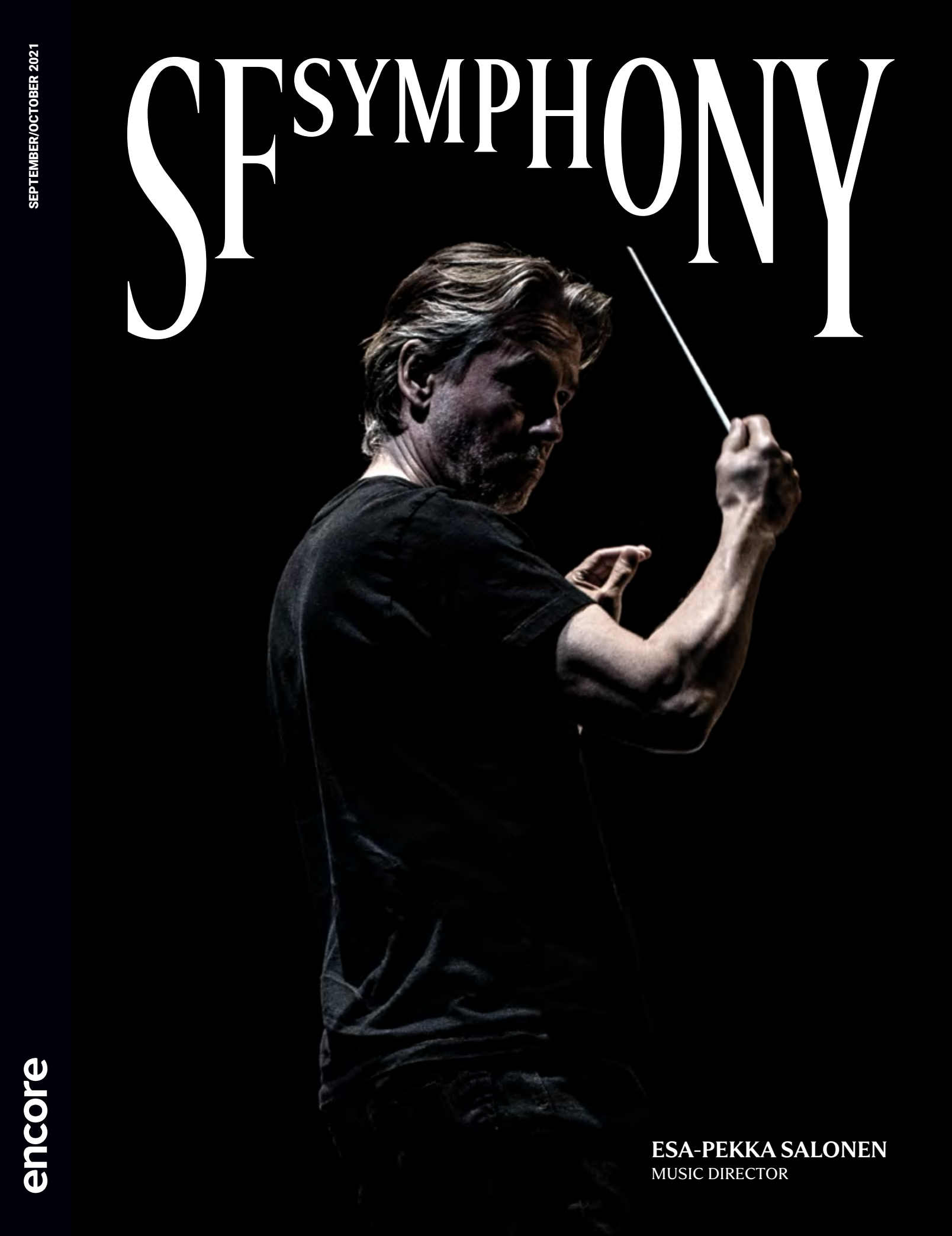
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2021

SF SYMPHONY



ESA-PEKKA SALONEN
MUSIC DIRECTOR

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ESA-PEKKA SALONEN

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY MUSIC DIRECTOR

San Francisco Symphony Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen has, through his many high-profile conducting roles and work as a leading composer, shaped a unique vision for the present and future of the contemporary symphony orchestra. He is Conductor Laureate for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, where he was Music Director from 1992 until 2009, the Philharmonia Orchestra, where he was Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor from 2008 until 2021, and the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra. He is a member of the faculty of the Colburn School in Los Angeles, where he developed and directs the pre-professional Negaunee Conducting Program. Salonen co-founded—and from 2003 until 2018 served as the Artistic Director for—the annual Baltic Sea Festival, which invites celebrated artists to promote unity and ecological awareness among the countries around the Baltic Sea. In 2020, he was appointed an honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE) by the Queen of England.

AT THE SYMPHONY

Welcome to the 2021–22 San Francisco Symphony season. It is wonderful to gather again as a Symphony family through the communicative and healing spirit of music, with Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen and our musicians back on stage and you with us here at Davies Symphony Hall. We look forward to a season marked by collaboration, flexibility, and inclusivity as we re-engage with music and each other in new and meaningful ways.

We can't wait to share innovative programs led by Esa-Pekka and boundary-pushing projects spearheaded by our Collaborative Partners. October alone features concerts involving four of the Collaborative Partners and Esa-Pekka: esperanza spalding joins us for our Opening Week concerts (Sept 30–Oct 2), Claire Chase plays Kaija Saariaho's *Aile du songe* (Oct 14–17), and Pekka Kuuisisto performs Bryce Dessner's Violin Concerto (Oct 21–23). In addition to reconnecting with longtime friends this season, we are thrilled to welcome vital artistic voices to our stage for the first time, such as composer Hannah Kendall, whom you can read about in the feature beginning on page 12.

Throughout the past year, we have been buoyed by the support of our incredible San Francisco community. When we returned to Davies Symphony Hall in May for our first live concerts in fourteen months, we were fortunate to share this momentous event with those working on the front lines to support our city. It is only fitting that the first concerts of this season are also given in celebration of our community partners. Among these is the beloved annual All San Francisco concert, now in its 41st year and presented this year on September 30, in which we welcome community groups to Davies Symphony Hall. You can learn more about All San Francisco in the sidebar at right.

Thank you for your continued support of the San Francisco Symphony. We look forward to sharing music with you in the months ahead.

Priscilla B. Geeslin
President, San Francisco Symphony

News & Notes

Bringing Music to All San Francisco

The All San Francisco Concert, presented in partnership with the San Francisco Arts Commission, is a dedicated performance for Bay Area nonprofit, social services, and community organizations, in recognition and gratitude for the work these groups do for the citizens of our city.

The Ellen Magnin Newman Award is presented annually to a Bay Area community-based organization that strengthens our region's cultural fabric and serves vulnerable families and individuals to create a more just and equitable society for everyone who lives here.

This year, the All San Francisco Committee is proud to honor **Loco Bloco**. Loco Bloco Productions, sponsored by Jamestown Community Center, promotes San Francisco youth's healthy transition into adulthood by engaging them in the creation and performance of music, dance, and theater rooted in Afro-Latino traditions. Loco Bloco encourages its youth to use multicultural art forms as a tool for their own empowerment and as a catalyst to help them overcome discrimination and bring about change in their communities.

2021 ALL SAN FRANCISCO COMMITTEE

Cynthia Inaba, FAMSF, Co-Chair
Robert Melton, Curator/Organizer, Co-Chair
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Cristina Barron, SF Pre-Trial
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Andrea Ceseña, Gray Area Foundation for the Arts
Brittany Ford, Mo'MAGIC
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Andrea Palmer, San Francisco Symphony
Ryan Pinter, California College of the Arts
Josué Rojas, Artist
Selina Weiss, Youth Law Center
Devi Zinzuvadia, St. James School in the Mission

THE ORCHESTRA

Esa-Pekka Salonen, *Music Director*
Nicholas Britell • Julia Bullock • Claire Chase • Bryce Dessner • Pekka Kuusisto • Nico Muhly • Carol Reiley • Esperanza Spalding, *Collaborative Partners*
Michael Tilson Thomas, *Music Director Laureate*
Herbert Blomstedt, *Conductor Laureate*
Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser, *Resident Conductor of Engagement and Education*
Daniel Stewart, *San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra Wattis Foundation Music Director*
Ross Jamie Collins • Kyle Dickson • Molly Turner, *Salonen Fellows, Colburn School of Music, Negaunee Conducting Program*
Vance George, *Chorus Director Emeritus*

FIRST VIOLINS

Alexander Barantschik, *Concertmaster*
Naoum Blinder Chair
Nadya Tichman, *Associate Concertmaster*
San Francisco Symphony Foundation Chair
Wyatt Underhill, *Assistant Concertmaster*
75th Anniversary Chair
Jeremy Constant, *Assistant Concertmaster*
Mariko Smiley
Paula & John Gambs Second Century Chair
Melissa Kleinbart
Katharine Hanrahan Chair
Yun Chu
Naomi Kazama Hull
In Sun Jang
Yukiko Kurakata
Catherine A. Mueller Chair
Suzanne Leon
Leor Maltinski
Sarn Oliver
Florin Parvulescu
Victor Romasevich
Catherine Van Hoesen

SECOND VIOLINS

Dan Carlson, *Principal*
Dinner & Swig Families Chair
Helen Kim, *Associate Principal*
Audrey Avis Aasen-Hull Chair
Jessie Fellows, *Assistant Principal*
Vacant
The Eucalyptus Foundation Second Century Chair
Raushan Akhmedyarova
David Chernyavsky
John Chisholm
Cathryn Down
Darlene Gray
Stan & Lenora Davis Chair
Amy Hiraga
Kum Mo Kim
Kelly Leon-Pearce
Eliot Lev
Isaac Stern Chair
Chunming Mo
Polina Sedukh
Chen Zhao

VIOLAS

Jonathan Vinocour, *Principal*
Yun Jie Liu, *Associate Principal*
Katie Kadarauch, *Assistant Principal*
Vacant
Joanne E. Harrington & Lorry I. Lokey Second Century Chair
Gina Cooper
David Gaudry
David Kim
Christina King
Wayne Roden
Nanci Severance
Adam Smyla
Matthew Young

CELLOS

Vacant, *Principal*
Philip S. Boone Chair
Peter Wyrick, *Associate Principal*
Peter & Jacqueline Hoefer Chair
Amos Yang, *Assistant Principal*
Vacant
Lyman & Carol Casey Second Century Chair
Barbara Andres
The Stanley S. Langendorf Foundation Second Century Chair
Barbara Bogatin
Phylis Blair Cello Chair
Jill Rachuy Brindel
Gary & Kathleen Heidenreich Second Century Chair
Sébastien Gingras
Penelope Clark Second Century Chair
David Goldblatt
Christine & Pierre Lamond Second Century Chair
Carolyn McIntosh
Elizabeth C. Peters Cello Chair
Anne Pinsker

BASSES

Scott Pingel, *Principal*
Daniel G. Smith, *Associate Principal*
Stephen Tramontozzi, *Assistant Principal*
Richard & Rhoda Goldman Chair
S. Mark Wright
Lawrence Metcalf Second Century Chair
Charles Chandler
Chris Gilbert
Brian Marcus

FLUTES

Vacant, *Principal*
Caroline H. Hume Chair
Vacant, *Associate Principal*
Catherine & Russell Clark Chair
Linda Lukas
Alfred S. & Dede Wilsey Chair
Catherine Payne, *Piccolo*
The Rainbow Piccolo Chair

OBOES

Eugene Izotov, *Principal*
Edo de Waart Chair
James Button, *Associate Principal*
Pamela Smith
Dr. William D. Clinite Chair
Russ deLuna, *English Horn*
Joseph & Pauline Scafidi Chair

CLARINETS

Carey Bell, *Principal*
William R. & Gretchen B. Kimball Chair
Vacant, *Associate Principal & E-flat Clarinet*
Vacant
Jerome Simas, *Bass Clarinet*

BASSOONS

Stephen Paulson, *Principal*
Steven Dibner, *Associate Principal*
Vacant
Steven Braunstein, *Contrabassoon*

HORNS

Robert Ward, *Principal*
Mark Almond, *Associate Principal*
Bruce Roberts, *Assistant Principal*
Jonathan Ring
Jessica Valeri
Daniel Hawkins

TRUMPETS

Mark Inouye, *Principal*
William G. Irwin Charity Foundation Chair
Aaron Schuman, *Associate Principal*
Peter Pastreich Chair
Guy Piddington
Ann L. & Charles B. Johnson Chair
Jeff Biancalana

TROMBONES

Timothy Higgins, *Principal*
Robert L. Samter Chair
Nicholas Platoff, *Associate Principal*
Paul Welcomer
Vacant, *Bass Trombone*

The San Francisco Symphony string section utilizes revolving seating on a systematic basis. Players listed in alphabetical order change seats periodically.
Second Century Chairs are supported in part by the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Foundation, ensuring the ongoing artistic excellence of the San Francisco Symphony's string sections.
Alexander Barantschik plays the 1742 Guarnerius del Gesù violin, on loan from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.
Daniel Stewart's appointment as Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra is generously supported by the Paul L. and Phyllis Wattis Endowment Fund.

The San Francisco Symphony is widely considered to be among the most artistically adventurous and innovative arts institutions in the United States, celebrated for its artistic excellence, creative performance concepts, active touring, award-winning recordings, and standard-setting education programs. In the 2020–21 season, the San Francisco Symphony welcomed conductor and composer Esa-Pekka Salonen as its twelfth Music Director, embarking on a new vision for the present and future of the orchestral landscape. In their inaugural season together, Esa-Pekka Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony introduced a groundbreaking artistic leadership model anchored by eight Collaborative Partners from a variety of cultural disciplines: Nicholas Britell, Julia Bullock, Claire Chase, Bryce Dessner, Pekka Kuusisto, Nico Muhly, Carol Reiley, and esperanza spalding. This group of visionary artists, thinkers, and doers, along with Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony, have set out to explore and develop new ideas inspired by the Partners' unique areas of expertise, including innovative digital projects, expansive and imaginative performance concepts in a variety of concert formats, commissions of new music, and projects that foster collaboration across artistic and administrative areas. This exciting artistic future builds on the remarkable 25-year tenure of Michael Tilson Thomas as the San Francisco Symphony's Music Director, who continues his rich relationship with the Symphony as its first Music Director Laureate. For more information on the San Francisco Symphony, visit sfsymphony.org.

TUBA
Jeffrey Anderson, *Principal*
James Irvine Chair

HARP
Douglas Rioth, *Principal*

TIMPANI
Edward Stephan, *Principal*
Marcia & John Goldman Chair
Bryce Leafman, *Assistant Principal Timpani*

PERCUSSION
Jacob Nissly, *Principal*
Bryce Leafman
James Lee Wyatt III
Vacant

LIBRARIANS
Margo Kieser, *Principal*
Nancy & Charles Geschke Chair
John Campbell, *Assistant*
Matt Holland-Gray, *Assistant*

Christopher Wood, *Stage Manager*
Michael "Barney" Barnard, *Stage Technician*
Jon Johannsen, *Recording Engineer/Stage Technician*
Tim Wilson, *Stage Technician*

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Jennifer Mitchell
Natalia Salemmo
Daphne Touchais
Cindy Wyvill
Angelique Zuluaga

ALTOS
Terry Alvord
Karen Carle
Silvie Jensen
Margaret (Peg) Lisi
Brielle Marina Neilson
Leandra Ramm
Dr. Meghan Spyker
Merilyn Telle Vaughn

TENORS
Seth Brenzel
Michael Desnoyers
Elliott JG Encarnación
Samuel Faustine
Kevin Gibbs
Michael Jankosky
Jimmy Kansau
David J. Xiques

BASSES
Adam Cole
Mitchell Jones
Clayton Moser
Matthew Peterson
Chung-Wai Soong
Michael Taylor
David Varnum
Nick Volkert

Now's the Time: Esa-Pekka Salonen on Music

BY CORINNA DA FONSECA-WOLLHEIM

As a teenager in 1970s Finland, Esa-Pekka Salonen developed a reputation for ruining parties. Sometimes he would show up with his friend Magnus, bigfoot the piano, and hammer out four-hands arrangements of atonal pieces. *The Apocalyptic Fantasy* by Josef Matthias Hauer, a progenitor of twelve-tone music, was a favorite. Or he would seize control of the stereo, toss aside Donna Summer and blast a little Pierre Boulez. "I didn't even like his *Marteau sans Maître*," Salonen said in a recent interview, "but I played it anyway because I was the intellectual with a capital 'I.'" A girl he had a crush on put an end to things when she confronted him, tearfully demanding to know what was wrong with him.

