PIERRE MONTEUX SCHOOL & MUSIC FESTIVAL

Symphony Concert Programs
Summer 2021

MONTEUX FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA 2021

VIOLIN
Asher Blackburn (Louisville, KY)
*Samuel Chen (Honolulu, HI)
Ava Figliuzzi (Brainerd, MN)
Judith Kim (Seattle, WA)
Jonathan Kuehn (Seattle, WA)
*Yohan Kwon (Flensburg, GERMANY)
*Tiffany Lu (Tampa, FL)
*Joseph Morag (New York, NY)
Edith Samuelsson (Boston, MA)
*Kin (Desmond) Siu (Gilbert, AZ)
*Uli Speth (Mount Vernon, NY)
Rylan Virnig (Portland, OR)
*Xuecong (Sunny) Xia (Guangzhou, CHINA)
*Ryan Zhang (Princeton Junction, NJ)

VIOLA
Jackson Bailey (Flagstaff, AZ)
Morgan Ballard-Wheeler (Tucson, AZ)
*Emmanuelle Lambert-Lemoine (Montréal, CANADA)
*Emma Strub (Austin, TX)
*Wayland Whitney (Sacramento, CA)

VIOLONCELLO
*Ryan Farris (Nederland, CO)
*Nicholas Finch (Melrose, MA)
Isabella Kodama (Seattle, WA)
Yael Meza Xolalpa (Mexico City, MEXICO)
*Vladimir Sagaydo (St. Petersburg, RUSSIA)

CONTRABASS
Sharon Montes (Houston, TX)
Daniel Ryan (Birmingham, AL)
Levee Stadel (Pittsburgh, PA)

FLUTE / PICCOLO
Alexander Day (Oakton, VA)
Roya Farzaneh (Murfreesboro, TN)
Daniel Prevost (Manassas, VA)
Aimee Toner (Fairfax, VA)

OBOE / ENGLISH HORN
Katherine Bruns (Carmel, IN)
Phillip Larroque (New Orleans, LA)
*Daren Weissfisch (Ridgewood, NJ)

CLARINETS
Lindsey Bos (Muskegon, MI)
Sandy Marcotte (Québec, CANADA)
Zackary Neville (Clay, WV)
Kristen Pierri (Wylie, TX)

BASSOON / CONTRABASSOON
*Shane Gillen (New Port Richey, FL)
*Savannah Norton (Elmira, NY)
Arekson Sunwood (Elmira, NY)
+Edward Walworth (Hancock, ME)

HORN
Jordan Bennett (Johnson City, TN)
Noah Fotis (Yorktown, VA)
Andre Richter (Greenville, NC)
Stefan Williams (Athens, GA)
Jessica Young (Amarillo, TX)

TRUMPET
Riley Conley (Edinboro, PA)
James McAloon, Jr. (Williamstown, NJ)
Nicholas Slaggert (Evanston, IL)
Justin Way (Dauphin Island, AL)

TENOR TROMBONE
Michael Martinez (Flagstaff, AZ)
Miriam Snyder (Rochester, NY)

BASS TROMBONE
Clayton Yoshifuku (Denton, TX)

TUBA
Tyler Woodbury (Chicopee, MA)

HARP
Zane Mallett (Dallas, TX)
Mia Venezia (Philadelphia, PA)

TIMPANI / PERCUSSION / KEYBOARDS
*William Cabison (Los Angeles, CA)
Jesus Flores (Pasadena, CA)
*Neil Rao (Louisville, KY)
Sebastião Sheldrick (Faro, PORTUGAL)

**Denotes Conductor*
+Denotes Guest Musician

MONTEUX SCHOOL & MUSIC FESTIVAL

Sunday, June 20, 2021

PROGRAM

Symphony No. 6 in D major, Op. 60 — **Antonín Dvořák** (1841-1904)

1. Allegro non tanto
2. Adagio
3. Scherzo (Furiant)
4. Finale (Allegro con spirito)

Conductors: Emma Strub (1), Daren Weissfisch (2), Kin (Desmond) Siu (3) and Wayland Whitney (4)

INTERMISSION

Suite No. 1 from *Cinderella*, Op. 107 — **Sergei Prokofiev** (1891-1953)

1. Introduction
2. Shawl Dance
3. Quarrel
4. Fairy Godmother and Fairy Winter
5. Mazurka
6. Cinderella Goes to the Ball
7. Cinderella's Waltz
8. Midnight

Conductors: Joseph Morag (1-3), Shane Gillen (4-5) and Xuecong (Sunny) Xia (6-8)

Russian Easter Overture, Op. 36 — **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov** (1844-1908)

Conductor: Ryan Farris

PLEASE... Turn off cell phones, pagers, watch alarms, etc.
Remain silent while the orchestra tunes.
No applause between parts of a multi-section work.
Recording prohibited. Flash photography only allowed between pieces.

PROGRAM NOTES
by the Conductors

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)
Symphony No. 6 in D major, Op. 60 (1880)

As a symphonist, Antonin Dvořák is most well-known for the imagination, grandeur and beauty of his later symphonies. However, his *Symphony No. 6 in D major* from 1880, which was the Czech composer's first published symphony, is a lesser-known triumph firmly rooted in the Viennese tradition of his idol Beethoven and his good friend and powerful supporter Johannes Brahms. The majesty and breadth of the outer movements of the Sixth Symphony include allusions to Brahms' *Symphony No. 2,* which was written in the same key and shares similar time signatures, tempo and character. The tuneful second movement is reminiscent of the tender third movement *adagio* of Beethoven's Ninth. What makes Dvořák's symphonies so beloved are the folk melodies and influences of his Bohemian roots and this symphony does not disappoint with the third movement's energetic *furiant* dance.

