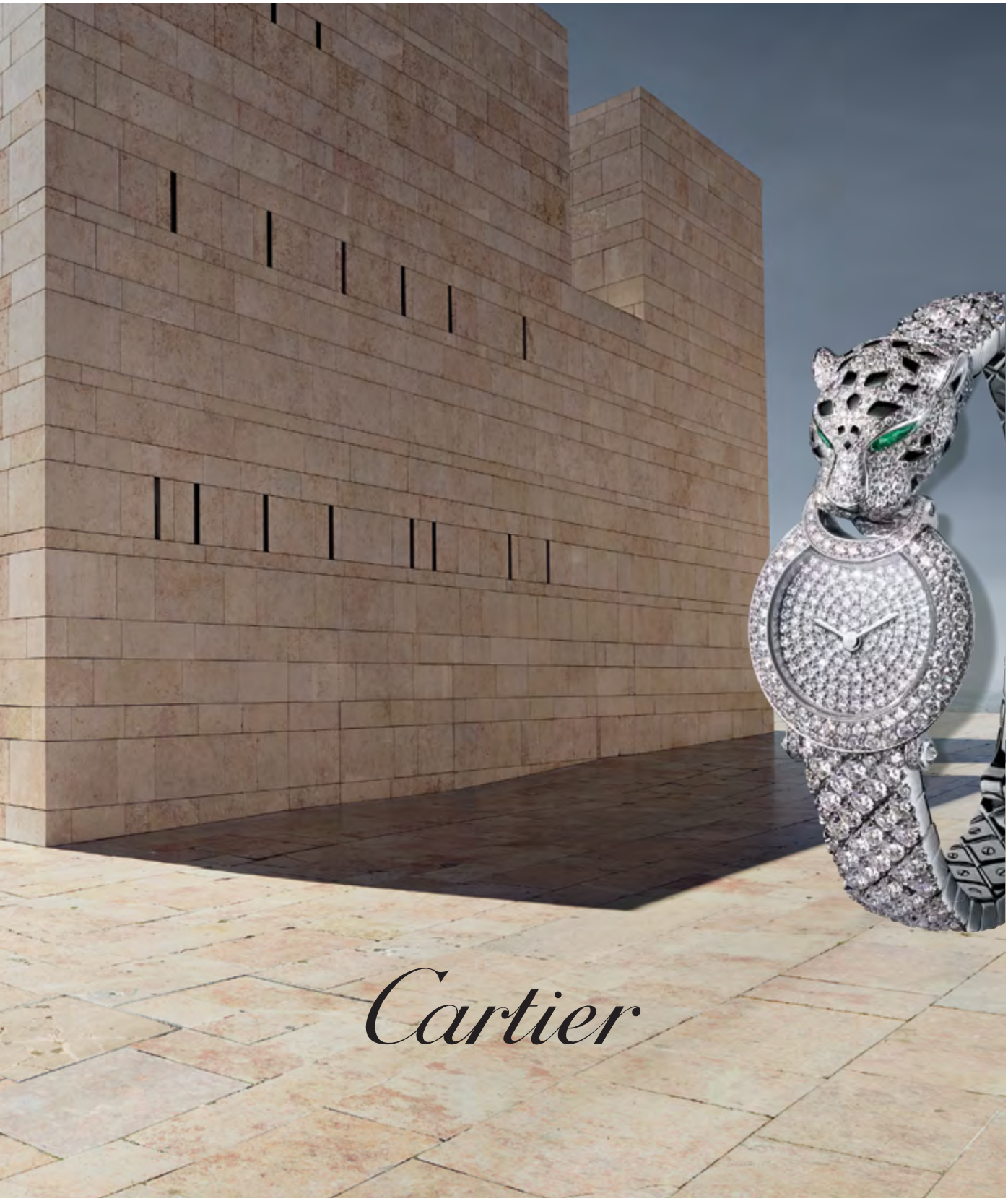
OCTOBER 2022

SF SYMPHONY

BARBARA BOGATIN
CELLO

encore



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SF SYMPHONY

October 2022

2022–23 Season | Vol. II, No. 2

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Cover: SF Symphony cellist Barbara Bogatin. Photo: Cody Pickens

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Cal Performances
music dance theater
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

22/23
SEASON

Colin Currie Group
Synergy Vocals
A Steve Reich Celebration

Colin Currie, *conductor and percussion*

Currie has assembled a superlative ensemble to celebrate Steve Reich's 86th birthday, performing his influential *Music for 18 Musicians*; his classic *Tehillim*; and the West Coast premiere and Cal Performances co-commission, *Traveler's Prayer*.

An *Illuminations*: "Human and Machine" event.
calperformances.org/illuminations

Nov 3
ZELLERBACH HALL

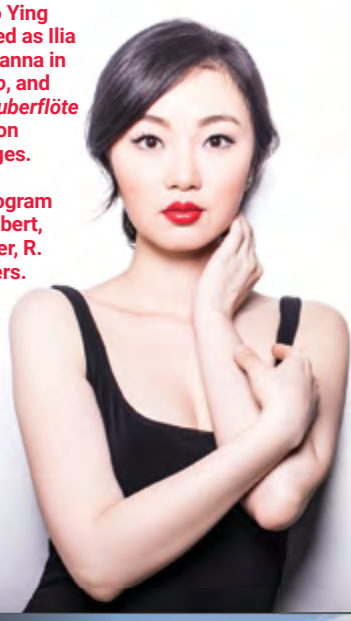
Ensemble Basiani

The sublime voices of Georgia's Ensemble Basiani present a transporting program highlighting the rich polyphonic music tradition of their homeland in the Caucasus.

Nov 3
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, BERKELEY

Ying Fang, *soprano*
Ken Noda, *piano*

The lyric soprano Ying Fang has appeared as Ilia in *Idomeneo*, Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* to great acclaim on international stages. She is joined by Ken Noda in a program of songs by Schubert, Schumann, Mahler, R. Strauss, and others.



Nov 6
HERTZ HALL

Sō Percussion

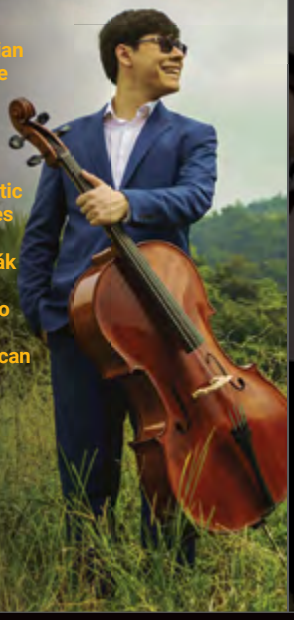
The singular new-music ensemble plays two concerts highlighting three millennial voices that are part of an inspiring generation of women composers revitalizing the contemporary music landscape.

An *Illuminations*: "Human and Machine" event.
calperformances.org/illuminations

Nov 12
ZELLERBACH HALL

Zlatomir Fung, *cello*
Janice Carissa, *piano*

The youngest musician ever to win First Prize in the cello division of the International Tchaikovsky Competition (2019), Fung brings an eclectic program that matches cello showpieces by Beethoven and Dvořák with an arrangement of Ives songs and two contemporary works with distinctly American sensibilities.



Nov 20
HERTZ HALL

THANKSGIVING WEEKEND

Vienna Boys Choir
Christmas in Vienna

The universally adored Vienna Boys Choir visits Berkeley in a festive program of Austrian folk songs, classical masterpieces, and Christmas hymns and carols from across the globe.

Nov 26
ZELLERBACH HALL

calperformances.org | 510.642.9988

AT THE SYMPHONY

Davies Symphony Hall is more than the home of the San Francisco Symphony. It is a gathering place for our Bay Area friends and visitors alike, a unifying hub for local groups representing a variety of missions, and a showcase for artists of all kinds.

Our upcoming Día de los Muertos celebration, now in its 15th year, neatly illuminates the role of our Symphony in the life of the community, as well as the vitality of our venerable building. This month and next, beautiful altars created by local artists and organizations especially for this occasion will animate our lobbies, while helping us to remember family and friends and reflect on the ties that bind all of us. The event would not be complete without the participation of our longtime partner Casa Círculo Cultural, whose artistry is threaded into both the concert itself and our entire Día de los Muertos celebration.

Here at Davies Symphony Hall, we welcome artists and create inspiring concerts all year long. This month alone, we feature guest performers like Yuja Wang and Sheku Kanneh-Mason, and premieres of Symphony-commissioned works by Trevor Weston, Daniel Kidane, and Magnus Lindberg (read more about Lindberg on page 12). We also celebrate Halloween in our own distinctive way, with two weeks of themed programming highlighted by Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* and HK Gruber's avant-garde *Frankenstein!!*.

Truly, our hall is graced by a brilliant range of artists and visions. But it is incomplete without people like you who share in the experience and, through their support, ensure that future generations will as well. Thank you for making Davies Symphony Hall your home for this performance. Please join us again and often throughout this year of extraordinary music and community.

Priscilla B. Geeslin
President, San Francisco Symphony

Community Connections

The San Francisco Symphony is honored to partner each year with **Casa Círculo Cultural** on our Día de los Muertos concert. Casa Círculo Cultural is a community-based multidisciplinary art nonprofit—truly vibrant and grass-roots—dedicated to creating cultural programming reflective of the experiences of the Latino communities in the San Francisco Bay Area, while promoting leadership development for the whole family. Casa Círculo Cultural's mission is to provide creative, educational, and recreational opportunities for Latinx families; encourage Hispanic art, culture, language, and traditions; while promoting leadership development for both kids and adults, rooted in the belief that social change is best achieved through collaboration, community empowerment, and civic engagement. Learn more at casacirculocultural.org.

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ESA-PEKKA SALONEN

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Esa-Pekka Salonen is known as both a composer and conductor. He is currently the Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony, where he works alongside eight Collaborative Partners from a variety of disciplines ranging from composers to roboticists. He is Conductor Laureate for London's Philharmonia Orchestra, where, as Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor from 2008 until 2021, he spearheaded digital projects such as the award-winning *RE-RITE* and *Universe of Sound* installations and the much-hailed app for iPad, *The Orchestra*; the Los Angeles Philharmonic, where he was Music Director from 1992 until 2009, and was instrumental in opening the Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall; and the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra. He is currently in the midst of *Multiverse Esa-Pekka Salonen*, a two-season residency as both composer and conductor, at Elbphilharmonie Hamburg. As a member of the faculty of Los Angeles's Colburn School, he develops, leads, and directs the pre-professional Negaunee Conducting Program. He is the co-founder—and until 2018 served as Artistic Director—of the annual Baltic Sea Festival. In 2015 he addressed the Apple Distinguished Educator conference on the uses of technology in music education, and his Violin Concerto was featured in an international campaign for iPad.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

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
Vacant, *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
Nadya Tichman
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*

**On leave*

The San Francisco Symphony string section uses revolving seating. Players listed in alphabetical order change seats periodically.

