Thursday, November 30, 2023, 7:30 p.m.
16,960th Concert

Friday, December 1, 2023, 2:00 p.m.
16,961st Concert

Saturday, December 2, 2023, 8:00 p.m.
16,962nd Concert

Semyon Bychkov, Conductor
Katia and Marielle Labèque, Pianos

Wu Tsai Theater
David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center
Home of the New York Philharmonic

Major support for these concerts is provided by Sharon and Larry Hite.

Generous support for Katia and Marielle Labèque’s appearances is provided by The Donna and Marvin Schwartz Virtuoso Piano Performance Series.

This program will last approximately one and three-quarters hours, which includes one intermission.
Semyon Bychkov, Conductor
Katia and Marielle Labèque, Pianos

R. STRAUSS
(1864–1949)

Don Juan, Tone Poem after Nikolaus Lenau, Op. 20 (1888)

Bryce DESSNER
(b. 1976)

Concerto for Two Pianos (2017; New York Premiere)
First Movement
Second Movement
Third Movement
(played without pause)

KATIA AND MARIELLE LABÈQUE

Intermission

RACHMANINOFF
(1873–1943)

Symphonic Dances, Op. 45 (1940)
Non allegro
Andante con moto (Tempo di valse)
Lento assai — Allegro vivace —
Lento assai. Come prima —
Allegro vivace

Semyon Bychkov’s appearances are made possible through the Charles A. Dana Distinguished Conductors Endowment Fund.
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Notes on the Program

Don Juan, Tone Poem after Nikolaus Lenau, Op. 20

Richard Strauss

One of the most enduring contributions of the “Music of the Future” camp — the Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner circle that wielded immense influence in mid-19th-century music — was the orchestral genre known as the symphonic poem or tone poem. The idea of the symphonic poem traces its ancestry to dramatic or depictive overtures of the early 1800s, but it was left for Franz Liszt to mold it into a clearly defined genre. This he did through a dozen single-movement orchestral pieces composed in the 1840s and ’50s that drew inspiration from, or were in some way linked to, literary sources. The idea proved popular in Germany and elsewhere, and the repertoire quickly expanded thanks to impressive contributions by such composers as Smetana, Dvořák, Musorgsky, Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saëns, and Franck.

Many lesser-known figures drawn to the Music of the Future also jumped on the symphonic poem bandwagon. One of them was Alexander Ritter, an Estonian-born violinist and composer who fell in with the Liszt and Wagner crowd and eventually became associate concert-master of the Meiningen Court Orchestra. There he grew friendly with the young Richard Strauss, who had been brought in as an assistant music director in 1885. Strauss would later say that it was Ritter who revealed to him the greatness of the music of Wagner, Liszt, and Berlioz and, by extension, opened his eyes to the possibilities of the symphonic poem. In 1886 Strauss produced what might be considered his first symphonic poem, Aus Italien, and he continued with hardly a break through the series of tone poems that many feel represent the genre at its height: Macbeth (1886–88), Don Juan (1888), Tod und Verklärung (Death and Transfiguration, 1888–89), Till Eulenspiegel’s lustige Streiche (Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks, 1894–95), Also sprach Zarathustra (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 1895–96), Don Quixote (1896–97), Ein Heldenleben (A Hero’s Life, 1897–98), and Symphonia domestica (1902–03). He was drawn to the concept (as he would recall in his memoirs) that new ideas must search for new forms; this basic principle of Liszt’s symphonic works, in which the poetic idea was really the formative element, became henceforward the guiding principle for my own symphonic work.

In Short

Born: June 11, 1864, in Munich, Bavaria
Died: September 8, 1949, in Garmisch, Germany
Work composed: May–September 30, 1888
World premiere: November 11, 1888, in Weimar, with the composer conducting the Grand Ducal Court Orchestra
New York Philharmonic premiere: December 15, 1905, Max Fiedler, conductor
Estimated duration: ca. 18 minutes
Sources and Inspirations