Today the San Francisco Symphony's Music Director is one of the most charismatic advocates for classical music and a composer of vibrant works, which can garner hundreds of thousands of streams online. In 2014 he starred in a splashy ad campaign for the Apple iPad. At the helm of the London-based Philharmonia Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic he became known for performances of visceral excitement. These days he wins over audiences to the music of their own time with smartly curated programs—which sometimes include compositions by Magnus Lindberg, his former accomplice in apocalyptic party music.

Speaking on Zoom from his house near Helsinki, Salonen remembered his younger self with wry amusement. "I was impossibly arrogant," he said. "And I actively hated pop and rock music." For years he held fast to the Modernist doctrine and its categorical value judgments. On one occasion he climbed a coal heap outside a power station and declared, in front of rolling TV cameras, that pop music was dead.

"As you can imagine," he said drily, "I've had to eat that one up a few times since."

If Salonen, now 63, has mellowed with time, so has the field. Today no single style dominates composition the way Modernism did in the first postwar decades. The trenches that used to divide musical genres have grown over with thriving new hybrids. As the spectrum of art music widens, classical institutions seek to become more flexible and responsive. For Salonen that means expanding the artistic leadership of the San Francisco Symphony by bringing in eight Collaborative Partners to develop new programs. Rooted in fields including jazz, film music and artificial intelligence, these partners—Nicholas Britell, Julia Bullock, Claire Chase, Bryce Dessner, Pekka Kuusisto, Nico Muhly, Carol Reiley and esperanza spalding—help the Symphony reflect a polyglot world.

"I really felt that I needed to have these bright, exciting, different voices as part of the artistic leadership team," Salonen said, "to go places where I wouldn't have gone without them."

Salonen hopes that these partners will not only enrich the symphony's program but help redefine the orchestra, forge new connections, and expand its role in the community. "When the world in which these orchestras exist is fragmented and diverse, it's almost unfair to imagine that a music director, or any one person, will have an overview of the entire field," he said.

"I would like to be proactive rather than reactive as the world is changing."

For him one of the lessons of the pandemic has been not to take the orchestra for granted as a mechanism that churns out weekly live concerts. Now he's curious about the future of the institution, where it's headed as a concept. And, he added, "I would like to be proactive rather than reactive as the world is changing."

Salonen thinks that received ways of talking about the classical canon—and "masterpieces"—has "stifled the art music world for centuries." Instead, he prefers to think of the standard repertory of a symphony orchestra as "music that is still being performed because generation after generation of people have loved it." Perhaps, he added, "we should leave the greatness concept out of the equation and talk more about love."

What Salonen loves best about the orchestra is its collective intelligence. His favorite metaphor is that of the ensemble as a shoal of fish that stays in formation even as it responds with quicksilver speed to new impulses. He increasingly sees his role as conductor as facilitating more than controlling. "In many cases the best performances of a certain type of music are the ones where you don't feel that it's being directed, but that it's growing organically like some natural phenomenon," he said.

But he takes a different approach when performing compositions designed, as he puts it, as mechanism. "Stravinsky was the master of mechanical form, of form that is constructed," he said. "And Sibelius was the master of a form that is trying to create an illusion of a garden. Where the composer is the gardener, but he doesn't make the plants. Whereas Stravinsky makes the parts and puts them together, and it's a perfectly functioning complex mechanism and you can see the seams."

Salonen traces his own development as a composer from a fascination with machines and the organization of sound toward a more organic ideal that seeks to hide the underlying scaffolding. Nature has become more important to Salonen over the years, though it is both a solace and a source of concern. In 2003 he cofounded the Baltic Sea Festival in Stockholm, which weaves together performances by artists from the region with programs addressing environmental concerns.

But for all the symphonies referencing nature Salonen feels no composer has yet satisfactorily captured the wilderness in sound. Certainly not the Romantics with their aesthetic distance, perched, like Caspar David Friedrich's "Wanderer," above and removed from the wild. Not even Sibelius, who drew so much inspiration from Finland's landscape. "He talks about nature an awful lot," Salonen said, "but when you see photographs of him, he takes walks in the woods wearing his French linen suits, and when he goes fishing he's sitting in the back of the boat and looking a bit worried about the water messing up his shoes. Observing, but not getting his hands dirty. So the forest remains a metaphor."

If there is one fundamental element of the physical world that musicians master it's time. Salonen says he has come to see time, rather than sound, as his primary element. "In composing it's the most difficult one and in conducting it's the most exciting, because that's the challenge that never gets boring," he said. He has become fascinated with Wagner, because his works "means that you are manipulating time, smaller units and larger units and then entire scenes and acts, and the whole thing is about time," he said. "That realization took me a few decades."

"When I was a teenager I told myself I wasn't interested in music because of its emotional content—or any content—but just for the sound," he said. "If I may talk about something as old-fashioned as a television set, I've gone from being fascinated by the schematics and microcircuits and bits and pieces that make a TV to being more interested in what's on. What the program is rather than the LEDs and microchips."

CORINNA DA FONSECA-WOLLHEIM is a writer and the founder of Beginner's Ear.

SPOTLIGHT

Musical Explorations with Composer Hannah Kendall

BY STEVE HOLT

The music of London-born, New York-based composer Hannah Kendall will figure on San Francisco Symphony programs for the first time, as Esa-Pekka Salonen leads the Orchestra in the US premiere of Kendall's *Tuxedo: Vasco 'de' Gama*, October 7–9.

Tell us about Tuxedo: Vasco 'de' Gama.
I came across Jean-Michel Basquiat's *Tuxedo* at the Guggenheim in New York a couple of years ago. And I was particularly drawn to the fact that it references so many things: The explorers Vasco da Gama and Magellan; police presence in Black communities; environmental aspects; all sorts of things. So then the BBC Proms asked me to write a piece to open their 2020 season. And the reference to Vasco da Gama seemed really apt for the year 2020. He was the first explorer to leave Europe and travel across seas to Asia. So that came under the umbrella of globalization, and also the resulting multiculturalism. I was in my New York apartment at the time, and Black Lives Matter was very prominent there then, and of course the pandemic as well. Actually, this is the first of now five pieces I've written that are inspired by that Basquiat. I think there'll be about ten in total, but this composition kicks off the whole series.

This is the first time the San Francisco Symphony has performed one of your works. Can you give us an idea of what it sounds like?
In the very beginning it's bright and funky. Ordinarily, having a piece opening the Proms would be an incredibly celebratory moment, but on the whole it's quite a solemn piece, because of how I was feeling and what I wanted to portray in the summer of 2020. Towards the end it's incredibly emotive, and throughout I have not shied away from strong melodic lines.

"It's an opportunity to push the boundaries a bit; to see how far I can push things."

How about the instrumentation?
Lately I've been trying to bring an aspect of the "other" into the western classical context. That's something Basquiat was interested in as well. So, for example, I've incorporated harmonicas into this work. They're a nod to the blues, music that's very specifically connected to people of the African diaspora. The central aspect of the piece is the presence of a spiritual, "Wade in the Water," and that of course harks back to Vasco da Gama crossing the seas.

How has the current pandemic affected your life as a composer?
I think I've found a lot of creative freedom and liberation in the pandemic, actually. I started doing things I wouldn't ordinarily have done because I thought, well, the whole world is turned upside down, so what does it matter if I want to change things drastically in my music? For example, there's a hint of a tinkly music box in this piece. And ever since COVID, auxiliary instruments play a huge, huge part in the music that I'm writing. I've started preparing stringed instruments with dreadlock cuffs, which are hair accessories that people with locks wear, and it sort of distorts the sound in really interesting ways; things like that. I've just sort of thought, you know, it's an opportunity to push the boundaries a bit; to see how far I can push things.

COVID also affected the premiere of Tuxedo *in London last year, right?*
It was really bizarre. Because I'm a Londoner, I've been going to the Proms my whole life; they were very important to my musical development. Opening the season is such a huge occasion and a huge deal. But last year I couldn't even take my mum! The Royal Albert Hall seats over 5,000, and I was the only person in the audience. It's one of the most memorable experiences I'll probably ever have. It was just exactly of its time, writing a piece in the midst of a pandemic, when the cases were really high in London. It just all came together in this really unusual way.

STEVE HOLT is a Contributing Writer to the San Francisco Symphony program book.

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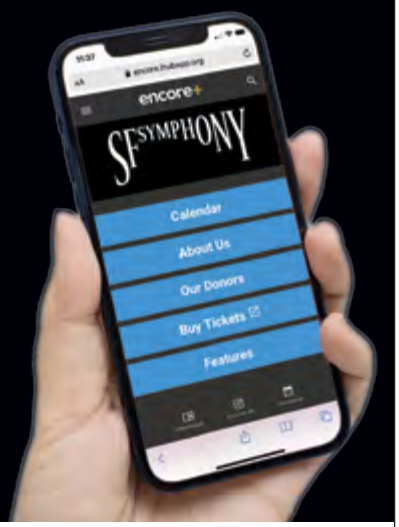

Scan the QR code with your phone's camera to view today's program.

MEET THE MUSICIANS

Mark Almond

Associate Principal Horn

SFS Member: 2020

Hometown: Bolton, England

Mark Almond, MD PhD, was named San Francisco Symphony Associate Principal Horn in February 2020, just before COVID-19 shut down live performances. Bad timing? Not really. Mark was able to pivot to his other great passion: Medicine.

Before coming to San Francisco in 2016, he alternated years of medical training and practice in England with time off for playing in leading orchestras and on movie sound stages.

"In my final year of my medical residency, in 2015, my wife wanted to move to the Bay Area for her job in tech. Unfortunately, if I came over here to work as a doctor, I would've had to start right back at the beginning again, despite having a PhD and 10 years' clinical experience working as a doctor in major London teaching hospitals. So, I literally Googled "horn jobs, San Francisco," and the co-principal horn of the SF Opera came up. I was fortunate enough to win the job. I finished my last hospital shift in England and two weeks later I was rehearsing *Andrea Chenier* with the Opera."

A few years later, he won his current Symphony position. And the music world promptly went on hiatus. "It was very bizarre. Luckily, as no live music performances were happening, I was able to work with the COVID-19 virus at UCSF because of my previous experience. [At Imperial College London, for his PhD, Almond had studied risk factors for severe outcomes following pandemic H1N1/09 infection—really!] Of course, as soon as I had assured the lab there'd be no music interfering with my work there, I was offered a gig with the LA Phil and some film sessions. I also started giving master classes on respiratory physiology for wind and brass players all over the world on Zoom."

Almond's first performance as a member of the San Francisco Symphony also came under unusual circumstances as he recorded his part for Nico Muhly's *Throughline* alone on the stage of Davies Symphony Hall. (His portion was later combined with fellow Symphony members through the miracle of technology).

Mark Almond is that rare talent who's never had to make an agonizing decision between two different passions.

"I was sort of lucky. I got a wide exposure to repertoire when I was at Cambridge studying medicine, because the extracurricular music there was great. I was playing in orchestras all the time. There were tricky decisions when I decided to leave medical school to go and freelance for a year in London, and then to leave the Philharmonia Orchestra to go back and finish medicine. It's been a long trip, mixing the music and the medicine over many years. But it's all turned out nicely."

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Barbara Fracchia

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CALENDAR

Sept/Oct at the Symphony

SEPT 22–23
The Princess Bride—Film with Live Orchestra
Sarah Hicks, conductor
Music by MARK KNOPFLER

SEPT 24–25
Apollo 13—Film with Live Orchestra
Constantine Kitsopoulos, conductor
Music by JAMES HORNER

SEPT 30
ALL SAN FRANCISCO CONCERT

OCT 1
RE-OPENING NIGHT

OCT 2
Esa-Pekka Salonen, conductor
esperanza spalding, vocalist and bass
Alonzo King LINES Ballet
JOHN ADAMS *Slonimsky's Earbox*
ALBERTO GINASTERA *Estancia* Suite
WAYNE SHORTER *Gaia*
SILVESTRE REVUELTAS *Noche de encantamiento,* from *La noche de los Mayas*

OCT 7–9
Esa-Pekka Salonen, conductor
HANNAH KENDALL *Tuxedo: Vasco 'de' Gama* [US Premiere]
UNSUK CHIN *Graffiti*
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 7

OCT 10
CHAMBER MUSIC
With SF Symphony Musicians
Davies Symphony Hall
ZOLTÁN KODÁLY Duo for Violin and Cello
DEVONTÉ HYNES *Perfectly Voiceless*
DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH Piano Quintet in G minor

OCT 14–17
[Open Rehearsal on Oct 14]
Esa-Pekka Salonen, conductor
Claire Chase, flute
Jeremy Denk, piano
CLAUDE DEBUSSY Prelude to *The Afternoon of a Faun*
OLIVIER MESSIAEN *Oiseaux exotiques*
KAIJA SAARIAHO *Aile du songe*
CLAUDE DEBUSSY *La Mer*

OCT 21–23
Esa-Pekka Salonen, conductor
Pekka Kuusisto, violin
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN *Leonore* Overture No. 2
BRYCE DESSNER Violin Concerto [US Premiere]
FRANZ SCHUBERT Symphony No. 5

OCT 24
CHAMBER MUSIC
With SF Symphony Musicians
Gunn Theater at the Legion of Honor
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART Violin Sonata in B-flat major K.378
FELIX MENDELSSOHN Cello Sonata No. 2
ANTONÍN DVOŘAK Piano Quartet in E-flat major

OCT 24
GREAT PERFORMERS SERIES
Ray Chen, violin
Julio Elizalde, piano
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN Violin Sonata No. 8 in G major
IGOR STRAVINSKY Divertimento for Violin and Piano
GIUSEPPE TARTINI (arr. Léopold Charlier) Violin Sonata in G minor, *Devil's Trill*
JOHANNES BRAHMS (arr. Joseph Joachim) Hungarian Dance No. 7 in A major
JOHANNES BRAHMS (arr. Fritz Kreisler) Hungarian Dance No. 17 in F-sharp minor
PABLO DE SARASATE *Zigeunerweisen*

OCT 28–30
Esa-Pekka Salonen, conductor
Yefim Bronfman, piano
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RICHARD STRAUSS Symphony for Winds
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 3

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RE-OPENING NIGHT
THE CONCERT

Friday, October 1, 2021 at 7:00

Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting

JOHN ADAMS

Slonimsky's Earbox (1995)

ALBERTO GINASTERA

Estancia Suite, Opus 8a (1941)
The Land Workers (Los trabajadores agricolas)
Wheat Dance (Danza del trigo)
The Cattlemen (Los peones de hacienda)
Malambo: Final Dance (Danza final)
Alonzo King LINES Ballet
Choreography by **Alonzo King**

WAYNE SHORTER

Gaia (2013)
First San Francisco Symphony performances
esperanza spalding vocalist and bass
Leo Genovese piano
Terri Lyne Carrington drums

SILVESTRE REVUELTAS

Noche de encantamiento from
La noche de los Mayas (1939)

Betsy Ayer stage manager

Elena Park stage director

This program will be presented without intermission.