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*
Katarzyna Bryla-Weiss
Joanne E. Harrington & Lorry I. Lokey Second Century Chair
Gina Cooper
David Gaudry
David Kim
Christina King
Leonid Plashinov-Johnson
Wayne Roden
Nanci Severance
Adam Smyla
Matthew Young

CELLOS

Rainer Eudeikis, *Principal*
Philip S. Boone Chair
Peter Wyrick, *Associate Principal*
Peter & Jacqueline Hoefer Chair
Amos Yang, *Assistant Principal*
Karel & Lida Urbanek Chair
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

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. For more information on the San Francisco Symphony, visit sfsymphony.org.

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 de Luna, *English Horn*
Joseph & Pauline Scafidi Chair

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

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

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

Learn More: For more on the SF Symphony musicians, visit sfsymphony.org/musicians

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*

TUBA
Jeffrey Anderson, *Principal*
James Irvine Chair

HARP
Vacant, *Principal*

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

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

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*

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY CHORUS
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Cheryl Cain
Cara Gabrielson
Michele Kennedy
Ellen Leslie
Jennifer Mitchell
Aimée Puentes
Natalia Salemmo

ALTOS
Terry Alvord
Silvie Jensen
Margaret (Peg) Lisi
Brielle Marina Neilson
Leandra Ramm
Meghan Spyker
Merilyn Telle Vaughn
Heidi Waterman

TENORS
Seth Brenzel
Elliott JG Encarnación
Sam Faustine
Kevin Gibbs
Michael Jankosky
Benjamin Liupaogo
Joachim Luis
Jack Wilkins

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

FEATURE

Composer Magnus Lindberg: Magic on the Page

BY STEVE HOLT

Philip Gatward

The San Francisco Symphony presents the world premiere of Finnish composer Magnus Lindberg's Third Piano Concerto, an SF Symphony co-commission, October 13–15. We spoke with Lindberg about what it's like to write for Yuja Wang, and about his close ties with Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Yuja Wang

How did you become a composer?
I don't come from a family of musicians, but when I was six, my father bought me an accordion. And very soon, maybe age seven or eight, I started to compose. Fortunately, my mother had a friend who was a professional pianist. And she listened to me playing the accordion and said, "Now we need to go from vertical to horizontal!" [*laughs*]. She helped prepare me for the Sibelius Academy, which I entered in 1973 as a pianist. But composition was always around. For me, the natural way of expressing music seems to have been to put it on paper.

How do you get started on a piece?
I somehow have the feeling that I'm working on one piece all my life, instead of separate pieces. I'm not making wine; I'm making sherry, where you add old vintages to the new. Composing for me is a learning process, going one step further with each piece. I would say before finishing a work, I've already started the next one. So, I avoid the problem of starting by keeping things running. I would not be the same composer unless I had written *all* these pieces. They are all equal in the sense that at the time I wrote them they meant so much to me.

How does being a pianist affect your composing for the instrument?
If I'm writing a concerto for violin, or cello, or clarinet, I'm of course attached to the advice of someone who plays that instrument. But obviously I have a connection to the piano; I have my own thoughts about what to write.

I wrote my First Piano Concerto for Paul Crossley, when he was artistic director of the London Sinfonietta. He was a great musician, and a visionary in his way of playing a broad spectrum of contemporary music. My sort of challenge was to reconsider the concerto. It took me four times to rewrite the piece before it worked.

My Second Piano Concerto was written for Yefim Bronfman and the New York Philharmonic. It's very much a big, bold piece for both the soloist and the orchestra.

For this Third Concerto, I thought okay, I'm mature now; I'll try to be very classical in the sense of approaching it. It didn't end up taking that path, although it's still a concerto in three movements. But there was a moment when I started to get the piece to stand on its own, and it became very much inspired by the just amazing playing of Yuja Wang.

I had seen her play in Hamburg, and I got to speak with her after the concert and I thought, ah! if ever there were a chance to compose something for her, that would be my goal. So when I began working on this concerto I decided to tailor everything for her; I wanted to make it something that would attach to her world. I like that idea very much. It was not giving up any of my musical ideas; just shaping them. That is the luxury of writing concertos; you can do it for someone personally. In this case there was also the fascination of coming back to the piano concerto for a third time.

"I'm not making wine; I'm making sherry, where you add old vintages to the new." —Magnus Lindberg

You have a long musical friendship with Esa-Pekka Salonen.
My youth would have been very different if I hadn't met my very close and esteemed friend and colleague. He entered the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki the same year I did, 1973; he as a horn player, I as a pianist. We were kicked out of music theory class after two weeks! We luckily ended up being taught by an excellent teacher with just three of us in the classroom for eight years, basically every week. Music theory became my favorite subject and still is. Of course, we've done so many things over the years together in music.

It must feel good to have him on the podium for this premiere.
When I heard that was the case, I thought, oh my god, this is fantastic! I know I can trust him. He is not afraid of saying, hey, there's something in the score that doesn't work, and I'm not afraid of changing my mind and amending the score in rehearsal. So I'm very much looking forward to working with him and Yuja.

It's a strange thing: I've grown increasingly nervous about premieres over the years. You spend so much time trying to put something on paper, and then when reality hits you, it's one of those situations when you would rather like to be somewhere far away. But I'm definitely coming to San Francisco for this!

Steve Holt is a Contributing Writer to the San Francisco Symphony program book.

For tickets or for more information, visit sfsymphony.org.

SPOTLIGHT

Tales of Murder, Madness & Mania

For many, the full range of music for Halloween might be limited to Michael Jackson's "Thriller" or, for the classically inclined, J.S. Bach's famous Toccata and Fugue in D minor. But a closer look reveals an array of music, full of surprises and unexpected detours. In two weeks of wonderfully wicked programs, Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Symphony explore works that revel in the world of the macabre. Here's what's onstage this month:

October 20 & 22 Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts Modest Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain*, Franz Liszt's *Totentanz* (with pianist Bertrand Chamayou), and Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*.

DECADENT DEBUT

How many pieces of music depict:
A. A terrifying bad drug trip
B. The sickly slicing of a guillotine (complete with a rolling head), and
C. A bizarre dance in hell at one's own funeral, among other oddities? Probably only one: Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, a masterful first symphony from a composer who went against the grain of all that was popular in 1830. Berlioz eschews both the high ideals of Beethoven and the frothy comic opera stylings of Rossini to create a semi-autobiographical symphonic melodrama rife with unrequited love (for Berlioz's muse, the Irish actress Harriet Smithson) and gallows humor (literally).

"The artist's sensations, emotions, and memories, as they filter through his fevered brain, are transformed into musical images and ideas." —Hector Berlioz

Witches' Sabbath, by Francisco Goya, 1798

DEVIL IN THE DETAILS

Long before the horror film *Midsommar* there was Modest Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain*, a gnarly tone poem depicting a midsummer witches' celebration on Saint John's Eve. And before Mussorgsky's work, there was Francisco Goya's grotesque *Witches' Sabbath*, which suggests visually what Mussorgsky vividly expresses in music: a gathering of demons, witches, and sorcerers with their leader (the devilish Chernobog) in the guise of a black goat. Or, if that's too disturbing, we can turn to Walt Disney, who famously used a version of Mussorgsky's work as the basis for one of *Fantasia*'s animated tone poems (featuring an equally imposing, yet slightly less terrifying, version of Chernobog).

SHALL WE DANCE?

Franz Liszt is said to have been inspired by this woodcut by Renaissance artist Hans Holbein when he composed *Totentanz* (Dance of Death). The composer had a lifelong fascination with the dark and divine, and in *Totentanz*, his status as a piano idol rubs against his restlessly forward-thinking compositional genius and penchant for spirituality. So, what is the "Deathly Dance" that anchors this set of devilish piano variations? Dies irae (Day of Wrath), a chant melody from the Latin Mass for the Dead, inspired countless composers, from Liszt to Sergei Rachmaninoff, to Liszt's chum Hector Berlioz, who parodied it in *Symphonie fantastique*'s chilling March to the Scaffold.

Dance of Death: The Trumpeters of Death, by Hans Holbein. ca. 16th century

FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER & KAZOOS?

The first question you might ask yourself after hearing HK Gruber's *Frankenstein!!* is "What *is* this?" It's certainly not Mary Shelley or Boris Karloff (or even Mel Brooks for that matter), but rather a tour-de-force for a vocally flexible (to put it mildly) "chansonnier" and an equally versatile band of orchestral players doubling on toy instruments including kazoos, melodicas, slide whistles, and hosepipe. Beneath the kooky exterior of HC Artmann's nonsense poems is something more sinister, however. Gruber notes, "Frankenstein—or whoever we choose to identify with that name—is not the protagonist, but the figure behind the scenes whom we forget at our peril."

"monster races down the stairs grubby hands, dishevelled hair so that's why he never lingers there's blood on his dainty fingers" —"Monster," by HC Artmann

Frontispiece from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus*, by Theodor von Holst, 1831

October 27–29 Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts Béla Bartók's Suite from *The Miraculous Mandarin*, Bernard Herrmann's Suite from *Psycho*, and HK Gruber's *Frankenstein!!* (with baritone Christopher Purves).

Radio Times caricature of Bartók, 1934

BANNED BALLET

"At the end of the performance there was a concert of whistling and catcalls! . . . The uproar was so deafening and lengthy that the fire curtain had to be brought down." The premiere of Igor Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*? Guess again. This quote from conductor Eugen Szenkár captures the tumult that erupted when Béla Bartók's ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin* was unveiled in Cologne in 1926. Bartók couldn't have been surprised: The friction of Menyhért Lengyel's plot—a NSFW tale of sexual exploitation and violence—and Bartók's aggressively rhythmic music is meant to challenge. The complete work was quickly banned by authorities, but the lively suite Bartók salvaged from his pulpy pantomime has found a lasting home on the concert stage.

"I lead the highly respectable listener from the crowded streets of a metropolis to a den of thieves." —Béla Bartók

Anthony Perkins as Norman Bates

THE O.G. SLASHER

Bernard Herrmann's iconic music to Alfred Hitchcock's film *Psycho* is so ingrained in our collective consciousness that we can sometimes lose sight of just how terrifying it must have sounded when it was unveiled in 1960. While Herrmann was a master of the jump scare, he was also adept at mirroring the complex psychological states of Hitchcock's protagonists in music that ranges from fevered Romanticism to boxed-in proto-minimalism.

Halloween Bonus: *Hocus Pocus* was not a success by Disney standards upon its release in 1993, but over the years the film has become go-to Halloween viewing for fans of a certain age. Thanks to a groundswell of fan interest, *Hocus Pocus 2* recently hit Disney+, giving boosters of the cult film the sequel they always dreamed of. Experience *Hocus Pocus* October 25 as the Symphony plays the score live-to-picture.

