemble on August 4, 2021, after its earlier planned premiere was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A TALE OF ENTRAPPED GUESTS

ENTRANCES. The first movement, *Entrances*, is excerpted from the opera's opening in which guests arrive for the dinner party. It features grotesque approximations of so-called "high-society" music, thumbing its nose at the *bourgeoisie* as they enter the mansion. The movement employs a signature Adès technique known as irrational meters, which function as sharp accelerations of tempo—jerking the listener around like a roller coaster, one that has its rider simultaneously smiling with glee and questioning the qualifications of the architect of such a fiendish device.

MARCHES. The second movement, *Marches*, ratchets up the tension with maniacal snare drum rudiments that seem like a haunting ode to Ravel's *Boléro*. The movement features a strong rhythmic and harmonic motive of a short, accented pickup beat preceding each menacing sonority in the orchestra, creating an auditory depiction of the party-goers searching for an exit from the mansion as they begin to realize their fate.

BERCEUSE. Adès' tense writing only relents when the third movement, *Berceuse*, begins with a lilting triple-meter lullaby sweeping through the orchestra—a fitting requiem for two doomed young lovers attending the dinner party.

WALTZES. The finale, *Waltzes*, is the only movement that doesn't directly quote a large swath of music from the opera. Instead, Adès describes its construction as "joining together the bits of a broken porcelain object," with layered waltz gestures picked from various parts of the opera, both jovial and menacing, splashing about the orchestra. The final moments of the work give way to sparkling, sparse orchestration, closing with a Benjamin Britten-esque flourish of piano, chipper violin melodies and glockenspiel, interspersed with surrealist string glissandos.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 3 clarinets (1 doubling E-flat clarinet and 1 doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani (doubling rototoms),

snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, antique cymbal, hi-hat cymbal, anvil, bass bell, castanets, cowbell, crotales, mark tree, tambourine, tamtam, triangle, whip, wood block, glockenspiel, vibraphone, harp, piano and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY NICHOLAS LANDRUM.

THOMAS ADÈS

Violin Concerto,

Concentric Paths

PREMIERED: September 5, 2005

Following the success of Thomas Adès' first opera, *Powder Her Face* (1995), and his Grawemeyer Award-winning work for a Mahlerian-sized orchestra, *Asyla* (1999), the young composer and conductor was jointly commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Berlin Festspiele to write a concerto for the violinist Anthony Marwood. *Concentric Paths* is a dramatic three-movement work that follows the familiar fast-slow-fast concerto form in a spirited 20-minute performance.

Concentric Paths has proven wildly popular for a contemporary violin concerto, having been performed with regularity since its premiere in September 2005 by Marwood and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe in Berlin, and helping cement Adès' place among the most often-heard living composers of concert music. It has been recorded by several leading violinists, including Augustin Hadelich, a frequent and popular guest of the Minnesota Orchestra. This week's soloist, Leila Josefowicz, has championed the concerto throughout her career.

THE MUSIC: DRAMATIC AND HERCULEAN

RINGS. The first movement, *Rings*, is a constantly swirling series of harmonics and violin arpeggios embellished by the orchestra in a signature Adès gesture, a descending chromatic sequence. The opening oscillation in the violin conjures memories of the Ligeti Violin Concerto, a favorite wellspring of modern composers. Adès describes the music as "fast, with sheets of unstable harmony in different orbits." The work highlights Adès' preoccupation with process and organization, with the length of each formal section of the music being derived from the Fibonacci sequence, an obsession found often in the composer's music. The violinist plays continuously throughout the first movement, a herculean effort and a rarity among even the most challenging of concertos in the repertoire.

PATHS. The second movement opens with compulsive Baroque-esque gestures traded between the soloist and the brass section in a modernist chaconne. The lyrical lines of the subsequent solo passage clash dramatically against the orchestra, eventually joining in harmony only to devolve into brooding grunts by the movement's close.

