

ANDRIS NELSONS, RAY AND MARIA STATA MUSIC DIRECTOR

Boston Symphony Orchestra

141st season, 2021–2022

Thursday, February 24, 8pm

Friday, February 25, 8pm (Casual Friday; no intermission, with introductory remarks from the stage by BSO principal bassoon Richard Svoboda)

Saturday, February 26, 8pm

Tuesday, March 1, 8pm

ANDRIS NELSONS conducting

ARVO PÄRT *CANTUS IN MEMORY OF BENJAMIN BRITTEN*

SHOSTAKOVICH VIOLIN CONCERTO NO. 1 IN A MINOR, OPUS 77[99]

Nocturne. Moderato

Scherzo. Allegro

Passacaglia. Andante

Burlesque. Allegro con brio

BAIBA SKRIDE

{INTERMISSION}

KAIJA SAARIAHO SAARIKOSKI SONGS [February 24, 26, March 1 only]

(world premiere; co-commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Andris Nelsons, Music Director, through the generous support of the Arthur P. Contas Fund for the Commissioning of New Works)

Poems from the collection *Alue* by Pentti Saarikoski, 1973.

Texts and translations follow program note.

Luonnon kasvot (“The face of nature”)

Jokaisella on tämänsä (“Everyone will have their own this”)

Kaikki tämä (“All of this”)

Minussa lintu ja käärme (“In me the bird and the snake”)

Sumun läpi (“Through the mist”)

ANU KOMSI

STRAVINSKY SUITE FROM *THE FIREBIRD* (1919 VERSION)

Introduction—The Firebird and its Dance—Variation of the Firebird—

The Princesses’ Round Dance (Khorovod)—Infernal Dance of King Kashchei—

Lullaby—Finale

These concerts will end about 9:50, except for the Friday concert, which will end about 9:30.

Following Friday evening’s concert, violinist Baiba Skride and BSO Director of Program Publications Robert Kirzinger participate in a post-concert casual conversation from the Symphony Hall stage, starting about 15 minutes after the concert ends.

Bank of America is proud to sponsor the BSO’s 2021-22 season.

Credits and further information are at the end of this program.

The Program in Brief...

Finnish soprano Anu Komsu and Latvian violinist Baiba Skride join Andris Nelsons and the BSO for this Baltic program. Anu Komsu sings the world premiere of the BSO-commissioned orchestral version of Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho's Saarikoski Songs, expansions of songs for piano and voice she wrote for Komsu in 2017. Saariaho's settings of Saarikoski's imagistic poetry enhance and amplify the sonic qualities of the language.

Estonian composer Arvo Pärt developed his distinctive mystical, expressively direct compositional style in the mid-1970s, when he was already in his 40s. He began his elegiac *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten* in 1976 and completed it the following year; he named it while still in the process of composing it after hearing of the English composer's death in December 1976.

Dmitri Shostakovich's fraught relationship with Joseph Stalin and Soviet authorities led him to suppress his Violin Concerto, originally written in 1948, until 1955, two years after Stalin's death. Shostakovich was held as an artistic hero within the Soviet Union but was nonetheless subject to constant political pressure, potential censure, and worse if his works didn't meet official standards of optimism and patriotism. The concerto was dedicated to the Ukrainian violinist David Oistrakh, who gave the premiere and championed the piece.

Russian composer Igor Stravinsky was a largely unknown quantity when he was chosen by the Russian dance impresario Sergei Diaghilev to write a ballet score for the famous Ballets Russes. *The Firebird* is based on a Russian fairy tale about a prince who enlists the help of the supernatural Firebird to defeat a powerful ogre who imprisoned a group of beautiful princesses. Stravinsky's extraordinarily imaginative scoring perfectly matched the timeless, magical story line. First performed in Paris in 1910, *The Firebird* catapulted Stravinsky to fame, leading immediately to his ballets *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*.

Robert Kirzinger

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Arvo Pärt

Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten

Arvo Pärt was born in Paidra in independent Estonia, and now lives in the Estonian village of Laulasmaa. He began the work that was to become *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* in 1976 and completed it in early 1977; he gave it its title after hearing of the death of Britten on December 5, 1976. The piece was first performed by the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra on April 7, 1977, in Tallinn. This is the first performance of *Cantus* by the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten is scored for a single bell (on the pitch A) and string orchestra (first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses). The piece is about 8 minutes long.

Estonia gained its independence from Russia in 1920, while Russia was going through its own transition to become the central republic of the Soviet Union. Estonia maintained its sovereignty for just over twenty years but during World War II was caught between the USSR and encroaching Nazi Germany. Having liberated Estonia from Nazi occupation at the end of the war, the Soviet Union kept it and the rest of the Baltic States behind the Iron Curtain until the Soviet system collapsed; Estonia has been independent once again since August 1991. Estonia and its people represent a kind of cultural crossroads from Western Europe to Russia. The push-pull of political, religious, and cultural influences created clashes and blends of the Lutheran religion and intellectual traditions of Germany and Sweden with the Russian Orthodox Church, with Estonia's distinct Finnic language and heritage as foundation.

It was in this environment, a society intact beneath the Soviet Socialist influence of the latter half of the 20th century, that Arvo Pärt developed as an artist. As a child he attended a music school in addition to his regular education and began experimenting with creating his own music. He became quite a competent pianist and also played oboe and percussion. Pärt's late teenage years coincided with the relaxation of Soviet policies for a time following Joseph Stalin's death in 1953.

Pärt's apprenticeship continued after high school at an intermediate music school, interrupted by his obligatory two-year military service. In 1957 he entered Tallinn Conservatory, where he studied Heino Eller, whom he holds as one of his most important influences. Concurrently he worked at Estonian Radio as a recording engineer and began composing for theater and film. By the time he graduated in 1963, he had established enviable professional credentials and a mastery of a range of compositional techniques.

During the late 1950s, composers gained greater access to music by progressive Western European and American composers working with serialism (carefully ordered series of pitch and other parameters, an expansion of Arnold Schoenberg's 12-tone technique), chance processes, and other new ideas. More important than the specific

techniques involved, however, was the very *idea* of freedom of artistic thought represented by the serious and breathlessly exuberant activity of the avant garde. It may surprise many admirers of Pärt's most familiar work that he was probably the first Estonian to write a significant piece using the 12-tone method, his *Necrology* (1961), which was performed several times outside of Tallinn but received even greater attention as the object of public condemnation from Tikhon Khrennikov, the First Secretary of the Union of Soviet Composers.

