

2022–2023 | 123rd Season

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, October 27, at 7:30

Saturday, October 29, at 8:00

Sunday, October 30, at 2:00

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor

Beatrice Rana Piano

Ravel *Le Tombeau de Couperin*

I. Prélude

II. Forlane

III. Menuet

IV. Rigaudon

Price Symphony No. 3 in C minor

I. Andante—Allegro

II. Andante ma non troppo

III. Juba: Allegro

IV. Scherzo: Finale

Intermission

Wieck-Schumann Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 7

I. Allegro maestoso—

II. Romanze: Andante non troppo con grazia

III. Finale: Allegro non troppo

First Philadelphia Orchestra performances

Hai-Ye Ni, solo cello

Ravel *Bolero*

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 50 minutes.

The October 30 concert is sponsored by **Ameline Pappas**.

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 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 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 11th season as the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. 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 community centers, in classrooms and hospitals, and over the airwaves and online. In response to the cancellation of concerts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Orchestra launched the Digital Stage, providing access to high-quality online performances, keeping music alive at a time when it was needed most. It also inaugurated free offerings: HearTOGETHER, a podcast

on racial and social justice, and creative equity and inclusion, through the lens of the world of orchestral music, and Our City, Your Orchestra, a series of digital performances that connects the Orchestra with communities through music and dialog while celebrating the diversity and vibrancy of the Philadelphia region.

The Philadelphia Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as Play!Ns; side-by-sides; PopUP concerts; Our City, Your Orchestra Live; School Concerts; the School Partnership Program and School Ensemble Program; and All City Orchestra Fellowships.

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 11 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.

Music Director

George Etheredge



Yannick Nézet-Séguin is currently in his 11th season as music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Additionally, he became the third music director of New York's Metropolitan Opera in 2018. 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 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 talents of his generation. He has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000, and in 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 at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon (DG) in 2018. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with 11 releases on that label, including *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*, which won a GRAMMY Award for Best Orchestral Performance. 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 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; the 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, and Laval University.

To read Yannick's full bio, please visit philorch.org/conductor.

Soloist



Simon Fowler

Pianist **Beatrice Rana** made her Carnegie Hall debut in recital at Zankel Hall in March 2019 and her Philadelphia Orchestra subscription debut three months later. She performs at the world's most esteemed concert halls and festivals and collaborates with conductors of the highest level, including Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Jaap van Zweden, Antonio Pappano, Manfred Honeck, Klaus Mäkelä, Gianandrea Noseda, Fabio Luisi, Riccardo Chailly, Paavo Järvi, Yuri

Temirkanov, Vladimir Jurowski, Lahav Shani, Trevor Pinnock, Louis Langrée, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, Sakari Oramo, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Susanna Mälkki, Kent Nagano, and Zubin Mehta.

In addition to appearances with The Philadelphia Orchestra, highlights of Ms. Rana's current performance schedule include a European tour with the Vienna Symphony and Mr. van Zweden; debuts with the Munich and Rotterdam philharmonics and the Chicago and San Francisco symphonies; and returns to the Orchestre de Paris, the New York Philharmonic, the National Symphony, the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, and the London Philharmonic. She also has a residency at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome and returns for recitals in venues including the Philharmonie de Paris, the Laeiszhalle in Hamburg, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Alte Oper Frankfurt, the Konzerthaus Vienna, and Carnegie Hall.

Ms. Rana records exclusively for Warner Classics. In 2015 her first album, featuring Prokofiev's Second Piano Concerto and Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto with Mr. Pappano and the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, received international acclaim, including *Gramophone* magazine's Editor's Choice and *BBC Music Magazine's* Newcomer of the Year Award. Her 2017 recording of Bach's "Goldberg" Variations was awarded Young Artist of the Year at the Gramophone Awards and Discovery of the Year at the Edison Awards. Recent releases include solo albums featuring works by Stravinsky, Ravel, and Chopin. In 2017 Ms. Rana started her own chamber music festival in her native town of Lecce, Italy; the festival has become one of Italy's major summer events. In 2020 she became artistic director of the Orchestra Filarmonica di Benevento. Born in 1993 to a family of musicians, she made her debut as an orchestra soloist at age nine, performing Bach's Concerto in F minor. She began her musical studies at age four and received her piano degree under the guidance of Benedetto Lupo at the Nino Rota Conservatory of Music in Monopoli, where she also studied composition. In 2011 she won First Prize and all special prizes at the Montreal International Musical Competition, and in 2013 she won the Second Prize and the Audience Award at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1835
Wieck-Schumann
Piano
Concerto

