SYMPHONIC I
HIGDON & RAVEL
10.04.18 | 7:00 PM
ZELLERBACH HALL

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
Festive Overture

JENNIFER HIGDON
Violin Concerto

ANNA CLYNE
Night Ferry

MAURICE RAVEL
La Valse

Ming Luke
Guest Conductor

Benjamin Beilman
Violin
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Berkeley Symphony 18/19 Season

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We think that extraordinary should be an everyday occurrence.


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Hello and welcome to Berkeley Symphony, which is celebrating its 48th season this year! This organization has been a part of our local community since 1971 and continues its tradition of innovation and excellence in programming.

Much like the city it calls home, Berkeley Symphony understands that sometimes you have to be the change you wish to see in the world. That’s why the symphony is working to improve diversity in orchestral performances throughout the season in both composers and conductors. Tonight’s program features two works by female composers and almost half of the works to be performed this year are by living composers, a departure from typical programs.

I am also delighted to see Berkeley High Jazz Ensemble, a premier jazz program known internationally, on the programming this season. Berkeley High Jazz is a true representation of the talent we have here in Berkeley and the symphony’s continued efforts to engage with our community. It’s wonderful to see these students perform on the Zellerbach Hall stage together with professional musicians, a unique collaboration that enriches both the students and the more seasoned players.

Enjoy tonight’s show and be sure to tell your friends and neighbors about this wonderful community resource.

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Mayor Jesse Arreguin
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Excellence. Innovation. Community. These are three words we live by here at Berkeley Symphony, and I am thrilled that our actions mirror our words.

Excellence: This season’s Symphonic performances showcase world-class artists, like Benjamin Beilman tonight and Andrew Tyson in January making their Berkeley Symphony debuts, as well as first-time guest appearances by three conductors leading our amazing orchestra. For our Chamber series, we have stellar performances planned by our very own Executive and Artistic Director René Mandel, as well as a concert curated by our Music Alive Composer-in-Residence Anna Clyne.

Innovation: Every Symphonic concert includes at least one work—tonight, two works—by a female composer. Nearly half of the pieces programmed on the Symphonic series are by living composers, including a world premiere commission by Hannah Kendall scheduled for our January 31 concert. Over the course of this season, you will hear the Symphony’s first-ever performance of ten of the fourteen pieces programmed.

Community: Our Symphonic Series features a community partner on every program, including Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA), ODC/Dance, Berkeley High School Jazz Ensemble, Bay Area Book Festival, and more. Our Music in the Schools program continues to bring musical joy to Berkeley public schools under the guidance of Education Director Ming Luke, who also guest conducts tonight’s performance. Our Berkeley Sounds Composer Fellows, mentored by Anna Clyne, are developing new works to be premiered at the Bay Area Book Festival in May.

Berkeley Symphony believes that classical music is a living art form created by, and open to, people from all walks of life. I am proud of our work embracing the beauty of the progress that classical music has made, while still holding true to the foundational pillars on which we stand. Thank you for joining us tonight and continuing to support your Berkeley Symphony.

S. Shariq Yosufzai
It is with exultant fanfare that we kick off 2018-19 with all of you here tonight. This season, we begin a journey together to define the new direction and future of Berkeley Symphony as we bid farewell to Music Director Joana Carneiro and beckon in a new era. With deep gratitude we thank Joana for her nine indelible seasons here as Music Director and Conductor, and for her enduring impact on our orchestra and organization. She will be missed both on and off the podium—and we so look forward to having her back in future seasons as a guest conductor.

Following the example Maestra Carneiro has set for adventurous programming and excellence, we present to you masterfully crafted pairings of contemporary music of our time with classics of the ages. Each concert in our 2018-19 Symphonic series provides all the elements of the best classical music experiences with a discerning eye to diversity and inclusion through programming. We feature music by powerful and iconic composers this year including a violin concerto by Pulitzer-Prize winning Jennifer Higdon, a world premiere piece composed by emerging star Hannah Kendall, an utterly unique and funky mélange of sound by the legendary Sofia Gubaidulina, all bookended by the extraordinary works of our beloved Music Alive Composer-in-Residence Anna Clyne.

For this 2018-19 season, we have four guest conductors lined up, starting tonight with Berkeley Symphony’s Associate Conductor and Education Director Ming Luke conducting Berkeley Symphony for the first time on the main stage of Zellerbach Hall. He is joined by the world-renowned Benjamin Beilman, also making his Berkeley Symphony debut as our featured violin soloist. This evening’s performance of Higdon’s beguiling violin concerto is certain to showcase Beilman’s profound artistry.

