

**NEW YORK
PHILHARMONIC**

**GUSTAVO
DUDAMEL**
THE TANG MUSIC &
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DESIGNATE

Wu Tsai Theater
David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center
Home of the New York Philharmonic
**2025–26 Season Sponsored by
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Thursday, April 30, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, May 1, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 2, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Gustavo Dudamel, Conductor
New York Philharmonic Chorus
Malcolm J. Merriweather, Director

Major support for these concerts is
provided by **Kay and Jackson Tai** and
Mrs. Martha Hall.

In appreciation of their generosity, these
concerts are dedicated to members of
the **Volunteer Council.**

This program will last approximately one and
three-quarters hours, which includes one
intermission.

Ellen REID
(b. 1983)

Earth Between Oceans (2025; New York
Premiere–New York Philharmonic
Co-Commission with the Los Angeles
Philharmonic)

Earth
Air
Fire
Water

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC CHORUS

Intermission

SCHUBERT
(1797–1828)

Gesang der Geister über den Wassern
(Song of the Spirits over the Waters),
D.714 (1821)

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC CHORUS

WAGNER
(1813–83)
arr. H. Zumpe

Waldweben (Forest Murmurs), from
Siegfried (1857)

STRAVINSKY
(1882–1971)

Suite from The Firebird (1919 version)
I. The Firebird and Its Dance; Variation
of the Firebird
II. The Princesses' Round-Dance
(Khorovod)
III. Infernal Dance of King Kashchei
IV. Lullaby
V. Finale

Guest artist appearances are made possible through the **Hedwig van Ameringen Guest Artists Endowment Fund**.

In consideration of the performers and audience, please silence your devices, and take photos and video only during applause.

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Benjamin Adler

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Barret Ham

(Continued)

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Notes on the Program

Earth Between Oceans

Ellen Reid

Connections to Earth, to the basic elements of nature, and to the cities of New York and Los Angeles mean a lot to composer Ellen Reid, as they do to Gustavo Dudamel. Reid's *Earth Between Oceans* was jointly commissioned by the New York Philharmonic and Los Angeles Philharmonic. Last fall the work was premiered on the West Coast to open the LA Phil's season, Dudamel's last as its music and artistic director. This week's performances by the New York Philharmonic look to a new era, with Dudamel set to become Oscar L. Tang and H.M. Agnes Hsu-Tang Music & Artistic Director in the 2026–27 season. In an introduction for the world premiere Dudamel wrote: "The title reflects the two cities that have shaped our lives — Los Angeles and New York — and the music explores how the four natural elements have shaped them in return."

Reid keeps a foot in both New York and Los Angeles, listing them as dual places of residence. Her connection to New York began when she arrived at Columbia University intending to study ethnomusicology. As classes began, right after 9/11, she found solace in writing music. With encouragement from her advisor, composer George Lewis, she began to consider a composing career. Reid went on to earn a master's from CalArts and establish connections in the Los Angeles music community, becoming the first composer to write for all four of the city's major performing groups: the LA Phil, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Los Angeles Master Chorale, and LA Opera.

Her first opera, *p r i s m*, composed for LA Opera, received the 2019 Pulitzer Prize for Music.

She is particularly drawn to vocal writing, an attraction that can be traced back to her Tennessee upbringing, where from a young age she sang in her church youth choir, a large ensemble that toured. "I love writing for choir because I love the feeling of being in that sound," she has said. In Reid's hands that sound takes on new and transcendent forms, as evidenced by the wordless treble vocals of *The World As We Know It Doesn't Exist*, performed by the New York Philharmonic in February 2020 as the first premiere in the Orchestra's expansive *Project 19*, which marked the centennial of the 19th Amendment by commissioning works from 19 women composers.

In Short

Born: March 23, 1983, in Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Resides: in New York City and Los Angeles

Work composed: 2025, on commission by the New York Philharmonic and Los Angeles Philharmonic; dedicated "to Gustavo Dudamel, in appreciation of our shared connection"

World premiere: September 25, 2025, at Walt Disney Concert Hall, by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Gustavo Dudamel, conductor, with the Los Angeles Master Chorale

New York Philharmonic premiere: these concerts, which mark the work's New York Premiere

Estimated duration: ca. 30 minutes

Earth Between Oceans likewise employs a wordless choir of mixed voices. As she told *San Francisco Classical Voice*:

I wanted a sense of otherworldliness, adding vocals with no text, just oohs and aahs and muttering. The voices blended with the strings and woodwinds that created a haze around the piece that only the human voice can do. We're trained as listeners to hear the voice in ways like no other.

In the second movement, *Air*, the chorus embodies breath and wind. The last, *Water*, finds the voices, strings, and brass working in unison — broad melodic

lines that swell and recede as ocean waves, with the voices bursting out at the crest of a wave.

The work's four movements are titled for elements of the natural world, but they are also tied to the cities that inspired Reid. *Earth* opens at ground level in New York, marked "clear winter morning," moving into an *adagietto* marked "sun breaking through clouds," then "luminous, joyful springtime" and "ochre sunset." *Air* takes flight above the city, evoking swirling, whipping winds. *Fire* reflects the agitation of sparking embers, and the enormity of loss that can result; Reid began composing the movement in January 2025, as devastating

In the Composer's Words



In an excerpt from her program note for *Earth Between Oceans*, Ellen Reid writes:

In this work, I took joy in exploring rhythm as a primary compositional element. In *Earth*, the meter accelerates through the movement, erupting in a guttural peak when the voices from the choir unite for the first time. In *Air*, a lack of consistent pulse creates a sense of endless space. In *Fire*, polyrhythms morph, cycle, and grow, and in *Water*, the rhythm ebbs and flows like the currents of the ocean. Another seismic component to this

piece is the large, wordless choir, conceived instrumentally and adding a dynamic timbre to the ensemble.

