

CONCERT PROGRAM

February 7-8, 2015

Stéphane Denève, conductor
Jean-Yves Thibaudet, piano

DEBUSSY *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*
(1862-1918) (*Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*) (1891-95)

JAMES MACMILLAN Piano Concerto No. 3, "The Mysteries of Light" (2007-08)
(b. 1959)

Baptisma Iesu Christi—
Miraculum in Cana—
Proclamatio Regni Dei—
Transfiguratio Domini Nostri—
Institutio Eucharistiae—

Jean-Yves Thibaudet, piano

(Performed without pause)

INTERMISSION

DVOŘÁK Symphony No. 8 in G major, op. 88 (1889)
(1841-1904)

Allegro con brio
Adagio
Allegretto grazioso
Allegro ma non troppo

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

These concerts are part of the Wells Fargo Advisors series.

Stéphane Denève is the Ruth and Ed Trusheim Guest Artist.

Jean-Yves Thibaudet is the Lucy and Stanley Lopata Guest Artist.

The concert of Saturday, February 7, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Dr. Philip and Mrs. Sima Needleman.

The concert of Sunday, February 8, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Mrs. Laura R. Orthwein.

Pre-Concert Conversations are sponsored by Washington University Physicians.

Large print program notes are available through the generosity of the Delmar Gardens Family and are located at the Customer Service table in the foyer.

FROM THE STAGE

Mark Sparks, Principal Flute, on Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (*Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*): "French composers were into the idea of the flute representing something poetic, a particular idea. The flute's simplicity, its roots in mythology, and its tonal characteristics, especially in the first octave, could evoke certain imagery and atmosphere. Debussy wasn't the only one doing this, but he is the most famous."

"The piece is avant-garde, revolutionary. A lot of those terms are actually an outgrowth of the Ballets Russes and Nijinsky's choreography—it's the visual aspects that caused a riot. But in terms of sound, it's the harmony. The idea is personal for Debussy. He owns the idea of what happens harmonically: ambiguity, consciously taking the traditional Germanic sense, Wagner especially, and throwing it out the window."



Mark Sparks

VARIETIES OF ECSTATIC EXPERIENCE

BY DANIEL DURCHHOLZ

TIMELINKS

1889

DVOŘÁK

Symphony No. 8 in G major, op. 88
George Eastman's Kodak camera goes on sale

1891-95

DEBUSSY

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune (*Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*)
Thomas Edison patents motion-picture camera

2007-08

JAMES MACMILLAN

Piano Concerto No. 3, "The Mysteries of Light"
Financial markets fall into global recession

What the world needs now, is ecstasy, sweet ecstasy. Burt Bacharach and Hal David didn't say that, exactly, though they might have had they heard the types of ecstatic expression found in tonight's program—the sensual delights of Debussy, the religious rapture found in the deep devotion of MacMillan, and Dvořák's reveling in the country comforts of his homeland. That these three pieces come from such wildly different directions is somehow comforting. There is more joy to be found in the world than we know and it can be found in more places than we think.

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune (*Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*)

IMPRESSIONS Claude Debussy did not care for the term "musical impressionism"—who, after all, approves of their work being reduced to a brief slogan? But it is as good a shorthand description as any for his music, with its constantly shifting harmonic inventions and unconventional orchestrations. Indeed, in the work of Debussy, impression matters more than any well-defined musical statement.

The impressionist painters of the late 19th century were important to Debussy, but so were the symbolist poets, as his work attempted to evoke in music what other artists did on paper and canvas. One of those symbolist poets was Stéphane Mallarmé, whose 1865 poem (subsequently revised) "L'après-midi d'un faune" was a favorite of Debussy's. He had written his first song based on a Mallarmé's poem eight years prior to the *Prelude*.

Mallarmé's poem—whose eroticism caused it to be refused publication more than once—follows the reverie of a faun (a half man/half goat creature out of Greek mythology) and his unsuccessful pursuit of a pair of nymphs. In Debussy's own description of the work, he says, "The music

of this *Prelude* is a very free illustration of the beautiful poem of Mallarmé. By no means does it claim to be a synthesis of the latter. Rather there are the successive scenes through which pass the desires and dreams of the faun in the heat of this afternoon. Then, tired of pursuing the fearful flight of the nymphs and the naiads, he succumbs to intoxicating sleep, in which he can finally realize his dreams of possession in universal Nature.”

