

2022–2023 | 123rd Season

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, May 11, at 7:30

Friday, May 12, at 2:00

Saturday, May 3, at 8:00

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor

Charlotte Blake Alston Speaker

Frank *Walkabout*: Concerto for Orchestra

I. Soliloquio Serrano

II. Huaracas

III. Haillí

IV. Tarqueada

First complete Philadelphia Orchestra performances

Intermission

Berlioz *Symphonie fantastique*, Op. 14

I. Daydreams, Passions (Largo—Allegro agitato e appassionato assai)

II. A Ball (Valse. Allegro non troppo)

III. In the Meadows (Adagio)

IV. March to the Scaffold (Allegretto non troppo)

V. Dream of a Witches' Sabbath (Larghetto—Allegro)

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 45 minutes.

The May 13 concert is sponsored by **Alison Young and David Maser**.

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2023–24
SEASON



Yannick Nézet-Séguin
Music and Artistic Director



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The Philadelphia Orchestra

Photos: Jeff Fusco, Jason Bell, Jessica Griffin, Mat Hennek



The Philadelphia Orchestra

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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 with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. 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.



The
Philadelphia
Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director

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1830

Berlioz

*Symphonie
fantastique*

Music

Bellini

*I Capuleti e i
Montecchi*

Literature

Tennyson

*Poems, Chiefly
Lyrical*

Art

Delacroix

*Liberty Guiding
the People*

History

Indian Removal
Act signed into
law

Gabriela Lena Frank, The Philadelphia Orchestra's composer-in-residence, remarks that *Walkabout: Concerto for Orchestra* was inspired by her travels in Peru, her mother's homeland. As with many of her compositions, she questions what it means to be born in America with forbearers hailing from Lithuania, China, and Andean South America. Her explorations lead to fascinating stylistic juxtapositions and enticing sounds.

At age 27 Hector Berlioz premiered one of the most remarkable first symphonies ever composed. Rather than play to the expectations of his audience by casting it in the four traditional movements and identifying the work with a number, key, and opus number, he called it: *Épisode de la vie d'un artiste, Symphonie fantastique en cinq parties* (Episode in the Life of an Artist: Fantastic Symphony in Five Movements). In addition, Berlioz indicated not only titles for its five movements but also devised an elaborate semi-autobiographical program that he wanted audiences to read. The result is a truly fantastic symphony that deploys a large orchestra to spectacular effect.

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Photos: Jeff Fusco, Bowie Verschuuren



HEAR
TOGETHER



The Music

Walkabout: Concerto for Orchestra

Gabriela Lena Frank

Born in Berkeley, California, September 26, 1972

Now living in Boonville, California



Few composers have done more for the advancement of classical music in the 21st century than Gabriela Lena Frank, a Berkeley-born composer and pianist of Peruvian/Chinese and Lithuanian/Jewish descent. In 2020 she received the Heinz Award in the Arts and Humanities category, bestowed for her efforts in “weaving Latin American influences into classical constructs and breaking gender, disability, and cultural barriers in classical music composition.” The prize also

honored the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music, which the composer established in the rural mountains of Mendocino County, California—for the purposes of inspiring composers, sparking initiatives in regions with low arts access, and creating and performing music with an ethical approach to climate citizenship.

A gifted pianist from an early age, Frank studied the keyboard music of J.S. Bach as a child and was also fascinated by the music, art, and literature of Latin-American artists settling in the Bay Area during her formative years. She received bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Rice University, where she studied piano with Jeanne Kierman Fischer and composition with Sam Jones, and later earned a D.M.A. in composition from the University of Michigan, studying with William Bolcom and Leslie Bassett.

Connected to Her Ancestral Homeland An admirer of both Béla Bartók and Alberto Ginastera, Frank has embraced the former composer’s ethnological impulse toward the research of indigenous materials and the latter’s assimilation of specifically Latin-American rhythms and melodic structures. During her first trip to her mother’s native Peru in the 1990s, Frank felt an immediate sense of connection, and she has since embarked on wide-ranging travels toward gathering musical experiences and exploring her own multi-ethnic identity.

Frank’s works usually contain an underlying story line, she has said, “a scenario or character.” *La Llorona* recounts the legend of the weeping mother whose ghost haunts the living, and *Apu* tells of an Andean mountain-spirit that watches over weary travelers. The *Concertino Cusqueño*, a Philadelphia Orchestra commission, celebrates Cusco, the original capital of the Incan empire Tawantinsuyu.