Earth Between Oceans celebrates the power of nature in conversation with the threats our environment faces. As a metaphor for the concurrent crises affecting our Earth, I captured field recordings while collecting plastic trash at beaches in Los Angeles (Venice, Santa Monica) and New York City (Rockaway Beach, Coney Island). These field recordings are woven throughout the work as connective tissue, a reminder that we live on a planet whose equilibrium is being challenged.

Finally, *Earth Between Oceans* is dedicated to Gustavo Dudamel, a bridge builder who forges meaningful connections across communities of people from different backgrounds, cultures, ages, classes, and abilities. His fierce positivity and tremendous talents inspire us to think bigger and do better. Therefore, despite the growing political, environmental, and social challenges we face, I felt deeply committed to ending the work with a sense of optimism — even if it feels out of reach.

wildfires raged across Los Angeles. *Water* reflects the gentler golden light and blue surf of the Pacific Coast.

Natural environments and site-specific works are a common thread in Reid's music. The *SoundWalk* app she created, commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, provides musical accompaniment to walks through Central Park, keyed to specific locations. *SoundWalk* has since been expanded to include site-specific music for Griffith Park in Los Angeles, Regent's Park and Primrose Hill in London, and Ueno Park in Tokyo. With each, Reid invites listeners to take a moment to revel in the beauty of musical connections to place.

Instrumentation: three flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes and English horn, three clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet), two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, vibraphone, marimba, cymbals, cowbell, wood blocks, snare drum, tom-toms, anvil, drum pad, tam-tam, bass drum, crotales, bell plates, piano, harp, and strings, plus mixed chorus.

— *Rebecca Winzenried, former Program and Publications Editor at the New York Philharmonic, manages print and digital programs for The 92nd Street Y, New York and Washington National Opera, and writes program notes for other ensembles.*

Paying It Forward

Another New York connection has been an integral part of Ellen Reid's work. Along with fellow composer Missy Mazzoli she founded Luna Composition Lab, which began at the Kaufman Music Center, near Lincoln Center, in 2016.

Luna Composition Lab provides mentorship and performance opportunities to young composers, ages 13–18, who are female, nonbinary, or gender-nonconforming. The organization marks the anniversary of its first decade this season and next with *Luna Lab@10*, featuring almost 75 world premieres by 50 Luna Lab alums, performed by leading groups such as the Kronos Quartet, International Contemporary Ensemble, Metropolitan Opera, and Music Academy of the West. Luna composition fellows have been mentored by leading composers including those who have had works premiered by the New York Philharmonic this season: Leilehua Lanzilotti, Nina C. Young, Wang Lu, Nina Shekhar, and Brittany J. Green. A Luna Composition Lab alum has already had music performed by the New York Philharmonic with the World Premiere of the orchestral version of Haeon Lee's *Out & Up* on the March 8, 2025, Young People's Concert.

The project comes from a personal place for Reid, who did not meet another female composer until she was in her 20s. A Luna goal has been to close that gap by offering sustained support for composers at a formative age, opening doors and creating community for those from cities large and small.

Gesang der Geister über den Wassern (Song of the Spirits over the Waters), D.714

Franz Schubert

Recognition of the young Franz Schubert unfolded gradually, initially limited to friends and his local community in Vienna. Beginning when he was 16, his symphonies were played by school and community orchestras. A Mass that he wrote at 17 was performed at the parish church. Two operas had brief runs.

Then, on March 7, 1821 — when he was all of 24 — three pieces were programmed at Vienna’s leading music theater in an annual charity concert given on Ash Wednesday, when theaters were closed for ballet and opera. It was sponsored by the formidably named Society of Ladies of the Nobility for the Promotion of the Good and the Useful. The featured composers included Mozart, Rossini, and Louis Spohr, and the performers included leading actors and musicians.

This proved to be the turning point in Schubert’s career. He received more press coverage from that night than from any during his lifetime. The big hit was *Erlkönig*, the trailblazing song he had composed six years earlier. He set the famous poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the poet he most revered, who inspired his first masterpieces, and whom he set most often. The two never met, and Goethe was apparently only dimly aware of the composer who most brilliantly set his words to music. *Erlkönig* had already become well known in private circles, and at that charity concert was encored. The song had just been published as his Op. 1, and it sustained Schubert’s fame for generations to come.

Schubert’s two other works performed that evening were part-songs that are

undeservedly forgotten because the genre has itself largely disappeared from the concert hall. He composed more than 100, most of them unaccompanied, although some featured piano. He wrote his earliest part-songs while studying with Antonio Salieri, the famous Kapellmeister (who did not murder Mozart), and Schubert and his friends often sang them at home, one to a part. These secular choral works were part of the important 19th-century tradition of male choral societies. The first such group, founded in Berlin in 1808 by Carl Friedrich Zelter, was known as the *Liedertafel* (song table), and its two-dozen members met monthly to socialize, eat, drink, and sing. Zelter was Goethe’s closest musical advisor, and the poet later started his own informal singing group, which met in his home.