Dvořák solidified his international fame in 1878 with the publication of his first set of *Slavonic Dances* and this symphony was one of the first pieces to be commissioned following that success. Dvořák became a musical sensation, traveling to big cities across Europe to conduct his works. However, the composer remained shy and remiss of his social duties throughout his life, staying true to his humble origins and never feeling quite comfortable in big cities. Dvořák crossed the Atlantic to assume directorship of the National Conservatory of New York from 1892 to 1895. While in America, he composed his most celebrated work, *Symphony No. 9, 'From the New World,'* while summering in a Czech-speaking Bohemian enclave in the small town of Spillville, Iowa. During his many years in Prague, Dvořák spent extensive time in the picturesque forests of Vysoká, a comfortable sixty-mile retreat from the hustle and bustle of the city. He probably would have felt at home in Hancock, Maine, and the Forest Studio of the Monteux School is the perfect setting for this wonderful and underappreciated work.

— Daren Weissfisch

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)
Suite No. 1 from *Cinderella*, Op. 107 (1946)

Known as an *enfant terrible* in his late teens for brazenly experimental piano compositions that sent audience members fleeing performances in outrage, Sergei Prokofiev and his contemporaries Shostakovich and Stravinsky forged a new musical soundscape in the early twentieth century.

A versatile musician, Prokofiev was an accomplished pianist and conductor, and a composer whose *oeuvre* includes seven operas, seven symphonies, eight ballets, nine concertos and nine piano sonatas. Breaking away from the sounds of "The Mighty Five"—which included two of his professors at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, Glazunov and Rimsky-Korsakov—it is not surprising that Prokofiev later claimed that he had to "unlearn" the traditionalist approach to composition he acquired while studying under Reinhold Glière. Following the Second World War, the Stalin regime denounced Prokofiev, along with Khachaturian and Shostakovich, for the crime of "formalism": turning otherwise pleasant and easily understandable classical music into cacophony. Prokofiev never escaped the watchful eyes of his oppressors. He died on March 5, 1953 at the age of 61, just a few hours before Stalin himself.

Though *Cinderella* has a markedly "Prokofievian" sound and certainly doesn't lack in complexity, its music is accessible to everyone. The melodies are at times lush and beautiful, with a hint of inner struggle and longing, as we follow Cinderella's arduous journey through unfavourable conditions as well as joyful and lighthearted encounters with her fairy godmother and the four fairies that help transform her lowly garments into a stunning ball gown. We also meet the Prince, often portrayed by solo trumpet, with whom Cinderella dances and falls in love. At midnight, Cinderella rushes away in a panic, having forgotten her fairy godmother's warning that the magic that gave her the beautiful gown would wear off when the clock strikes twelve. Picking up a slipper that Cinderella has left behind, the Prince vows to find the true love he so suddenly met and lost.

Two years after the ballet's premiere, Prokofiev extracted three concert suites from the score. *Suite No. 1* contains music taken from Acts I and II of the ballet.

— Xuecong (Sunny) Xia

NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (1844-1908)
Russian Easter Overture, Op. 36 (1887-1888)

Celebrated Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *Russian Easter Overture* was completed in the spring of 1888 and is dedicated to the memory of two of his contemporaries: Alexander Borodin and Modest Mussorgsky. Subtitled 'Overture on Liturgical Themes,' the work utilizes as its primary material several chant melodies from the Russian Orthodox liturgy. While unfamiliar to most modern listeners, these chants would have been instantly recognizable to Russian audiences of the time and were likely chosen to inspire a sense of pride and nationalism. Rimsky-Korsakov suggests in his autobiography that he wanted to reproduce "the legendary and heathen aspects of the holiday, the transition from the solemnity and

mystery of the evening of Passion Saturday to the unbridled pagan-religious celebrations of Easter Sunday morning."

The Overture overflows with colorful effects and novelties, featuring prominent solos for violin, flute, cello and notably trombone, an instrument long associated with church music. After a lengthy introduction, the work launches into a fast *allegro*, presenting several chant melodies in contrasting instrumentations and various combinations. The work concludes brilliantly, shimmering with bell-like effects from the percussion and harp, trombones proudly declaiming a final liturgical melody above a sea of orchestral color.

— *Ryan Farris*

MONTEUX SCHOOL & MUSIC FESTIVAL

Sunday, June 27, 2021

PROGRAM

Istar (Variations symphoniques), Op. 42 — **Vincent d'Indy** (1851-1931)

Conductor: Uli Speth

Violin Concerto in D major — **Igor Stravinsky** (1882-1971)

1. Toccata
2. Aria I
3. Aria II
4. Capriccio

Gabriel Lefkowitz, Violin
— 2021 Artist in Residence —
Conductors: Xuecong (Sunny) Xia (1-2) and Kin (Desmond) Siu (3-4)

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47 — **Dmitri Shostakovich** (1906-1975)

1. Moderato – Allegro non troppo
2. Allegretto
3. Largo
4. Allegro non troppo

Conductors: Ryan Zhang (1), Samuel Chen (2),
Nicholas Finch (3) and Emmanuelle Lambert-Lemoine (4)

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PROGRAM NOTES
by the Conductors

VINCENT D'INDY (1851-1931)
Istar (Variations symphoniques), Op. 42 (1896)

Istar is a set of symphonic variations inspired by the great human tradition of storytelling. The source is an Assyrian poem dating back to ca. 2000 BC.

