

2023–2024 | 124th Season

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Saturday, December 9, at 8:00

## Deutsche Grammophon 125th Anniversary Concert

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** Conductor

**María Dueñas** Violin

**Hélène Grimaud** Piano

**Moby** Musician/Vocalist

**Rachmaninoff/orch. Stokowski** Prelude in C-sharp minor, Op. 3, No. 2

**Price/orch. Gray** *Adoration*, for string orchestra

**Ravel** *Tzigane*, for violin and orchestra

**Kreisler/orch. McAlister** "Caprice viennoise," for violin and orchestra

### Intermission

**Ravel** from Piano Concerto in G major:

II. Adagio assai

III. Presto

**Moby/orch. Twist** "Everloving"

**Handel/arr. Moby/orch. Knoth** "Sarabande" (from Keyboard Suite in D minor, HWV 437)

**Moby/orch. Knoth** "Hymn"

**Moby/orch. Knoth** "Porcelain"

**Stravinsky** Finale, from Suite from *The Firebird* (1919 version)

This program runs approximately 2 hours.

Hélène Grimaud's appearance is sponsored by the **Robert Heim and Eileen Kennedy Visiting Artist Fund**.

Philadelphia Orchestra concerts are broadcast on WRTI 90.1 FM on Sunday afternoons at 1 PM, and are repeated on Monday evenings at 7 PM on WRTI HD 2. Visit [www.wrti.org](http://www.wrti.org) to listen live or for more details.



## The Philadelphia Orchestra

The world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust education initiatives, a commitment to its diverse communities, and the embrace of digital outreach, the ensemble is creating an expansive and inclusive future for classical music, and furthering the place of the arts in an open and democratic society. In June 2021 the Orchestra and its home, the Kimmel Center, united to form The Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center, Inc., reimagining the power of the arts to bring joy, create community, and effect change.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 12th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, in Verizon Hall and around the community, in classrooms and hospitals, and over the airwaves and online. The Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as PlayINs; side-by-sides; PopUP concerts; Our City, Your Orchestra Live; School

Concerts; sensory-friendly concerts; open rehearsals; the School Partnership Program and School Ensemble Program; All City Orchestra Fellowships; and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad. The Orchestra's free online video series, Our City, Your Orchestra (OCYO), uncovers and amplifies the voices, stories, and causes championed by unique Philadelphia organizations and businesses. Joining OCYO in connecting with the community is HearTOGETHER, a free monthly podcast featuring artists and activists who discuss music, social justice, and the lived experiences that inform the drive to create a more equitable and inclusive future for the arts.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador and one of our nation's greatest exports. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Mann Center, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich touring history, having first performed outside Philadelphia in its earliest days. In 1973 it was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, launching a five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 13 celebrated releases on the Deutsche Grammophon label, including the GRAMMY® Award-winning *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit [www.philorch.org](http://www.philorch.org).

# Music and Artistic Director

London Nordeman



**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** is currently in his 12th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. An inspired leader, Yannick is both an evolutionary and a revolutionary, developing the mighty "Philadelphia Sound" in new ways. His collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called him "phenomenal," adding that "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 and sought-after talents of his generation. He became the third music director of New York's Metropolitan Opera in 2018. In addition, he has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000. In 2017 he became an honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He served as 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 at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick has shown a deep commitment to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today's composers and by performing the music of under-appreciated composers of the past. In 2018 he signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with 13 releases on that label, including *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*, which won a GRAMMY® Award for Best Orchestral Performance in 2022.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal'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; Companion to the Order of Arts and Letters of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Montreal; an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres; *Musical America's* 2016 Artist of the Year; ECHO KLASSIK's 2014 Conductor of the Year; a Royal Philharmonic Society Award; Canada's National Arts Centre Award; the Prix Denise-Pelletier; the Oskar Morawetz Award; and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec, the Curtis Institute of Music, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, McGill University, the University of Montreal, the University of Pennsylvania, Laval University, and Drexel University.

To read Yannick's full bio, please visit [philorch.org/conductor](http://philorch.org/conductor).

