

Season 2012-2013

**Thursday, February 21,
at 8:00**

**Saturday, February 23,
at 8:00**

**Sunday, February 24,
at 2:00**

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor

Jean-Yves Thibaudet Piano

Ridge Theater Company

Bob McGrath Artistic Director

Bach/orch. Stokowski Passacaglia and Fugue in
C minor, BWV 582

Ravel Piano Concerto in G major

I. Allegramente

II. Adagio assai

III. Presto

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 the 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, 45 minutes.

These performances are made possible in part by the
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The Rite of Spring

Ridge Theater/Production Credits:

Film by Bill Morrison

Projections by Laurie Olinder

Sets by Jim Findlay

Lighting by Matt Frey

Costumes by Deb O.

Stage Management by Matt Tierney

Video Programming by Austin Switser

Tissue Pulling by Matthew Greenfield

Aerialist Rigging by Eric Geoffrey

Assistant Choreographer: Javier Perez

Choreography by Dan Safer

Directed by Bob McGrath

Featuring:

Hope Davis

Anna Kichtchenko

Jennie MaryTai Liu

Kate Moran

Ani Taj

Natalie Thomas

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



A Symphony V.0 Production

March 28-30 8 PM

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor

Malin Christensson Soprano

Karen Cargill Mezzo-soprano

Andrew Staples Tenor (Evangelist)

Andrew Foster-Williams

Bass-baritone

Luca Pisaroni Bass-baritone (Jesus)

Westminster Symphonic Choir

Joe Miller Director

The American Boychoir

Fernando Malvar-Ruiz

Music Director

James Alexander Stage Director

John H. Weir Lighting Designer

Originally premiered on Good Friday in 1727, Bach's setting of the Gospel of St. Matthew features solo voices, children's choir, double choir, and a double orchestra. Yannick re-introduces this passion oratorio—not performed by the Orchestra in nearly 30 years—over the Easter weekend.



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The Philadelphia Orchestra

Jessica Griffin



Renowned for its distinctive sound, beloved for its keen ability to capture the hearts and imaginations of audiences, and admired for an unrivaled legacy of “firsts” in music-making, The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the preeminent orchestras in the world.

The Philadelphia Orchestra has cultivated an extraordinary history of artistic leaders in its 112 seasons, including music directors Fritz Scheel, Carl Pohlig, Leopold Stokowski, Eugene Ormandy, Riccardo Muti, Wolfgang Sawallisch, and Christoph Eschenbach, and Charles Dutoit, who served as chief conductor from 2008 to 2012. With the 2012-13 season, Yannick Nézet-Séguin becomes the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Named music director designate in 2010, Nézet-Séguin brings a vision that extends beyond symphonic music into the

vivid world of opera and choral music.

Philadelphia is home and the Orchestra nurtures an important relationship not only with patrons who support the main season at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts but also those who enjoy the Orchestra’s other area performances at the Mann Center, Penn’s Landing, and other venues. The Philadelphia Orchestra Association also continues to own the Academy of Music—a National Historic Landmark—as it has since 1957.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, presentations, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador for Philadelphia and for the United States. Having been the first American orchestra to perform in China, in 1973 at the request of President Nixon, today The Philadelphia

Orchestra boasts a new partnership with the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing. The Orchestra annually performs at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center while also enjoying a three-week residency in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., and a strong partnership with the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival.

The ensemble maintains an important Philadelphia tradition of presenting educational programs for students of all ages. Today the Orchestra executes a myriad of education and community partnership programs serving nearly 50,000 annually, including its Neighborhood Concert Series, Sound All Around and Family Concerts, and eZseatU.

For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit www.philorch.org.

Soloist



Decca/Kasikara

Pianist **Jean-Yves Thibaudet** has performed around the world for more than 30 years and recorded more than 50 albums. His long history with The Philadelphia Orchestra began in 1990 when he made his debut at the Mann Center under the baton of Charles Dutoit; he has appeared with the Philadelphians as a guest soloist almost every year since.