CALENDAR

SHEKU KANNEH-MASON
OCT 16

OCT 6–9
Oct 6 at Mondavi Center, UC Davis
Esa-Pekka Salonen conductor
Golda Schultz soprano
DANIEL KIDANE *Sun Poem* (US Premiere)
JEAN SIBELIUS *Luonnotar*
IGOR STRAVINSKY *The Firebird*

OCT 13–15
Esa-Pekka Salonen conductor
Yuja Wang piano
CARL NIELSEN *Helios* Overture
MAGNUS LINDBERG Piano Concerto No. 3 (World Premiere)
BÉLA BARTÓK Concerto for Orchestra

OCT 16
GREAT PERFORMERS SERIES
Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla conductor
Sheku Kanneh-Mason cello
City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
BENJAMIN BRITTEN Four Sea Interludes from *Peter Grimes*
EDWARD ELGAR Cello Concerto
THOMAS ADÈS *The Exterminating Angel* Symphony
CLAUDE DEBUSSY *La Mer*

OCT 20–22
Open Rehearsal on Oct 20;
Oct 21 at Cal Performances, UC Berkeley
Esa-Pekka Salonen conductor
Bertrand Chamayou piano
MODEST MUSSORGSKY *Night on Bald Mountain*
FRANZ LISZT *Totentanz*
HECTOR BERLIOZ *Symphonie fantastique*

OCT 23
CHAMBER MUSIC
with SF Symphony musicians
Works by WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART, LERA AUERBACH, and ANTON ARENSKY

OCT 25
FILM WITH LIVE ORCHESTRA
Sarah Hicks conductor
Hocus Pocus

OCT 27–29
Esa-Pekka Salonen conductor
Christopher Purves baritone
HK GRUBER *Frankenstein!!*
BERNARD HERRMANN Suite from *Psycho*
BÉLA BARTÓK Suite from *The Miraculous Mandarin*

CHRISTOPHER PURVES
OCT 27–29

NOV 3–4 & 6
Open Rehearsal on Nov 3
Juraj Valčuha conductor
Behzod Abduraimov piano
HANNAH KENDALL *The Spark Catchers*
SERGEI PROKOFIEV Piano Concerto No. 2
SERGEI RACHMANINOFF Symphonic Dances

NOV 5
DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS
Carlos Miguel Prieto conductor
Pacho Flores trumpet
Casa Círculo Cultural
Canción de Obsidiana
Works by SILVESTRE REVUELTAS, GABRIELA ORTIZ, ARTURO MÁRQUEZ, EVENCIO CASTELLANOS YUMAR, and JOSÉ PABLO MONCAYO GARCÍA

BERTRAND CHAMAYOU
OCT 20–22

NOV 6
GREAT PERFORMERS SERIES
Lahav Shani conductor
Israel Philharmonic Orchestra
PAUL BEN-HAIM Symphony No. 1
GUSTAV MAHLER Symphony No. 1

NOV 11–13
Michael Tilson Thomas conductor
Gautier Capuçon cello
IGOR STRAVINSKY *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*
DANNY ELFMAN Cello Concerto (US Premiere)
PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY Serenade for Strings

NOV 13
GREAT PERFORMERS SERIES
Daniil Trifonov piano
PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY *Children's Album*
ROBERT SCHUMANN Fantasie in C major
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART Fantasia in C minor, K.475
MAURICE RAVEL *Gaspard de la nuit*
ALEXANDER SCRIABIN Piano Sonata No. 5

NOV 17-19
Michael Tilson Thomas conductor
Emanuel Ax piano
JOHANNES BRAHMS Serenade No. 1
JOHANNES BRAHMS Piano Concerto No. 1

For complete details and calendar, visit sfsymphony.org.
Buy tickets online or through the Symphony Box Office: 415.864.6000.

All performances are with the SF Symphony at Davies Symphony Hall unless otherwise noted.

THE FIREBIRD
THE CONCERT

Friday, October 7, 2022, at 7:30pm
Saturday, October 8, 2022, at 7:30pm
Sunday, October 9, 2022, at 2:00pm

Pre-concert discussion with composer Daniel Kidane, Friday at 6:30pm

Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting

DANIEL KIDANE

Sun Poem (2022)
US Premiere and San Francisco Symphony Commission

JEAN SIBELIUS

Luonnotar, Opus 70 (1913)

Golda Schultz soprano

Intermission

IGOR STRAVINSKY

The Firebird (1910)

Introduction
Scene I
Kashchei's Enchanted Garden—
Appearance of the Firebird pursued by Ivan Tsarevich—
Dance of the Firebird—
Ivan Tsarevich Captures the Firebird—
Supplication of the Firebird—
Appearance of the Thirteen Enchanted Princesses—
Game of the Princesses with the Golden Apples (Scherzo)—
Sudden Appearance of Ivan Tsarevich—
Khorovod of the Princesses—Daybreak—
Magic Carillon: Appearance of Kashchei's Guardian Monsters;
Capture of Ivan Tsarevich—
Arrival of Kashchei the Immortal;
His Dialogue with Ivan Tsarevich;
Intercession of the Princesses—Appearance of the Firebird—
Dance of Kashchei's Retinue Under the Firebird's Spell—
Infernal Dance of all Kashchei's Subjects—
Lullaby (Firebird)—Kashchei's Death
Scene II
Disappearance of the Palace and Dissolution of
Kashchei's Enchantments;
Animation of the Petrified Warriors;
General Thanksgiving

The October 7 concert is presented in partnership with sfac san francisco arts commission

AT A GLANCE

Daniel Kidane's *Sun Poem* was co-commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra and the San Francisco Symphony, and receives its United States premiere this week. The piece was inspired by the work of Barbadian poet Kamau Brathwaite, whose book by the same title "explores the male history of [Barbados] as it passes from father to son." Kidane took this as inspiration as he recently became a father himself. "For me it is to do with the states of fatherhood," he said, "the idea of excitement but also trepidation and worrying."

Jean Sibelius's *Luonnotar* sets a Finnish creation myth from the *Kalevala*, a collection of ancient runes that became the national epic. Luonnotar is a primordial feminine "spirit of Nature" who gives birth at sea and meets a bird whose eggs become the entire cosmos. Sibelius's challenging writing for the solo soprano mixes austere incantation with stretches of soaring lyricism.

The Firebird was **Igor Stravinsky**'s first success—a ballet based on Slavic folklore for the Ballets Russes in Belle Époque Paris. Prince Ivan Tsarevich faces Kaschei, a monstrous king whose immortality is protected by a magic egg. The Firebird is captured by Prince Ivan, and it gives him an enchanted feather in return for its freedom. Later, when Ivan is taken captive by Kaschei, the feather summons the Firebird who helps defeat the tyrant. Stravinsky's magnificent score was deeply rooted in Russian folk song and opera, while also discovering new colors and rhythms that would influence orchestral music forever after.

Sun Poem

DANIEL KIDANE

Born: 1987, in London

Composed: 2022, on commission from the London Symphony Orchestra and San Francisco Symphony
US Premiere and San Francisco Symphony Commission
Instrumentation: 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, crotales, marimba, tam-tam, tubular bells, and vibraphone), harp, piano, and strings
Duration: About 13 mins

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Daniel Kidane's music has been performed extensively across the United Kingdom and abroad. Orchestral highlights include *Woke*, premiered by the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Last Night of the Proms, *Zulu*, performed by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and additional works for the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Youth Orchestra, the Cheltenham Festival, and the Chineke! Orchestra for the reopening of Queen Elizabeth Hall.

Recent pieces premiered during the COVID-19 pandemic include *The Song Thrush and the Mountain Ash* for Huddersfield Choral Society, *Dappled Light* for the London Symphony Orchestra's Summer Shorts series, and *Christus factus est* for Merton College Choir. *Be Still*, originally for the Manchester Camerata, was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and received its American premiere from the San Francisco Symphony in June 2021, conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Born in 1987, in London, to an Eritrean father and Russian mother, Kidane began his musical education at the age of eight when he started playing the violin. He first received composition lessons at the Royal College of Music Junior Department and then studied privately in Saint Petersburg, receiving composition lessons from Sergey Slonimsky. He completed his undergraduate and postgraduate studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester under the tutelage of Gary Carpenter and David Horne. Kidane has worked closely with the London Symphony Orchestra, participating in several of their programs for young composers.

FATHER AND SON

Sun Poem was co-commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra and San Francisco Symphony, and received its world premiere with the LSO at the Edinburgh International Festival on August 18, 2022. It received a second performance at the Barbican Centre in London on September 11, launching Simon Rattle's last season as the LSO's music director.

The piece was inspired by the Barbadian poet Kamau Brathwaite (1930–2020), whose book *Sun Poem* (1982) "explores the male history of the island as it passes from father to son," employing a "sun-son-*son*-song progression . . . based on the imagery of the seven colours (or voices) of the rainbow."

In an interview with the LSO, Kidane explained at length:

> It explores the idea of heritage and paternal lineage. Last year I lost my father to cancer and this year I became a father myself, so it's quite a personal journey of looking at my own heritage and how it's interconnected with now becoming a father. This is quite an exciting piece—it's supposed to reflect the idea and the journey of fatherhood up until the point when the newborn comes into the world, so hopefully it captures some of that excitement and turbulence as well.
>
> The inspiration manifests itself in the music through two ideas. In a very simple sense there's faster, more exciting writing, and slower, perhaps more meditative, introvert writing. The piece is divided between those two ideas and it flows between those two ideas. It starts off quite jubilantly and dies away into a more introvert section, and then goes back to more exciting writing.
>
> For me it is to do with the states of fatherhood—the idea of excitement but also trepidation and worrying that comes with fatherhood. It's new to me, as I suppose it is to every father, but that idea that for the next *x* amount of years you'll forever be somebody's rock and someone will turn to you for advice and inspiration. For me I almost saw that rock figure as a lot slower in the music, and potentially my own inner excitement is the fast and more virtuosic writing.
>
> I've always been a fan of what I call "twittering," having chattering lines of music that are led by almost not a melodic line, but rhythms and textures that pass and phase into

other bits. If you see a flock of starlings in the sky, that murmuration where they're moving together as a group is the best way I can describe how the music flows in and out in the faster sections. In the bits that are a bit more meditative, the surface is calmer, but I try to inject it with inner tension. Whether tremolos or pizzicato or other such things, it's there floating around in the background.

For me this piece is a culmination of my earlier interest in writing faster, more energetic music, and potentially over the last few years my music slowing down slightly—it's a push and pull between the fast and the slow. Something that's always been important to me in my writing is this idea of heritage, where you've come from. I've always mentioned in my own biographies and writings that I'm from a mixed background . . . so that sort of medley of cultures is ever-present in my thinking and where I get ideas and inspiration. So to draw from a poem from a Caribbean poet about the idea of heritage and paternal lineage came very naturally to me and resonated with the ideas that I wanted to explore in the music.

—Benjamin Pesetsky

Benjamin Pesetsky is Associate Director of Editorial for the San Francisco Symphony. He has also written program notes for the St. Louis Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra.

Luonnotar, Opus 70

JEAN SIBELIUS

Born: December 8, 1865, in Hämeenlinna (Tavastehus), Russian Grand Duchy of Finland
Died: September 20, 1957, in Järvenpää, Finland

Composed: 1913
SF Symphony Performances: First and only—March 2015. Thomas Adès conducted with Dawn Upshaw as soloist.
Instrumentation: Solo soprano, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, 2 harps, and strings
Duration: About 10 mins

A CREATION MYTH

The *Kalevala* is a collection of ancient Finnish epic myths that the philologist and physician Elias Lönnrot assembled in the 1830s and 1840s as a collection of fifty poems, or "runes." Rather than unfolding as an overarching narrative, such as we find, say, with *The Odyssey*, the *Kalevala* comprises a motley assortment of episodes mixed with spells, charms, and songs. Characters are introduced and then dropped willy-nilly, only to resurface in later runes. The overall action takes place in a misty, northern landscape that mirrors the Karelian region of Finland where the oral transmission of these poems had endured.