ROUNDS. Following the dramatic highs of the second movement, the finale, Rounds, opens with a ritualistic dance rhythm reminiscent of Igor Stravinsky or Heitor Villa-Lobos. The violinist again returns to the stratospheric highs of the earlier movements, accompanied by ascending sequences of pitches—only to be unceremoniously swallowed up by the orchestral gestures from the work's opening.

Instrumentation: solo violin with orchestra comprising 2 flutes (both doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 3 horns, 2 trumpets, trombone, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, metal block, bongos, metal can, 3 low drums, wood drum, cowbell, metal guiro, wood guiro, 3 tamtams, wood block and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY NICHOLAS LANDRUM.

MAURICE RAVEL

Une barque sur l'océan and Alborada del gracioso, from Miroirs

PREMIERED: February 3, 1907 (Une barque sur l'océan); May 17, 1919 (Alborada del gracioso)

This season, as the Minnesota Orchestra celebrates the 50th anniversary of Orchestra Hall's opening in October 1974, the ensemble is programming a number of works that were part of the historic 1974-75 season. One of that year's major initiatives was a project to record the entirety of Maurice Ravel's orchestral works, including all of the French composer's music featured on this week's program.

Like nearly all of Ravel's orchestral works, Une barque sur l'océan and Alborada del gracioso originated as music for solo piano. Two of the five images that comprise his suite of 1906, Miroirs, represent the composer's explorations into the impressionism of his compatriot Claude Debussy.

IMAGES IN MUSIC

UNE BARQUE SUR L'OCÉAN. To evoke the rocking of a small boat, as indicated in the title *Une barque sur l'océan*, Ravel created a fluid piece that rolls

upon seemingly continuous arpeggios. The lullaby of the water is a glistening barcarole in the tradition of the Venetian gondolieri. Its aim is clearly descriptive, and it was fittingly dedicated to Ravel's painter-friend Paul Sordes. The music easily lends itself to transcription into orchestral colors—not only for the obvious harp but for woodwind palette as well.

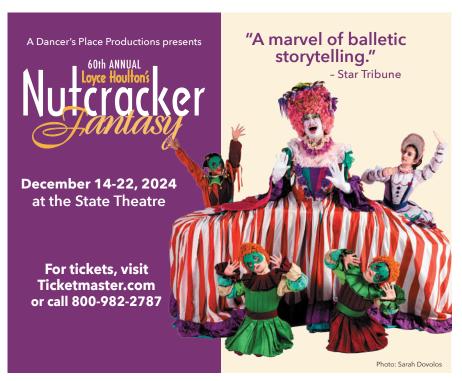
ALBORADA DEL GRACIOSO. Ravel inscribed the *Alborada del gracioso* to another friend, the critic and scholar Michael D. Calvocoressi. The *alba* or *alborada* of the title refers to a poem sung by the troubadours of Provence in the age of courtly love. *Gracioso* refers to the traditional jester of Spanish comedy, the fool engaged to entertain a noble household. Literally, then, this is a jester's serenade, but the elaborately orchestrated music is more resplendent than the humble title would suggest.

Ravel seems to have had both song and dance in mind: first, a guitar-like opening, with strings buzzing like a mass of Romani guitars to make way for a beguiling tune in the oboe. Contrasting with the dance is a melancholy middle section, the bassoon pouring out the song of the jester. When the opening mood is reinstated, the music grows even more brilliant, with many striking instrumental effects, not only in the bustling percussion but throughout the corps of the virtuosic orchestra. Glissandos assigned to trombones—scale patterns rapidly executed in a sliding motion—are among Ravel's signature techniques.

Combined instrumentation: 3 flutes (2 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, military drum, bass drum, cymbals, antique cymbals, castanets, tamtam, tambourine, triangle, xylophone, glockenspiel, 2 harps, celesta and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY MARY ANN FELDMAN.