Appropriately, the music is sensual, hedonistic, and dreamlike, from the opening melody (played on flute) suggestive of the faun playing his pipes to the rather formless but richly expressive colors provided as the piece moves forward, on harp, woodwinds, and strings.

Some were scandalized by the piece when it debuted in Paris, and others were put off by its radical formlessness. But it turned out to be a staggeringly important work for the generation of composers that followed. As Pierre Boulez commented, “Just as modern poetry surely took root in certain of Baudelaire’s poems, so one is justified in saying that modern music was awakened by ‘L’après-midi d’un faune.’”

JAMES MACMILLAN

Piano Concerto No. 3, “The Mysteries of Light”

DIRECT APPEALS Contemporary composer James MacMillan is a bit of a polemicist. He stands staunchly against “the old guard of the avant-garde” who “are deeply suspicious of any significant move towards tonality, any hint of pulse that is actually discernible, and any music which communicates successfully with a non-specialist audience.” His works, instead, are direct appeals to communication on an emotional level, and the traditional music of his native Scotland is something he has drawn on again and again to achieve that.

Another perennial source for MacMillan is religion, the impulse toward which he sees as among the “primal, universal aspects of the human condition.” A deeply devoted Catholic, MacMillan found inspiration for his Piano Concerto No. 3, “The Mysteries of Light,” in the 2002 introduction by Pope John Paul II of a set of five



Born

August 22, 1862, St. Germain-en-Laye, near Paris

Died

March 25, 1918, Paris

First Performance

December 22, 1894, in Paris; Gustave Doret conducted the orchestra of the Société Nationale de Musique

STL Symphony Premiere

January 30, 1908, Max Zach conducting

Most Recent STL Symphony Performance

May 22, 2009, Ward Stare conducting

Scoring

3 flutes
2 oboes
English horn
2 clarinets
2 bassoons
4 horns
percussion
2 harps
Strings

Performance Time

approximately 10 minutes

**Born**

July 16, 1958, in Kilwinning,
Scotland

First Performance

April 14, 2011, Jean-Yves
Thibaudet was soloist, with
Osmo Vänskä conducting
the Minnesota Orchestra, in
Minneapolis

STL Symphony Premiere

This week

Scoring

3 flutes
piccolo
2 oboes
English horn
3 clarinets
bass clarinet
2 bassoons
contrabassoon
4 horns
3 trumpets
3 trombones
tuba
timpani
percussion
harp
strings

Performance Time

approximately 25 minutes

meditations known as the Luminous Mysteries, to the practice of praying the Rosary. Previously, there had been three sets (Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious) of five Mysteries each, which recall scenes from the lives of Jesus and Mary. Perhaps the most famous example of music based on the structure of the Rosary is Heinrich Biber's Rosary (or Mystery) Sonatas, composed in the 17th century.

MacMillan wanted to revive this practice, and the addition of the Luminous Mysteries provided the perfect opportunity. The five, as presented by John Paul II, focus on the public ministry of Jesus Christ.

MacMillan's composition lays them out in a single continuous piece with five distinct sections, thus fusing the concerto form with that of the symphonic poem. The sections are "The Baptism of Jesus Christ," "The Wedding at Cana," "Proclamation of the Kingdom of God," "The Transfiguration of Our Lord," and "The Institution of the Eucharist."

A working knowledge of the source material would likely deepen the experience of the concerto, but MacMillan has issued this rather intriguing disclaimer: "the music here is in no way geared towards liturgy, or devotional in any accepted, traditional sense. Rather, each image or event becomes the springboard for a subjective reflection, and proceeds in quasi-dramatic fashion, not too distant in concept from the musical tone poem."

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

Symphony No. 8 in G major, op. 88

CHANGE OF ATTITUDE For his Symphony No. 8, Antonín Dvořák said he wished to compose a work “different from the other symphonies, with individual thoughts worked out in a new way.”

To be sure, the great Czech composer did not reinvent the symphonic form with his Eighth, though he did find unique ways of presenting his ideas, working his way through a variety of themes and composing with great invention, verve, and a deep affection for the music of his Bohemian homeland.