Mr. Thibaudet began the 2012-13 season playing Gershwin with the New Jersey Symphony and opening the season for the São Paulo State Symphony. Other international highlights this season include a tour of Europe with the Kammerorchester Basel; a Bernstein tour in Spain with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin; engagements with the Oslo and Helsinki philharmonics, and at the Lucerne Festival; and a three-week residency in his native Lyon, France. Appearances in the U.S. include an all-Debussy program at Lincoln Center; Saint-Saëns's Piano Concerto No. 5 with the Boston Symphony; and performances with the New York Philharmonic and the National, Colorado, and Seattle symphonies. Mr. Thibaudet finishes the season playing Saint-Saëns and MacMillan with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Nashville, Chicago, Atlanta, and Indianapolis symphonies.

Mr. Thibaudet's recordings with Decca have won numerous awards. His latest CD, *Gershwin*, features big jazz band orchestrations of *Rhapsody in Blue*, the "I Got Rhythm" Variations, and the Concerto in F live with the Baltimore Symphony and Marin Alsop. On his Grammy-nominated recording *Saint-Saëns, Piano Concerti Nos. 2 & 5*, released in 2007, he is joined by Mr. Dutoit, a long-standing collaborator, and the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Mr. Thibaudet was the soloist on the Oscar-winning soundtrack for the film *Atonement* in 2007 and the Oscar-nominated *Pride and Prejudice* in 2005. He was also featured in the 2000 PBS/Smithsonian special "Piano Grand!," a performance program hosted by Billy Joel to pay tribute to the 300th anniversary of the piano.

Known for his style on and off the stage, Mr. Thibaudet has also made a mark in fashion. His concert wardrobe is by celebrated London designer Vivienne Westwood.

Ridge Theater Artists

Ridge Theater has established itself as one of the premier creators of multimedia theater, opera, and new music performance in America. Ridge productions—described as “hallucinatory, oddly beautiful, and disturbing”—typically position performers within film and video projections, redefining traditional theatrical boundaries. Dramatic staging by co-founder and artistic director Bob McGrath and haunting film work and projections by the filmmaker Bill Morrison (writer and director of 2002’s *Decasia*) and the visual artist Laurie Olinder are hallmarks of the Ridge style. “They conjure up a dreamlike world, in which the actors seem to float,” wrote the *Chicago Tribune*.

Bill Morrison has worked with Ridge Theater since 1990, designing films for over 20 staged productions with the company. Called “one of the most adventurous American filmmakers” by *Variety*, his work often combines archival material set to original contemporary music. He is best known for his landmark film *Decasia* (2002), which first premiered as part of Ridge Theater’s immersive production of Michael Gordon’s symphony. Recent projects include *The Shooting Gallery*, an interactive installation with composer Richard Einhorn that premiered at BAM’s Next Wave Festival 2012; *The Great Flood*, with the guitarist Bill Frisell; and *Just Ancient Loops*, with composer Michael Harrison and cellist Maya Beiser.

Laurie Olinder is a multi-media designer, painter, and photographer. She is a founding member of Ridge Theater and has been recognized with an OBIE Award, a New York Dance and Performance “Bessie” Award, and an Eliot Norton Award for Outstanding Design in the Theater. Ms. Olinder has designed projections for numerous contemporary composers, including John Adams, Gavin Bryars, Philip Glass, Michael Gordon, Henryk Górecki, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe. Her work has been shown at noted performance venues such as the American Repertory Theater, BAM, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and MASS MoCA.

Ridge Theater Artists

Jim Findlay works across specialties as a designer, director, performer, and creator with a constellation of theater, performance, and music groups. He was a founding member of the Collapsable Giraffe and Accinosco/Cynthia Hopkins. He is a frequent collaborator with Ridge Theater, Bang on a Can, and Ralph Lemon, and he was a designer at the Wooster Group from 1994 to 2003. His work has been seen at Carnegie Hall, BAM, Arena Stage, A.R.T., and in over 50 cities worldwide, including Berlin, Istanbul, London, Moscow, and Paris. He recently co-wrote and directed *Botanica*. His awards include two Obies, two Bessies, a Lucille Lortel, and a Henry Hewes Award.