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Sarah Hicks, conductor

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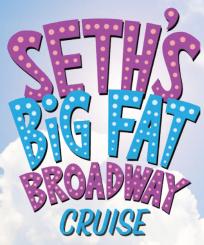
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HOLST'S THE PLANETS

Dima Slobodeniouk, conductor

Wu Wei, sheng

Members of the Minnesota Chorale, Kathy Saltzman Romey, artistic director

THU OCT 10 11AM | SAT OCT 12 8PM

Lotta Wennäkoski Flounce CA. 5'

Jukka Tiensuu Teoton CA. 32'

> Fever Adrift Game Bliss

> > Wu Wei, shena

INTERMISSION CA. 20'

Gustav Holst The Planets, Suite for Large Orchestra,

Opus 32

Mars, the Bringer of War Venus, the Bringer of Peace Mercury, the Winged Messenger Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age Uranus, the Magician Neptune, the Mystic

Minnesota Chorale

Conductor, soloist and choir profiles, as well as the choir roster, begin on page 56. Turn to page 21 for information about pre-concert activities.

THANK YOU

The Classical season is presented by Ameriprise Financial.

CA. 48'

PROGRAM NOTES



LOTTA WENNÄKOSKI

B: February 8, 1970 Helsinki, Finland Flounce
PREMIERED:
September 9, 2017

This week's concerts include the Minnesota Orchestra's first rendition of music by contemporary Finnish composer Lotta Wennäkoski: *Flounce*, a five-minute work premiered in September 2017 by the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the last night of London's prestigious BBC Proms. The instrumentation is notable for its large array of percussion instruments and an unusual call for the harpist to play their instrument with a "superball stick."

Based in Helsinki, Wennäkoski composes primarily in the mediums of orchestral, chamber and vocal music, and her pieces have been heard in Europe, the U.S. and beyond. Commissions have come from prominent ensembles such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Helsinki Philharmonic. Her recent works include concertos for harp and violin as well as her first opera, *Regine*, commissioned by the Savonlinna Opera Festival.

ENERGY, TIMBRE AND SPACE

Flounce is Wennäkoski's most often-performed orchestral work, having received more than 50 performances. The composer has provided these comments:

"Sometimes it is the title that starts to guide the musical ideas of a work in the making. This was more or less the case with the short orchestral piece *Flounce*, written in spring 2017. I was fascinated by the different meanings of the English word *flounce*—both the verb and the noun. The piece is thus largely characterized by brisk gestures 'non troppo serioso,' but it also has passages of lace-like ornamenting in a more lightweight and lyrical mood. The same kind of duality is present in the way I'm aiming to combine an often energetic pulse with (sometimes non-conventional) timbral ideas and a feeling of space in the orchestration."

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, bassoon, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, trombone, bass trombone, tuba, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, 2 cowbells, crotales guiro, medium rainstick, slide whistle, 2 tamtams, temple blocks, triangle, vibraslap, xylophone, vibraphone, harp and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER.



JUKKA TIENSUU

B: August 30, 1948 Helsinki, Finland

Teoton

PREMIERED: October 30, 2015

Like Lotta Wennäkoski, whose brief work *Flounce* opens today's program, Jukka Tiensuu hails from Helsinki, and his composition *Teoton* dates from about the same time as Wennäkoski's work—but there are few other similarities. *Teoton* is six times in length and calls for a soloist performing on the sheng, a Chinese reed instrument with a history that dates back over three millennia.

A profile of today's soloist, Wu Wei, offers this colorful description of the instrument: "[T]he sheng, a mouth organ, formed out of a bundle of bamboo reeds and cased in a metal bowl, is supposed to sound like the song of the singing phoenix from the legend: silvery and fleeting as the wind." Its modern iteration is capable of playing individual pitches and chords, with a wide range and bright tone befitting performances alone as well as in an ensemble role.

Tiensuu splits with many modern concert composers in explicitly rejecting the concept of program notes explaining his music, opposing the idea of giving "unnecessary prejudices for a piece that [the audience] is about to hear for the very first time....Important in a composition are not the thoughts of the composer but the thoughts the music incites in the listener and the small enlightenments they may lead the listener to."