Pärt's use of serialism throughout the 1960s demonstrated his broader interest in formalism or process, prefiguring the stylized ritual of his later works. His *Credo* (1968) served as culmination of his first stylistic period. This watershed led to a crisis of aesthetic vision resulting in his adoption of what seem to be archaic compositional methods in the mid-1970s. Process, repetition, unequivocal gestures—the stuff of religious rites, particularly in the Orthodox churches where a vernacular Reformation never occurred—are the basis of much of Pärt's work of the 1970s to the present. The conductor and singer Paul Hillier, who wrote an incisive study of Pärt's music and has performed many of his pieces, drew a striking parallel between Pärt's conceptual approach and the Russian Orthodox religious icon painting, which employs set of artistic formulae, a core visual language that recurs in the work of many different artists—a gilded crown, a type of costume, an arrangement of animals, even the shape of a face. Hillier relates the stylized lack of depth and perspective in icon painting to the timeless quality of Pärt's music, achieved through repetition and eschewal of the “traditional,” that is, Western classical, passage of musical time.

Pärt's return to the familiar triad and simplified tonality parallels the visual formulae of icon painting. Pärt supplemented his new ideas by extensive study of medieval and Renaissance music, which influence can clearly be heard in his later pieces. A specific sonic reference for the composer is the complex sound of bells, with their added significance as one of the public “voices” of the church. The repetitive patterns as well as the harmonic language of Pärt's work since the early 1970s can be heard as abstractions of the bells' sound and of the patterns of ringing changes on the bells for various church functions. Pärt calls the later pieces “tinnabuli” (from the Latin for bell) works. The first of these were *Modus* (later revised as *Sarah Was Ninety Years Old*), *Calix*, and *Für Alina*, composed in 1976. Begun that same year, *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* was another of the pieces that defined Pärt's new musical language. The composer wrote about his piece for the booklet of the album *Tabula Rasa*:

In the past years we have had many losses in the world of music to mourn. Why did the date of Benjamin Britten's death—4 December 1976—touch such a chord in me? During this time I was obviously at the point where I could recognize the magnitude of such a loss. Inexplicable feelings of guilt, more than that even, arose in me. I had just discovered Britten for myself. Just before his death I began to appreciate the unusual purity of his music—I had had the impression of the same kind of purity in the ballads of Guillaume de Machaut. And besides, for a long time I had wanted to meet Britten personally—and now it would not come to that.

Pärt's instinctive connection to Britten (1913-1976) might also relate to the older composer's humanistic and artistic integrity, demonstrated most comprehensively in his *War Requiem* (1962), his pacifist masterpiece. Britten too, like Pärt, found in modern, avant garde music elements that he could bring into his own work without abandoning his individual musical vision.

Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten begins with a tolling bell on the pitch A that continues through the whole piece. The musical material is simple: a lamenting, descending A minor scale begun high in the violins and continued, overlapping in different tempos (each lower iteration half the speed of the previous), downward through the lower strings. The emotional affect of the piece has an impact that goes well beyond its straightforward and transparent architecture.

Robert Kirzinger

Composer and writer Robert Kirzinger is the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Director of Program Publications.

Dmitri Shostakovich

Violin Concerto No. 1, Opus 77[99]

Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich was born in St. Petersburg on September 25, 1906, and died in Moscow on August 9, 1975. He composed his Violin Concerto No. 1—giving it the opus number 77—in 1947-48, but political difficulties deferred the premiere. It was another seven years until the work was first performed, on October 29 and 30, 1955, with the Leningrad (formerly St. Petersburg) Philharmonic under the direction of Yevgeny Mravinsky, and David Oistrakh, the work's dedicatee, as soloist—at which time Shostakovich recatalogued it as his Opus 99. Oistrakh, during his first visit to the United States, gave the American premiere on December 29, 1955, with the New York Philharmonic under Dimitri Mitropoulos.

In addition to the solo violin, the score of Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No. 1 calls for 2 flutes and piccolo (doubling 3rd flute), 2 oboes and English horn (doubling 3rd oboe), 2 clarinets and bass clarinet (doubling 3rd clarinet), 2 bassoons and contrabassoon (doubling 3rd bassoon), 4 horns, tuba, timpani, tam-tam, tambourine, xylophone, celesta, 2 harps, and strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses). The concerto is about 37 minutes long.

Few composers were so affected by external political events in the course of their life's work as Dmitri Shostakovich. After producing his first symphony at the age of 19, Shostakovich was widely recognized as the most brilliant talent to appear in Soviet Russia. But his career was repeatedly sidetracked by the demands of the Soviet state for music that was accessible to the masses, avoided "decadent" Western trends, and glorified Russia and the Soviet political system. Joseph Stalin himself, though no musician, tried to ensure that major musical works were composed to "suitable" texts, emphasized positive emotions, and bore congratulatory dedications to Stalin or his principal cohorts.

Already in the mid-1930s Shostakovich went through a difficult, even dangerous time when his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* was attacked in the newspaper *Pravda* as "more noise than music." He canceled the premiere of his Fourth Symphony (which was not heard for decades) and composed instead the more outwardly triumphant Fifth Symphony, which restored Shostakovich to a position of prestige in the Soviet musical firmament. Another confrontation took place after World War II when a party resolution of 1948 condemned most of the prominent Russian composers—particularly Shostakovich—for "formalistic distortions and anti-democratic tendencies alien to the Soviet people."

This denunciation forced certain concessions from Shostakovich. He composed no symphonies until after Stalin's death in 1953, concentrating his public work instead on film scores and vocal music in a more accessible style. Many of the films were tales of Russian heroism in the recently ended war, bearing titles like *Encounter at the Elbe* and *The Fall of Berlin*. Already at the time of the party denunciation, Shostakovich had completed his first violin concerto, then labeled Opus 77, but it was, he judged, too abstract, not sufficiently affirmative in style, to be given out for performance. He finally let it be heard only in 1955, at which time he listed it as Opus 99. Shostakovich may have revised the concerto, though he made contradictory claims about it, and since no manuscript of the early version is known it is impossible to judge to what degree it was actually reworked.

Stalin's death in 1953 brought about a gradual liberalization, but only after Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony had been accepted—despite heated debate—by the Soviet Composers Union did he bring out the Violin Concerto, one of his most original works. None of the leaders of the Composers Union dared to make any significant comments about it and no critic was willing to accept the responsibility of saying anything favorable until the concerto's dedicatee, the violinist David Oistrakh, himself stepped into the breach in 1956 with a daring article in *Sov'etskaya Muzyka* (*Soviet Music*), condemning the strange silence that greeted the new work on the part of leaders of the Composers Union. Oistrakh noted that the concerto, which avoids easy crowd-pleasing techniques, needs to be lived with in order for performer or listener to grasp the full depth of its message.