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2021 Re-Opening Night

AT A GLANCE

John Adams's *Slonimsky's Earbox* (1995) is a kind of portrait of and homage to one of the most intriguing figures of twentieth-century musicology: Nicolas Slonimsky. Slonimsky's deliciously quirky personality—characterized, Adams writes, by "wit and hyper-energetic activity"—is embedded in the music of *Slonimsky's Earbox*.

The ballet *Estancia* (1941) was an early work by **Alberto Ginastera**, who would go on to be lauded as the dean of Argentine classical music. The suite of four dances Ginastera extracted from the ballet is memorable for its depiction of episodes, by turns tender and boisterous, in a typical day among the gauchos on an estancia (ranch) of the Argentine Pampas.

Wayne Shorter has gained equal renown as a trailblazing saxophonist and insightful composer. In a decade of working together, esperanza spalding and Shorter have developed a rich artistic rapport grounded in a shared sense of musical adventure and a drive for boundless creativity. As spalding has noted, "He's drawing in a different plane. We're all drawing between the lines, and he's drawing on the whole wall."

In his short life, **Silvestre Revueltas** staked an essential place in the currents of modernism emerging in his home country of Mexico. Revueltas composed his score for the film *La noche de los Mayas* in 1939. *Noche de encantamiento* (Night of Enchantment), which closes the suite José Ives Limantour created from Revueltas's score, is a theme-and-variations set that grows into one of the "sonic spectaculars" of the orchestral repertory.

From notes by James M. Keller, Thomas May, and Steven Ziegler

Slonimsky's Earbox

JOHN COOLIDGE ADAMS (B. 1947)

COMPOSED: 1995, on a joint commission from the Hallé Orchestra and the Oregon Symphony

WORLD PREMIERE: September 12, 1996. Kent Nagano, to whom Adams dedicates the work, led the Hallé Orchestra at Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, England

SF SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES: FIRST AND ONLY—October 2009, with Osmo Vänska conducting

INSTRUMENTATION: Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets (including E-flat clarinet), bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, crotales, marimba, glockenspiel, xylophone, two suspended cymbals, woodblock, claves, snare drum, hi-hat, temple blocks, cast, shaker, tambourine, tam-tam, triangle, vibraphone, piano, keyboard sampler (Kurzweil K2000 or Akai; alternatively, celesta or small electronic jazz organ), harp, and strings

DURATION: About 14 mins

THE BACKSTORY The success of John Adams's 1987 operatic debut, *Nixon in China*, was a significant breakthrough for the composer, putting him firmly on the international map. Yet Adams had already begun laying the groundwork for his reputation with his pieces for the concert hall. Two of the most seminal of these were first heard here, in Davies Symphony Hall: *Harmonium* in 1981 and *Harmonielehre* in 1985.

Adams remarks that several of his compositions from throughout his career appear to bear family resemblances. *Slonimsky's Earbox* (1995) presents a fascinating instance in which varied stylistic tendencies can be heard to intertwine and further evolve the composer's musical vocabulary. Adams himself believes that the work marks "an important turning point in my orchestral music," one that led to "a successful integration of the older minimalist techniques (repetitive motifs, steady background pulse, and stable harmonic areas) with the more complex, more actively contrapuntal language of the post-*Klinghoffer* [meaning Adams's 1991 opera, *The Death of Klinghoffer*] pieces."

A tall order, perhaps, for such a relatively brief piece of music—though the work's pulsating energies and kaleidoscopic textures make for a readily enjoyable experience on first hearing. It is typical for an Adams composition to operate on multiple levels at once—even when the composer is

clearly having as good a time with putting orchestral sounds together as Adams seems to have in *Slonimsky's Earbox*. Aside from its compositional significance in Adams's development as an artist, the work also serves as a kind of portrait of and homage to one of the most intriguing figures of twentieth-century musicology: Nicolas (born Nikolai Leonidovich) Slonimsky (1894–1995). The long, rich life of this Russian-American music historian stretched from the last decades of tsarist Russia (he was born in Saint Petersburg) to the waning of the millennium in Southern California. Irrepressibly curious, innovative, and funny, Slonimsky was a Renaissance man who channeled his formidable talents into both performance (as a conductor who championed new music) and scholarship. Adams enjoyed the pleasure of getting to know Slonimsky during his very last years, when the elder composer lived in Santa Monica. Slonimsky's deliciously quirky personality—characterized, Adams writes, by "wit and hyper-energetic activity"—is embedded in the music of *Slonimsky's Earbox*.

The portmanteau word "earbox" (packing "ear" together with implied suggestions of "music box," "sound box," even "toolbox" and "toy box") neatly encapsulates a contemporary idea of musical composition: In *Slonimsky's Earbox*, Adams depicts composition as a process of selecting items from a box of available procedures, rather than as inspiration from above or as following a set of predetermined values. The source material is what the astute French critic Renaud Machart describes as "a reservoir of gestures, a conservatory of memory, and a place for experimentation." Indeed, Adams chose this neologism

not only as the title for the first important retrospective issued by his record label Nonesuch two decades ago, but also as the name of his website (earbox.com).
THE MUSIC Adams's *Earbox* erupts in colorfully energetic currents. Strange, mercurial scalar patterns rocket upward. (This is a composer with an uncanny knack for knowing exactly *how* to spin a piece into motion.) The explosive opening sets the tone for a brilliant toccata, demanding virtuosity from the entire orchestra. Adams intensifies the excitement of these bright, spiraling fragments by restlessly modulating them, shifting unpredictably among timbres. He generates further tension when the centrifugal energy of the opening gestures emerges against a field of motor-like, static patterns that eventually work their way into the foreground. Drawing from the minimalist compartment of the "toolbox," these static elements slow the frenzy and introduce a quieter section.

The music pools into a floating, introspective calm. Before long, new sparks are struck, and *Earbox* begins to gear up for a new and now certain trajectory. The final minutes constitute one of those masterful ingatherings so characteristic of Adams: He makes us simultaneously aware of the moment unfolding and of a destination further out that has just entered the horizon. The haze-like calm is revealed as a mirage, a specter cast aside by the surging energy from the opening that returns, but that is now guided into an unstoppable, coruscating climax. —**Thomas May**

THOMAS MAY writes and lectures about music and theater, and is a Contributing Writer to the San Francisco Symphony program book. His books include *Decoding Wagner* and *The John Adams Reader*.

Dances from the Ballet *Estancia,* Opus 8bis

ALBERTO EVARISTO GINASTERA (1916–83)

COMPOSED: 1941

WORLD PREMIERE: Full ballet: August 19, 1952, at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, with Juan Emilio Martini conducting the Orquesta del Teatro Colón. Suite: May 12, 1943, at the same venue and with the same orchestra, with Ferruccio Calusio conducting

SF SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES: FIRST—July 2005. JoAnn Falletta conducted at a Summer in the City concert. These are the first Orchestral Series performances of the work

INSTRUMENTATION: Flute (doubling piccolo) and piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, triangle, castanets, tambourine, snare drum, tenor drum, cymbals, bass drum, tam-tam, xylophone, piano, and strings

DURATION: About 13 mins

THE BACKSTORY Music in the European tradition has been part of Argentina's sonic landscape since the arrival of Jesuit missionaries in the sixteenth century. The eminent Italian composer-and-organist Domenico Zipoli settled there in 1717 to oversee music in Córdoba, then the country's principal cultural center, and numerous Argentine composers emerged in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A handful achieved prominence beyond the nation's borders, including the folk-inspired nationalist Julián Aguirre, the Paris-trained Juan José Castro, the neo-Romantic Carlos Guastavino, the "new tango" proponent Astor Piazzolla, the theatrical avant-gardist Mauricio Kagel, and three Argentinians based in the United States: Lalo Schifrin, Mario Davidovsky, and Osvaldo Golijov. Nonetheless, it was Alberto Ginastera who was and still is revered as the dean of Argentine composers, the figure who first cemented the nation's status in the international classical-music scene.

He showed his musical instincts early on. "One day," he continued, "I went into the kitchen and played on all the pots and pans and other things I could get, to make a kitchen orchestra. For this I was spanked. They did not know then that what I was playing had in it the roots of *Panambí* and *Estancia*." Ginastera was referring to the only two ballets he would ever write—both

being early works (he composed *Panambí* from 1935–37, *Estancia* in 1941), both building on nationalistic subjects, and both exhibiting orchestral brilliance and rhythmic verve that would prove popular with audiences. A third Ginastera score, *Variaciones concertantes* (1953), would also gain currency as a ballet, but it was written as a concert work rather than as one destined for staging.

He was schooled in his native country, principally at the National Conservatory of Music in Buenos Aires. When he was eighteen, he was awarded first prize in a composition contest, and in quick succession he produced numerous pieces with a distinctive flavor, often employing native Argentine rhythms or folk melodies. Many of these early works he later destroyed or at least withdrew, denouncing them as immature examples of his art. Nonetheless, some have found at least borderline places in the repertoire, including his *Danzas argentinas* (for piano, 1937) and his chamber composition *Impresiones de la Puna* (1934), in addition to *Estancia*, composed when he was twenty-five.

Argentina endured a period a political oppression in the mid-twentieth century under the regime of Juan Perón. Ginastera did not flourish in that climate, and in 1945 the regime forced him to resign from his position on the music faculty of the National Military Academy because he had signed a petition in support of civil liberties. Fortunately, the composer was able to travel with his family to the United States, where he studied from 1945–47 with the support of a Guggenheim fellowship. During that visit he worked with Aaron Copland at Tanglewood. On his return to Argentina, he formed the Liga

de compositores, a national affiliate of the International Society of Contemporary Music. Not until after Perón was overthrown, in 1955, did Ginastera assume several political-academic posts in Argentina and begin to introduce some of the most important new music from Europe and North America to eager minds in his country. He lived a cosmopolitan life, traveling frequently from his home base in Buenos Aires to musical centers in Europe and North America. In 1969, exasperated with the political situation in Argentina, Ginastera left definitively, and he spent most of the rest of his life in Geneva, where he would die.

Ginastera's later works moved toward an abstracted Modernism ("neo-Expressionism," he called it), even exploring serial composition and polytonality. Nonetheless, he remained concerned about the gap that separated audiences from serious musical composition during his lifetime and proclaimed that the proper aspiration of a composer was "to be integrated into society, not stand apart from it."

THE MUSIC *Estancia* (Opus 8) resulted from a commission tendered in 1941 by American Ballet Caravan, a short-lived troupe founded by George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein. Kirstein envisioned an evening of three one-act ballets by three Latin American composers—Ginastera, Francisco Mignone of Brazil, and Domingo Santa Cruz of Chile—with Balanchine choreographing all three. The troupe disbanded in 1941, before the project could be realized, but Ginastera had finished his score and was able to get some instant mileage out of it by extracting four sections to stand as his *Danzas del Ballet Estancia* (Opus 8bis), a huge hit at their premiere, which took place in Buenos Aires. The ballet would not be staged until 1952—also in Buenos Aires, and with choreography by Michel Borowski instead of Balanchine.

When Ginastera composed *Estancia*, he was going through his phase of "objective nationalism" (as he termed it), transposing elements of folk music directly into a classical format. The ballet's scenario was perfectly suited to this approach. Its plot is minimal—a city boy is smitten with a country girl, who reveals her admiration when he develops the skills of a ranch-hand—but its five scenes add up to a celebration of rural life in Argentina unrolling over the course of a day, from dawn of one day to dawn of the next. The complete ballet (though not the *Danzas* suite) even includes sung and recited passages from *Martín Fierro*, José Hernández's epic poem from the 1870s about the lives of gauchos on the Pampas, a foundational text that is deeply ingrained in the psyche of many Argentinians.

An *estancia* is a ranch, a large, private expanse of land especially used for raising livestock. The suite opens with "Los trabajadores agrícolas" (The Farm Workers), a scene from the Morning section of the ballet. Throbbing percussion underpins the vivacity of this opening movement, which features alternating rhythmic groupings of two beats and three beats. Following the premiere, a critic for *Mundo Uruguyano*, from across the estuary in Montevideo, declared of this section, "There is an almost mystical union of land and man through the confluence of inevitabile work and limitless power." The "Danza del trigo" (Wheat Dance), also a Morning moment, offers delicate contract to this energetic opening. Solo flute sings out the placid theme, strings soar in the middle, and solo violin picks up the flute's idea near the end. "Los peones de hacienda" (Laborers on the Estate) depicts cowboys, their music—marked "Vigorous and Coarse"—again being stamped with unpredictable syncopations and cross-rhythms. The opening movement displayed characteristics of the *malambo*, a traditional dance for men sometimes performed competitively by the gauchos. The *malambo* returns for the finale, now explicitly identified. Percussionists get a workout in this hard-driving conclusion, where woodwinds and xylophone discharge *glissando* shrieks to urge on the action. **—James M. Keller**

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Gaia
WAYNE SHORTER (B. 1933)

COMPOSED/WORLD PREMIERE: *Gaia* was composed on commission from the Los Angeles Philharmonic and premiered by that orchestra in 2013

SF SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES: These are the first San Francisco Symphony performances of any of Wayne Shorter's music

INSTRUMENTATION: Vocal soloist and Jazz ensemble, 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes and English horn, 3 clarinets and bass clarinet, 4 bassoons (two doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, piano, celesta, and strings

DURATION: About 22 mins

Wayne Shorter has gained equal renown as a trailblazing saxophonist and insightful composer. He came up through the ranks of the thriving Jazz scene of the 1950s and '60s, making a name for himself with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and Miles Davis's second quintet, while also staking a claim as a noteworthy solo artist and bandleader through albums such as *Night Dreamer*, *Juju*, and *Speak No Evil*. In the 1970s and '80s he devoted himself to Weather Report, the earth-shaking Jazz fusion band he co-founded in 1971, while also collaborating on projects with Steely Dan, Joni Mitchell, and Carlos Santana. By 2000, Shorter had once again turned his attention to the more traditional instrumentation of Jazz quartet, recording several acclaimed albums, including the Grammy Award-winners *Alegría* (2003) and *Beyond the Sound Barrier* (2005). Throughout, he continued to make his mark as a composer, expanding his oeuvre to include projects with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and commissioned works from the National, Saint Louis, and Nashville symphonies, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the La Jolla Music Society.