A few guideposts are nonetheless useful for the listener. A concerto in all but name, *Teoton* is divided into four movements played without pause, each bearing a simple title: *Fever, Adrift, Game* and *Bliss*. The musicians are at times called to play notes sharp or flat by slight differences of one-quarter or one-sixth pitch—in contrast to the sound world of most Western music, in which the smallest unit is a half-step. Today's soloist, Wu Wei, delivered the world premiere on October 30, 2015, with Ilan Volkov leading the Seoul Philharmonic—one of five ensembles credited as commissioners.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Born in 1948, Tiensuu has been a prominent figure in Finnish new music since the 1970s, following studies at the Sibelius Academy and Juilliard School, among other institutions. In addition to his work as a composer, he is an accomplished conductor, harpsichordist and pianist. Among his recent works is *Ihmepari*,

a concerto for two violin-playing sopranos premiered by Anu Komsi, Minna Pensola and the Tapiola Sinfonietta in December 2022.

Instrumentation: solo sheng with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, trombone, bass trombone, vibraphone, chimes and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER.



GUSTAV HOLST

- **B:** September 21, 1874 Cheltenham, England
- D: May 25, 1934 London, England

The Planets, Suite for Large Orchestra, Opus 32

PREMIERED: September 29, 1918

— Many works of music have reflected on our solar system—but among Western classical music, the clear champion is Gustav Holst's *The Planets*. But even that is incomplete. Holst omitted Earth, and Pluto had not yet been discovered when he was writing in the mid-1910s, though in retrospect he may have taken the right course, as Pluto was downsized to a "dwarf planet" in 2006.

THE MOVEMENTS IN BRIEF

Holst claimed that the individual titles of his *Planets* "were suggested by the astrological significance of the planets; there is no program music...neither have they any connection with the deities of classical mythology." Whether intentional or not, the movements are ordered by the planets' nearest distance from Earth, rather than the sun.

MARS. Mars has come to represent the inhuman nature of mechanized warfare. The relentless pounding set up in the opening bars carries through the entire movement. For this music Holst chose an unusual time signature, 5/4, which creates its own opportunities for musical warfare, and various smaller patterns do battle with it.

VENUS. The antidote to the cruel, terrible oppression of *Mars* is *Venus*, in music of soothing melodic contours, predictable rhythmic patterns and pastel colors. Calmness and serenity pervade the music, which rises just once, briefly, to *forte*.

MERCURY. Motion resumes for the next planet, portrayed in music of scintillating brilliance, sparkling colors and rapidly pulsating shifts of light and shade. To

astrologers, Mercury is the thinker, but Holst's Mercury, despite his disclaimer about classical mythology, is clearly the winged messenger, darting about with feathery lightness.

JUPITER. Astrologer Noel Tyl tells us that Jupiter "symbolizes expansiveness, scope of enthusiasm, knowledge, honor and opportunity." Holst's *Jupiter* corresponds in all these respects, depicting the quintessence of the plump, jovial fellow who knows how to enjoy life and lives it to the fullest. As a hedonist indulges in many pleasures, so does Holst lavish upon this planet a wealth of musical ideas—five of them, in fact, every one heard initially in the horns.

SATURN. A greater contrast with jollity could scarcely be imagined than the grey, mournful sounds that greet our ears at the beginning of *Saturn*. Like the inexorable ticking of some cosmic clock, flutes and harps mark the unstoppable passage of time. A strange, cold air seems to hover over the opening, as a two-note motif swells and recedes in various instruments. A solemn dirge, heard initially in the trombones, underscores the despair and weariness of the grim scenario. Bells clang, clashing in angry syncopation with the booming clock. The frenzy reaches a climax, then subsides as the wisdom, serenity, resignation and acceptance of old age settle over the music.

URANUS. In astrology, Uranus rules inventors; hence it is entirely appropriate to imagine in Holst's music a kind of "sorcerer's apprentice" scenario, with a mad magician racing about his dungeon workshop and, at the climactic moment, exulting in some arcane discovery about the nature of the universe. The fournote motif brazenly announced by trumpets and trombones, then echoed by tubas at double speed and by timpani at quadruple speed, constitutes the molecular matter from which Holst constructs his musical formula. The climax is a truly fearsome sound from the orchestra.