Among Frank's recent works are *Pachamama Meets an Ode* for chorus and orchestra, also commissioned by The Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Seguín; *Hailli-Serenata*, given its premiere by the Chicago Symphony and Andrés Orozco-Estrada; *Suite Mestiza* for solo violin; and the *Conquest Requiem* for chorus and orchestra, set to texts in English, Spanish, and Nahuatl. Her first opera, *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*, on a libretto by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Nilo Cruz, received its premiere in October 2022 at San Diego Opera. The *San Diego Union-Tribune* called the piece, based on the lives of two of Mexico's most venerated visual artists, "a richly scored, lyrically detailed and visually stunning work."

Frank has received a wide range of commissions: from Yo-Yo Ma, Dawn Upshaw, the King's Singers, the Kronos Quartet, the Cuarteto Latinoamericano, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, and the orchestras of Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, Atlanta, Cleveland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, among others. She has received a Guggenheim Fellowship and a USA Artist Fellowship, and her chamber work *Inca Dances* won a 2009 Latin GRAMMY Award. In 2013 she was awarded the Medal of Excellence from the Sphinx Organization, a group devoted to outstanding young Black and Latino leaders in classical music. Her music has been the subject of several books, broadcasts, and films, including the PBS feature *Compadre Huashayo*, which addressed her work in Ecuador composing for the Orquesta de Instrumentos Andinos, and Aric Hartvig's Emmy-nominated 2015 documentary *Música Mestiza*.

Frank has written some 100 compositions, including orchestral, band, and choral works; music for chamber ensemble (which often features indigenous instruments); and works for solo piano. She has held residencies at Vanderbilt University, the Pensacola Orchestra, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's "Music in Color" series. She is currently composer-in-residence for The Philadelphia Orchestra.

A Closer Look *Walkabout*: Concerto for Orchestra received its world premiere on February 17, 2017, in Detroit, with the Detroit Symphony conducted by Michelle Merrill. The composer has written the following about the piece:

Walkabout: Concerto for Orchestra is inspired by my travels in Perú, my mother's homeland. Born in the States, I did not begin these fateful trips until my time as a graduate student at the University of Michigan where my teachers encouraged me to answer questions of identity that long persisted for me: What does it mean to be American born yet with such a motley crew of forbearers hailing from Lithuania, China, and Andean South America? For more than 20 years, I've been answering this question, with each piece raising yet more to address.

In four movements, *Walkabout* uses both musical and extra-musical influences. The first movement, "Soliloquio Serrano," features string principals prominently in an introspective yet lyrical "mountain soliloquy." The second movement is lively and bold, a portrait of "huaracas," the slingshot weapons

favored by the soldiers employed during the 16th century in the dominant Inca empire. "Hailli," the Quechua word for prayer, is the third movement and is both lyrical and passionate. The last movement, "Tarqueada," portrays, after a mysterious opening, one of my favorite scenes of Perú: a great parade of "tarka" flutists who can number up to a hundred at once. These musicians also blow whistles and beat a variety of different drums, creating a sonic effect of controlled chaos that never stops building.

—Paul J. Horsley

Walkabout: *Concerto for Orchestra* was composed in 2016.

These are the first complete Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work. The fourth movement was performed on concerts with Cirque de la Symphonie in June 2019 with Kensho Watanabe conducting.

The score calls for three flutes (III doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, three clarinets (II doubling E-flat clarinet, III doubling bass clarinet), three bassoons, two horns, three trumpets, two trombones, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, marimba, police/parade whistle, slapstick, snare drum, suspended cymbal, tam-tam, thunder sheet, triangles, xylophone), harp, piano, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 30 minutes.



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Photos: Jeff Fusco, Jessica Griffin, Kirill Balabanov

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Philadelphia
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Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director

The Music

Symphonie fantastique

Hector Berlioz

Born in La Côte-Saint-André, France, December 11, 1803

Died in Paris, France, March 8, 1869



When a New York newspaper in 1868 described the *Symphonie fantastique* as “a nightmare set to music,” it was meant to be an insult. Yet this was exactly what Hector Berlioz intended: not that the critic should have a miserable evening, but that he should grasp, even dimly, the agonies of the composer’s own experience. Of Berlioz’s real sufferings there can be no doubt. One has only to read the letters of 1829 (when Berlioz was 25 years old) to glimpse the torment of a composer

whose mind was bursting with musical ideas and whose heart was bleeding.

Romantic Passion The object of his passion was an Irish actress, Harriet Smithson, whom Berlioz had seen on the stage two years before in the roles of Juliet and Ophelia. How was this unreal passion to be expressed? Berlioz’s first thought, naturally enough, was a dramatic work, perhaps *Scenes from Romeo and Juliet*, for which he may have composed a few movements. He then set several of Thomas Moore’s Irish Melodies, which at least evoked the land of her birth. He would have liked to be writing a Beethovenian symphony—except that the customary triumphant ending had no counterpart in his own world.

