

Season 2018-2019

Thursday, March 14, at 7:30
Saturday, March 16, at 8:00

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor
James McVinnie Organ

Muhly *Register*, Concerto for Organ and Orchestra 
 (In one movement)
*First Philadelphia Orchestra performances—Philadelphia
 Orchestra co-commission*

Intermission

Tchaikovsky *Manfred*, Symphony in Four Scenes after
 Byron's Dramatic Poem, Op. 58 
 I. Lento lugubre
 II. Vivace con spirito
 III. Andante con moto
 IV. Allegro con fuoco

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 45 minutes.

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

These concerts, and the Organ Postludes, are part of the Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ Experience, supported through a generous grant from the **Wyncote Foundation**.

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Please join us following these concerts for a free Organ Postlude featuring Peter Richard Conte.

Sullivan/transcr. Ennis Overture to *The Mikado*

Debussy/transcr. Roques *Prèmiere arabesque*

Rheinberger from Organ Sonata No. 11, Op. 148:
I. Agitato

Sousa/transcr. Conte "The Gladiator" March

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



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The Philadelphia Orchestra

Jeffrey Griffin



The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the preeminent orchestras in the world, renowned for its distinctive sound, desired for its keen ability to capture the hearts and imaginations of audiences, and admired for a legacy of imagination and innovation on and off the concert stage. The Orchestra is inspiring the future and transforming its rich tradition of achievement, sustaining the highest level of artistic quality, but also challenging—and exceeding—that level, by creating powerful musical experiences for audiences at home and around the world.

Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin's connection to the Orchestra's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics since his inaugural season in 2012. Under his leadership the Orchestra returned to recording, with four celebrated CDs on the prestigious Deutsche Grammophon label, continuing its history of recording success. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of listeners on the radio with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM.

Philadelphia is home and the Orchestra continues to discover new and inventive ways to nurture its relationship with its loyal patrons at its home in the Kimmel Center, and also with those who enjoy the Orchestra's area performances at the Mann Center, Penn's Landing, and other cultural, civic, and learning venues. The Orchestra maintains a strong commitment to collaborations with cultural and community organizations on a regional and national level, all of which create greater access and engagement with classical music as an art form.

The Philadelphia Orchestra serves as a catalyst for cultural activity across Philadelphia's many communities, building an offstage presence as strong as its onstage one. With Nézet-Séguin, a dedicated body of musicians, and one of the nation's richest arts ecosystems, the Orchestra has launched its **HEAR** initiative, a portfolio of integrated initiatives that promotes **H**ealth, champions music **E**ducation, eliminates barriers to **A**ccessing the

orchestra, and maximizes impact through **R**esearch. The Orchestra's award-winning Collaborative Learning programs engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members through programs such as PlayINs, side-by-sides, PopUP concerts, free Neighborhood Concerts, School Concerts, and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, presentations, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global cultural ambassador for Philadelphia and for the US. Having been the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, in 1973 at the request of President Nixon, the ensemble today boasts five-year partnerships with Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts and the Shanghai Media Group. In 2018 the Orchestra traveled to Europe and Israel. The Orchestra annually performs at Carnegie Hall while also enjoying summer residencies in Saratoga Springs and Vail. For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit www.philorch.org.

Music Director

Chris Lee



Music Director **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** will lead The Philadelphia Orchestra through at least the 2025-26 season, an extraordinary and significant long-term commitment. Additionally, he became the third music director of the Metropolitan Opera, beginning with the 2018-19 season. Yannick, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is an inspired leader of The Philadelphia Orchestra. His intensely collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm, paired with a fresh approach to orchestral programming, have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called him “phenomenal,” adding that under his baton, “the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better.”