In the poem, the pagan goddess Istar, who symbolizes life, power and fertility, travels to the Underworld, where her lover is held captive. In order to see him, she has to pass through seven gates of Hell, removing a piece of clothing at each.

Vincent d'Indy symbolizes this journey by composing a theme and variations, but with a twist. Usually, the theme (main melody) is introduced at the beginning of a piece, followed by variations. D'Indy presents this form in reverse, beginning with a veiled version of the theme, in which only the harmony is apparent. More and more of the theme is gradually revealed in subsequent variations, and finally the complete theme appears in its purest form near the end of the piece, with the entire orchestra playing in unison. At the end of the story, Istar is admitted to see her lover and the piece closes with an ending that would put many a Hollywood composer to shame.

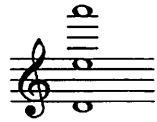
— Uli Speth

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)
Violin Concerto in D major (1931)

Stravinsky's *Violin Concerto in D major* is a neoclassical work in four movements, written during the summer of 1931 and premiered on October 23, 1931. Suggested by Willy Strecker, head of Schott publishing in Mainz, Stravinsky had his own reservations about composing a violin concerto. He told his publisher, "I am not a violinist," before reluctantly taking on the challenge. After consulting with fellow composer Paul Hindemith, Stravinsky was reassured that his lack of first-hand experience with the instrument would not hinder his ability to write a concerto.

The work was commissioned in 1931 by American composer and diplomat Blair Fairchild for Samuel Dushkin, a Polish-American violinist who studied with Leopold Auer and Fritz Kreisler. Stravinsky wrote in 1960 that "[the concerto] was commissioned for Samuel Dushkin by his patron [Blair Fairchild] and—in that worst year of the depression, 1931—my 'angel.'

During lunch one day, Stravinsky sketched onto a napkin a chord that could only be described as very, VERY distant:



The Passport Chord

Dushkin's initial reaction was "no," to which Stravinsky replied, "Quel dommage" [what a pity]. When Dushkin returned home, he tried to play the chord. To his surprise, the chord was indeed playable and he called Stravinsky immediately to break the "good news." Stravinsky deemed the chord the "passport" to the entire concerto, and each movement begins with it. In his conversations with his assistant Robert Craft, published in 1961, Stravinsky emphasized that his violin concerto did not follow any standard model of the (violin) repertoire. In these conversations, Stravinsky also noted that the movement titles—*Toccata, Aria I, Aria II* and *Capriccio*—were suggestive of J.S. Bach and reflected his fondness for Bach's *Concerto for Two Violins in D minor*.

This concerto was also used for a ballet choreographed by George Balanchine, first in 1941 and then in 1972 for the Stravinsky Festival. Each of the middle two *Aria* movements features a *pas de deux*, a dance in which two dancers perform ballet steps together.

— Kin (Desmond) Siu

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)
Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47 (1937)

The year 1936 marked the "Great Terror" in the Soviet Union, when many prominent artists were imprisoned or killed under the rule of Joseph Stalin. Two years earlier, Dmitri Shostakovich premiered his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, which included a plot filled with adultery and murder that was heavily criticised by the Party. Shostakovich soon received instruction, believed to be passed down from Joseph Stalin himself, to "reject formalist errors and in his art attain something that could be understood by the broad masses." Shostakovich was in the middle of rehearsals of his *Fourth Symphony*, but due to the political climate, the premiere was withdrawn. During that year, Shostakovich was also summoned for interrogation, but luckily escaped because his interrogator was himself arrested and killed before the appointed day.

In this climate, Shostakovich began composing his *Fifth Symphony*, which he titled "An Artist's Response to Just Criticism." Premiered on November 21, 1937, it brought him huge success. It is said that the crowd was moved to tears and that the standing ovation at the end

lasted well over half an hour, but reactions were varied. Party members saw the symphony as a celebration of the Soviet nation, a musical rejoicing; the rest of the audience felt otherwise. They heard the music as an expression of suffering under Stalin's rule. Thankfully for Shostakovich, the success of the *Fifth Symphony* brought him back into good standing with the Soviet Party.

In the first movement, there is a quote of the *habanera* motif from Bizet's *Carmen*. It refers to Shostakovich's infatuation with Elena Konstantinovskaya, who declined his offer of marriage and instead moved to Spain and married a man named Roman Karmen. The second movement is like a forced dance and conversation between the oppressed and their oppressors, represented by winds and strings respectively. The bombastic end of the second movement dissipates quickly as the music transitions to the solemn, serene entrance of the violins in the third movement. This tranquility morphs into an outpouring of sadness and despair at the climax. Loneliness, desperation, pain, hopelessness and anger are all represented in this sorrowful third movement. The last movement begins with a military march that becomes frenetic through a long *accelerando*. After a middle section filled with nostalgia and sadness, the opening theme is repeated, but at a slower tempo. After a few attempts, the symphony comes to an end in a seemingly celebratory fanfare, but with heavy and exhausted repeated notes in the strings and winds.