Luonnotar dates from a significant turning point in Jean Sibelius's career: the aftermath of the radically searching Fourth Symphony of 1911, a work often recognized as representing his attempt to come to terms with the crisis of modernism that was being confronted by many artists in the years immediately preceding the First World War. Moreover, the composer had experienced a personal brush with death some years before when he received a diagnosis of throat cancer, for which he underwent a risky operation. He survived and eventually reached the age of 91—but keenly felt his mortality in the years surrounding the Fourth Symphony. The fact that *Luonnotar* centers on a myth of creation is therefore no coincidence. At this moment in his own career, Sibelius as an artist was confronting the creative process itself.

The piece's source is the very first of the *Kalevala*'s runes, which describes a kind of double creation myth that takes place in a lonely setting predating the present world. The muse-like Luonnotar, referring to the primordial, feminine "Spirit of Nature," exists in ethereal solitude, an elemental spirit in the eternal expanse of air. But she becomes weary of her loneliness—a condition with which Sibelius identified as a composer who was tracing a path apart from his contemporaries—and she descends to the level of the primal seas. There she is impregnated by the waves, floats for seven centuries, and gives birth. A storm at last erupts, and a seagull—or, according some translations, a duck—takes refuge on her lifted knee, which she offers out of pity so the bird can nest. The bird lays seven eggs, they hatch, and in the process they begin to radiate a tremendous heat that forces her to stir and dislodge the nest. Their fragments are transformed into the cosmos, with the shell now the firmament above, the yolk the sun, the white the moon, and the speckled shell becomes the stars.

THE MUSIC

Sibelius had originally promised to compose a setting of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* for Aino Ackté (1876–1944), a Finnish soprano. *Luonnotar*, which is dedicated to Ackté, replaced that plan, and when the composer first showed the score to her, Ackté reacted with both delight and trepidation over the "madly difficult" solo part. She sang the premiere under Herbert Brewer at the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester, England, on September 10, 1913.

The composition is compact and at times rather austere. Sibelius draws on two highly contrasting motivic elements. One is a widely spanning melody that evokes a ballad and that is used to articulate the narrative events. The other, a sequence of sighing and tonally ambiguous note pairs, highlights to Luonnatar's subjective state of discomfort and distress as she endures amid the rough wind and waves.

In the recapitulation of the opening ballad material, Sibelius constructs an overwhelming climax and writes for the high range of the soprano. *Luonnotar* concludes with a quasi-shamanistic, incantatory treatment of the second theme, now used to describe how the cosmos has been shaped. Here Sibelius creates a sense of *arrival* at a destination that had been present from the start—a uniquely Sibelian design.

—Thomas May

Thomas May is a Contributing Writer to the San Francisco Symphony program book. He blogs at memeteria.com.

The Firebird

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Born: June 17, 1882, in Oranienbaum, Russia
Died: April 6, 1971, in New York

Composed: 1909–10
SF Symphony Performances: First—April 1973. Seiji Ozawa conducted the complete ballet music (the 1919 Suite was first performed in June 1940, conducted by Pierre Monteux at the Golden Gate International Exposition). Most recent—September 2018. Michael Tilson Thomas conducted.
Instrumentation: 3 flutes (2nd and 3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets (3rd doubling E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet), 3 bassoons (3rd doubling contrabassoon), contrabassoon, 4 horns, 4 Wagner tubas (offstage), 6 trumpets (3 offstage), 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, bells, tam-tam, tambourine, triangle, and xylophone), 3 harps, piano, celesta, and strings
Duration: About 45 mins

THE BALLET

Just a few years before *The Firebird* premiered in Paris, Igor Stravinsky was an undistinguished law student in Saint Petersburg wishing he was a composer instead. By chance he met the son of Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, who was the reigning tsar of Russian composers, ingratiated himself with the family, and soon was taking lessons with the master himself.

Meanwhile, Serge Diaghilev was developing plans to bring Russian art to Western European capitals, beginning with painting and sculpture, then experimenting with opera, and finally settling on ballet. Together with the dancer Michel Fokine, he established the Ballets Russes in Paris, which at first mostly choreographed to existing works by Robert Schumann, Frédéric Chopin, and 19th-century Russian composers. To repurpose non-ballet music for dance was itself an innovative idea, but soon Parisians were clamoring for fresh sounds. Diaghilev and Fokine began to develop an ambitious new ballet with an original score for their French audience, and they paired two Russian folk characters—the magical Firebird and the evil Kashchei the Deathless—for the story.

The ballet follows Prince Ivan Tsarevich, who walks through the garden of Kashchei, a monstrous king. The prince sees the Firebird near a golden apple tree and captures it, only releasing it in exchange for a feather. Soon he meets 13 maidens and falls in love with one of them, who unfortunately turns out to be under Kashchei's evil spell and lures the prince into a trap. The captured prince summons the Firebird with its feather, and the creature reveals that Kashchei's immortality derives from a magical egg he keeps in a box. The prince smashes the egg, Kashchei dies, the maidens are liberated, and everyone rejoices.

At least three established composers turned down the project before Diaghilev tried the 27-year-old Stravinsky, who had previously only orchestrated a few Chopin piano pieces for the Ballets Russes. He was the last choice, and Diaghilev could not have had particularly high expectations for the untested composer. Stravinsky set to work writing in his Saint Petersburg apartment between December 1909 and May the following year, sometimes meeting with Fokine to improvise music and dance together.

THE MUSIC

The Firebird was Stravinsky's first major piece, and it set him on course to write *The Rite of Spring* and other innovative works over the next five decades. An original voice already comes through in *The Firebird*, but current scholarship has emphasized its links to earlier Russian music—links that Stravinsky himself downplayed, not wanting to appear indebted to the country of his birth, or to the past.

But many of the melodies are borrowed from Russian folk music, and even his harmonic sleights-of-hand and modern orchestrational wizardries don't stray far from those of Rimsky-Korsakov. *The Firebird*'s distinctive sound-world is largely created through the contrast of murky, chromatic harmonies (representing supernatural evil) against bright, singable melodies (representing human good). It's a vivid effect, but one borrowed from 19th-century Russian opera—not a 20th-century innovation. What really distinguishes Stravinsky is the shaping of melodies and his rhythmic sense—how he trims and arranges the sinewy phrases, creating jagged exclamations in fast sections and undulating tension in slow ones.

So what if *The Firebird* wasn't quite as original as it might at first seem, when it has such an irresistible pull? The French critic Robert Brussel visited a piano rehearsal in Saint Petersburg in the winter of 1910. Perhaps the very first member of the public to hear it, he immediately recognized: "the moment [Stravinsky] began to play, the modest and dimly lit dwelling glowed with a dazzling radiance. By the end of the first scene, I was conquered: by the last, I was lost in admiration. The manuscript on the music stand, scored over with fine penciling, revealed a masterpiece."

Stravinsky traveled to Paris that spring for the premiere at the Palais Garnier, and it was met with universal acclaim. Nearly every musical and literary figure in Paris attended the first night—and suddenly Stravinsky, who the day before had been a complete unknown, was shaking hands with Claude Debussy and Marcel Proust.

Stravinsky revisited the *Firebird* three times (in 1911, 1919, and 1945) to create suites for concert performance. Of these, the 1919 suite is the most frequently performed—but on today's concert, we hear the complete ballet music as Stravinsky originally conceived it. In addition to being nearly twice as long, this version is more lavishly scored with a large brass section, three harps, and two keyboard players—forces Diaghilev could afford at the Ballets Russes, but which Stravinsky later pared back to accommodate more modest organizations.

The music emerges from the dark in the lowest depths of the orchestra (Introduction), setting the stage as Kashchei's cursed domain. In Scene I, the Firebird appears and dances against glittering violins, chirping clarinet and flutes (Dance of the Firebird). Soon Prince Ivan encounters the 13 princesses, who dance a *khorovod*—a Russian circle dance—warmly accompanied by solo violin, winds, and cello (Khorovod of the Princesses). The sun rises into the next day, and Kashchei and his retinue arrive and capture Prince Ivan. In a sudden eruption of timpani, brass, and xylophone, Kaschei is forced to dance (Infernal Dance), and is then subdued by the Firebird's Lullaby, sung mostly by the bassoon. In the brief Scene II, peace is restored and Kaschei's palace disappears, as the music slowly builds from the glow of a horn solo into a magnificent full-orchestra celebration.

—B.P.

Text

LUONNOTAR

Olipa impi ilman tyttö,
kave Luonnotar korea,
ouostoi elämätään.
Aina yksin ollessansa
avaroilla autioilla.
Laskeusi lainehille
aalto impeä ajeli,
vuotta seitsemänsataa.
Vieri impi veen emona
uipi luotehet,
etelät uipi kaikki ilman rannat.
Tuli suuri tuulen puuska,
meren kuohuille kohotti.
"Voi poloinen päiviäni,
parempi olisi ollut
ilman impenä elää
Oi, Ukko, Ylijumala
käy tänne kutsuttaissa."
Tuli sotka, suora lintu
lenti kaikki ilman rannat,
lenti luotehet, etelät,
ei löyä pesän sioa.
"Ei! Ei! Ei!
Teenkö tuulehen tupani,
aalloillen asuinsiani.
Tuuli kaatavi, tuuli kaatavi
aalto viepi asuinsiani!"
Niin silloin veen emonem
nosti polvea lainehasta
siihen sorsa laativi pesänsä;
alkoi hautoa.
Impi tuntevi tulistuvaksi
järskytti jäsenehensä
pesä vierähti vetehen.
Katkieli kauppaleiksi
muuttuivat munat kaunoisiksi.
Munasen yläinen puoli
yläuseksi taivahaksi,
yläpuoli valkeaista,
kuuksi kumottamahan
mi kirjavaista tähiksi taivaalle,
ne tähiksi taivaalle.

Air's young daughter was a virgin,
Fairest daughter of creation.
Long did she abide a virgin,
Dwelling ever more so lonely
In those far-extending deserts.
After this the maid descending
Sank upon the tossing billows,
Seven long centuries together.
Then she swam, the Water-Mother
Southward swam and swam to northwest,
Swam around in all directions.
Then a sudden mighty tempest
Drove the billows of the waters.
"Oh how wretched is my fortune
Better were it I had tarried
Virgin in the airy regions,
Ukko, thou of Gods the highest
Hasten here for thou art needed."
Then a beauteous teal came flying
Flew round in all directions,
Southward flew and flew to northwest,
Searching for a spot to rest in.
"No! No! No!
Should I make the wind my dwelling,
Should I rest it on the billows,
Then the winds will overturn it,
Or the waves will sweep it from me."
Then the Mother of the Waters
From the waves her knee uplifted;
Gentle there the teal alighting
So she might her nest establish.
Then the maiden felt a burning
And her limbs' convulsive shaking,
Rolled the eggs into the water,
And to splinters they were broken,
And to fragments they were shattered.
From the cracked egg's upper fragment
Rose the lofty arch of heaven,
From the white the upper fragment
Rose the moon that shines so brightly;
All that in the egg was mottled
Now became the stars in heaven.
—Translation after W.F. Kirby

SF SYMPHONY

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Soundwaves Art Foundation has raised more than six million dollars for social justice causes working with more than 500 major recording artists.

soundwavesartfoundation.com

About the Artists

GOLDA SCHULTZ

In the 2022–23 season, soprano Golda Schultz debuts at Opéra National de Paris and Lyric Opera of Chicago as Micaëla in *Carmen* and sings Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues des Carmélites* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera. She also returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Adina in *L'elisir d'amore*, to Vienna State Opera as Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, and joins the Boston Symphony for Sibelius's *Luonnotar*. She made her San Francisco Symphony debut last week in Mahler's Symphony No. 2, staying on for this week's performances of *Luonnotar*.

