

Thursday, April 28, 8pm | Sponsored by Hemenway & Barnes LP
Friday, April 29, 1:30pm | The Henry Lee Higginson Memorial Concert
Saturday, April 30, 8pm

Andris Nelsons conducting

STRAUSS Interlude, “Dreaming by the Fireside,” from *Intermezzo*, Opus 72

SAINT-SAËNS Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Opus 33
Allegro non troppo—Allegretto con moto—
Come prima
Blaise Déjardin, cello

{intermission}

STRAUSS *An Alpine Symphony*, Opus 64
Night—Sunrise—The Ascent—Entry into the Wood—
Wandering by the Brook—At the Waterfall—
Apparition—On Flowery Meadows—On the Alm—
Through Thicket and Undergrowth on the Wrong Path—
On the Glacier—Dangerous Moments—
On the Summit—Vision—The Fog Rises—
The Sun Gradually Becomes Obscured—Elegy—
Calm Before the Storm—Thunderstorm. Descent—
Sunset—Dying Away of Sound—Night

The evening concerts will end about 9:45, and the Friday afternoon concert about 3:15
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...

BSO Principal Cello Blaise Déjardin makes his concerto solo debut with the orchestra performing Camille Saint-Saëns’s Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor in these concerts. Composed in 1873 for the prominent French cellist Auguste Tolbecque, the concerto is cast in a single movement of three readily discernible large-scale sections that move from exhilarating energy to great charm to impassioned, virtuosic lyricism.

Between 1886 and 1903, Richard Strauss secured his reputation as the leading German composer of his time by writing the series of orchestral tone poems that included *Don Juan*, *Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks*, *Don Quixote*, and *A Hero’s Life*, among others. *An Alpine Symphony*—the last of his tone poems—followed more than a decade later, by which time he had also cemented his place as an opera composer with *Salome*, *Elektra*, and *Der Rosenkavalier*. The germ for *An Alpine Symphony* can be traced to a boyhood mountain-climbing expedition during which Strauss’s group lost its way on the ascent and was drenched in a storm coming down. This excursion is depicted musically in great detail, but another, more spiritual aspect of the score—reflecting, in Strauss’s words, “the adoration of eternal, glorious nature” and influenced by the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche—is embodied in the work’s numerous quieter, even rarified, passages, including the final moments, as night once more enshrouds the scene.

The almost cinematic orchestral Interludes from the composer’s 1923 opera *Intermezzo*, though embedded in an opera, are virtually miniature tone poems in themselves. Based on an episode in Strauss’s life, the plot of *Intermezzo*’s libretto (written by the composer) revolves around a misunderstanding that drives the wife of a conductor to jealous extremes. Strauss called his opera a “Bourgeois comedy with symphonic interludes,” indicating

the importance of the purely orchestral music of the four Interludes, of which the gorgeous “Dreaming by the Fireside” is the most lyrical and contemplative.

Robert Kirzinger/Marc Mandel

Farewell, Thanks, and All Best

Four members of the BSO are retiring this season after long tenures with the orchestra. Following the concerts of April 28, 29, and 30, cellist Martha Babcock, contrabassoonist Gregg Henegar, and violinist Bo Youp Hwang will be recognized onstage. Cellist Sato Knudsen retired earlier this spring.

A member of the BSO for 48 years, MARTHA BABCOCK joined the orchestra September 1, 1973. She has served as the BSO’s assistant principal, associate principal, and acting principal cello, as well as principal cello of the Boston Pops Orchestra. Born in Freeport, IL, she began her musical studies at the age of 6; at 10 she chose to study the cello and made her solo debut with orchestra at 14. Ms. Babcock graduated *cum laude* from Harvard University; her cello teachers included Lowell Creitz, Aldo Parisot, and George Neikrug. Winner of the Piatigorsky Prize at the Tanglewood Music Center, she began her professional career as a cellist at the age of 19, when she became the youngest member of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra.