Shorter is known for a musical practice that incorporates philosophical and spiritual elements. "Jazz shouldn't have any mandates," he has said. "Jazz is not supposed to be something that you're required to sound like jazz. For me, the word jazz means, I dare you… And this music, it's dealing with the unexpected. No one really knows how to deal with the unexpected. How do you rehearse the unknown?"

esperanza spalding first got to know Shorter about a decade ago and the two

have since developed a rich artistic rapport grounded in a shared sense of musical adventure and a drive for boundless creativity. In a 2014 interview, spalding noted, "The way he composes, the way his sense of melody is so sublime and so inspired… He's drawing in a different plane. We're all drawing between the lines, and he's drawing on the whole wall." In recent years, the pair has been at work on the opera *Iphigenia*, with music by Shorter and a libretto by spalding, who will also play the title role in the work's first performances. (Bay Area audiences will have the opportunity to experience *Iphigenia* in its West Coast premiere with Cal Performances in February 2022). A milestone in Shorter and spalding's partnership came in 2013 with the Jazz-orchestral work *Gaia*, from which we hear excerpts this evening. Commissioned and premiered by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, *Gaia* featured a libretto by spalding, who shared the stage with Shorter in the premiere. —**Steven Ziegler**

Noche de encantamiento (Night of Enchantment), from *La noche de los Mayas*
SILVESTRE REVUELTAS SÁNCHEZ (1899-1940)

COMPOSED/WORLD PREMIERE: 1939 as a score for the film *La noche de los Mayas*, released in September of that year. The movement heard here is from a suite arranged and edited by José Ives Limantour in 1960

SF SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES: FIRST AND ONLY—November 2005. David Robertson led Limantour's complete suite

INSTRUMENTATION: 2 flutes (doubling piccolos), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets (doubling E-flat clarinets) and bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, piano, timpani, and strings, as well as a large percussion section comprising timpani, bongos, deep congo, tom-tom, güiro, metal rattle, tumkul (a large drum made from the zapote tree, with two tongues high on the drum yielding distinct pitches; replaced if desired by two deep woodblocks of different pitch), caracol (conch shell, replaced if desired by a tenor tuba), bass drum, Indian drum, drum with snares, drum without snares, tam-tam, and xylophone

DURATION: 13 mins

THE BACKSTORY Silvestre Revueltas entered the world at the dawn of the twentieth century—truly, since he was born on the very last day of 1899—and in his short life of only four decades he staked an essential place in the currents of modernism that were then emerging in Mexico. He was the oldest of twelve siblings who included several artistic achievers; his brother Fermín became an important painter, his sister Rosaura a noted actress. His father gave him a violin for his fifth birthday and he began studying that instrument seriously when he was eight. In 1917 his father sent Fermín and him to a high school in Austin, Texas; after that the Revueltas brothers continued in 1919 to Chicago, where Fermín enrolled at the Art Institute of Chicago and Silvestre at the Chicago Musical College (which was later incorporated into Roosevelt University).

For much of his life, Silvestre Revueltas would shuffle back and forth between the United States and Mexico. In 1924 he met Carlos Chávez, who was emerging as the leading composer of revolutionary Mexico. The two recognized each other as kindred artistic spirits, and Revueltas became a leading interpreter at the concerts of new music Chávez began producing in Mexico City, concerts that introduced the nation

to important scores by Claude Debussy, Arnold Schoenberg, Edgard Varèse, Darius Milhaud, and Paul Hindemith, among others.

In 1926 Revueltas settled in San Antonio, Texas, where he directed orchestras at two theaters. That's where he seems to have made his first bow as a composer, thanks to the premiere of his *Batik* for chamber ensemble in 1926, and in San Antonio he also began to lose the struggle with alcohol that would plague him for the rest of his life. A break came at the end of 1928, when he received an invitation from Chávez, who had recently accepted the directorships of the National Conservatory of Music and the Mexico Symphony Orchestra in Mexico City. He wanted Revueltas to join him as violin professor at the conservatory and assistant conductor of the orchestra. Revueltas accepted, and his affiliation with the orchestra did much to jump-start his largely unrealized instincts as a composer. Revueltas's sudden flow of works began appearing on programs not only in Mexico but also in the United States and Cuba. In the mid-1930s Chávez and Revueltas had a falling out and were never reconciled. To this day, each has his partisans to argue in favor of his standing as Mexico's greatest composer.

Not much time remained for Revueltas. He filled it with work, composing compulsively while continuing to teach and conduct, and he grew increasingly involved in politics. He became active in the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists, an organization of populist and socialist leanings, and was fascinated with the unrolling tragedy of the Spanish Civil War. In 1937 he spent nearly four months in war-torn Spain, where he and a group of Mexican colleagues presented concerts and engaged in efforts on behalf of the populist Republican forces.

Revueltas was drawn to the cinema, which in his time was viewed not merely as an entertainment genre but as a medium for social commentary and political expression. Mexican cinema was just finding its footing in the 1930s, and its artistic pioneers were influenced by the Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, who from 1930 to 1932 resided in Mexico, shooting his vast geographical-sociological cinematic fresco *¡Que viva Mexico!* About a hundred Mexican films were made between 1932 and 1936, including two for which Revueltas contributed memorable scores: *Redes* (Fishing Nets, 1935), directed by the Austrian-American Fred Zinnemann and the Mexican Emilio Gómez Muriel, and *Vámonos con Pancho Villa* (Let's Go with Pancho Villa, 1936), directed by Fernando de Fuentes. Six more Revueltas film scores would follow, including, in 1939, *La noche de los mayas* (The Night of the Mayas), directed by Chano Urueta.

The film's curious plot, based on a novel by Antonio Mediz Bollo, involves a young man and woman, Uz and Lol, who leave modern Mexican society to live as their ancestors had in a Mayan village on the Yucatán Peninsula. While the film has not aged gracefully, Revueltas's score has fared well in posterity. In 1960 the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (National Institute of Fine Arts) organized a celebration to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the composer's death, and the composer and conductor José Ives (or Yves) Limantour, a champion of Revueltas's work, arranged and edited the film score to create a suite of four movements, a half hour of music in the mold of a traditional symphony.

THE MUSIC Revueltas's music reflects the complex cultural mix of Mexico, and in the orchestral suite of *La noche de los Mayas* we find reflections of Pre-Columbian, Mestizo, Creole, and (especially in the finale) Afro-West Indian musical traditions. Revueltas's emphases on rhythm and timbre come together most obviously in his extended percussion section, here entrusted to eleven musicians playing both standard percussion instruments and such indigenous Mayan instruments as the *tumkul* (a large drum made from the zapote tree) and the *caracol* or conch shell. Melodic patterns often unroll in repetitive rhythms, building in solidity through their very reiteration, a strategy that owes much to Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*.

The finale, "Noche de encantamiento" (Night of Enchantment), is a theme-and-variations set that grows into one of the "sonic spectaculars" of the orchestral repertory. The percussion section is subdivided into four groups, Revueltas notes in his score, and at one point "each individual group should be given the opportunity to improvise freely on its basic rhythm whilst the other three accompany these players until it is their turn to improvise." Four variations follow the statement of the theme, and after that the percussion continue at full force as music from the opening of the suite returns to bring *La noche de los Mayas* to a thundering close. —**J.M.K.**

LISTEN AGAIN: Esa-Pekka Salonen with the Los Angeles Philharmonic (Sony Classical)

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN'S biography may be found on page 6.

ESPERANZA SPALDING (also known as irma nejando, or, i.e.) is a being who has grown to recognize love in the abstract and aspirational, and is now fully dedicated to learning how she can serve and embody actualized love through honor for and receptivity to, fellow humans, teachers, and practitioners of various regenerative arts.

Bass, piano, composition, performance, voice, and lyrics are tools and disciplines she is engaged in deeply to cultivate her own channel for transmitting care and beauty through vibration/sound/presence.

She has written an opera with Wayne Shorter slated for premiere in Fall 2021. She is currently developing a mockumentary in collaboration with brontë velez and the San Francisco Symphony (where she serves as a Collaborative Partner), researching and developing liberation rituals in jazz and black dance, and continuing a lifelong collaboration with practitioners in various fields relating to music, healing, and cognition to develop music with enhanced therapeutic potential.

She is presently paid by Harvard University to co-create and learn with students enrolled there, working on developing creative practices that serve the restoration of people and land.

LEO GENOVESE was born in Argentina in 1979. He moved to the United States in 2001. He has been traveling the world playing music for the last twenty years. He has nine albums as a leader and dozens as a sideman. He believes in music as a force of change. He practices the saxophone in hotel rooms. He doesn't support MP3 culture. He cooks pretty spicy food, like his music.

NEA Jazz Master and three-time Grammy award-winning drummer, producer, and educator **TERRI LYNE CARRINGTON** started her professional career while studying under a full scholarship at Berklee College of Music in Boston. She gained national recognition on late night TV as the house drummer for both the *Arsenio Hall Show* and Quincy Jones's VIBE TV show.

While still in her twenties, Ms. Carrington toured extensively with Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock, among others, and in 1989 she released a Grammy-nominated debut CD on Verve Forecast, *Real Life Story*. In 2011 she released the Grammy-winning album, *The Mosaic Project*, followed by *Money Jungle: Provocative in Blue* in 2013, which also earned a Grammy, establishing her as the first woman ever to win in the Best Jazz Instrumental Album category.

She has toured or recorded with artists such as Al Jarreau, Stan Getz, Woody Shaw, Diana Krall, Cassandra Wilson, Dianne Reeves, James Moody, Yellowjackets, esperanza spalding, and many more. Additionally, Ms. Carrington is an honorary doctorate recipient from Berklee, and she currently serves as Founder and Artistic Director for the Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice.

In 2019 Ms. Carrington was granted the Doris Duke Artist Award, in recognition of her past and ongoing contributions to Jazz music. Her current band project, Terri Lyne Carrington and Social Science (a collaboration with Aaron Parks and Matthew Stevens) released its debut album, *Waiting Game*, in November 2019 on Motema Music. The album was nominated for a 2021 Grammy award.

ALONZO KING, Founder and Artistic Director of Alonzo King LINES Ballet, has been called a visionary choreographer who is altering the way we look and think about movement. King calls his works 'thought structures,' created by the manipulation of energies that exist in matter through laws, which govern the shapes and movement directions of everything that exists. Alonzo King LINES Ballet has been guided by his unique artistic vision since 1982. King has works in the repertories of the world's leading ballet and modern companies, and he has collaborated with distinguished visual artists, musicians, and composers across the globe. His work has been recognized for its impact on the cultural fabric of the company's home in San Francisco, as well as internationally by the dance world's most prestigious institutions. Named a Master of Choreography by the Kennedy Center in 2005, King is the recipient of the NEA Choreographer's Fellowship, the Jacob's Pillow Creativity Award, the US Artist Award in Dance, NY Bessie Award, and the National Dance Project's Residency and Touring Awards. In 2015 he received the Doris Duke Artist Award in recognition of his ongoing contributions to the advancement of contemporary dance. Joining historic icons in the field, King was named one of America's "Irreplaceable Dance Treasures" by the Dance Heritage Coalition. He is a former San Francisco commissioner, and a writer and lecturer on humanity and art. He holds honorary doctorates from Dominican University, California Institute of the Arts, and the Juilliard School.

Thirty-nine years of outstanding, multi-disciplinary collaborations for the stage place **ALONZO KING LINES BALLET** at the forefront of artistic innovation in ballet. With each collaboration, LINES Ballet investigates deeply rooted affinities between Western and Eastern classical forms, elemental materials, the natural world, and the human spirit. At LINES Ballet, the artistic investigation is infinite and essential for it leads to what unites us as human beings: empathy, joy, and the ability to transcend.

LINES Ballet's spring and fall home seasons and global tours share this vision of transformative, revelatory dance with more than 40,000 audience members worldwide every year. The company has been featured at venues such as the Venice Biennale, Monaco Dance Forum, Maison de la Dance de Lyon, the Edinburgh International Festival, Montpellier Danse, the Wolfsburg Festival, the Holland Dance Festival, and the Théâtre National de Chaillot in Paris. Members of the company were recently featured in SoundBox: Patterns, a digital program curated by Esa-Pekka Salonen with choreography by Alonzo King on SFSymphony+.

LINES Ballet is proud of its continuing commitment to dance education and community—serving and impacting lives through LINES Community Programs, the LINES Ballet Training Program and Summer Program, the joint BFA Program in Dance with Dominican University of California, and the LINES Dance Center, one of the largest dance facilities on the West Coast.

DANCERS FROM ALONZO KING LINES BALLET

Babatunji
Adji Cissoko
Madeline DeVries
Lorris Eichinger
Shuaib Elhassan
James Gowan
Ilaria Guerra
Maya Harr
Marusya Madubuko
Alvaro Montelongo
Michael Montgomery
Tatum Quiñónez

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**listing as of August 20, 2021*

SALONEN: ESPERANZA SPALDING & LINES BALLET

THE CONCERT

Saturday, October 2, 2021 at 7:30

Inside Music Talk by Sarah Cahill at 6:30

Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting

JOHN ADAMS — *Slonimsky's Earbox* (1995)

ALBERTO GINASTERA — *Estancia* Suite, Opus 8a (1941)
The Land Workers (Los trabajadores agricolas)
Wheat Dance (Danza del trigo)
The Cattlemen (Los peones de hacienda)
Malambo: Final Dance (Danza final)
Alonzo King LINES Ballet
Choreography by **Alonzo King**

WAYNE SHORTER — *Gaia* (2013)
First San Francisco Symphony performances
esperanza spalding vocalist and bass
Leo Genovese piano
Terri Lyne Carrington drums

SILVESTRE REVUELTAS — Noche de encantamiento from *La noche de los Mayas* (1939)

Betsy Ayer stage manager

Elena Park stage director

This program will be presented without intermission.

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN's biography may be found on page 6.

Full program notes and biographies of the performers may be found beginning on page SFS2.

Inside Music Speaker **SARAH CAHILL** has commissioned, premiered, and recorded numerous compositions for solo piano. Named a 2018 Champion of New Music by the American Composers Forum, her writing has appeared in the *John Adams Reader*, *Contemporary Music Review*, *Keyboard Magazine*, *Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, and *Piano and Keyboard Magazine*. Ms. Cahill is on the faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory and her radio show, *Revolutions Per Minute* can be heard every Sunday evening on KALW-FM in San Francisco.

KENDALL, CHIN & BEETHOVEN

THE CONCERT

Thursday, October 7, 2021 at 7:30
Friday, October 8, 2021 at 7:30
Saturday, October 9, 2021 at 7:30

Inside Music Talk by Elizabeth Seitz at 6:30

Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting

HANNAH KENDALL

Tuxedo: Vasco 'de' Gama (2020)
First United States performances

UNSUK CHIN

Graffiti (2013)
Palimpsest
Notturno urbano
Passacaglia
First San Francisco Symphony performances

Intermission

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 7 in A major, Opus 92 (1812)
Poco sostenuto—Vivace
Allegretto
Presto
Allegro con brio

AT A GLANCE

Composer **Hannah Kendall** notes, "*Tuxedo: Vasco 'de' Gama* takes its title from Jean-Michel Basquiat's iconic 1982–83 artwork *Tuxedo*…His reference to Vasco da Gama (written as 'Vasco de Gama'), the first European to voyage to Asia by sea, offers a commentary on exploration and the seeds of globalization and multiculturalism: two important themes in the context of the year 2020."

Unsuk Chin's early training in electronic music enlarged her conception of sounds she might apply to acoustic orchestral music. In her three-movement *Graffiti*, she says, "one can hear allusions to a manifold of styles, which are juxtaposed in a kaleidoscopic manner." Chin cites Street Art as a stimulus for this piece. The opening movement, "Palimpsest," is a musical analogy to inscriptions on walls that do not entirely obscure what was written or painted beneath them, and the second movement employs multiphonic woodwind tones that may sound electronic but are not.

Richard Wagner described **Ludwig van Beethoven**'s Seventh Symphony as representing "the essence of the dance." The work includes many moments of real abandon. A semi-slow introduction, the largest ever heard in any symphony at the time of its premiere and still one of the largest, defines great harmonic spaces. There is no slow movement. Instead, the famous second-movement Allegretto is relaxed only by comparison with what comes before and after. The symphony's finale is one wild unharnessing of sound.

