

2022–2023 | 123rd Season

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, March 30, at 7:30

Saturday, April 1, at 8:00

Sunday, April 2, at 2:00

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor

Charlotte Blake Alston Speaker

Ying Fang Soprano

The Crossing

Donald Nally Artistic Director

J.L. Adams *Vespers of the Blessed Earth*

I. A Brief Descent into Deep Time

II. A Weeping of Doves

III. Night Shining Clouds

IV. Litanies of the Sixth Extinction

V. Aria of the Ghost Bird

World premiere—Philadelphia Orchestra commission

Intermission

Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*

First Part: The Adoration of the Earth

Introduction—

The Auguries of Spring—Dances of the Young Girls—

Ritual of Abduction—

Spring Rounds—

Ritual of Rival Tribes—

Procession of the Sage—

The Sage—

Dance of the Earth

Second Part: The Sacrifice

Introduction—

Mystic Circles of the Young Girls—

Glorification of the Chosen One—

Evocation of the Ancestors—

Ritual Action of the Ancestors—

Sacrificial Dance (The Chosen One)

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 55 minutes.

Lead support for these concerts is given by **Dr. and Mrs. Joseph B. Townsend.**

Additional support is given by **Joyce Creamer, MaryAnn Edwards, Susan Mucciarone and David Moore, Robert and Gene Pratter, Carol Westfall, and Steve and Mary Beth Young.**

The April 2 concert is also sponsored by **Juliet J. Goodfriend and Marc R. Moreau.**

Supertitles by Michael Chadwick

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 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 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!N's; 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 12 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 and Artistic Director

George Etheredge



Yannick Nézet-Séguin is currently in his 11th season as music and artistic 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 12 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; 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, and Laval University.

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

Speaker



Charlotte Blake Alston is an internationally acclaimed storyteller, narrator, and librettist and is The Philadelphia Orchestra's Imasogie Storyteller, Narrator, and Host. She has appeared as host and narrator on the Orchestra's School and Family concerts since 1991 and has been the host of Sound All Around, the Orchestra's preschool concert series, since 1994. She has also appeared on each of the Orchestra's Martin Luther King, Jr., Tribute Concerts since 2003.

Committed to keeping alive African and African-American oral traditions, Ms. Alston has performed on national and regional stages including the Smithsonian Institution, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. She has been a featured artist at the National Storytelling Festival; the National Festival of Black Storytelling; and festivals in Ireland, Switzerland, South Africa, and Brazil. She has performed at Presidential inaugural festivities in Washington, D.C., and the Pennsylvania Gubernatorial Children's Inaugural Celebrations in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She was also one of two storytellers selected to present at the opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. She has been guest narrator for several orchestras including the Cleveland Orchestra, the Boston Symphony, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. During a 20-year association with Carnegie Hall, she was the featured preconcert artist, host, and narrator on the Family, School, and Global Encounters concert series and represented the Hall in Miyazaki, Japan. She has also performed as a touring artist for Lincoln Center Institute.

Ms. Alston has produced several commissioned works for orchestras and opera companies including original narrative texts for Saint-Saëns's *Carnival of the Animals* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade*. Her honors include two honorary Ph.Ds, a Pew Fellowship in the Arts, and the Circle of Excellence Award from the National Storytelling Association. She is the recipient of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Artist of the Year Award and the Zora Neale Hurston Award, the highest award bestowed by the National Association of Black Storytellers.

