The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music director and conductor





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THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

YANNICK NÉZET-SÉGUIN

MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

LISA BATIASHVILI

VIOLIN

Tuesday, September 25, 2018, at 7:30 pm Hancher Auditorium, The University of Iowa

Liar, Suite from Marnie

Nico Muhly (b. 1981)

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

- Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)
- I. Allegro moderato—Moderato assai
- II. Canzonetta: Andante
- III. Allegro vivacissimo

INTERMISSION

Symphonic Dances, Op. 45

- I. Non allegro
- II. Andante con moto (Tempo di valse)
- III. Lento assai—Allegro vivace—Lento assai, come prima—L'istesso tempo, ma agitato— Poco meno mosso—"Alliluya"

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)



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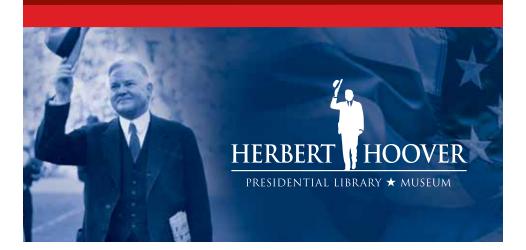
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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the preeminent orchestras in the world, renowned for its distinctive sound, desired for its keen ability to capture the hearts and imaginations of audiences, and admired for a legacy of imagination and innovation on and off the concert stage. The Orchestra is inspiring the future and transforming its rich tradition of achievement, sustaining the highest level of artistic quality, but also challenging—and exceeding—that level, by creating powerful musical experiences for audiences at home and around the world.

Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin's connection to the Orchestra's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics since his inaugural season in 2012. Under his leadership the Orchestra returned to recording, with three celebrated CDs on the prestigious Deutsche Grammophon label, continuing its history of recording success. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of listeners on the radio with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM.

Philadelphia is home and the Orchestra continues to discover new and inventive ways to nurture its relationship with its loyal patrons at its home in the Kimmel Center, and also with those who enjoy the Orchestra's area performances at the Mann Center, Penn's Landing, and other cultural, civic, and learning venues. The Orchestra maintains a strong commitment to collaborations with cultural and community organizations on a regional and national level, all of which create greater access and engagement with classical music as an art form.

The Philadelphia Orchestra serves as a catalyst for cultural activity across Philadelphia's many communities, building an offstage presence as strong as its onstage one. With Nézet-Séguin, a dedicated body of musicians, and one of the nation's richest arts ecosystems, the Orchestra has launched its **HEAR** initiative, a portfolio of integrated initiatives that promotes **H**ealth, champions music **E**ducation, eliminates barriers to **A**ccessing the orchestra, and maximizes impact through **R**esearch. The Orchestra's award-winning Collaborative Learning programs engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members through programs such as PlayINs, side-by-sides, PopUP concerts, free Neighborhood Concerts, School Concerts, and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, presentations, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global cultural ambassador for Philadelphia and for the US. Having been the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, in 1973 at the request of President Nixon, the ensemble today boasts five-year partnerships with Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts and the Shanghai Media Group. In 2018 the Orchestra traveled to Europe and Israel. The Orchestra annually performs at Carnegie Hall while also enjoying summer residencies in Saratoga Springs and Vail. For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit www.philorch.org.

Photo: Jessica Griffin 7

YANNICK NÉZET-SÉGUIN

MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin will lead The Philadelphia Orchestra through at least the 2025-26 season, an extraordinary and significant longterm commitment. Additionally, he became the third music director of the Metropolitan Opera, beginning with the 2018-19 season. Yannick, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is an inspired leader of The Philadelphia Orchestra. His intensely collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm, paired with a fresh approach to orchestral programming, have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The New York Times has called him



Photo © Chris Lee

"phenomenal," adding that under his baton, "the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better."

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling talents of his generation. He has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montréal's Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000, and in summer 2017 he became an honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He was music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 2008 to 2018 (he is now honorary conductor) and was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world's most revered ensembles and has conducted critically acclaimed performances at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon (DG) in May 2018. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with three CDs on that label. His upcoming recordings will include projects with The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and the Orchestre Métropolitain, with which he will also continue to record for ATMA Classique. Additionally, he has recorded with the Rotterdam Philharmonic on DG, EMI Classics, and BIS Records, and the London Philharmonic for the LPO label.