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling talents of his generation. He has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000, and in summer 2017 he became an honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He was music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 2008 to 2018 (he is now honorary conductor) and was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world’s most revered ensembles and has conducted critically acclaimed performances at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon (DG) in May 2018. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with four CDs on that label. His upcoming recordings will include projects with The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and the Orchestre Métropolitain, with which he will also continue to record for ATMA Classique. Additionally, he has recorded with the Rotterdam Philharmonic on DG, EMI Classics, and BIS Records, and the London Philharmonic for the LPO label.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal’s Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini; he also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick’s honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada; an Officer of the Order of Montreal; *Musical America’s* 2016 Artist of the Year; the Prix Denise-Pelletier; and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec in Montreal, the Curtis Institute of Music, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, McGill University, and the University of Pennsylvania.

To read Yannick’s full bio, please visit philorch.org/conductor.

Soloist

Magnus Andersen



Organist **James McVinnie** makes his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these performances. His boundless approach to music has led him to collaborations with some of the world's leading composers, producers, and performers in classical, contemporary, popular, and experimental music. Nico Muhly, Tom Jenkinson (Squarepusher), Martin Creed, Richard Reed Parry of Arcade Fire, Shara Nova, David Lang, and Bryce Dessner, among others, have written works for him. Mr. McVinnie is a member of the Icelandic record label/collective Bedroom Community. *Cycles*, his debut recording of music written for him by Mr. Muhly, was released on the label in 2013. An album of music by Philip Glass, *The Grid*, was released on Orange Mountain Music in summer 2018.

Mr. McVinnie's recent performance highlights include a solo recital at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles and a subsequent concerto debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Esa-Pekka Salonen in the orchestra's Reykjavik Festival. At London's Barbican Centre Mr. McVinnie led the first performance of Mr. Glass's *Music in Twelve Parts* by any group other than the composer's own ensemble. His collaboration with Tom Jenkinson (Squarepusher) was presented at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw by the 2017 Holland Festival. He also gave the first performances of *Register* by Mr. Muhly with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in February 2018. In January 2019 he gave the world premiere of Mr. Glass's new *Symphony No. 12* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and John Adams conducting. He also performs the *Symphony* with the London Contemporary Orchestra in May 2019.

Mr. McVinnie was assistant organist of Westminster Abbey between 2008 and 2011. Prior to this appointment, he held similar positions at St. Paul's Cathedral, St. Albans Cathedral, and Clare College, Cambridge, where he studied music. He made his debut at London's Royal Festival Hall in March 2014, giving one of the six reopening recitals on the refurbished, iconic 1954 Harrison & Harrison organ. He made his solo debut at the Salzburg Festival at age 26, performing with the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra under Ivor Bolton.

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



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Tonight's concert features the "King of Instruments" in all its glory and where better than in Verizon Hall with the Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ and The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Nico Muhly, one of America's most accomplished young composers, wrote *Register*, his new organ concerto, as a co-commission from the Philadelphians. He dedicated the work to his good friend James McVinnie, who is the soloist tonight. The title refers to the many possibilities for the selection and combination of stops on an organ that produce the instrument's marvelous kaleidoscopic palette of tone colors and also conveys the expressive implications of vocal register or tone of voice.

The organ appears as well in Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* Symphony. If you have never heard the piece (or even heard of it), that is because what might be called his "Symphony No. 4½" has long been overshadowed by its far more famous symphonic neighbors and because it uses a large orchestra with organ. Tchaikovsky was inspired by Lord Byron's poem about a tormented anti-hero in the Swiss Alps looking back on his wayward life.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is the only orchestra in the world with three weekly broadcasts on SiriusXM's *Symphony Hall*, Channel 76, on Mondays at 7 PM, Thursdays at 12 AM, and Saturdays at 6 PM.

The Music

Register



Nico Muhly
Born in Randolph,
Vermont, August 26, 1981
Now living in New York City

Nico Muhly's ascent to prominence among his generation of composers comes from music that has entranced listeners with its seductive blend of American Minimalism (he counts Philip Glass among his mentors) and rich contrapuntal textures redolent of Anglican choral music. Two albums released during the composer's 20s, *Speaks Volumes* (2007) and *Mothertongue* (2008), demonstrate, as well, an instinct for expressive immediacy that have made Muhly highly sought-after as both a pop music collaborator and film composer. His skills as a dramatic composer have garnered two commissions from the Metropolitan Opera: *Two Boys* (2011) and *Marnie* (2017).