Soloist

Veikko Kahkonen



Chinese soprano **Ying Fang** has been praised by the *New York Times* as “indispensable at the Met in Mozart.” In the 2022–23 season she returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Ilia in Mozart’s *Idomeneo* conducted by Manfred Honeck and as Zerlina in a new production of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* conducted by Nathalie Stutzmann. She also returns to the Salzburg Festival as Nannetta in a new production of Verdi’s *Falstaff* opposite bass-baritone Gerald Finley and makes her

house debut at the Vienna State Opera as Susanna in Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* conducted by Philippe Jordan; she reprises the role with the Handel and Haydn Society under the baton of Raphaël Pichon. On the concert stage, she returns to the San Francisco Symphony for Mahler’s Symphony No. 4 conducted by Robin Ticciati, debuts with the Atlanta Symphony in Brahms’s *A German Requiem* led by Donald Runnicles, and performs with the Pittsburgh Symphony in Mozart’s Mass in C minor and Handel’s *Messiah* led by Mr. Honeck. She also performs a series of recitals with pianist Ken Noda at New York’s Park Avenue Armory, Cal Performances, and the Dallas Opera.

In the 2021–22 season Ms. Fang made her house debut at the Paris Opera as Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* in a new production conducted by Gustavo Dudamel and subsequently reprised the role both in a return to the Met, conducted by James Gaffigan, and in her debut at the Matsumoto Festival in Japan. She also returned to Lyric Opera of Chicago as Pamina in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* and to the Dutch National Opera for her role debut as Ännchen in Weber’s *Der Freischütz* in a new production by Kirill Serebrennikov. On the concert stage, she joined the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus under the direction of Yannick Nézet-Séguin for a special season-opening performance of Mahler’s Symphony No. 2.

A native of Ningbo, China, Ms. Fang is the recipient of the Martin E. Segal Award, the Hildegard Behrens Foundation Award, the Rose Bampton Award of the Sullivan Foundation, the Opera Index Award, and the First Prize Award of the Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition. In 2009 she became one of the youngest singers to win one of China’s most prestigious awards—the China Golden Bell Award for Music. She holds a master’s degree and an artist diploma in opera study from the Juilliard School and a bachelor’s degree from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. She was a member of the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. She made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2016.

Chorus

Christian Stewart



The Crossing, which is making its Philadelphia Orchestra debut, is a GRAMMY-winning professional chamber choir dedicated to new music and committed to working with creative teams to make and record new, substantial works for choir. Many of its nearly 110 commissioned premieres address social, environmental, and political issues. The Crossing collaborates with some of the world's most accomplished ensembles and artists, including the New York and Los Angeles

philharmonics, the American Composers Orchestra, Network for New Music, Lyric Fest, Piffaro, Annenberg Center Live, Beth Morrison Projects, Allora & Calzadilla, Bang on a Can, Klockriketeatern, and the International Contemporary Ensemble. The choir collaborates with some of the world's most prestigious venues and presenters and holds an annual residency at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center in Big Sky, Montana, where it is working on an extensive, multi-year project with composer Michael Gordon and filmmaker Bill Morrison.

The Crossing has recently expanded its choral presentation to film, working with Four/Ten Media, in-house sound designer Paul Vazquez of Digital Mission Audio Services, visual artists Brett Snodgrass and Steven Bradshaw, and composers David Lang and Michael Gordon on live and animated versions of new and existing works. Mr. Lang's "protect yourself from infection" and *in nature* were specifically designed to be performed within the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Crossing, with its commitment to recording its commissions, has issued 21 releases, receiving three GRAMMY awards for Best Choral Performance (2018, 2019, 2023) and eight GRAMMY nominations. Other recognitions include the American Composers Forum's 2017 Champion of New Music, the 2015 Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence, three ASCAP awards for Adventurous Programming, and the Dale Warland Singers Commission Award from Chorus America.

The Crossing is under the direction of Donald Nally, who has also held distinguished tenures as chorus master for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Welsh National Opera, Opera Philadelphia, and the Chicago Bach Project, and for many seasons at the Spoleto Festival in Italy. He has been visiting resident artist at the Park Avenue Armory, and music director of Mr. Lang's 1,000-voice Crowd Out at Millennium Park in Chicago and 1,000-voice Mile Long Opera on the High Line in Manhattan. In spring 2023 he concludes a decade as the John W. Beattie Chair in Music and director of choral organizations at Northwestern University. Visit www.crossingchoir.org for more information.

