

2023–2024 | 124th Season

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, January 11, at 7:30

Saturday, January 13, at 8:00

**Anna Sułkowska-Migoń** Conductor

**Wu Man** Pipa

**Nowowiejski** Overture to *Baltic Legend*, Op. 28

*First Philadelphia Orchestra performances*

**Zhao** Pipa Concerto No. 2

(In one movement)

*First Philadelphia Orchestra performances*

## Intermission

**Tchaikovsky** Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64

I. Andante—Allegro con anima

II. Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza

III. Valse: Allegro moderato

IV. Finale: Andante maestoso—Allegro vivace

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 50 minutes.

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The  
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Orchestra  
Yannick Nézet-Séguin  
Music and Artistic Director

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## The Philadelphia Orchestra

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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.

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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.

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# Conductor

Gizegorz Mart



Conductor **Anna Sułkowska-Migoń** is making her Philadelphia Orchestra debut. Born in Kraków, Poland, she won first prize at La Maestra conducting competition in Paris in March 2022. Since then she has appeared regularly with all the major Polish orchestras and will make further debuts in North America and Europe in the coming seasons. A champion of Polish composers, she conducted the 25th anniversary performance of Krzysztof Penderecki's *Credo* at the

Oregon Bach Festival in July 2023, as well as a special concert of works by Mieczysław Weinberg and Elżbieta Sikora to mark the 80th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April 2023.

In addition to these current performances, highlights of Ms. Sułkowska-Migoń's 2023–24 season include debuts with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, the Polish National Radio Symphony, the Chamber Orchestra of Paris, the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, the Orchestre National de Lille, and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Nice, as well as returns to the Warsaw Philharmonic as a part of the Eufonie Festival, the Dresden Philharmonic, and the Polish Radio Symphony. She conducts the National Symphony (Ireland) as part of the Cellissimo festival in Galway with cellist Alban Gerhardt and pianist Finghin Collins, as well as the RTÉ Concert Orchestra. She also appears at the Palau de la Música Catalana twice, with the Orquesta Sinfónica del Vallés and trumpeter Pacho Flores and as part of a tour with the Orquesta de la Comunitat Valenciana and baritone André Schuen that will also include performances in Valencia and Castellón.

Ms. Sułkowska-Migoń is the recipient of the 2022–24 Taki Alsop Conducting Fellowship and attended the Ravinia Festival in August 2022 as part of the Taki Alsop master classes with the Chicago Symphony. She was also selected as one of four conductors to participate in the Dallas Opera's Hart Institute for Women Conductors Program in the 2022–23 season. She has previously collaborated with conductors such as Marin Alsop, François Xavier-Roth, Klaus Mäkelä, Stéphane Denève, Kirill Karabits, Jerzy Maksymiuk, Piotr Sułkowski, and Antoni Wit. As an instrumentalist specializing in viola, she studied at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw. She then completed her master's at the Krzysztof Penderecki Academy of Music in Kraków, specializing in symphonic and choral conducting. She attended the 2023 Gstaad Conducting Academy and was awarded the Neeme Järvi Prize by a jury that included Jaap van Zweden, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, and Johannes Schlaefli.

# Soloist



**Wu Man** belongs to a rare group of musicians who have redefined the role of their instruments, in her case, the pipa, a pear-shaped, four-stringed Chinese lute with a rich history spanning centuries. She is celebrated as one of the most prominent instrumentalists of traditional Chinese music, as well as a composer and educator. She has premiered hundreds of new works for the pipa, while spearheading multimedia projects to both preserve and create awareness of China's ancient

musical traditions. Her efforts were recognized when she was named *Musical America's* 2013 "Instrumentalist of the Year," marking the first time this prestigious award has been bestowed on a player of a non-Western instrument. She has performed in recital and as a soloist with major orchestras around the world. She makes her Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these current performances.

Ms. Wu is a frequent collaborator with ensembles such as the Kronos and Shanghai quartets and the Knights, and she is a founding member of the Silkroad Ensemble. She has appeared in more than 40 recordings throughout her career, including the Silkroad Ensemble's GRAMMY Award-winning recording *Sing Me Home*, featuring her composition *Green (Vincent's Tune)*. She is also a featured artist in the 2015 Emmy Award-winning documentary *The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble*. Ms. Wu's Silkroad Ensemble performances in recent years have included tours of the United States during the season and to summer festivals such as Tanglewood and Wolf Trap; a tour of Asia; and performances with Mark Morris Dance in Berkeley and Seattle.