Born in South Africa and trained at the Juilliard School and Bavarian State Opera Studio, Ms. Schultz's appearances include Contessa in *Le nozze di Figaro* at Vienna State Opera, Opernhaus Zürich, and Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* at Salzburg Festival and New National Theatre Tokyo; Clara in Jake Heggie's *It's A Wonderful Life* at San Francisco Opera; Liù in *Turandot* at Vienna State Opera; Agathe in *Der Freischütz* at Bavarian State Opera; Vitellia in *La clemenza di Tito* at Salzburg Festival; and multiple roles at the Metropolitan Opera.

Last season she joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra for Strauss's *Vier letzte Lieder*, debuted with the New York Philharmonic in *Brentano Lieder*, and joined the Philadelphia Orchestra for Mozart's Requiem. In 2020, Ms. Schultz was featured soloist of the BBC's Last Night of the Proms on a program broadcast live to a global audience of millions. In 2022, she released her debut solo album, *This Be Her Verse*, on Alpha Classics, exploring the world and inspirations of female composers from the Romantic era to present day.

CONCERT SPONSOR

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Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Board of Governors of the San Francisco Symphony gratefully acknowledge the support of the San Francisco Arts Commission.

In founding the San Francisco Symphony in 1911, San Francisco's civic leaders sought to create a permanent orchestra in our music-loving city. For more than 85 years, the SF Symphony has partnered with the SFAC to enrich and serve its vibrant community through music. The partnership dates back to 1935, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt encouraged all cities to support local symphonies believing that music was good for the soul of the people. San Franciscans followed suit and passed an historic charter amendment allocating funds to support the Symphony.

Through this mutually beneficial partnership, Arts Commission funding contributes to the Symphony's community programs, supports concerts such as Día de los Muertos and Lunar New Year, and helps bring a broad audience to experience its music and programs. This partnership also enables the Arts Commission to distribute funds to support and strengthen cultural equity throughout the city. The SF Symphony is honored to partner with the SFAC to continue its work as San Francisco's orchestra.

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN & YUJA WANG
THE CONCERT

Thursday, October 13, 2022, at 7:30pm
Friday, October 14, 2022, at 7:30pm
Saturday, October 15, 2022, at 7:30pm

Post-concert discussion with composer Magnus Lindberg and pianist Yuja Wang on Thursday

Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting

CARL NIELSEN

Helios Overture, Opus 17 (1903)

MAGNUS LINDBERG

Piano Concerto No. 3 (2022)
I.
II.
III.

World Premiere and San Francisco Symphony Commission

Yuja Wang

Intermission

BÉLA BARTÓK

Concerto for Orchestra (1943)
Introduction: Andante non troppo
Game of Couples: Allegretto scherzando
Elegy: Andante, non troppo
Interrupted Intermezzo: Allegretto
Finale: Pesante—Presto

The San Francisco Symphony's presentation of Magnus Lindberg's Piano Concerto No. 3 for Yuja Wang is made possible through the generous support of the Jessie and Claudine Cheng Foundation.

AT A GLANCE

When **Carl Nielsen** composed his ***Helios* Overture** in 1903, he was on the path to becoming Denmark's most eminent composer. He spent that winter and spring in sunny Athens, where he told a friend, "Helios burns all day and I am writing away at my new solar system." When the Overture was published, he attached this description: "Stillness and darkness—Then the sun rises to joyous songs of praise—Wanders its golden way—quietly sinks in the sea."

Magnus Lindberg emerged in the 1980s as part of a group of Finnish composers who made tremendous impact on the contemporary music scene. Early on he was drawn to extreme complexity, but he later developed a compositional mode that might be called "classical modernism." His **Piano Concerto No. 3**, being premiered this week, is in the line of the virtuoso concerto, making strenuous demands of the pianist while incorporating the solo part into a richly conceived symphonic texture.

While most concertos are scored for a solo instrument accompanied by orchestra, **Béla Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra** revived an older meaning of the term, in which all the instruments of the ensemble are combined into a harmonious whole. Bartók, who was ill in New York after emigrating from Hungary, wrote: "The general mood of the work represents, apart from the jesting second movement, a gradual transition from the sternness of the first moment and the lugubrious death-song of the third to the life-assertion of the last one." Premiered by the Boston Symphony in 1944, it was among Bartók's final works.

Helios Overture, Opus 17

CARL NIELSEN

Born: June 9, 1865, in Sortelung, Denmark
Died: October 3, 1931, in Copenhagen

Composed: 1903
SF Symphony Performances: First and only—April 1987. Herbert Blomstedt conducted.
Instrumentation: 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings
Duration: About 12 mins

At the beginning of the 20th century, Carl Nielsen was approaching middle age and was beginning to gain widespread attention in his native Denmark, thanks especially to his opera *Saul and David* and his Symphony No. 2, *The Four Temperaments*, premiered just four days apart in late 1902. With the *Helios* Overture, which followed shortly thereafter, he grappled with a challenge that concerned him over many years—the question of program music. He was uneasy with the idea that instrumental music might be crafted to narrate a literary story, as was the case with symphonic poems, a genre that flourished at the turn of the 20th century in works by Richard Strauss, Jean Sibelius, and many other composers. Nielsen was more of a purist, believing that music must narrate its own story, that the structure of a composition should arise from its internal logic rather than from some external plot or imagery. On the other hand, he was willing to recognize that some degree of inspiration might derive from peripheral stimuli.

In the winter of 1903, he traveled to Athens, where his wife, the sculptor Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen, was residing through a study grant. While she copied statuary on the Acropolis, he composed in a studio set aside for him at the city's conservatory. For a Danish composer, a southern sojourn proved inspiring indeed. "Now it is scorchingly hot," he wrote to a friend at the end of March. "Helios burns all day and I am writing away at my new solar system: a long introduction with sunrise and morning song is finished, and I have begun on the allegro."

When the work was published, he attached a brief description: "Stillness and darkness—Then the sun rises to joyous songs of praise—Wanders its golden way—quietly sinks in the sea." Clearly, a depictive element was central to the piece. Two days after he finished composing it, he sent a long, chatty letter to Thomas Laub, a fellow Danish composer:

> If you would like to write a little something to me, I would be very pleased . . . and you can give me your opinion of so-called Program Music, to what extent you think a program is permissible, and so forth. It is of some interest to me, as I have just done such a piece: that is to say, not a detailed program. My overture describes the movement of the sun through the heavens from morning to evening, but it is only called *Helios* and no explanation is necessary. What do you say? Such a program title is not a nuisance. Light, Darkness, Sun, and Rain are almost the same as Credo, Crucifixus, Gloria, and so forth.

In this piece, Nielsen finds his comfort level at a point where he draws general impetus from a non-musical idea while stopping short of attaching a detailed narrative. This mirrors the balance of inspiration also found in *The Four Temperaments,* in which the movements reflect four different aspects of human personality, and which he would visit again in his Symphony No. 4, *The Inextinguishable*, which reflects in a general way the indomitable spirit of life.

When the *Helios* Overture premiered in Copenhagen in the fall of 1903, critics applauded its originality, although some repeated their usual complaints about Nielsen's music being too intellectual. The audience, however, was enthusiastic about this musical portrait of a day in the life of the sun.

—James M. Keller

James M. Keller, the longtime Program Annotator of the San Francisco Symphony, is the author of *Chamber Music: A Listener's Guide* (Oxford University Press) and is writing a sequel volume about piano music.

Piano Concerto No. 3

MAGNUS LINDBERG

Born: June 27, 1958, in Helsinki

Composed: 2022
World Premiere and San Francisco Symphony Commission
Instrumentation: Solo piano, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (glockenspiel, gong, spring coil, bass drum, suspended cymbals, crotales, metal plate, triangle, and tam-tam), and strings
Duration: About 20 mins

FROM SUPER-COMPLEXITY TO CLASSICAL MODERNISM

Magnus Lindberg emerged on the international music scene in the 1980s, one of a generation of groundbreaking Finnish composers that included Kaija Saariaho, Jouni Kaipainen, and Esa-Pekka Salonen (his junior by three days). All four were products of the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, where they studied with Paavo Heininen, a renowned developer of talent whose passing the music world mourned this past January. Lindberg also worked there with another senior eminence of Finnish music, the composer Einojuhani Rautavaara.

His early style revealed a penchant for complexity, and during the 1980s he became preoccupied with intricate rhythmic interactions on multiple levels. In 1983, his *Zona* for solo cello and chamber ensemble brought his exploration of rhythmic intricacy to the practical limit of the unaided human mind. For his next major work, the award-winning *Kraft*, he devised a computer program to assist in generating even more meticulous calculations to fuel his composition.

After the intense difficulty of *Zona* and *Kraft*, Lindberg proceeded to works that, in many cases, seem less insistent on overload. Even in the modern "classicist" mode, many of Lindberg's scores nonetheless remain generally vigorous, colorful, dense, and kinetic, and despite the extreme refinement of his compositional method, his scores manage to sound spontaneous. His work has been honored with the UNESCO International Rostrum for Composers, the Prix Italia, the Nordic Council Music Prize, the Royal Philharmonic Society Prize, and the Wihuri Sibelius Prize.

In recent years he has carved out a particular reputation as a composer of orchestral music. "The orchestra is my favorite instrument," he has remarked. This has both led to stints as composer-in-residence for such orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, SWR Radio Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart, and London Philharmonic.

APPROACHING THE CONCERTO

"The piano concerto," Lindberg has observed (commenting on his Piano Concerto No. 2), "is one of those genres that has such a load of history, and a composer is challenged to imagine what can be added to it. I don't think you can truly do much in the direction of inventing entirely new textures for piano playing . . . for me the challenge was to stretch expression to the extreme."

The new Piano Concerto No. 3 includes back-and-forth dialogue, but on the whole it falls more in the tradition of the virtuoso concerto—in this case, the hyper-virtuoso concerto. Lindberg was inspired by the "amazing playing" of pianist Yuja Wang, who takes the solo part in these premiere performances. (For more on Lindberg, see page 12.)

The concerto is cast in the standard three movements. These, and sections within them, are marked not by customary tempo terms but rather by carefully calibrated metronome settings, which underscore the strict relationship of metric pulses that subtly unify the piece. The harmony throughout is richly chromatic, often making telling use of the interval of the second (or its cousin the seventh), sometimes even employing clustered tones. Following a relatively sustained opening section, the first movement generally quickens as its episodes unroll, leading to an extended cadenza of daunting difficulty, and finally a quiet conclusion. The more relaxed second movement also includes a cadenza early on, this time shorter and of a more reflective character. The third is a vigorous, propulsive finale.