The Crossing

Katy Avery
Nathaniel Barnett
Jessica Beebe
Steven Berlanga
Karen Blanchard
Steven Bradshaw
Aryssa Burrs
Micah Dinger
Ryan Fleming
Joanna Gates
Dimitri German

Steven Hyder
Lauren Kelly
Michele Kennedy
Anika Kildegaard
Heidi Kurtz
Kim Leeds
Elijah McCormack
Frank Mitchell
Maren Montalbano
Rebecca Myers
Jack Reeder

James Reese
Daniel Schwartz
Thann Scoggin
Rebecca Siler
Tiana Sorenson
Daniel Spratlan
Elisa Sutherland
Daniel Taylor
Jason Weisinger
Jackson Williams

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1913

Stravinsky

The Rite of Spring

Music

Elgar
Falstaff

Literature

Mann
Death in Venice

Art

Sargent
Portrait of Henry James

History

Balkan War

This concert opens with the world premiere of John Luther Adams's *Vespers of the Blessed Earth*, a Philadelphia Orchestra commission. The Pulitzer Prize-winning American composer has long pursued environmental issues and projects. At the head of this new score, he quotes the 20th-century Spanish poet Pedro Salinas: "Earth, nothing more. Earth, nothing less. And let that be enough for you." Over the course of its five movements, Adams calls upon a variety of texts, on this concert sung by the soprano Ying Fang and the GRAMMY-winning Philadelphia choir the Crossing.

The legendary 1913 premiere in Paris by the Ballets Russes of Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* proved a landmark event in the history of Western music. Historians now generally agree that the audience was more scandalized by the ballet's choreography than by the innovative music; within a year *The Rite of Spring* had emerged as an enormously successful concert piece. It took nearly a decade, until 1922, for the work to make it across the Atlantic. Leopold Stokowski conducted the American premiere with The Philadelphia Orchestra in March 1922.

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.

The Music

Vespers of the Blessed Earth

John Luther Adams

Born in Meridian, Mississippi, January 23, 1953

Now living in New Mexico



Pulitzer Prize–winning composer John Luther Adams was born in Mississippi but spent much of his adult life in Alaska, where the pristine grandeur of the natural environment exerted a deep influence on his music. After completing composition studies with James Tenney in 1973 at the California Institute of the Arts, Adams became involved in the conservation movement in Alaska, eventually serving for a term as executive director of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center,

while continuing to compose and teach. “My music has always been profoundly influenced by the natural world and a strong sense of place,” he notes. “I hope to explore the territory of sonic geography—that region between place and culture, between environment and imagination.”

The Earth as Inspiration It was Adams’s haunting orchestral poem *Become Ocean* (2013) that won him the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Music, as well as a GRAMMY Award in 2015 for “Best Contemporary Classical Composition.” That same year, he was named *Musical America’s* “Composer of the Year.” As he adds to an expansive oeuvre of landscape-informed compositions, Adams hopes his music will alert audiences to critical issues of climate change and environmental preservation, leading Alex Ross of the *New Yorker* to proclaim him “one of the most original musical thinkers of the new century.”

Adams’s compositions frequently allude to root environmental elements of earth, water, and air in their titles and performance conceptions. As the composer himself observes, “My work calls me to live as close as I can to the Earth, which is the ultimate source for everything I do.” The Earth is, indeed, the foundational and ultimate inspiration for Adams’s latest composition, *Vespers of the Blessed Earth*, which he considers one of the most ambitious works of his creative life. He includes potent words from the 20th-century Spanish poet Pedro Salinas on the frontispiece of the printed score: “Earth, nothing more. Earth, nothing less. And let that be enough for you.”