Matt Frey has collaborated with Ridge Theater on such projects as *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*, *Shelter Project*, *Oedipus*, *Decasia*, and *The Death of Klinghoffer*. Recent work includes *Dog Days* (Peak Performances), *Feng Yi Ting* (Spoleto Festival, Lincoln Center Festival), Debussy's *The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian* (San Francisco Symphony), *What Rhymes with America* (Atlantic Theatre Company), and *Long Day's Journey into Night* (Actors Theatre of Louisville). Other companies he has collaborated with include the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Atlanta Symphony, the Corn Exchange (Dublin), Soho Rep, Playwright's Horizons, Naked Angels, the New Group, New York Theatre Workshop, Second Stage, and Paper Mill Playhouse.

Deb O's environment, set, and costume design credits include *The Seagull*, *Ivanov*, *Platonov*, and *Uncle Vanya* (Lake Lucille, NY); *The Magical History Tour* (the Clipper on the Hudson, NY); *5 Days in March* and *Heaven on Earth* (La Mama); *The Panic Show* and *Make a Small Incision* (Witness Relocation); *The Deepest Play Ever* (New Musical, the New Ohio, NY); *Too Much Too Soon* (Lesser America); *The Nature of Captivity* (Mabou Mines, P.S. 122); *The Savannah Disputation* (Old Globe, CA); *The Greeks* (Juilliard); *Salsalandia* (La Jolla Playhouse, CA); *Jihad the Musical* (Edinburgh Festival); and *The Mistakes Madeline Made* (Yale Rep). She received her MFA from Yale University and teaches design at NYU/PHTS.

Ridge Theater Artists

Matt Tierney has been associated with numerous productions with Ridge Theater, including *Jennie Richee*, *Decasia*, *Oedipus*, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, and *Shelter* with Bang on a Can. His recent work in sound design includes *Detroit*, *Kin*, *This* (Playwrights Horizons); *Uncle Vanya*, *The Ugly One*, *Blasted* (Hewes Award), and *Orange, Hat, and Grace* (SoHo Rep); *That Face* (Manhattan Theater Company); and *Elevator Repair Service's The Select (The Sun Also Rises)* (2012 Lucille Lortel and Obie awards). Regional theaters Mr. Tierney has worked with include the McCarter Theatre, BAM, Center Theatre Group, and Bard College. He was a former member of the Wooster Group and also appeared with Young Jean Lee's Theater Company.

Austin Switser is a New York-based video designer working internationally to integrate media components into performance. He is currently designing the Builders Association's upcoming production of *House/Divided*; he also collaborated with the company on *Jet Lag* and *Continuous City*. His additional design credits include New York Theater Workshop, Second Stage, the Apollo Theatre, Center Theater Group, REDCAT, the Geffen Playhouse, Pasadena Playhouse, and South Coast Repertory. He has been the associate designer for such Broadway productions as *American Idiot*, *Rock of Ages*, *Sondheim on Sondheim*, *A Catered Affair*, and *The People in the Picture*. Mr. Switser received his degree from CalArts in Video Design for Performance.

Javier Perez is an actor and dancer based out of New York City and Miami. He was last seen in Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard* as Trofimov and in the film *Rock of Ages* as a featured dancer. He has worked as a dancer on television for various award shows and most recently assisted in choreography and appeared on *Dancing with the Stars*. Mr. Perez's upcoming engagements include the world premiere of Charles L. Mee's *Eterniday with Witness Relocation* at La MaMa.

Ridge Theater Artists

Dan Safer is the artistic director of Witness Relocation, with which his dance and theater work has been performed in New York and across the U.S., Europe, and Southeast Asia. He has choreographed plays (most recently Hoi Polloi's *All Hands* at the Incubator Arts Project and Lisa D'Amour's *Detroit* at Playwrights Horizons), operas, rock videos, fashion shows, and films (*The Imperialists Are Still Alive*). Mr. Safer was a recipient of the Six Points Fellowship from 2007 to 2009, and he is the winner of two NY Innovative Theater Awards. He is the head of Movement Training at NYU/ Playwrights Horizons Theater School and has recently taught at Princeton University and the Norwegian Theatre Academy.

Bob McGrath is co-founder and artistic director of Ridge Theater. He has directed theater and opera at venues including the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Lincoln Center, the American Repertory Theater, Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall, Vineyard Theater, La MaMa E.T.C., and Arts at St. Ann's. He has collaborated with such composers and writers as John Adams, Gavin Bryars, Ben Katchor, David Lang, Michael Gordon, Neil LaBute, Warren Leight, Mark Mulcahy, Ben Neill, D.B.R. Daniel Bernard Roumain, Mikel Rouse, Susan Sontag, DJ Spooky, Mac Wellman, and Julia Wolfe. He currently teaches at Virginia Tech and has previously taught at Sarah Lawrence College and NYU. Mr. McGrath is the recipient of three OBIE awards.