Don Juan — the fictional character we love to hate — has inspired artists and captivated audiences for centuries in depictions, ranging from cruel seducer to hero, that reflect the social mores of the time. Strauss’s orchestral Don Juan — based on poet Nikolaus Lenau’s depiction of Don Juan as the Romantic dreamer — and Mozart’s unrepentant womanizer in the opera Don Giovanni are among the most prominent. Other notable depictions include Molière’s play Don Juan ou le Festin de pierre (1665), the final installment in his hypocrisy trilogy; Christoph Willibald Gluck’s ballet Don Juan (1761); and Lord Byron’s satirical epic poem Don Juan (1818–24). The character has remained popular in the era of film, in The Private Life of Don Juan (1934), an updated satirical interpretation starring Douglas Fairbanks; the swashbuckling Adventures of Don Juan (1948) with Errol Flynn; and, more recently, Don Jon (2013), with Joseph Gordon-Levitt as a 21st-century Don obsessed with “my body, my pad, my ride, my family, my church, my boys, my girls, my porn.”

— The Editors

Counterclockwise from top: Francisco d’Andrade as Don Giovanni, by Max Slevogt, 1912; Errol Flynn in Adventures of Don Juan, 1948; the movie poster for Don Jon, 2013; Don Juan and the Commander, by Charles Ricketts, ca. 1905
Don Juan is the first of Strauss’s compositions to reveal his distinct personality as a composer. The extramusical impetus for this work was the famous womanizer of legend, whose libertine exploits were apparently born in popular literature of the 16th century and then embroidered through generations of poets, playwrights, and novelists. Strauss based his symphonic poem on a version of the tale that the Austro-Hungarian poet Niko- laus Lenau had produced in 1844. Lenau’s Don Juan is a Romantic dreamer, and his compulsion to seduce and desert an endless succession of women derives not from misogyny but rather from a quest that would ring true in the Romantic era, seeking the ever-elusive ideal “to enjoy in one woman all women, since he cannot possess them as individuals.”

Strauss traces a series of Don Juan’s exploits, with several episodes of love music conveying the disparate characters of the women he conquers. Don Juan meets his inevitable doom in the end. A violent crash in the orchestra represents the thrust of a sword being run through him by a father avenging the death of one of the Don’s victims, and his life slips away via a discordant note on the trumpet.

**Instrumentation:** three flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes and English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons and contra-bassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, cymbals, orchestra bells, harp, and strings.

— 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)

**Musical Politics**

Eduard Hanslick, the generally conservative, greatly feared music critic of the Neue freie Presse of Vienna, encountered Strauss’s Don Juan in 1892, and launched a subtle attack on the work at hand:

The tendency is … to use purely instrumental music merely as a means of describing certain things; in short, not to make music, but to write poetry and to paint. Virtuosity in orchestration has become a vampire sapping the creative power of our composers.

These outwardly brilliant compositions are nothing if not successful. I have seen Wagner disciples talking about the Strauss Don Juan with such enthusiasm that it seemed as though shivers of delight were running up and down their spines. Others have found the thing repulsive, and this sensation seems to me more likely to be the right one. This is no “tone painting” but rather a tumult of brilliant daubs, a faltering tonal orgy, half bacchanal, half witches’ Sabbath.

He who desires no more from an orchestral piece than that it transport him to the dissolute ecstasy of a Don Juan, … may well find pleasure in this music, for with its exquisite skillfulness it achieves the desired objective insofar as it is musically attainable. The composer may thus be compared with a routine chemist who well understands how to mix all the elements of the musical-sensual stimulation to produce a stupefying “pleasure gas.” For my part, I prefer, with all due homage to such chemical skill, not to be its victim; nor can I be, for such musical narcotics simply leave me cold.
Concerto for Two Pianos

Bryce Dessner

Bryce Dessner is best known as the lead guitarist and co-songwriter of the Grammy-winning indie rock band The National. Yet while many rock / pop musicians have credibly and successfully “crossed over” to classical idioms at times — composing, performing with orchestra, scoring a film — Dessner has always had one foot in both worlds. Or, more accurately, both feet in both worlds. He is a polymath who perceives music as a single continuum unbroken by genre; he explores how music and other media and art forms can enhance each other, and his main creative approach is collaboration.

Dessner studied classical guitar as a teenager in Cincinnati. With Aaron, his twin brother, he founded The National in 1999. Around the same time Bryce — who’d earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in music at Yale — was forging relationships with Steve Reich, Philip Glass, and the Kronos Quartet, becoming a fixture of the contemporary-music scene as a composer and a guitarist.

