

Season 2019-2020

Thursday, February 20,
at 7:30

Friday, February 21, at 2:00

Saturday, February 22,
at 8:00

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Herbert Blomstedt Conductor

Lise de la Salle Piano

Mendelssohn Piano Concerto No. 2 in D minor, Op. 40
I. Allegro appassionato—
II. Adagio: Molto sostenuto—
III. Finale: Presto scherzando

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, 40 minutes.

 LiveNote® 2.0, the Orchestra's interactive concert guide for mobile devices, will be enabled for these performances.

These concerts are part of The Philadelphia Orchestra's WomenNOW celebration, funded in part through generous support from the **Tang Fund**.

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

Please join us following the February 21 concert for a free Chamber Postlude featuring members of The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Beethoven String Quartet No. 10 in E-flat major, Op. 74
("Harp")

- I. Poco adagio—Allegro
- II. Adagio ma non troppo
- III. Presto—Più presto quasi prestissimo—
- IV. Allegretto con variazioni

Miyo Curnow Violin

Elina Kalendarova Violin

Kerri Ryan Viola

Kathryn Picht Read Cello

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



Getting Started with LiveNote[®] 2.0

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Helpful Hints

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- » Tap in the middle of the screen to display player controls such as Glossary, Brightness, Text Size, and Share.
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The Philadelphia Orchestra



Jessica Griffin

The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the world's preeminent orchestras. It 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 educational initiatives, and an ongoing commitment to the communities that it serves, the ensemble is on a path to create an expansive future for classical music, and to further the place of the arts in an open and democratic society.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his eighth 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, from Verizon Hall to

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The Philadelphia Orchestra continues the tradition of educational and community engagement for listeners of all ages. It launched its **HEAR** initiative in 2016 to become a major force for good in every community that it serves. **HEAR** is a portfolio of integrated initiatives that promotes **H**health, champions music **E**ducation, enables broad **A**ccess to Orchestra performances, and maximizes impact through **R**esearch. The Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members through programs such as PlayINs, side-by-sides, PopUP concerts, Free Neighborhood Concerts, School Concerts, sensory-friendly 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. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich history of touring, having first performed outside Philadelphia in the earliest days of its founding. It was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China in 1973, launching a now-five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

The Orchestra also makes live recordings available on popular digital music services and as part of the Orchestra on Demand section of its website. Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording, with seven celebrated CDs on the prestigious Deutsche Grammophon label. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit www.philorch.org.

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director

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Photo: Jessica Griffin

Conductor



JIM PETERSON

Herbert Blomstedt made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 1987 and last appeared with the ensemble in 2017. In the more than 60 years of his career, he has acquired the unrestricted respect of the musical world. Noble, charming, sober, modest—he possesses those very qualities that seemingly have so little to do with a conductor's claim to power. Anyone who has attended his rehearsals and experienced his concentration on the essence of the music, the precision in the phrasing of musical facts and circumstances as they appear in the score, the tenacity regarding the implementation of an aesthetic view, is likely to have been amazed at how few despotic measures were required to this end. He has always represented that type of artist whose professional competence and natural authority make all external emphasis superfluous. His work as a conductor is inseparably linked to his religious and human ethos, and his interpretations combine great faithfulness to the score and analytical precision, with a soulfulness that awakens the music to pulsating life.

Born in the US to Swedish parents and educated in Uppsala, New York, Darmstadt, and Basel, Mr. Blomstedt made his conducting debut in 1954 with the Stockholm Philharmonic and subsequently served as chief conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic, the Swedish and Danish radio orchestras, and the Staatskapelle Dresden. Later, he became music director of the San Francisco Symphony, chief conductor of the NDR Symphony, and music director of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. His former orchestras in San Francisco, Leipzig, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Dresden, as well as the Bamberg and NHK symphonies, have all honored him with the title of conductor laureate.

Mr. Blomstedt holds several honorary doctorates. He is also an elected member of the Royal Swedish Music Academy and was awarded the German Federal Cross of Merit. Over the years, all leading orchestras around the globe have secured his services. At the age of 92, he continues to be at the helm of leading orchestras with enormous mental and physical presence, verve, and artistic drive.