A native of Montréal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montréal's Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini; he also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick's honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada; an Officer of the Order of Montréal; Musical America's 2016 Artist of the Year; the Prix Denise-Pelletier; and honorary doctorates from the University of Québec in Montréal, the Curtis Institute of Music, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, McGill University, and the University of Pennsylvania. To read Yannick's full bio, please visit philorch.org/conductor.

LISA BATIASHVILI

VIOLIN

Violinist Lisa Batiashvili was Musical America's 2015 Instrumentalist of the Year and nominated as Gramophone's 2017 Artist of the Year. The Georgian violinist, who has lived in Germany for over 25 years, has developed longstanding relationships with some of the world's leading orchestras, including the New York and Berlin philharmonics, the Staatskapelle Berlin, Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and the London Symphony. She made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2005 and toured Europe with the ensemble and Yannick Nézet-Séguin in 2015. Beginning in 2019 she will be the artistic director of the Audi



Photo: Sammy Hart

Summer Concerts music festival in Ingolstadt, Germany.

Ms. Batiashvili's recent performance highlights include the UK premiere of Anders Hillborg's Violin Concerto No. 2 with the BBC Symphony and Sakari Oramo; the work was written for, and premiered by, her in 2016 with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and Mr. Oramo. As part of her residency with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, she performed concertos by Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev, as well as Bach's Concerto for Violin and Oboe. She also toured Europe with the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and the Staatskapelle Dresden.

Ms. Batiashvili records exclusively for Deutsche Grammophon. Her recording *Visions of Prokofiev*, released in February 2018, features Mr. Nézet-Séguin and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. Earlier recordings include the Tchaikovsky and Sibelius violin concertos with Daniel Barenboim and the Staatskapelle Berlin; the Brahms Violin Concerto with the Staatskapelle Dresden; and a disc of works by Tchaikovsky with the Rotterdam Philharmonic and Mr. Nézet-Séguin. In 2016 EuroArts released a DVD of her live Waldbühne performance of Dvořák's Violin Concerto with the Berlin Philharmonic and Mr. Nézet-Séguin. She has been awarded the MIDEM Classical Award, the Choc de l'Année, the Accademia Musicale Chigiana International Prize, the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival's Leonard Bernstein Award, and the Beethoven-Ring. Ms. Batiashvili gained international recognition at age 16 as the youngest-ever competitor in the Sibelius Competition. She plays a Guarneri del Gesù violin from 1739, generously loaned by a private collector.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Liar, Suite from Marnie

Nico Muhly

Born in Randolph, Vermont, August 26, 1981 Now living in New York City

Born in Vermont and raised in Providence, Rhode Island, Nico Muhly has written for the concert hall, for the stage, and for film. He majored in English at Columbia University before studying at the Juilliard School and working for eight years as an assistant to Philip Glass.

Liar is an orchestral suite based on Marnie, Muhly's second commission from the Metropolitan Opera, which will give the U.S. premiere on October 19, following its world premiere at the English National Opera last year. With a libretto by Nicholas Wright, the opera is based on Winston Graham's 1961 novel, which Alfred Hitchcock adapted into the 1964 film starring Tippi Hedren and Sean Connery. Liar is a Philadelphia Orchestra commission, made possible by a generous grant from the Tang Fund on behalf of Oscar Tang and Agnes Hsu-Tang, and was premiered during the orchestra's opening weekend in mid-September.

Marnie is a career criminal who charms her way into clerical jobs and robs her employers before changing identities and moving on to a new city. Eventually she is drawn into a halting romance with Mark Rutland, the wealthy owner of a printing company, who unravels her lies, catches her in the act, and blackmails her into marriage. He feels compelled to change her—by force if necessary—and sexually assaults her on their honeymoon when she declares she cannot stand to be touched by any man. Mark makes some aberrant attempts to help her, before psychoanalysis reveals a shocking childhood incident as the source of both her criminality and sexual repression.