Ms. Babcock has been a soloist with the Boston Pops on many occasions, collaborating with conductors Keith Lockhart, John Williams, Ronald Feldman, and Erich Kunzel in concertos by Antonín Dvořák, Luigi Boccherini, Edward Elgar, Robert Schumann, and Eugen d’Albert. Active in solo and chamber music performances in the Boston area and at Tanglewood, she has been a frequent guest artist with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players and recorded Dvořák’s String Sextet with the group for Nonesuch. She has also recorded contemporary works for CRI and chamber music of Rebecca Clarke for Northeastern Records. Her recording of Camille Saint-Saëns’s *The Swan* is on the Boston Pops CD *Pops in Love*, conducted by John Williams; her solo recording of James Yannatos’s Sonata for Solo Cello was released by Albany Records. Ms. Babcock’s cello, the “ex-Feuermann,” was made in Rome in 1741 by David Tecchler. She is married to former BSO violinist Harvey Seigel.

GREGG HENEGAR’s 29-year tenure with the BSO began with his appointment as contrabassoonist on August 31, 1992; he previously held the same position with the Houston Symphony. An active teacher, Mr. Henegar is a faculty member at New England Conservatory, Boston University, and the Tanglewood Music Center. He is the author of *Modern Exercises for the Contrabassoon*. Mr. Henegar studied bassoon with George Goslee, former principal bassoon of the Cleveland Orchestra, at the Cleveland Institute of Music and with Sanford Berry at the University of Illinois. He has given numerous performances of new works written for the contrabassoon and has recorded works by Donald Erb with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Mr. Henegar is the exclusive agent in North America for Mollenhauer Contrabassoons of Kassel, Germany.

Born in Korea, BO YOUP HWANG gave his first violin solo performance with the Seoul Symphony Orchestra when he was 12. He went on to study at the University of Seoul. At age 18, Mr. Hwang won two prestigious prizes, leading to study with the Fine Arts String Quartet at the University of Wisconsin, where he studied violin with Abraham Loft and later won First Prize in the Young Artists Competition. Mr. Hwang was assistant concertmaster of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra before joining the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the start of the 1973 Tanglewood season, on June 4, 1973. He has performed on several occasions as a soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra with John Williams and was also active with Francesco String Quartet for many years. Mr. Hwang has returned to Seoul, Korea, on several occasions to perform with orchestras there. He has also taught many successful young musicians over the years in the Boston area. In his leisure time Mr. Hwang enjoys painting, making pottery, going on nature walks, and fishing.

Born in Baltimore in 1955, SATO KNUDSEN was raised in Newton, MA, began his musical studies as a violinist at the age of 3, and switched to cello when he turned 7. A member of the BSO for 38 years, Mr. Knudsen joined the orchestra’s cello section on July 25, 1983, during the Tanglewood season, overlapping in tenure with his father, Ronald Knudsen, a BSO violinist from 1965 to 2013. Sato Knudsen’s teachers include David Soyer at Bowdoin College and Stephen Geber, Robert Ripley, and Madeleine Foley at New England Conservatory. He also attended the Piatigorsky Seminar in Los Angeles and was a Fellowship student at the Tanglewood Music Center. Before joining the BSO, he was associate principal cello of the San Antonio Symphony for three years; prior to that appointment he performed with the Boston Pops Orchestra, Boston Opera Company, New Hampshire Symphony, and Worcester Symphony. Mr. Knudsen was a concerto soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1974, as a winner of the BSO’s Youth Concerts Concerto Competition. He has been a soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra, Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra, Newton Symphony, and Brockton Symphony. A member of the Hawthorne String Quartet, he has performed extensively with that group in the New England area and in Europe. As cellist with the Anima Piano Trio, he has performed at Carnegie Recital Hall and Jordan Hall, throughout New England, and on radio stations WQXR in New York and WGBH in Boston.