—J.M.K.

Concerto for Orchestra

BÉLA BARTÓK

Born: March 25, 1881, Nagyszentmiklós, Hungary (which later became Sânnicolau Mare, Romania)
Died: September 26, 1945, in New York

Composed: 1943 (rev. 1945)
SF Symphony Performances: First—December 1949. Pierre Monteux conducted. Most recent—March 2017. Michael Tilson Thomas conducted.
Instrumentation: 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (3rd doubling English horn), 3 clarinets (3rd doubling bass clarinet), 3 bassoons (3rd doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (side drum, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, and tam-tam), 2 harps, and strings
Duration: About 36 mins

DEFINING CONCERTO

From the mid-18th through the early 20th centuries, a concerto was a work that pitted a soloist against the full orchestra in a dramatic back-and-forth. But as the 20th century progressed, composers began devising a new kind of concerto, the so-called "concerto for orchestra," in which individual players or sections of the orchestra are given their sequential moments in the spotlight. Hindemith wrote what seems to be the first of these pieces in 1925, and in following eight decades, concertos for orchestra were written by composers including Zoltán Kodály, Béla Bartók, Ulysses Kay, Witold Lutosławski, Michael Tippett, Karel Husa, Joan Tower, Steven Stucky, and Jennifer Higdon.

Bartók often complained of being under-appreciated by audiences and of experiencing financial troubles. He grew increasingly desperate as National Socialism overtook Central Europe in the 1930s, but he felt compelled to stay in Hungary to look after his mother. When she died in 1939, Bartók wasted little time in preparing his exit, and in the fall of 1940 he and his family arrived in New York, where he would spend his five remaining years.

The 59-year-old Bartók felt depressed and isolated in his new surroundings. He lacked energy and was plagued by ill health, the first symptoms of leukemia. He gave some concerts and received a grant from Columbia University to carry out research on Yugoslav folk music, but he became convinced that his career

as a composer was over. By summer of 1943, Columbia's grant money had run out and Bartók was in such precarious health that he was confined to a hospital.

At the instigation of two of Bartók's Hungarian friends, the conductor Fritz Reiner and the violinist Joseph Szigeti, Serge Koussevitzky—the conductor of the Boston Symphony and a great champion of contemporary music—dropped by the hospital to offer the composer a thousand-dollar commission for a new symphonic work. This was obviously an act of charity. Bartók's weight had fallen to 87 pounds, and he was all but bankrupt. Suspicious of handouts, Bartók refused on the grounds that he doubted he could deliver the piece. But Koussevitzky, without missing a beat, improvised the story that his foundation required him to give Bartók a check for half the amount in order to secure the commission—and that the remaining half would wait until the piece was completed. Bartók accepted the plan and the much-needed check, and during the summer and early fall of 1943 managed to write the entire Concerto for Orchestra at a rural mountain getaway at Saranac Lake, north of New York City.

Koussevitzky had actually not been a particular aficionado of Bartók's music, but the new work converted him completely. What he got was a splendid showpiece for his orchestra. Bartók provided a comment: "The general mood of the work represents, apart from the jesting second movement, a gradual transition from the sternness of the first moment and the lugubrious death-song of the third to the life-assertion of the last one."

THE MUSIC

After its slow introduction, the first movement displays a tough sort of good humor, with opportunities to spotlight solo woodwinds and the brass section. In the Game of Couples, Bartók plays the game in his first intermezzo by featuring various instrumental "couples"—first bassoons, then oboes, clarinets, flutes, and trumpets.

Bartók was the master of what has come to be called "night music." An unsettling example of this arrives with the Elegy, its mystery played out with prominent touches of low strings, high winds, and harp.

The oboe takes pride of place in the Interrupted Intermezzo. After a section for lushly scored strings, the oboe restates its theme. Then the interruption occurs—in the guise of a quotation from Dmitri Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony, thought to depict the Siege of Leningrad. The music of Shostakovich was enjoying extreme popularity in the United States just then, certainly buoyed by the wartime alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union. Bartók, who disliked Shostakovich's music in general, grew increasingly annoyed by what he considered unfair adulation of the piece. Here, Bartók makes sure it comes across as rude and vulgar. Of this movement as a whole, Bartók commented, "The melody goes on its own quiet way when it's suddenly interrupted by a brutal band-music, which is derided, ridiculed by the orchestra. After the band has gone away, the melody resumes its waltz—only a little bit more sadly than before."

The Finale is, as Bartók put it, a *perpetuum mobile*, a whirlwind of energy that belies its composer's frailty, bringing everything to a brilliant end.

Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony premiered the new piece a little more than a year after it was completed. Against his doctors' advice, Bartók attended the concert; the audience's cheering would prove the highlight of his career. "It was worth the while," he reported. "The performance was excellent! Koussevitzky is very enthusiastic about the piece, and says it is 'the best orchestra piece of the last 25 years' (including the works of his idol Shostakovich!)."

—J.M.K.

About the Artists

YUJA WANG

Pianist Yuja Wang is celebrated for her charismatic artistry, emotional honesty, and captivating stage presence. She has performed with the world's leading conductors, musicians, and ensembles, and is renowned not only for her virtuosity, but for her spontaneous and lively performances.

Ms. Wang was born into a musical family in Beijing. After childhood piano studies in China, she received advanced training in Canada and at the Curtis Institute of Music under Gary Graffman. Her international breakthrough came in 2007, when she replaced Martha Argerich as soloist with the Boston Symphony. Two years later, she signed an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon and has since established her place among the world's leading artists with a succession of critically acclaimed performances and recordings. She was named *Musical America*'s Artist of the Year in 2017, and in 2021 received an Opus Klassik Award for her world-premiere recording of John Adams's *Must the Devil Have all the Good Tunes?* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Ms. Wang made her San Francisco Symphony debut in February 2006 and became a Shenson Young Artist later that year. She was also the featured artist in the San Francisco Symphony's 2010–11 Project San Francisco initiative. She can be heard on the San Francisco Symphony's *Masterpieces in Miniature* album on SFS Media performing the Scherzo from Henry Litolff's *Concerto symphonique* No. 4.

In October 2021, Ms. Wang performed at Carnegie Hall's Opening Night Gala, following its historic 572 days of closure. In 2021–22 she also performed duo recitals with violinist Leonidas Kavakos; embarked on an international recital tour to North America, Europe, and Asia; and served as artist-in-residence for the Czech Philharmonic and Rotterdam Philharmonic.

Esa-Pekka Salonen's biography may be found on page 9.

CBSO & SHEKU KANNEH-MASON
THE CONCERT

Sunday, October 16, 2022, at 7:30pm

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla conducting

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Four Sea Interludes from *Peter Grimes*, Opus 33a (1945)
- Dawn
- Sunday morning
- Moonlight
- Storm

EDWARD ELGAR

Cello Concerto in E minor, Opus 85 (1919)
- Adagio—Moderato
- Allegro moderato
- Adagio
- Allegro, ma non troppo

Sheku Kanneh-Mason

Intermission

THOMAS ADÈS

The Exterminating Angel Symphony (2020)
- Entrances
- March
- Berceuse
- Waltzes

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

La Mer (1905)
- De l'Aube à midi sur la mer (From Dawn Till Noon on the Sea)
- Jeux de vagues (Play of the Waves)
- Dialogue du vent et de la mer (Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea)

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Four Sea Interludes from *Peter Grimes*, Opus 33a

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Born: November 22, 1913, in Lowestoft, England
Died: December 4, 1976, in Aldeburgh, England

Composed: 1944–45
Instrumentation: 2 flutes (doubling piccolos), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets (2nd doubling E-flat clarinet), 2 bassoons (2nd doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, bells, cymbals, snare drum, tam-tam, tambourine, and xylophone), harp, and strings
Duration: About 16 mins

ACROSS THE OCEAN

Someone at a tennis party asked the 14-year-old Benjamin Britten what he planned to be when he grew up. "A composer," he said. "Yes, but what else?" came the reply. When that conversation took place, Edward Elgar was still alive, his reputation sinking fast, himself in despair at the prospect for an English composer to be taken seriously as a professional. More than anyone, Britten was to change that, and the turning point was the triumph of *Peter Grimes* on June 7, 1945. The idea for the opera had come to Britten in America, where he had gone, a rather discontented young man, in June 1939.

In some respects, to be sure, things were beginning to go well for Britten. He was getting performances and the important publishing firm of Boosey & Hawkes took him on. Still, British criticism, then at an apex of provincialism, was hostile to anyone outside the English pastoral tradition. Britten's loyalty to left-wing and pacifist causes and his ties to such artists as W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood also made him a suspect figure. Stanley Baldwin's and then Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasing Hitler drove him to despair. When Auden and Isherwood moved to the United States in January 1939, Britten made arrangements to follow suit. His companion on the journey—and for life, as it turned out—was Peter Pears, whom he had met three years before.

Auden and Isherwood, each in his own way, settled in America with Americans; Britten's American experience, agreeable and stimulating though it was, made him realize how deeply rooted he was in England. In Escondido, California, in the summer of 1941, he saw an article by E.M. Forster about the East Anglian poet George Crabbe. "To think of Crabbe is to think of England," Forster began. That sentence changed Britten's life. It brought to the surface his feeling that he must return to England, and it was in Crabbe's *The Borough* that he found the material for *Peter Grimes*. It was hard to get passage during the war, but by April 17 he and Pears were home.

This is the synopsis given the audience at the premiere of the opera:

> In the life of his Suffolk fishing-town Peter Grimes fits uneasily. He lives alone, visionary, ambitious, impetuous, poaching and fishing without caution or care for consequences, and with only one friend in town—the widowed schoolmistress, Ellen Orford. . . .
>
> He fishes with the aid of an apprentice, bought, according to the custom of the time from the workhouse. In the Prologue he is chief witness in an inquest on his first apprentice and the verdict is accidental death. In Act I he is boycotted but obtains a second apprentice, whom Ellen goes to fetch for him and promises to care for. In Act II she discovers he has been using the boy cruelly. Led by the Rector, the men of the borough go to investigate his hut. Frightened, Peter takes the boy down the scar of a recent landslide under which he moors his boat, and the boy falls down the cliff. When it is discovered that the boy is dead a hue-and-cry from the borough sets out to find Peter, who commits suicide by scuttling his boat just out of sight of the town. This is in the small hours of the morning. The borough wakes up and goes on with its life as usual.

The Sea Interludes introduce, separate, and connect the seven scenes of the Prologue and the three acts. In concert they do not occur in the same order as in the opera. The first Sea Interlude—Dawn—contains three musical ideas: a lonely and extended line for soft, high violins and flutes; a fluttering arpeggio for clarinets, harp, and violas; and a sequence of quietly weighty chords for brass with bassoons, drums, and low strings. Sunday Morning is the Prelude to Act II. We hear church bells, setting a scene takes place against the background of the service. After the bright Sunday Morning comes the soft swells of Moonlight. The Storm comes in the middle of Act I. Peter, alone, has been "gazing intently into the sea and approaching storm." The storm breaks. The slow phrases that freeze its course are the recollections of his vision.