We invite you to celebrate the uniqueness of Berkeley with us tonight as we explore the intersections of artistic expression from all sides of the classical music experience. It is only with the support of our cherished audience, generous donors, and loyal subscribers—all of you—that we can bring this art to life.

With all warmest wishes,

René Mandel
Thank you to Joana Carneiro for her adventurous artistic vision and leadership for nine seasons as our beloved Music Director and Conductor.
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Berkeley Sounds Composer Fellows

In summer 2017, three emerging composers were chosen from a national candidate pool to participate in the inaugural Berkeley Sounds Composer Fellows program: Ursula Kwong-Brown of New York City; Aiyana Tedi Braun, currently a student at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia; and Peter Shin of Kansas City. Through the two-season fellowship, the composers are mentored by Music Alive Composer-in-Residence Anna Clyne while developing compositions to be performed by Berkeley Symphony. In addition, the Fellows receive artistic and career guidance from the Symphony artistic staff, orchestra musicians, and renowned mentor-composers and industry professionals. The goal for participating composers is to develop a composition style that is deeply personal and artistically true, yet designed to enter the standard orchestra repertory.

2017/18 Season Fellowship Highlights

- Mentorship sessions with Anna Clyne, John Adams, Joana Carneiro, Berkeley Symphony principal musicians and artistic staff
• Development of new works for chamber ensemble inspired by artwork on display at BAMPFA (Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive)
• Radio interview with DJ Velvet Einstein on KALX
• **Full: Pairs** on March 31 at BAMPFA: Compositions by Berkeley Sounds Composer Fellows were paired with pieces written by their mentors: Aiyana Braun with Jennifer Higdon; Ursula Kwong-Brown with Myra Melford; Peter Shin with Ted Hearne; and Anna Clyne with Julia Wolfe
• **Full: Symphony and Ballet** on April 29 at BAMPFA: World premieres of chamber ensemble pieces written by Aiyana Braun, Peter Shin, and Ursula Kwong-Brown were matched with dance by Berkeley Ballet Theater choreographers Laura O’Malley, Keon Saghari, and Vanessa Thiessen

What’s Next: 2018/19 Season Fellowship Activities
• Development of new works for chamber orchestra based on poetry written by living Bay Area poets
• World premieres of chamber orchestra pieces to be performed in partnership with the **Bay Area Book Festival** in Berkeley in May 2019
• Additional performances of these works on Berkeley Symphony’s spring Family Concerts
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Symphonic I: Higdon & Ravel

Thursday, October 4, 2018 at 7pm    Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley

Ming Luke    
Conductor

Dmitri Shostakovich    Festive Overture, Op. 96

Jennifer Higdon    Concerto for Violin and Orchestra

I. 1726
II. Chaconni
III. Fly Forward

Benjamin Beilman    violin

INTERMISSION

Anna Clyne    Night Ferry

Maurice Ravel    La Valse

Tonight’s concert will be broadcast on KALW 91.7 FM on May 6, 2019 at 9pm.

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Dmitri Shostakovich

Born on September 25, 1906, in Saint Petersburg, Russia; died on August 9, 1975, in Moscow

**Festive Overture in A major, Op. 96**

Composed: 1954

First performance: November 6, 1954, in Moscow, with Alexander Melik-Pashayev conducting the Bolshoi Theater Orchestra

Duration: approximately 7 minutes

Scored for piccolo, 2 flutes, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon; 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, cymbals, bass drum, snare drum, and strings

**In sum:**

- Shostakovich saved the day by agreeing to write the *Festive Overture* for a Soviet commemoration, with just three days to accomplish the task.

- The piece dates from the period just after the death of Stalin, which gave Shostakovich something of a reprieve from the tremendous pressure that sometimes included outright condemnation under the dictator.

- An example of Shostakovich’s populist style, the *Festive Overture* is a brilliant orchestral tour de force that shows a playful attitude toward Russian tradition.

The day Stalin died, March 5, 1953, marked a moment of temporary liberation—an occasion to feel genuinely festive—for Dmitri Shostakovich and countless other victims of the Soviet dictator’s reign. Shostakovich had been a Wunderkind composer and, not quite 30, was at the height of his success when he first experienced the terrifying implications of Stalin’s disapproval. An editorial in the Communist Party’s official newspaper, *Pravda*, condemned the composer for writing “decadent” music for an elite, though the work being attacked (his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*) was actually a runaway success with the public.

