The McKnight Center for the Performing Arts Presents the

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

Friday, September 22, 2023, 6:00 p.m.

16,926th Concert of the New York Philharmonic

Jaap van Zweden, Conductor
Stefan Jackiw, Violin

New York Philharmonic

BARBER (1910-81)

Allegro
Andante
Presto in moto perpetuo

STEFAN JACKIW

COPLAND (1900-90)

Third Symphony (1942–46)
Molto moderato: with simple expression
Allegro molto
Andantino quasi allegretto
Molto deliberato (Fanfare); Allegro risoluto

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NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA, OP. 14
SAMUEL BARBER

Born: March 9, 1910, in West Chester, Pennsylvania
Died: January 23, 1981, in New York City
Work composed: summer 1939 through July 1940; revised November 1948
World premiere: February 7, 1941, in Philadelphia, by The Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, conductor, Albert Spalding, soloist; the revised version was introduced January 7, 1949, by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, conductor, Ruth Posselt, soloist
Estimated duration: ca. 24 minutes

When the Curtis Institute of Music opened its doors to students on October 1, 1924, Samuel Barber was second in line. It was a violinist who managed to pass through the portal before him: Max Aronoff, a future member of the Curtis String Quartet, the ensemble for which Barber would compose (a dozen years later) his String Quartet with its famous slow movement, often heard in its string orchestra setting as his Adagio for Strings. Barber’s musical gifts had been apparent from an early age, and he was fortunate to have been born into a family that was attuned to recognize them. Although his parents were not professional musicians, his aunt, the contralto Louise Homer, was a mainstay at The Metropolitan Opera, and her husband, Sidney Homer, was well known as a composer of light Lieder of the parlor-song sort.

At Curtis Barber studied piano (with Isabelle Vengerova), composition (with Rosario Scalero), and voice (with the baritone Emilio de Gogorza, who was a colleague of Barber’s aunt at The Met). While still a student there he produced several works that have entered the repertoire, including Dover Beach for baritone and string quartet (which he sang in its first commercial recording) and the orchestral Overture to The School for Scandal and Music for a Scene from Shelley. Thanks to a Rome Prize, he spent 1935–37 at the American Academy in that city completing, among other pieces, his Symphony in One Movement; it quickly received high-profile performances in Rome, Cleveland, and New York, as well as in the opening concert of the 1937 Salzburg Festival. The following year his reputation was cemented when Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony broadcast his Essay No. 1 and the Adagio for Strings; the latter would become one of the most recognized compositions of the century. Barber was famous, and he was not yet 30 years old.

In 1939 he returned to Curtis, this time as composition professor, and he maintained that position until 1942, when he traded his affiliation there for one with the US Army Air Forces. During this period Barber composed his Violin Concerto, which also grew out of a Curtis connection. Samuel Fels, of Fels Naptha soap fame, served on the school’s board of directors, and in early 1939 he offered Barber a $1,000 commission to write a violin concerto for Iso Briselli, a Curtis violin student he was interested in assisting. Barber accepted.

The composer described the piece in a note for the work’s world premiere: “The first movement … begins with a lyrical first subject announced at once by the solo violin, without any orchestral introduction. This movement as a whole has perhaps more the character of a sonata than concerto form. The second movement … is introduced by an extended oboe solo. The violin enters with a contrasting and rhapsodic theme, after which it repeats the oboe melody of the beginning. The last movement, a perpetual motion, exploits the more brilliant and virtuoso characteristics of the violin.”

The finale was in part problematic because the violinist for whom the concerto was commissioned (and his violin coach) expressed displeasure with it. After provisional readthroughs, including by the respected violinist Oscar Shumsky, Barber showed his concerto to the eminent Albert Spalding, who was reputedly on the lookout for an American piece to add to his concerto repertoire. Spalding signed on instantly, and it was he who introduced the work, with Eugene Ormandy conducting The Philadelphia Orchestra, following its extended gestation.

Instrumentation: two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, snare drum, piano, and strings, in addition to the solo violin.