Shostakovich's orchestra completely omits the heavier brass instruments and is thus unusually transparent, highlighting the soloist at every turn. During much of the work the soloist is playing in ensembles of chamber-music size. The four movements are arranged in a slow-fast-slow-fast pattern, unusual for concertos, with descriptive titles (Nocturne, Scherzo, Passacaglia, and Burlesque) giving a clear idea of the character of each (though Oistrakh felt that "Burlesque" was not quite right for the finale, in which he found the mood of a brightly colored Russian folk festival). Throughout the concerto the soloist is required to play virtually without pause. The lengthy and very difficult cadenza—substantial enough almost to be regarded as a separate movement in its own right—links the third and fourth movements. The work is a tribute to the technique, expressive skill, and sheer concentration of the great violinist for whom it was written.

The opening Nocturne is moderately slow, contemplative in its lyricism, and delicate in its scoring. The stately tread of the strings in the dotted rhythms of the opening bars reappears at several points throughout the movement, offset by the graceful lyric flow of running eighth notes soon introduced in the bassoon and picked up by other instruments. No rhetorical outbursts intrude on the pensive course of the movement, the principal change of character coming with the introduction of triplet figures near the middle.

The scherzo is a sparkling dance movement in which the soloist plays almost throughout with chamber-sized groupings of woodwind instruments. Near the end of the 3/8 section that makes up the main part of the movement, Shostakovich introduces a melodic figure played *fortissimo* in octaves on the solo violin and consisting of the notes D-sharp, E, C-sharp, B. This is almost the same figure that appears throughout the Tenth Symphony, where it is "spelled" to indicate the composer's initials (D.SCH. = D, E-flat, C, B-natural in German notation). The full orchestra plays a rough-hewn 2/4 middle section that the violinist Boris Schwarz likened to a Jewish folk dance

(Shostakovich wrote the concerto at the same time that he was composing his set of *Jewish Folk Poetry*). As this vigorous section dies away, the opening 3/8 material returns, though it now builds beyond chamber size to close the movement with the full orchestra, following a brief recollection of the middle section.

The third movement is a somber, stately passacaglia, a form built on a repeating bass line, one of Shostakovich's favored techniques. Here, the bass line is presented *fortissimo* in cellos and double basses, while the horns play a countermelody in octaves. The theme moves to tuba and bassoon for a second statement, *piano*, under woodwind chords before the violin enters with a melody of keening lamentation to accompany the third statement in the strings. As the repeated passacaglia statements continue, the violin moves to newer, more flowing counterpoints, while the English horn and bassoon take up the keening melody. Further repetitions take the soloist into the higher reaches and then back down for a triplet accompaniment. At the climactic statement the soloist presents the passacaglia theme, *fortissimo*, in octaves above the strings. At the end of a gradual decrescendo, the violin reiterates the opening countermelody of the horns. This is the starting point of the extended and difficult cadenza, which finally issues in the finale. The last movement gives itself up totally to a rhythmic energy and brilliant color that is the closest thing in the concerto to traditional virtuoso tricks; it brings the work to an effective and satisfying close.

Steven Ledbetter

Steven Ledbetter, a freelance writer and lecturer on music, was program annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 1998.

The first American performance of Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No. 1 was given by its dedicatee, David Oistrakh, on December 29, 1955, with Dimitri Mitropoulos and the New York Philharmonic.

The first Boston Symphony performances were led by Erich Leinsdorf in November 1964 with soloist Leonid Kogan, followed by a Carnegie Hall performance that December. BSO associate concertmaster Tamara Smirnova played the work's first Tanglewood performance in 1995 under André Previn. Baiba Skride gave the most recent subscription series performances, led by Andris Nelsons, in February 2013.

Kaija Saariaho

Saarikoski Songs, for soprano and orchestra (2021)

Kaija Saariaho was born in Helsinki, Finland, on October 14, 1952, and has lived primarily in Paris since 1982. She composed her Saarikoski Songs at the suggestion of soprano Anu Komsu, beginning with "Luonnon kasvot" ("The face of nature") in 2013, originally intended as a standalone work, and adding to the cycle song-by-song through the 2020 composition of "Minussa lintu ja käärme" ("In me the bird and the snake") and "Sumun läpi" ("Through the mist"). Anu Komsu and pianist Pia Väri gave the premiere of the cycle for soprano and piano in Kookola Centria Hall, Finland, on January 4, 2021; the score is dedicated to Anu Komsu. Created in 2020-2021, the orchestral versions were co-commissioned by the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Andris Nelsons, Gewandhauskapellmeister, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Andris Nelsons, Music Director, through the generous support of the Arthur P. Contas Fund for the Commissioning of New Works. These are the world premiere performances.

The score of Saarikoski Songs calls for solo soprano with a small orchestra of flute, alto flute (doubling piccolo), oboe, English horn, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, contrabassoon, 2 horns, trumpet, percussion (1 player: xylophone, marimba, crotales, suspended cymbals, triangle, tam-tam, wood blocks, wood chimes, guiro, glass chimes, tambourine, small bell, snare drum, frame drum, bass drum), timpani (with large cymbal and temple bowl), celesta, and strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses). The cycle is about 15 minutes long.

Kaija Saariaho's earliest celebrated works, from the mid-1980s, were remarkable for their intense concentration on the quality of sound itself, whether instrumental or electronic or both, but text and the voice are a fundamental part of her work and process. The progression from concentrated studies like *Lichtbogen*, in which a single sound gesture is explored and exploded over a 20-minute span, through her *Six Japanese Gardens* for percussion and electronics and *Papillons* for solo cello, reveals an organic evolution of increasingly nuanced and imaginative control over not only the minute details but the overall, large-scale impact.

The ways Saariaho engages with the sound of language and its meaning in her music are completely consonant with her explorations in pure sound. The expressive potential of a word, encompassing its "pure" meaning but also its context within a larger text, its sonic reality, and the way it's delivered by the singer/speaker all factor into how she brings language into her music. Conversely, the bigger picture of narrative and image-painting with text as a basis has been the foundation of many of her purely instrumental works, such as in her violin concerto *Graal théâtre*. Correspondences between her explicitly dramatic works and her concertos, orchestral music, and

instrumental chamber music abound and reflect Saariaho's overall approach to her art, which also touches on fascinations with the natural word and with visual art.