More than anything, Dvořák’s Eighth stands in stark contrast to the tragic hue of his Seventh, which was written following the death of his mother; a time, he said, “of doubt, and obstinacy, silent sorrow and resignation.” Yet that particular work stands as one of his most profound achievements.

The Eighth is every bit its equal, but is its attitudinal polar opposite. As Dvořák would say, “different.” It is notable for its exuberance, its tunefulness, and its use of Slavic folk idioms, something Dvořák excelled at throughout his career. It was his fellow Czech composer Leoš Janáček—himself no stranger to borrowing from his native culture—who declared Dvořák the “sole representative of Czech music.”

The Eighth Symphony is one reason why.

MELODY POUR Perhaps the mood of the piece and the sources it draws upon have something to do with the circumstances of its composition. By the time he undertook the Eighth, Dvořák was living in comfortable circumstances. Brahms had praised Dvořák and made connections for him, and noted conductors such as Hans Richter and Hans von Bülow also championed his work. He traveled extensively (though not yet to America, which would inspire his Symphony No. 9 (“From the New World”), and he was famous as a conductor as well as a composer.

Success had not turned Dvořák’s head, though, and he remained deeply devoted to Czech nationalism and to the music of his homeland—a passion that burned within him since his early



Born

September 8, 1841,
Nelahozeves, Bohemia

Died

May 1, 1904, Prague

First Performance

February 2, 1890, in Prague;
the composer conducted
the Czech National
Orchestra

STL Symphony Premiere

December 18, 1964, Edouard
Van Remoortel conducting

Most Recent STL Symphony Performance

October 10, 2010, Gilbert
Varga conducting

Scoring

2 flutes
piccolo
2 oboes
English horn
2 clarinets
2 bassoons
4 horns
2 trumpets
3 trombones
tuba
timpani
strings

Performance Time

approximately 34 minutes

work with another great Czech composer, Bedřich Smetana. But success had accorded him a certain degree of comfort, including the purchase of a summer home in Bohemia, where he composed and orchestrated his Symphony No. 8 in a mere two and a half months—between August 26 and November 8, 1889.

Being in the countryside no doubt inspired the symphony's bucolic feel and lent to the ease and speed of its composition. "Melodies simply pour out of me," he said at the time.

That much is evident in the first movement, which begins with a bit of melodic misdirection. Rather than the key of G major, which is promised in the title, Dvořák introduces a theme in G minor. Its somber sound is comparable to a sky full of gloomy clouds whose purpose is to remain only long enough to offer a contrast to the moment when they disperse and allow the sun to burst through. Present also in the first moment is a playful "bird call" melody played on the flute as well as energetic bursts—lots of timpani, to be sure—and an abundance of melodic ideas following fast on one another's heels.

The second movement, more peaceful and pastoral, tracks the passage of a day in the countryside. Woodwinds and strings evoke the tranquil beauty, while brass and timpani threaten to bring a thunderstorm, though it comes to nothing.

The third movement features a lovely waltz that moves suddenly from its 3/8 time signature to 2/4—a shift from a staid tempo to a more frenetic one characteristic of a Slavic *dumka*—a folk form borrowed by Dvořák on numerous occasions.

Opening with a trumpet fanfare, the final movement offers a theme and variations, with energetic dance rhythms and Czech folk melodies, giving way to a more lyrical sequence and then a rip-roaring finale.

STÉPHANE DENÈVE

RUTH AND ED TRUSHEIM GUEST ARTIST

Stéphane Denève is Chief Conductor of Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and will become Chief Conductor of the Brussels Philharmonic and Director of its Centre for Future Orchestral Repertoire from September 2015. From 2005-12 he was Music Director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Denève regularly appears at major concert venues with the world's leading orchestras and soloists. He has a special affinity for the music of his native France, and is a passionate advocate for new music.

Recent European engagements have included appearances with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, Vienna Symphony, London Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin, and Swedish Radio Symphony. In North America he made his Carnegie Hall debut in 2012 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, with whom he is a frequent guest both in Boston and at Tanglewood, and he appears regularly with the Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and San Francisco Symphony. He makes his New York Philharmonic debut in 2015.