Soloist

Stéphane Gallios



Lise de la Salle made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2013. In addition to these current performances, highlights of her 2019–20 season include appearances with other major orchestras and conductors, including Washington's National Symphony and Krzysztof Urbanski, the Cincinnati Symphony and James Conlon, and the Dortmund Philharmonic for its first-ever New Year's concert; recitals in London and Hamburg; and additional concerts in Germany, France, Switzerland, the UK, the US, and the United Arab Emirates. She has played with many leading orchestras across the globe in the world's most esteemed concert halls, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Chicago, Boston, Detroit, and Atlanta symphonies in the US; the London Symphony and the Royal Philharmonic in the UK; and the national orchestras of France and Lyon in her native France. Active in educational outreach, she also teaches master classes in many of the cities in which she performs.

Among Ms. de la Salle's critically acclaimed recordings for Naïve are an all-Chopin disc with a live recording of the Second Piano Concerto with Fabio Luisi conducting the Staatskapelle Dresden, and a disc released in celebration of Liszt's Bicentennial, which was awarded a Diapason d'Or. Recent recordings include *Bach Unlimited* for Naïve and *Paris-Moscow* with French cellist Christian-Pierre La Marca on Sony Classical.

Born in Cherbourg, France, in 1988, Ms. de la Salle was surrounded by music as a child. She began studying piano at the age of four and gave her first concert at the age of nine in a live broadcast on Radio France. She studied at the Paris Conservatory and made her concerto debut at 13. She made her Paris recital debut at the Louvre before going on tour with the Orchestre National d'Île-de-France. She has worked closely with Pascal Nemirovski and was a long-term advisee of Geneviève Joy-Dutilleux. In 2004 she won the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in New York. Later that year the organization presented both her New York and Washington debuts. At the Ettlingen International Competition in Germany, she won First Prize and the Bärenreiter Award. She has also won First Prize in many French piano competitions.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

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

1837

Mendelssohn

Piano Concerto
No. 2

Music

Donizetti
*Roberto
Devereux*

Literature

Hawthorne
Twice-told Tales

Art

Martin
*Manfred on the
Jungfrau*

History

Victoria becomes
Queen of
England

Felix Mendelssohn began his life as a miraculous prodigy and by the time of his death—too young at age 38—was one of the most celebrated and powerful figures in music: a great composer, pianist, conductor, as well as a public figure shaping the future of musical life. He composed his Piano Concerto No. 2 during his honeymoon and the piece sparkled when he was the soloist for its premiere in England in September 1837.

At age 27 Hector Berlioz produced one of the most remarkable first symphonies ever written, which he titled *Episode in the Life of an Artist: Fantastic Symphony in Five Movements*. In the *Symphonie fantastique* he indicated not only movement titles but also devised an elaborate autobiographical program that he wanted audiences to read before hearing the piece. The result is a truly fantastic symphony that deploys a large orchestra to spectacular effect. A brief musical motif, the *idée fixe* associated with the artist's beloved, appears in each of the five movements and lends a larger unity to the work. The influence of the *Symphonie fantastique* on musical Romanticism was enormous.

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

Piano Concerto No. 2



Felix Mendelssohn
Born in Hamburg,
February 3, 1809
Died in Leipzig,
November 4, 1847

As a child Felix Mendelssohn was already recognized as one of the most extraordinary prodigies in the history of music and by the end of his relatively short life—he died at age 38—he had emerged as one of the most lauded and powerful musicians of the day. His early compositional genius may even have surpassed that of Mozart in works such as the miraculous Octet, composed at age 16, and the Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at 17.

Mendelssohn hailed from a prosperous Jewish family that was part of the German intellectual and cultural elite. Moses Mendelssohn, his paternal grandfather, was the celebrated Enlightenment philosopher. His banker father, Abraham, who eventually converted his children (and then himself) to Protestantism, was thus sandwiched between eminent figures. He once quipped that “formerly I was the son of my father, now I am the father of my son.”

The Musical Director of Europe Mendelssohn received an excellent education—what we would now call a liberal arts one—that included foreign languages, literature, and philosophy. His parents subsidized a multi-year grand tour of Europe that would leave traces on compositions for years to come. That his gifts were not limited to music is evident in his impressive writings, sketches, and watercolors. By his late 20s Mendelssohn was esteemed not only as a distinguished composer and performer—a pianist and one of the first important modern conductors—but also an immensely powerful force in German musical culture more broadly.

Following a three-year stint as music director in Düsseldorf, Mendelssohn moved in 1835 to Leipzig, which served as his base for the remaining 12 years of his life. He was the conductor of the eminent Gewandhaus Orchestra and was instrumental in establishing a conservatory there, of which he was the first director and that is now named after him. (His friend Robert Schumann also taught there, as did a host of other important musicians of the day.) After a few years, without giving up Leipzig, he was drawn into the Berlin sphere as well, jet-setting between the two cities at a time before jets. He helped to invent modern concert life much as we know it today and was largely responsible for the revival of the

music of J.S. Bach. Mendelssohn traveled widely, knew almost everyone, and thus by 1840 had emerged as a—or perhaps *the*—central musical figure of his day. Eventually the range and intensity of his activities took a toll on his health and he had a series of strokes shortly before his death in November 1847.