Saariaho's native language, Finnish, became a sonic source subject to fragmentation and deconstruction in her early vocal triptych *Preludi–Tunnustus–Postludi*, but until relatively recently Saariaho's major vocal works have been in French and English. These include her five operas, the best-known of which is the French-language *L'Amour de loin* ("Love from Afar," 2000). The cantata *La Passion de Simone*, like her first three operas, features text by the Lebanese-French poet Amin Maalouf. As part of her work on *L'Amour de loin*, which centers on the 12th-century troubadour Jaufré Rudel, she created her soprano-and-electronics piece *Lonh* from Jaufré texts in the poet's own Old Occitan language. Her opera *Innocence*, premiered last year at the Aix-en-Provence festival, is based on the work of the Finnish playwright Sofi Oksanen translated primarily into English, but many of the characters sing in one of nearly a dozen other European languages. Her *Circle Map*, co-commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, creates a kind of text collage from poems in Persian by Rumi. (The BSO also co-commissioned Saariaho's cello concerto *Notes on Light*.)

In 2007 Saariaho wrote a song cycle for voice and piano on texts by the Finnish poet Eino Leino (1878-1926), one of the founders of modern Finnish poetry (and poet of Jean Sibelius's 1920 cantata *Hymn of the Earth*), at the request of the Finnish soprano Anu Komsu. Saariaho later made an orchestral version of the cycle. It was at Komsu's suggestion that Saariaho set the Finnish writer Pentti Saarikoski's poem "Luonnon kasvot" ("The face of nature") in 2013; as the composer writes, the song was intended as a one-off:

Unlike [the poet Eino] Leino, Saarikoski has been a poet close to my heart ever since my student years. However, I had never even contemplated the idea of setting his poetry to music, because it doesn't require any, nor does it seem to clearly open the door to it.

However, when in 2013 I started composing *Luonnon kasvot* ("The face of nature"), which was then intended as a standalone song, living inside Saarikoski's text proved an invigorating experience, that demanded that I create an approach closer to natural orality. This material didn't lend itself to the stretched vocals that felt so organic in the process of approaching Leino's poetry, and indeed they would have immediately come across as artificial.

The approach to the text felt new and almost too unadorned, which is why in "Luonnon kasvot" the text is complemented by abstract bird-like vocalizations.

The next songs came spontaneously over the years, and are very different from each other, as are the poems, all taken from the collection *Alue* ("The District"). In 2017, "Jokaisella on tämänsä" ("Everyone will have their own this") brought a more dramatic expression into the cycle's world, surprisingly soon followed by the peaceful "Kaikki tämä" ("All of this"), written in one single sunny day in the French countryside—whereas "Minussa lintu ja käärme" ("In me the bird and the snake") and "Sumun läp" ("Through the mist") were created in Finland, during the corona-spring of 2020, and the texts have an evident connection to the feelings of that time.

During the entire fragmented composition process, the poems planted their seeds in me as musical ideas at specific moments, when they spoke to me in a particular way.

Pentti Saarikoski (1937-83) was among the most important poets of post-World War II Finland; his approach to a natural, modernized vernacular language, an ironic but nonetheless informed view of tradition, and a wild lifestyle that seemed like a performance in itself suggest parallels to the Beat and modernist poets in the U.S. He was one of most formidable translators into Finnish of many important works of Western literature, including Homer's *The Odyssey* and other ancient classic as well as such modern authors as James Joyce (*Ulysses*), J.D. Salinger (*The Catcher in the Rye*), and Ezra Pound. As critic and translator Anselm Hollo describes him, "Saarikoski...was a highly literate and iconoclastic left-wing radical...a youth idol—the popular press referred to him as "The Blond Beetle of the North"—whose often scandalous public behavior and pronouncements, combined with his introduction of uninhibited Finnish vernacular into the language of literature...shocked many of his elders in much the same way that William S. Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg jolted the establishment in the United States."

The poems of Saarkoski Songs are all taken from his 1973 collection *Alue* ("The District"). In a preface to his translation into English of the poems in Saariaho's Saarkoski Songs, writer and director Aleksis Barrière writes,

The collection *Alue* ("The District," 1973) is a break from Pentti Saarikoski's output of the 1960s, which was centered on political commentary and poetry as a means for social transformation. It was also written shortly before his separation from his wife and self-imposed exile to Sweden, where he authored his last works, inspired by a renewed interest in Greek mythology. The text of *Alue* is written in the form of unnumbered fragments, comprising reflections on the author's life, his walks in the Helsinki neighborhood of Pohjois-Haaga with his child between winter and spring, and the destruction of the nearby forest to give way to new apartment buildings.

In her piano-vocal versions of the songs, Saariaho, though making sure the voice presents the language as language, also moves the singer into the realm of the wordless instrumental, not just as an illustrating device (as in the birdlike trills of the first song) but also in extensions of syllables that leave one's immediate grasp of a word's meaning behind. The piano, too, is often pushed out of its wonted role: the extremes of register and specific, blurring use of the sustain pedal create sound-fields that amplify the imagery painted by the singer's words. Clouds of sound produced by playing within the strings (that is, inside the piano without use of the keys) already foreshadow the much greater acoustic range of the orchestra. As in the Leino Songs, in the orchestral versions of Saarikoski Songs the blending of ensemble and vocal roles expands the possibilities exponentially. A powerful melodic idea, a four-note motif of two half-step intervals separated by a major third, creates a harmonic and melodic connection binding the cycle together. The idea can almost be thought of as a version of the trill that appears throughout the first song, "The face of nature." These vocal ideas are both anticipated and echoed in the orchestra in constantly changing, pointillistic colors—a flute, a violin, percussion in quick succession. Listen to the way the trill is brought into the entire string section at the end of the first song, for example.

The longer lines of the first song become the fragmented and clipped, excited vocal gestures of the second song, "Everyone will have their own this," the orchestral accompaniment of which is mosaic-like in its accumulation of small fragments. The third song, "All of this," is a dark, slow lament. The two horns, trumpet, and percussion join the strings for its somber backdrop. With a foundation consisting almost entirely of a rapidly repeated pitch A in different octaves and instruments, the recitative-like "In me the bird and the snake" highlights the outsized role timbre plays in defining the cycle's sound-world. The two-line poem of the final song, "Through the mist," suggested the timeless, "misterioso" setting in which the orchestra provides the text's ambiguous, ethereal meaning.
Robert Kirzinger

Kaija SAARIAHO Saarikoski Songs

I. Luonnon kasvat

Mutta luonnon kasvat ovat tyynet
maailman loppuun asti.
Kevätpäivät tuoksuvat epätarkoilta
muistoilta,
käden, kiihtyneen hengityksen.
Metsä on akatemia jonka barbaarit
hävittivät
Tulessa kuuluu sukuputtoon
kuolleiden lintujen laulu.

