

## HYMN — Curated by Friends and Colleagues

January 27, 2023 • 7:30 PM

Featuring:

**Lidia Khaner**, conductor

**Clayton Leung**, viola

**Tatiana Warszynski**, violin

This program does not include an intermission.

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**VALENTIN SILVESTROV**

*Hymn – 2001* (2001)

(6')\*

**VERONIKA KRAUSAS**

*Inside the Stone* (1997)

(7')\*

**PĒTERIS VASKS**

*Concerto for Viola and String Orchestra* (2016) (ESO Premiere)

(35')\*

*I. Andante*

*II. Allegro moderato*

*III. Andante*

*IV. Adagio*

*Program subject to change.*

\*indicates approximate performance duration

***Hymn – 2001***  
**Valentin Silvestrov**  
(b. Kyiv, 1937)

First performed: April 15, 2001, in Kyiv  
Last ESO performance: January 20, 2023

Born in 1937, the Ukrainian Valentin Silvestrov may be counted alongside his contemporaries Arvo Pärt and Giya Kancheli as among the most profoundly spiritual composers from the former Soviet republics. Silvestrov, however, distinguishes himself from those contemporaries by the sharpness of his ears and the freshness of his thinking. Many of his works could be considered either neoclassical and post-modernist (a bit of an elusive term, denoting a turning away from aspects of modern art). Still, the composer has insisted, "I do not write new music. My music is a response to and an echo of what already exists." He does this by his use of traditional tonal and modal techniques, creating a singular blend of both dramatic and emotional textures, qualities that he suggests are otherwise sacrificed in much of contemporary music.

*Hymn – 2001* was composed in 1999 and dedicated to Giya Kancheli. This work is a noble song of praise with expands outward tonally and harmonically. "My hymn is enveloped in silence although it appears like a customary string setting on the outside," he writes. "The paradox of Cage's ('4:33') is also present in latent form, but this is the 'silence of new music.' All melodic content from my other compositions can also be found here. A rest does not only constitute a lack of sound but is also a state of [slowing down] and paralysis or a suspension of time. In early music, there was an occasional need for silence, but here it is a fundamental feature."

***Inside the Stone***  
**Veronika Krausas**  
(b. Sydney, Australia, 1963)

First performed: 1997  
This is the ESO premiere of any work by Veronica Krausas

Of Lithuanian heritage, composer Veronika Krausas was born in Australia, raised in Canada, and lives in Los Angeles. She has directed, composed for, and produced multi-media events that incorporate her works with dance, acrobatics, and video. Krausas has music composition degrees from the University of Toronto, McGill University in Montréal, and a doctorate from the Thornton School of Music at USC in Los Angeles, where she is a faculty member in the Composition Department. She is a pre-concert lecturer and interviewer at the Los Angeles Philharmonic and serves on the advisory boards of Jacaranda Music and People Inside Electronics.

Of her work *Inside the Stone*, Veronika Krausas writes:  
"This piece is inspired by a line from a poem by the Canadian poet, Gwendolyn MacEwen: 'What lives inside the stone? Miracles, strange light.'"

## ***Concerto for Viola and String Orchestra***

**Pēteris Vasks**

(b. Latvia, 1946)

First performed: May 20, 2016, in Cardiff, Wales

This is the ESO premiere of any work by Pēteris Vasks

Viola fans rejoice! This work will be the first of two important viola concertos from the last 100 years the Edmonton Symphony will perform. The second, William Walton's 1923 concerto, will be presented in March. Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks shares traits in common with such Baltic contemporaries as Arvo Pärt – words such as “ethereal” and “mystical” come up frequently. A double bassist himself, Vasks is known particularly for his compositions for string instruments. The concerto presented here is entirely for strings, and is dedicated to the soloist who premiered the work, Maxim Rysanov.

Vasks sees his art as a nurturing one, providing “food for the soul,” he has said. His concerto begins tentatively – the string orchestra reaching out gradually and slowly. The deep, alto voice of the solo instrument emerges out of the texture in a languid Andante melody. The music of the opening movement is at once rich and earthy, the viola's drive bringing the rest of the ensemble with it until a pause restores the more contemplative mood, bringing the movement to a close. The second movement is the only fast one of the concerto's four movements. This is an Allegro set to a rustic rhythm, the viola's role equally more of a folk instrument. Double stops and rapid bow work lend an air of vitality to the solo part, which scarcely stops for even a moment. A cadenza near the movement's end explores the range of dynamics and register, the orchestral strings re-entry dramatically and suddenly ending on a precarious ascent.

The third movement is also marked Andante – this one decidedly more in the nature of a sorrowful song, one which both the viola and string ensemble build into a dramatic and altogether more harrowing intensity. This is the longest movement of the concerto – a journey to dark and ominous places. Like the first movement, a pause resets the mood of the movement, but not its restless sense of loss and displacement. There is a cadenza in this movement as well, angular and icy, leading to another feverish ascent in the strings, which immediately ushers in the final movement, an Adagio begun by the lone viola. As if surveying the landscape left in tatters in the previous movement, this one begins with an air of resignation for soloist and orchestra. The viola's long, unbroken song leads to an extended orchestral response – a dialog in which the viola offers the final comment – a sad one to be sure, but not without hope or beauty.

Program notes © 2023 by D.T. Baker