He enjoys close relationships with many of the world's leading solo artists, including Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Leif Ove Andsnes, Yo-Yo Ma, Leonidas Kavakos, Gil Shaham, Piotr Anderszewski, Emanuel Ax, Lars Vogt, Joshua Bell, Hilary Hahn, Vadim Repin, and Natalie Dessay.

A graduate and prize-winner of the Paris Conservatoire, Denève worked closely in his early career with Sir Georg Solti, Georges Prêtre, and Seiji Ozawa. He is committed to inspiring the next generation of musicians and listeners, and works regularly with young people in the programs of the Tanglewood Music Center and New World Symphony.

For further information, please visit stephandedeneve.com.



Stéphane Denève debuted with the St. Louis Symphony in 2003. His most recent performance was in September 2013.



Jean-Yves Thibaudet most recently performed with the St. Louis Symphony in September 2001.

JEAN-YVES THIBAUDET

LUCY AND STANLEY LOPATA GUEST ARTIST

Jean-Yves Thibaudet's 2014-15 season is an intriguing combination of a wide variety of music: a balance of orchestral appearances, chamber music and recitals, and a repertoire that includes familiar pieces, unfamiliar work by well-known composers, and new compositions. He also follows his passion for education and fostering the next generation of performers by becoming the first-ever resident artist at the Colburn School of Los Angeles this year and the following two.

In the new year, audiences can hear Thibaudet play MacMillan's Piano Concerto No. 3, which he premiered in 2011, with the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Stéphane Denève, and then Liszt with the Cleveland Orchestra and the Naples Philharmonic. After playing a duo recital with Gautier Capuçon in his native France at the Festival de Pâques in Aix-en-Provence, Thibaudet returns to the United States to play Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major—one of his signature pieces from the French repertoire for which he is renowned—with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Bernard Haitink's direction.

Under Michael Tilson Thomas's baton, he performs Bernstein's *Age of Anxiety* in San Francisco, where he celebrates Thomas's 70th birthday earlier in the year by playing Liszt's *Hexaméron* with Emanuel Ax, Jeremy Denk, Yuja Wang, and Marc-André Hamelin. Thibaudet performs Ravel's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic before interpreting both Ravel's Piano Concerto and Messiaen's *Turangalila* Symphony with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Esa-Pekka Salonen as part of the orchestra's 2015 Reveries and Passions Festival.

Jean-Yves Thibaudet then travels to Europe to perform with the Frankfurter Museumsorchester, Dresden Philharmonic, and the Munich Philharmonic, among others, before ending the season in dramatic fashion with Beethoven's Choral Fantasy with the Orchestre de L'Opéra de Paris under the baton of Music Director Philippe Jordan.

A BRIEF EXPLANATION

You don't need to know what "andante" means or what a glockenspiel is to enjoy a St. Louis Symphony concert, but it's always fun to know stuff. For example, what's going on in that Mallarmé poem?

"L'Après-midi d'un Faune": along with Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* (Daniel Durchholz references Baudelaire in his program notes) Mallarmé's poem moved art into a new form of expression; naturally, it was scandalous, as well as sensuous and surreal, and Debussy transformed poetic language into musical expression, or rather, impressions, with an emphasis on color rather than the explicit musical statement—definitely *not* Wagner; the poem begins: "These nymphs, I would perpetuate them./ So bright/ Their crimson flesh that hovers there, light/ In the air drowsy with dense slumbers./ Did I love a dream?"

PLAYING DEBUSSY:

MARK SPARKS, PRINCIPAL FLUTE

"Any advanced flutist has to have a special relationship with this piece. It's in the audition repertoire. It requires a high degree of control tonally, the ability to find timbres and colors and atmosphere in that passage.

"It has to begin very softly. I used to sit in a room and practice the first note over and over. Most flutists begin the phrase with one breath. I like to. It's how I was taught. You can transform the energy of the phrase without creating gaps by taking a breath—color, energy dynamics, all in the soft range of the instrument.

"You also need to control your nerves. You start the piece. It's the quintessential solo moment, like the trumpet in Mahler Five or the bassoon in *The Rite of Spring*."



Mark Sparks

YOU TAKE IT FROM HERE

If these concerts have inspired you to learn more, here are suggested source materials with which to continue your explorations.