In this work, the distant echoes of Claudio Monteverdi’s *Vespers of 1610* offer a kind of inspirational model, but mostly in the sense that Monteverdi’s piece is also a collection of prayers—night prayers offered for the Blessed Virgin Mary. Adams’s

Vespers are prayers for the Earth itself, not necessarily verbal or vocal, but alluding to sacred words, symbols, and practices, sometimes framed in the form of purely instrumental pleas from the heart. As the composer has declared of these *Vespers*, "I wanted to give full voice to the grief that so many of us feel today, to see a measure of consolation and solace, and some hope of renewal in the enduring beauty of the Earth."

A Closer Look In five movements, *Vespers of the Blessed Earth* presents a geological-scale view of the Earth's history, interspersed with sections that focus on specific examples of endangered environments, fauna, and flora. In the first movement, "**A Brief Descent into Deep Time,**" the sacred text is the Earth itself. Adams describes the movement as a journey across "two-billion years of deep time through singing the names, colors, and ages of the geologic layers of the Grand Canyon."

"**A Weeping of Doves,**" for a cappella chorus, is derived from the call of the beautiful fruit dove (*Ptilinopus pulchellus*), a brightly colored bird found throughout the rainforests of Papua New Guinea. The weeping of the beautiful fruit dove functions here not only as a symbol of the divine spirit within Abrahamic religions and a representation of lost peace, but also as the direct inspiration for the ritual mourning and weeping practices of the Kaluli people of the New Guinean rainforests. The weeping of doves is a holy lament—across cultures and religions—for the Earth.

The third movement, "**Night-Shining Clouds,**" illustrates a paradoxical tension between humanity's disregard for the environment and the Earth's own response. Adams writes, "Sometimes on summer evenings, bright clouds appear on the northern horizon, pulsing with color as if illuminated from within. As we pollute the atmosphere more and more, these noctilucent clouds have become more widespread, as the earth just grows more beautiful." In this movement, as in the entire work, the descending lines evoke an austerity and sadness. Here the orchestral strings explore the sub-harmonic series, "spiraling downward in a nocturnal chaconne."

The allusion to a liturgical *Vespers* service is most overt in the fourth movement—Adams calls it "the heart of my vespers"—with its title of "Litanies" and the use of Latin text throughout. "Litanies" implies both an act of divine supplication and a list of related items. In the "**Litanies of the Sixth Extinction,**" the chorus recounts the scientific names of 193 threatened and endangered species of plants and animals, ending (ominously) with *Homo sapiens*. ("Sixth extinction" is a term conservation biologists have given to the current Anthropocene mass extinction event in which the disappearance of thousands of lifeforms coincides with climate change and humankind's accelerated destruction of natural environments.)

The concluding "**Aria of the Ghost Bird**" revisits the sacred implications of birdsong and spiritual presence, but with a poignant, cautionary tone. In this movement, Adams sets musically the call of the now-extinct Kaud'i 'Ō'ō bird (*Moho braccatus*)

of Hawai'i. The composer transcribed the bird's distinctive call from a 1987 recording of the last of the species—a male—singing for a female who would never come, but singing to the end nevertheless.

The warning entreaty of John Luther Adams's *Vespers for the Blessed Earth* is both timely and urgent. But he adds a caveat:

No matter what we humans may vaingloriously believe, ours is not to "save the earth." Without or without us, the earth will endure. The urgent challenge now facing humanity is to save ourselves, to become more fully and deeply human.

—Luke Howard

Vespers of the Blessed Earth was composed from 2020 to 2021.

These are the world premiere performances of the piece, and the first time any work by the composer has been performed by The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Adams scored the work for two flutes (1 doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets (both doubling bass clarinet), two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, bass trombone, timpani, percussion (chimes, crotales, handheld bells, large bass drum, large tam-tam, marimba, orchestra bells, rubbed stones, vibraphone), harp, piano, strings, soprano soloist, and chorus.

Performance time is approximately 50 minutes.