At the March 1821 fundraiser Schubert’s popular *Das Dörfchen* (*The Little Village*), to a poem by Gottfried August Bürger, was sung by two

In Short

Born: January 31, 1797, in Vienna, Austria

Died: November 19, 1828, in Vienna

Work composed: February 1821

World premiere: March 7, 1821, at the Theater am Kärntnertor in Vienna, apparently unaccompanied, by a group of singers assembled by Schubert

New York Philharmonic premiere: May 3, 1974, Pierre Boulez, conductor, with The Camerata Singers

Estimated duration: ca. 11 minutes

tenors and two basses; it too was encored. Schubert's third composition on the program, *Gesang der Geister über den Wassern*, seems to have baffled the audience and critics. It was scored for an unusual complement: four tenors, four basses, two violas, two cellos, and bass. Like *Erkönig*, it sets a famous Goethe poem, but the length and unusual performing forces challenged the expectations of the time. Some disparaging

reviews indicate that on this occasion it was sung without the string accompaniment, which destroys much of its effect. A later reminiscence, from the friend of Schubert who had organized the concert, said the performance was under-rehearsed.

Schubert was clearly deeply attracted to this Goethe poem, a philosophical meditation on nature, the soul, and fate that he turned to repeatedly. He had

The Work at a Glance

Goethe wrote *Gesang der Geister über den Wassern* in October 1779, on vacation in western Switzerland, inspired by the magnificent waterfalls he saw at Staubbach at Lauterbrunnen. He sent a first version, cast as a dialogue between two spirits, to Charlotte von Stein, his muse, but she was unimpressed. He revised the poem into six stanzas of unequal length. Its premise goes back to ancient Greek and Nordic myths about spirits arising from the waters and causing those who witness them to experience prophetic madness.

Schubert's work opens with the steady chug of the bass playing a repeated monotone dactylic rhythm (long-short-short) that undergirds much of the piece and returns to round it off at the end. Quiet and yearning strings enter before the eight-part male chorus softly intones the first stanza: "The human soul / is similar to water: / It comes from the heavens, / it rises to the heavens / and back down / to earth it has to come, / eternally changing."

Schubert deploys the chorus in strikingly different ways throughout, which helps to delineate its structure. Initially they sing together, almost in a hushed monotone, but then Schubert uses the upper and lower voices antiphonally. The music mirrors closely the six stanzas of Goethe's poem — when we hear a dramatic shift in mood, tempo, dynamics, or another musical event, it signals the next stanza. Water, waves, and wind are central verbal themes that Schubert paints musically. The final stanza returns to the original tempo with the chugging double bass underneath and the same hushed choral incantation. The last lines, again mostly a monotone, are as simple as can be: "Human soul, / how similar you are to the water! / Human fate, / how similar you are to the wind!"



Staubbach Falls, just west of Lauterbrunnen, Switzerland

attempted to set it as a conventional song for voice and piano in September 1816, and returned to it the following year, writing an unaccompanied version for two tenors and two basses. His third attempt, in December 1820, can be considered an incomplete draft of the work we hear today, scored for male vocal octet and lower string quintet. That same month Schubert gave the poem another try, this time writing for male chorus with piano accompaniment, but it remained an incomplete sketch.

Then, in February 1821, just weeks before the Ash Wednesday concert, Schubert struck gold with his final

attempt, a part-song on steroids thanks to its extraordinary instrumentation. The criticism of the work's premiere must have stung, given his sustained attraction to the poem and the notable success of his two pieces performed earlier that evening.

Instrumentation: violas, cellos, and basses, plus male chorus.

— *Christopher H. Gibbs is James H. Ottaway Jr. Professor of Music at Bard College and the co-author, with Richard Taruskin, of The Oxford History of Western Music, College Edition.*

Text and Translation

Gesang der Geister über den Wassern (*Song of the Spirits over the Waters*)

Franz Schubert

*Des Menschen Seele
Gleicht dem Wasser.
Vom Himmel kommt es,
Zum Himmel steigt es,
Und wieder nieder
Zur Erde muß es,
Ewig wechselnd.*

*Strömt von der hohen
Steilen Felswand
Der reine Strahl,
Dann stäubt er lieblich
Wolkenwellen
Zum glatten Fels;
Und leicht empfangen,
Wallt er verschleiernd,
Leisrauschend
Zur Tiefe nieder.*

*Ragen Klippen
Dem Sturz entgegen,
Schäumt er unmutig
und Stufenweise
Zum Abgrund.*

*Im flachen Bette
Schleicht er das Wiesental hin,
Und in dem glatten See
Weiden ihr Antlitz
Alle Gestirne.*

*Wind ist der Welle
Lieblicher Buhler,
Wind mischt vom Grund auf
Schäumende Wogen.*

*Seele des Menschen,
Wie gleichst du dem Wasser,
Schicksal des Menschen,
Wie gleichst du dem Wind!*

The human soul
Is similar to water:
It comes from the heavens,
It rises to the heavens
And back down
To earth it has to come,
Eternally changing.

Streaming from the high
Steep wall of the cliff
Is a pure beam,
Then it lovingly sprays out
In clouds of waves
Onto the smooth rocks,
And it is no sooner welcomed than
It surges and veils itself,
Rumbling gently,
And descends to the depths.

When rocks loom up
It plunges against them,
It angrily foams
Step by step
To the abyss.

In its flat bed
It slithers through the valley of meadows,
And in the smooth lake,
Feasting their eyes on their reflection,
Are all the constellations.

Wind is the waves'
Beloved partner;
The wind goes down and gets mixed with
The foaming waves.

Human soul,
How similar you are to the water!
Human fate,
How similar you are to the wind!