A Honeymoon Concerto Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 2 in D minor came mid-career, at a time when he was juggling his many official duties with a big change in his personal life. He began writing the Concerto on his honeymoon after marrying Cécile Jeanrenaud in March 1837. The work was intended for England, a country with which he enjoyed a long and deep relationship, specifically for the Birmingham Music Festival, where he was slated to conduct his oratorio *St. Paul* in September. His halting progress on the Concerto can be traced through letters in which he complained that the work was causing him trouble: "it simply won't flow," "I have already begun the new concerto and, as usual, I am terribly cross—what a wretched thing is the piano and its 100,000 little notes," and "the concerto is proving to be a real pain for me." But he pressed forward—composing the work in his head (as usual) and playing it for friends (and his new bride) before committing it to paper. He wrote to a friend in late July that it was "almost finished in my head." Mendelssohn was the soloist at the premiere in Birmingham on September 21 with George Smart conducting in a concert that had just one rehearsal. The piece enjoyed great success leading to further performances in England before the European premiere in Leipzig. Mendelssohn continued to play it for the rest of life.

Although the label "Piano Concerto No. 2" registers the reality of Mendelssohn's two mature essays in the genre, it is somewhat misleading. He had completed the now better-known Piano Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 25, in 1831 and his last major orchestral work was the great Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64. But, in fact, Mendelssohn wrote many more concertos, which points to the various complications caused by his prodigious gifts, premature death, and the fact that he often revised his works. His popularity meant that some pieces were released posthumously with ever-ascending opus numbers, even though they had been written in his youth for his own use or for friends. At age 13, he composed a Piano Concerto in A minor, as well as a Violin Concerto in D minor. During the next years, 1823 and 1824, he produced two concertos for two pianos, which he played with his older sister Fanny, and

Mendelssohn composed his D-minor Piano Concerto in 1837.

The first, and only other, performances of the piece by The Philadelphia Orchestra were in March/April 1958, with pianist Rudolf Serkin and Eugene Ormandy.

The score calls for solo piano; pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, and trumpets; timpani; and strings.

The Concerto runs approximately 22 minutes in performance.

also a Double Concerto for Violin and Piano in D minor.

A Closer Look Today, looking at 19th-century piano concertos that remain vital repertory pieces, there seems quite a gap between Beethoven's last one, the "Emperor" from 1809, and the great late-Romantic essays by Grieg, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky. There are a few lucky survivors from the 1830s, '40s, '50s, such as the two Chopin wrote in his late teens and Schumann's much revised A-minor Concerto. Both of Mendelssohn's mature piano concertos were written for his own use, succeeded in their own time, and are relatively rarely heard today, especially the Second performed on this concert.

The opening **Allegro appassionato** begins somewhat mysteriously and the piano soloist enters quite early, well ahead of schedule according to the formal traditions of the time. Commentators have speculated that the dark mood of much of the movement may relate to the death of Mendelssohn's father and the brighter, more lyrical sections reflective of his recent marriage. The three movements are played without pause, thus leading to a hymn-like **Adagio: Molto sostenuto** followed by the **Finale: Presto scherzando**. Ever since the premiere this last movement has delighted audiences. Mendelssohn said that it "creates so much effect as a piece of pianistic pyrotechnics that I often have to laugh when I happen to play it properly." Audiences wanted Mendelssohn to repeat it at the premiere—in an age before recordings this was common practice—but the composer/soloist remarked that he "was too tired."

—Christopher H. Gibbs

The Music

Symphonie fantastique



Hector Berlioz
Born in La Côte-St.-André,
Isère, December 11, 1803
Died in Paris, 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 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 suffering there can be no doubt. One has only to read the letters of 1829 (when he 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

Berlioz composed the *Symphonie fantastique* in 1830.

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 Yannick Nézet-Séguin in October 2016.

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 (doubling C, A, and 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.

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

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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

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

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

Idee 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.

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

Timbre: Tone color or tone quality

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

Presto: Very fast

Scherzando: Playfully

Sostenuto: Sustained

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Assai: Much

Molto: Very
(Ma) non troppo: (But) not too much

Più: More

Poco: Little, a bit

Quasi: Almost

MODIFYING SUFFIXES

-issimo: Very

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



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