NEPTUNE. Nearly tuneless, often without any kind of metrical pulse, and played *pianissimo* throughout, the music of *Neptune* takes on at times an ethereal beauty, at others terrifying mystery. The icy sounds of flutes, celesta, harps and, eventually, a wordless soprano and alto chorus add to the aura of remoteness and haunting visions of empty space. By the end, the listener has been transported not only to the limits of audibility but to the edge of infinity.

Instrumentation: 4 flutes (1 doubling piccolo, 1 doubling piccolo and bass flute), 3 oboes (1 doubling bass oboe), English horn, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 6 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, tenor tuba, timpani (2 players), snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, gong, tambourine, triangle, xylophone, glockenspiel, chimes celesta, organ, 2 harps, strings and chorus of sopranos and altos

PROGRAM NOTE BY ROBERT MARKOW.



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SHOSTAKOVICH SYMPHONY NO. 12

Robert Treviño, conductor Yulian

Yulianna Avdeeva, piano

FRI OCT 18 8PM | SAT OCT 19 7PM

Zhou Tian Gift

CA. 9'

Leonard Bernstein

Symphony No. 2, *The Age of Anxiety* (after W.H. Auden)

CA. 35'

Part I

The Prologue: Lento moderato The Seven Ages: Variations 1-7 The Seven Stages: Variations 8-14

Part II

The Dirge: Largo

The Masque: Extremely fast
The Epilogue: L'istesso tempo –
Adagio – Andante – Con moto

Yulianna Avdeeva, piano

INTERMISSION

CA. 20'

Dmitri Shostakovich

Symphony No. 12 in D minor, Opus 11,

CA. 39'

The Year 1917

Revolutionary Petrograd

The Rising/Razliv

Aurora

Dawn of the People/

The Sunrise of Humankind

Conductor and soloist profiles appear on pages 54 and 56. Turn to page 21 for information about pre-concert activities.

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ZHOU TIAN

B: December 22, 1981 Hangzhou, China

Gift

PREMIERED: September 27, 2019

Zhou Tian holds a special distinction in Minnesota Orchestra history: he was the first composer to have a work conducted by former Music Director Osmo Vänskä as part of the Orchestra's Composer Institute, *Palace of 9 Perfections* in May 2006, and one of the few Institute alumni to subsequently have a work commissioned and premiered by the ensemble—titled *First Sight*.

In 2018 Zhou received a Grammy nomination for his Concerto for Orchestra in the category of Best Contemporary Classical Composition. His music has been performed by prominent orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, London Philharmonic and Shanghai Symphony, which he has served as the artist in residence. Born in 1981 in Hangzhou, China, he moved to the U.S. at age 19 and studied composition at the Curtis Institute, Juilliard School and University of Southern California. He currently serves as professor of composition at Michigan State University.

A MUSICAL HOMECOMING

Zhou offers the following words on his orchestral composition *Gift*, which was premiered on September 27, 2019, by the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra.

"I consider *Gift* something of a homecoming. As I began a residency with the Shanghai Symphony, I wanted to create a reminder of the joy of music making, and along the way explore my own musical identity after 18 years of living abroad. The title, *Gift*, came from a poem titled 'Music as a Gift of Decency' by Shen Yue from the Northern and Southern dynasties (ca. 400). The piece is shaped around a folky four-note motif, which rises and falls against a large orchestral palette throughout its 10-minute duration. In a nutshell, this is my gift to fellow musicians."

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, xylophone, glockenspiel, harp, piano and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER.



LEONARD BERNSTEIN

B: August 25, 1918 Lawrence, Massachusetts

D: October 14, 1990 New York City Symphony No. 2, The Age of Anxiety (after W.H. Auden) PREMIERED: April 8, 1949

Leonard Bernstein, substituting on short notice for the indisposed Bruno Walter, made a sensational debut with the New York Philharmonic on November 13, 1944. The event sent his career skyrocketing. Four years later, at age 30, he began his Symphony No. 2, *The Age of Anxiety*, after a poem by W.H. Auden. Bernstein introduced the work in the role of piano soloist in a performance by the Boston Symphony Orchestra on April 8, 1949.