— *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*
Translation by Malcolm Wren,
schubertsong.uk

Waldweben (Forest Murmurs), from *Siegfried*

Richard Wagner

Richard Wagner's operatic tetralogy *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*) is a complicated web spun out of Germanic-Nordic mythology, unified by the composer's overarching musical conception and his detailed interweaving of melodic motifs. It comprises the four operas *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung* — or, as Wagner liked to think of it, three operas with *Das Rheingold* serving as a prologue. The tetralogy occupied him for 26 years, from 1848 (when he made the first prose sketch for the libretto) until 1874 (when he placed final details in the score of *Götterdämmerung*). Together the four operas include some 15 hours of music, making *The Ring* the most imposing single work in the canon of classical music.

One way to get a grip on Wagner's cycle is to follow the magical ring of the title as it moves through generations, through landscapes subterranean and terrestrial, through a universe of gods and mortals and creatures, through what Sir Arthur Sullivan (of operetta fame) described as an array of "thieves, liars, and blackguards." Everybody thinks they want the ring, but when they get it, it leads to no good. As we learn in the opening opera, *Das Rheingold*, it was forged by a dwarf of the Nibelung race out of gold he stole from the Rhine Maidens, denizens of Germany's aquatic aorta. Some distance into the cycle, in *Die Walküre* (the second opera), we meet Brünnhilde, a Valkyrie (a warrior maiden) whose father is Wotan, the chief god. She has gotten mixed up with a brother-sister incestuous couple (Siegmond and Sieglinde) and tries to rescue the male of the pair, in defiance of

her father's orders. Wotan punishes her by plunging her into a profound sleep and surrounding her with a circle of fire, where she is condemned to remain until she is saved by the bravest of all heroes. Fortunately, she had already managed to shepherd to safety the pregnant Sieglinde, who dies giving birth.

The third opera, *Siegfried*, is named for the offspring of that incest. He learns his origins and, fulfilling a prophecy, repairs a magical sword he inherited. He uses it to slay Fafner, a giant who has transformed himself into a dragon and who currently holds the ring, which accordingly passes to Siegfried. A bird leads him to the peak where Brünnhilde has lain sleeping now for many years, surrounded by fire, and he awakens her with a kiss. They fall in love.

Happiness ensues for a while, but things take a bad turn in the cycle's fourth and final installment, *Götterdämmerung*. Brünnhilde now holds the ring, and Siegfried, under the influence of an evil spell, wrests it from her. Not

In Short

Born: May 22, 1813, in Leipzig, Saxony (Germany)

Died: February 13, 1883, in Venice, Italy

Work composed: 1857

World premiere: as part of the opera, on August 16, 1876, at the Bayreuth Festival, Hans Richter, conductor

New York Philharmonic premiere: January 5, 1882, with Leopold Damrosch conducting the New York Symphony (which merged with the New York Philharmonic in 1928)

Estimated duration: ca. 8 minutes

realizing that he has been temporarily deprived of power over his actions, she plots with confederates to murder him. Realizing her error too late, she builds a funeral pyre for him and, carrying the ring, rides into it on her horse. Valhalla (the fortress-city of the gods) is in shambles and, with it, the race of the gods. The Rhine overflows its banks and the ensuing flood drags everything underwater, including the golden ring whose fateful trajectory — itself a full-circle “ring” leading back to the Rhine Maidens —

has proved to be such a curse. Please understand that this plot summary leaves out almost everything.

So, back to the opera *Siegfried*. *Forest Murmurs*, from its second act, is heard while Siegfried waits on a grassy knoll in the woods for the dragon Fafner to emerge from his lair. Murmuring strings suggest a breeze in the leaves, and a succession of birdsongs (flute, oboe, clarinet) illustrate the bucolic surroundings. *The Ring* cycle is shot through with leitmotifs — brief musical themes associated with specific

A Little More About *Siegfried*

It really is impossible to express concisely everything that happens in any one of the operas that together comprise *The Ring*, but here’s a bit more about what happens in *Siegfried*, from which the selection you hear in this concert comes.

The titular hero — son of (the siblings) Siegmund and Sieglinde — has been raised in a sylvan cave by Mime, a dwarf who educates him about his origins and the prophecy about reforging his father’s sword (which had been shattered in the previous opera); this Siegfried manages to do. Mime leads Siegfried to the lair of the surviving giant (who has transformed himself into a dragon) in the hope of gaining the gold. Our hero slays the dragon and takes the golden ring. Mime and Alberich (another dwarf, of the Nibelung race, who had forged the ring out of gold he stole from the Rhine Maidens) try to take the ring, but Siegfried prevails. A bird leads Siegfried to the sleeping Brünnhilde; Wotan tries to block him, but Siegfried shatters Wotan’s spear with his own magic sword. He awakens the Valkyrie with a kiss, they fall in love, and Brünnhilde welcomes her new life with him, bidding farewell to her status as a deity.



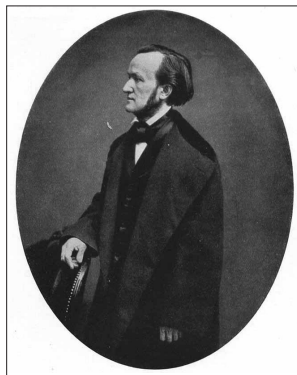
From top: tenor Jean de Reszke as Siegfried, ca. 1896; Otto von Richter’s depiction of Siegfried awakening Brünnhilde, 1892

characters or ideas — and here a number of them interweave to convey what is going through Siegfried’s mind: thoughts of the parents he never knew (Siegmund and Sieglinde) and the love they shared, the hovering presence of Freia, the goddess of youth and love. As the movement unrolls it grows into a full-bodied depiction of the forest, an idyllic descriptive tone poem within an opera.