Hope Davis, originally from Madison, Wisconsin, attended the North Carolina School of the Arts. She has performed with Douglas Dunn and Dancers, Christopher Williams Dance, Davis Freeman/Random Scream, and as a guest with the Limon Company. She was featured in Punchdrunk's American debut of *Sleep No More* in Boston and has been performing in its award-winning New York production for the past two years.

Ridge Theater Artists

Anna Kichtchenko was born in Moscow and was encouraged to explore circus arts from a young age. After immigrating with her family to Toronto, her passion for the circus became more serious, and she went to Montreal at age 14. She spent six years at the National Circus School of Montreal, developing her specialty, aerial tissue loop, and acquiring numerous circus skills, including contortion and hula hoops. She has performed in *Loft* with Les 7 doigts de la main in the German cabaret Chameleon; the *Omaterra* Show in Sherbrooke, Quebec; in a music video with Yann Perea and the *Daily Planet* TV show on the Discovery Channel; and in special events with Cirque Eloize, Cirque du Soleil, and Cirque Fantastic, among others.

Jennie MaryTai Liu works in experimental dance and theater as a director, choreographer, and performer; she also produces film pieces. Her work has been presented by such venues as the Bushwick Starr, HERE Arts Center, Dance Theater Workshop, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, and the American Dance Festival, as well as in Europe and her native Hong Kong. She has received residencies from the Bogliasco Foundation, the Yaddo Arts Colony, and the Djerassi Resident Artists Program and has performed with Big Dance Theater, the Faye Driscoll Dance Group, Nellie Tinder, Witness Relocation, and Cathy Weis Projects. She trained in theater at the Experimental Theater Wing at NYU and received her MFA in Dance from Hollins University.

Kate Moran began studying classical dance at a young age before turning to contemporary theater. While at NYU's Experimental Theatre Wing, she began working with the Paris-based SideOne Posthume Theatre and the Brooklyn-based GALEGates et al. Current projects include the world tour of Robert Wilson and Philip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach*; Peter Greenaway's latest film, *Goltzius and the Pelican Company*; Claude Schmidt's production of *Melaine Daniels*, an original piece based on Hitchcock's *The Birds*; and Yann Gonzalez's first feature film, *Les Rencontres d'après minuit*. Ms. Moran has recently been naturalized and holds a dual citizenship between France and the U.S., dividing her time between the two.

Ridge Theater Artists

Ani Taj is an NYC-based dancer, choreographer, and the founder of the Dance Cartel. She has choreographed new musicals, plays, concerts, music videos, art parties, and flash mobs, and she loves to make dances that remind her of Brazilian Carnaval. Her work has been presented at the Ace Hotel, Rattlestick Theatre, 3LD, Joe's Pub, Kent285, Summer on the Hudson, Dance on the Greenway, DanceNOW's Raw Festival, Triskelion Arts, and the Espacio Xisto (Salvador da Bahia, Brazil). As a performer, she has worked with Les Freres Corbusier, David Dorfman Dance, Reggie Watts & Tommy Smith, Simone Forti, and Liz Swados.

Natalie Thomas is a former company member of William Forsythe's Ballett Frankfurt, Nederlands Dans Theater II, and Berlin's Komische Oper. Her dance credits include *Wolf Phrase* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, *Minus 16* at Lucent Danstheater, and *Eidos Telos* at Sadler's Wells, and her theater credits include *Lucid* at the Cherry Lane Theatre; *Bellona, Destroyers of Cities* at the Kitchen; and the Wooster Group's *House/Lights* at St. Ann's Warehouse. She has been seen in numerous films, as well as on *The Guiding Light* and *Law and Order*. She has taught at Playwrights Horizons Theater School NYU and the Ailey School and has choreographed for Ballett Frankfurt, Nederlands Dans Theater Workshop, Korzo Workshop, and Panacea Festival.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1708