—James M. Keller, former New York Philharmonic Program Annotator; San Francisco Symphony program annotator; and author of Chamber Music: A Listener’s Guide (Oxford University Press)

THIRD SYMPHONY
AARON COPLAND

Born: November 14, 1900, in Brooklyn, New York
Died: December 2, 1990, in Peekskill, New York
Work composed: the roots of the Third Symphony reach as far back as 1942, when Copland wrote his Fanfare for the Common Man, which would be incorporated into the symphony’s finale. Work on the symphony per se began (on commission from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation) in the summer of 1944, and the piece was completed on September 29, 1946; dedicated “To the memory of my dear friend Natalie Koussevitzky,” the wife of the conductor Serge Koussevitzky.
World premiere: October 18, 1946, at Boston’s Symphony Hall, by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, conductor

Estimated duration: ca. 43 minutes

Aaron Copland had already produced two symphonies, in 1924 / 28 and 1934, when in March 1944 the conductor Serge Koussevitzky extended a commission for another major orchestral work, which he hoped to introduce at the outset of the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s 1946 season. In Copland: Since 1943, the second volume of the impressive oral history prepared by Vivian Perlis with the composer, Copland discussed the genesis and early history of this work. “While in Bernardsville [New Jersey] in the summer of 1945,” he said,

I felt my Third Symphony finally taking shape. I had been working on various sections whenever I could find time during the past few years. My colleagues had been urging me to compose a major orchestral work. ... Elliott Carter, David Diamond, and Arthur Berger reminded me about it whenever they had the opportunity. ... They had no way of knowing that I had been working on such a composition for some time. I did not want to announce my intentions until it was clear in my own mind what the piece would become (at one time it looked more like a piano concerto than a symphony). The commission from Koussevitzky stimulated me to focus my ideas and arrange the material I had collected into some semblance of order.

(Copland employed the locution Third Symphony as a specific title for this work, preferring it to the more generic implication of “Symphony No. 3.”)

Copland enjoyed a bit of a head start in that he had decided that the finale would incorporate the Fanfare for the Common Man, which he had written three years before. Here, however, it serves as little more than an introduction to the rest of the movement, although its general contours do seem to pervade a fair amount of the symphony’s material. Copland made progress at the MacDowell Colony but did not complete his work before again being distracted by his teaching obligations at Tanglewood. He said:

After Tanglewood, I stayed on in the Berkshires to work on the orchestration. It was a mad dash! The finishing touches were put on the score just before rehearsals were to start for the premiere, 18 October 1946. It was two years since I had started working on the piece in Mexico.

Copland described the work’s form, saying that it

was composed in the general form of an arch, in which the central portion, that is the second-movement scherzo, is the most animated, and the final movement is an extended coda, presenting a broadened version of the opening material. Both the first and third themes in the first movement are referred to again in later movements. The second movement stays close to the normal symphonic procedure of a usual scherzo, while the third is freest of all in formal structure, built up sectionally with its various sections intended to emerge one from the other in continuous flow, somewhat in the manner of a closely knit series of variations. Some of the writing in the third movement is for very high strings and piccolo, with no brass except single horn and trumpet. It leads directly into the final and longest of the movements: the fourth is closest to a customary sonata-allegro form, although the recapitulation is replaced by an extended coda, presenting many ideas from the work, including the opening theme.

One aspect of the Third Symphony ought to be pointed out: it contains no folk or popular material. Any reference to either folk material or jazz in this work was purely unconscious. However, I do borrow from myself by using Fanfare for the Common Man in an expanded and reshaped form in the final movement. I used this opportunity to carry the Fanfare material further and to satisfy my desire to give the Third Symphony an affirmative tone. After all, it was a wartime piece — or more accurately, an end-of-war piece — intended to reflect the euphoric spirit of the country at the time.

Copland’s Third Symphony was warmly received at its premiere, and it was awarded the New York Music Critics Circle Prize as the best orchestral work by an American composer played during the 1946–47 season. Koussevitzky, George Szell, and Leonard Bernstein all championed the work early on, although Copland’s feathers were considerably ruffled when Bernstein decided to cut eight measures from the finale without discussing the matter with the composer first. Copland eventually came around to Bernstein’s point of view on the cut and declared that “his conducting of the Third Symphony is closest to what I had in mind when composing the piece.”

Instrumentation: three flutes (one doubling piccolo) and piccolo, three oboes (one doubling English horn), two clarinets with E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, four trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, tenor drum, bass drum, chime, snare drum, tam-tam, cymbals, suspended cymbal, xylophone, orchestra bells, wood block, triangle, slapstick, ratchet, anvil, claves, two harps, celesta, piano, and strings.