# Soloists



Felix Broede

Violinist **María Dueñas** made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in May at the Mann Center. She studies with the world-renowned teacher Boris Kuschmir at the University of Music and Performing Arts in her adopted home of Vienna. Born in Granada, Spain, in 2002, she was accepted at the conservatory in her hometown at age seven. In 2014 a scholarship took her to Dresden where she caught the attention of conductor Marek Janowski, at whose invitation she later made her debut as soloist

with the San Francisco Symphony. She is now in demand worldwide, performing with major orchestras and enjoying a regular collaboration with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel. An exclusive Deutsche Grammophon artist, she released her first album, *Beethoven and Beyond*, in May 2023 with Manfred Honeck and the Vienna Symphony. Highlights of her current season include a tour with the Kammerphilharmonie Bremen under Paavo Järvi and debuts with the Swedish Radio Symphony and the Munich Philharmonic. She plays a Nicolò Gagliano violin, on loan by the Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben, and the Stradivari "Camposelice" of 1710, loaned to her by the Nippon Music Foundation.



Mat Hennek

French pianist **Hélène Grimaud** made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2000. A deeply passionate and committed musical artist, her multiple talents extend far beyond the instrument she plays. She has established herself as a wildlife conservationist, a human rights activist, and a writer, her deep dedication to her musical career reflected in, and amplified by, the scope and depth of her environmental, literary, and artistic interests. Ms. Grimaud has been an exclusive Deutsche Grammophon artist since 2002.

Her recordings have been critically acclaimed and awarded numerous accolades. Highlights of her current season include performances with the London Philharmonic across Europe and with the Luxembourg Philharmonic as part of a season-long residency at the Philharmonie Luxembourg; recitals across North America; and performances with the Camerata Salzburg, with which she embarks on a new artistic partnership this season. Ms. Grimaud has established the Wolf Conservation Center in upstate New York. She is also a member of Musicians for Human Rights, a worldwide network of people working in the field of music to promote a culture of human rights and social change.

# Soloist

Travis Schneider



Born in 1965 in New York City, **Moby** (Richard Melville Hall) has had one of the most varied careers in the world of music and entertainment. In addition to selling over 20,000,000 records under his own name, he has worked with such artists as David Bowie, Freddy Mercury, Daft Punk, the Beastie Boys, and Vikingur Olafson. He's also worked on film music alongside directors such as Danny Boyle, Michael Mann, and David Lynch. Recently Moby released two

orchestral albums on the Deutsche Grammophon label, as well as started his own underground music label, Always Centered at Night. Moby has also worked extensively with climate, animal, environmental, and public health charities, such as Environmental Working Group, Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, the Institute for Music and Neurologic Function, and many others. Moby's film and television production company, Little Walnut, produces its own short- and long-form scripted and unscripted content, as well as funds other films and productions. As an author Moby has written two memoirs and has contributed to publications as diverse as *The Economist* and *Rolling Stone*. Tonight's performance marks his Philadelphia Orchestra debut.

# The Music

## Prelude in C-sharp minor (orchestrated by Leopold Stokowski)

**Sergei Rachmaninoff**

**Born in Semyonovo, Russia, April 1, 1873**

**Died in Beverly Hills, California, March 28, 1943**



It may seem odd for a composer to complain about anything having to do with success and huge popularity, but sometimes a specific piece gets such enormous attention that it leads to frustration. Beethoven resented how his Septet, Op. 20, overshadowed much greater later pieces and Prokofiev became annoyed that he was constantly asked to play the march from his opera *The Love for Three Oranges*.

Rachmaninoff found himself in a similar situation with his Prelude in C-sharp minor, which we hear tonight in an imaginative orchestration by Leopold Stokowski.

Around the time of Rachmaninoff's first trip to America in 1909 (during which he conducted The Philadelphia Orchestra), he remarked "One thing which I hope to achieve by my visit to this country will be the disclosure that I have other claims for my standing in the musical world beyond the fact that I once wrote a Prelude in the key of C-sharp minor." Rachmaninoff's predicament came quite early as the Prelude was one of his first serious pieces, written at age 18. For the rest of his long career he rarely escaped playing it in concert—if the Prelude was not on a recital it was demanded as an encore, usually the final one.