In *Testimony*, Shostakovich declared the fourth movement a parody of the power and control of the state:

> *The rejoicing is forced, created under threat, as in* Boris Godunov. *It's as if someone were beating you with a stick and saying, "Your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing," and you rise, shaky, and go marching off, muttering, "Our business is rejoicing, our business is rejoicing."*
>
> *— Samuel Chen, Emmanuelle Lambert-Lemoine, Ryan Zhang*

MONTEUX SCHOOL & MUSIC FESTIVAL

Sunday, July 4, 2021

PROGRAM

Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance, Op. 23a — **Samuel Barber** (1910-1981)

Conductor: Emma Strub

Symphony No. 4 in B-flat major, Op. 60 — **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827)

1. Adagio – Allegro vivace
2. Adagio
3. Allegro vivace – Un poco meno allegro
4. Allegro ma non troppo

Conductors: Yohan Kwon (1), Savannah Norton (2) and Joseph Morag (3-4)

INTERMISSION

Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, Op. 28 [Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks] — **Richard Strauss** (1864-1949)

Conductor: Ryan Farris

Suite from *Appalachian Spring* — **Aaron Copland** (1900-1990)

Conductor: Daren Weissfisch

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Remain silent while the orchestra tunes.
No applause between parts of a multi-section work.
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PROGRAM NOTES
by the Conductors

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981)
Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance, Op. 23a (1955)

In 1945, Samuel Barber returned home from serving in the Army Air Corps. With the horrors of war fresh on his mind and Aaron Copland's criticism ringing in his ears—Copland had called Barber's early works "emotionally conventional" and "lacking in musical substance"—Barber was in a position to do something artistically radical. He received an opportunity for this when Martha Graham, the famed dancer and choreographer, approached him to commission music for a ballet based on the Greek tragedy *Medea*.

The Medea-Jason tragedy is a story following Medea, a descendant of the Sun God, and her discovery that her husband Jason has been unfaithful. The opening depicts Medea's tender love for her children. Upon confirming suspicions of her husband's infidelity, she vows revenge. What follows is a violent dance in which Medea kills Jason, their children, and Jason's mistress. Both Graham and Barber decided to use the narrative loosely, focusing more on the timeless themes of jealousy and vengeance. In Barber's words:

> *The choreography and music were conceived, as it were, on two time levels, the ancient mythical and the contemporary. Medea and Jason first appear as godlike, super-human figures of the Greek tragedy. As the tension and conflict between them increases, they step out of their legendary roles from time to time and become the modern man and woman, caught in the nets of jealousy and destructive love; and at the end reassume their mythical quality. In both the dancing and music, archaic and contemporary idioms are used. Medea, in her final scene after the denouement, becomes once more the descendant of the sun.*

The end result is a famously angular, violent and dissonant masterpiece. The ballet *Medea* opened in New York in 1946. In 1948, a seven-movement concert suite was premiered by the Philadelphia Orchestra, under the baton of Eugene Ormandy. In 1955, Barber expanded the ballet's instrumentation and arranged a single-movement work entitled *Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance*.

— Emma Strub

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)
Symphony No. 4 in B-flat major, Op. 60 (1806)

Beethoven composed his *Symphony No. 4 in B-flat major* during the summer and fall of 1806. The piece was commissioned by Count Franz von Oppersdorff, during Beethoven's annual break at Prince Karl Lichnowsky's summer residence in Silensia. Robert Schumann often compared Beethoven's *Fourth Symphony* to the "Nordic giants" it stands between, referring to the grandeur and titanic power of Beethoven's *Third* and *Fifth* symphonies. Though Beethoven's even-numbered symphonies are generally regarded as less significant than his odd-numbered symphonies, Hector Berlioz considered the calm, lyrical nature of the *Fourth Symphony* a return to an earlier sound-world, writing:

> *Here, Beethoven entirely abandons ode and elegy, in order to return to the less elevated and less somber, but not less difficult style of the* Second Symphony. *The general character of this score is either lively, alert and gay, or of a celestial sweetness.*

The opening of Beethoven's *Fourth Symphony* resembles many qualities of his iconic *Symphony No. 5*. It is interesting to note that Beethoven did not write his *Fifth Symphony* after completion of the *Fourth*, but rather in the midst of it. The first movement begins with an *Adagio* introduction in B-flat minor. Like the opening of the *Fifth*, it consists of a series of descending thirds. The hushed and introspective introduction takes a tonal journey that evades the symphony's home key of B-flat major right up to the arrival of the *Allegro vivace*. Once the *Allegro* has begun, Beethoven takes listeners on a journey that is full of textural and dynamic contrasts.

The second movement *Adagio* is extremely lyrical and *cantabile* (song-like). The movement begins with a dotted *ostinato* in the second violins that is soon contrasted with a tranquil theme heard in the first violins. As the movement progresses, Beethoven masterfully orchestrates the *ostinato* figure so that it becomes both the accompaniment and the main idea in certain passages. The second theme, just as graceful as the first, can be heard in the solo clarinet.

Though the symphony reflects qualities of the classical era, Beethoven found ways to move away from conventional symphonic forms. Instead of a standard ternary form, the third movement is in five parts (scherzo-trio-scherzo-trio-scherzo), with a brief coda. The overall character is light and lively in nature. The finale of the symphony is packed with energy and excitement, but its overarching message is neither spectacular nor heroic. Humor and high spirits bring the piece to a perfect conclusion. Beethoven led the first private performance of the work in Vienna in March of 1807, and the first public performance on April 13, 1808 in Vienna's Burgtheater.