Liar substantially reworks material from the opera into a new piece, and is not simply an orchestral retelling of the story in miniature. Muhly compares it with Marnie's psychoanalysis:

Her memory comes back to her out of order, in abstract ways. Things from one memory infect another memory and things from reality link up with unreality. The Suite does that, too: It puts things out of order and in layers specifically to show different sides of her motivation and what she finds beautiful in life. It's more an abstract portrait of the character than a narrative arch.

The piece unfolds in a single movement played without pause. In the opera, each character is paired with a particular orchestral instrument: Marnie is colored by the oboe, while her husband is associated with the trombone. In Liar, Muhly adapts much of the vocal writing into these instruments, so Marnie is represented by the oboe section, while her husband's presence is felt through the low brass. Her mother's influence creeps in from time to time in the form of a solo viola.

The opening comes from the beginning of the opera's Act II, after Marnie and Mark return from their honeymoon. Sharp jabs in the brass cut through the woodwinds, while the violins float a quiet, glacially slow line of their own. This leads to an extended oboe passage based on an aria Marnie sings following a suicide attempt.

Muhly then jumps back to Act I, as Marnie plans to shed her false identity and move to a new city. She knows her burgeoning relationship with Mark puts her at risk of being caught, and she furiously packs her bags. This melts into a scene where she picks a safe: contrabassoon, bass clarinet, and low strings evoke a darkened, eerie tension as she turns the lock. Then a hard cut: Marnie is with her horse, Forio, the only creature she trusts and with whom she can be entirely herself. This music—built on rippling clarinets and some of the sunniest in the piece—conveys her connection with the powerful animal as they go on a fox hunt.

The Suite shifts toward haunting, long-lined polyphony, based on choral music from Act I. In the opera, four "Shadow Marnies"—members of the chorus representing her past identities and current anxieties—sing, "All night long, the guilty hear malevolent voices. The whisperings of suspicious neighbors. The furtive gossipings. The hinted accusations." The music boils tumultuously.

At this point, "We've had all these manifestations of her activities," Muhly explains, "two kinds of anxiety, escape, the true expression of who she is, and now we're in stasis." *Liar* concludes with music from the end of Act I, looping back to the point just before it began. Marnie and Mark are on their cruise-ship honeymoon and he grows impatient. He muses on her crimes as a license for him to capture and possess her: This is the only music in the Suite originally sung by him, rather than by her. The strings and woodwinds pulse and glisten as he moves closer and closer.

-Benjamin Pesetsky

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Born in Kamsko-Votkinsk, Russia, May 7, 1840 Died in St. Petersburg, November 6, 1893

Although Tchaikovsky ultimately triumphed with his Violin Concerto, which became one of his most beloved and frequently performed compositions, its path to success was unusually discouraging and came during a period of deep personal crisis. The turmoil began with his ill-considered marriage to a student in July 1877, undertaken to quiet gossip about his homosexuality. After a few weeks together Tchaikovsky left his wife and fled Russia to spend the next eight months wandering Europe. Intense work on two masterpieces came in the immediate wake of the marriage fiasco: the Fourth Symphony and the opera Eugene Onegin. As Tchaikovsky's mental state stabilized, however, he found it increasingly difficult to compose and wrote mainly trifles.

In March 1878 Tchaikovsky settled in Clarens, Switzerland, where he was visited by a former student, a young violinist named losif Kotek who was studying in Berlin with Joseph Joachim, for whom Schumann, Brahms, Dvořák, and others wrote concertos. The two played through some violin literature together and Tchaikovsky was particularly delighted with Édouard Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole*, which inspired him to compose his own Violin Concerto in the space of just some three weeks. What he admired was that Lalo, "in the same way as Léo Delibes and Bizet, does not strive after profundity, but he carefully avoids routine, seeks out new forms, and thinks more about *musical beauty* than about observing established traditions, as the Germans do."