Whatever the project, Dessner is particularly interested in orchestration. “I’ve always kind of taken the role of orchestrator in [The National],” he said, “thinking about colors and shading of sounds and instruments. It’s the direction my brain goes.” He has orchestrated recordings by Paul Simon and Bon Iver. This is, of course, central to his composing in classical genres. “Harnessing the power of an orchestra is an endless education,” he said.

Dessner’s interdisciplinary projects include the 2017 ballet No Tomorrow, created with artists Ragnar Kjartansson and Margrét Bjarnadóttir, which received Iceland’s Gríman Award. In 2019 The Metropolitan Museum featured the song Death Is Elsewhere, co-written by Dessner, in an installation by Kjartansson. Dessner was widely praised for the Grammy-nominated score he co-wrote with Ryuichi Sakamoto and Alva Noto for Alejandro González Iñárritu’s 2016 film The Revenant. He went on to score The Two Popes and (with Aaron Dessner) C’mon C’mon. The Los Angeles Philharmonic and Roomful of Teeth premiered his theater piece Triptych (Eyes of One on Another), which integrates Robert Mapplethorpe photographs with the musical score.

Dessner also expresses his creativity at the level of planning and crafting artistic experiences with arts organizations. He co-founded and curates the festivals MusicNOW (in Cincinnati), Haven (Copenhagen), Sounds from a Safe Harbour (Cork, Ireland), and PEOPLE (Berlin), and has programmed festivals and events at the Barbican in London, the Philharmonie de Paris, and Hamburg’s Elbphilharmonie. He is one of eight creative advisers to music director Esa-Pekka Salonen at the San Francisco Symphony.

In Short

Born: April 23, 1976, in Cincinnati, Ohio
Resides: in Paris, France
Work composed: 2017; the reduced version, heard here, 2020
World premiere: April 13, 2018, by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, John Storgårds, conductor, Katia and Marielle Labèque, soloists, at London’s Royal Festival Hall
New York Philharmonic premiere: these performances, which mark the work’s New York Premiere
Estimated duration: ca. 20 minutes
As a composer Dessner has received commissions from the Orchestre de Paris, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall, and the Kronos Quartet. The Australian Chamber Orchestra toured with his Réponse Lutosławski, and in 2019 Gautier Capuçon’s seven-cello ensemble premiered Dessner’s The Forest, commissioned by the Fondation Louis Vuitton. In 2019 the recordings When We Are Inhuman — featuring Dessner, the singer-songwriter Bonnie “Prince” Billy, and the ensemble Eighth Blackbird — and Tenébre, an album of his string compositions performed by Ensemble Resonanz, were released.

True to form, the Concerto for Two Pianos grew out of a collaboration with performers. He composed it for Katia and Marielle Labèque, for whom Dessner had written El Chan (2015), a 20-minute piano duo that, the composer writes in his note for the concerto, taught him “how to address the challenges of writing for two pianos.” It avoids the classic tendency to pit the solo instrument(s) against the orchestra in conversation, even competition; rather, the pianos are prominent parts of the orchestral texture, sometimes independent, sometimes doubling other instruments in Glass-esque repeated, syncopated scalar lines. (The same spirit animates Wires, which the NY Phil performed in its New York Premiere in 2019 with Dessner featured on electric guitar.) It’s a sonic manifestation of Dessner’s predilection toward forces coming together to create something new that transcends old categories, as is the work’s continuous, through-composed unfolding through three connected movements. You might hear, as does Marielle Labèque, echoes of Stravinsky, such as in the syncopated booms from the whole orchestra as well as an exuberant dancing quality that suggests a sense of joy and awakening.

The NY Phil Connection

In November 2019 the New York Philharmonic gave the New York Premiere of Bryce Dessner’s Wires, which was just one of the occasion’s firsts: it was Santtu-Matias Rouvali’s NY Phil debut, Dessner’s NY Phil debut, and the first time the Orchestra had hosted a composer / soloist on electric guitar. Dessner curated a Kravis Nightcap following one of the concerts.

His music was first heard at the Philharmonic in 2015, with the US Premiere of Wave Movements, written with Richard Reed Parry of the band Arcade Fire, on CONTACT!, the new-music series. In 2016 violinist Jennifer Koh gave the World Premiere of Dessner’s Gift on her Shared Madness program, presented by the Philharmonic as part of the NY PHIL BIENNIAL at National Sawdust.