Born in Hangzhou, China, Ms. Wu studied at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, where she became the first recipient of a master's degree in pipa. At age 13 she was recognized as a child prodigy and a national role model for young pipa players. She is a recipient of the 2023 National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment of the Arts, one of the United States's most prestigious honors in folk and traditional arts. In 2023 she was additionally honored with the Asia Society's Asia Arts Game Changers Award, presented annually in New York City to honor artists and arts professionals for their significant contributions to contemporary art. She is a visiting professor at her alma mater and a distinguished professor at the Zhejiang and Xi'an conservatories. In 2021 she received an honorary doctorate of music from the New England Conservatory of Music. She has also served as artistic director of the Xi'an Silk Road Music Festival at the Xi'an Conservatory. For more information, please visit [wumanpipa.org](http://wumanpipa.org).

# Framing the Program

## Parallel Events

1888

**Tchaikovsky**  
Symphony  
No. 5

**Music**

Rimsky-Korsakov  
*Sheherazade*

**Literature**

Zola  
*La Terre*

**Art**

Toulouse-Lautrec  
*Place Clichy*

**History**

Jack the Ripper  
murders

1924

**Nowowiejski**  
Overture to  
*Baltic Legend*

**Music**

Gershwin  
*Rhapsody in Blue*

**Literature**

Forster  
*A Passage to India*

**Art**

Braque  
*Sugar Bowl*

**History**

Lenin dies

The acclaimed Polish conductor Anna Sulowska-Migoń makes her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in a concert that opens with a spirited overture by Feliks Nowowiejski, an unjustly neglected but once extremely popular Polish composer. The piece prefaces his opera *Baltic Legend* about a poor fisherman seeking the jewels of Queen Jurata, who rules a kingdom at the bottom of the Baltic Sea.

By the late 1880s, when Tchaikovsky composed his Fifth Symphony, he had not tackled the genre in nearly 10 years. While the piece proved immediately successful with audiences, the composer wavered in his affection for the Symphony, which carried deep autobiographical associations. He returned to a subject already sounded in his Fourth Symphony: Fate. Yet while that work was angry and defiant, the mood in the Fifth is more at peace. This is music that often seems to dance with Fate.

In between these two pieces, pipa virtuoso Wu Man performs a concerto by Zhao Jiping, widely known for his scores to the films *Raise the Red Lantern* and *Farewell My Concubine*. The composer has described the piece as "not so much ... a Western traditional concerto, but more an exploration of poetic expression of thoughts and emotions, able to stimulate many levels of the audience's imagination."

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Photo: Jeff Fusco

# The Music

## Overture to *Baltic Legend*

**Feliks Nowowiejski**

**Born in Barczewo, Poland, February 7, 1877**

**Died in Poznań, Poland, January 18, 1946**



Feliks Nowowiejski lived during a tumultuous epoch in Polish history, a time in which the country's borders shifted significantly. He was born in what was then East Prussia, the son of a master tailor who inculcated a love of Polish history, music, and culture in all of his 11 children. Feliks evinced profound musical talent as a boy, becoming an accomplished performer on the violin, French horn, cello, piano, and, especially, the organ. When his father had to declare bankruptcy,

Feliks supported his large and impoverished family by joining the orchestra of the Prussian Regiment of the Grenadiers as a violinist. After he was awarded a composition prize, he studied at the famed Stern Conservatory in Berlin and later attended Max Bruch's master classes at the Königlische Musikakademie.