— J.M.K. This note is derived from an essay originally published in the program books of the San Francisco Symphony and is used with permission.
NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
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Jaap van Zweden became Music Director of the New York Philharmonic in 2018. In 2023–24, his farewell season celebrates his connection with the Orchestra’s musicians as he leads performances in which six Principal players appear as concerto soloists. He also revisits composers whom he has championed at the Philharmonic, ranging from Steve Reich and Joel Thompson to Mozart and Mahler. By the conclusion of his Philharmonic tenure he will have led the Orchestra in World, US, and New York Premieres of 31 works. He is also Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic, since 2012, and becomes Music Director of the Seoul Philharmonic in 2024. He has appeared as guest with the Orchestre de Paris; Amsterdam’s Royal Concertgebouw and Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestras; Vienna, Berlin, and Los Angeles philharmonic orchestras; and London Symphony, Chicago Symphony, and Cleveland orchestras.

Jaap van Zweden’s NY Phil recordings include David Lang’s *prisoner of the state* and Julia Wolfe’s Grammy-nominated *Fire in my mouth* (Decca Gold). He conducted the Hong Kong Philharmonic in first-ever performances in Hong Kong of Wagner’s Ring Cycle, the Naxos recording of which led the Hong Kong Philharmonic to be named the 2019 Gramophone Orchestra of the year. His performance of Wagner’s *Parsifal* received the Edison Award for Best Opera Recording in 2012.

Born in Amsterdam, Jaap van Zweden became the youngest-ever concertmaster of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra at age 19 and began his conducting career almost 20 years later. He was named Musical America’s 2012 Conductor of the Year, was profiled by CBS 60 Minutes on arriving at the NY Phil, and in the spring of 2023 received the prestigious Concertgebouw Prize. In 1997 he and his wife, Aaltje, established the Papageno Foundation to support families of children with autism.
Violinist Stefan Jackiw has appeared as soloist with many of the leading orchestras in the country. He has performed in numerous major music festivals and concert halls, including the Aspen, Ravinia, Caramoor, Schleswig-Holstein, and Mostly Mozart festivals, and the Philharmonie de Paris and Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw. His 2023–24 activities include this appearance with the New York Philharmonic, performing Barber’s Violin Concerto; a quadruple world premiere of new works at Roulette; and his return to Asia with the Taiwan Philharmonic and the China National Symphony. In the spring, the Junction Trio — comprising Jackiw, pianist Conrad Tao, and cellist Jay Campbell — makes its Carnegie Hall debut with the New York premiere of John Zorn’s Philosophical Investigations.

In 2022–23 Jackiw performed with The Cleveland Orchestra and Vancouver Symphony; appeared at 92NY with Alisa Weilerstein and Daniil Trifonov; and embarked on a multi-city tour with the Junction Trio. Other recent highlights include his performance of Mozart’s Violin Concerto No. 5 with Alan Gilbert and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, his return to Carnegie Hall to perform Bach with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, and performances with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra and the Orchestre National de Lyon. Jackiw recently performed a new violin concerto written for him by Conrad Tao and premiered by the Atlanta and Baltimore Symphony Orchestras.

Stefan Jackiw began playing the violin at age four. His teachers have included Zinaida Gilels, Michèle Auclair, and Donald Weilerstein. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Harvard University and an artist diploma from the New England Conservatory, and is the recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant. Jackiw plays a violin made in 1705 by Vincenzo Ruggieri. He lives in New York City.
The New York Philharmonic connects with millions of music lovers each season through live concerts, broadcasts, streaming, education programs, and more. In 2023–24 — which builds on the Orchestra’s transformation reflected in the new David Geffen Hall — the Orchestra honors Jaap van Zweden in his farewell season as Music Director, premieres 14 works by a wide range of composers, marks György Ligeti’s centennial, and celebrates the one-hundredth birthday of the beloved Young People’s Concerts.

The Philharmonic has commissioned and / or premiered important works, from Dvořák’s *New World* Symphony to Tania León’s Pulitzer Prize–winning *Stride*, and offers concert streaming through a new partnership with Apple Music Classical. The Orchestra builds on a longstanding commitment to serving its communities — which has led to annual free concerts across New York City and the free online New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives — through a new ticket access program.

Founded in 1842, the New York Philharmonic is the oldest symphony orchestra in the United States, and one of the oldest in the world. Jaap van Zweden became Music Director in 2018–19; Gustavo Dudamel will become Music and Artistic Director in 2026 after serving as Music Director Designate in 2025–26.