A Penetrating Ear for Color Many of Muhly's recent orchestral scores reveal a deepening sophistication with regard to orchestral color as an increasingly vital part of his compositional arsenal. *Control (Five Landscapes for Orchestra)* (2016), written for the Utah Symphony, takes inspiration from the state's natural environment. Its score is more evocative of Debussy than of Glass, trading hypnotic rhythms for a painterly care with instrumental timbres: a dreamy oboe melody floating atop crystalline plinks in the harp and celesta; marimba penetrating a gauzy halo of high winds and strings. Likewise his Cello Concerto (2012), from whose modest orchestration—single winds and brass, one percussionist, piano, harp, and strings—Muhly exacts a sweeping range of color.

His penetrating ear for color naturally served Muhly well in the composition of *Register* for organ and orchestra and is in evidence from the opening measure. The work's title refers to the registration of a pipe organ—that is, the selection and combination of stops that produce the instrument's kaleidoscopic palette of tone colors—as well as to the emotive implications of vocal register, or tone of voice. "I've always treated the organ as an early version of the synthesizer," Muhly writes, "with additions and subtractions to the sounds creating sudden shifts of mood, or register. Like in speech, changes in tone and style can be subtle or jarring; here, the organ and orchestra work with and against one another in an animated and intimate conversation, with sudden asides and rapid shifts in tack." In organist James McVinnie, to whom *Register* is dedicated,

Muhly composed *Register* in 2017.

These are the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the piece, which it co-commissioned.

The score calls for solo organ, piccolo, two flutes (II doubling piccolo II), two oboes, three clarinets (II doubling E-flat clarinet, III doubling bass clarinet), two bassoons (II doubling contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets, two trombones, bass trombone, tuba, percussion (bass drum, brake drum, Chinese cymbal, crotales, glockenspiel, güiro, ratchet, sleigh bells, tam-tams, tambourine, triangle, vibraphone, whip, wood blocks), harp, piano (doubling celesta), and strings.

Performance time is approximately 18 minutes.

Muhly has an old friend and a trusted (and frequent) collaborator. The soloist in *Register* is given considerable freedom to select his own registration throughout the score, following expressive prompts from the composer (“bright, brilliant;” “a strange sound . . . very quiet and obscure,” even, at one point, simply “an entirely different color”).

Register was co-commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic—which gave its world premiere in February 2018 with McVinnie as soloist, conducted by James Conlon—The Philadelphia Orchestra, and London’s Southbank Centre, where the London Contemporary Orchestra performs it in 2020.

A Closer Look Muhly writes, “The piece is built around three distinct cycles of chords: one, large and ascending, with a sense of slight menace; the second, bright, descending, and brilliant; and the third, a sparkling perpetual-motion machine, in whose genetic past is a Pavane in G minor by Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625), a composer with whose music Jamie and I both enjoy a lifelong romance.”

With these cycles of chords at *Register’s* foundation, a psychedelic swirl of orchestral colors surrounds the organ throughout the work. A literal crack of a whip sets in motion a bustle of winds and brass, like a city street scene at rush hour. An instant later, the organ’s “bright, brilliant” figurations place the ear on a different plane, accented first by featherweight string tremolandos, then quickly expanding into a shimmer of woodwinds and crotales. A sudden, impetuous organ solo—an emphatic series of chords, demanding the masses’ attention—heralds yet another, ethereal music.