THE SYMPHONY'S SCENARIO

The work is divided into two large parts, each containing three sections played without pause. Following is an excerpted version of Bernstein's description of the symphony's scenario.

PROLOGUE. The *Prologue* finds four lonely characters, a girl and three men, in a Third Avenue bar, all of them insecure, and trying, through drink, to detach themselves from their conflicts, or, at best, to resolve them. They are drawn together by this common urge and begin a symposium on the state of man.

THE SEVEN AGES. The life of man is reviewed from the four personal points of view. This is a series of [seven] variations which differ from conventional variations in that they do not vary any one common theme.

THE SEVEN STAGES. The variation form continues for another set of seven, in which the characters go on an inner and highly symbolic journey according to a geographical plan leading back to a point of comfort and security.

THE DIRGE. The Dirge is sung by the four as they sit in a cab en route to the girl's apartment for a nightcap. They mourn the loss of the "colossal Dad," the great leader who can always give the right orders, find the right solution, shoulder the mass responsibility, and satisfy the universal need for a father-symbol.

THE MASQUE. The Masque finds the group in the girl's apartment, weary, guilty, determined to have a party, each one afraid of spoiling the others' fun by admitting that he should be home in bed....The party ends in anticlimax and the dispersal of the actors....Thus a kind of separation of the self from the guilt

of escapist living has been effected, and the protagonist is free again to examine what is left beneath the emptiness.

THE EPILOGUE. What is left, it turns out, is faith....Throughout the *Epilogue*, the piano-protagonist has taken no part, but has observed it, as one observes such development on a movie screen, or in another human personality. At the very end the pianist seizes upon it with one eager chord of confirmation, although the performer has not participated in the anxiety-experience leading to this fulfillment. The way is open; but, at the conclusion, is still stretching long in front of us.

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, tenor drum, bass drum, cymbals, drum set, tamtam, temple blocks, triangle, xylophone, glockenspiel, 2 harps, pianino, celesta and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY MARY ANN FELDMAN.



DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

- **B:** September 25, 1906 Saint Petersburg, Russia
- **D:** August 9, 1975 Moscow, Russia

Symphony No. 12 in D minor, Opus 11, *The Year 1917*

PREMIERED: October 1, 1961

In his 50s, Dmitri Shostakovich wrote two symphonies that have often troubled Western critics and audiences, particularly during nadirs in relations between Russia and the West. The Eleventh, subtitled *The Year 1905*, depicted the abortive revolt against the czar in St. Petersburg and looked ahead to its eventual triumph, while the Twelfth, *The Year 1917*, commemorated the Communist Revolution and Vladimir Lenin's victory.

The symphony's story extends decades before its composition. Immediately after the triumphant premiere of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony in 1937, which had rescued the composer from political disfavor, he announced his intention to compose a symphony about Lenin. But the Sixth, unveiled in 1939, had nothing to do with the Soviet leader.

THE "LENIN" IDEA RETURNS

The composer never lost interest in the "Lenin" symphony, and 20 years later, he stated that he was again at work. He predicted that it would "embody the mighty

image of the greatest man of our most complex epoch." The new symphony was greeted rapturously upon its October 1961 premiere and played widely in the USSR, but it met an icy reception at its Western premiere in Edinburgh in fall 1962. As in the Eleventh Symphony, the four movements of the Twelfth have titles with historic significance, but the Twelfth creates a general atmosphere rather than offering precise pictorialism.

REVOLUTIONARY PETROGRAD. The first movement opens with a *Moderato* introduction. In unison, cellos and basses stamp out *fortissimo* the bold and portentous theme, built on constantly shifting meters, that will form the symphony's backbone. The music builds to a strident climax, and the *Allegro* leaps ahead as three unison bassoons sound a scurrying main theme derived from the introduction. A second subject, again for cellos and basses and again derived from the very beginning, assumes a noble character. From these materials Shostakovich builds this long sonata-form first movement, which concludes in a climactic restatement of the principal theme by the brass.