Instrumentation: two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, triangle, and strings.

— James M. Keller is a former New York Philharmonic Program Annotator and the author of *Chamber Music: A Listener’s Guide* (Oxford University Press).

A Nod to the Arranger



We hear Wagner’s *Forest Murmurs* not as it appears in the score of the opera *Siegfried* but rather in an arrangement by Hermann Zumpe (1850–1903). He met with some success as a composer of operettas but was more famous as a conductor — particularly a Wagner conductor — presiding over prestigious podiums in Stuttgart, Schwerin, and Munich; in the last, he directed the organizations that would evolve into the Munich Philharmonic and the Bavarian Staatsoper. In 1872 he went to Bayreuth to be part of what Wagner facetiously called his *Nibelungen-Kanzlei* — “Nibelung Chancellery,” devoted musical assistants who copied out parts, checked printing proofs, prepared piano reductions for singers’ rehearsals (to Zumpe fell *Götterdämmerung*), and provided other services relating to the premiere of the *Ring* cycle.



Zumpe created his edition of *Forest Murmurs* for the Schott publishing house to release in 1880. Its departures from Wagner’s original include an overhaul of the orchestration. The orchestra required for *Siegfried* in the opera house is vast, but Zumpe recast the music in a way that conveys the essence of Wagner’s sound while bringing the piece within reach of a more normally constituted concert orchestra.

From top: Wagner in Brussels, 1860, and a drawing of Hermann Zumpe by Christian Wilhelm Allers, 1886

Suite from *The Firebird* (1919 version)

Igor Stravinsky

As musicians go, Igor Stravinsky was a late bloomer. He didn't begin piano lessons until he was nine; these were soon supplemented by tutoring in harmony and counterpoint. His parents supported him, all the more laudable since they knew what their teenager was getting into. Stravinsky's father was a bass at the opera houses of Kiev and, later, St. Petersburg; his mother was an accomplished amateur pianist.

One of Stravinsky's school friends was the son of the celebrated composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. When Stravinsky's father died, in December 1902, Rimsky-Korsakov became a personal and musical mentor to the aspiring composer. Stravinsky's big break came with a string of collaborations with the ballet impresario Serge Diaghilev, whose Ballets Russes, launched in Paris in 1909, became part of Europe's cutting-edge arts scene. His first Diaghilev project was modest, a pair of Chopin orchestrations for the 1909 Ballets Russes production of *Les Sylphides*. The production was a success, but critics complained that the troupe's choreographic and scenic novelty clashed with its conservative music. Diaghilev addressed this by commissioning new ballet scores, and the first was Stravinsky's *Firebird*, premiered in 1910. Thus began a collaboration that produced key cornerstones of Modernist stage music: *Petrushka* (premiered in 1911), *The Rite of Spring* (1913), *The Nightingale* (1914), *Pulcinella* (1920), *Mavra* (1922), *Reynard* (1922), *The Wedding* (1923), *Oedipus Rex* (1927), and *Apollo* (1928).

The Ballets Russes specialized in pieces that were inspired by Russian folklore, and *The Firebird* was perfectly

suiting to the company's designs. The tale involves the dashing Prince Ivan (Ivan Tsarevich), who finds himself wandering through the garden of the evil King Kashchei, whose power resides in a magic egg that he guards in an elegant box. In Kashchei's garden, the Prince captures a Firebird, which pleads for its life. The Prince agrees to spare it if it gives him one of its magic tail feathers, and it agrees. Thus armed, the Prince continues through his evening and happens upon 13 enchanted princesses. The most beautiful of them catches his eye, and (acting under Kashchei's spell) lures him to a spot where Kashchei's demonic guards can ensnare him. Before he can be put under a spell himself, the Prince uses the feather to summon the Firebird, which reveals to

In Short

Born: June 17, 1882, in Oranienbaum, now Lomonosov, near St. Petersburg, Russia

Died: April 6, 1971, in New York City

Work composed: between November 1909 and May 18, 1910; the concert suite heard here was created in Morges, Switzerland, in 1919

World premiere: the original ballet was unveiled on June 25, 1910, in a staged production of the Ballets Russes at the Paris Opéra, Gabriel Pierné, conductor. This concert suite was premiered on April 12, 1919, in Geneva, Switzerland, Ernest Ansermet, conductor.

New York Philharmonic premiere: February 10, 1921, with Walter Damrosch conducting the New York Symphony (which would merge with the New York Philharmonic in 1928)

Estimated duration: ca. 22 minutes

Views and Reviews

A French critic reported his experience of hearing Stravinsky play through his work-in-progress that winter in St. Petersburg:

The composer, young, slim, and uncommunicative, with vague meditative eyes, and lips set firm in an energetic looking face, was at the piano. But the moment he began to play, the modest and dimly lit dwelling glowed with a dazzling radiance. By the end of the first scene, I was conquered: by the last, I was lost in admiration. The manuscript on the music-desk, scored over with fine penciling, revealed a masterpiece.

him the secret of the magic egg. The Prince locates and smashes the egg, then goes off to marry the newly liberated Princess, with whom, of course, he will live happily ever after.

The Firebird would be the first of Igor Stravinsky's truly original Diaghilev scores, but the opportunity came to him rather by accident. One of Diaghilev's set designers, Alexandre Benois, pushed to have Nikolai Tcherepnin write the score. Diaghilev favored his one-time harmony professor Anatoly Lyadov, despite his reputation for procrastination and debilitating self-criticism. Lyadov strung Diaghilev along for months, before the impresario, who was running out of time, turned to the aspiring young Stravinsky. Stravinsky dropped what he was working on, installed himself in a dacha belonging to the family of Rimsky-Korsakov, and turned out his sparkling score

between November 1909 and March 1910, with final orchestrations and retouching continuing until May.