Fortunately, Shostakovich regained favor, but in 1948 he once again faced condemnation along similar lines. Stalin’s death brought a temporary thaw that allowed him to bring out music he knew would have been too dangerously adventurous to risk presenting, including such
“The Shostakovich and the Hidgon in the first half are two exceptionally bright and exuberant pieces. A brief look at the year that Festive Overture was written, 1954, gives some hints to its energy. While Shostakovich was one of the USSR’s most celebrated composers, the censors and Stalin often had a very heavy hand and Shostakovich was often on the wrong side of the government. When Stalin died in 1953, however, it began a major relaxation in censorship—thus the exuberance of the Festive Overture takes on a second and deeper meaning.”
masterpieces as his First Violin Concerto and Tenth Symphony (the latter often interpreted—though with some controversy—as a scathing portrayal of a tyrant).

*Festive Overture* dates from the year after Stalin’s death and represents the kind of prestigious commission Shostakovich was denied when he was out of favor but that went instead to third-rate hacks who always knew how to please the cultural police. But it happened that a conductor at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow who was tasked with organizing a special concert commemorating the 37th anniversary of the 1917 October Revolution desperately needed a peppy opening number.

Another conductor, Lev Nikolayevich Lebedinsky, remarked that the usual crop of composers who would be asked to produce this sort of piece typically “wrote terrible shit.” Yet in this instance, Shostakovich was asked to step into the breach—even though he had only three days to produce the piece.

“The speed with which [Shostakovich] wrote was truly astounding,” remarked Lebedinsky. “Moreover, when he wrote light music, he was able to talk, make jokes, and compose simultaneously, like the legendary Mozart.” As soon as he finished one page, messengers were on hand to rush it to the Bolshoi to get the parts copied, as there wasn’t a moment to spare.

**What to listen for**

*Festive Overture*—a concert opener rather than an actual overture to a subsequent stage work—opens with solemn brass fanfares, but no sooner are those sounded than the music takes off in an entirely different direction, one filled with manic high spirits. Mandatory optimism became one of the tenets of Socialist Realism, the cultural policy officially sanctioned under Stalin (and after), but here Shostakovich signals a sense of lighthearted liberation that seems to break free from the portentous rhetoric of the opening—and does so again in the coda, after a reprise of the fanfare music.

He also alludes to markers of Russian tradition, humorously echoing Tchaikovsky at his most unbridled and even quoting loosely from the overture to Glinka’s 1842 opera *Ruslan and Lyudmila* in the lyrical second theme, which Shostakovich intertwines with wildly rushing figures traded between strings and winds. As Lebedinsky notes, the music’s “vivacious energy spill[es] over like uncorked champagne.”
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Jennifer Higdon

Born on December 31, 1962, in Brooklyn, New York; currently resides in Philadelphia.

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra

Composed: 2008

First performance: February 6, 2009, with Hilary Hahn as the soloist and Mario Venzano conducting the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

Duration: approximately 33 minutes

In addition to solo violin, the score calls for 2 flutes (second doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (second doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 2 percussionists, harp, and strings.

In sum:

- One of the most distinguished American composers working today, Jennifer Higdon won the Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto.

- Higdon is by nature a highly collaborative artist and is often inspired by the musical personalities of performers, so she finds the concerto format especially appealing.

- Written for Hilary Hahn, the Violin Concerto leaves lots of room for the soloist’s personality to emerge while also allowing for varied exchanges between the violin and different configurations of the orchestra.

On the day she learned that she had been awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto (in April 2010), Jennifer Higdon remarked in an interview with NPR that she felt “fortunate to work with such great musicians,” referring to Hilary Hahn—the impetus for her Pulitzer-winning Violin Concerto. The composer similarly hastened to share credit for her success in several other discussions of the honor. She cited a host of colleagues, former teachers, and even her own students at the Curtis Institute as sources of inspiration.

It’s a reaction that follows naturally from the generous artistic personality Higdon projects. While her style is sometimes characterized as American neo-Romanticism, her approach to composition suggests little of the ego-driven self-absorption of Romantic cliché. It seems closer to a Baroque era attitude, one that appreciates music-making as a shared, praxis-oriented craft. That applies equally to the impressive range of soloists and ensembles around whose talents Higdon has tailored her commissions and to her disciplined work ethic. New requests for Higdon’s work come pouring in at a furious pace, yet not even her demanding schedule of teaching and frequent travel can
“The Higdon starts out with crystalline clarity from the percussion and harmonics from the strings and soloist. Higdon’s journey through Curtis sets the scene for this brilliant work written for Hilary Hahn, who also attended Curtis as a student. To perform this work with Benjamin Beilman, who also has connections to Curtis, will be a great joy.”
keep her from carving out time each day to compose.