After notes by James M. Keller, Hannah Kendall, and Michael Steinberg

Tuxedo: Vasco 'de' Gama
HANNAH KENDALL (B. 1984)

COMPOSED 2020

WORLD PREMIERE: August 28, 2020. Sakari Oramo led the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall, London, as part of the BBC Proms

SF SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES: These are the first performances of any work by Hannah Kendall by the San Francisco Symphony

INSTRUMENTATION: 2 flutes, 2 oboes (doubling harmonicas), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons (doubling harmonicas); 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, percussion, and strings

DURATION: 6 mins

THE BACKSTORY Born in London in 1984, Hannah Kendall is a Doctoral Fellow in composition at Columbia University in New York City.

Writing on Kendall's website, Robin Smith observes, "…Hannah Kendall's music looks beyond the boundaries of composition. Her work bridges gaps between different musical cultures, both honoring and questioning the contemporary tradition while telling new stories through it. Contrasting fine detail with limitless abandon, she has become renowned both as a composer and a storyteller, confronting our collective history with narratively-driven pieces centered on bold mission statements.…Kendall's recent work has provided a meeting point for different types of music, carrying with it the weight of connected but unharmonized histories."

This focus is reflected in works such as the chamber opera *The Knife of Dawn* (2016), which shed a light on the incarceration of Guyanese political activist Martin Carter, and the orchestral work *Disillusioned Dreamer* (premiered by Joseph Young and the Berkeley Symphony in 2019), which takes inspiration from Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man.* Kendall is currently composing an Afrofuturist opera for experimental vocalist and movement artist Elaine Mitchener.

Kendall's recent works also show a proclivity for instrumentation that exists outside of that typically found in a symphony orchestra, ranging from the harmonicas and music box heard in *Tuxedo: Vasco 'de' Gama* to string instruments prepared with dreadlock cuffs (You can read more about

Kendall's compositional process in the feature article on page 12).

Kendall's *Tuxedo* series—a projected group of ten works, of which five have been completed—is based on a work by artist Jean-Michel Basquiat. *Tuxedo: Vasco 'de' Gama* was premiered in a 2020 broadcast from the BBC Proms.

THE MUSIC The composer notes:

"Tuxedo: Vasco 'de' Gama takes its title from Jean-Michel Basquiat's iconic 1982–83 artwork *Tuxedo*, a collection of sixteen diagrammatic block pieces that come together to form a figure adorned with Basquiat's trademark three-point crown symbol. It highlights recurring notions of majesty in his output, as does the tuxedo itself, which is a garment associated with luxury and elegance.

"A multitude of Basquiat's thematic preoccupations are displayed in the intricate hand-drawn and -written iconographic detail, encompassing a variety of histories. Indeed, his reference to Vasco da Gama (written as 'Vasco de Gama'), the first European to voyage to Asia by sea, offers a commentary on exploration and the seeds of globalization and multiculturalism: two important themes in the context of the year 2020.

"The music moves between bright and buoyant moments of high energy and expansive stillness, underpinned by the incorporated harmonicas, which also function as a nod to the blues. Basquiat often drew attention to historical and contemporary matters of the African Diaspora. In a similar fashion, I have included a transcription of 'Wade in the Water', a traditional African-American spiritual, for music box."
—**Hannah Kendall**

Graffiti for Large Ensemble
UNSUK CHIN (B. 1961)

COMPOSED: 2012–13

WORLD PREMIERE: February 26, 2013, at Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, CA, with Gustavo Dudamel conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group

SF SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES: FIRST AND ONLY—At these concerts

INSTRUMENTATION: 2 flutes (1st doubling piccolo, 2nd doubling alto flute), 2 oboes (2nd doubling English horn), 2 clarinets (1st doubling E-flat clarinet, 2nd doubling bass clarinet), bassoon (doubling contrabassoon), 2 horns, 2 trumpets, trombone, tuba, timpani vibraphone, tubular chimes, 6 snare drums (small, medium, large), cymbals, glockenspiel, Mark tree, 5 triangles, tambourine, harmonica, xylophone, flexatone, crotales, pitched gongs, two pop bottles, whip, cencerros (cowbells), marimba, bass drum, four temple blocks, three tom-toms, tenor drum, suspended cymbals, thundersheet, tam-tam, harp, celesta, piano (also doubling celesta), and strings

DURATION: About 23 mins

THE BACKSTORY "People have a certain idea of what it means to be Korean, and I think this is not fair, because I do not feel like a Korean; I feel like a cosmopolitan. My interest in music and everything else happens in a space where nationality just does not matter at all." So said composer Unsuk Chin in a video produced in her adopted city of Berlin around the time she was given the 2017 Wihuri Sibelius Prize of Finland, one of the world's most prestigious composer awards. Although she is a native of South Korea and studied at Seoul National University, she traveled for advanced study to Hamburg where from 1985–88 she was a pupil of György Ligeti. She then realized a series of compositions at the Electronic Music Studio of the Technical University of Berlin, launching a Berlin-based career that has indeed been international. Chin credits her work in electronic music with enlarging her conception of the possibilities of sound even within acoustic composition and with expanding her sense of fantasy as a composer.

Her music occasionally does employ sounds associated with Asia, as in her *Šu* (a concerto for sheng, a Chinese mouth organ, that incorporates some references to Korean traditional music) and her much-played *Gougalōn*, inspired in part by travels in China, specifically to the regions of Hong Kong and Guangzhou. But such

pieces are exceptions, and she is wary that they may invite listeners to view her work through an exoticizing lens. Her music is more properly considered as part of the international avant-garde, personal rather than national, and decidedly not nationalistic. It seems logical that *Graffiti*, for example, should have been commissioned by a consortium of performing groups in the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and Germany.

A year as composer-in-residence with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin in 2001–02 led to the composition of her Violin Concerto, for which she was awarded the prestigious Grawemeyer Award in 2004. Many other honors have also come her way, including the Arnold Schoenberg Prize in Vienna, and, more recently, the 2018 Marie-Josée Kravis Prize for New Music at the New York Philharmonic, the 2019 Hamburg Bach Prize, and the 2021 Léonie Sonning Music Prize of Denmark.

Chin recently concluded her post as artistic director of the Philharmonia Orchestra's Music of Today series, where she was appointed by Esa-Pekka Salonen in 2011. From 2006–17 she served as composer-in-residence with the Seoul Philharmonic, for which she established a contemporary music series. She is currently composer-in-residence of the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra in Hamburg.

THE MUSIC "I cannot and I do not need to describe my music," Chin has declared. "You have to listen to it and everybody has to understand it in their own way. Everybody conceives it differently, yet I wish that every person who listens to my music, no matter how experienced they are with music, no matter where they come from and how old they are—that they feel something of my music, that there is no feeling of indifference." Nonetheless, she has provided a commentary about the work performed in this concert:

"My ensemble piece *Graffiti* can be likened to a palimpsest. The music is polydimensional and multilayered; one can hear allusions to a manifold of styles, which are juxtaposed in a kaleidoscopic manner. A special stimulus was the controversial phenomenon of Street Art, which—without being commercial and without ever attempting at being "high culture"—nevertheless often displays remarkable creativity and skill. Besides, Street Art often wittily succeeds in criticizing the commercialization and uniformity of cities insofar as it thwarts the expectations created by omnipresent mass media and by advertising. As for *Graffiti*, the music shifts quickly and unexpectedly between primitivism and refinement, complexity and transparency. It calls for great agility, virtuosity and constant changes of perspective from the musicians; each instrument is being treated as a soloist."

The piece is cast in three movements. The idea behind the first, "Palimpsest," is much allied to an aspect of Street Art. The word refers to a surface on which writing has been effaced so that a different text may be written over it, but on which traces of the original writing still peeks through. The surface might be a piece of paper or it might be a wall. There is a flickering quality to the scurrying strings, an effect that may leave a listener feeling that the musical lines are emerging only in bits and pieces. This movement provides a fine example of how Chin's early work in electronic music left a mark on her later style.

Although the general character of the music may sound like something generated in an electronic workshop, all of the sounds are produced by acoustic instruments; in this sense, too, the music may be viewed as a personal palimpsest—an earlier style still discernable as lying behind a later piece. From the outset we also hear the composer's proclivity for using rich percussion effects, which in *Graffiti* are underscored not only by the quantity of percussion instruments but also the specificity of them, as when she calls for multiple sizes of triangles or snare drums to achieve precise timbres.

Another attribute of Chin's style also seems born from the sonic expansion of electronic music: her penchant for making sounds transform gradually as instruments are added or subtracted or as a chord is passed from one group to another. Consider the opening of the second movement, "Notturno urbano" (Urban Nocturne), where the clangor of chimes and gongs is handed off to double basses deep in their range, to which is then added the sound of a single bassoon. Bassoons nearly always play just one note at a time, but they are capable of sounding several notes simultaneously by employing unorthodox fingerings and nuanced breath control. Here the bassoon's first statement grows from a single note to encompass a five-note chord, its volume swelling and

receding in the process. Other woodwinds also lend multiphonic tones in this movement: bass clarinet, clarinet, and, at the movement's end, oboe.

Graffiti ends with a "Passacaglia." In this time-honored process, which has served finales since the Baroque era, a series of notes or harmonies is repeated over and over as a scaffolding around which the rest of the music unrolls in triple meter. Here, the passacaglia theme is assigned first to the brasses (with occasional support from the bassoon), playing marcato (strongly accented) in 3/8 time, and is later entrusted to other instruments. "My music," Chin has written, "is a reflection of my dreams. I try to render into music the visions of immense light and of an incredible magnificence of colors that I see in all my dreams, a play of light and colors floating through the room and at the same time forming a fluid sound sculpture. Its beauty is very abstract and remote, but it is for these very qualities that it addresses the emotions and can communicate joy and warmth."—**James M. Keller**

Inside Music Speaker **ELIZABETH SEITZ** is currently Professor of Core Studies at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee, where she received the 2019 Distinguished Faculty of the Year award. She received her Ph.D. from Boston University. She has been a frequent lecturer at the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Lyric Opera, Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Rockport Chamber Music, Tanglewood, and the New York Philharmonic.

Symphony No. 7 in A major, Opus 92

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

COMPOSED: Begun late in 1811, completed in June 1812

WORLD PREMIERE: December 8, 1813, at the University of Vienna

SF SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES: FIRST—February 1914. Henry Hadley conducted. MOST RECENT—January 2020. Dima Slobodeniouk conducted

INSTRUMENTATION: 2 each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, and trumpets, with timpani and strings

DURATION: About 38 mins

THE BACKSTORY The Seventh Symphony is Beethoven's last word for quite a few years on the subject of the big style he had been cultivating since the early 1800s. The concert at which the work had its premiere—it was a benefit for Austrian and Bavarian soldiers wounded at the recent Battle of Hanau—was probably the most wildly successful of his career. What caused the excitement was not, however, Opus 92, the new symphony, but Opus 91, *Wellington's Victory, or The Battle of Vitoria*, originally written for a mechanical instrument called the Panharmonicon but presented even at this, its first performance, in the version for orchestra. (At Vitoria, in northeast Spain, an army of English, Spanish, and Portuguese troops under the Duke of Wellington defeated the French on June 21, 1813. In the battle of Hanau, that October, Napoleon thrashed the mostly Bavarian army that attempted to block his retreat toward the southwest.)

The Panharmonicon was an invention of Johann Nepomuk Maelzel, whose most enduring contribution to music was the first dependable metronome. Between the Seventh Symphony and *Wellington's Victory*, another gadget of Maelzel's, a mechanical trumpeter, played marches written for the occasion by Dussek and Pleyel. So great was the success that the entire program was repeated later in the month, again in January 1814, and once more in February. To Beethoven's annoyance, the critic of the *Wiener Zeitung* referred to the Seventh as having been composed "as a companion piece" to *Wellington's Victory*. But the public liked the "companion piece" too, and the composer Louis Spohr, one of the violinists in the orchestra for the whole series of concerts, reports that the second movement was encored each time.

THE MUSIC A semi-slow introduction, the largest ever heard in any symphony until then and still one of the largest, defines great harmonic spaces, first A major, then C major (the gently lyric oboe tune), then F major (the same tune on the flute). The excursions to C and F are entered upon with startling bluntness. Obviously Beethoven's aim is to draw attention not only to these shifts, but to these new harmonic areas, and in fact every one of the symphony's journeys is foreshadowed here. So important are these journeys that Frederik Prausnitz, in his wonderfully stimulating book *Score and Podium*, refers to the Seventh Symphony as a "Tale of Three Tonalities." The material—scales, and melodies that outline common chords—is of reckless simplicity. Gradually, with a delicious feeling for suspense, Beethoven draws the Vivace from the last flickers of the introduction. Having done so, he propels us with fierce energy and speed through one of those movements of his that are dominated by a single propulsive rhythm. The coda, as so often in Beethoven, is virtually another development, and Beethoven heaves it to a tremendous climax by making a crescendo across a tenfold repetition of an obsessive, harmonically off-balance bass.

There is no slow movement. The Allegretto that the first audiences—indeed audiences throughout the nineteenth century—liked so much is relaxed only by comparison with what comes before and after. A subtly unstable wind chord begins and ends the movement. It is a chord of A minor, the home key, but with a "wrong" note—E instead of A—in the bass. When we first hear it, it sets up the "walking" music of the lower strings; when it reappears at the end, it is not so much a conclusion as a slightly eccentric preparation for the F major explosion of the scherzo. That scherzo's contrasting trio, which may or may not be a quotation of a pilgrims' hymn, is marked to go "very much less fast," and ever since Toscanini took it strikingly faster than his colleagues (though still "very much less fast" than the extremely quick music of the movement's outer sections), conductors, critics, and others have not ceased to argue about just what Beethoven meant—how much less is "very much less"? As in many of the big works of this period in his life, including the *Pastoral* Symphony, Beethoven makes the journey through the trio and the reprise of the scherzo twice, though with amusing variants.

The finale is fast, too, but the sense of pace is quite different. The scherzo, sharply defined, moves like a superbly controlled machine. The finale carries to an extreme point, unimagined before Beethoven's day and rarely reached since, a truly wild and swirling motion adumbrated in the first movement. Here, too, Beethoven builds the coda upon an obsessively repeated bass—just a pair of notes grinding away, G-sharp/A at first, then working its way down through chromatic degrees until reaching the dominant, E, and its neighbor, D-sharp, the whole inspired and mad process being spread across fifty-nine measures. Of course, to sound wild it must be orderly, and rhythmic definition is everything, here as in the notoriously difficult first movement.—**Michael Steinberg**

LISTEN AGAIN: Michael Tilson Thomas leading the San Francisco Symphony (SFS Media) | Esa-Pekka Salonen with the Los Angeles Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon digital release)

MICHAEL STEINBERG, the San Francisco Symphony's program annotator from 1979 to 1999 and a contributing writer to our program book until his death in 2009, was one of the nation's pre-eminent writers on music. We are privileged to continue publishing his program notes. His books are available at the Symphony Store in Davies Symphony Hall.

CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES

THE CONCERT

Sunday, October 10, 2021 at 2:00

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

Duo for Violin and Cello, Opus 7 (1914)
Allegro serioso, non troppo
Adagio
Maestoso e largamento, ma non troppo lento—Presto
Victor Romasevich violin
Jill Rachuy Brindel cello

DEVONTÉ HYNES

Perfectly Voiceless (2019)
Jacob Nissly • Bryce Leafman • Stan Muncy • Marty Thenell percussion

Intermission

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Quintet in G minor, Opus 57 (1940)
Prelude
Fugue
Scherzo
Intermezzo
Finale
David Chernyavsky violin
Polina Sedukh violin
Katie Kadarauch viola
Sébastien Gingras cello
Asya Gulua piano

Duo for Violin and Cello, Opus 7

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY (1882–1967)

"If I were to name the composer whose works are the most perfect embodiment of the Hungarian spirit, I would answer, Kodály. His work proves his faith in the Hungarian spirit. The obvious explanation is that all Kodály's composing activity is rooted only in Hungarian soil, but the deep inner reason is his unshakable faith and trust in the constructive power and future of his people." So wrote Béla Bartók, whose opinion, emanating from the apex of 20th-century Hungarian music, holds considerable authority.

Zoltán Kodály achieved eminence as a composer, ethnomusicologist, and educator, and all of these strands proved interrelated through most of his career. As the son of a frequently transferred stationmaster for the Hungarian railroads, Kodály spent his early years in a succession of small Hungarian towns (some of which would later be reassigned to Czechoslovakia). He expressed delight in the Magyar folk music that surrounded him, and simultaneously developed an interest in mainstream European chamber music. His parents were enthusiastic musical amateurs, and Kodály learned piano, violin, viola, and cello well enough to perform creditably on each. While still in his mid-teens he started to compose, and he naturally proceeded to conservatory and university studies in music. He received diplomas in composition (in 1904) and in teaching (in 1905), as well as (in 1906) a doctorate in musicology, culminating in a dissertation on the structure of Hungarian folksong. These three disciplines—often uneasy counterparts among the musical professions—coexisted and reinforced one another in Kodály.

The best known of Kodály's works (at least outside of Hungary) are his orchestral scores, such shimmering displays of melody and color as the *Háry János* Suite, the *Dances of Galánta*, and the *Peacock Variations*. All of these are works of his maturity. But before reaching his "orchestral" phase, Kodály produced a small corpus of high-quality chamber music for strings, his predilection doubtless reflecting his own proficiency on that family of instruments.

Composed in 1914, the Duo for Violin and Cello (Opus 7) is without precedent

in the principal chamber-music literature, prefiguring (and quite likely inspiring) Maurice Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Cello of 1920–22. The piece was not premiered until 1918, when it was heard on an all-Kodály program in Budapest. Kodály composed the Duo immediately upon returning from an expedition to collect folk songs in Transylvania; the rhythm, melody, and harmony of this traditional repertoire all exercise an influence on the Duo, which even includes direct quotations from folk dances and children's songs. All the same, the Duo is no folk song recital. Here, as in the rest of his "art music," Kodály has profoundly absorbed the material of his native Hungary, and made it unequivocally his own.

Kodály's Duo exploits the similar technical possibilities of the two instruments, with their differing timbres and ranges enhancing the flavor of contrast. The work is rich in imitation and in explorations of minute subtleties of timbre. The opening Allegro serioso announces the Duo as a relatively extroverted, rhapsodic work, not unrelated in spirit to aspects of Ravel and other French contemporaries. The Adagio is nervous and simmering in its emotions, veering rapidly from the extremes of the two instruments' ranges to passages of overlapping pitch and even unisons. The finale opens with cadenza-like roulades from the violin, punctuated by pizzicatos and sweeping chords from the cello, before proceeding to an ebullient Presto section (announced by the cello's repeated-note motif) that proclaims its heritage in Magyar traditional music. Kodály's idiosyncratic brand of modernism is everywhere apparent, embracing classic sonata forms and contrapuntal procedures, the fervor of Romantic expressiveness, the experimental sense of the 20th century, and nationalistic references to folk music—all synthesized into a convincing, authentic voice.

Perfectly Voiceless

DEVONTÉ HYNES (B. 1985)

Devonté Hynes arrived at concert music after having achieved considerable success in the realm of popular entertainment, where he has made a mark as a singer, songwriter, record producer, and director. Persons who follow that repertoire may know him under his stage name Blood Orange or his previous pseudonym, Lightspeed Champion. He was a member of the dance-punk band Test Icicles from its foundation in 2004 until its dissolution in 2006, after which he relocated from his native London to New York City. In 2010 he recalibrated into Blood Orange, focusing on electronica and rhythm and blues. Blood Orange has now released five albums, the most recent being *Angel's Pulse* (2019). He has also written songs and produced recordings for many other performers, including The Chemical Brothers, Diana Vickers, Theophilus London, Solange Knowles, and A$AP Rocky. His work as a composer of cinema scores includes Gia Coppola's film *Palo Alto* and Melina Matsoukas' *Queen & Slim*. Also an accomplished dancer, Hynes has worked in collaborations with the ballet dancer Maria Kochetkova with the choreographer Emma Portner in music videos.

He is passionate about the music of Philip Glass, whose works he first encountered as a teenager through the 1982 album *Glassworks*. Today, he keeps a photo of Glass on his piano in his New York home and speaks readily of how Glass's style informs his own compositions. He has performed selections from Glass's Piano Etudes at Glass concerts in Carnegie Hall and at the Kennedy Center.

In October 2019, Hynes released his first album devoted entirely to his classical compositions: *Fields*, featuring the Chicago-based ensemble Third Coast Percussion. *Perfectly Voiceless* figures as the penultimate track on that release. The music was intended to accompany a full-evening dance production by Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. Hynes composed the entire album in a Digital Audio Workstation, using synthesized and sampled sounds, and then sent the recordings and scores to the members of Third Coast Percussion, who created the arrangements and orchestrations for their acoustic percussion instruments. "This was the first time I've written music that I've never played," said Hynes, "and I love that. It's something I've always been striving to get to. Seeing what Third Coast Percussion had done with these pieces was magical." Once the arrangements were complete, Third Coast Percussion sent the files back to Hynes for feedback. Most of Hynes' music was the foundation for choreography by Emma Portner, Jon Boogz, and Lil Buck, but *Perfectly Voiceless* served as an undanced interlude between choreographed movements.

In the booklet notes for the *Fields* recording, the members of Third Coast Percussion write that the music represents "a blend of Dev's love of classical and minimalist music with many of the characteristic elements of his work as Blood Orange—lush and powerful synth pads, beautiful melodies, intricate, light, bubbly rhythmic structures. In *Perfectly Voiceless*, a wall of Philip Glass-esque old school minimalism parts to reveal a catchy pop melody."

"I don't know if it's naïve," Hynes stated in an interview for *Cultured* magazine, "but I feel that everyone is the constant at the thing that they do, so I feel like it's impossible for me to be involved in something and have it not sound like me… A lot of people constantly try to out-do themselves. They innovate and try things and go against something. I've never had that thing. That need to one-up something or I did something once so I can't do it again. I reuse chord strips or chord progressions, instruments, or people. I'm just trying to do in that moment what works or what is of service to the idea. That's how you create a world."

Quintet for Piano and Strings in G minor, Opus 57

DMITRI DMITRIEVICH SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–75)

Dmitri Shostakovich held the music of J.S. Bach close to his heart. His pupil Boris Tishchenko quoted Shostakovich, a great connoisseur of the music of Mahler, as saying, "I used to consider *Das Lied von der Erde* the best work ever written, but now it seems to me that Bach's music is even more forceful." Another student, Yuri Abramovich Levitin, recalled that in 1938, after Shostakovich was hospitalized due to a near-breakdown (the result of the political bullying that he endured periodically), the composer proclaimed: "I have decided to start working again, so as not to lose my qualifications as a composer. I am going to write a prelude and a fugue every day. I shall take into consideration the experience of Johann Sebastian Bach." It was deemed appropriate to have movements from two Bach violin sonatas played at his funeral—badly, by all accounts. As a pianist, he apparently had a good deal of Bach under his fingers. In 1950, he headed the Soviet delegation that traveled to East Germany for the Bach bicentennial celebrations; on that occasion performed as one of the pianists in Bach's Concerto for Three Keyboard Instruments and also served as a judge at the International Bach Competition. Following the competition (where he was bowled over by the playing of Tatyana Nikolaeva) he would compose his Twenty-four Preludes and Fugues for Piano, a modern equivalent to Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*.

Bach lurks about the fringes of others of his pieces, too; certainly Shostakovich's Piano Quintet offers eloquent testimony of the inspiration he drew from the Leipzig master. The opening two movements (you may consider them a single, bipartite movement, if you prefer) stand as a prelude-and-fugue pair—Prokofiev, in fact, objected to this opening as being too "Bachian" for his taste—and the Intermezzo also evokes Bach in its spare texture in which long melodic lines weave above an incessant, crisply punctuated "walking bass" line. One wonders if Shostakovich was turning to the technical model of Bach as a means of grounding his tendency toward the emotional self-expression that had already gotten him into plenty of trouble, such as when his satirical opera *The Nose* (1930) earned him a bureaucratic rebuke for "bourgeois decadence" or when his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (1936) earned denunciation from Stalin's press corps. It was on the rebound from the latter misadventure that Shostakovich, having contritely offered his Fifth Symphony as "the creative reply of a Soviet artist to justified criticism," was awarded the Stalin Prize twice in succession, in 1940 for his Piano Quintet and in 1941 for his Symphony No. 7 (*Leningrad*).

In 1939, therefore, Shostakovich was a *persona grata*, and it was safe for the Beethoven String Quartet to approach him to request a new chamber work. To the group's first violinist, he responded immediately, "I shall definitely write you a quintet and play it with you." The Piano Quintet came into being during the summer of 1940, and Shostakovich premiered it with the ensemble in Moscow, on November 23 of that year. (He would record it with the Beethoven Quartet twenty years later.) The audience received it ecstatically, demanding an encore of the Scherzo and the Finale. It is a beautifully balanced, finely wrought work. Compared to Shostakovich's other chamber works, the Quintet's impact derives relatively little from the intense soul-searching for which he is noted, although the slow-paced Fugue is profoundly moving, emerging without a break from the pent-up drama of the Prelude. Instead, we encounter more "positive" aspects of the composer's emotional arsenal: the naive sassiness of the Scherzo, the ecstatic melodies of the Intermezzo; the optimism of the dance-march of the Finale, complete with a quotation from a tune associated with the entrance of clowns in Russian circuses. But even in this concluding movement, Shostakovich is given to undercutting the overriding emotion, and he has the piece end by fading into an unpretentious wisp of a coda.
—James M. Keller

JAMES M. KELLER is Program Annotator of the San Francisco Symphony and is the author of *Chamber Music: A Listener's Guide* (Oxford University Press).

VICTOR ROMASEVICH was born in Minsk, Belarus, and started piano studies with his mother, Lena Lubotsky, at the age of four. He entered the Gnesin Music School in Moscow at age five as a violin student of Mikhail Garlitsky and later studied with Rostislav Dubinsky of the Borodin Quartet, Boris Belenky at the Moscow Conservatory and, following his emigration to the United States in 1977, at Juilliard with Ivan Galamian. In 1979 he became a violin and viola pupil of the composer and philosopher Iosif Andriasov. Winner of the Gina Bachauer Prize at the 1985 J.S. Bach International Competition in Washington DC, Mr. Romasevich joined the San Francisco Symphony as Associate Principal Viola in 1990, and in 1992 moved to the first violin section.

JILL RACHUY BRINDEL, occupant of the Gary & Kathleen Heidenreich Second Century Cello Chair, joined the cello section of the San Francisco Symphony in 1980. She has been a member of the Navarro Trio for more than twenty years. The trio is currently in residence at Sonoma State University where Ms. Brindel began teaching in 2015. She studied at Indiana University and Chicago Musical College and was formerly assistant principal cello of the Lyric Opera of Chicago Orchestra, principal cello of the Mendocino Music Festival, and a member of the Houston Symphony. Ms. Brindel actively promotes the music of her late father, composer Bernard Brindel. She is a cello coach for the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra.

JACOB NISSLY was appointed Principal Percussion of the San Francisco Symphony in 2013. Previously, he was principal percussion of the Cleveland Orchestra and the Detroit Symphony. He also served as a member of the New World Symphony. He is on the percussion faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory and is currently a coach for the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra. He has also taught at the Eastman School of Music and the Cleveland Institute of Music. Mr. Nissly holds a Bachelor of Music and Jazz Studies from Northwestern University and a Master of Music degree from the Juilliard School. He began his percussion studies with Woody Smith in Iowa.

BRYCE LEAFMAN joined the San Francisco Symphony as Assistant Principal Timpani/Section Percussion during the 2020–21 season. Previously, he was principal percussion of the Billings Symphony, and he has performed with the Omaha, Berkeley, Marin, and New World symphonies; the Boston Philharmonic; and Symphony New Hampshire. In 2017 he was the first percussionist to win a solo concerto competition at the Aspen Music Festival, and he returned to the Aspen Music Festival in 2019 as the Charles Owen Memorial Percussion Fellow. Mr. Leafman holds degrees from New England Conservatory, Boston University, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

STAN MUNCY is a Bay Area percussionist and jazz vibe player. A member of the Santa Rosa Symphony, he regularly performs with the San Francisco Symphony. He was percussionist/assistant timpanist with the Honolulu Symphony. He also performs regularly with eighth blackbird and the new music ensemble-in-residence at UC Berkeley, the Eco Ensemble.

San Francisco-based percussionist **MARTY THENELL** began his musical studies on drumset with John Xepoleas. He is a graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music where he studied with Trey Wyatt and the Juilliard School where he studied with Greg Zuber, Daniel Druckman, and Billy Drummond. He has also been mentored by San Francisco Symphony members Jacob Nissly and Edward Stephan. As an orchestral musician, Mr. Thenell has been a guest with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and the San Francisco Symphony. He has given solo performances in San Francisco, New York City, and Verbier, Switzerland, and he has been a guest with the Elbtonal Percussion Quartet.

DAVID CHERNYAVSKY joined the San Francisco Symphony in 2009. Born in Saint Petersburg, Russia, he began violin studies at the age of six and at eleven gave his first solo recital. After winning prizes in competitions in Russia and France, he entered the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. In 1997, Mr. Chernyavsky came to the US to study at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music and, later, at the Juilliard School. He has recorded several CDs with the Saint Petersburg Quartet and with the Joel Rubin Klezmer Music Ensemble, and he has released a solo CD, *Klezmer Violin*. He also performs and teaches with the San Francisco Academy Orchestra.

POLINA SEDUKH, a native of Saint Petersburg, Russia, is a graduate of the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, where she studied with Savely Shalman, Lev Ivaschenko, and Vladimir Ovtcharek. Ms. Sedukh also holds a degree from the Longy School of Music in Boston. Before joining the San Francisco Symphony in 2007, she was a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. She made her solo debut with the Chamber Orchestra of Liepaya in Latvia at age of seven, followed by recital tours in US, Germany, and Austria. She has appeared as soloist with Saint Petersburg State Symphony, Boston Virtuosi Orchestra, Newton Symphony, and Saint Petersburg Cappella Orchestra, and has been a prizewinner at numerous competitions, including the Ludwig Spohr International Violin Competition.

KATIE KADARAUCH joined the San Francisco Symphony in 2007 as Assistant Principal Viola. A native of the Bay Area, she was principal viola of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra and earned a bachelor's degree and graduate diploma from the New England Conservatory. She also studied at the Colburn Conservatory of Music, during which time she performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and recorded film scores for movies such as *Get Smart*, *Spider-Man*, and *Avatar*. Ms. Kadarauch was the violist of the former Janaki String Trio, which toured the US and abroad and recorded with the Naxos and Yarlung labels. She plays on a Peter Rombouts viola ca. 1720, on loan from the San Francisco Symphony.