The ballet was well established by the time Stravinsky assembled several of its movements into a symphonic suite in 1919. (He would later expand this in 1945, but the 1919 version remains more popular.) This is one of music's great showpieces of orchestration, a tour de force for a 28-year-old composer. Even in the reduced orchestration of the 1919 version the music is full of astonishing instrumental effects. Some of the sounds are frankly startling, such as when, in the introduction, the strings play eerie glissandos over their fingerboards to evoke the mystery of the garden at night. When the Firebird dances, it does so to variations on a Russian song, and the overlay of wind orchestration makes one believe that its feathers must indeed sparkle with magic. More folk tunes inform the dance of the Princesses, which is thrown into disarray when Kashchei's guards swarm onto the scene with their Infernal Dance. A solo violin comes to the fore in the tender Lullaby, and, with the evil spells broken, the Finale depicts a breathtakingly beautiful wedding processional for the Prince and his chosen Princess.

Instrumentation: two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes (one doubling English horn), two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, xylophone, harp, piano (doubling celesta), and strings.

—J.M.K.

The Artists



Gustavo Dudamel is committed to creating a better world through music. His rise, from humble beginnings in Venezuela to an unparalleled international career of artistic and social achievements, offers living proof that culture can bring meaning to the life of an individual and greater harmony to the world. Currently Music & Artistic Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Venezuela's Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra, in 2026 he becomes the New York Philharmonic's Oscar L. Tang and H.M. Agnes Hsu-Tang Music & Artistic Director, continuing a legacy that includes Mahler, Toscanini, and Bernstein.

Throughout 2025 Dudamel celebrated El Sistema's 50th anniversary, honoring the global impact of José Antonio Abreu's visionary education program and acknowledging the vital importance of arts education. Celebrations with the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra included a European tour to Paris, London, Luxembourg, Berlin, Munich, Brussels, and Madrid; a London residency that included opening for Coldplay at Wembley Stadium and performing at the Royal Festival Hall; and recordings on the Platoon label, including the Grammy-nominated recording of Ravel's *Boléro*. Dudamel maintains longstanding artistic relationships with the world's leading orchestras, returning

regularly for appearances and international tours with the Berlin Philharmonic and the Vienna Philharmonic.

Dudamel's advocacy for the power of music to unite, heal, and inspire is global. In appearances from the United Nations and the White House to the Nobel Peace Prize Concert and *The New York Times* "Turning Points" essay series, Dudamel has served as a passionate advocate for music education and social integration through art. In 2007 Dudamel, the LA Phil, and its community partners founded YOLA (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles), which provides more than 1,700 young people with free instruments, music instruction, academic support, and leadership training, and welcomes them to YOLA's purpose-built, Frank Gehry-designed Judith and Thomas L. Beckmen YOLA Center at Inglewood. In 2012 Dudamel and his wife, actress and director María Valverde, launched the Dudamel Foundation to expand access to music and the arts for young people. The Dudamel Foundation has hosted its *Encuentros* initiatives from across the Americas and Europe, exploring cultural unity and celebrating harmony, equality, dignity, beauty, and respect through music.

As a conductor, Dudamel is one of the few classical musicians to become a bona fide pop-culture phenomenon and has worked tirelessly to ensure that music reaches an ever-greater audience. In 2024 he was the first classical musician to be featured on the cover of *Billboard*. He was the first classical artist to participate in the Super Bowl half-time show and the youngest conductor to lead the Vienna Philharmonic's New Year's Concert. In 2025 he and the LA Phil made history as the first professional symphony orchestra to perform at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival. He has performed at global mainstream events from the Academy Awards to the reopening of Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral, and has worked with musical icons like Billie Eilish, Christina Aguilera, LL Cool J, Ca7riel y Paco, Cynthia Erivo, Laufey, Coldplay, and Nas.

The **New York Philharmonic Chorus** is an ensemble of New York–based, professional vocalists. The Chorus made its debut in October 2022, when it performed in the Inaugural Galas marking the opening of the transformed David Geffen Hall; over the two programs the chorus displayed its range through performances of music by Bernstein and Handel as well as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and the World Premiere of Angélica Negrón's *You Are the Prelude*, commissioned by the Orchestra for the occasion. Later that season the ensemble joined the Orchestra for Adolphus Hailstork's *Done Made My Vow, A Ceremony* and the New York Premiere of John Luther Adams's *Become Desert*, a Philharmonic co-commission. In the 2023–24 season the Chorus performed in the staged production of *Émigré* — composed by Aaron Zigman with lyrics by Mark Campbell and Brock Walsh — and in Mahler's Symphony No. 2, *Resurrection*, in Jaap van Zweden's final David Geffen Hall appearances as Philharmonic Music Director. This season the New York Philharmonic Chorus performs works by two Pulitzer Prize winners: the World Premiere of David Lang's *the wealth of nations* and the New York Premiere of Ellen Reid's *Earth Between Oceans*.