**A World-Wide Hit** In 1902 Nowowiejski was awarded the Meyerbeer Prize for his oratorio *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, Op. 3. His fame grew after this, culminating in the creation of his most celebrated score, *Quo Vadis*, Op. 30, an oratorio based on the internationally best-selling historical novel by Nowowiejski's compatriot Henryk Sienkiewicz. *Quo Vadis* was premiered at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw in 1909 and was subsequently performed around the world, rapidly garnering some 200 performances in Europe, South America, and the United States. Nowowiejski himself conducted the New York premiere of the piece, which had been translated into English, at Carnegie Hall on March 19, 1912. *Quo Vadis* continued to appear in concert halls until the outbreak of the Second World War. While a measure of this acclaim surely resulted from the massive reputation of Sienkiewicz's novel, the oratorio also showcases Nowowiejski's rhetorical but sincere post-Wagnerian style, which achieves sustained grandeur at climactic points. The combination of religiosity—Sienkiewicz's plot concerns the Neronian persecution of Christians—with a palatable late Romantic idiom was particularly appealing to audiences during the first three decades of the last century. Nowowiejski's melodic invention rarely flags over the oratorio's considerable length; his choral writing is expert; and his orchestration is invariably colorful, especially in his use of percussion.



In 1921 Nowowiejski and his family settled in Poznań, where he served as director of the State Music Conservatory until 1927. He composed four symphonies, including one with a narrator, vocal soloists, and chorus; concertos for piano and cello; and attractive piano pieces and songs. None, however, approached the fame of *Quo Vadis*. In addition to his works for the concert hall, he wrote five operas, the most noted of which is *Baltic Legend*, Op. 28. It was first produced in Poznań on November 24, 1924, revived by the Poznań Opera in 1955 and 2017, and also performed at the Łódź Opera in 1965. The opera's plot traces the adventures of an impoverished fisherman, Doman, who is tasked with obtaining the jewels of Queen Jurata, who reigns in a kingdom at the bottom of the Baltic Sea. (There is a striking similarity here to the sixth scene of Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov's 1898 opera *Sadko*, which also takes place in a mythological deep-sea realm.) Aside from Doman's second-act aria, *Baltic Legend's* lively Overture is the most often performed part of the opera today.

**A Closer Look** The Overture is cast in an adaptation of sonata form. It begins with a declamatory theme in the horns that is redolent of Slavic folk song. A transitional passage echoing Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" leads to a folk-like dance. Nowowiejski then introduces a lyrical melody that is transformed by featuring the gleaming sonorities of celesta, harp, and woodwinds. This passage in particular displays his close study of Debussy's music—the French master's beloved whole-tone scale makes a fleeting appearance here. The lyrical music is short-lived—stormy music evoking the roiling Baltic Sea intrudes brusquely. After a mysterious episode reminiscent of medieval organum, the opening theme returns in grandiose conclusion.

While this description might imply that the Overture is a jumble of musical scraps, the composer stiches these varied elements into a satisfying whole by deriving all the thematic material from the opening horn call. Through shimmering harmonic progressions, Nowowiejski conjures up an imaginary world of pre-Christian Poland complete with a sunken town, capricious pagan deities, a pair of winsome lovers, a jewel-encrusted crown, and Midsummer Day revels. With its brilliant orchestration, rich melodies, and dramatic portrayal of the turbulent Baltic Sea, this Overture is one of Nowowiejski's finest creations.

—Byron Adams

*Nowowiejski composed Baltic Legend in 1924.*

*These are the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work, and the first time anything by the composer has been played by the Orchestra.*

*The score calls for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, snare drum, suspended cymbal, triangle), harp, celesta, and strings.*

*Performance time is approximately 12 minutes.*

# Pipa Concerto No. 2

**Zhao Jiping**

**Born in Pingliang, Gansu, China, August 1945**

**Now living in Xi'an, China**



Zhao Jiping became internationally known as a composer for such "Fifth-Generation" filmmakers as Chen Kaige, Zhang Yimou, and He Ping. Among his most famous film scores are those for *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991), *To Live* (1993), and *Farewell My Concubine* (1993). He is also a noted composer for the concert stage.

Son of the painter Zhao Wangyun, Zhao Jiping was trained at the Xi'an Conservatory of Music, where he majored in composition and graduated in 1970. When the Central Conservatory reopened after the Cultural Revolution in 1978, he was accepted there for postgraduate studies. He first gained renown as a film composer when Chen Kaige invited him to write music for *Yellow Earth* (1984). The music, close to its folk roots, was highly crafted and evocative of Chen's cinematic expanse. In *To Live* and *Raise the Red Lantern*, Zhao's colorful use of Chinese instruments, such as the banhu, xun, and sheng, in combination with a Western orchestra, met with critical acclaim. The incorporation of regional opera, especially operatic percussion passages, added even more brilliance and dramatic context to *Farewell My Concubine*, a story about two Jingju (Peking opera) stars. In 2000 Zhao received a commission from Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Project to write a chamber work. *Moon Over Guan Mountains* (scored for pipa, sheng, cello, and tabla) was premiered at Tanglewood, and remained in the Silk Road Ensemble's international repertory throughout 2002.