Soon after graduating from the Moscow Conservatory in the spring of 1892 Rachmaninoff wrote the Prelude, which scored an immediate triumph when he premiered it at the Moscow Electronic Exhibition in September 1892. He eventually composed a set of 10 more preludes (Op. 23 in 1902–03) and then another 13 (Op. 32 in 1910), thus totaling 24 in all major and minor keys, as Bach, Chopin, and others had done before him.

The Prelude is in ABA form, beginning with a dramatic descending three-note motif pounded out in octaves against which are juxtaposed very soft and mysterious chords (*Lento*). The contrasting middle section is marked *Agitato*, with rapidly moving triplets that build in intensity and volume to climatic bell-like chords. The opening section returns in abbreviated form, the initial material this time sounding loudly across a much larger range. A soft coda of chiming

chords concludes the work. Stokowski's orchestration emphasizes the mysterious, sometimes even sinister elements of the original piano piece.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

*Rachmaninoff composed his Prelude in C-sharp minor in 1892.*

*The first Philadelphia Orchestra performance of the Stokowski orchestration was on a benefit concert in December 1962, led by Stokowski. It has since been played a handful of times, most recently on subscription in January 2015 with Yannick Nézet-Séguin.*

*Wolfgang Sawallisch and the Orchestra recorded the Stokowski orchestration of Rachmaninoff's Prelude in 1995 for EMI.*

*Stokowski's score calls for four flutes, three oboes, English horn, three clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, eight horns, four trumpets, four trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, chimes, cymbals, gong, vibraphone), harp, celesta, and strings.*

*Performance time is approximately five minutes.*

# The Music

## **Adoration (orchestrated by Jim Gray)**

**Florence Price**

**Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, April 9, 1887**

**Died in Chicago, June 3, 1953**



In 1943 Florence Price reached out to Serge Koussevitzky, the prominent conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, about programming some of her music. She wrote that she had “two handicaps—those of sex and race. I am a woman; and I have some Negro blood in my veins. I should like to be judged on merit alone.” Nearly 80 years later this wish is becoming more of a reality as her music has proved one of the most notable musical discoveries of recent times. It

has been a discovery in two senses: of a remarkable composer whose works had largely been forgotten, and of a process abetted by the literal discovery in 2009 of a treasure trove of unpublished scores long thought lost. Some pieces are still missing. Price composed four symphonies, but the whereabouts of the perhaps unfinished second is unknown, at least for now. Yannick Nézet-Séguin and The Philadelphia Orchestra have been at the forefront of bringing Price’s music greater recognition and have recorded her symphonies on Deutsche Grammophon; the First and Third won a GRAMMY Award in 2021 for Best Orchestral Performance.

**A Major Premiere** Price came to national prominence in 1933 when the Chicago Symphony Orchestra premiered her Symphony No. 1, the first such work written by an African-American woman performed by a leading orchestra. She was 46 years old at the time, with two decades more to live. Price was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, where her mother was her first music teacher. At age 16 she headed to Boston’s New England Conservatory to study composition, organ, and piano, and also took private lessons with the distinguished American composer George Whitefield Chadwick. Price then taught for some years back in Little Rock and in Atlanta. She married, had two daughters, and, shaken by lynchings in the Jim Crow South, moved in 1927 to Chicago. She divorced her abusive husband, continued compositional studies, and saw her career begin to blossom. Her compositions garnered attention as she published songs, piano pieces, and pedagogical works. She won prizes, most notably \$500 in the 1932 Wanamaker Foundation Award for her First Symphony, which brought the piece to the attention of Frederick Stock, music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He programmed the work as part of Chicago’s A Century of Progress



International Exposition in June 1933. The attention led to some other orchestral performances and further opportunities.

Price composed a wide range of works, including some popular and commercial ones that she released under a pseudonym. Her arrangements of African-American spirituals and her art songs were championed by celebrated singers, preeminently Marian Anderson. But she found getting performances of her large-form pieces, such as concertos and symphonies, more difficult. Most of them remained unpublished, which was why the 2009 discovery of many manuscripts in what had been her abandoned former summer house in St. Anne, Illinois, was such an important addition to her catalogue.