—Michael Steinberg

Cello Concerto in E minor, Opus 85

EDWARD ELGAR

Born: June 2, 1857, in Broadheath, outside Worcester, England
Died: February 23, 1934, in Worcester

Composed: 1919
Instrumentation: Solo cello, 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings
Duration: About 30 mins

A MUSICAL POSTSCRIPT

Elgar's was a strangely paced career. He was a few weeks short of 40 when he first drew attention with an *Imperial* March for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, he composed all the music upon which his reputation rests between the ages of 42 and 62, and he lived to be 76. Once on his way, he quickly achieved an eminence of which few artists dare dream, the first performances of his Symphony No. 1 in 1908 marking the zenith of his fame. At the premiere of his Symphony No. 2 two-and-a-half years later, it was clear that the tide had turned. By 1919, the year of the Cello Concerto, he was a monument. He commanded some respect and provoked occasional ridicule, but for the most part he was an object simply of indifference. The prospect of the first major Elgar score since the 1913 tone-poem *Falstaff* was not enough to fill Queen's Hall when the Cello Concerto was premiered; no one, moreover, bothered to protest on the composer's behalf when Albert Coates, the conductor for the rest of the program, usurped much of Elgar's rehearsal time to work on Borodin's Symphony No. 2 and Scriabin's *Poem of Ecstasy.* Only consideration for his soloist kept Elgar from withdrawing his concerto. The performance was a near disaster.

Elgar had a keen sense of his own "irrelevance." The 1914 war had depressed Elgar utterly. The slaughter of men and horses (the latter almost more important to him than the former) caused him unquenchable anguish, and he saw clearly that a whole world—his world—was being swept away forever. *Falstaff* was completed in July 1913. For four years after that, Elgar wrote only minor and occasional pieces. In 1918 and 1919 he wrote, almost as postscript, a series of compositions whose intimacy was new in his work: the Violin Sonata, the String Quartet, the Piano Quintet, and the Cello Concerto. A week after the first performance of the concerto, Alice Elgar, eight years older than her husband, entered her final illness. She died five months later, in April 1920. That closed down Elgar's spirit for good and ended his life as a composer, except for minor scores.

The conductor Sir Adrian Boult said: "With the Cello Concerto [Elgar] struck a new kind of music, with a more economical line, terser in every way. He was rather good at it, and having written the Cello Concerto it is extraordinary he didn't get bitten by the new style." Boult's remark is surprising in that it does not take into account the crushing of Elgar's spirit by his wife's death, something on which all accounts by those who knew him agree, but the musical observation is important.

THE CONCERTO

The soloist begins the concerto with a sentence of recitative that is spacious, extroverted, noble, and tinged by melancholy. What happens in the orchestra, a few notes of accompaniment and a brief woodwind echo of the first phrase, is a miracle of unostentatious mastery. Picking up the cello's last note, the violas begin a gentle, ambling theme; this was the first idea Elgar had noted for this work. It descends beyond the violas' range, is carried on by the cellos, and is then reiterated and expanded by the soloist. Unaccompanied at first, it gets a lovely series of subtly oblique harmonizations once the soloist has taken it on. Clarinets and bassoon propose a new lilting theme, and the cello makes gently tristful comment—which does not, however, keep the tune from moving into warm E major. The first section is recapitulated with ever more beautiful scoring. Enjoy, for example, the delicately placed notes for the timpani.

The first movement subsides on a low E, plucked in the solo, bowed in the orchestra. The sound of that note in the orchestral cellos and basses seems to remind the soloist of the way the concerto began. It is enough, at any rate, to get him to reminisce, still in pizzicato, about the recitative. The orchestra is quick to discourage any such sentimentality, urging the soloist to get going. The scherzo, when it is finally under way, is a brilliant study in repeated notes, full of rhythmic surprises, and the orchestra accompanies with the utmost deftness. A delightfully flush theme makes a few visitations, but the dominant style of this movement is lighter-than-air.

Now the stage is darkened. The songful Adagio is a great page by a great composer of slow movements. It rises briefly to an urgent climax and sinks to a close on a question mark. The orchestra takes the hint and begins a distant march-like music, but modulating rapidly so as to bring things around to the soloist from his Adagio musings; instead, it immediately sets him into the recitative mood again. The brief accompanied cadenza done, the march takes off and the finale is under way. Up to a point it seems to be a cheery, uncomplicated rondo. Then a new and slower theme in a broader meter and rich chromatic harmony changes the mood. That somber mood established, another change of meter, now to triple-time, brings the music to its most impassioned climax. We catch just a ghost of the Adagio, followed by a recollection of the opening recitative, and then the concerto hurries to its close.

—M.S.

Michael Steinberg, the San Francisco Symphony's program annotator from 1979 to 1999 and a contributing writer until his death in 2009, was one of the nation's pre-eminent writers on music.

The Exterminating Angel Symphony

THOMAS ADÈS

Born: March 1, 1971, in London

Composed: 2020
Instrumentation: 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (3rd doubling English horn), 3 clarinets (2nd doubling E-flat clarinet and 3rd doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani (doubling rototoms), percussion (glockenspiel, vibraphone, bass bell, snare drum, suspended cymbal, clash cymbal, hi-hat, woodblock, tambourine, anvil, whip, antique cymbal, crotales, triangle, whip, castanets, mark tree, tam-tam, and bass drum with mounted clash cymbals), harp, piano, and strings
Duration: About 20 mins

THE COMPOSER

Since the mid-1990s, Thomas Adès has been one of Britain's leading composers. He first came to attention with the controversial operetta *Powder Her Face* (1995), based on Margaret Campbell, Duchess of Argyll, whose real-life 1963 divorce created a sensational sex scandal in England. Since then, he has written two more operas: *The Tempest* (2003) for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and *The Exterminating Angel* (2016) for the Salzburg Festival, Royal Opera House, Metropolitan Opera, and Royal Danish Opera. He has also written extensively for the concert hall, including a recently acclaimed piano concerto for the Boston Symphony, where he serves as artistic partner.

THE EXTERMINATING ANGEL

Composed in 2020, this symphony is an orchestral rendering of music from *The Exterminating Angel*. The opera is based on Luis Buñuel's classic surrealist movie from 1962, in which a collection of society characters find themselves inexplicably trapped together at a post-opera party.

In the Symphony's opening movement, Entrances, the guests arrive for dinner; in an early sign that they are leaving reality behind, they arrive twice. Then comes the ferocious and obsessive March that bridges the opera's first two acts, the music for their first night under the spell of the Exterminating Angel. The third movement is a Berceuse which draws on some of the work's most memorable music: one of the yearning, melancholy duets between the doomed lovers Beatriz and Eduardo: "Fold your body into mine / Hide yourself within its hand."

Adès described composing Waltzes—the Symphony's final and most extensive movement—as like "joining together the bits of a broken porcelain object." Unlike the other movements, which draw on fairly complete passages from the opera, here the waltz fragments that surface throughout the score are brought together to create something wholly original. "What interests me about the waltz is the seductiveness of this music," remarked Adès in an interview before the opera's premiere. "I often feel that the waltzes by Johann Strauss are saying, 'why don't you stay a little longer? Don't worry about what's going on outside.' So in the context of this opera, the waltz becomes very dangerous, potentially fatal."

The Exterminating Angel Symphony was commissioned by City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra as part of its centenary commissions, together with several other international orchestras. The piece was premiered in August 2021 by the CBSO and Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla.

—Courtesy of Faber Music

La Mer

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Born: August 22, 1862, in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France
Died: March 25, 1918, in Paris

Composed: 1903–05
Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 cornets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, tam-tam, and triangle), harp, and strings
Duration: About 23 mins

DEBUSSY'S REVOLT

On the basis of the Claude 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 mistwashed, unmuscular delicacy that had been so valued. Giacomo 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. 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 everchanging 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 Frédéric 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*—years spent at the Paris Conservatory; as household pianist to Tchaikovsky's patroness, Mme. Nadezhda von Meck; as an eager student of the music of Wagner and pilgrim to Bayreuth; as a friend of contemporary poets and painters, who interested him more than most of the musicians he met; as a man perpetually in difficulties with and over women, and who more than once thought of suicide; as the composer of a growing catalogue of works that attracted an attention not only widespread but, given their originality, remarkably respectful. 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.

AT SEA

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.

About the Artists

MIRGA GRAŽINYTĖ-TYLA

Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla was named music director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in February 2016, following in the footsteps of Simon Rattle, Sakari Oramo, and Andris Nelsons. With the start of the 2022–23 season, she assumes the position of principal guest conductor for one season.

Recent highlights include *War Requiem* at the Salzburg Festival; *The Cunning Little Vixen* at the Bavarian State Opera; numerous European tours with the CBSO; and performances with the London Symphony, NDR Elbphilharmonie, Swedish Radio Orchestra, Filarmonica della Scala, and National Symphony Orchestra. She has also conducted the Lithuanian National Symphony, Beethoven Orchestra Bonn, Deutsche Radiophilharmonie, Bavarian Radio Symphony, MDR Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, Kremerata Baltica, Philadelphia Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, San Diego Symphony, and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. Ms. Gražinytė-Tyla was a Dudamel Fellow at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, later becoming assistant conductor and then associate conductor. She was the music director of the Salzburg Landestheater from 2015 until 2017.

As an exclusive Deutsche Grammophon artist, her first album was released in 2019, contributing to the rediscovery of the music of Mieczysław Weinberg, and winning Opus Klassik and *Gramophone* awards. Her most recent release, *The British Project*, includes works by Elgar, Britten, Walton, and Vaughan Williams, and was released in 2021.

A native of Vilnius, Lithuania, Ms. Gražinytė-Tyla was discovered by the German Conducting Forum in 2009 and won the Salzburg Festival Young Conductors Award in 2012.

SHEKU KANNEH-MASON

Sheku Kanneh-Mason became a household name in 2018 after performing at the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex and garnered renown as the winner of the 2016 BBC Young Musician competition, the first Black musician to take the title. His latest album for Decca Classics, *Song*, showcases his lyrical playing, and his 2020 album *Elgar* reached No. 8 on the UK Official Album Chart. Sheet music collections of his performance repertoire, along with his own arrangements and compositions, are published by Faber Music.

This season, Mr. Kanneh-Mason appears as artist-in-residence with the Philharmonia Orchestra. He also performs with the London Mozart Players, Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Camerata Salzburg, Hallé Orchestra, and Royal Scottish National Orchestra. In North America, he solos with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Toronto Symphony, and Boston Symphony. Since 2017, he has performed every summer at the BBC Proms, including in 2020 when he gave a recital with his sister, Isata, to an empty auditorium due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He made his debut at the San Francisco Symphony last April in a Great Performers Series recital.

A graduate of London's Royal Academy of Music, Mr. Kanneh-Mason was appointed in May 2022 as the Academy's first Menuhin Visiting Professor of Performance Mentoring. He is an ambassador for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Future Talent, and Music Masters. He was appointed a member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the 2020 New Year's Honours List. He plays a Matteo Goffriller cello from 1700, which is on indefinite loan to him.