Music
Donizetti
Lucia di Lammermoor
Literature
Browning
Paracelsus
Art
Constable
The Valley Farm
History
The Great Fire of New York

1914
Ravel
Le Tombeau de Couperin

Music
Stravinsky
Le Rossignol
Literature
Joyce
Dubliners
Art
Braque
Music
History
Panama Canal opened

1938
Price
Symphony
No. 3

Music
Bartók
Violin Concerto No. 2
Literature
Wilder
Our Town
Art
Chagall
White Crucifixion
History
Kristallnacht

Music by Maurice Ravel frames the program today, surrounding works by two increasingly recognized women composers.

Ravel originally wrote *Le Tombeau de Couperin* for piano and later orchestrated four of its six movements. The intimate work is an homage—the title literally means tomb—to the great 18th-century French keyboard composer François Couperin. Ravel wrote it during the First World War and in each of the movements he honors as well friends who died in the horrific conflict. Concluding the concert is his evocative *Bolero*, a glorious crescendo for orchestra. Ravel was born to a Basque mother in the French Pyrenees, not far from the Spanish border, and this is one of many pieces that testify to his enduring fascination with Spain.

The Philadelphia Orchestra continues its pathbreaking exploration of the music of Florence Price. When the Chicago Symphony Orchestra premiered her First Symphony in 1933 it was the first such work written by a Black woman to be performed by a leading American orchestra. Her Second Symphony is lost and the Third, heard on this concert, premiered in November 1940. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt reported enthusiastically about the piece in her syndicated newspaper column.

The prodigious Clara Wieck—only later to marry Robert Schumann—began composing her Piano Concerto in A minor at age 14 and played its premiere two years later in Leipzig under the baton of Felix Mendelssohn. The three-part work has an improvisatory opening movement, a lyrical second scored for piano alone until joined by a solo cello, and a rousing finale in the manner of a grand polonaise.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is the only orchestra in the world with three weekly broadcasts on SiriusXM's *Symphony Hall*, Channel 76, on Mondays at 7 PM, Thursdays at 12 AM, and Saturdays at 4 PM.

ThePhiladelphiaOrchestra

The Music

Le Tombeau de Couperin

Maurice Ravel

Born in Ciboure, Lower Pyrenees, March 7, 1875

Died in Paris, December 28, 1937



Like other composers of his day, Maurice Ravel felt all too keenly the challenge to his national identity that World War I presented. Dissatisfied with “mere” military service, he sought musical means to plant his personal and artistic roots firmly into French soil. By 1914 he had already established a notable reputation as a composer, with a brilliant String Quartet, orchestral works (the *Rapsodie espagnole*, *Mother Goose*, *Daphnis and Chloé*), and revolutionary piano pieces (*Jeux d’eau*,

Miroirs, *Gaspard de la nuit*). At the beginning of the war he volunteered for service, risking his already fragile health to become a driver for the transport corps. But a composer he remained; despite his contribution to the battlefield he still sought a means of asserting his “Frenchness” musically. *Le Tombeau de Couperin* became this means, for several reasons.

An Homage Not Only to Couperin The concept of the *tombeau* or “homage-piece” dates back many centuries. French composers of the 17th century commonly wrote sets of chamber or keyboard pieces—which they called *tombeaux* (literally “tombs”) or occasionally *apothéoses*—to pay musical tribute to a dead colleague. In *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, six piano pieces composed from 1914 to 1917, Ravel indulged not only his increasing Neo-Classical tendencies but also his nationalistic reverence of the supreme artistry of one of France’s most prominent sons. In the Parnassus of musical deities of the Baroque, François Couperin *le grand* (the great)—as he was called to distinguish him from the other members of his musically gifted family—joins the elite of Bach, Handel, Rameau, Vivaldi, and Alessandro Scarlatti. He is perhaps the least well appreciated of all these luminaries, and many concert-goers know his name solely through Ravel’s title.

Couperin himself (1668–1733) wrote sets of homage-pieces, too, including *apothéoses* for two early Baroque masters, Jean-Baptiste Lully and Arcangelo Corelli. Ravel’s set of pieces thus paid tribute not only to a French master but also to a distinctly French tradition of musical tribute. At the same time the work took on another dimension related specifically to the war: Each of the six piano movements is dedicated to a friend or colleague lost on the battlefield. (In the composer’s original piano manuscript, he has drawn a small picture of a funeral

urn.) Thus the *tombeau* was not just for Couperin: Ravel paid tribute to a great Frenchman and simultaneously expressed his grief over fallen comrades.