THE RISING/RAZLIV. Quiet drums mark the transition to the second movement, titled *Razliv*—after the place near St. Petersburg where Lenin hid before the revolution. An ominous, surging figure for lower strings introduces this *Adagio*, which features prominent solos for horn and flute and which offers atmospheric quiet interludes. A distinctive trombone solo leads to the transition to the third movement.

AURORA. Aurora was the name of the cruiser that was taken over by its crew and which then shelled the czar's Winter Palace, igniting the revolution. Timpani and then pizzicato strings stamp out the movement's basic rhythm. This music, marked by impressive writing for percussion, drives directly into the finale.

DAWN OF THE PEOPLE/THE SUNRISE OF HUMANKIND. A mighty horn call, distantly derived from the symphony's introduction, launches the heroic final movement. Strings leap ahead at the *Allegretto*. Over its long span the music builds to a massive climax and finally pounds its way to a thunderous conclusion.

How the music should be received today, amid the intractable Russia-Ukraine war and international condemnation of the invading country—is a matter for individual interpretation.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, tamtam, triangle and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.

ARTIST PROFILES



YULIANNA AVDEEVA, PIANO

Yulianna Avdeeva, a Steinway Artist, is the first-prize winner of the 2010 International Chopin Piano Competition, which launched her to international fame. She performs a recital at Carnegie Hall on October 22—a follow-up to her sold-out recital debut there in 2023. Next spring, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the death of Shostakovich, she performs his 24 Preludes and Fugues at the Leipzig Gewandhaus. Her recent and upcoming orchestral highlights include performing Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1 on tour with the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century in Kyoto, Osaka, Tokyo and Fukuoka, and in her debut with the Chicago Symphony. Upcoming chamber music highlights include performances at the Salzburg Festival with members of the Vienna Philharmonic, Gidon Kremer and Kremerata Baltica, and a trio tour with Julia Fischer and Daniel Müller-Schott, including at London's Wigmore Hall. Her latest album, Voyage, features the late works of Chopin. More: sheldonartists.com, avdeevapiano.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 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 Dessa-with whom Hicks and the Orchestra made a live-in-concert recording on Doomtree Records, Later this season she leads film music concerts including Hocus Pocus, Back to the Future and Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



LEILA JOSEFOWICZ, VIOLIN

Leila Josefowicz's passionate advocacy of contemporary music for the violin is reflected in her diverse programs and enthusiasm for performing new works. A favorite of living composers, she has premiered many concertos, including Matthias Pintscher's Assonanza with the Cincinnati Symphony, John Adams' Scheherazade, 2 with the New York Philharmonic, Luca Francesconi's Duende—The Dark Notes with the Swedish Radio Symphony and Steven Mackey's Beautiful Passing with the BBC Philharmonic. Josefowicz's 2024-25 season includes engagements with the New York Philharmonic, London Symphony, Gulbenkian Orchestra, and the Houston, San Diego, KBS, City of Birmingham and BBC symphony orchestras. Recent highlights include appearances with the Berlin, London and Los Angeles philharmonics; Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich: Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra; NDR Elbphilharmonie; and the orchestras of Chicago, San Francisco, Cleveland and Philadelphia. More: leilaiosefowicz.com.



YUNCHAN LIM, PIANO

Since becoming the youngest person to ever win the gold medal at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition at the age of 18 in 2022, Yunchan Lim's ascent to international stardom has been meteoric. The video of his Rachmaninoff concerto performance went viral and has amassed over 15 million views. He has since made successful debuts with the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Lucerne Symphony, KBS Symphony, and Tokyo Symphony, among others; and recital debuts at the Wigmore Hall, Concertgebouw, Suntory Hall and Seoul Arts Center. In April 2024 he released his debut studio album of Chopin Études worldwide on Decca Classics. Born in Siheung, Korea, Lim began piano lessons at age 7. He entered the Music Academy of the Seoul Arts Center the next year, and quickly became immersed in musical studies. He is now studying at the New England Conservatory with Minsoo Sohn. More: imgartists.com, vunchanlimofficial.com.