Sheku Kanneh-Mason appears by arrangement with Enticott Music Management.

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The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra is the flagship of musical life in Birmingham and the West Midlands, and one of the world's great orchestras. Based in Symphony Hall, Birmingham, the CBSO typically presents more than 150 concerts each year in Birmingham, the UK, and around the world, playing music that ranges from classics to contemporary, film scores, and even symphonic disco. With a far-reaching community program and a family of choruses and ensembles, it is involved in every aspect of music making in the Midlands. But at its center is a team of 90 professional musicians, and a more than 100-year tradition of making the world's greatest music in the heart of Birmingham.

That local tradition started with the orchestra's very first symphonic concert in 1920—conducted by Edward Elgar. Ever since then, through war, recessions, social change, and civic renewal, the CBSO has been proud to be Birmingham's orchestra. Under principal conductors including Adrian Boult, George Weldon, Andrzej Panufnik, and Louis Frémaux, the CBSO won an artistic reputation that spread far beyond its region. But it was when it discovered the young British conductor Simon Rattle in 1980 that the CBSO became internationally famous—and showed how the arts can help give a new sense of direction to a whole city.

Mr. Rattle's successors Sakari Oramo and Andris Nelsons helped cement that global reputation and continued to build on the CBSO's tradition of flying the flag for Birmingham. And under the dynamic leadership of Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, the CBSO continued to do what it does best—playing great music for the people of Birmingham, the Midlands, and beyond. In September of last year, the Orchestra announced that Japanese conductor Kazuki Yamada, who has been the Orchestra's principal guest conductor since 2018, had been appointed as its chief conductor and artistic advisor with effect from April 2023.

The CBSO is grateful to Mr. John Osborn, CBE, a former member of the CBSO board, for his exceptional generosity in making this tour possible. Additional support has been provided by the Dunard Fund. The CBSO is extremely grateful to all its supporters, both individuals and trust and foundations who contribute to our Sound of the Future Campaign. This tour has been made possible in collaboration with Arabella Arts.

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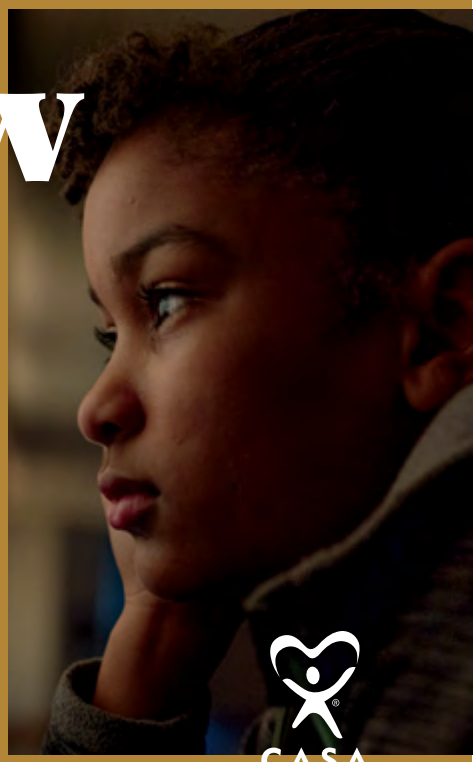

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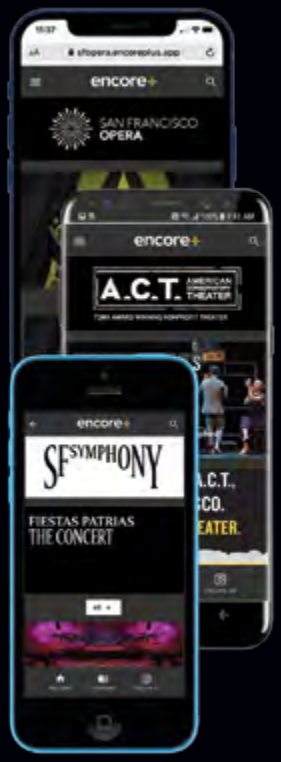

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Not Your Usual Suspect

CELEBRATING THE KAREL & LIDA URBANEK ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL CELLO CHAIR

"I'm not your usual suspect," remarked Lida Urbanek with a smile. "My interest in music has always been because of the people I've met. People who perform and appreciate music. They inspire me. That's music for me."

Given her unassuming manner, it comes as no surprise that Lida recently endowed an orchestral chair for the San Francisco Symphony in a rather direct way. "I thought about what was important to me. I looked up the Symphony's Development Department contact information on the website. I called and it was done."

Of course, there's a bit more to it than that. "I have been a subscriber for more than 50 years. We didn't have much in those early days. My husband's company went public after his passing, and at that point I had more to give. I wanted to honor him and so I gave thought to what he was passionate about. He loved open space and hiking. And he really loved the Symphony."

With so many endowment options, Lida quickly settled on an endowed chair. "I love being able to see the musicians in action. That's why I chose to endow a chair rather than a program. It was personal. There are people behind the music."

As to which instrument, Lida was inspired by, of all things, a Symphony donor event. "It featured five cellists with five different cellos, from something basic and cheap to something rare and old. Each cellist played a bit of Dvořák's Cello Concerto. I was astounded by the difference in the sounds. I'd never realized that how it was constructed was so critical to the sound it made."

Amos Yang is the first person to hold the Karel & Lida Urbanek Assistant Principal Cello Chair. "I'm a proud San Francisco native," he noted. "I first experienced the power of music as a member of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra in 1981, and am honored to now be part of this wonderful ensemble. It's especially gratifying to know that there are people in the community willing to support the legacy of the Symphony. The Assistant Principal Cello Chair endowment by Lida is an honor that I will always appreciate and be thankful for, and she and Karel will remain a huge part of every performance we give. It is support like this that is crucial to the success of the San Francisco Symphony."

About her decision to endow a chair, Lida reflected, "It was impulsive. But decisive. I realized I could do some good in my lifetime rather than leaving it to after. I wanted something permanent, something that would outlive me. And I wanted to honor my husband, to keep his memory alive."

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Endowment and legacy gifts play a vital role in sustaining financial stability and building a strong future for the San Francisco Symphony. The Symphony gratefully acknowledges the following generously established named funds, including the named orchestra chairs, and planned giving donors who have invested in the long-term health and impact of the Symphony.

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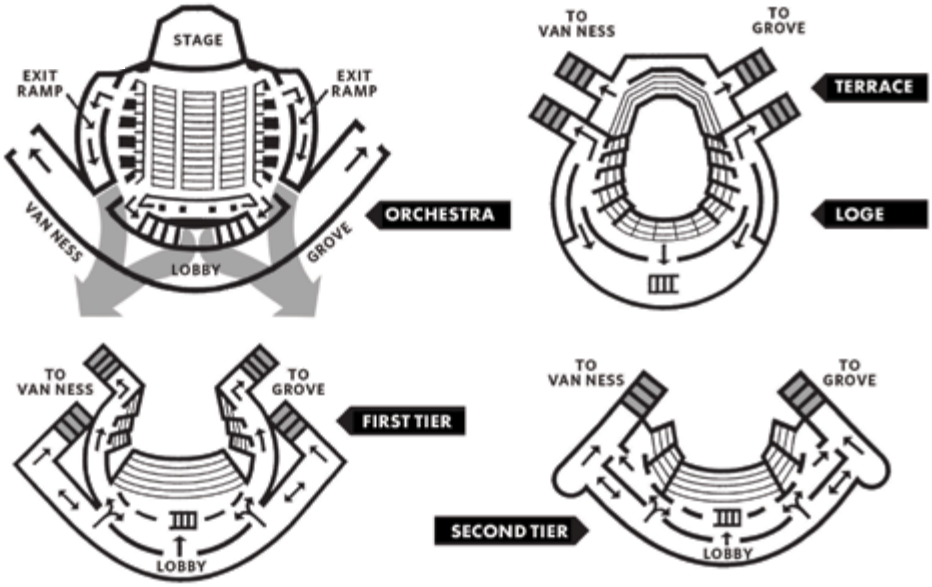

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MEET THE MUSICIANS

Barbara Bogatin

CELLO
SF Symphony member since 1994

Hometowns: Santa Rosa, California
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

San Francisco Symphony cellist Barbara Bogatin was introduced to meditation by her (not-yet) husband, Clifford Saron, a neuroscientist who researches the effects of meditation on the brain and well-being.

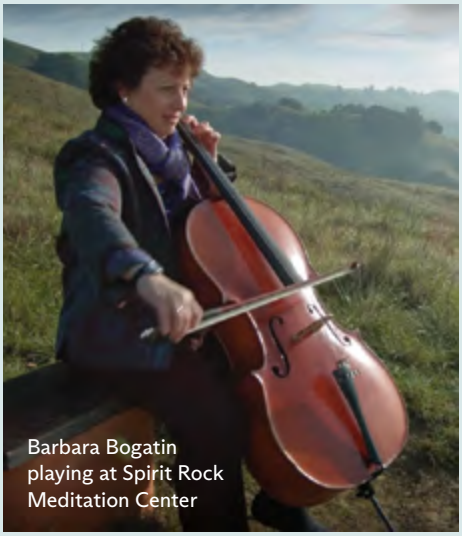
"When we were first dating he kept trying to convince me to do a meditation retreat. The idea of sitting on a cushion for 12 hours a day, in silence, was not very appealing! But I was curious about what effects such an intensely self-reflective experience would have, and eventually I attended one with him."

Much of classical music can be very judgmental. But Barbara is able to reconcile that aspect of the field with Buddhist practice.

"We do have to listen critically when we play: Are we flat or sharp, are we using our musculature in the best possible way? But the extra self-judgments we add on, like 'why can't I play this right?' or 'what's wrong with me?' get in our way. I've found my deepest connection to music happens when I'm free of that type of judgment, critical of the sound, not the self. I use what we call *mettā*, a loving-kindness meditation, before a solo performance, where I repeat some affirmations: May I be peaceful, may I be calm, may I feel joy. If I cultivate being present in an embodied way, when the time comes to perform I can take that spirit of freedom, joyfulness, and equanimity on stage."

Barbara is dedicated to sharing these insights with others.

"My husband and I have worked with meditation teachers to develop a workshop called 'The Buddha, the Brain, and Bach,' which explores the relationship of contemplative practice, music performance, and neuroplasticity, the ability of the brain to change. We've presented our workshops at Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Esalen in Big Sur, and at conferences in Europe and South Africa. I also teach a seminar on Mindfulness Meditation that is specifically designed for music students which I've given at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and the Juilliard School." (More information can be found on her website, barbarabogatin.com.)


Barbara Bogatin playing at Spirit Rock Meditation Center

Barbara's other pursuits include creative writing about music, and she has published articles in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Strings* Magazine, *San Francisco Classical Voice*, and the online journal *Riff*. In her spare time, she does political activism as founder of Musicians Indivisible SF. Reflecting on her more than 25 years with the SF Symphony, she notes "It's been a continuous learning and growing experience. My own children have grown up as part of the Symphony family and I love the idea of passing on our shared love of music to the next generation."

Watch Barbara's video profile
at sfsymphonyplus.org

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