— *Savannah Norton*

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949)
Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, Op. 28 (1894-1895)
[Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks]

Richard Strauss's tone poem *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* chronicles the adventures and misadventures of a notorious prankster from German folklore. Till Eulenspiegel is represented by two themes, one played by the horn, the other by clarinet. Together, these two themes weave the fabric of the entire work, forming a *rondo* in which the opening themes continuously reappear in various guises. After a brief introduction, representing a musical "once upon a time," the tempo quickens and Till's two themes are heard for the first time. We then hear Till riding off on a horse, galloping towards the local market. When he arrives, mischief and mayhem erupt from the percussion and woodwinds as Till makes a mess of things. Next, Till dresses up as a priest and preaches morals to the local townsfolk, but all he really wants is to pocket the offerings. A *cadenza* for solo violin represents Till urinating off the steeple of the local church before quickly hurrying off to his next adventure.

In the next scene, we hear Till dancing with the local girls, attempting to woo their affections but always being scoffed at and rejected. In frustration, Till runs off to find his next victims, the academics. In this section, we hear a brief theme first stated by the bassoons, then comically imitated and mutated throughout the orchestra. The music builds to a climax in which Till snubs his nose at everyone before once again darting off to find more mischief. Building up to the final climax, Till is chased and eventually captured by the village guards and put on trial for blasphemy. He is sentenced to death and hanged in a graphically depicted musical moment featuring the piccolo clarinet for the final time. The opening "once upon a time" music is once heard again, suggesting that tricksters like Till will always be among us.

— Ryan Farris

AARON COPLAND (1900-1990)
Suite from *Appalachian Spring* (1945)

Set beside a newly-built farmhouse in rural western Pennsylvania sometime around the American Civil War, the ballet *Appalachian Spring* was commissioned by Martha Graham's dance company with music composed by Aaron Copland for 13 instruments in 1943-44. The ballet is a snapshot of the simple life of a bride-to-be and her farmer-husband in a revivalist frontier community. This remarkable work was the just recipient of a Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1945, the same year Copland created the suite for full orchestra that we will perform this evening.

The very first notes we hear, played by the second violins and violas, are incidentally the last three notes of the Shaker melody "Simple Gifts," attributed to the composer Joseph Brackett of Alfred, Maine, and featured famously towards the end of the suite. The soundscape evokes the vast openness, endless expanse and overwhelming beauty of the American frontier. Copland incorporated folk melodies and what he called "snappy" jazz rhythms, creating a quintessential American sound.

The drama takes place during springtime, as Martha Graham implied in a brief synopsis for the premiere of the ballet in 1944. However, the title *Appalachian Spring*—which supplanted the ballet's original title of simply *Ballet for Martha* only a few weeks before its premiere—refers to words from a poem by American poet Hart Crane, in which spring is a natural wellspring. Despite this misconception and the fact that Copland later admonished himself for not realizing that there were no Shaker settlements in rural Pennsylvania, *Appalachian Spring* encapsulates universal human emotions and yearnings and remains one of the most important and beloved works of American symphonic music.

— Daren Weissfisch

MONTEUX SCHOOL & MUSIC FESTIVAL

Sunday, July 11, 2021

PROGRAM

The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan, Op. 8 — **Charles Tomlinson Griffes** (1884-1920)

Conductor: Kin (Desmond) Siu

Symphony No. 4 in A major, Op. 90, *Italian* — **Felix Mendelssohn** (1809-1847)

1. Allegro vivace
2. Andante con moto
3. Con moto moderato
4. Saltarello (Presto)

Conductors: Nicholas Finch (1), Wayland Whitney (2), William Cabison (3) and Emmanuelle Lambert-Lemoine (4)

INTERMISSION

Siegfried's Funeral March from *Götterdämmerung* — **Richard Wagner** (1813-1883)

Conductor: Shane Gillen

Symphony No. 2 in C major, Op. 61 — **Robert Schumann** (1810-1856)

1. Sostenuto assai – Allegro, ma non troppo
2. Scherzo (Allegro vivace)
3. Adagio espressivo
4. Allegro molto vivace

Conductors: Yohan Kwon (1), Ryan Zhang (2), Emma Strub (3) and Neil Rao (4)

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PROGRAM NOTES
by the Conductors

CHARLES TOMLINSON GRIFFES (1884-1920)
The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan, Op. 8 (1915)

American composer Charles Tomlinson Griffes was born in Elmira, NY on September 17, 1884 and died of the Spanish flu at the age of 35 on April 8, 1920. Griffes studied at the Stern Conservatory in Berlin (now called the Berlin University of the Arts), and was briefly taught by German composer Engelbert Humperdinck after his formal studies.

The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan was based on a poem titled *Kubla Khan*, by English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. According to Coleridge's preface, he wrote the poem after awakening from an opium-induced dream. The poem depicts Shangdu, or Xanadu, the summer palace of Mongolian emperor and founder of the Yuan dynasty, Kublai Khan.

Originally written for solo piano in 1912, Griffes later orchestrated *The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan* in 1915. Although Griffes studied in Germany, the composer had a fondness for French Impressionism, which he portrayed beautifully in this symphonic poem. *The Pleasure Dome of Kubla Khan* was premiered by Pierre Monteux and the Boston Symphony in 1919.