Bach

Passacaglia
and Fugue in
C minor

Music

A. Marcello
Oboe Concerto

Literature

Curl
*The Charitable
Surgeon*

Art

Watteau
Quellnymph

History

English capture
Sardinia

1913

Stravinsky

*The Rite of
Spring*

Music

Elgar
Falstaff

Literature

Mann
Death in Venice

Art

Sargent
*Portrait of Henry
James*

History

Balkan War

1929

Ravel

Piano Concerto
in G major

Music

Walton
Viola Concerto

Literature

Hemingway
*A Farewell to
Arms*

Art

Feininger
Sailing Boats

History

The Great
Depression

The program today revisits three Philadelphia premieres under Leopold Stokowski, whose appointment 100 years ago as the Orchestra's third music director is being celebrated throughout this season. The many marvelous orchestrations that Stokowski crafted for the Orchestra, most famously those based on organ music by Johann Sebastian Bach, are an important part of his Philadelphia legacy. Today we hear his first major Bach orchestration, that of the monumental Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, Bach's longest organ composition and, in Stokowski's view, the greatest.

Maurice Ravel began composing his Piano Concerto in G major in 1928 while on a North American tour and readily acknowledged the "thrilling and inspiring" influence of jazz that he heard while here. Stokowski conducted the American premiere of the Concerto with the Philadelphians and Sylvan Levin in April 1932, four months after its unveiling in Paris.

This coming May 29 marks the centennial of the scandalous premiere in Paris of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, a landmark event in the history of Western music. Historians now generally agree that it was the choreography much more than the music that caused the sensation that night in the newly built Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and indeed within a year *The Rite of Spring* emerged as a successful concert piece. Nearly a decade elapsed before the piece made it across the Atlantic. Stokowski conducted the American premiere of both staged and concert versions of Stravinsky's masterpiece right here in Philadelphia. Today, in a first-of-its-kind partnership with Philadelphia Live Arts, the Orchestra collaborates with the New York-based Ridge Theater to present a 21st-century treatment of *The Rite of Spring* with dancers, video projection, and theatrical lighting.

The Music

Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor



Johann Sebastian Bach
Born in Eisenach, March 21,
1685
Died in Leipzig, July 28, 1750

Leopold Stokowski, whose appointment a century ago as music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra is being celebrated throughout this season, wonderfully transformed music he loved into vibrantly colored orchestrations of his own. The compositions that inspired him varied widely, ranging from pieces by Baroque masters to Romantic opera arias, from medieval plainchant to the piano music of Chopin and Debussy. Partly through the influence of Walt Disney's *Fantasia* (1940)—which begins with a striking image of Stokowski conducting Johann Sebastian Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor (and later with him shaking hands with Mickey Mouse)—these transcriptions became emblems of the conductor's long relationship with Philadelphia and its Orchestra.

From Baroque Organ to Modern Orchestra

Stokowski was particularly drawn to the music of Bach and over the years arranged some three dozen organ, instrumental, and vocal pieces. Most were for organ; Stokowski's own instrument; when he emigrated from England to America he served as organist at St. Bartholomew's Church in New York City. This attraction seems natural as well because the organ is itself an orchestra in the sounds and instrumental colors it can produce. Stokowski's "symphonic transcription" (as he called it) of the Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor was his first large-scale orchestration of Bach and dates from 1922. It quickly became one of his most popular adaptations, a piece he frequently performed and recorded six times, twice with the Philadelphians.

In his study *Stokowski and the Organ*, Rollin Smith notes that Stokowski's orchestrations, unlike those of others who arranged Bach's works in the first decades of the 20th century, do "not stray far from the organ or its effects. The conductor's orchestration emulates the organist's registration." The organs of Bach's time, especially early in his career, were manually pumped pipe instruments that produced nowhere near the volume of sound we now associate with great cathedral organs, let alone with a modern symphony orchestra. Yet some of Bach's organ pieces, such as the brilliant Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, anticipate such a sonic future.

Bach probably composed his Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor around 1708.

The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work, in Stokowski's orchestration, were in February 1922, with Stokowski on the podium. Most recently the piece was performed in August 1985 in Saratoga, in Eugene Ormandy's orchestra, with William Smith conducting.