**A Closer Look** Price was trained as an organist and early in her career accompanied silent films on the instrument in movie halls. She composed a fair number of pieces for the “king of instruments,” including *Adoration* near the end of her life; it was published in 1951. The piece unfolds leisurely in a literal ABA form with coda, the middle section being somewhat slower. As with most of her compositions, the musical vocabulary is lushly Romantic and tonal. (In some of her works she also calls upon African-American traditions.) In the original organ version, a beautiful song-like melody is underpinned by sustained chords and long pedal points, melody and spare accompaniment that transfers idiomatically to a version for string orchestra we hear tonight in Jim Gray’s orchestration

—Christopher H. Gibbs

*Adoration was composed around 1951.*

*The Philadelphia Orchestra commissioned Jim Gray’s orchestration of the piece for use as an encore during its August 2022 Tour of European Festivals.*

*The score calls for strings alone.*

*Performance time is approximately four minutes.*

# The Music

## *Tzigane*

**Maurice Ravel**

**Born in Ciboure, March 7, 1875**

**Died in Paris, December 28, 1937**



Ravel was no violinist, but he loved “gypsy” music. One evening in 1922, at a musical soiree in London, he sat in fascination as the Hungarian-born violin virtuoso Jelly d’Arányi played for him one gypsy tune after another. This was doubtless the inspiration for his *Tzigane* (which is French for gypsy), the piece he tried to make into a sort of compendium not only of “romany” styles but of virtuosic violin techniques in general—including harmonics, pizzicatos, double stops, and all manner

of fireworks. Ravel was afraid he had written things in the violin part that could not be played (he kept writing to d’Arányi saying, “Let me know if such-and-such passage is unplayable”), but after she had dazzled a London audience in the April 1924 premiere of *Tzigane’s* original version (for violin and piano), the composer wrote, “I thought I had written something very difficult, but you have proved the contrary. If I had known, I would have made the music even more difficult!”

Ravel also made a version with accompaniment of a piano fitted with the *luthéal*, a device that produced a sound approximate to that of the cimbalom—in order to evoke more accurately the sound of a Hungarian gypsy band; Samuel Dushkin and Beveridge Webster played the first performance of this version in October 1924 at the Salle Gaveau. In July 1924 Ravel provided the piece with a richly colored and transparently textured orchestral accompaniment, which d’Arányi played in November with Gabriel Pierné and the Colonne Orchestra.

*Tzigane* begins with a dark-hued solo passage, in which the violin introduces a number of themes; one of these is taken up in the vigorous Moderato, followed by a succession of gypsy-like melodies. The second half of the piece is devoted to a tune made up of rapid 16th-notes, which drives the piece to a frenzied close. “Ravel’s idea was to represent a gypsy serenading,” wrote the violinist André Pollak, who played the work’s American premiere in New York in December 1924, “with all the extravagance of his fiery temperament and all the good and bad taste at his command—and some real or imagined beauty.”

—Paul J. Horsley

*Ravel composed Tzigane in 1924.*

*The first Philadelphia Orchestra performance of Tzigane was in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in May 1937, with violinist Joseph Knitzer as soloist and conductor José Iturbi. The work was last performed on subscription concerts by violinist David Kim in October 2008, led by Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos.*

*The work is scored for an orchestra of two flutes (II doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, trumpet, percussion (cymbals, orchestra bells, suspended cymbal, triangle), harp, celesta, strings, and solo violin.*

*Performance time is approximately 10 minutes.*

# The Music

## "Caprice viennois" (orchestrated by Clark McAlister)

**Fritz Kreisler**

**Born In Vienna, February 2, 1875**

**Died In New York, January 29, 1962**



The classical-music world would be a much less interesting place without figures like Fritz Kreisler. Composer, pedagogue, and one of the most influential violinists of the 20th century, he helped determine the way we think about how melodies and musical phrases "should" sound. It is not an exaggeration to say that without his approach to vibrato and luscious tone—which was widely imitated by a range of musicians, not just fiddlers—everything from solo violinists to

orchestras to opera singers might sound different today.