Nijinsky as Faun,
photo by Baron de Meyer, 1912

Joffrey Ballet, *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* YouTube

The mythic dancer Nijinsky choreographed and was the first to dance the role of the faun with the Ballets Russes; the next mythic male dancer of the last century was Rudolf Nureyev, and you can watch him in this YouTube clip, Google “*L'Après-midi d'un Faune* – Joffrey Ballet” and you’re there

John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*

Google “Apostolic Letter Rosarium Virginis Mariae”

Read the historic Apostolic Letter, delivered by John Paul II in 2002, which inspired James MacMillan to compose his Piano Concerto No. 3, “The Mysteries of Light”

Josef Skvorecky,

Dvořák in Love: A Light-Hearted Dream

W. W. Norton & Co.

In this novel by expatriate Czech writer Skvorecky, the love affair is between Dvořák and the United States, which he came to in 1892; the novel imagines the inspiration of Symphony No. 9, “From the New World”

Read the program notes online. Go to **stlsymphony.org**. Click “Connect,” then “Program Notes.”

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The St. Louis Symphony is on



CLASSICAL CONCERT:

TCHAIKOVSKY 6



André Watts

FEBRUARY 20-21

Juraj Valcuha, conductor; André Watts, piano

It is one of the most heartfelt and stirring works of the Romantic repertoire, Tchaikovsky's ultimate statement, his Symphony No. 6, "Pathétique." These concerts also combine two legends: Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 and André Watts.

Presented by The Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation and sponsored by Thompson Coburn.

CLASSICAL CONCERT: TCHAIKOVSKY VIOLIN CONCERTO



Augustin Hadelich

FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 1

Hans Graf, conductor; Augustin Hadelich, violin

Tchaikovsky's stunning concerto deserves a fiery talent, which it finds in the young virtuoso Augustin Hadelich. Guest conductor Hans Graf returns to lead the Symphony through the thrills and chills of Stravinsky's *The Firebird Suite*.

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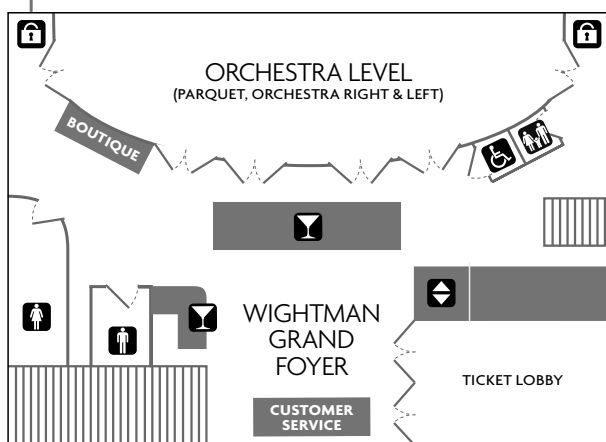
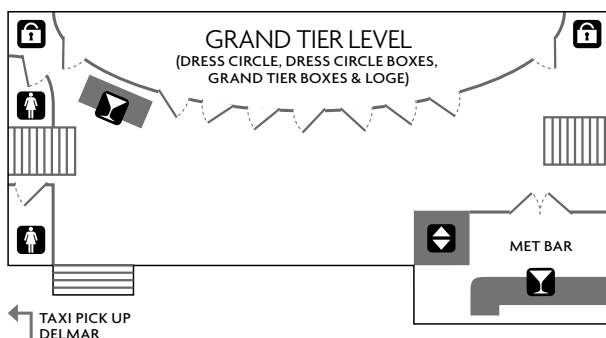
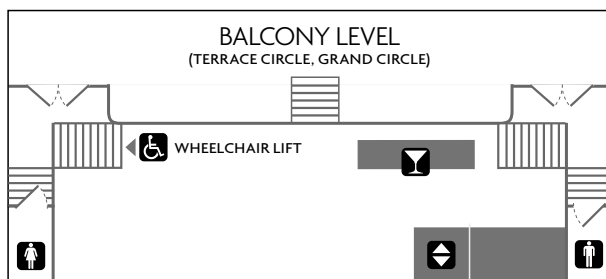
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