The Orchestra has recorded the Stokowski orchestration of the piece twice, in 1929 and 1936, both with Stokowski and both for RCA. The ensemble also recorded Ormandy's orchestration three times, all with Ormandy: in 1946 and 1960 for CBS, and in 1971 for RCA.

Stokowski's orchestration calls for four flutes (II doubling alto flute and IV doubling piccolo), three oboes, English horn, three clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, eight horns, four trumpets, four trombones, tuba, euphonium, timpani, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 13 minutes.

As Stokowski himself declared: "Bach foresaw ... this immense volume that a modern organ or orchestra can produce. That showed foresight of a tremendous nature."

Stokowski's advocacy of Bach's organ music helped to make this music known; he was not capitalizing on the fame of beloved pieces, but rather helping to make them beloved. As the pianist Oscar Levant observed: "The highly polished and iridescent playing of the orchestra—as slick, colorful, and vibrant as the audience it attracted—virtually put Bach, for the first time, on the Hit Parade."

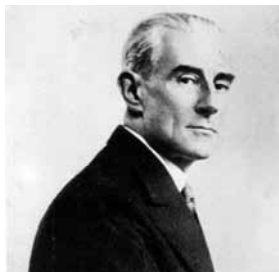
A Closer Look The Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor is the longest of Bach's organ works and, Stokowski believed, his greatest. Bach apparently composed it early in his career, around 1708, when he was working in Mühlhausen and then Weimar. A passacaglia is a procedure most associated with the Baroque era in which a short theme is continuously varied. (Brahms was famously inspired to use the procedure in the final movement of his Fourth Symphony.) This is the only known one that Bach so designated, although the form is related to the chaconne, of which he wrote a number. In this piece Bach used an eight measure theme, the first four of which seem to be based on an organ Mass by the French composer André Raison, although there is a chance that the similarity is coincidental. More certain is that Bach looked to a number of pieces by the great Dietrich Buxtehude, whose organ compositions so inspired the 20-year-old Bach that he walked some 250 miles to visit him in Lübeck in order to, as he put it, "comprehend one thing and another about his art."

The eight-measure theme in 3/4 meter is stated unaccompanied by the lower strings (originally organ pedal alone) in a slow and stately manner to start the monumental piece. This memorable theme will remain a constant presence throughout the next 13 minutes, migrating among the various instruments of the orchestra. Following the theme's initial statement there are 20 variations, with those in the middle being of a more transparent and soloistic nature, primarily for woodwind instruments. Just after the mid-point of the work a massive fugue begins that uses the first half of the passacaglia theme as the subject.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

The Music

Piano Concerto in G major



Maurice Ravel
Born in Ciboure, Lower
Pyrenees, March 7, 1875
Died in Paris, December 28,
1937

When Ravel embarked upon his American tour of 1928, his earlier battles for recognition in a hostile Paris were a distant memory. He was a celebrity. "As soon as we arrived in the harbor, a swarm of journalists and cartoonists invaded the boat, with cameras," he wrote to his brother upon arriving in New York. "In the hotel, the telephone didn't stop ringing. Every minute they would bring me baskets of flowers, and of the most delicious fruits in the world. Rehearsals, teams of journalists relieving one another every hour, letters, invitations, receptions. In the evening, relaxation: dance halls, theaters, gigantic movie houses, etc." Doubtless Ravel heard a wonderful mix of contemporary jazz and big-band music during these excursions into New York's night life, and it left its mark— as did the music of Gershwin.

Inspired by Jazz The tour, during which Ravel conducted his own music and performed on piano, was also an unprecedented artistic success. Upon returning to France he immediately began work on the Piano Concerto in G, the first ideas for which were conceived in America. His progress was interrupted by an additional commission from Paul Wittgenstein, the one-armed Viennese pianist, for a concerto for the left hand. So during the next two years Ravel wrote two concertos side by side; both are permeated by the rhythms, harmonies, and textures of 1920s jazz. "Each movement of my new concerto has some jazz in it," he said in February 1932 of the G-major Concerto. "I frankly admit that I am an admirer of jazz, and I think it is bound to influence modern music. It is not just a passing phase, but it has come to stay. Jazz is thrilling and inspiring; I spend many hours listening to it in nightclubs and on the radio."