The face of nature

But the face of nature is peaceful
will be till the end of the world.
The spring days smell like imprecise
memories,
of a hand, of an agitated breath.
The forest is an academy obliterated
by barbarians.
In the wind can be heard
the song of birds who died in the extinction.

II. Jokaisella on tämänsä

Jokaisella on tästä lähtien tämänsä
Johon hän on täällä sidottu.
Mitään ei vaihdeta enää.
Ei, se on tullut mahdottomaksi.
Sitä ei ole kielletty lailla
koska se on tullut mahdottomaksi.
Sitä ei ole ruvettu paheksumaan
koska se on tullut mahdottomaksi.

Everyone will have their own this

Everyone from now on will have their own this
to which they are bound.
No further changes will be made.
No no it has become impossible.
It has not been banned by law
since it has in fact become impossible.
It has not started to be frowned upon
since it has in fact become impossible.

Tästä lähtien täällä on jokaisella
tämänsä josta hän pitää kiinni.

III. Kaikki tämä

Mutta me näemme
Harmaan kaislikon
Ja iloitsemme.
Mutta me kosketamme kiveä
Ja iloitsemme.
Kaikki tämä on tapahtunut hiljattain.
Ja me iloitsemme
Yhdessä kaiken kanssa mikä on.

IV. Minussa lintu ja käärme

Käärme puree leukansa kiinni
eikä lintu siipiään avaa.
Me tulimme meluisen metsän läpi.
Ja ilman halki.
Tätä aluetta ei kenenkään tarvitse sanoa.
Minussa lintu ja käärme häikäilemättä.

V. Sumun läpi

Väliin jäävä aika jähmettyy vuoriksi
Jotka näen sumun läpi katsomatta.

Pentti Saarikoski

From now on everyone here will have
their own this to which they cling.

All of this

But we see
a bed of grey reeds
and we rejoice.
But we touch a stone
and we rejoice.
All of this has happened recently.
And we rejoice
together with everything that is.

The bird and the snake

The snake closes its mouth in a bite.
And the bird won't open her wings.
We came through a noisy forest.
And through the air.
Nobody ought to tell about this district.
In me the bird and the snake unscrupulous!

Through the mist

The interstitial time petrifies into mountains
that I see without looking through the mist.

Translated by Aleksis Barrière

Igor Stravinsky

Suite from *The Firebird* (1919 version)

Igor Fedorovich Stravinsky was born at Oranienbaum, Russia, on June 17, 1882, and died in New York City on April 6, 1971. He began the ballet score *The Firebird* in early November 1909 at a "dacha" of the Rimsky-Korsakov family near St. Petersburg. He completed the score in the city; it bears the date May 18, 1910. Commissioned by Diaghilev as a ballet in two scenes, the work was first performed on June 25, 1910, by the Ballets Russes at the Paris Opéra, with a cast including Tamara Karsavina (the Firebird), Michel Fokine (Prince Ivan), Vera Fokina (the Tsarevna), and Alexis Bulgakov (Kashchei); Gabriel Pierné conducted. The scenario was by Fokine in collaboration with Diaghilev and his staff; Fokine also created the choreography. Alexandre Golovine designed the settings, Golovine and Léon Bakst the costumes. The score is dedicated to Andrei Rimsky-Korsakov, the son of the composer Nikolai, who had been Stravinsky's teacher. Stravinsky made suites from the ballet on three separate occasions, the first in 1911 (employing virtually the original orchestration), the second in 1919 (for a much smaller orchestra), and the third in 1945 (using the same orchestra as the second but containing more music).

The score of the *Firebird* Suite in the 1919 version calls for 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes and English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, bass drum, xylophone, tambourine, cymbals, harp, piano, celesta, and strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses). The 1919 suite is about 22 minutes long.

The Russian legend of the Firebird had been discussed as a possible subject for a ballet by Ballets Russes impresario Serge Diaghilev and his staff early in 1909. Michel Fokine, who was to create the choreography, worked out the scenario by combining several Russian fairy tales. The choice of composer was problematic; Diaghilev wanted his former teacher Anatoly Liadov (1855-1914), but the latter was notoriously slow about finishing scores. So, in the fall of 1909, the impresario approached the twenty-seven-year-old Igor Stravinsky, whose brief orchestral work *Fireworks* he had heard earlier in the year. Stravinsky had just completed the first act of his opera *The Nightingale*, but he immediately recognized the extraordinary opportunity that a Ballets Russes commission represented. He was

also excited about writing big, formal dance numbers. He did have reservations about the necessity of writing gestural music to fit the dramatic passages of mime that related the story. Much later, in *Expositions and Developments*, one of his series of published “conversations” with Robert Craft, he claimed, “The Firebird did not attract me as a subject. Like all story ballets, it demanded descriptive music of a kind I did not want to write.”

Nonetheless, Stravinsky was so enthusiastic about the project that he began composing the score in November, six weeks before Diaghilev was able to offer a formal commission. He wrote the opening pages at a *dacha* belonging to the family of his late teacher Rimsky-Korsakov, about seventy miles south of St. Petersburg. Returning to the city in December, he finished the piece by March and the full orchestration by the following month. The final date on the manuscript, May 18, 1910, reflects a last period of refinement.

The premiere of the lavishly colorful ballet marked a signal triumph for the Ballets Russes and put Stravinsky on the map. Diaghilev could hardly wait to get another work from him, and in the ensuing years he quickly turned out *Petrushka* and the epoch-making *Rite of Spring*—all this before having time to return to his unfinished opera! When he finally did get back to *The Nightingale*, Stravinsky was already among the most famous and influential composers of the century, though a vastly different composer from the one who had written the first act of that oddly divergent work.

The scenario of *The Firebird* involves the interaction of human characters with two supernatural figures: the magic Firebird and the evil sorcerer Kashchei, a green-taloned ogre who cannot be killed except by destroying his soul, which is preserved in a casket in the form of an egg. Stravinsky needed to find a way to distinguish musically between the human and the supernatural elements of the story. He used some of the same means employed by Rimsky-Korsakov in his last (and best-known) opera, *The Golden Cockerel* (which had not yet been performed when Stravinsky started work, though he certainly knew its score): the humans are represented by diatonic, often folklike, melodies, the supernatural figures by chromatic ideas, slithery for Kashchei and his realm or shimmering arabesques for the Firebird (whose music is largely derived from a single motive).