The pianist Marguerite Long, who later was to play the premiere of the composer's G-major Piano Concerto, presented the first performances of the piano version of the *Tombeau* in Paris on April 11, 1919. As he often did with his keyboard works, Ravel created orchestrations of four of the six, which were performed in Paris in February 1920 and made into a very popular ballet by the Swedish Ballet the same year.

A Closer Look The first piece of the orchestral suite, a **Prélude** featuring effervescent and ornate wind solos, alludes clearly to the harpsichord works of Rameau and Couperin. The **Forlane** is derived from a typically quirky 6/8 dance of northern Italian origin. The **Menuet** draws upon a dance type familiar to most through the middle movements of Classical-period symphonies; it features a piquantly spiced central Trio featuring instrumental color that is distinctly 20th century. The suite's final dance is the vigorous **Rigaudon**, juxtaposed with a more pastoral section of vivid contrast.

—Paul J. Horsley

Le Tombeau de Couperin was composed from 1914 to 1917 and was orchestrated in 1919.

Leopold Stokowski conducted the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of Ravel's Tombeau suite in February 1921, only a year after its world premiere. The most recent appearance on a subscription performance was in November 2016, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin on the podium. The piece also appeared on the Digital Stage in July 2021.

The Orchestra recorded the work in 1958 with Eugene Ormandy for CBS.

Ravel scored the work for two flutes (II doubling piccolo), two oboes (II doubling English horn), two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, trumpet, harp, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 18 minutes.

The Music

Symphony No. 3

Florence Price

Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, April 9, 1887

Died in Chicago, June 3, 1953



One might expect the historic premiere of Florence Price's First Symphony by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1933 to have won her a modicum of access to that orchestra and others for her later compositions—but that was not the case. Her First Symphony remained unpublished until 2008, her Second Symphony is missing, and her Fourth Symphony (1945) went unperformed in her lifetime and unpublished until 2020. How could the work of such a

brilliant and significant symphonist remain so obscure for so long?

“Two Handicaps—Those of Sex and Race” Florence Price's letters answer that question plainly. She repeatedly tried to persuade conductor Serge Koussevitzky (1874–1951) to program her music—in vain. One of her letters to him, dated July 5, 1943, describes the difficulties she faced outright:

To begin with I have two handicaps—those of sex and race. I am a woman; and I have some Negro blood in my veins.

Knowing the worst, then, would you be good enough to hold in check the possible inclination to regard a woman's composition as long on emotionalism but short on virility and thought content;—until you shall have examined some of my work?. ... As to the handicap of race, ... I should like to be judged on merit alone—the great trouble having been to get conductors, who know nothing of my work ... to even consent to examine a score.

Fortunately, Price's Third Symphony did not go entirely unheard in her lifetime: It was performed by Valter Poole and the Michigan WPA Symphony Orchestra on November 6 and 8, 1940. Those performances were a success, and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt reported enthusiastically on the work in her syndicated newspaper column, *My Day*. However, that was not enough to rescue the piece from the oblivion to which the “handicaps” of its composer's race and sex doomed it. It was not heard again in her lifetime and remained unperformed until 2001 and unpublished until 2008. Only now is it beginning to be heard in concert halls with any regularity.

A New Phase in Her Compositional Development Nevertheless, Price's Third Symphony towers over its surviving predecessor in originality and maturity of conception—and the composer's correspondence shows that she understood its significance fully. In a 1940 letter she stated that it was "Negroid in character and expression" but hastened to clarify that it did not merely replicate the African-American tradition as it was represented in her First Symphony. The later work, she said, was "a cross section of present-day Negro life and thought with its heritage of that which is past, *paralleled or influenced by concepts of the present day*" (emphasis added)—a reference to the Third Symphony's cultivation of dissonant passages, jarring percussion, and other Modernist expressive devices that were absent from the First Symphony but central to 20th-century music in general, and to much of Price's later music.

These descriptions do not just reveal Price's ideas about the music of this ambitious work. Even more, they reveal that she understood that it signaled a new stage in her development as a composer and paved the way for some of the most important and startlingly original compositions of her entire career.