Richard Strauss

Interlude, “Dreaming by the Fireside,” from *Intermezzo*, Opus 72

Richard Georg Strauss was born in Munich, Germany, on June 11, 1864, and died in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Bavaria, on September 8, 1949. He wrote the opera *Intermezzo*, on his own libretto, between 1918 and 1923. It was premiered at the Staatsoper Dresden on November 4, 1924, with Lotte Lehman in the principal soprano role of Christine and baritone Joseph Correck as Robert Storch. Strauss assembled five of the opera’s interludes into a four-movement, symphony-like concert piece by 1929.

The score of the Interludes from *Intermezzo* calls for 2 flutes, 2 oboes (2nd doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 3 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, timpani, percussion (cymbals, triangle, snare drum), harp, piano, and strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses). The second interlude, “Dreaming by the Fireside,” is about 9 minutes long.

“What could be more serious than married life?” Richard Strauss once remarked about *Symphonia domestica* (1904). “Marriage is the most profound event in life and the spiritual joy of such a union is *elevated* by the arrival of a child.” On the surface the remark appears to be a pointed defense of his early 20th-century domestic symphony, criticized by a press who saw the sacred art of music desecrated in a sonic celebration of everyday family life. Strauss, of course, was quite serious, and his preoccupation with marriage and fidelity—with domestic relationships—formed a continuous thread throughout his mature career. Indeed, Strauss proudly asserted in a letter to his wife, Pauline, that his life was concerned with only three things: “nature, notes, and his family.”

Strauss created a triptych of marriage operas beginning with *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1919), continuing with *Intermezzo* (1924), and completed with the composition of *Die ägyptische Helena* (1928). The bookend opera libretti were written by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, while the centerpiece was an autobiographical domestic comedy with text by Strauss himself. *Die Frau ohne Schatten* explores marriage on metaphysical and human levels; *Intermezzo* uses the topic of fidelity as material for an autobiographical bourgeois sex comedy; while *Die ägyptische Helena* delves into the symbolic implications of the marital bond through classical mythology. There are certainly other Strauss operas that deal with betrothal, but none of them ever explored what that matrimonial bond might actually become. That sense of “becoming,” in the worldview of Strauss has partly to do with the “elevating” phenomenon of a child, who plays a small part but large role in all three of the operas, born and unborn.

With his *Symphonia domestica*, Strauss shocked his critics with a depiction of banal family life that debunked this sacred German genre of symphony by removing it from its elevated aura, which the composer believed had become moribund in a modern world. Idealized, romantic notions of the eternal feminine, or its turn-of-the-century inversion, the *femme fatale*, no longer interested Strauss, who never returned to such constructs after *Elektra*. Strauss recognized in Wagner an inability to reconcile passion and fidelity, and, beginning with *Ariadne auf Naxos*, such reconciliation became his own artistic goal. Wagner was the first major German composer for whom the dual personae of bourgeois and artist were in constant conflict, as it would be for a generation of composers to follow. Strauss, however, rejected this conflict, judging such a late-Romantic opposition as unfeasible for the 20th century and embracing the bourgeoisie of a new generation.

Intermezzo, a controversial autobiographical stage comedy and prototype of the Weimar-era *Zeitoper* (topical opera) with its workaday, prosaic qualities, throws the vicissitudes of married life into high relief. In all three of Strauss’s marriage operas, the troubling domestic themes involve such eternal and topical issues as infidelity, mistrust, vanity, impotence, infertility, and separation (and in *Intermezzo*, even a call for divorce). As Strauss’s work on *Die Frau ohne Schatten* wound down in early autumn 1916, he was thinking of new operatic projects, which he suggested to Hofmannsthal: among other things, a modern domestic comedy. Hofmannsthal begged off, it was so crassly autobiographical, and he suggested that Strauss work with the Viennese writer Hermann Bahr, who soon withdrew. Unrattled, Strauss pushed ahead with his comedy, ultimately deciding to write the libretto himself.