Grammy Award–nominated conductor **Malcolm J. Merriweather** is music director of New York City's The Dessoff Choirs and Orchestra; has prepared the New York Philharmonic Chorus for all its performances since it was founded in 2022; and holds the Tania León Endowed Chair in Music at Brooklyn College. His 2025–26 season highlights include singing the world premiere of Peter Boyer's *A Hundred Years On* with The Philadelphia Orchestra and the title role in Brian Story's *Frederick: Cantata on the Life of Frederick Douglass* with Music Worcester. His tenth anniversary with The Dessoff Choirs celebration includes conducting Adolphus Hailstork's *The World Called*, J.S. Bach's B-minor Mass, and Tania León's *It's a Journey*. Merriweather is acclaimed for world premiere recordings of Margaret Bonds's *The Ballad of the Brown King*, *Credo*, and *Simon Bore the Cross* (AVIE Records). Solange Knowles invited him to join Saint Heron for *Glory to Glory: A Revival of Devotional Art* with Voices of Harlem and The Clark Sisters. His ensembles have appeared at New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, Los Angeles's Walt Disney Concert Hall, and London's Westminster Abbey, and before Pope Francis at the Vatican.

New York Philharmonic Chorus

Malcolm J. Merriweather, *director*

Michele Kennedy, *choral associate*

SOPRANOS

Shabnam Abedi
 Vianca Alejandra
 Gloria Bangiola
 Meg Dudley
 Halley Gilbert
 Laura Jobin-Acosta
 Christina Kay
 Sylvia Maisonet
 Barbee Monk
 Mara O'Malley
 Angela Owens
 Julie Sarte
 Elisa Singer Strom
 Linda Tsatsanis
 Elizabeth Van Os
 Amaranta Viera
 Katherine Wessinger
 Maggie Woolums

ALTOS

Sarah Balsam-Moga
 Nina Berman
 Jennifer Borghi
 Hai-Ting Chinn
 Wendy Gilles
 Allison Gish
 Francesca Lunghi
 Jared Christopher
 Marshall
 Katherine Doe Morse
 Guadalupe Peraza
 Mary Rice
 Suzanne Schwing
 Charlotte
 Small-Chestnut
 Pamela Terry
 Carla Wesby
 Cherissia Williams

TENORS

Charles Curtis
 Matthew Deming
 Sean Fallen
 Kaleb Hopkins
 Brandon
 Hornsby-Selvin
 John Kawa
 Taiwan Norris
 Douglas Purcell
 Emerson Sieverts
 Nathan Siler
 Michael Steinberger
 Edward Washington
 Tommy Wazelle

BASSES

Ryan Cheung
 Daniel Chiu
 Matthew Cramer
 Martin Hargrove
 Brandon Hynum
 Dominic Inferrera
 Angelo Johnson
 Andrew Jurden
 Guanchen Liu
 Brian Mummert
 Gregory Purnhagen
 Christopher Seefeldt
 Charles Sprawls

Current as of April 27, 2026

New York Philharmonic

The **New York Philharmonic** plays a leading cultural role in New York City, the United States, and the world. Each season the Orchestra connects with millions of music lovers through live concerts in New York and beyond, as well as broadcasts, recordings, and education programs. Gustavo Dudamel serves as the Oscar L. Tang and H.M. Agnes Hsu-Tang Music & Artistic Director Designate in the 2025–26 season, before beginning his tenure as Music & Artistic Director in September 2026.

In 2025–26 Dudamel conducts works reflecting on the United States in the nation's 250th anniversary year, including three World Premieres: Leilehua Lanzilotti's *of light and stone*, David Lang's *the wealth of nations* (the result of his being named a 2024 winner of the Orchestra's Marie-Josée Kravis Prize for New Music), and an orchestration of Rzewski's *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!*, with the variations arranged by 18 leading composers. Dudamel also leads the New York Premiere of Ellen Reid's *Earth Between Oceans*, co-commissioned in partnership with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; collaborates with the Spanish Harlem Orchestra; and conducts the Spring Gala concert. The NY Phil honors former Music Director Pierre Boulez's centennial through two programs conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen featuring selections from Boulez's *Notations*, with Pierre-Laurent Aimard performing the piano versions interspersed with their orchestral versions, and *Rituel in memoriam Bruno Maderna*, commissioned in partnership with the LA Phil and Opéra de Paris, featuring choreography by Benjamin Millepied.

The New York Philharmonic's legacy of commissioning and / or premiering works by leading composers runs from Dvořák's *New World* Symphony to Pulitzer Prize winners: John Adams's *On the Transmigration of Souls* and Tania León's *Stride*, the latter made possible through *Project 19*, the

largest women-only commissioning project. The Orchestra's more than 2,000 recordings released since 1917 include the live recording of Julia Wolfe's Grammy-nominated *Fire in my mouth*. In 2023 the NY Phil announced a partnership with Apple Music Classical, the standalone music streaming app designed to deliver classical music lovers the optimal listening experience. The nationally syndicated radio program *The New York Philharmonic This Week* features recent performances and commercial recordings complemented by interviews and archival highlights. The Orchestra's extensive history is available free online through the New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives.

A resource for the community and the world, the Orchestra complements the annual free Concerts in the Parks, Presented by Didi and Oscar Schafer, and the Free Concert at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, Presented by the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation, with the Phil for All: Ticket Access Program. The NY Phil's impactful education projects include the Young People's Concerts, Very Young People's Concerts, and the New York Philharmonic Very Young Composers Program, as well as free discussion series. The Orchestra has appeared in 437 cities in 63 countries, including Moscow, USSR, in 1959, on the Leonard Bernstein–led tour of that country; São Paulo, Brazil, in a 1987 concert in Ibirapuera Park attended by 150,000; and Pyongyang, DPRK, in 2008, marking the first visit there by an American orchestra.