And so goes the peripatetic 18-minute work, gleefully taking the listener from one vivid Technicolor episode to the next. The build-up to the work’s dramatic climax pits fluttering winds and high strings, like a chorus of birds (complete with the insistent rapping of a woodpecker), in dialogue with massive chords in the low brass. The organ, using distinct registrations, amplifies both sides of the exchange, before its mighty cadenza takes over. Melody here is issued from the organ’s pedals, the manuals adding atmospheric chords (as per the composer’s instructions, a “strange, mysterious sound”).

Muhly concludes *Register* on a subtle note. “Despite the power of the modern organ,” he writes, “the piece ends with a glance towards the Jacobean period, with strings played without vibrato, and the organ in its smallest, most understated register.”

—Patrick Castillo

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director

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Itzhak Perlman's appearance is made possible in part by a gift from Joan N. Stern, in memory of Clarence and Diana Stern.

The musicians of The Philadelphia Orchestra have graciously donated their services for this concert.

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Photo: Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

The Music

Manfred Symphony



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Born in Kamsko-Votkinsk,
Russia, May 7, 1840
Died in St. Petersburg,
November 6, 1893

Tchaikovsky's six numbered symphonies are beloved concert repertory and his final three in particular are enormously popular. He gave some of them explicit titles, such as "Winter Dreams" and "Pathétique," or divulged private programs in letters. And then there is what might be called Tchaikovsky's "Symphony No. 4½," the title page of which reads: "*Manfred*. Symphony in Four Scenes after Byron's Dramatic Poem." The work dates from 1885, between the composition of his Fourth and Fifth symphonies.

Manfred is one of Tchaikovsky's most ambitious instrumental works, but it has never quite found a welcome home in the concert hall, a fate the composer evidently anticipated: "I think it is my best symphonic composition, although because of its difficulty, impracticality, and complexity it is doomed to failure and neglect." He later soured somewhat on the piece and even contemplated cutting the last three movements entirely to recast the especially impressive first one as an independent symphonic poem.

The Appeal of Lord Byron The Symphony is based on a popular literary work by the great English poet Lord Byron (1788-1824), whose influence on the Romantics extended to Russia and whose works inspired many writers, composers, and artists. Byron's semi-autobiographical poem, published in 1817, tells of Manfred's remorse over past acts (incest is clearly alluded to) that resulted in the death of his beloved Astarte; he seeks death as a release from his torments. Manfred dominates the 1,336-line dramatic poem, although he encounters other characters, supernatural figures, and the ghost of Astarte. Stubbornly unrepentant to the end, the reclusive anti-hero dies rejecting salvation from any religious authority, the sort of defiant stance that Romantics found irresistible.

Mily Balakirev, the founding member of the so-called *Kuchka* or Mighty Five group of progressive Russian composers (along with Modest Musorgsky, César Cui, Alexander Borodin, and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov), suggested that Tchaikovsky write the piece and gave him detailed instructions about how to do so. Years earlier,

Balakirev, to whom Tchaikovsky ultimately dedicated the Symphony, had received a programmatic description for an orchestral work from the prominent music critic Vladimir Stasov, who was inspired by the French composer Hector Berlioz's recent trip to Russia. Stasov hoped that either Berlioz or Balakirev would write a piece based on *Manfred*, but they both declined. In October 1882 Balakirev passed along Stasov's program, to which he added suggested keys and tempos, to Tchaikovsky, who confessed the idea left him "quite cold." He acknowledged that the idea might well serve "a composer disposed to imitate Berlioz," further commenting that he was "passionately fond" of Robert Schumann's earlier incidental music for *Manfred* and would not want to compete with it.

Two years later Balakirev approached Tchaikovsky again and this time the response was more positive. Tchaikovsky was about to go visit a dying friend in the Swiss Alps, exactly the spot where *Manfred*'s tale takes place. He took along Byron's poem, which may have appealed to him in part because of the protagonist's sexual dilemma, perhaps resonating with issues around his own homosexuality. He admitted that during the "very hard work" of composing the piece over a four-month period he "turned for a time into a sort of *Manfred*." He finished the Symphony in September 1885, commenting in a letter that he had "been in a state of melancholy and nervous strain all summer under the influence of this depressing subject." Its successful premiere took place in Moscow the following March with its first American performance in New York at the end of the year.