In the process, Higdon has established herself as one of the most sought-after contemporary American composers, earning recognition through frequent programming and such distinctions (in addition to the Pulitzer) as the Grammy Awards (she has garnered two in the Best Contemporary Classical Composition category, for her Percussion Concerto and Viola Concerto, respectively) and, most recently, Northwestern University’s Nemmers Prize in Music Composition and the Eddie Medora King Award.

Surprisingly, Higdon discovered the world of classical music at a relatively late age. Born in Brooklyn, she grew up in Atlanta and rural Tennessee with much exposure to country and rock and, thanks to her parents’ involvement with the visual arts, to avant-garde art happenings. But she decided at age fifteen to teach herself flute and became a performance major at Bowling Green State. The notion of composing, Higdon recalls, arose almost by chance after a few years of study, when her flute teacher asked her to write a short piece. “I found arranging sounds to be fascinating,” says Higdon.

In 2000, the Philadelphia-based Curtis Institute commissioned a fifteen-minute orchestral piece, blue cathedral (2000). This breakthrough work had a widespread impact, introducing Higdon’s gift for emotionally direct, yet complexly textured, colorful orchestral language. The Violin Concerto, for example, juxtaposes the quasi-vocal lyricism of the solo violin with a remarkable array of sonorities from the percussion section, including marimba, glockenspiel, and knitting needles.

It makes sense that the concerto format figures prominently in Higdon’s prolific catalog of works: this is a composer who relishes collaborations with musicians whose artistic personalities she can set in high relief, such as Hilary Hahn, to whom she dedicated the Violin Concerto. It was commissioned for the violinist by the Indianapolis Symphony, the Toronto Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony, and the Curtis Institute of Music, where Higdon holds the Rock Chair in Composition.

Higdon notes that the Violin Concerto represented “a big mountain to cross” because the existing literature boasts such an abundance of familiar masterpieces. But she found inspiration in Hahn’s musical personality, having gotten to know the violinist when she was a student at the Curtis Institute.

“The 'story' of the Violin Concerto,” says Higdon, “is really Hilary and her violin.” Higdon studied the violin concerto repertoire as well as
relatively unknown works, looking for interesting angles from which to show off the solo instrument and also consulting closely with Hahn. For Higdon, writing a concerto involves “explor[ing] an instrument’s world, a journey of the imagination, confronting and stretching an instrument’s limits, and discovering a particular performer’s gifts.”

**What to listen for**

Cast in three movements, the Violin Concerto opens with the longest of these (and the last to be composed), a highly energetic movement titled “1726” (a reference to the address of the Curtis Institute, where Hahn enrolled in the composer’s class in “20th-Century Music”). With a nod to such Baroque composers as J.S. Bach, a devotee of intricate numerology in his compositional practice, Higdon makes extensive use of the musical intervals represented by each digit (i.e., unisons, sevenths, seconds, and sixths).

This is followed by “Chaconni,” a contrasting second movement that provides a space of lyrical calm. The title and formal design play on another Baroque idea, that of the chaconne or repeating chord progression. Higdon presents multiple chaconnes as the violin engages in a series of dialogs with different sections of the orchestra. The Concerto concludes with “Fly Forward,” which Higdon makes into an occasion to highlight the most athletic aspects of the soloist’s virtuosity.

**Anna Clyne**

Born March 9, 1980, in London; currently resides in Brooklyn

**Night Ferry**

Composed: 2012

First performance: February 9, 2012, with Riccardo Muti conducting the Chicago Symphony

Duration: approximately 20 minutes

Scored for 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes and English horn, 2 clarinets and bass clarinet, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 3 percussionists, harp, piano, and strings.

**In sum:**

- Anna Clyne is the Music Alive Composer-in-Residence with Berkeley Symphony through the 2018/19 season.
- *Night Ferry* was inspired by reflection on the manic depression that afflicted Schubert and other creative artists.
- Clyne was guided by a multi-panel painting she created of images and textual fragments as she structured the flow of her composition.
• Intensely colorful and built from dramatically contrasting impulses, *Night Ferry* is “music of voyages, from stormy darkness to enchanted worlds.”