The opera’s story curiously dates to the very time when he was devising his *Symphonia domestica* while touring on the Isle of Wight in 1902. In a state of domestic bliss, the composer devised his “symphonic self- and family portrait,” originally to be called “My Home.” The earliest sketch was a little verse, an extension of his triangular focus on “notes, nature, and his family”:

My wife, my child, my music,
Nature and sun, they are my joy,
A little calm and much humor,
There even the devil can teach me nothing!

While still indulging in domestic fantasy, Strauss received a bolt from the blue, an angry letter from his wife Pauline, accusing him of adultery and demanding an immediate divorce. Pauline, who routinely read his mail, had opened a letter from a young woman who wrote:

Sorry, but I waited in vain for you yesterday at the Union Bar. Would you thus be so friendly and make available a pair of tickets for Monday or Wednesday of this week?

Strauss was dumbfounded and entirely innocent, the victim of mistaken identity. But even after he got to the bottom of the mystery—the letter was intended for the conductor Joseph Stransky (whose nickname was “Straussky”)—Pauline was not easily assuaged. In a characteristically Straussian way, he turned this painful period in their relationship into material for an autobiographical comedy where Richard became Robert Storch (the opera’s baritone principal) and Pauline, Christine (the principal soprano role).

He had composed comedies before, but this one Strauss believed to be unique, an “anti-opera,” as he explained:

By turning its back on the popular love-and-murder interest of the usual opera libretto, and by taking its subject matter perhaps too exclusively from real life, this new work blazes a path for musical and dramatic composition which others after me perhaps will negotiate with more talent and better fortune.

Strauss subtitled his new work as a “Bourgeois Comedy with Symphonic Interludes,” the second of which we shall hear in these concerts. One of the most innovative aspects of *Intermezzo* is the filmic structure of this stage work. Over two acts there are more than a dozen “Kinobilder” (cinematic scenes): short, open-ended, and (with stage lighting) often employing “cinematic” dissolves. The scenes are quite chatty, while the lyricism is given to the orchestral interlude. Act I revolves around Christine as she makes her accusations and threats, while Act II belongs mostly to Robert as he gathers facts for his defense, though they sing a lovely duet of reconciliation at the end.

Within a few years of the opera’s 1924 premiere in Dresden, Strauss put together a suite of his four favorite interludes, which also express the emotional variety of the score. The first and longest interlude, “Travel Fever and Waltz Scene,” conflates two orchestral scenes: the first where Christine nervously prepares her husband for a concert tour and, second, at a dance where Christine, now absent from Storch, flirts and dances with a young baron.

“Dreaming by the Fireside” is not a true interlude, but this lyrical moment of rhapsody is one of the most poignant and intense in the entire opera. Christine sits alone by the fireplace yearning for her husband. The orchestration is luminescent, with a beautiful soaring theme in the clarinet playing in depth, radiance, and beauty against the strings. She drops her posturing and expresses her honest feelings of love towards her husband. “ ‘Now here I sit, alone again! My dear man! He is so good and faithful. Oh, these long, lonely evenings’ (*she sinks into dream*).”

The third Interlude, “At the Card Table,” begins Act II, with Storch playing Skat—Strauss’s favorite leisurely activity, and in the fourth, “Happy Conclusion,” Storch has been vindicated and joyfully returns home to be reconciled with his wife, Christine.

Though it is hard to believe, the Strauss family has always maintained that Strauss’s wife, Pauline, had no idea that she was about to see an opera based on a very private moment in her own domestic life. It is to her credit that, whatever the case, she took it in stride.

Bryan Gilliam

Professor Emeritus of Music at Duke University, Bryan Gilliam is a scholar of 19th- and 20th-century German music. He is the author of The life of Richard Strauss in the Cambridge Musical lives series as well as editor of several volumes of Strauss scholarship. His most recent book is Rounding Wagner’s Mountain: Richard Strauss and Modern German Opera.

The only previous BSO performances of music from Intermezzo were of the opera’s Entr’acte under Serge Koussevitzky in 1929-30 and Erich Leinsdorf in 1964 and, in spring 2021, a performance under Andris Nelsons of the four Symphonic Interludes from the opera Intermezzo (of which “Dreaming by the Fireside” is the second), videorecorded in Symphony Hall without an audience during the pandemic emergency. This performance was released on the BSO’s streaming platform, BSO NOW, in April 2021.