Founded in 1842, the New York Philharmonic is the oldest symphony orchestra in the United States and one of the oldest in the world. Notable figures who have conducted the Philharmonic include Tchaikovsky, Richard Strauss, Stravinsky, and Copland. Distinguished conductors who have served as Music Director include Bernstein, Toscanini, and Mahler.

Q&A David Peel, Assistant Principal Horn

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nyphil.org/david-peel



MATT DINE

The Facts: Originally from Miami; spent most of life and career in the New Jersey / New York City area. Studied with the late Jerome Ashby, a former Philharmonic member; Andrew Lewinter at University of Miami; and his own father, Jerry Peel. Prior to the Philharmonic: member of the American Symphony Orchestra and American Ballet Theatre Orchestra; horn chair at *Disney's Aladdin* on Broadway. Current teaching positions: on the faculty of Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of the Arts. **At the Philharmonic:** Joined in 2024.

Are there other musicians in your family?

My dad is a horn player and teacher, and my sister plays flute and piccolo in The Philadelphia Orchestra.

What is your earliest musical memory?

Seeing my dad perform a solo concert with a rhythm and string section backing him. I was completely blown away — to me, he was a rock star. That experience is probably a big reason I ended up doing what I do today.

Who are your greatest musical influences?

My family shaped my life and my musical path. My mother was tireless in keeping me engaged,

disciplined, and striving to improve, while watching my father's career made it impossible not to be drawn to that world. Being around rehearsals, recording sessions, and performances was profoundly inspiring. Beyond that, I'm constantly inspired by listening, watching, and learning from the remarkable musicians I've worked with throughout my career.

Who are your favorite composers? Mahler and Richard Strauss — their writing is some of the most fun a horn player can have.

What are your Philharmonic highlights?

Every day I come to work at the Philharmonic is a privilege. Performing Mahler's Second Symphony during one of my trial weeks stands out — it was both nerve-wracking and exhilarating.

What music are you listening to right now?

Lately I've been into electronic music by artists like Modera and Klur. It's rhythmic, groove-based music with nice simple vocal melodies. It provides a nice contrast to what I do all day, and helps me return to the Orchestra with fresh ears.

What do you like to do outside of work at the Philharmonic?

The most important part of my life is my family. I adore them and spend as much time with my wife and kids as I can. I also enjoy teaching, working on DIY projects around the house, and skiing whenever I get the chance — there's nothing better than flying down a mountain with nothing else on your mind.

What advice would you give to young musicians considering an orchestral career?

Three-quarters of being a musician happens between your ears. You can practice until your fingers bleed, but if what's going on inside your head isn't right, none of that matters. Secondly, do a lot of imitation and copying. And lastly, take what you do very seriously without taking yourself too seriously.

Q&A: I-Jung Huang, Violin

nyphil.org/i-jung-huang



CHRIS LEE

The Facts: From Taoyuan, Taiwan. Studied with Miriam Fried at New England Conservatory, Donald Weilerstein and Daniel Phillips at The Juilliard School, and Philharmonic Associate Principal Second Violin Lisa Eunsoo Kim and former Philharmonic Concertmaster Glenn Dicterow at Manhattan School of Music. Prior to the Philharmonic: Member of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. **At the Philharmonic:** Joined in 2022.

What is your first memory of your musical career? My very first violin performance — although not my actual playing! I just remember wanting to look right for the stage, so I insisted my mom let me wear a full matching outfit, including a pink dress and a hat. And looking back now, it's funny — I think I cared more about what I was wearing than the performance itself!

Are there other musicians in your family? Not professionally, but my mom has always loved music and played a little piano, and my brother also played violin growing up.

Who is your greatest musical influence? Hilary Hahn really inspired me during some of the most challenging times in my teenage years. I watch a lot of her interviews, and I keep a printed quote from one of them in my violin case (about how to mentally prepare for going on stage), which I always turn to for encouragement.

Who are your favorite composers? Beethoven, Mozart, Dvořák, Prokofiev, and Shostakovich ... and many others!

What are your personal Philharmonic highlights? Receiving tenure: that was the moment I truly felt like I belonged to this iconic orchestra. Also, our Spring Gala honoring John Williams in 2023. I remember seeing him, Steven Spielberg, and Ken-David Masur together backstage, and shaking their hands. I never dreamed something like that would happen!

What would you be if not a musician? I used to dream of working in a bakery, but I'd probably be an entrepreneur or have some kind of freelance career.

What music are you listening to right now? Whatever I need to prepare for the following week's performances!

What do you like to do outside of the Philharmonic? I have many hobbies. I enjoy making videos on YouTube and sharing my musical life with others who are interested — you can find my channel @violinijung. I also love sewing and journaling.

What advice would you give to young musicians considering an orchestral career? Never give up. The path to an orchestral career can be full of setbacks — I had my share of difficult auditions early on. What kept me going was this: even if you can't keep running, keep moving forward. Persistence matters more than speed.

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New York Philharmonic Guide

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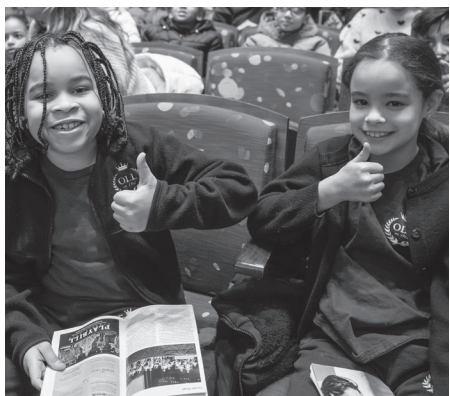
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