Kreisler began his professional touring career in 1888 with performances in Europe and the United States, but abandoned them temporarily to study medicine. It was not until after 1900 that, resuming his career, he made a sensation throughout the world, eventually winning the London Philharmonic Society's Gold Medal. He lived through both world wars and in 1943 became a naturalized citizen of the United States. In 1941 he was struck by a truck in New York City and nearly died of the injuries sustained; though he recovered, his playing and hearing were never the same.

Kreisler was also a composer of note, his works including several well-known violin pieces such as "Schön Rosmarin," "Liebesleid," "Liebesfreud," "Caprice viennois," and "Tambourin chinois." He also arranged a wide variety of music from all periods (Corelli, Albéniz, etc.), and wrote pieces that imitated the styles of Haydn, Stamitz, and others.

—Paul J. Horsley

*Kreisler composed "Caprice viennois" in 1910.*

*The Philadelphia Orchestra's first performance of the work was at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center in August 2000, with violinist James Ehnes and Charles Dutoit. It has only been performed twice since then: at the 2015 Academy of Music Anniversary Concert with Simone Porter and Yannick Nézet-Séguin and in July 2016 at the Bravo! Vail Music Festival with Chad Hoopes and Bramwell Tovey.*

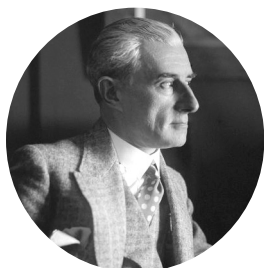
*The score calls for solo violin, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, timpani, harp, and strings.*

*Performance time is approximately four minutes.*

# The Music

## Selections from Piano Concerto in G major

Maurice Ravel



In a 1932 interview with an English newspaper, Maurice Ravel declared: "I frankly admit that I am an admirer of jazz, and I think it is bound to influence modern music. It is not just some passing phase, but has come to stay. It is thrilling and inspiring, and I spend many hours listening to it in night clubs and over the wireless." The composition prompting the observation was his recent Piano Concerto in G major, each movement of which, he commented, "has jazz in it."

**A Pair of Piano Concertos** Ravel's interest in jazz had grown during a successful 1928 tour of America, where he had chances to hear more of it in New Orleans and New York, during which time he met George Gershwin. Soon after returning to Paris he began writing the G-major Concerto, some ideas for which date back more than a decade. The project was interrupted, however, by an attractive commission from the Viennese pianist Paul Wittgenstein (older brother of the great philosopher), who had lost his right hand in the First World War and sought out leading composers, including Strauss, Prokofiev, Hindemith, and Britten, to write pieces for left hand alone. In this way Ravel found himself composing two concertos, both jazz influenced.

Ravel intended the G-major Concerto as a vehicle for his own performances as a pianist and announced plans to take it on an extended tour across Europe, to North and South American, and Asia. Ultimately health problems forced him to cede the solo spotlight to Marguerite Long, to whom the Concerto is dedicated. Ravel assumed instead the role of conductor at the very successful premiere in Paris in January 1932, part of a festival of his music. Against the recommendations of his doctors the two then took the piece on a four-month tour to 20 cities, and also recorded it.

**A Closer Look** Ravel felt the genre of the concerto "should be lighthearted and brilliant and not aim at profundity or at dramatic effects." He acknowledged finding his models in concertos by Mozart and Camille Saint-Saëns: "This is why the [G-major] Concerto, which I originally thought of entitling *Divertissement*, contains the three customary parts: the initial Allegro, a compact classical structure, is followed by an Adagio ... [and] to conclude, a lively movement in Rondo form."