Bryce Dessner after the New York Premiere of Wires, November 2019
In the Composer’s Words

Bryce Dessner includes the following note in the score for his Concerto for Two Pianos:

I first met Katia and Marielle Labèque during rehearsals for a concert we shared with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel several years ago. The orchestra was premiering a recent work of mine, paired with Katia and Marielle performing Philip Glass’s Concerto for Two Pianos. During that week in Los Angeles I became acquainted with their incredible playing and profoundly open and inspiring musical universe. I had also recently moved to Paris, and Katia and Marielle would quickly become a second family to me in France. Soon after that we started planning our future collaboration, which materialized with my Concerto for Two Pianos.

The piece was composed for Katia, Marielle, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra throughout 2017, with a large portion of the development taking place in Katia and Marielle’s piano studio on Rue Quincampoix in Paris and their house on the Basque coast where they spend most of the summer. I spent a lot of time familiarizing myself with the repertoire they have performed over the years, and doing research on the deeply personal and intertwined musical history and style that they share. I also shared the score with them several times as it developed, to get their feedback and to be sure the ideas were translating well to the piano. I had previously composed a 20-minute piano duo for them in 2015 called El Chan, which they have toured extensively and recorded. Working on this first duo piece together was a great learning experience for me, in shaping how to address the challenges of writing for two pianos.

My Concerto is a tribute to two great musicians whom I am honored to work with and whom I am even luckier to call my friends.

— Bryce Dessner
Sergei Rachmaninoff was not at first a standout at the Moscow Conservatory, but by the time he graduated, in 1892, he was deemed worthy of receiving the Great Gold Medal, an honor that had previously been bestowed on only two students. For several years his career continued auspiciously, but in 1897 he was dealt a major setback with the failure of his First Symphony, which a prominent and dismissive review by the composer and critic César Cui likened to “a program symphony on the ‘Seven Plagues of Egypt’” that “would bring delight to the inhabitants of Hell.”

The distress threatened to undo Rachmaninoff, and for the next three years he didn’t write a note. In the psychological aftermath of this embarrassing fiasco, he turned to a different musical pursuit and focused on conducting. Before long he sought the help of a physician who was investigating psychological therapy through hypnosis, and by 1901 he was back on track as a composer. A few years later he would add the obligations of a touring concert pianist to his schedule, and Rachmaninoff’s numerous recordings reveal that his outstanding reputation as a performer was fully merited.

Success followed success for the next three and a half decades, but with the completion of his Third Symphony, in 1936, it appeared that Rachmaninoff had reached the end of his composing career. He had by then finished building a villa on the shore of Lake Lucerne, which he enjoyed traversing in his speedboat, and he was trying to rein in performing commitments so he could ease into retirement. However, the outbreak of World War II disrupted such plans, and he decided to move with his family to the United States — familiar territory, since he had been largely residing in America since 1918. So it was that Rachmaninoff spent the summer of 1940 at an estate near Huntington, Long Island; it was there that his final work, the Symphonic Dances, came into being.

His initial plan was to name the piece Fantastic Dances, which would have underscored its vibrant personality. Alternatively, he pondered titling the three movements “Noon,” “Twilight,” and “Midnight” — or, as his biographer Victor Seroff recounted the story, “Morning,” “Noon,” and “Evening,” meant as a metaphor for the three stages of human life. Rachmaninoff scrapped those ideas and settled instead on the more objective name of Symphonic Dances. The spirit of

In Short

**Born:** April 1, 1873, at Oneg, in the Novgorod region of Russia

**Died:** March 28, 1943, in Beverly Hills, California

**Work composed:** summer 1940; dedicated to Eugene Ormandy and The Philadelphia Orchestra

**World premiere:** January 3, 1941, at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, by The Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, conductor

**New York Philharmonic premiere:** December 17, 1942, Dimitri Mitropoulos, conductor

**Most recent New York Philharmonic performance:** April 9, 2022, Long Yu, conductor

**Estimated duration:** ca. 34 minutes
the dance does indeed inhabit this work, if in a sometimes mysterious or mournful way. As Rachmaninoff was completing the piece he played it privately for his old friend Michel Fokine, the one-time choreographer of the Ballets Russes, who immediately signaled his interest in using it for a ballet. Regrettably, Fokine died in 1942 before he could make good on his intention.