SÉBASTIEN GINGRAS joined the San Francisco Symphony in 2010. He grew up in Chicoutimi, Québec, where he was educated at the Conservatoire de Musique. He received his master's degree in music from the New England Conservatory, where he studied with Laurence Lesser. Previously a member of the New World Symphony and the Saint Louis Symphony, Mr. Gingras has joined in chamber music performances with artists including Menahem Pressler, Anthony Marwood, and the Alcan and Borromeo string quartets.

ASYA GULUA received her initial musical training in her native Moscow at the Gnesin School of Music, where she studied with Anna Arzamanova and Sergei Lebedev. In 1996 she immigrated to the United States and enrolled at the Interlochen Arts Academy. She holds degrees from the Juilliard School (BM), Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music (MM), and the University of Oregon (DMA). She has frequently appeared in duo piano performances with her husband, pianist and composer Arsen Gulua. Ms. Gulua lives in Salem, OR where she teaches private students and collaborates with musicians and composers on a local and national level.

EXOTIC BIRDS: DEBUSSY, MESSIAEN & SAARIAHO

THE CONCERT

Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 7:30
Friday, October 15, 2021 at 7:30
Saturday, October 16, 2021 at 7:30
Sunday, October 17, 2021 at 2:00

Inside Music Talk by Peter Grunberg at 6:30 (1:00 on Sunday)

Off the Podium with Claire Chase and Jeremy Denk, moderated by Peter Grunberg, following Friday's performance

Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting

CLAUDE DEBUSSY
Prelude à L'Après-midi d'un faune (1894)

OLIVIER MESSIAEN
Oiseaux exotiques (1956)
Jeremy Denk piano

Intermission

KAIJA SAARIAHO
Aile du songe (2001)
Aérienne
Prélude—Garden of the Birds—Other Shores
Terrestre
Dancing Bird—Bird, a Tiny Satellite of Our Planetary Orbit
First San Francisco Symphony performances
Claire Chase flute

CLAUDE DEBUSSY
La Mer (1905)
From Dawn Till Noon on the Sea—Play of the Waves—Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea

AT A GLANCE

After the first concert performance of *Prélude à L'Après-midi d'un faune*, the Symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé—whose poem inspired **Claude Debussy**'s work—sent to the composer a copy of the poem, inscribed with these lines: "Sylvan spirit, if with your primal breath/Your flute sounds well,/ Hear now the radiance/ When Debussy plays."

Birdsong plays a central role in **Olivier Messiaen**'s *Oiseaux exotiques*, in which forty-seven different examples are woven into the fabric of the piece. The composer referred to this work as "almost a piano concerto"—one that featured his wife, Yvonne Loriod, at its premiere—and he also cited the pair of clarinets and the xylophone as particularly "in the foreground" in both their musical input and their placement on the stage.

Kaija Saariaho's 2001 flute concerto *Aile du songe* (Wing of the Dream) draws inspiration from a lengthy poem by the French writer Saint-John Perse, who often drew on imagery of birds. In her first movement, Saariaho parallels Perse's contemplations of birds in the air, while the second considers birds on *terra firma*. Together, the movements describe the bird as (to quote the poet) "a tiny satellite of our planetary orbit."

It was during youthful summer weeks spent at the beaches of Cannes that **Debussy** learned to love the sea, particularly its unpredictability, its ever-changing nature. *La Mer* was only the composer's seventh major orchestral score, but it is so brilliantly assured that it sometimes seems like Debussy invented the modern orchestra.

After notes by James M. Keller and Michael Steinberg

Prélude à L'Après-midi d'un faune

ACHILLE-CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

COMPOSED: Begun in 1892 and completed on October 23, 1894, with further minor revisions over the span of two decades

WORLD PREMIERE: December 22, 1894. Gustave Doret conducted at a concert in Paris of the Société Nationale de Musique

SF SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES: FIRST—February 1912. Henry Hadley conducted. MOST RECENT—April 2015, led by Pablo Heras-Casado

INSTRUMENTATION: 3 flutes, 2 oboes and English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 harps, antique cymbals, and strings

DURATION: About 10 mins

THE BACKSTORY Claude Debussy achieved his musical maturity in the final decade of the nineteenth century. It was a magical moment in France, when partisans of the visual arts fully embraced the gentle luster of Impressionism, when poets navigated the indirect locutions of Symbolism, when composers struggled with the pluses and minuses of Wagner, and when the City of Light blazed even more brightly than usual, enflamed with the pleasures of the Belle Époque.

Several early Debussy masterpieces of the nineties have stuck forcefully in the enduring repertory, including, most strikingly, *Prélude à L'Après-midi d'un faune* (Prelude to *The Afternoon of a Faun*), completed in 1894. Debussy was hardly a youngster when he composed it. He had begun studying at the Paris Conservatory in 1872, when he was only ten; had served as resident pianist and musical pet for Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky's mysterious patroness, in Russia and in her travels during the summers of 1880-82; had finally gained the imprimatur of the Prix de Rome in 1884 (for his cantata *L'Enfant prodigue*), enabling him to spend the next two years in Italy; had inhaled the Wagnerian breezes of Bayreuth in 1888 and 1889; had grown enamored of the sounds of the Javanese gamelan at the Paris International Exposition of 1889; and had composed a great many songs and piano pieces. While helping define the composer's distinctive voice, these early works baffled many listeners. Of the *Prélude à L'Après-midi d'un faune* Debussy's fellow composer

Alfred Bruneau wrote "[It] is one of the most exquisite instrumental fantasies which the young French school has produced. This work is too exquisite, alas! it is too exquisite."

Even at the distance of more than a century and a quarter, listeners can appreciate Bruneau's concern. The Debussy of the 1890s sometimes seems so obsessed with minute details of timbre that everything can threaten to implode into a mass of sensual loveliness. The composer's eventual style was not to display the sort of firm, unmistakable architecture that most composers up until that time had cherished. His method would evolve into something more intuitive, with themes that invite little development, with harmonies inspiring momentary excitement rather than underscoring long trajectory. Although he is sometimes called a musical Impressionist, his aesthetic affinities would seem to be more allied to the Symbolists, those poets and artists of the late-nineteenth century who disdained the purely expository or representational and sought instead to evoke a specific, fleeting emotional illumination in the reader or viewer through sometimes mysterious metaphors.

One of those poets was Stéphane Mallarmé, whose poem *L'Après-midi d'un faune* (penned in 1865 and revised a decade hence) is a feast of transcendence. Mallarmé's poem—which he called an eclogue—was published in a most elegantly produced little book with a drawing by Manet. This seemed to make next to no impact, but J.K. Huysmans mentioned the poem enthusiastically in *À Rebours* (Against the Grain), an influential novel, published in 1884 and dubbed "the breviary of decadence." Suddenly everyone was curious about Mallarmé and *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, enough so for the poem to be republished with wider circulation in the *Revue indépendante*. It was then that Debussy saw the poem he was to make so famous and which indeed was to be so significant in establishing his own renown.

THE MUSIC Debussy responds to Mallarmé's voluptuousness in kind, reinventing the flute (that pours water "into chord-besprinkled thickets"), reinventing the orchestra, finding new harmonies, new rhythms, new ways of ordering events. No one had ever heard a beginning like this one, with these four subtly varied proposals of one melody, at once so sensual and so incorporeal.

Paul Dukas, to whom Debussy had given a copy of Mallarmé's poem in 1887, was especially struck by the music's lucidity. Having occasion in 1901 to review his friend's *Nocturnes*, Dukas reflected:

"His effort seems to be to note the most distant harmonics of the verse and to take possession of all the suggestions of the text in order to transport them to the realm of musical expression. Most of his compositions are thus symbols of symbols, but expressed in a language itself so rich, so persuasive, that it sometimes reaches the eloquence of a new word, carrying its own law within it, and often much more intelligible than that of the poems on which it comments. Such is the case, for example, with *L'Après-midi d'un faune*."

Perhaps Mallarmé himself said it even better. After the first concert performance of *Prélude*, which he had already heard with astonished pleasure when Debussy played it for him on the piano, he sent to the composer a copy of the poem, inscribed with these lines: "Sylvan spirit, if with your primal breath/Your flute sounds well,/ Hear now the radiance/When Debussy plays."—**Michael Steinberg**

LISTEN AGAIN: Esa-Pekka Salonen with the Los Angeles Philharmonic (Sony Classical)

MICHAEL STEINBERG, the San Francisco Symphony's Program Annotator from 1979 to 1999 and a contributing writer to our program book until his death in 2009, was one of the nation's pre-eminent writers on music. We are privileged to continue publishing his program notes. His books are available at the Symphony Store in Davies Symphony Hall.

Oiseaux exotiques, for Solo Piano and Small Orchestra

OLIVIER MESSIAEN (1908–92)

COMPOSED: October 5, 1955, to January 23, 1956, on a commission from Pierre Boulez for the Domaine Musical concerts at the Petit Théâtre Marigny in Paris

WORLD PREMIERE: March 10, 1956, at the Petit Théâtre Marigny, with Rudolf Albert conducting and Yvonne Loriod (the work's dedicatee) as pianist

SF SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES: FIRST—April 1973. Seiji Ozawa conducted, with Peter Serkin as pianist. MOST RECENT—January 2010. George Benjamin conducted, with Nicolas Hodges at the piano

INSTRUMENTATION: Solo piano, flute and piccolo, oboe, 2 clarinets plus E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet, bassoon, 2 horns, trumpet, glockenspiel (or keyboard glockenspiel), xylophone, temple blocks, woodblock, snare drum, gongs, and tam-tam

DURATION: About 15 mins

THE BACKSTORY Born into an intellectual family—his father was a professor and English-French translator, his mother a poet—Olivier Messiaen showed an early aptitude for music, composing his first song at the age of eight. At the age of eleven he enrolled at the Paris Conservatory, where he would be awarded *premiers prix* (top honors) in four domains: organ, piano accompaniment, improvisation, and composition. His musical education there was of the highest order: his composition professors included Paul Dukas and his principal organ teacher was Marcel Dupré.

Upon leaving the Conservatory, he was named (in 1931) organist at the Eglise de la Trinité in the ninth *arrondissement* of Paris, where he reigned over the Cavaillé-Coll instrument in the loft for the rest of his life. He spent two years as a prisoner-of-war in Stalag 8A in Silesia, where he composed his well-known *Quatuor pour le fin du temps* (Quartet for the End of Time), but he returned to La Trinité upon his repatriation, in 1941. Already before World War II, he had accepted posts on the faculties of the École Normale de Musique and the Schola Cantorum, both being leading Parisian music schools. In addition, he had helped establish (along with his colleagues André Jolivet, Daniel-Lesur, and Yves Baudrier) the musical movement *La jeune France*; this circle hoped to reinject a spirit of humanism and spirituality into French

composition, which had stressed lighter, more cynical, even frivolous attitudes during the interwar years.

In ensuing decades, Messiaen gained renown as a composer of a highly idiosyncratic bent, achieving works that combined an extraordinary expressive sensibility with a fascination for technical details (most astonishingly in the often-neglected area of rhythm), yet working in a modernist language that, notwithstanding its complexity, did not prove bewildering or off-putting to the general listener. Young composers—Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and Iannis Xenakis among them—flocked to his classes, ensuring that his very personal aesthetic would leave a mark in musical history apart from his own output, which it unquestionably has.

One of Messiaen's principal sources of inspiration was his spiritual belief; visions of angels waft through many of his compositions. Another was his passion for birdsong. He began notating birdsong outdoors in 1923, and through the years he traveled on many bird-watching expeditions to observe birds in their native habitats. It was the birds' songs and calls that seemed to interest him most profoundly, and he often captured their sounds in the field using a tape recorder he might haul halfway around the world. Having thus captured birdsongs (often very exotic examples), he would transcribe them to provide musical material he could incorporate into his original works.

Composers have often referenced birdsong for its bucolic or sentimental implications. Messiaen, however, incorporated birdsong strictly for its aesthetic content—birdsongs as musical themes—although he certainly imposed a human interpretation on these sounds, aligning what he viewed as their distinct individual character to the expressive intent of his music.

THE MUSIC In *Oiseaux exotiques* (Exotic Birds, 1955–56), Messiaen assembles an international array of forty-seven birdsongs. Scholars have pointed out that essentially all of them could have been heard at that time in the collection of the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, as well as on recordings with which Messiaen was familiar. In this work we encounter a synthesis of several streams of Messiaen's musical interests, including not just birdsong but also his absorption of Greek and Hindu metrics and his theory of *timbres-couleurs*, which involves the relationship of pitches to tone colors and the harmonic implications of overtones relating to the notes of a melody. When speaking of such works by Messiaen it is easy to be swept up in their avian details, but their importance lies less in the transcription of natural sounds than in the way the composer employs those materials.

Messiaen begins the score of *Oiseaux exotiques* with two detailed prefaces, the first of which provides practical instructions for performers and concludes with the admonition that musicians "should not forget that this work is highly coloured; it contains all the colours of the rainbow, including red, that colour especially associated with hot countries—the colour of the American bird known as the 'Cardinal.'" The Second Preface reveals that "this score uses exotic bird-songs from India, China, Malaysia (East Indies) and North and South America." The composer offers specific observations on eighteen of his birds, such as:

"The Mocking-Bird (*Mimuspolyglottus*) has a grey mantle, pink stomach, fawn brown wings and tail with white streaks. Its strophes are brassy, staccato, rich in harmonics. Their repetitions, which have an incantatory character, recall our song-thrush. The Mocking-Bird, represented by horns and trumpet, keeps up a dialogue with the Cardinal (piano solo) in the central tutti.

"The Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) is black, with a yellow nape and a white back. It is a member of the troupial genus (*Icteridae*). Brilliant melodic figures, great virtuosity. The Cat-Bird and Bobolink monopolize the main piano cadenza, before the final tutti.

"The Wood-Thrush (*Hylocichla*

mustelina), whose sparkling fanfare, full of sunlight, almost sacramental, ends the first piano solo "cadenza," and begins the last.

"The piano part," writes Messiaen, "is very important; the work is almost a piano concerto, with three short 'cadenzas' and two longer ones.…But one must be able also to hear the two B-flat clarinets, which play an essential role…, since it is they who perform the song of the American Robin. Finally, the xylophone is also used as a solo instrument. This is why the piece requires a concert grand piano, with a brilliant and very sonorous tone; and why the piano solo, the xylophone, and the two clarinets are placed in the foreground."

The composer Alexander Goehr, a Messiaen pupil, was "bowled over" by *Oiseaux exotiques* at its premiere, and later marveled at "the way in which the dawn choruses, consisting of many different and overlapping parts, have been built up rhythmically and harmonically." "Here," Goehr declared, "technique at the highest level hides technique. You hear the final harmony and the balancing combinations of voices, but you cannot say how it's done. Questions about such matters elicited no response from Messiaen." —**James M. Keller**

LISTEN AGAIN: Pianist Paul Crossley with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the London Sinfonietta (CBS Masterworks)

Aile du songe: Concerto for Flute and Orchestra

KAIJA SAARIAHO (B. 1952)

COMPOSED: 2001, on commission from the Flanders Festival, the Finnish Broadcasting Corporation, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra

WORLD PREMIERE: October 12, 2001, at the Flanders Festival in Brussels, with Marin Alsop conducting the Vlaams Radio Orkest, with flutist Camilla Hoitenga (to whom the piece is dedicated)

SF SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES: These are the first complete performances of the work on SF Symphony concerts

INSTRUMENTATION: Solo flute, crotales, suspended cymbal, maracas, small gong, glockenspiel, tam-tam, tambourine, 2 triangles, 2 güiros, frame drum, Chinese cymbal, claves, bass drum, xylophone, sandpaper blocks, tubular bells, vibraphone, glass/metal/shell wind chimes, marimba, timpani, celesta, harp, and strings

DURATION: About 18 mins

THE BACKSTORY Kaija Saariaho's interest pointed early on toward a life involving visual imagery, perhaps as a painter or designer. But she veered instead toward a musical career, studying at Helsinki University and the Sibelius Academy, where she was a pupil of Paavo Heininen, the composer, teacher, and musicologist who at that time was emerging as an *éminence grise* behind Finland's ascent in the international musical avant-garde. Following her graduation from the conservatory, in 1981, she worked with Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber at the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg. Installing herself in Paris the following year (she has lived there ever since), she became closely associated with the Institut de Recherche et de Coördination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM), the musical technology center headed by Pierre Boulez. There she became deeply involved in electronic composition.