The Music

The Rite of Spring

Igor Stravinsky

Born in Lomonosov, Russia, June 17, 1882

Died in New York City, April 6, 1971



Music connected with dance has long held a special place in French culture, at least as far back as the age of Louis XIV, and there was an explosion of major full-length scores during the 19th century in Paris. Some of the perennial favorites were written by now generally forgotten figures, such as Adolphe Adam (*Giselle* from 1841) and his pupil Léo Delibes (*Coppélia* in 1870 and *Sylvia* in 1876). These composers inspired the supreme ballet music of the late century, that written by

Tchaikovsky, the great Russian. With his scores to *Swan Lake* (1875-76), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1889), and *Nutcracker* (1892), ballet found its musical master.

Back to Paris In the first decade of the 20th century, however, magnificent dance returned to Paris when the impresario Sergei Diaghilev started exporting Russian culture. He began in 1906 with the visual arts, presented symphonic music the next year, then opera, and, finally, in 1909, added ballet. The offerings of his legendary Ballets Russes proved to be especially popular despite grumbling that the productions did not seem Russian enough for some Parisians. Music historian Richard Taruskin has remarked on the paradox:

The Russian ballet, originally a French import and proud of its stylistic heritage, now had to become stylistically "Russian" so as to justify its exportation back to France. Diaghilev's solution was to commission, expressly for presentation in France in 1910, something without precedent in Russia: a ballet on a Russian folk subject, and with music cast in a conspicuously exotic "Russian" style. He cast about for a composer willing to come up with so weird a thing.

Stravinsky and the Ballets Russes Diaghilev had some difficulty finding that composer. After being refused by several others, he engaged the 27-year-old Igor Stravinsky, who achieved great success with *The Firebird* in 1910. His second ballet, *Petrushka*, followed the next season. And then came the real shocker that made music history: *The Rite of Spring*.

The Russian artist and archeologist Nicholas Roerich, a specialist in Slavic history and folklore, devised the scenario for the *Rite* together with Stravinsky and eventually created the sets and costumes. Subtitled "Pictures of Pagan Russia,"

the ballet offers ritual dances culminating in the sacrifice of the "chosen one" in order "to propitiate the god of spring." Stravinsky composed the music between September 1911 and March 1913, after which the work went into an unusually protracted period of rehearsals. There were many for the orchestra, many for the dancers, and then a handful with all the forces together. The final dress rehearsal on May 28, 1913, the day before the premiere, was presented before a large audience and attended by various critics. All seemed to go smoothly.

A Riotous Premiere An announcement in the newspaper *Le Figaro* on the day of the premiere promised

the strongly stylized characteristic attitudes of the Slavic race with an awareness of the beauty of the prehistoric period. The prodigious Russian dancers were the only ones capable of expressing these stammerings of a semi-savage humanity, of composing these frenetic human clusters wrenched incessantly by the most astonishing polyrhythm ever to come to the mind of a musician. There is truly a new thrill which will surely raise passionate discussions, but which will leave all true artists with an unforgettable impression.

Diaghilev undoubtedly devised the premiere to be a big event. Ticket prices at the newly built Théâtre des Champs-Élysées were doubled and the cultural elite of Paris showed up. The program opened with a beloved classic: *Les Sylphides*, orchestrations of piano pieces by Chopin. What exactly happened next that evening, however, is not entirely clear. Conflicting accounts quickly emerged, sometimes put forth by people who were not even in attendance. From the very beginning of *The Rite of Spring* there was laughter and an uproar among the audience, but whether this was principally in response to the music or to the dancing is still debated. It seems more likely that it was the latter. One critic observed that "past the Prelude the crowd simply stopped listening to the music so that they might better amuse themselves with the choreography." That choreography was by the 23-year-old dancer Vaslav Nijinsky, who had presented a provocative staging of Claude Debussy's *Jeux* with the company just two weeks earlier. Although Stravinsky's music was evidently inaudible at times through the din, conductor Pierre Monteux pressed on and saw the 30-minute ballet through to the end. The evening was not yet over. After intermission came two more audience favorites: Carl Maria von Weber's *The Specter of the Rose* and Alexander Borodin's Polovtsian Dances from his opera *Prince Igor*.