Ravel said the second movement **Adagio** was inspired by the slow movement of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet. An extended solo for piano starts what is an unusually lyrical and heartfelt movement, especially so for a mid-20th-century concerto. The brief and rousing **Presto** finale has been a favorite ever since the premiere—Ravel and Long frequently had to repeat it at concerts—and projects infectious perpetual-motion energy.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

*Ravel composed his G-major Piano Concerto from 1929 to 1931.*

*The United States premiere of the Concerto was given simultaneously by The Philadelphia Orchestra and the Boston Symphony, in April 1932; Sylan Levin was the soloist and Leopold Stokowski conducted. The most recent subscription performances were in October 2018, with pianist Kirill Gerstein and Louis Langrée. Some of the other pianists who have performed the work here include Eugene List, Jean Casadesus, Leonard Bernstein (who conducted from the keyboard), Philippe Entremont, Peter Serkin, Louis Lortie, Martha Argerich, and Jean-Yves Thibaudet.*

*The Philadelphians recorded the G-major Concerto in 1964 with Entremont and Eugene Ormandy for CBS.*

*The score calls for solo piano, piccolo, flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, E-flat clarinet, two bassoons, two horns, trumpet, trombone, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, slapstick, snare drum, tam-tam, triangle, wood block), harp, and strings.*

*The Concerto runs approximately 23 minutes in performance.*

# The Music

## Finale, from Suite from *The Firebird* (1919 version)

Igor Stravinsky

Born in Lomonosov, Russia, June 17, 1882

Died in New York City, April 6, 1971



On May 19, 1909, the impresario Sergei Diaghilev presented the Parisian debut of his troupe, the astonishing Ballets Russes. This revelatory first night featured both the brilliant dancer Vaslav Nijinsky and a stunning new ballet entitled *La Pavillon d'Armide* with music by Nikolai Tcherepnin and lavish decor by Alexandre Benois. The discriminating aesthete and diarist Count Harry Kessler wrote effusively to the poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal, "All in all, this Russian ballet is

one of the most remarkable and significant artistic manifestations of our time." The music was not the only aspect of the Ballets Russes to which Kessler reacted, however: The colorful sets and costumes designed by Léon Bakst and the revolutionary choreography by Mikhail Fokine also enthralled him.

**A Third-Choice Composer** The success of that first season in Paris presented Diaghilev with a pressing problem: How was he to exceed this triumph for the 1910 season? One way was to commission a new ballet based on Russian folktales, *Zhar-ptitsa* (The Firebird). Diaghilev had his subject; his choreographer, Fokine; his set designer, Alexander Golovin; and his costume designer, Bakst. What he needed, urgently, was a composer.

Diaghilev's first choice was Tcherepnin, but he withdrew from the project early on. His second choice was Anatoli Liadov, a student of Rimsky-Korsakov who wrote enchanting tone poems on Russian subjects. Running out of time, Diaghilev convinced one of Rimsky-Korsakov's last pupils, the young Igor Stravinsky, to accept the commission. Stravinsky had a very short time to compose an extended and complex score. He began work in November 1909 and finished the following May. He worked closely with Fokine as he composed, although he did overrule the choreographer's tasteless demand to have a suite of Russian dances conclude the ballet.

After stormy rehearsals, *The Firebird* proved an immense success when it was premiered in Paris on June 25, 1910; it is not an exaggeration to say that it made Stravinsky famous overnight. While the sets, costumes, and choreography received praise, the music elicited an ecstatic response from critics, colleagues,

and audiences alike. Capitalizing on this newfound fame, Stravinsky derived three suites from *The Firebird*: a short one in 1911, a more extended one in 1919 that incorporated revisions to the orchestration, and a final version from 1945.

**A Closer Look** For the 1919 *Firebird Suite*, Stravinsky excerpted six sections of his ballet score: the Introduction that leads directly into *The Firebird* and its Dance, *The Princesses' Round Dance*, and the *Infernal Dance of King Kashchei* that leads directly into the *Berceuse*—a lullaby—and then without pause to the *Finale*. By so doing, he maintains the outline of the plot, which was drawn from a collection of folktales collected by Alexander Afanasyev. These tales feature both the *Firebird* and the sinister figure of *Kashchei the Deathless*.