The general flavor of Saariaho's earlier work may remind listeners of Edgard Varèse (whom Saariaho has cited as an inspiration in her explorations of how music relates to noise), while its refinement of orchestration and its meticulous notation recall Anton Webern. Saariaho's compatriot Risto Niemanen, who has written extensively about her work, has referred aptly to her tendency toward "orchestration in miniature." In fact, one

might say that Saariaho has been known to "out-Webern" Webern by extending her hyper-management of sound to include micro-intervals and sometimes expand her orchestra to include subtle electronic effects. A third important influence was the French composer Gérard Grisey, whose so-called Spectral Music emphasized the inherent acoustic properties of sound and how sounds were actually perceived—the idea that music is made of sounds, rather than of notes.

During the 1980s, Saariaho often found inspiration for her compositions in the physical phenomena of nature (again, an idea allied to the Spectralists). Much of her music of that time seemed monolithic, yet its surface was typically enlivened by scurrying detail, by intricate variations of sound that traced busy patterns through the texture of the large orchestra. In the 1990s (and on into our own century) her music took on an increasingly lyrical flavor as her basic outlook evolved.

Many of her twenty-first-century works, including her acclaimed opera *L'Amour de loin* (2000; it earned her the coveted Grawemeyer Award in 2003 and was revived in a new production by the Metropolitan Opera in 2016) have basked in luxurious expanses of unabashed sensuousness. Opera has proved a fertile field for her. *L'Amour de loin* was followed by *Adriana Mater* in 2005, the monodrama *Emilie* in 2008, the chamber opera *Only the Sound Remains* in 2015, and, most recently, *Innocence*, premiered to rapturous reviews by the Festival International d'Art Lyrique d'Aix-en-Provence this past summer. (Since this latest, very international opera—its libretto moves through nine languages—was co-commissioned by

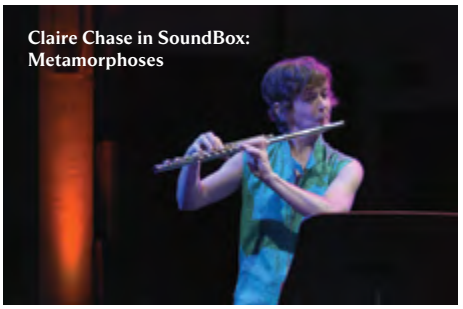
San Francisco Opera, we will likely get to see it here before long.)

THE MUSIC *Aile du songe* (Wing of the Dream) is one of a handful of Saariaho's concertos—or concerto-like pieces—featuring a solo instrument. Others have spotlighted violin, clarinet, cello, harp, and organ. "I have been very familiar with the flute since my earliest pieces," she stated. "I like the sound in which breathing is ever present and with timbral possibilities that befit my musical language: the instrument's body makes it possible to write phrases that go through grinding textures colored with phonemes whispered by the flautist which gradually go towards pure and smooth sounds."

Saariaho's music is often inspired by or deeply connected to poetry. In the case of *Aile du songe*, literary inspiration comes from poems by the French diplomat and writer Saint-John Perse (1887–1975). He was given the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1960, at which time the award panel cited "the soaring flight and evocative imagery of his poetry." The metaphor was apt. Many of his most striking works are deeply invested in avian imagery, including his long poem *Oiseaux* (Birds) of 1963.

Saariaho explains, "The concerto's title and the general mood of the piece derive from … *Oiseaux*: '*Aile falquée du songe, vous nous retrouverez ce soir sur d'autres rives!*' [Scythe-shaped wing of the dream, this evening you will find us again on other shores!]. This is not the first time I combine my music with Saint-John Perse's verses. In *Laconisme de l'aile*, composed in 1981, I already used some sentences from *Oiseaux*. In these poems, Saint-John Perse does not describe the singing of the birds. He rather speaks of their flight and uses the rich metaphor of the birds to describe life's mysteries through an abstract and multidimensional language: '*Ignorants de leur ombre, et ne sachant de mort que ce qui s'en consume d'immortel au bruit lointain des grandes eaux, ils passent, nous laissant, et nous ne sommes plus les mêmes. Ils sont l'espace traversé d'une seule pensée.*' [Unaware of their shadow and knowing naught of death except the bits of immortality that are consumed by the distant sound of leaping fountains, they pass, leaving us behind, and we are no longer the same. They are the space traversed by a single thought]." She continues:

"The concerto is composed of two main parts: *Aérienne* [Aerial] and *Terrestre*


Claire Chase in SoundBox: Metamorphoses

[Terrestrial]. These two titles are also to be found in one of Perse's poems, quoted below.

"The three sections of *Aérienne* describe three different concerted situations:

In "Prélude," the flute gradually pervades space and generates the orchestra's music, in "Jardin des oiseaux" [Garden of the Birds] the flute interacts with individual instruments of the orchestra, while "D'autres rives" [Other Shores] compares the flute to a lone, high-flying bird whose shadow forms different images played by the strings over the unchanged landscape of the harp, celesta and percussion.

"The first section of *Terrestre*, "Oiseau dansant" [Dancing Bird], introduces a deep contrast with the other material of the concerto. It refers to an Aboriginal tale in which a virtuosic dancing bird teaches a whole village how to dance. The finale—the second section of *Terrestre*—is a synthesis of all the previous aspects, then the sound of the flute slowly fades away."

She concludes with the promised quotation from Saint-John Perse's poem: "*Dans sa double allégeance, aérienne et terrestre, l'oiseau nous était ainsi présenté pour ce qu'il est: un satellite infime de notre orbite planétaire*" [In its double allegiance, aerial and terrestrial, the bird thus presented itself to us as what it is: a tiny satellite of our planetary orbit].—**J.M.K.**

WATCH AGAIN: Claire Chase performs a chamber version of the *Terrestre* section of *Aile du songe* as part of SoundBox: Metamorphoses, available on sfsymphonyplus.org.

La Mer

ACHILLE-CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

COMPOSED: Begun in the summer of 1903, completed in March 1905. Debussy continued to make revisions for many years afterwards

WORLD PREMIERE: October 15, 1905. Camille Chevillard conducted the Lamoureux Orchestra, in Paris

SF SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES: FIRST—January 1914. Henry Hadley conducted. MOST RECENT—May 2019. James Gaffigan conducted

INSTRUMENTATION: 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes and English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, bass tuba, timpani, cymbals, tam-tam, triangle, glockenspiel, bass drum, 2 harps, and strings. (The string section Debussy hoped for but can rarely, if ever, have found is an unusually large one, including 16 cellos.)

DURATION: About 23 mins

THE BACKSTORY Pierre Boulez wrote that, among Debussy's symphonic works, *La Mer* "best fulfills the conditions of the genre in the most usual sense of the term, especially if one considers the effective coda of the last movement, which carries to its maximum the rhetoric of 'the culminating point,' a rhetoric practically lacking in all his other orchestral pieces."

The subtle orchestral *Images* and the elusive-allusive *Jeux* were still in the future when *La Mer* was introduced; even so, on the basis of the Debussy they already knew, Parisian critics in 1905 seemed to have a clear sense that this new score was somehow different. Some who had been among the composer's most dedicated allies were now among the most disappointed of observers, specifically because *La Mer* moved so decisively away from the mist-washed, unmuscular delicacy that had been so valued by the Debussyists. Gaston Carraud, for example, writing in *La Liberté*, notes that "the rich wealth of sounds that interprets this vision [of the sea] with such accuracy and intensity, flows on without any unexpected jolts, its brilliance is less restrained, its scintillations are less mysterious. It is certainly genuine Debussy—that is to say, the most precious and the most subtle expression of our art—but it almost suggests the possibility that some day we may have an Americanized Debussy." Puccini, always a sensitive and sympathetic listener to music more radical than his own, spoke of "Debussy's revolt against *Debussyisme*."

Debussy all his life maintained a nearly total silence about his childhood. (At the time of the birth of Achille-Claude, Manuel-Achille Debussy and his wife ran a small ceramics store, the father soon changing to a job with the Fives-Lille Railway Company, which entailed moving the family to Clichy, a suburb of Paris). He did, however, make occasional and affectionate references to summer weeks spent at the beaches of Cannes. He learned then to love the sea, and no one who knows Debussy's music need be told that what he loved particularly was its unpredictability, its ever-changing nature. His parents at some point conceived the notion that he ought to be a sailor, but his vocation was determined when a Mme. Mauté de Fleurville, a lady with fascinating connections (she had been a pupil of Chopin and was the mother-in-law of Paul Verlaine), discovered his musical gift.

Thirty years elapsed between those inspiring lessons and the first sketches for *La Mer.* It is, however, always a surprise to recall that *La Mer* was only the composer's seventh major orchestral score, so brilliantly assured is it, so possessive in ways that sometimes make it seem that Debussy invented the modern orchestra.

THE MUSIC As we gradually learn to discern objects in near darkness, so we learn to hear motion in the stillness of Debussy's dawn. Thematic fragments detach themselves from the surrounding texture until at last a clear sense of motion, of rhythmic pattern, is established. Debussy is most evocative in the wonderful theme for cellos, its pattern of swell and retreat echoed subtly in the timpani and horns. It even looks like a wave on the page—so much, in fact, like the wave in the painting by Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai that Debussy asked his publisher to put a detail from that painting on the cover of his score.

The sketch of the "Play of the Waves" is scherzo and intermezzo in this not-quite-symphony, an interlude of lighter weight and less dense musical facture between the passions and storms, the awesome concentration of the first and third movements. The dialogue in the finale is often tempestuous. Exhibiting that new preoccupation with firm and perceptible formal design, Debussy ties the triumphant peroration to the last bars of the opening movement, the journey from dawn to noon.—**M.S.**

JEREMY DENK is one of America's foremost pianists. Winner of a MacArthur Fellowship and the Avery Fisher Prize, he was recently elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Mr. Denk returns frequently to Carnegie Hall and in recent seasons has appeared with the Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Cleveland Orchestra, as well as on tour with Academy of St Martin in the Fields, and at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the BBC Proms. He made his San Francisco Symphony debut in 2006.

Mr. Denk is also known for his original and insightful writing on music which has appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *New Republic*, the *Guardian*, and on the front page of the *New York Times Book Review*.

His recording of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Goldberg* Variations for Nonesuch Records reached No. 1 on the *Billboard* Classical Charts. His recording of Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Opus 111 paired with György Ligeti's Études was named one of the best discs of the year by the *New Yorker*, NPR, and the *Washington Post*. Mr. Denk has a long-standing attachment to the music of American visionary Charles Ives, and his recording of Ives's two piano sonatas also featured in many "best of the year" lists. His recording *c.1300-c.2000* was released in 2018 with music ranging from Guillaume de Machaut, Gilles Binchois, and Carlo Gesualdo to Karlheinz Stockhausen, György Ligeti, and Philip Glass. He can also be heard in Henry Cowell's Piano Concerto with the San Francisco Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas on the *American Mavericks* recording on SFS Media, and in SoundBox: Delirium, a program he curated on SFSymphony+.

Jeremy Denk is a graduate of Oberlin College, Indiana University, and the Juilliard School. He lives in New York City.

CLAIRE CHASE is a flutist, interdisciplinary artist, and educator. She co-founded the International Contemporary Ensemble in 2001, was named a MacArthur Fellow in 2012, and in 2017 was awarded the Avery Fisher Prize from Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

Fiercely dedicated to the music our time, Chase has given the world premieres of hundreds of new works by a new generation of artists, and in 2013 began *Density 2036*, a twenty-four-year commissioning initiative to create a new body of repertoire for the flute leading up to the centennial of Edgard Varèse's seminal 1936 flute solo *Density 21.5.* Each year leading up to the centennial, Chase premieres a program of newly commissioned music, and in 2036 she will play a twenty-four-hour marathon of all the repertory generated in the project. In the 2022–23 season, a weeklong retrospective will take place featuring the first ten programs in the project to date. This season, Chase released the first five years of *Density 2036* (2013–17) on a four-album compilation produced in collaboration with Meyer Sound Laboratories in Berkeley, CA.

Upcoming projects include a collaboration with the Ecuadorian anthropologist Eduardo Kohn on a multi-species opera by Pauline Oliveros, a new duo concerto with esperanza spalding by the Brazilian composer Felipe Lara, and an evening-length new solo work by the Australian composer Liza Lim for contrabass flute, electronics, and kinetic percussion.

A deeply committed educator, Claire Chase is Professor of the Practice of Music at Harvard University, where she teaches courses on contemporary music, cultural activism, and interdisciplinary collaboration. A San Francisco Symphony Collaborative Partner, she is also a Creative Associate at the Juilliard School. She lives in Brooklyn.

Inside Music Speaker **PETER GRUNBERG** has appeared as a piano soloist with the San Francisco Symphony, performed at the Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg, and Tanglewood festivals, and has collaborated in recital with such artists as Frederica von Stade, Thomas Hampson, and Joshua Bell. Mr. Grunberg was Head of Music Staff at San Francisco Opera, and as musical assistant to Michael Tilson Thomas with the San Francisco Symphony he was also a principal collaborator on the *Keeping Score* project.

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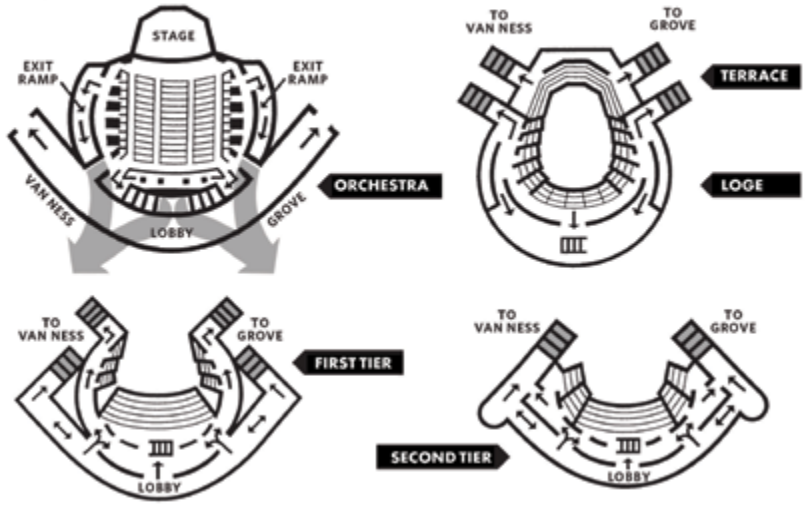

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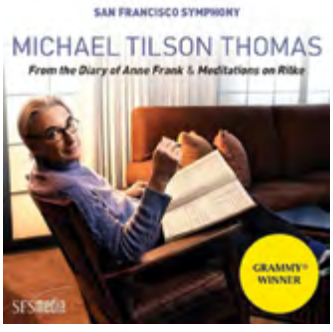

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