A passion for drawing connections between music and other artistic disciplines threads through Anna Clyne’s creative work. It’s immediately apparent in the myriad links between poets and visual imagery that served as the impetus for the composition we hear on this program, *Night Ferry*. Clyne reveals this interdisciplinary perspective in many other works as well, whether in her symphonic ballet *RIFT* or *The Seamstress*, her violin concerto for Jennifer Koh, which she conceived as “an imaginary one-act ballet” inspired by a William Butler Yeats poem.

A collaborative spirit likewise underscores Clyne’s commitment to educational projects with young composers and to art therapy with people who have Alzheimer’s. In connection with her Music Alive residency with Berkeley Symphony—which continues into its third and final year through the current season—Clyne has been involved in a mentoring program with three young area composers whose work will be showcased in a program this coming May.

The position at Berkeley is the latest in a series of prestigious residencies for Clyne, including with the Chicago Symphony (2012-15), the Baltimore Symphony (2015-16), and National Sawdust (2017-18). The London-born composer, who has lived in the United States since 2002, studied at the University of Edinburgh and the Manhattan School of Music, where Julia Wolfe (of the new music collective Bang on a Can) became an important mentor. Clyne’s music has been featured at the BBC Proms, and her double violin concerto, *Prince of Clouds*, which she wrote during her Chicago residency, was nominated for a Best Contemporary Classical Composition Grammy Award in 2015.

Also a product of Clyne’s period collaborating with the Chicago Symphony musicians, *Night Ferry* marks a significant milestone. It was her largest effort up to that point and relies solely on the acoustic resources of a large orchestra (without the use of the electronics that figure in some of her previous work). The piece originated from a suggestion by Riccardo Muti to think of a link with two works by Franz Schubert that had been scheduled on the program for which the new piece was slated. Instead of looking for direct musical inspiration from Schubert, Clyne became intrigued by the literature on his psychological condition and its effect on his art.

She remarks: “Schubert suffered...
“Night Ferry was inspired by Franz Schubert’s mental disorders and depicts mania and violent mood swings sonically. Ravel’s La Valse, to be played directly after Night Ferry, at first glance is a charming collection of waltzes, a straight tribute to Strauss, Jr. However, though Ravel intended to write this tribute to Strauss, he was delayed in its composition by World War I. Ravel was greatly and severely affected by the war both physically and mentally. Ravel was affected by his own Night Ferry journey—a carefree tribute to Strauss therefore was no longer possible. To play these two works back to back and to take Berkeley Symphony’s audiences through this journey will be a musical experience not to miss!”
from cyclothymia, a form of manic depression that is characterized by severe mood swings, ranging from agonizing depression to hypomania, a mild form of mania characterized by an elevated mood and often associated with lucid thoughts and heightened creativity. This illness sometimes manifests in rapid shifts between the two states and also in periods of mixed states whereby symptoms of both extremes are present. This illness shadowed Schubert throughout his adulthood, and it impacted and inspired his art dramatically . . . . Extremes were an organic part of his make-up.”

Through a process of creative association, Clyne drew on artists who suffered similar emotional pain (including Virginia Woolf and Robert Lowell) and found a prototype for the image of a psychological voyage in Samuel Coleridge Taylor’s long narrative poem The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, a monument of early Romantic literature that was published in 1798, the year after Schubert’s birth. She took her title from this passage in Seamus Heaney’s poem Elegy, a tribute to fellow poet Robert Lowell:

You were our Night Ferry thudding in a big sea,
the whole craft ringing with an armourer’s music
the course set willfully across the ungovernable and dangerous

A visual component became an essential part of Clyne’s creative process as well. As an aid in the challenge of structuring the composition, she devised a “visual timeline” in which she “painted” the music, arranging a series of large canvases in a horizontal row. Divided into seven parts, each canvas corresponded roughly to three minutes of the piece and was in turn subdivided into three sections (see insert for reproduction). Painting became intertwined with composing in a creative feedback loop to trigger “ideas for musical motifs, development, orchestration, and, in particular, structure,” Clyne explains. “Similarly, the music would also give direction to color, texture and form.”

Interspersed among her images made with “paint, charcoal, pencil, pen, ribbon, and gauze,” she included pieces of text from the Coleridge as well as fragments of the illustrations Gustav Doré created to accompany it. Additional texts Clyne wrote into the painting derived from other artists “afflicted with, and blessed by, this fascinating illness.” Meanwhile, the vision of the mystic Persian poet also inspired her: “We have fallen into the place where everything is music . . . .”

**What to listen for**

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unfolds in a vast single-movement span that seamlessly binds these together. Moreover, the roiling, turbulent figure we hear at the outset recurs in various guises throughout the piece. Clyne says she imagined a condition of “darkness” as her starting point, from which the music voyages to magical places—for example, the melody first played by piccolo (“with tenderness and warmth”), which offers a respite, though temporary, from the opening atmosphere.