**A Closer Look** The composer has provided the following about the Concerto:

In 2012 I was approached by the pipa virtuoso Wu Man to write a concerto. Having known and admired Wu Man for many years, I was immediately taken by the prospect and, in fact, had wanted to write something that could feature her incredible artistry. This is my second concerto for pipa, an instrument that resonates so closely to my heart.

Commissioned by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra for Wu Man, this concerto was composed in the summer of 2013 in Xi'an, China. Wu Man has accumulated a wealth of playing experience and has a unique perspective on the interpretation of music, particularly on the integration of eastern sounds with western ensembles. I see the piece not so much as a Western traditional concerto, but more an exploration of poetic expression of thoughts and emotions, able to stimulate many levels of the

audience's imagination. The orchestra and Wu Man are the canvas and I have the privilege to paint the picture.

My goal was to create a pipa concerto with a strong Chinese flavor combined with a sense of global musical language. The movements represent various expressions in different textures and tempos; these are inspired by the most elegant Chinese traditional music style, *Ping Tang*, from Wu Man's hometown in the Su Hong area. I am confident that this powerful collaboration will touch a new light!

*Zhao's Pipa Concerto No. 2 was composed in 2013.*

*These are the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work.*

*The score calls for solo pipa, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (chimes, cymbals, snare drum, tam-tam, tambourine, triangle), harp, and strings.*

*Performance time is approximately 20 minutes.*

# Symphony No. 5

**Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

**Born in Kamsko-Votkinsk, Russia, May 7, 1840**

**Died in St. Petersburg, November 6, 1893**



Tchaikovsky's orchestral works were not always as successful as his elevated position in today's concert-hall pantheon would suggest. While he may have been regarded as Russia's greatest symphonist and arguably its most talented composer during his lifetime, his ballet scores, overtures, and concertos often received responses ranging from pedestrian to outright disdain. Tchaikovsky endured periods of crushing self-doubt, exacerbated by the critical responses to his music.

It was largely during the 20th century, after the composer's death, that his reputation as an audience favorite became firmly established.

When Tchaikovsky began composing his Symphony No. 5 in the summer of 1888, it was with a mixture of determination and paralyzing uncertainty. "I want so much to show not only to others, but to myself, that I still haven't expired," he wrote to his patron and friend Nadezhda von Meck. It had been 10 years since his Fourth Symphony and he was resolved to prove that his inspiration had not dried up.

The initial sketches for this new work came to him only with difficulty, but he found some creative momentum as he was working on the instrumentation. When the new symphony was completed in August 1888, he exclaimed with some relief, "Thank God, it is no worse than my previous ones." The following week, he reiterated, "it has turned out well."

**A Self-Proclaimed Failure** At its premiere the following month, the audience and his close friends received the piece enthusiastically, but the critics were harsh at subsequent performances. Tchaikovsky unfortunately believed the critics rather than his friends and concluded after three performances that the work was a failure. "There is something repellant in it," he lamented, "some over-exaggerated color, some insincerity of fabrication." It was not until the following year, when Brahms heard a performance in Hamburg and expressed his admiration for the new work, that Tchaikovsky finally admitted this colorful, emotional, patchwork-quilt of a symphony had any merit. "I have started to love it again," he wrote to his nephew. "My earlier judgment was undeservedly harsh."

Tchaikovsky claimed that the Fifth Symphony was not programmatic, but his early sketches included comments about "fate," "providence," and "faith." Perhaps he was thinking of Beethoven's famous "Fate" symphony—also a Fifth—and had planned a similar symphonic trajectory for this work. Those initial sketches were eventually rejected, though, and unlike a true programmatic symphony the piece

holds together well without a specific narrative program when heard simply in terms of its musical discourse and development. And in that regard, it might resemble Beethoven's Fifth even more closely.