The lightheartedness of the G-major Concerto was designed as a sort of foil to the more serious Left-Hand Concerto, as well as to excessively serious concertos in general. "I set out with the old notion that a concerto should be a diversion," Ravel later said of the G-major work. "Brahms's principle of a symphonic concerto was wrong; the critic was right who said that Brahms had written a concerto 'against' rather than 'for' the piano." His goal here, as he himself stated, was virtuosity without

Ravel composed his G-major Piano Concerto from 1929 to 1931.

Sylvan Levin was the soloist in the first Philadelphia Orchestra performance of the Concerto, in April 1932; Leopold Stokowski conducted. The most recent subscription performances were in November 2002, with Martha Argerich and Charles Dutoit. Some of the other pianists who have performed the work here include Eugene List, Jean Casadesus, Leonard Bernstein (who conducted from the keyboard), Philippe Entremont, Peter Serkin, and Louis Lortie.

The Philadelphians recorded the G-major Concerto in 1964 with Entremont and Eugene Ormandy for CBS.

The score calls for piccolo, flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, E-flat clarinet, two bassoons, two horns, trumpet, trombone, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, slapstick, snare drum, tam-tam, triangle, wood block), harp, and strings, in addition to the solo piano.

The Concerto runs approximately 20 minutes in performance.

profundity. “As a model I took two musicians who, in my opinion, best illustrate this type of composition: Mozart and Saint-Saëns. This is why the Concerto, which I originally thought of entitling *Divertissement*, contains the three customary parts: the initial Allegro, a compact classical structure, is followed by an Adagio, in which I wanted to pay special homage to ‘scholasticism,’ and in which I attempted to *write* as well as I could; to conclude, a lively movement in Rondo form.”

He originally intended the Concerto as a pianistic display piece for himself, in fact for yet another projected concert tour. But by the time he had completed the arduous, two-year project in 1931, he had grown so ill that the pianist Marguerite Long was enlisted to perform the demanding solo part. (He did conduct the performance, however.) After the successful Paris premiere, in January 1932, he and Long took the work on an extended tour of 20 European cities. The reception was enormous; in a number of cities the audiences demanded a repeat of the propulsive and jazzy final movement.

The presence of jazz elements in the Concerto in G has, however, tended to obscure a view of the work’s debt to tradition and to formal models—and of its meticulous craftsmanship. The first movement, for example, is one of the composer’s most sharply-etched “classical” forms, dazzling in its sheer sonic excitement, yet consistently satisfying in its remarkable logic and symmetry. Ravel was a diligent composer, and a perfectionist; the almost unparalleled “polish” of his scores was the result of meticulous care heaped upon every measure of music. He thought nothing of spending two years on a piece.

A Closer Look A crack of a whip and a Basque folk tune in the piccolo begin the opening **Allegramente**; the piano’s first solo might remind some of *Rhapsody in Blue*, as will, perhaps, the bluesy clarinet theme that follows. The movement’s pyrotechnics culminate in a twittering, cascading cadenza. The second movement (**Adagio**) is a rare treat in the 20th-century repertoire: a truly lyrical, tonal slow movement with the integrity required by the most rigorous of modernists. It is like Chopin viewed through a Stravinskian lens; its out-of-step triple meter continues to “fool the ear” throughout. The **Presto** finale is a *perpetuum mobile* movement that brings the work to a jaunty, inspired close.

—Paul J. Horsley

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 century, that written by Tchaikovsky, the great Russian. With his *Swan Lake* (1875-76), *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 premiere centennial of which is celebrated this May.

The Russian artist and archeologist Nikolai 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 a large number for the orchestra, many more 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 works by Chopin. What exactly happened next, 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 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 Debussy's *Jeux* with the company just two weeks earlier. Although the music was 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: Weber's *The Specter of the Rose* and Borodin's Polovtsian Dances.

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* here 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.

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 April 2010 with Charles Dutoit.

The Philadelphians recorded the work in 1929 with Stokowski for RCA, in 1955 with Eugene Ormandy for CBS, and in 1978 with Riccardo Muti for EMI; an abridged version by Stokowski appeared in 1939 for RCA and 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 (II 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, bass trumpet, three trombones, two tubas, two timpanists, percussion (two antique cymbals, bass drum, cymbals, güiro, tam-tam, tambourine, and triangle), and strings.