Clyne’s orchestral imagination is extraordinary, pitting the looming depths of the ensemble against sparkling percussion and swirling strings, at other times foregrounding a tangle of woodwind solos. The suggestive power of her color choices extends throughout Night Ferry, working in tandem with her use of tempo and orchestral weight to heighten or relax the tension. The piece eventually reaches a point of gently ebbing gestures, the volume falling away until the orchestra comes to rest on a long silence.

Overall, according to Clyne, this is “music of voyages, from stormy darkness to enchanted worlds. It is music of the conjurer and setter of tides, the guide through the ‘ungovernable and dangerous,’” that traces “a winding path between explosive turbulent chaoticism and chamber lyricism.”

Maurice Ravel

Born on March 7, 1875, in Ciboure, France; died on December 28, 1937, in Paris

La Valse

Composed: 1919-20

First performance: December 12, 1920, in Paris, with Camille Chevillard conducting the Lamoureux Orchestra

Duration: approximately 13 minutes

Scored for 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (3rd doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (triangle, tambourine, snare drum, cymbals, bass drum, castanets, tam-tam, glockenspiel, crotales), 2 harps, and strings

In sum:

• Several of Ravel’s best-loved works were inspired by dance themes, including La Valse.

• The man who commissioned La Valse rejected it as a ballet, and this “choreographic poem” has become better known as a stand-alone concert piece.

• Ravel wanted to pay tribute to the Viennese waltz of the 19th century, but La Valse is often interpreted as a musical allegory.
for the implosion of civilization associated with the First World War.

The genesis of La Valse straddles the period of a vanished society and the catastrophe of the First World War that robbed Maurice Ravel of friends (and in which he himself served as an ambulance driver). In 1909, the impresario Sergei Diaghilev—a Russian in exile in Paris, the man responsible for commissioning Stravinsky to write his pre-war, epochal ballet The Rite of Spring—had engaged Ravel to write what would be the Frenchman’s longest score: the ballet music Daphnis et Chloé for Diaghilev’s company, Les Ballets Russes. Tensions emerged between composer and impresario, but after the war Diaghilev again commissioned him to write a ballet.

There is some debate as to what Ravel set out to accomplish in this remarkable score, which he called a “poème chorégraphique pour orchestre.” The seeds for the piece date well before the war, back to 1906 (possibly the year before), when he imagined writing an homage to the Viennese waltz style perfected by the Strauss family—and to all the “joie de vivre” it symbolized. Curiously, following a conflagration that had encouraged a nationalist hostility against all things Germanic, Ravel returned to his abandoned ode to the Viennese waltz, completing the orchestral score in 1920. He also prepared a two-piano version of the music, which was premiered in Vienna as part of a concert series Arnold Schoenberg had instituted to promote new music.

Diaghilev insulted Ravel by rejecting the score. The young Francis Poulenc, who was present when Ravel and a colleague played a duo-piano transcription of La Valse for Diaghilev, reported: “When [he] finished, Diaghilev said, ‘Ravel, this is a masterwork . . . but it is not a ballet . . . It is the portrait of a ballet . . . a painting of a ballet.’” Ravel broke entirely with Diaghilev. Thus La Valse went full circle, so to speak, and has become known as a tone poem in the concert hall, though there have been various choreographic treatments as well (such as by Ida Rubinstein, who would also commission Ravel’s late-period ballet project Boléro).

Ravel described a scenario in his preface to the score: “Swirling clouds afford glimpses, through rifts, of waltzing couples. The clouds scatter little by little; one can distinguish an immense hall with a whirling crowd. The scene grows progressively brighter. The light of the chandeliers bursts forth at the fortissimo. An imperial court, about 1855.”

What is missing here is an obviously symbolic depiction of
a civilization’s demise (note the year 1855), let alone any reference to a “dance of death.” Yet in Ravel’s work overall we find a recurrent fascination with “the motif of death,” as the biographer Arbie Orenstein has observed. And even if the widespread interpretation of this music as a metaphor for the rupture in European civilization was not Ravel’s intention, the composer George Benjamin argues that *La Valse*’s “one-movement design plots the birth, decay, and destruction of a musical genre.”

**What to listen for**

Ravel here employs the most refined technical means in his treatment of harmony, rhythmic accentuation, dynamics, timbre, and allusions to the musical past. Opening with the mysterious, indeterminate sound of muted double basses, the piece also calls to mind the suddenly varying perspectives of cinema. Strains of various waltzes shift in and out of focus.