The dilemma was resolved early in 1830 when Berlioz picked up the fake news that Harriet was free and easy with her favors and in no way worthy of the exalted passion that consumed him day and night. Now, he suddenly realized, he *could* represent this dramatic episode in his life as a symphony, with a demonic, orgiastic finale in which both he and she are condemned to hell.

Drawn in places from music he had written for other purposes, the symphony was speedily written down in little more than three months and performed for the first time later that year. Berlioz issued a printed program explaining the work’s narrative. Although it is about an “artist” and his “beloved,” it was equally about Romeo and Juliet, and more specifically Hector and Harriet. Even after Berlioz, by a strange irony, had met and married Harriet Smithson three years later, the work’s dramatic program remained. There can be few parallels to this extraordinary tale of love blooming in real life after it had been violently exorcized in a work of art.

A Closer Look All five movements of the *Symphonie fantastique* contain a single recurrent theme, the *idée fixe* (“obsession”), which represents the artist’s love and

is transformed according to the context in which the artist finds his beloved. The first movement (**Daydreams, Passions**) opens with a slow introduction depicting “the sickness of the soul, the flux of passion, the unaccountable joys and sorrows he experienced before he saw his beloved,” after which the *idée fixe* is heard as the main theme of the Allegro, the violins and flute lightly accompanied by sputtering lower strings. The surge of passion is aptly described in the volcanic first movement.

In the second movement, **A Ball**, the artist glimpses her in a crowd of whirling dancers. In the third, **In the Meadows**, two shepherds call to each other on their pipes, and the music depicts the stillness of a summer evening in the country, and the agitation caused by the beloved’s appearance. At the end the lone shepherd’s pipe is answered only by the rumble of distant thunder.

In his despair the artist has poisoned his beloved and is condemned to death. The fourth movement is the **March to the Scaffold**, as he is led to the guillotine before the raucous jeers of the crowd. In his last moments he sees the beloved’s image (the *idée fixe* in the clarinet’s most piercing range) before the blade falls. Finally, in the **Dream of a Witches’ Sabbath**, the artist finds himself a spectator at a sinister gathering of spectres and weird, mocking monsters of every kind. The *idée fixe* appears, horribly distorted, bells toll, the *Dies irae* is coarsely intoned by tubas and bassoons, and the witches’ round-dance gathers momentum. Eventually the dance and the *Dies irae* join together and the Symphony ends in a riot of brilliant orchestral sound.

The *Symphonie fantastique* has remained to this day a classic document of the Romantic imagination and a great virtuoso piece for orchestra. Berlioz introduced harps into the symphony orchestra for the first time, and the finale calls for bells and the squeaky, high-pitched E-flat clarinet. The composer’s grasp at so early an age of the orchestra’s potential charge is truly uncanny.

—Hugh Macdonald

Berlioz composed the Symphonie fantastique in 1830 and revised the piece in 1831–32.

The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work were conducted by Fritz Scheel in March 1903. Most recently on a subscription series it was led by Herbert Blomstedt in February 2020.

The Orchestra has recorded the Symphonie four times: with Eugene Ormandy in 1950 and 1960 for CBS; with Ormandy in 1976 for RCA; and with Riccardo Muti in 1984 for EMI. A live recording from 2007 with Christoph Eschenbach is also available as a digital download.

Berlioz scored the piece for two flutes (II doubling piccolo), two oboes (II doubling English horn), two clarinets (I doubling E-flat clarinet), four bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, two ophicleides, timpani, percussion (bass drum, bell plates, cymbals, snare drum), two harps, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 55 minutes.

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Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

Cadence: The conclusion to a phrase, movement, or piece based on a recognizable melodic formula, harmonic progression, or dissonance resolution

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

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

Dies irae: Literally, day of wrath. A medieval Latin hymn on the Day of Judgement sung in requiem masses.

Dissonance: A combination of two or more tones requiring resolution

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

Idée fixe: A term coined by Berlioz to denote a musical idea used obsessively

Legato: Smooth, even, without any break between notes

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output. Opus numbers are not always reliable because they are often applied in the order of publication rather than composition.

Polyphony: A term used to designate music in more than one part and the style in which all or several of the musical parts move to some extent independently

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

Sonority: Resonance, tone quality

Timbre: Tone color or tone quality

Tonality: The orientation of melodies and harmonies toward a specific pitch or pitches

Tonic: The keynote of a scale

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Agitato: Excited

Allegretto: A tempo between walking speed and fast

Allegro: Bright, fast

Appassionato: Passionately

Larghetto: A slow tempo

Largo: Broad

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Assai: Much

Non troppo: Not too much

The Philadelphia Orchestra
Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



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