ARTIST PROFILES



DIMA SLOBODENIOUK, CONDUCTOR

Dima Slobodeniouk, one of the most sought-after conductors of his generation, has earned praise for his exhilarating approach and energetic leadership. From 2013 to 2022 he served as music director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia. A frequent guest of the Minnesota Orchestra since his debut in 2019. he appeared at Orchestra Hall most recently in March 2023. Last season he debuted with the National Symphony and Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, and returned to the Boston Symphony, London Philharmonic, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra and Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, among other ensembles. From 2016 to 2021 he was principal conductor of Finland's Lahti Symphony, with which he recorded works by Kalevi Aho for an album that won the 2018 BBC Music Magazine Award. More recently he led an acclaimed recording of Esa-Pekka Salonen's Cello Concerto with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and soloist Nicolas Altstaedt. More: dima-slobodeniouk.com.



ROBERT TREVIÑO, CONDUCTOR

Robert Treviño has emerged as one of the most exciting conductors of today's younger generation. He serves as music director of the Basque National Orchestra and principal guest conductor of the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, In North America he has led the symphony orchestras of Cleveland, Baltimore, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Utah, Toronto and Detroit, as well as performances at Washington National Opera and the Interlochen Festival. He recently made his Zurich and La Fenice opera debuts, and has conducted other leading ensembles abroad including the London Symphony Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, São Paulo Symphony and NHK Symphony. His recording contract with Ondine has resulted in a complete Beethoven symphonies cycle, two Ravel albums, a Rautavaara album and Americascapes. A cycle of Bruch symphonies with the Bamberger Symphoniker and his 2023 recording Respighi—Roman Trilogy with Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI were released to excellent reviews. More: sheldonartists.com, robert-trevino.com.



WU WEI, SHENG

The artistry of internationally renowned sheng virtuoso Wu Wei reaches far beyond the traditional boundaries of his more than 3,000-year-old Chinese instrument and brings it well into the 21st century. His radiant and transparent tone as well as the infinite possibilities offered by his instrument have led him to collaborating with many artists; composers such as Unsuk Chin, Jukka Tiensuu and Donghoon Shin; and ensembles in traditional, chamber and orchestral settings, as well as with jazz big bands, electronic music, minimal and Baroque performances. He has been invited by orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic and Seoul Philharmonic. With violist Martin Stegner and bassist Janne Saksala, he founded the Wu Wei Trio. His upcoming projects include a residency in Beijing with the NCPA Orchestra and the premiere of Philippe Leroux's concerto for sheng, ensemble and electronics with Ensemble intercontemporain and IRCAM. More: wuwei-music.com.



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, and is 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.

MINNESOTA CHORALE KATHY SALZTMAN ROMEY,

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The Minnesota Chorale, principal chorus of the Minnesota Orchestra since 2004, last year marked the 50th anniversary of its first appearance with the Orchestra. Its other recent collaborations with the Orchestra include performances of Johannes Brahms' Schicksalslied and the U.S. premiere of Eleanor Alberga's Rise Up. O Sun!, as well as the world premiere of brea(d)th by Carlos Simon and Marc Bamuthi Joseph. Founded in 1972 and led since 1995 by artistic director Kathy Saltzman Romey, the Chorale is Minnesota's preeminent symphonic chorus and ranks among the foremost professional choruses in the U.S. More: mnchorale.org.

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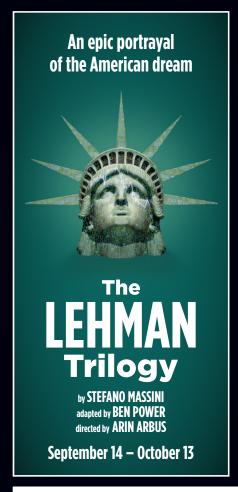
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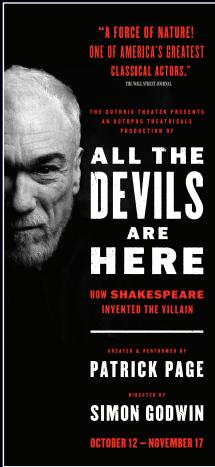
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