Midway through, an apparent quotation of the three-note rhythmic motto of the Scherzo from Beethoven’s Ninth intrudes with primal force. What we might have expected as a recapitulation filters all that has gone before through a strange new lens, and the circling momentum of the waltz collapses in violent entropy.

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With the “energy, creativity and charisma not seen since Leonard Bernstein” and “mind-blowing” and “spectacular” conducting, Ming Luke is a versatile conductor that has excited audiences around the world. Highlights include conducting the Bolshoi Orchestra in Moscow, performances of Romeo and Juliet and Cinderella at the Kennedy Center, his English debut at Sadler’s Wells with Birmingham Royal, conducting Dvorak’s Requiem in Dvorak Hall in Prague, recording scores for a Coppola film, and over a hundred performances at the San Francisco War Memorial with San Francisco Ballet. He has been recognized nationally for his work with music education and has designed and conducted education concerts and programs with organizations such as Berkeley Symphony, Houston Symphony, Sacramento Philharmonic, San Francisco Opera and others.


For the 18/19 season, Luke serves as an Assistant Conductor for the San Francisco Symphony, opens Berkeley Symphony’s season, works with the ARIA program with San Francisco Opera, and will return to the Kennedy Center and Sadler’s Wells in London with San Francisco Ballet. Guesting at the
San Bernardino Symphony, Billings Symphony, and Opera San Jose, Luke will also embark on a Baltics tour with the Berkeley Community Chorus and Orchestra, a well regarded chorus for whom he is only the third Music Director in over fifty years.

Passionate about collaborating with dance companies and deepening the impact of movement to live music, he has guested with Boston Ballet, New York City Ballet Orchestra, Nashville Symphony/Ballet, San Diego Ballet and others and conducted l’Orchestre Prométhée in Paris as part of San Francisco Ballet’s residency with Les Etés de la Danse. Noted for his work with ballet, famed dancer Natalia Makarova stated, “Ming has a mixture of pure musicality and a sensitivity to needs of the dancers, which are such rare qualities.”

Luke has written, arranged, and performed over 150 education concerts with Berkeley Symphony and has served on grant panels for the National Endowment of the Arts and the Grants and Cultural Committee of the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission. An exciting pops conductor, Luke has created and conducted a variety of pops concerts in many venues, from baseball stadiums, to picnics in the park with over 4,000 people in attendance, traditional concert halls and recording for Major League Baseball.

Ming Luke holds a Master of Fine Arts in Conducting from Carnegie Mellon University and a Bachelor of Music in Music Education and Piano Pedagogy from Westminster Choir College of Rider University.

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Benjamin Beilman, violin

American violinist Benjamin Beilman is recognized as one of the fastest rising stars of his generation, winning praise for his passionate performances and deep rich tone, which the *Washington Post* called “mightily impressive” and *The New York Times* described as “muscular with a glint of violence.”

In March 2016, Warner Classics released his debut recital CD. Highlights of Mr. Beilman’s 2017/18 season include performances with the Houston Symphony, Oregon Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, and Orchestra St. Luke’s, as well as a multi-city tour of California playing-directing the New Century Chamber Orchestra in a program including Bach, Stravinsky, and Andrew Norman. In recital, he will premiere a new work written for him by Frederic Rzewski and commissioned by Music Accord, presented by Boston Celebrity Series and Shriver Hall Concert Series, and on tour throughout the US in the 17-18 and 18-19 seasons. Abroad, Mr. Beilman will make his Australian concerto debut with the Sydney Symphony where he will perform Jennifer Higdon’s Concerto, and debuts with Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Trondheim Symphony.

He will also perform the European premiere of Frederic Rzewski’s new work at the Heidelberg Spring Festival, and return to the Wigmore Hall in recital.

The recipient of the prestigious 2014 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship, a 2012 Avery Fisher Career Grant, and a 2012 London Music Masters Award, in 2010, he won First Prize in the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, YCA’s Helen Armstrong Violin Fellowship, a People’s Choice Award, and was named First Prize Winner of the 2010 Montréal International Musical Competition.
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Beilman studied with Almita and Roland Vamos at the Music Institute of Chicago, Ida Kavafian and Pamela Frank at the Curtis Institute of Music, and Christian Tetzlaff at the Kronberg Academy.

He plays the “Engleman” Stradivarius from 1709 generously on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation.