A Closer Look The Third Symphony is cast in four movements, all pitting Black and Modernist elements against each other. The first movement foregrounds 20th-century styles from the outset, beginning with an unsettled slow introduction (**Andante**) and moving from there to a turbulent and dissonant main theme (**Allegro**); only with the lush and expansive second theme, entrusted first to the solo trombone, do the flavors of Black vernacular styles come to the foreground. Those flavors launch the tranquil **Andante ma non troppo** second movement, but the serene beauty of its opening section is repeatedly interrupted by unsettled whole-tone material that reminds us that this is, after all, music of the 20th century, not the 19th.

The third movement is an African-American Juba dance (**Allegro**), but it also includes a blues-influenced theme that introduces a new facet of Black vernacular styles into the Symphony. And the **Scherzo: Finale** is a kaleidoscopic exploration of orchestral virtuosity and swirling colors. Although Black stylistic influences make themselves felt here, on the whole the turbulence and harmonic adventure of mid-20th-century classical music predominate. Time and again the restlessness promises to subside, and time and again the barely established calm is broken—until finally Price abandons any attempt to resolve the conflict between the two. The Symphony's close is a tour de force of swirling, chaotic abandon punctuated by dissonance and chromaticism, and its final bars are a fury of roaring percussion and chordal interjections that finally manage to reclaim the work from turbulence and discord—the conflicting and discordant forces of the musical world, and the Black condition, given eloquent voice in this Symphony.

—John Michael Cooper

Price's Third Symphony was composed from 1938 to 1939.

The Orchestra's first performance of the complete work was on the Digital Stage in December 2021, led by Yannick Nézet-Séguin. The fourth movement alone had been performed on the 2011 Martin Luther King, Jr., Tribute Concert, conducted by Thomas Wilkins.

The Philadelphians recorded the Symphony for Deutsche Grammophon in 2021, with Yannick, which won a GRAMMY Award.

The score calls for piccolo, three flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, castanets, crash cymbals, cymbal, gong, orchestra bells, sandpaper, slapstick, snare drum, tambourine, triangle, wood block, xylophone), harp, celesta, and strings.

The Symphony runs approximately 30 minutes in performance.

The Music

Piano Concerto

Clara Wieck-Schumann

Born in Leipzig, September 13, 1819

Died in Frankfurt, May 20, 1896



The life and career of Clara Wieck-Schumann fascinate for several reasons: She represents one of the richest cases for understanding both the life of a prodigy guided by an ambitious parent (as with Mozart, her father was a noted musician) and the limited and limiting opportunities available to women musicians in 19th-century Europe. She was, moreover, the central figure in the lives of two of Romanticism's leading composers—for more than 20 years the object of

Robert Schumann's deep love and devotion, and then for a much longer period an inspiration to Johannes Brahms.

From Prodigy to Partner Clara's father, Friedrich Wieck, was a respected piano teacher who wrote a how-to book on musicianship. He had many talented students—that is what first brought the 18-year-old Robert Schumann to his door—but most prized was his own daughter. Her gifts were recognized early and widely; while still a teenager she was compared with Franz Liszt and Sigismund Thalberg, her chief, and older, virtuoso competitors. Robert initially played the role of unofficial older brother (he was nine years her senior) when he came to Leipzig to study with Wieck and lived with the family. He had other things—reading, music, drinking, and more age-appropriate romances—on his mind.

Robert's infatuation with Clara, and hers with him, took some time to blossom, but eventually caused Wieck enough concern to throw him out of the house. Thus began secret meetings and unpleasant legal proceedings; the young lovers had to wait until the day before Clara's 21st birthday to wed. Wieck eventually reconciled with his two greatest students and watched as they began to have their own children.

Clara Wieck gave up many things when she wed Robert. For most of their married life, she was the more famous figure; he was better known as a critic—a brilliant one—than as a composer. Their partnership was extraordinary and is extraordinarily documented. Not only did they maintain an extensive correspondence and keep personal journals, but they also entered into various joint ventures, including compositions and a shared "marriage diary" in which to record their feelings. While Clara continued to concertize, including long

and arduous tours, she was also almost always pregnant; the couple had eight children between 1841 and 1854.