The following excerpt from Coleridge's poem prefaces the score:

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright
With sinuous rills...
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery...
The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

— Kin (Desmond) Siu

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)
Symphony No. 4 in A major, Op. 90, *Italian* (1833)

Mendelssohn's *Symphony No. 4, 'Italian'* was completed in 1833 when Mendelssohn was just twenty-four years old. The work is a product of his travels in and around Italy, which he visited for ten months as part of a grand tour of Europe. Writing to his sister about his travels, Mendelssohn remarked, "...now has begun what I have always thought... to be the supreme joy in life... I am loving it." He added, "I am writing to you to thank you, dear parents, for having given me all this happiness."

Mendelssohn's happiness is on display from the very outset. The first movement begins with a flourish as relentless eighth-notes in the winds drive a galloping, propulsive theme in the violins. Although a strict sonata form, the movement is anything but academic. A carefree theme introduced by the clarinets is more stolid and reflective, though no less exuberant than the opening. Soon, a rollicking dance rhythm slowly infects the orchestra and strains of the opening theme struggle to be heard over the joyous din.

The second movement depicts a grand religious procession, solemn and serious. After a call to prayer, a plodding bass line accompanies a simple, strophic chant. A pair of flutes adds a warbling countermelody, evoking the sort of village *banda* that might have accompanied such a procession. A contrasting theme begins in the clarinets, sweet and cajoling, seeming to express boredom with the procession, almost as if the listener is being beckoned away from the window. The movement may have been inspired by rituals surrounding the elevation of Pope Gregory XVI to the papacy, which Mendelssohn no doubt witnessed during his stay in Rome.

The third movement is a minuet and trio in the classical style, again treated in a carefree, romantic fashion. The minuet begins lazily, a *pastorale* growing in warmth and intensity as day progresses. The trio is signaled by a pair of distant horns engaged in a jaunt of their own, perhaps on horseback. As the riders draw near, the skies seem to threaten rain, but the moment passes and the riders recede into the distance. The languid, amorous minuet resumes, winding down as the day draws to an end.

The fourth movement begins mid-leap, immediately launching into a Roman *saltarello*. The flutes begin the dance, intricate and nimble. They are joined by the strings and the rest of the orchestra as the music becomes a frenzied cacophony. The first violins introduce a new dance, the Neopolitan *tarantella*. This oozing, sinuous spider dance is a perfect foil to the more airborne *saltarello*. The combination serves as a literal portrait of Italy, while the previous movements are more figurative.

— *Wayland Whitney*

RICHARD WAGNER (1813-1883)
Siegfried's Funeral March from *Götterdämmerung* (1876)

Richard Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung* is a 16-hour epic cycle of four operas, of which *Götterdämmerung* [Twilight of the Gods] is the final and longest part. The epic tells the story of a power-endowing ring that changes hands between gods, dwarfs, giants and mortals. The ring is forged from gold stolen from the Rhine River by a Nibelung [dwarf], and later stolen in turn by the god of gods, Wotan (Odin). After the ring is stolen, the Nibelung places a curse on the ring so that anyone who possesses it shall die. *Götterdämmerung* fulfills this initial prophecy as Wotan and all the other gods meet their demise by the end of the opera.

Siegfried, the unfortunate subject of this funeral march, is a mortal hero and grandson of Wotan, who has come to possess the ring and is the last hope for the gods. Siegfried is given a potion that erases his memory and causes him to forget his lover Brünnhilde, the Valkyrie. Siegfried then is tricked into handing Brünnhilde over to Gibichung king Gunther to be his wife. When Brünnhilde objects on the grounds that she loves Siegfried, she swears on a spear that the two are in fact lovers. Siegfried, in his forgetful state, swears on the same spear that he has never been with Brünnhilde. After receiving a second potion that restores his memory, Siegfried realizes his error and dies by the spear on which he swore. In the opera, this music plays as the Gibichung carry Siegfried's corpse to their castle. In fact, it is the funeral pyre that begets the flames that consume the known mortal world and Valhalla, the realm of the gods.

One of the hallmarks of the Ring Cycle, aside from its massive scale, is Wagner's use of *Leitmotifs* or musical motives to symbolize character in today's musical language (think of the music to *Star Wars* and other modern-day movies). Their inception and popularization come largely from Wagner's operas. In this particular work, you can hear Wagner's *Leitmotifs* for the darkness of death in the opening rhythmic motive in the timpani, as well as an expanded version of Siegfried's famous horn call in the brass fanfares.

— Shane M. Gillen

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)
Symphony No. 2 in C major, Op. 61 (1847)

Robert Schumann's *Symphony No. 2, Op. 61* was written in 1847 and dedicated to King Oscar I of Norway and Sweden. Having started sketches for the work on December 12, 1845, and orchestration on February 12 of the next year, it wasn't until October 19, 1846 that Schumann finished the work, due to depression and poor health, especially ringing in his ears. Not only does the symphony evoke a Beethovenian triumph over fate and pessimism, but Schumann's first work since his nervous breakdown also marks a shift in his compositional strategy to working all of the music in his head, rather than at the piano.

In a letter to his colleague Felix Mendelssohn, Schumann reported that "for several days, drums and trumpets in the key of C have been sounding in my mind. I have no idea what will come of it." This moment first appears in the slow introduction of the first movement, where a brass chorale of horns, trumpets and trombones convey a religious atmosphere by intoning a Bach-inspired fanfare. This motif appears in other movements as well, in the ends of the *scherzo* and *finale*, in particular. The slow introduction then transitions into a small burst of exciting energy based on a single rhythmic motif, a technique Schumann learned from Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5 in C minor*. The optimism is then followed by a series of conflicts and struggles, in the form of quick harmonic changes, before returning to a loud, triumphant C major.