Three dances make up this orchestral suite. The opening march-like movement is powerful and assertive, although with expressive contrast arriving in the middle section, in the form of very Russian-sounding wind writing. In the movement’s coda the strings play a gorgeous new theme against the tintinnabulation of flute and piccolo, harp, piano, and orchestra bells. The theme has not been previously heard in this piece, but that doesn’t mean it was actually new; Rachmaninoff borrowed it from his First Symphony, which had come to grief so many years before. In reviving the theme, the composer seems to vindicate that early effort, if in a strictly private reference, as the First Symphony had remained unpublished and unperformed since its premiere.

A waltz follows, although more a melancholy, even oppressive Slavic waltz than a lilting Viennese one. To conclude, Rachmaninoff offers a finale that includes

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Listen for … the Saxophone

Although not a standard member of the symphony orchestra, the saxophone had occasionally been pressed into service during the 19th and early 20th centuries as an “extra” instrument to intone passages of special color, with memorable examples being provided by Bizet (in his L’Arlésienne music) and Ravel (in his orchestration of Musorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition). Nonetheless, writing for saxophone was a new experience for Rachmaninoff when he composed his Symphonic Dances. The instrument appears only in the first movement, for a fleeting but sensuous passage of three spacious phrases, beginning:

\[\text{\textit{moto expressivo}}\]

Rachmaninoff was worried about writing idiomatically for the alto saxophone and about notating the part indicated above, in the correct transposition for the instrument. So he turned to an expert, the composer-arranger Robert Russell Bennett, remembered today as the orchestrator of Broadway hits such as Show Boat, Oklahoma!, and My Fair Lady. Bennett recounted:

When he was doing his Symphonic Dances, he wanted to use a saxophone tone in the first movement and got in touch with me to advise him as to which of the saxophone family to use and just how to include it in his score — his experience with saxophones being extremely limited. … Some days later we had luncheon together at his place in Huntington. When he met my wife and me at the railroad station he was driving the car and after about one hundred yards, he stopped the car, turned to me, and said, “I start on A sharp?” I said, “That’s right,” and he said, “Right,” and drove on out to his place.
quotations from Russian Orthodox liturgical chants and from the Dies Irae of the Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead. Both would seem odd selections for what are, after all, identified as dances. But Rachmaninoff subsumes his borrowed material brilliantly into the general spirit of the Symphonic Dances, and on the final page of the manuscript — the last he would ever complete — he inscribed, in Latin script, the word “Alliluya.”

**Instrumentation:** two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, three clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet), alto saxophone, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, tambourine, snare drum, orchestra bells, xylophone, tam-tam, chimes, cymbals, bass drum, harp, piano, and strings.

— J.M.K.

### The NY Phil Connection

It seems that the episode recounted by Robert Russell Bennett, in which Rachmaninoff consulted him on writing for the saxophone (see sidebar, page 32), wasn’t the only time the Russian composer reached out to other musicians for advice about instrumentation. In 1940 then New York Philharmonic Principal Trumpet Harry Glantz was floored, and a bit perplexed, to receive a brief letter from Rachmaninoff, addressed from the composer’s 505 West End Avenue apartment. Rachmaninoff had performed with the Philharmonic on numerous occasions dating back to 1910, when he was the soloist in his own Piano Concerto No. 3 under the baton of then Music Director Gustav Mahler. The composer apparently thought highly enough of Philharmonic musicians, based on their collaborations, to consult with the Principal Trumpet on a compositional matter. The short trumpet passage in question would be written into Rachmaninoff’s Symphonic Dances, his final opus and the only work he wrote, start to finish, in the United States.

— The Editors

Rachmaninoff’s query, a gift to the New York Philharmonic Archives from Harry Glantz’s daughter, Lois Rosenfield
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The New York Philharmonic uses the revolving seating method for section string players who are listed alphabetically in the roster.

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Programs are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.
Semyon Bychkov’s inaugural season with the Czech Philharmonic, in 2018–19, was celebrated with performances from the orchestra’s home in Prague to concerts in London, New York, and Washington. Now in his sixth season as chief conductor and music director, Bychkov will celebrate 2024’s Year of Czech Music by taking the orchestra on extensive tours of Asia and Europe.