The Budding Composer All of Clara's compositions date from the early part of her long and distinguished career, when she was the celebrated Clara Wieck, not yet Clara Schumann. Her first pieces tended toward being the flashy fare that was expected from virtuoso performers. She began writing her ambitious Piano Concerto, Op. 7, in late 1832 or early 1833 at age 14 and premiered the piece with Felix Mendelssohn conducting the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra in November 1835. It is her only surviving orchestral composition. The few works she wrote after her marriage tended to be occasional pieces, usually birthday and Christmas gifts, although in 1846 she produced her magnificent Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17. Following Robert's death, when she was 37, she only wrote one minor piece, a march. Her intense musical activities continued as she went on performing, teaching, tending to her husband's legacy, and being Brahms's principal adviser.

Clara's original version of the Concerto we hear today was a lively single-movement work, which is now the finale, such as Carl Maria von Weber and Ludwig Spohr (to whom she dedicated the piece) had successfully written. In November 1833 she wrote in her diary: "I have finished my concerto on the 22nd and Schumann now wants to orchestrate it so that I can play it at my concert." Only this movement survives in manuscript, at the start of which Robert (himself at this point quite inexperienced as an orchestrator) wrote "Concertsatz by Clara, my instrumentation." Clara went on to perform this several times before the premiere of the full three-movement Concerto with Mendelssohn. It is unclear who orchestrated the first movement (the orchestra does not play in the second), but the instrumentation there is generally quite modest, usually scored just for strings, or entirely absent. Clara performed the Concerto across Europe many times in the years to follow, fulfilling her hope that it would please audiences and be in demand.

A Closer Look The orchestra opens the Concerto with a bold and regal statement (**Allegro maestoso**) before the piano enters with thundering ascending scales played in octaves. The music soon settles down for a piano solo of an improvisatory Chopinesque lyricism. (Chopin much admired Clara's playing and she was a strong advocate for his music.) The rising theme that opens the movement recurs in the following ones, lending the work a larger unity, and served as a model for Robert's later Piano Concerto. The second movement **Romanze: Andante non troppo, con grazia** follows without pause and seems like a Mendelssohnian song without words. It is initially for piano alone until a solo cello joins for an extended duet. Robert and Brahms would later feature the solo cello in slow movements of their concertos.

Soft murmurings from the timpani provide a link to the sparkling **Finale: Allegro non troppo**, which begins with a trumpet fanfare. The movement is in triple meter

and in the manner of a grand polonaise, perhaps another nod to Chopin. (Clara's Op. 1 was a set of four polonaises in 1830.) The orchestra is more prominent in this movement but does not overshadow the piano. A fast coda in duple meter brings the Concerto to a rousing conclusion.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Clara Schumann composed her Piano Concerto from 1833 to 1835.

These are the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work.

The Concerto is scored for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, and trumpets; trombone; timpani; strings; and solo piano.

Performance time is approximately 20 minutes.

The Music

Bolero

Maurice Ravel



Deeply moved by works of Debussy from the 1890s, Maurice Ravel began to find his own answers to the questions about harmony, color, and instrumental texture that the late 19th century had left unresolved. As a new century dawned, so did hopes of a "new music," and this impulse found expression in the music of composers as diverse as Elgar and Schoenberg, Puccini and Debussy. At the beginning of the decade, Ravel's music began to appear in print for the first time:

The publisher Demets brought out elegiac pieces such as the *Pavane pour une infante défunte* (Pavane for a Dead Princess) and revolutionary works such as *Jeux d'eau* (Water Games). Buoyed by these successes, in 1904 the composer wrote *Miroirs* (Mirrors), a remarkable set of "impressionistic" piano pieces that some would later compare to the paintings of Monet or Van Gogh. After this he was destined to join Debussy in writing a new chapter in the history of French music.

A Conservatory Drop Out Three times Ravel had entered the competition for the Prix de Rome—1901, 1902, and 1903—and three times he had failed, achieving in his last year only Third Prize. Finally he dropped out of the Paris Conservatory altogether, and instead became involved in "Les Apaches," an informal, vaguely disreputable collection of Parisian aesthetes who met to discuss art, literature, painting, music, history, and any other topic that might arise. It was at meetings of Les Apaches that Ravel tried out some of his more daring new works, often for audiences that included such musicians as Manuel de Falla, M.D. Calvocoressi, and Florent Schmitt. Their unconventional tastes gave Ravel just the creative encouragement he needed to continue on the path that he had set for himself.

Ironically, despite early rejections by the musical establishment of his native country, as he matured Ravel found his iconoclastic tendencies becoming tempered by a growing reverence for the past—and especially the music of French masters. Eventually, in the 1930s, he would assimilate jazz as well, and its rhythms and harmonies would imbue his music with unique "popular" inflections that would give courage to later generations of composers compelled to lace their scores with elements of mass culture.