This comment is very revealing of Tchaikovsky's musical values and his antipathy toward the gloried German tradition exemplified at the time by Brahms and Wagner. Tchaikovsky preferred composers who are now considered minor figures, such as Delibes (remembered best for his ballet Coppélia and

opera Lakmé) and Bizet. "I think that music's entire future is now in France," Tchaikovsky declared after playing through a four-hand arrangement of Brahms's brand new First Symphony, which elicited his comment: "God, what a loathsome thing it is."

It is in this spirit that Tchaikovsky set about to write an attractive concerto that would please listeners, and yet initially the work did not completely please anyone. The first discouraging response came from Kotek and Tchaikovsky's brother Modest, who liked the first and third movements, but not the middle one. Tchaikovsky decided to write a new slow movement. The next blow came from his extremely generous patroness, Madame Nadezhda von Meck, to whom over the years he would send most of his works and who usually reacted enthusiastically. In this instance, however, she expressed some dissatisfaction with the opening movement. Tchaikovsky responded by thanking her for her honesty but saying "I must defend the first movement of the Concerto a little. Of course there is much that is cold and calculated in any piece written to display virtuosity, but the ideas for the themes came spontaneously to me and, indeed, the whole shape of the movement came in a flash. I still hope you will come to like it."

Things got much worse with the scheduled premiere of the Concerto in March 1879. The dedicatee, the distinguished violinist Leopold Auer, declared the piece unplayable and refused to take it on. Tchaikovsky later recalled: "A verdict such as this from the authoritative St. Petersburg virtuoso cast my poor child for many years into the abyss, it seemed, of eternal oblivion." There may have been a performance of the published violin and piano version in New York in 1879 played by Leopold Damrosch, but no details survive and the real premiere was still nowhere in sight.

It took Tchaikovsky some time to find a willing violinist in Adolf Brodsky, who gave the much delayed orchestral premiere in December 1881 with the Vienna Philharmonic under Hans Richter. That under-rehearsed performance evidently left a good deal to be desired and led to an infamous review from the powerful critic Eduard Hanslick, who condemned the vulgarity of the Concerto, especially its lively folk-like finale: "We see plainly the savage vulgar faces, we hear curses, we smell vodka. Friedrich Vischer once observed, speaking of obscene pictures, that they stink to the eye. Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto gives us for the first time the hideous notion that there can be music that stinks to the ear." Modest Tchaikovsky said no review more hurt his brother, who could recite it word for word until his death.

Tchaikovsky was himself often ambivalent about the quality of his compositions, and it must not have helped when friends, family, and critics were unsupportive. In the case of the Violin Concerto, however, public enthusiasm came quickly and it did not take long for the piece to emerge triumphant in the standard repertoire. Leopold Auer, in fact, became a champion (he slightly edited the solo part), as did many of his celebrated students, including Jascha Heifetz, Mischa Elman, Nathan Milstein, and Efrem Zimbalist (who long served as president of the Curtis Institute of Music).

The opening Allegro begins with the violins quietly stating a noble tune (not heard again) that soon ushers in the lilting appearance of the soloist. Both of the principal themes in the long movement are lyrical, the second one marked "con molto espressione." Although the themes do not contrast, ample variety is provided by interludes, including a majestic one with a Polonaise rhythm, and by a brilliant coda of virtuoso fireworks to conclude.

The brief Canzonetta: Andante projects a plaintive mood and proves a

satisfying substitute for Tchaikovsky's original thoughts. (He published his rejected slow movement as *Méditation* for violin and piano, the first of three pieces in *Souvenir d'un lieu cher*, Op. 42.) The energetic finale (Allegro vivacissimo) bursts forth without a break. A brief orchestral introduction leads to the soloist's unaccompanied entrance in a cadenza-like passage that teasingly tips over into a dazzling rondo theme that keeps returning and gives further opportunities for virtuoso display.

-Christopher H. Gibbs

Symphonic Dances, Op. 45

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Born in Semyonovo, Russia, April 1, 1873 Died in Beverly Hills, California, March 28, 1943

Sergei Rachmaninoff pursued multiple professional careers and juggled different personal identities, often out of joint with the realities of his time and place. He was a Russian who fled his country after the 1917 Revolution and who lived in America and Europe for the rest of his life. He was a great composer who, in order to support himself and his family, spent most of his time performing, both as a conductor and as one of the superme pianists of the 20th century. And he was a Romantic composer writing in the age of burgeoning Modernism, his music embraced by audiences but seemingly coming from a bygone world alien to the stylistic innovations of Debussy, Schoenberg, Ives, Stravinsky, and other contemporaries.