Appointed by Music Director Riccardo Muti, Clyne served as a Mead Composer-in-Residence for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 2010-2015. She also recently served as Composer-in-Residence for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra during the 2015/16 season and for L’Orchestre national d’Île-de-France from 2014-2016. This season, Clyne is an Artist-in-Residence at National Sawdust. She was additionally selected by the League of American Orchestras and New Music USA to serve as the Music Alive Composer-in-Residence with Berkeley Symphony through the 2018/19 season.

Clyne has been commissioned by such renowned organizations as American Composers Orchestra, BBC Radio 3, BBC Scottish Symphony, Carnegie Hall, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Houston Ballet, London Sinfonietta, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, and the Southbank Centre, and her work has been championed by such world-renowned conductors as Marin Alsop, Pablo Heras-Casado, Riccardo Muti, Leonard Slatkin, and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Clyne was nominated for the 2015 Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Classical Composition for her double violin concerto, *Prince of Clouds*. She is also the recipient of several prestigious awards including the 2016 Hindemith Prize; a Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; awards from Meet the Composer, the American Music Center, the

**Anna Clyne, composer-in-residence**

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Jennifer Higdon is one of America’s most acclaimed and most frequently performed living composers. She has become a major figure in contemporary Classical music, receiving the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto, a 2010 Grammy for her Percussion Concerto and a 2018 Grammy for her Viola Concerto. Higdon enjoys several hundred performances a year of her works, and blue cathedral is one of today’s most performed contemporary orchestral works, with more than 500 performances worldwide. Her works have been recorded on more than sixty CDs. Higdon’s first opera, Cold Mountain, won the International Opera Award for Best World Premiere and the opera recording was nominated for 2 Grammy awards. She now holds the Rock Chair in Composition at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Her music is published exclusively by Lawdon Press.
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Thomas Rarick, a protégé of the great English maestro Sir Adrian Boult, founded the orchestra in 1971 as Berkeley Promenade Orchestra. Reflecting the spirit of the times, musicians performed in street dress and at unusual locations such as the University Art Museum. When Kent Nagano became the music director of the orchestra in 1978, he charted a new course by offering innovative programming that included rarely performed
20th-century works and numerous premieres. The renamed Berkeley Symphony Orchestra gained an international reputation for its adventurous programming, and became known for premiering the music of international composers and showcasing young local talents.

Berkeley Symphony entered a new era in January 2009 when Joana Carneiro became the Orchestra’s third Music Director in its 40-year history. Under Carneiro, the Orchestra continued its tradition of presenting the cutting edge of classical music for nine seasons. In 2016, Berkeley Symphony and composer Anna Clyne were awarded a Music Alive grant for a three-year composer residency, designed to immerse Clyne and the Symphony in the creation of new work, collaboration with other Berkeley arts institutions, music education, community outreach and multidisciplinary activities. Following Music Director Joana Carneiro’s decision to step down from the position in 2018, Berkeley Symphony named her Music Director Emerita and formed a committee to determine the future of artistic leadership.
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**$250 and above (continued)**

Emily & Robert Warden
Elizabeth & Sheridan Warrick
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Craig Wood
Katinka Wyle

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**Associate Principal Level**

**$120 and above (continued)**

Anonymous (3)
Philip & Mary-Ellis Adams
Karthiga Anandan & Luckshman Parameswaran
Mark & Cynthia Anderson
Jason Anderson
Laura Arechiga
Barbara Armentrout
Christian Fritze & Catherine Atcheson
Lea Baechler
Anna Bellomo & Joshua Bloom
Elaine & David I. Berland
Dorian Bikle
Ragna Boynton
Julia R. Brown
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Susan Crosby
Beth Crovitz
Claire Day
Margaret Dennis
Ms. Jacqueline M. Divenyi
Robert & Loretta Dorsett
Beth & Norman Edelstein
Bennett Falk & Margaret Moreland
Ms. Mary Ellen Fine
Ms. Brenda Fitzpatrick

---

**Associate Principal Level**

**$120 and above (continued)**

Ednah Beth Friedman
Marianne & John Gerhart
Heidi Goldstein
Anita Stapen & Richard Granberg
Steven E. Greenberg
Ervin & Marian Hafter
William & Judith Hein
Alan Stephens, Donna Hiraga-Stephens
Joanna Hirsch
Luise Hollowell
Phyllis Isaacson
Melanie Johnston
Michelle Jurika
Rick St. John & Tamiko Katsumoto
Charlotte Buchen Khadra
Paul Kuhn
Samuel and Tamara Kushner
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Eric Leimbach
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