A Closer Look Composed in 1928 for Ida Rubinstein's Parisian dance troupe, *Bolero* is one of the most subversive orchestral scores of the 20th century. Ravel said later that he wanted to write a piece that had "no form, properly

speaking, and no modulation, or almost none—just rhythm and orchestra." The ballet caused a stir at its premiere that November, and many decades later the music continues to draw a crowd. Each repetition of the bolero tune presents a new and intriguing combination of instruments, both in the melody and in the accompaniment. The initial strophes, for instance, explore the soloistic qualities of various wind instruments; the sixth combines muted trumpet and flute to produce a tone that sounds like neither. By the end, we are so entrenched in the key of C that the effect of the brief, shocking swerve into E major in the 18th and final strain is way out of proportion to its actual harmonic significance.

In 1979 the piece was used in Blake Edwards's film *10*, as the accompaniment to Dudley Moore's bumbling lovemaking to bombshell Bo Derek—and for this reason it remains indelibly fixed in the mind, for many listeners, as a sexual metaphor. While such a blatant connection might indeed have been in the back of Ravel's mind, it should not limit us to thinking about the piece only in these terms. *Bolero* is, in the composer's straightforward and no-nonsense description, "a piece lasting 17 minutes and consisting wholly of orchestral effects without music—one long and very gradual crescendo."

—Paul J. Horsley

Bolero was composed in 1928.

The Orchestra's "unofficial" premiere of Bolero is of special interest. On December 20, 1929, after a concert of music by Wagner, Leopold Stokowski turned to the audience in the Academy of Music and said: "We are receiving much interesting modern music from the publishers. Perhaps you would like to hear some. It may be that you will not like this piece. It is very modern." And with that Stokowski and The Philadelphia Orchestra performed the local premiere of Bolero. It has been performed many times by the Philadelphians since, most recently on subscription concerts in January 2017; Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducted.

The Philadelphia Orchestra has recorded the work five times: in 1953, 1960, and 1968 for CBS with Eugene Ormandy; in 1973 for RCA with Ormandy; and in 1982 for EMI with Riccardo Muti.

The score calls for piccolo, two flutes (II doubling piccolo), two oboes (II doubling oboe d'amore), English horn, two clarinets (II doubling E-flat clarinet), bass clarinet (doubling soprano saxophone), tenor saxophone, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, piccolo trumpet, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drums, tam-tam), harp, celesta, and strings.

Bolero runs approximately 17 minutes in performance.

Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Chromatic: Relating to tones foreign to a given key (scale) or chord

Coda: A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

Contrapuntal: See counterpoint

Counterpoint: The combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines

Diatonic: Melody or harmony drawn primarily from the tones of the major or minor scale

Dissonance: A combination of two or more tones requiring resolution

Forlana: A lively dance from Northern Italy in triple meter with dotted rhythm

Harmonic: Pertaining to chords and to the theory and practice of harmony

Harmony: The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

Juba dance: An African-American style of dance that involves stomping as well as slapping and patting the arms, legs, chest, and cheeks

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Minuet: A dance in triple time commonly used up to the beginning of the 19th century as the lightest movement of a symphony

Modernism: A consequence of the fundamental conviction among successive generations of composers since 1900 that the means of musical expression in the 20th century must be adequate to the unique and radical character of the age

Neo-Classicism: A movement of style in the works of certain 20th-century composers who revived the balanced forms and clearly perceptible thematic processes of earlier styles to replace what were, to them, the increasingly exaggerated gestures and formlessness of late Romanticism

Octave: The interval between any two notes that are seven diatonic (non-chromatic) scale degrees apart

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output

Polonaise: A Polish national dance in moderate triple meter

Rigaudon: A French folkdance, court dance, and instrumental form popular in France and England in the 17th and 18th centuries; duple-meter in two or more strains characterized by four-bar phrases, usually with an upbeat

Romanza: A title for short instrumental pieces of sentimental or romantic nature, and without special form

Scale: The series of tones which form (a) any major or minor key or (b) the chromatic scale of successive semi-tonic steps

Scherzo: Literally "a joke." Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid tempo, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts.

Tonic: The keynote of a scale

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Allegro: Bright, fast

Andante: Walking speed

Con grazia: With grace, prettily

Maestoso: Majestic

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Ma non troppo: But not too much

DYNAMIC MARKS

Crescendo: Increasing volume

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