The complete ballet is like a danced opera, with “recitative” (the gestural music) and “arias” (the set pieces). Despite Stravinsky’s later claim that he had not wanted to write gestural music, he shaped his music to follow Fokine’s scenario in elaborate and effective detail. *The Firebird* is most often heard in one or another of Stravinsky’s suites, which omit some of the repetition and development of the full ballet score. The 1919 Suite opens with the ballet’s Introduction, with its mood of magical awe. The double basses present a melodic figure (two semitones and a major third) that lies behind all the music of the Firebird. Following a shower of brilliant harmonics on the violins (played with a new technique invented by Stravinsky for this passage), a muted horn signals the curtain’s rise on a nocturnal scene in the Enchanted Garden of Kashchei, returning to the mysterious music of the opening (with a chromatic bassoon phrase foreshadowing the sorcerer). Suddenly the Firebird appears (shimmering strings and woodwinds), pursued by a young prince, Ivan Tsarevich. The Firebird performs a lively dance, shot through with brilliant high interjections from the upper woodwinds. But Ivan Tsarevich captures the magic bird (horn chords *sforzando*) as it flutters around a tree of golden apples. The Firebird appeals to be freed in an extended solo dance, but Ivan takes one of its magic feathers before allowing it to depart.

Thirteen enchanted princesses, the captives of Kashchei, appear—tentatively at first—shake the apple tree, then use the fallen fruit for a game of catch. Ivan Tsarevich interrupts their game, for he has fallen in love with one of them. They dance a *khоровод* (a stately slow round dance) to one of the favorite passages of the score, a melody first introduced by the solo oboe (this is an actual folk song).

In pursuit of the princesses, Ivan Tsarevich enters the palace, where he is captured by the monsters that serve as Kashchei’s guards. In the suite the music then jumps to the point at which Kashchei begins to turn Ivan into stone, making a series of magic gestures: one—two—... But before he can make the third and final gesture, Ivan Tsarevich remembers the Firebird’s feather; he waves it, summoning the Firebird to his aid. Kashchei’s followers are enchanted by the magic bird, who sets them dancing to an “infernal dance” of wild syncopation and striking energy.

The Firebird also indicates to the Prince where he can find—and destroy—the soul of Kashchei, whereupon all the knights that had been turned to stone before come back to life (in a sweetly descending phrase of folklike character) and all take part in a dance of general happiness (a more energetic version of the same phrase). The Firebird has disappeared, but its music, now rendered more “human” in triadic harmony, sounds in the orchestra as the curtain falls.

Though much of *The Firebird* is of a piece with Rimsky-Korsakov’s fairy tale opera composed only a short time previously, there are things in the manner of Stravinsky’s score that already foreshadow the revolutionary composer to come: the inventive ear for new and striking sounds, the love of rhythmic irregularities (though there is much less of it here than in the later ballets), and the predilection for using *ostinatos*—repeated fragments of a melodic and rhythmic idea—to build up passages of great excitement, a procedure that will reach the utmost in visceral force with *The Rite of Spring*. As seen from the vantage point of today, *The Firebird* is almost a romantic

work of the last century, but the dancers at the first performance found the music demanding, challenging them to the utmost. If, in listening to this familiar score, we can cast our minds back into the framework of 1910, we may be able to sense afresh the excitement of being on the verge of a revolution.

Steven Ledbetter

The first American performance of the ballet The Firebird was given by the Ballets Russes at the Century Theatre in New York on January 17, 1916.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra's first performances of music from The Firebird were of the original 1911 suite, conducted by Pierre Monteux on October 31 and November 1, 1919, followed by performances in Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, and Detroit. Stravinsky himself introduced the 1919 version of the suite to BSO audiences in March 1935; the complete ballet had its first BSO performances only in March and April 1974, when Seiji Ozawa led it in Boston, Washington, D.C., New York, and Philadelphia. The most recent BSO performances of music from the ballet were of the 1919 suite at Tanglewood on July 24, 2021, under Andris Nelsons' direction; Ken-David Masur led the most recent subscription-series performances of the complete ballet in January 2018 as well as the most recent subscription performances of the 1919 suite, in February 2015.

To Read and Hear More...

For a complete BSO performance history of any piece on the program, readers are encouraged to visit the BSO Archives' online database, "HENRY," named for BSO founder Henry Lee Higginson, at archives.bso.org.

The website of Estonia's Arvo Pärt Centre is an excellent resource for information about the composer (<https://www.arvopart.ee/en/>), as is the website of his publisher, Universal Edition (<https://www.universaledition.com/arvo-part-534>). Books about the composer include Paul Hillier's still-useful *Arvo Pärt*, originally published in 1997 (Oxford University Press "Oxford Studies of Composers" series); *Arvo Pärt in Conversation*, translated by Robert C. Crow (Dalkey Archive Press), and, concentrating on the spiritual aspects of Pärt's work, *Arvo Pärt: Sounding the Sacred*, a book of essays edited by Peter C. Bouteneff, Jeffers Englehardt, and Robert Saler (Fordham University Press). *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt*, edited by Andrew Shenton (Cambridge University Press) and a series of related essays, each published as a separate volume by Cambridge, focus on specific facets of the composer's work and career. Notable recordings of *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* include Paavo Järvi's with the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra (Warner Classics), Dennis Russell Davies's with the Staatsorchester Stuttgart (ECM), Vladimir Spivakov's with Moscow Virtuosi (Capriccio), and Neeme Järvi's with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra (Delos).

The website saariaho.org is the most comprehensive and up-to-date source of information on Kaija Saariaho and her music. Also valuable are the websites of her publisher, Chester Music (www.chestermusic.com) and of the Finnish Music Information Center (core.musicfinland.fi/composers/kaija-saariaho). The article on Saariaho in the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and *Grove Music Online* is by Kimmo Korhonen with Risto Nieminen, but dates from 2001. Books in English about the composer and her music include *Kaija Saariaho: Visions, Narratives, Dialogues*, a collection of essays edited by Tim Howells (Routledge), and Pirkko Moisala's slim *Kaija Saariaho* (Illinois University Press) both are more than five years old. There are no recordings yet of the orchestral versions of the Saarikoski Songs, but Anu Komsu recorded the voice-and-piano versions with pianist Pia Värri for the album *Sumun Läpi* ("Through the Mist") (ColoraMaestro).