Contrary to the typical slow-fast sequence of middle movements, Schumann chooses to place the fast movement first, a *scherzo* in duple rather than triple meter, famous for appearing on many first violin audition lists. This *scherzo* movement also includes two contrasting trios, the second of which contains a hidden gem: a B-A-C-H (B-flat, A, C, B-natural) motif, evoking an homage to J.S. Bach. The third movement features not only large romantic phrasing, but also a sense of longing. Although it begins in the mournful key of C minor, the tragedy ends happily in the key of C major, as though Schumann had a sense of hope that he would find a way out of his depression. An exuberant *finale* concludes the symphony with a victory of Schumann's own.

— Yohan Kwon

MONTEUX SCHOOL & MUSIC FESTIVAL

Sunday, July 18, 2021

MEMORIAL CONCERT

Pierre Monteux (1875-1964)
Doris Hodgkins Monteux (1894-1984)
Charles Bruck (1911-1995)
Nancie Monteux-Barendse (1917-2013)

PROGRAM

Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68 — **Johannes Brahms** (1833-1897)

1. Un poco sostenuto – Allegro
2. Andante sostenuto
3. Un poco allegretto e grazioso
4. Adagio – Più andante – Allegro, non troppo, ma con brio – Più allegro

Conductors: Ryan Farris (1), Joseph Morag (2), Daren Weissfisch (3) and Xuecong (Sunny) Xia (4)

INTERMISSION

Suite from *The Miraculous Mandarin*, Op. 19, BB 82 — **Béla Bartók** (1881-1945)

Conductor: Tiffany Lu

Ibéria (Images No. 2) — **Claude Debussy** (1862-1918)

1. Par les rues et par les chemins [Along the streets and byways]
2. Les parfums de la nuit [Fragrances of the night] —
3. Le matin d'un jour de fête [Morning of a festival day]

Conductor: Michael Jinbo

PLEASE... Turn off cell phones, pagers, watch alarms, etc.
Remain silent while the orchestra tunes.
No applause between parts of a multi-section work.
Recording prohibited. Flash photography only allowed between pieces.

PROGRAM NOTES
by the Conductors

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)
Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68 (1876)

Brahms famously took twenty-one years (1855-1876) to complete his first symphony. Notoriously hard on himself, he would often consign sketches and drafts he deemed unsuitable for publication or performance to the fire. In addition to the relentless perfectionism he demanded of himself, Brahms was also expected by his friends and the public to continue Beethoven's symphonic legacy, undoubtedly causing him to take even longer than usual before deeming a work presentable. Brahms's obsession with Beethoven while conceiving this symphony was not lost on critics, who facetiously dubbed the work "Beethoven's 10th" and went so far as to make accusations of plagiarism. Nonplussed, Brahms responded to criticisms that his symphony was similar to Beethoven's 5th and 9th by saying, "any ass can see that."

An interesting aspect of this symphony is that it has relatively little in the way of melody. Indeed, the symphony's most singable melody, the one aspiring to the mantle of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," doesn't appear until after the introduction of the final movement. This phenomenon is common in much of Brahms's work, which often consists of subtle manipulations of motivic elements rather than tuneful melodies. The first movement of this symphony is a perfect example, being entirely comprised of transformations of the motifs presented in the first eight bars. That the work doesn't sound overly academic or formal is a testament to Brahms's mastery of his craft. Brahms actually saw this as something of a flaw in his artistry, saying near the end of his life that he would have traded all four symphonies and the *Haydn Variations* in order to be able to write a melody like Johann Strauss. It is fortunate for us that he never went through with that deal.

— *Joseph Morag*

BÉLA BARTÓK (1881-1945)
Suite from *The Miraculous Mandarin*, Op. 19, BB 82 (1918-1924)

Written from 1918 to 1924 and based on a 1916 story by Melchior Lengyel, the one-act pantomime ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin* tells a story so grotesque that when it premiered in Cologne, Germany, it caused a major scandal. It was banned from performance there and in Hungary, even after a more successful 1927 premiere in Prague. Bartók consequently

set to work on an unstaged concert suite that preserves about two-thirds of the original music.

The suite opens with a harsh, discordant depiction of urban chaos. Trombones and trumpets in close intervals imitate car horns and cacophonous street noises. The entrance of three tramps (hoodlums or thugs) is depicted by a rough, swaggering melody in the violas. The tramps force a girl into dancing to lure passers-by from the street into their lair, so as to rob and kill them. The girl subsequently performs three *lockspiel* [decoy dances], each of which is depicted by increasingly florid clarinet solos. The first victim is a shabby, old lecher, who says he has no money and makes sleazy, inappropriate overtures to the girl. The tramps emerge from their hiding places and throw him out onto the street, an action represented by cascading, thumping brass and percussion interruptions. After a second *lockspiel*, the next person to enter the lair is a young boy, with whom the girl shyly, then more passionately, dances. Also penniless, he is abruptly thrown out by the tramps. A third and most elaborate *lockspiel* leads to the entrance of the Mandarin, represented by a menacing trio of trombones playing a pentatonic melody. The wealthy Chinese man is the ideal target. The Mandarin is utterly transfixed as the girl performs an increasingly seductive waltz. He pursues her with relentless, horrifying doggedness and catches up to her after an ever-wilder chase.