**A Closer Look** A single theme—perhaps a leitmotif of fate—appears in each of the four movements, suggesting a journey or gradual metamorphosis, culminating in a conclusion that can be heard as either triumphant or ominous. At the Symphony's opening (**Andante**), this dotted-rhythm theme is presented in a slow introduction—a mournful funeral march. Then the clarinets and bassoon introduce the **Allegro con anima** section with a variant on the theme that, while lilting and more animated, even dance-like at times, still bears the emotional weight of the portentous introduction. If this is indeed a "Fate" theme, then the fatal narrative has already been set, and cannot be avoided. A less-troubled second idea only serves to intensify the storm of the contrapuntally dense development, where the dotted-rhythm figure relentlessly reemerges. After the main theme is reprised, the waltz-like second theme is brought back in E major, but the coda re-establishes the funeral-march connotations with a repeated lament bassline and a total dissipation of energy.

Out of the darkness of the low strings, the harmonies turn to D major in the **Andante cantabile** second movement, a nocturne whose ravishing horn melody was later adapted to the popular song "Moon Love." This melody is dramatically interrupted by the Fate motif, but gradually regains its composure, reaching an almost-triumph before Fate cruelly silences it once more. The lyrical melody can then only limp to a defeated close. A short waltz (**Allegro moderato**), instead of the usual third-movement scherzo, transforms the horn melody into an oasis of untroubled delight before the Fate motif returns, again, to shroud the closing.

The finale opens (**Andante maestoso**) and proceeds much as the first movement did, with a dramatic dialogue between Fate and Joy, except the Fate theme is now in E major. With repeated references to other motifs from the inner movements, the dramatic momentum arches toward a seemingly triumphant victory, the Fate motif now an exultant brass fanfare, hammered home with Beethovenian repetitions of tonic major harmony.

And yet the Symphony's conclusion feels less victorious than it should. Is it Tchaikovsky's wishful thinking—a forced victory paralleling the composer's own fears and hopes for this work? As a commentator of the day remarked, if Beethoven's Fifth Symphony was "Fate knocking at the door," then Tchaikovsky's Fifth might represent "Fate trying to get out."

—Luke Howard

*Tchaikovsky composed his Fifth Symphony in 1888.*

*The work has been performed by The Philadelphia Orchestra probably as often as any piece in the orchestral repertory. Fritz Scheel conducted the first Orchestra performance, in October 1906. From the 1930s it was a favorite of Eugene Ormandy, who led it on tours and at the Academy of Music. The most recent subscription performances were Fabio Luisi's in May 2022.*

*The Orchestra has recorded the Fifth eight times: in 1934 for RCA with Leopold Stokowski; in 1941 for RCA with Ormandy; in 1950 and 1959 for CBS with Ormandy; in 1974, again for RCA, with Ormandy; in 1981 for Delos with Ormandy; in 1991 for EMI with Riccardo Muti; and in 2005 for Ondine with Christoph Eschenbach. The second movement alone was also recorded by Stokowski in 1923 for RCA.*

*The score calls for three flutes (III doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings.*

*Performance time is approximately 50 minutes.*

# 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

**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

**Legato:** Smooth, even, without any break between notes

**Leitmotif:** Literally "leading motif." Any striking musical motif (theme, phrase) characterizing or accompanying one of the actors, or some particular idea, emotion, or situation in a drama.

**Meter:** The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

**Nocturne:** A piece of a dreamily romantic or sentimental character

**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.

**Oratorio:** Large-scale dramatic composition originating in the 16th century with text usually based on religious subjects. Oratorios are performed by choruses and solo voices with an instrumental accompaniment, and are similar to operas but without costumes, scenery, and actions.

**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.

**Sonata form:** The form in which the first movements (and sometimes others) of symphonies are usually cast. The sections are exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last sometimes followed by a coda. The exposition is the introduction of the musical ideas, which are then "developed." In the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.

**Tonic:** The keynote of a scale

## THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

**Andante:** Walking speed

**Allegro:** Bright, fast

**Cantabile:** In a singing style, lyrical, melodious, flowing

**Con alcuna licenza:** With some freedom

**Con anima:** With feeling

**Maestoso:** Majestic

**Moderato:** A moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow

**Vivace:** Lively

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