The action of *The Firebird* is fantastical but straightforward. While out hunting, Tsarevich Ivan strays into the enchanted realm of *Kashchei*. He captures the *Firebird*, who begs for her freedom. Ivan lets her go and in return gives him one of her feathers through which he can summon her aid in times of danger. Ivan happens upon a group of princesses, who have been taken prisoner by *Kashchei*, and falls in love with the fairest of them. Confronted by *Kashchei* himself, Ivan remembers the feather and waves it to summon the *Firebird*. She makes *Kashchei's* minions dance an *Infernal Dance* and during the following *Berceuse*, he and his servants fall into a deep sleep. Ivan smashes the egg that holds *Kashchei's* immortality, thus destroying him. The *Finale*, which begins with a noble horn solo, reveals Ivan and his bride sitting in majesty on glittering thrones as the orchestra evokes the tintinnabulation of Russian church bells.

—Byron Adams

*Stravinsky composed The Firebird from 1909 to 1910.*

*Music from The Firebird was first played by The Philadelphia Orchestra in November 1917, when the 1911 Suite was led by Leopold Stokowski. The most recent subscription performances were in March 2023, when Kensho Watanabe conducted the 1919 Suite.*

*The Philadelphia Orchestra has recorded the Firebird Suite seven times: in 1924, 1927, and 1935 with Stokowski for RCA; in 1953 and 1967 with Eugene Ormandy for CBS; in 1973 with Ormandy for RCA; and in 1978 with Riccardo Muti for EMI.*

*The score for the 1919 Suite calls for two flutes (II doubling piccolo), two oboes (II doubling English horn), two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, tambourine, triangle, xylophone), harp, piano (doubling celesta), and strings.*

*The Finale runs approximately three minutes in performance.*



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Philadelphia, PA 19102

**Web Site:** For information about The Philadelphia Orchestra and its upcoming concerts or events, please visit [philorch.org](http://philorch.org).

**Individual Tickets:** Don't assume that your favorite concert is sold out. Subscriber turn-ins and other special promotions can make last-minute tickets available. Visit us online at [philorch.org](http://philorch.org) or call us at 215.893.1999 and ask for assistance.

**Subscriptions:** The Philadelphia Orchestra offers a variety of subscription options each season. These multi-concert packages feature the best available seats, ticket exchange privileges, discounts on individual tickets, and many other benefits. Learn more at [philorch.org](http://philorch.org).

**Ticket Turn-In:** Subscribers who cannot use their tickets are invited to donate them and receive a tax-deductible acknowledgement by calling 215.893.1999. Twenty-four-hour notice is appreciated, allowing other patrons the opportunity to purchase these tickets and guarantee tax-deductible credit.

**PreConcert Conversations:** PreConcert Conversations are held prior to most Philadelphia Orchestra subscription concerts, beginning one hour before the performance. Conversations are free to ticket-holders, feature discussions of the season's music and music-makers, and are supported in part by the Hirschberg–Goodfriend Fund in memory of Adolf Hirschberg, established by Juliet J. Goodfriend.

**Lost and Found:** Please call 215.670.2321.

**Late Seating:** Late seating breaks usually occur after the first piece on the program or at intermission in order to minimize disturbances to other audience members who have already begun listening to the music. If you arrive after the concert begins, you will be seated only when appropriate breaks in the program allow.

**Accessible Seating:** Accessible seating is available for every performance. Please call Patron Services at 215.893.1999 or visit [philorch.org](http://philorch.org) for more information.

**Assistive Listening:** With the deposit of a current ID, hearing enhancement devices are available at no cost from the House Management Office in Commonwealth Plaza. Hearing devices are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Large-Print Programs:** Large-print programs for every subscription concert are available in the House Management Office in Commonwealth Plaza. Please ask an usher for assistance.

**Fire Notice:** The exit indicated by a red light nearest your seat is the shortest route to the street. In the event of fire or other emergency, please do not run. Walk to that exit.

**No Smoking:** All public space on the Kimmel Cultural Campus is smoke-free.

**Cameras and Recorders:** The taking of photographs or the recording of Philadelphia Orchestra concerts is strictly prohibited, but photographs are allowed before and after concerts and during bows. By attending this Philadelphia Orchestra concert you consent to be photographed, filmed, and/or otherwise recorded for any purpose in connection with The Philadelphia Orchestra.

**Phones and Paging Devices:** All electronic devices—including cellular telephones, pagers, and wristwatch alarms—should be turned off while in the concert hall.