Important books about Shostakovich include Elizabeth Wilson's *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* (Princeton University Press); Laurel E. Fay's *Shostakovich: A Life* (Oxford University Press); the anthology *Shostakovich Reconsidered*, written and edited by Allan B. Ho and Dmitry Feofanov (Toccata Press); *Shostakovich and Stalin* by Solomon Volkov (Random House) and *Shostakovich and His World*, edited by Laurel E. Fay (Princeton University Press). Volkov's earlier book, *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich* continues to generate discussion regarding its complete veracity (Limelight). This was the basis of Tony Palmer's 1988 film starring Ben Kingsley as Shostakovich. English writer Julian Barnes's recent novel, *The Noise of Time*, uses three crucial moments in Shostakovich's life to address matters of life, art, society, and political oppression (Knopf). Still important is Dmitri Rabinovich's *Dmitri Shostakovich*, published in a 1959 English translation by George Hanna (Foreign Languages Publishing House).

Baiba Skride has recorded Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No. 1 with Mikko Franck and the Munich Philharmonic (Sony). The very first recording of the concerto was made by David Oistrakh with Dimitri Mitropoulos and the New York Philharmonic on January 2, 1956, right after they gave the American premiere performances (Sony; their exciting live performance of January 1, 1956, was issued by the New York Philharmonic

in a set of historic radio broadcasts). Oistrakh's collaboration with Yevgeny Mravinsky and the Leningrad Philharmonic (with whom he gave the world premiere) is also available on compact disc (Regis).

Stephen Walsh, who wrote the Stravinsky article in the 2001 *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, also wrote the 2-volume biography: *Stravinsky—A Creative Spring: Russia and France, 1882-1934* and *Stravinsky—The Second Exile: France and America, 1934-1971* (Norton). Eric Walter White wrote the crucial *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works* (University of California). Richard Taruskin's 2-volume, 1,700-page *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works through "Mavra,"* exhaustively examines Stravinsky's career through the early 1920s (University of California). Other useful books include *Stravinsky and His World*, a collection of essays and documents edited by Tamara Levitz (Princeton University Press); *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky*, edited by Jonathan Cross (Cambridge University Press); and Michael Oliver's *Igor Stravinsky* in the series "20th-Century Composers" (Phaidon paperback). If you can find a used copy, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents* by Vera Stravinsky and Robert Craft offers a fascinating overview of the composer's life (Simon and Schuster).

Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra recorded Stravinsky's complete *Firebird* in 1983 (EMI). For a recording of the *Firebird* Suite, the BSO recorded the 1919 version under Seiji Ozawa in 1969 (RCA), and the version using Stravinsky's original, larger 1911 instrumentation under Erich Leinsdorf in 1964 (also RCA). Other choices for the 1919 version include Pierre Boulez's with the BBC Symphony (Sony Classical), Leonard Bernstein's with either the New York Philharmonic (Sony Classical) or the Israel Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon), Riccardo Chailly's with the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam (London/Decca), and Carlo Maria Giulini's with the Philharmonia Orchestra (EMI). Stravinsky himself made recordings of the *Firebird* Suite (1945 version) with the New York Philharmonic (Pearl) and (later) the Columbia Symphony Orchestra (Sony Classical).

Robert Kirzinger/Marc Mandel

ARTISTS

Baiba Skride

Violinist Baiba Skride's natural approach to music-making has endeared her to some of today's most important conductors and orchestras worldwide. She is consistently invited for her refreshing interpretations, sensitivity, and delight in the music. She has worked with such prestigious orchestras as the Berlin Philharmonic, Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig, Boston and Chicago symphony orchestras, New York Philharmonic, Concertgebouworkest, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, and the Sydney, Shanghai, and NHK symphony orchestras. She collaborates with conductors Marin Alsop, Christoph Eschenbach, Ed Gardner, Susanna Mälkki, Andris Nelsons, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Santtu-Matias Rouvali, Andris Poga, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Tugan Sokhiev, John Storgårds, and Juraj Valcuha, among others. Highlights of Ms. Skride's 2021-22 season include the season opening of the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, performing Sofia Gubaidulina's Triple Concerto with Harriet Krijgh (cello) and Martynas Levickis (bayan) under the baton of Andris Nelsons. In celebration of Gubaidulina's 90th birthday, she returns to the GHO in her Violin Concerto No. 1, *Offertorium*, which she also plays with the London Symphony Orchestra and Dima Slobodeniouk as well as with the Hallé Orchestra and Sir Mark Elder. She returns to the hr-Sinfonieorchester with Alain Altinoglu to perform Gubaidulina's Violin Concerto No. 3, *Dialog: Ich und Du*. Ms. Skride also returns to the Luxembourg Philharmonic Orchestra, RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Residentie Orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of Antwerp, Boston, Gothenburg, Singapore, and Sydney, among others. Ms. Skride is a sought-after chamber musician internationally and commits to the long-established duo with her sister, pianist Lauma Skride. She is a founding member of the Skride Quartet, with which she has performed throughout Europe and in North America and Australia. This season, she also performs in trio with Lauma Skride and Harriet Krijgh, and in projects with Alban Gerhardt, Brett Dean, and others. Recent recordings, all released on Orfeo, include works by Mozart with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra and Bartók with the WDR Sinfonieorchester, both with Eivind Aadland conducting, as well as her American disc featuring Bernstein, Korngold, and Rózsa with the Gothenburg Symphony and Tampere Philharmonic orchestras under Santtu-Matias Rouvali, and the debut recording of the Skride Quartet. Ms. Skride was born into a musical family in Riga, Latvia, where she began her studies, transferring in 1995 to the Conservatory of Music and Theatre in Rostock. In 2001 she won first prize at the Queen Elisabeth Competition. She plays the Yfrah Neaman Stradivarius kindly loaned to her by the Neaman family through the Beare's International Violin Society. A frequent guest with the BSO and Andris Nelsons, Baiba Skride made her subscription series debut in January/February 2013 and her most recent return to Symphony Hall in May 2019, playing Sebastian Currier's *Aether* for violin and

orchestra. Her Tanglewood debut with the orchestra was in July 2015, Christian Zacharias conducting, and in July 2021 she performed the Sibelius concerto under Andris Nelsons. She performed with the BSO and Maestro Nelsons at Carnegie Hall in 2017 and on a 2018 European tour.