In the concert version, the music ends at this point in the action. In the staged version, the tramps leap out to rob the Mandarin, but when they attempt to murder him by multiple means, the Mandarin's wounds do not bleed and his strength does not flag. His body begins to glow blue-green as he continues to chase the girl. Finally, the girl realizes what will vanquish their foe. Telling the tramps to cease their attacks, she embraces the Mandarin. His thirst slaked, the Mandarin's wounds finally bleed and he dies. It was the omission of this content in the unstaged concert version that allowed the work to be performed with any degree of frequency during Bartók's lifetime.

While the censored piece caused such moral uproar, both Lengyel and Bartók were commenting on "the inhumanity of contemporary civilization," in one biographer's words. War-torn, crime-ridden and politically-shattered Hungary and Bartók's own affliction with the 1918 Spanish flu were the backdrop against which this work was written. Bartók seldom reached the same level of animalistic horror in his compositions after this work, which has become a towering monument to that era of art and modern orchestral history.

— Tiffany Lu

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)
Ibéria (Images No. 2) (1905-1908)

In September 1905, Debussy wrote to his publisher Durand: "I am now going to complete as quickly as possible the *Images* for two pianos." The composition was intended to be a sequel to his first *Images* for solo piano (1901-1905). By 1906, Debussy decided to compose the work for orchestra instead, and over the next six years he completed three pieces comprising his *Images pour orchestre*: *Gigues*, *Ibéria* and *Rondes de printemps*. The second part of the triptych, *Ibéria*, was the first to be finished. The work premiered at the Châtelet Theater in Paris on February 20, 1910, with Gabriel Pierné conducting the Orchestre Colonne. Gustav Mahler conducted the New York Philharmonic in the U.S. premiere on January 3, 1911.

Debussy was one of many French composers known for their works in a Spanish style, including Bizet (*Carmen*), Lalo (*Symphonie espagnole*), Chabrier (*España*) and Ravel (*Rapsodie espagnole* and *Boléro*). They were influenced by the many Spanish musicians who studied in France from the late 19th to early 20th century, including Isaac Albéniz and Manuel de Falla. In fact, Debussy spent only a few hours in Spain over the course of his lifetime, when he traveled twelve miles across the border to San Sebastián to attend a bullfight. Though the encounter was brief, Falla noted:

> *He remembered, however, the light in the bull-ring, particularly the violent contrast between the one half of the ring flooded with sunlight and the other half deep in shade...*
>
> *Claude Debussy wrote Spanish music without knowing the land of Spain, which is a different matter. Debussy knew Spain from his reading, from pictures, from songs, and from dances with songs danced by true Spanish dancers.*

The scene is set from the very opening measures of the first movement of *Ibéria*, with the rhythms of castanets, tambourine and chattering woodwinds. A plaintive Moorish-sounding theme is played by the oboe and solo viola. The second movement is a nocturnal *habanera* set in the perfumed gardens of Andalusia. The air is heavy with the sweet fragrance of oleander and jasmine. Debussy described the mood as "soft and dreamy," but deeper passions are aroused in its sensuous melodies. Debussy was especially proud of how the second movement connects to the third, writing to his friend André Caplet:

> *You cannot imagine how naturally the transition from* Les parfums de la nuit *to* Le matin d'un jour de fête *is achieved.* Ça n'a pas l'air d'être écrit! *[It doesn't sound like music that has been written down!] And the whole rising feeling, the awakening of people and of nature. There is a watermelon vendor and children whistling—I see them all clearly.*

The romantic dream of the second movement slowly dissolves with the growing sound of distant bells and music in the streets. The string section becomes the strumming of a giant guitar. Manuel de Falla described Debussy's *Ibéria* as follows:

> *The echoes from the villages, a kind of sevillana—the generic theme of the work—which seems to float in a clear atmosphere of scintillating light; the intoxicating spell of Andalusian nights, the festive gaiety of people dancing to the joyous strains of a banda of guitars and bandurrias... all this whirls in the air, approaches and recedes, and our imagination is continually kept awake and dazzled by the power of an intensely expressive and richly varied music.*
>
> *— Michael Jinbo*

MONTEUX SCHOOL & MUSIC FESTIVAL

Sunday, July 25, 2021

SYMPHONIC POPS CONCERT

PROGRAM

American Fantasia — **Victor Herbert** (1859-1924)

Conductor: Ryan Farris

Künsterleben [Artist's Life], Op. 316 — **Johann Strauss, Jr.** (1825-1899)

Conductor: Savannah Norton

Triumphal March and Ballet from *Aïda* — **Giuseppe Verdi** (1813-1901)

Conductor: Vladimir Sagaydo

INTERMISSION

Selections from *The King and I* — **Richard Rodgers** (1902-1979)
(arr. Robert Russell Bennett)

Conductor: Wayland Whitney

Here Come the Bands — **Lee Norris (arr.)**

Conductor: Shane Gillen

An American in Paris — **George Gershwin** (1898-1937)

Conductor: Daren Weissfisch

PLEASE... Turn off cell phones, pagers, watch alarms, etc.
Remain silent while the orchestra tunes.
No applause between parts of a multi-section work.
Recording prohibited. Flash photography only allowed between pieces.