Five more performances of *The Rite of Spring* were given over the next two weeks and then the company took the ballet on tour. Within the year the work was triumphantly presented as a concert piece, again with Monteux conducting, and ever since the concert hall has been its principal home. Yet it is well worth remembering that this extraordinary composition, which some commentators herald as the advent of modern music, was originally a theatrical piece, a collaborative effort forging the talents of Stravinsky, Roerich, Diaghilev, Nijinsky,

Monteux, and a large ensemble of musicians and dancers. Leopold Stokowski conducted the American premiere of both the concert and staged versions of *The Rite of Spring* in Philadelphia.

A Closer Look *The Rite of Spring* calls for an enormous orchestra deployed to spectacular effect. The ballet is in two tableaux—"The Adoration of the Earth" and "The Sacrifice"—each of which has an introductory section, a series of dances, and a concluding ritual. The opening minutes of the piece give an idea of Stravinsky's innovative style. A solo bassoon, playing at an unusually high register, intones a melancholy melody. This is the first of at least nine folk melodies that the composer adapted for the piece, although he later denied doing so (except for this opening tune).

Some order eventually emerges out of chaos as the "The Auguries of Spring" roar out massive string chords punctuated by eight French horns. In the following dances unexpected and complicated metrical innovations emerge. At various points in the piece Stravinsky changes the meter every measure, a daunting challenge for the orchestra in 1913 that now seems second nature to many professional musicians. If Arnold Schoenberg had famously "liberated the dissonance" a few years earlier, Stravinsky now seems to liberate rhythm and meter.

Although the scenario changed over the course of composition, a basic "Argument" was printed in the program at the premiere, which read as follows:

FIRST ACT: "The Adoration of the Earth." Spring. The Earth is covered with flowers. The Earth is covered with grass. A great joy reigns on the Earth. Mankind delivers itself up to the dance and seeks to know the future by following the rites. The eldest of the Sages himself takes part in the Glorification of Spring. He is led forward to unite himself with the abundant and superb Earth. Everyone stamps the Earth ecstatically.

SECOND ACT: "The Sacrifice." After the day: After midnight. On the hills are the consecrated stones. The adolescents play the mystic games and see the Great Way. They glorify, they proclaim Her who has been designated to be delivered to the God. The ancestors are invoked, venerated witnesses. And the wise Ancestors of Mankind contemplate the sacrifice. This is the way to sacrifice larilo the magnificent, the flamboyant.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Stravinsky composed The Rite of Spring from 1911 to 1913.

The Rite of Spring is one of many essential works of the 20th century that received its United States premiere in Philadelphia. Leopold Stokowski and The Philadelphia Orchestra presented the piece on March 3, 1922. The most recent subscription performances were in October 2018 with Stéphane Deneuve.

The Philadelphians have recorded the complete work four times: in 1929 with Stokowski for RCA, in 1955 with Eugene Ormandy for CBS, in 1978 with Riccardo Muti for EMI, and in 2013 with Yannick Nézet-Séguin for Deutsche Grammophon. An abridged version was recorded by Stokowski and the Orchestra in 1939 for RCA, the same version that appeared in the film Fantasia.

The score calls for piccolo, three flutes (III doubling piccolo II), alto flute, four oboes (IV doubling English horn II), English horn, three clarinets (III doubling bass clarinet II), E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, four bassoons (IV doubling contrabassoon II), contrabassoon, eight horns (VII and VIII doubling Wagner tubas), piccolo trumpet, four trumpets, three trombones, bass trombone, two tubas, timpani, percussion (antique cymbals, bass drum, cymbals, güiro, tam-tam, tambourine, and triangle), and strings.

The Rite of Spring runs approximately 30 minutes in performance.

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Web Site: For information about The Philadelphia Orchestra and its upcoming concerts or events, please visit philorch.org.

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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.

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 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.