Anu Koms

The Finnish soprano Anu Koms, known for her versatile musicianship and dynamic coloratura voice, makes her Boston Symphony Orchestra debut this week. Her musical education began in Kokkola, Finland, where she played flute and violin in the Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra. Equally at home on the opera and concert stages, she has appeared regularly all over Europe and in the U.S. and Japan. She is an avid recitalist and chamber musician, with a repertoire ranging from Renaissance to contemporary music. With an operatic repertoire of some 70 roles, Ms. Koms has sung such characters as the title roles of *Lulu* and *Salome*, Nannetta (*Falstaff*), Zerbinetta (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Olympia (*Tales of Hoffmann*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Norina (*Don Pasquale*), Micaëla (*Carmen*), and the Queen of the Night (*The Magic Flute*). Ms. Koms premiered George Benjamin's opera *Into the Little Hill*, which was written especially for her, in 2006 at Opéra Bastille; she has since given more than 40 performances of the piece in Europe and the United States. She performed Morton Feldman's *Neither*, one of her signature roles, at her Salzburg Festival debut in 2011. She has been featured as soloist with major orchestras including the Berlin, Czech, Los Angeles, New York, Rotterdam, and Vienna philharmonics, the Bavarian Radio, BBC, City of Birmingham, and Vienna symphony orchestras, the Mahler and Ostrobothnian chamber orchestras, Ensemble Intercontemporain, and Ensemble Modern, and worked with celebrated conductors like Sir Roger Norrington, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Alan Gilbert, Sakari Oramo, Jesús López Cobos, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Hannu Lintu, Susanna Mälkki, Franz Welser-Möst, Rudolf Barshai, Leif Segerstam, Dima Slobodeniouk, and Santtu-Matias Rouvali. In recent seasons she has made successful turns in the title role of *Salome*, which she sang under Leif Segerstam in his farewell concerts with the Turku Philharmonic Orchestra, and as Tiresias in Poulenc's *The Breasts of Tiresias* in Helsinki. Ms. Koms's recent recordings include Magnus Lindberg's *Accused* with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Hannu Lintu (Ondine), Sibelius's *Luonnotar* with the Lahti Symphony and Sakari Oramo (BIS), Kaija Saariaho's Leino Songs with the FRSO and Oramo (Ondine), and Langgaard's Symphony No. 2 with the Vienna Philharmonic and Oramo (Ondine), which won the 2019 *Gramophone* Orchestral Award. Anu Koms holds a master's degree from the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki.

Andris Nelsons

Ray and Maria Stata Music Director, endowed in perpetuity

The 2021-2022 season is Andris Nelsons' eighth as the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Ray and Maria Stata Music Director. In summer 2015, following his first season as music director, his contract with the BSO was extended through the 2021-2022 season. In February 2018, he was also named Gewandhauskapellmeister of the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig. In October 2020, the BSO and GHO jointly announced extensions to Mr. Nelsons' contracts. His contract with the BSO was extended until 2025, and his GHO contract until 2027. An evergreen clause in his BSO contract reflects a mutual intention for long-term collaboration beyond the years of the agreement. In fall 2019, Mr. Nelsons and the BSO hosted the Gewandhausorchester in historic concerts at Symphony Hall that included performances by the GHO as well as concerts featuring the players of both orchestras together.

The fifteenth music director in the orchestra's history, Andris Nelsons made his BSO debut at Carnegie Hall in March 2011, his Tanglewood debut in July 2012, and his BSO subscription series debut in January 2013. He has led the orchestra on three European tours and one of Japan; a scheduled February 2020 tour to East Asia was canceled due to the COVID-19 emergency. In the pandemic-affected 2020-2021 BSO season, Mr. Nelsons led the BSO in six of the fifteen concerts streamed as part of the orchestra's BSO NOW virtual season recorded in Symphony Hall. The diverse repertoire ranged from Beethoven symphonies and music of Schumann and Brahms to several recent works by leading young American composers. His BSO repertoire in the 2021-2022 season ranges from favorites by Rachmaninoff and Sibelius to world and American premieres of BSO-commissioned works by HK Gruber, Jörg Widmann, Unsuk Chin, and Kaija Saariaho. This season also marks the culmination of Mr. Nelsons' multi-season joint project with the BSO and GHO to perform and record major works of Richard Strauss, to be released by Deutsche Grammophon.

Andris Nelsons and the BSO's ongoing series of recordings of the complete Shostakovich symphonies for Deutsche Grammophon, so far encompassing ten of the fifteen symphonies, has earned three Grammy Awards for Best Orchestral Performance and one for Best Engineered Album. The latest installment, featuring symphonies nos. 1, 14, and 15 and the Chamber Symphony, Op. 110a, was released in June 2021. Future releases will explore the

composer's concertos for piano, violin, and cello, and his monumental opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. Mr. Nelsons' other recordings with the BSO include the complete Brahms symphonies for the BSO Classics label and a Naxos release of recent American works commissioned and premiered by the orchestra. Under an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon, he has also recorded the complete Beethoven symphonies with the Vienna Philharmonic (released in 2019) and is recording the Bruckner symphonies with the GHO.

Mr. Nelsons frequently leads such orchestras as the Berlin Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and appears with such opera companies as the Bayreuth Festival and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Born in Riga in 1978 into a family of musicians, Andris Nelsons began his career as a trumpeter in the Latvian National Opera Orchestra before studying conducting. He was Music Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (2008-2015), Principal Conductor of Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie in Herford, Germany (2006-2009), and Music Director of the Latvian National Opera (2003-2007).

Credits and Further Information

First associate concertmaster Tamara Smirnova performs on a 1754 J.B. Guadagnini violin, the "ex-Zazofsky," and James Cooke performs on a 1778 Nicolo Gagliano violin, both generously donated to the orchestra by Michael L. Nieland, M.D., in loving memory of Mischa Nieland, a member of the cello section from 1943 to 1988.

Todd Seeber performs on an 1835 Kennedy bass, the "Salkowski Kennedy," generously donated to the orchestra by John Salkowski, a member of the bass section from 1966 to 2007.

Steinway & Sons Pianos, selected exclusively for Symphony Hall.

The BSO's Steinway & Sons pianos were purchased through a generous gift from Gabriella and Leo Beranek.

The program books for the Friday series are given in loving memory of Mrs. Hugh Bancroft by her daughters, the late Mrs. A. Werk Cook and the late Mrs. William C. Cox.

Special thanks to Fairmont Copley Plaza and Commonwealth Worldwide Executive Transportation.

Broadcasts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra are heard on 99.5 WCRB.

In consideration of the performers and those around you, please turn off all electronic equipment during the performance, including tablets, cellular phones, pagers, watch alarms, messaging devices of any kind, anything that emits an audible signal, and anything that glows. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please note that the use of audio or video recording devices and taking pictures of the artists—whether photographs or videos—are prohibited during the performance.