Bychkov’s first season with the Czech Philharmonic saw the culmination of The Tchaikovsky Project — a series of residencies and seven CDs devoted to Tchaikovsky’s symphonic repertoire. Over the past two years the focus has turned to the music of Mahler, with performances of the symphonies at home, on tour, and on disc for Pentatone. The cycle launched in 2022 with the release of Mahler’s Symphonies Nos. 4 and 5, followed in 2023 with the release of Symphonies No. 2, Resurrection, and No. 1.

Especially recognized for his interpretations of the core repertoire, Bychkov has collaborated with many extraordinary contemporary composers including Luciano Berio, Henri Dutilleux, and Mauricio Kagel. More recent collaborations include those with Julian Anderson, Bryce Dessner, Detlev Glanert, Thierry Escaich, and Thomas Larcher, whose works he has premiered with the Czech Philharmonic, Amsterdam’s Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, and the Vienna, Berlin, New York, and Munich philharmonic orchestras. Dividing his time between symphonic and operatic repertoire, this summer he will return to Bayreuth for Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde.

Like the Czech Philharmonic, Bychkov has one foot firmly in the culture of the East and one in the West. Born in St. Petersburg in 1952, he emigrated to the United States in 1975 and, since the mid-1980s has lived in Europe. Singled out for an extraordinarily privileged musical education, Bychkov studied at the Glinka Choir School and with the legendary Ilya Musin at the Leningrad Conservatory — combining innate musicality with rigorous Russian pedagogy.

In 2015 Semyon Bychkov was named Conductor of the Year by the International Opera Awards. He received an honorary doctorate from the Royal Academy of Music in July 2022 and was named Conductor of the Year by Musical America in October 2022. Bychkov was one of the first musicians to express his position on the outbreak of the war in Ukraine and has subsequently spoken frequently in support of Ukraine.

Katia and Marielle Labèque are regular guests with the Berlin, London, and Los Angeles philharmonic orchestras; Bavarian Radio, Chicago, and London symphony orchestras; and The Cleveland Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Orchestra de Paris, Dresden Staatskapelle, Amsterdam’s Royal Concertgebouw, and Vienna Philharmonic. They have worked with distinguished conductors, including Marin Alsop, Semyon Bychkov, Gustavo

Career highlights include a Berlin Philharmonic gala attended by more than 33,000 conducted by Simon Rattle (EuroArts DVD). A Vienna Summer Night Concert had a record audience of over 100,000 at the Schönbrunn Palace (Sony CD and DVD); more than 1.5 million worldwide watched on television.

They have worked with composers including Thomas Adès, Andriessen, Berio, Boulez, Bryce Dessner, Philip Glass, Osvaldo Golijov, Ligeti, and Messiaen. They premiered Glass’s Double Concerto for Two Pianos with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under the direction of Gustavo Dudamel. In spring 2019 they premiered Dessner’s Concerto for Two Pianos at Royal Festival Hall with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and John Storgårds.

The Paris Philharmonie hosted a special "Week End" focused on Amoria, Invocations, and their new project for two guitars and two pianos with David Chalmin and Dessner, including a piece written for them by Thom Yorke, Don’t Fear the Light, with Yorke as special guest. They premiered Nico Muhly’s In Certain Circles with the Orchestre de Paris and Maxim Emelyaniev in 2021, and performed it with the New York Philharmonic and Jaap van Zweden in 2022. They recently toured Germany, Austria, and Holland with Filarmonica Jóven de Colombia and Andrés Orozco-Estrada. Their label, KML Recordings, joined Deutsche Grammophon in 2016.
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 he has championed at the Philharmonic, from Steve Reich and Joel Thompson to Mozart and Mahler. 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 first 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.

The New York Philharmonic connects with millions of music lovers each season through live concerts in New York and around the world, broadcasts, streaming, education programs, and more. In the 2023–24 season — which builds on the Orchestra’s transformation reflected in the new David Geffen Hall — the NY Phil honors Jaap van Zweden in his farewell season as Music Director, premieres 14 works by a wide range of composers including some whom van Zweden has championed, marks György Ligeti’s centennial, and celebrates the 100th 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. The NY Phil has released more than 2,000 recordings since 1917, and in 2023 announced a partnership with Apple Music Classical, the new streaming app designed to deliver classical music lovers the optimal listening experience. 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, following titans including Bernstein, Toscanini, and Mahler. Gustavo Dudamel will become Music and Artistic Director beginning in 2026 after serving as Music Director Designate in 2025–26.