Rachmaninoff worried at times that his triple professional profile might cancel one another out. He was an unusually accomplished performer in two domains at a time when there was in any case an ever-increasing separation between performer and composer. Rachmaninoff, in the great tradition of Mozart and Beethoven through Strauss and Mahler, was the principal performing advocate of his own music. And yet even when he was out of sync with time and place, he pressed on with a gruelling performance schedule (sometimes 70 or more concerts in a year) and composed some of the most popular and enduring works of the first half of the 20th century.

The Symphonic Dances was Rachmaninoff's last composition. He had been frustrated by the hostile reception given to some of his recent pieces and perhaps sensed more than ever being stylistically old fashioned. The exception among these later works was the Variations on a Theme of Paganini, for piano and orchestra, which proved an immediate success and got a further boost when the choreographer Mikhail Fokine created a wildly popular ballet called Paganini, which premiered at London's Covent Garden in June 1939. At this point Rachmaninoff and his wife were living in a comfortable oceanside estate on Long Island, where Fokine and other celebrated Russians were neighbors. Rachmaninoff had never completed a ballet (unlike most of his great Russian precursors and contemporaries) and wondered whether Fokine might be interested in creating a new piece. (Fokine's death ended those hopes.)

Another great satisfaction came in late 1939 when The Philadelphia Orchestra presented a "Rachmaninoff Cycle" in Philadelphia and in New York City. The next summer, at age 67, he was inspired to compose for the first time in several years. He informed Eugene Ormandy: "Last week I finished a new symphonic piece, which I naturally want to give first to you and your orchestra. It is called Fantastic Dances. I shall now begin the orchestration. Unfortunately my concert tour begins on October 14. I have a great deal of practice to do and I don't know whether I shall be able to finish the orchestration before November. I should be very glad if, upon your return, you would drop over to our place. I should like to play the piece for you."



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The Symphonic Dances premiered successfully in Philadelphia, although it was less well received a few days later in New York. With time the piece established itself as a dazzling and vibrant compositional farewell, one with poignant private echoes and resonances. It is also a reminder that although Rachmaninoff was a towering pianist and wrote five great works for piano and orchestra, he was also a gifted conductor who composed many pieces that do not involve the piano at all, from operas, to the evocative large a cappella choral works, three symphonies, and this final orchestral masterpiece.

Rachmaninoff initially thought of titling the three movements "Daytime," "Twilight," and "Midnight," but ultimately decided against it. The first movement (Non allegro) gets off to a rather subdued start, but quickly becomes more energetic as a rather menacing march. It is notable for its use of solo saxophone, an indication of Rachmaninoff's interest in jazz. There is a slower middle part and coda, where he quotes the brooding opening theme of his First Symphony. Since in 1940 he—and everyone else—thought the score of that work was lost (it was discovered a few years after his death)—the reference is entirely personal. The magical scoring at this point, with strings evocatively accompanied by piccolo, flutes, piano, harp, and glockenspiel, makes what had originally seemed aggressive more than 40 years earlier in the First Symphony now appear calm and serene.

The Andante con moto offers a soloistic, leisurely, melancholy, and mysterious mood in what is marked "tempo of a waltz" with a grander, faster, and more excited ending. The finale begins with a brief slow section (Lento assai) followed by a lively dance with constantly changing meters (Allegro vivace). After a slower middle section, the ending has further personal resonances. It is the last time Rachmaninoff uses the "Dies irae" chant from the Mass of the Dead, which had become something of his signature tune, beginning with his First Symphony and appearing in many other compositions. He also recalls music he had used in his choral *All-Night Vigil* nearly 30 years earlier, and here marks the score "Alliluya" (to use the Russian spelling). At the very end he wrote the words, "I thank Thee, Lord."

-Christopher H. Gibbs

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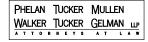
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