The Rite of Spring runs approximately 30 minutes in performance.

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

Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

BWV: The thematic catalogue of all the works of J.S. Bach. The initials stand for *Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis* (Bach-Works-Catalogue).

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

Cadenza: A passage or section in a style of brilliant improvisation, usually inserted near the end of a movement or composition

Chaconne: Before 1800, a dance that generally used variation techniques; in 19th- and 20th-century music, a set of ground-bass or *ostinato* variations

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

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

Dissonance: A combination of two or more tones requiring resolution

Divertimento: A piece of entertaining music in several movements, often scored for a mixed

ensemble and having no fixed form

Divertissement: See divertimento

Fugue: A piece of music in which a short melody is stated by one voice and then imitated by the other voices in succession, reappearing throughout the entire piece in all the voices at different places

Ground bass: A continually repeated bass phrase of four or eight measures

Intonation: The treatment of musical pitch in performance

Legato: Smooth, even, without any break between notes

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Ostinato: A steady bass accompaniment, repeated over and over

Passacaglia: In 19th- and 20th-century music, a set of ground-bass or *ostinato* variations, usually of a serious character

Perpetuum mobile: A title sometimes given to a piece in which rapid figuration is persistently maintained

Rondo: A form frequently used in symphonies and concertos for the final movement. It consists of a main section that alternates with a variety of contrasting sections (A-B-A-C-A etc.).

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

Toccata: Literally “to touch.” A piece intended as a display of manual dexterity, often free in form and almost always for a solo keyboard instrument.

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

Tonic: The keynote of a scale

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Allegro: Cheerfully

Presto: Very fast

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Assai: Much

Orchestra Headlines

Philadelphia Orchestra Musicians in Concert

The Dolce Suono Ensemble, which includes numerous Orchestra members, presents a a DSE on the Road concert on Sunday, March 3, at 3:00 PM at Croft Farm, 100 Bortons Mill Road, in Cherry Hill, NJ. For more information, call 267.252.1803 or visit www.dolcesuono.com.

1807 & Friends, a chamber music group whose roster includes many Philadelphia Orchestra musicians, presents a concert on Monday, March 4, at 7:30 PM, at the Academy of Vocal Arts, 1920 Spruce Street, Philadelphia. The performance, which features Philadelphia Orchestra Associate Principal Flute David Cramer and pianist Cynthia Raim, includes works by Weber, Gaubert, and Mendelssohn. Single tickets are \$17.00. For more information, please call 215.438.4027 or 215.978.0969.

The Main Line Symphony, led by Philadelphia Orchestra bassist Henry Scott, presents the second concert of its 2012-13 season on Friday, March 15, at 8:00 PM at Valley Forge Middle School, 105 West Walker Rd., Wayne. The program features Philadelphia Orchestra Assistant Principal Bass Joseph Conyers in Bottesini's Double Bass Concerto No. 2, along with Enesco's Romanian Rhapsody No. 1 and Dvořák's "New World" Symphony. Tickets are \$18.00 for adults and \$12.00 for students and senior citizens. For more information, please call 610.688.0235 or e-mail info@mlso.org.

New Barbara Govatos Recording

A new boxed set recording of the complete Beethoven Sonatas for Violin and Piano by Orchestra violinist Barbara Govatos and pianist Marcantonio Barone was recently released on Bridge Records. The set is available through Bridge Records or Amazon. This past November the duo received the Classical Recording Foundation's Samuel Sanders Award for Collaborative Artists in recognition of the new recording.

March

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Jessica Griffin

Tickets are disappearing fast for these amazing concerts! Order your tickets today.

Rite of Spring

March 2 8 PM

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor

Bach/orch. Stokowski Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor

Bach/orch. Stokowski Fugue in G minor ("Little")

Bach/orch. Stokowski Toccata and Fugue in D minor

Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*

The Rite of Spring will be performed in the concert version without any additional visual elements.

Beethoven's "Eroica"

March 8 & 9 8 PM

March 10 2 PM

Christoph von Dohnányi Conductor

Rudolf Buchbinder Piano

Lutosławski Funeral Music

Mozart Piano Concerto No. 20, K. 466

Beethoven Symphony No. 3 ("Eroica")

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