A Closer Look In the published score Tchaikovsky gave a summary of the Symphony's four movements, adapting Stasov's and Balakirev's suggestions. The work owes a debt to Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* and *Harold in Italy*, principally through the use of a recurring musical motif that is associated with the title character, heard at the start of the piece. This Berliozian *idée fixe* appears at some point in each movement and unifies the different scenes.

Tchaikovsky calls for a very large orchestra, including organ, which is a practical reason the Symphony is less frequently performed than his others. He gave the most detailed description of the first movement (**Lento lugubre**): "Manfred wanders in the Alps. Wearied by the fateful questions of existence, tormented by hopeless longings and the memory of past crimes, he suffers terrible spiritual yearnings. He has delved into the occult sciences and commands the mighty powers of darkness,

The Manfred Symphony was composed in 1885.

Fritz Scheel conducted the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the piece, in October/November 1902. It was heard only a handful of times before the most recent subscription performances, in October 2005 with Vladimir Jurowski.

The Philadelphia Orchestra recorded the Manfred Symphony with Eugene Ormandy in 1976 for BMG.

Tchaikovsky's score calls for three flutes (Ill doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, chimes, cymbals, snare drum, tam-tam, tambourine, triangle), two harps, harmonium, and strings.

Manfred runs approximately 60 minutes in performance.

but neither they nor anything in this world can give him the forgetfulness to which alone he vainly aspires. The memory of the lost Astarte, once passionately loved by him, gnaws at his heart, and there is neither limit nor end to Manfred's despair."

Tchaikovsky switched the suggested order of the middle movements and follows with a fantastical, colorful scherzo (**Vivace con spirito**): "The Alpine Fairy appears to Manfred beneath the rainbow of a waterfall." The slow, dance-like third movement (**Andante con moto**) is "Pastoral: a picture of the simple, free, and peaceful life of the mountain folk." The finale (**Allegro con fuoco**) caused the composer the most difficulty, although it was well received at the premiere: "The subterranean palace of [the Satanic figure] of Arimanes. An infernal orgy. Appearance of Manfred in the midst of a bacchanal. Evocation and appearance of the spirit of Astarte, who pardons him. Death of Manfred," for which Tchaikovsky impressively brings in the organ and uses the medieval *Dies irae* chant.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



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Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

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

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Contrapuntal: See counterpoint

Counterpoint: The combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines

Harmonic: Pertaining to chords and to the theory and practice of harmony

Harmony: The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

Idee fixe: A term coined by Berlioz to denote a musical idea used obsessively

Legato: Smooth, even, without any break between notes

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Minimalism: A style of composition characterized by an intentionally simplified rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic vocabulary

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a

composer's output. Opus numbers are not always reliable because they are often applied in the order of publication rather than composition.

Pavane: A court dance of the early 16th century, probably of Spanish origin

Perpetual motion:

A musical device 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.).

Scherzo: Literally "a joke." Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid tempo in triple time, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts.

Sonata form: The form in which the first movements (and sometimes others) of symphonies are usually cast. The sections are exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last sometimes followed by a coda. The exposition is the introduction of

the musical ideas, which are then "developed." In the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.

Symphonic poem:

A type of 19th-century symphonic piece in one movement, which is based upon an extramusical idea, either poetic or descriptive

Timbre: Tone color or tone quality

Tremolando: A slight steady wavering of pitch

Vibrato: Pulsation of musical sound, on stringed instruments produced by rapid rocking of finger stopping the string

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Allegro: Bright, fast

Andante: Walking speed

Con fuoco: With fire, passionately, excited

Con moto: With motion

Con spirito: With spirit

Lento: Slow

Lugubre: Dismal, dark, sad

Vivace: Lively

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