Camille Saint-Saëns

Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Opus 33

Camille Saint-Saëns was born in Paris, France, on October 9, 1835, and died in Algiers on December 16, 1921. He composed his A minor cello concerto in Paris in November 1872; it was first performed on January 19, 1873, at the

Paris Conservatoire with soloist Auguste Tolbecque—the work’s dedicatee—and the orchestra of the Société des Concerts conducted by Édouard Deldevez.

In addition to the solo cello, the score calls for 2 each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses). The piece is about 20 minutes long.

If Camille Saint-Saëns had been just a pianist, he would have been as famous and as acclaimed as Anton Rubinstein, Leschetizky, Paderewski, or any other lion of the age. Yet playing the piano was only one of many activities, not all of them concerned with music, that consumed him over a very long life. He was an immensely productive composer, producing music “as an apple-tree bears apples,” as he described it himself. No genre of music was untouched—operas, ballets, symphonies, concertos, chamber music, songs, choral music, all in abundance; even a film score, one of the first ever composed. For many years he was organist at the Madeleine church in Paris; he conducted frequently; he wrote articles for the press and published half a dozen books; he wrote poetry and plays; he took a close interest in astronomy, archaeology, philosophy, and classical literature; he spoke many languages and traveled tirelessly all over Europe and North Africa giving concerts, including a series of all of Mozart’s piano concertos in London; he went to Scandinavia, Russia, Indochina, and Uruguay; he was involved in the whole spectrum of music-making in France for all of his career, and was a prime mover in the Société Nationale de Musique. His tastes ranged effortlessly from Wagner to the Baroque, and the composers he most admired were Mozart, Rameau, Gluck, Schumann, Berlioz, and Liszt. He was a modernist and a reactionary at the same time, an atheist who composed a huge quantity of religious music, a deeply serious and thoughtful composer whose best-known work is the frivolous *Carnival of the Animals*.

Such a person is rare in any culture, and now that we can test his achievement solely by his music and his writings, his immense gifts are not so readily appreciated. Much of his music is bound to remain in obscurity, and there are few who would be bold enough to measure his achievement as a composer against Wagner or Verdi or Brahms, yet in productivity and versatility he is certainly a rival to Dvořák and Tchaikovsky. His works are appealing, superbly crafted, and full of surprises. He is very French in his desire to impress his hearers with the delicacy and *rightness* of every movement, to display impeccable taste, and to paint always in sensitive colors. His word-setting is faultless, his fugues are full of ingenious invention, his piano writing bears the signature of a brilliant pianist.

He wrote five piano concertos (and played them all himself), three violin concertos, and two cello concertos, as well as miscellaneous pieces for violin, horn, harp, and piano with orchestra. Of the two cello concertos, the first is much the more frequently played; in fact, it is a piece that every serious cello student confronts because of its excellent illustration of the cello’s range of tone and color and the efficient (not impossibly virtuoso) technique that it requires. It is also in a single movement that exhibits a diversity of tempo and mood.

The main idea, introduced at once by the soloist, is a swirl of notes which eventually gives way to a lyrical second theme over sustained strings. When that is done, the music accelerates into some bravura double-stops for the cello and an exultant tutti for the orchestra, like the end of a recapitulation.

It then proceeds to a development section, but instead of the normal sequence of a concerto first movement it recapitulates only the lyrical theme and then comes to a halt. With a distinct change of tempo, the muted strings give out a delicate passage, like a minuet on tiptoe. The soloist replies with four notes that will be important later, and then a countermelody to the orchestra’s whisperings, and this fairy-like “second movement” wends its way toward a return of the cello’s four notes, now low in the bass.

Some further development of the opening material intervenes before another change of tempo for what serves as a finale with a theme whose first four notes were so neatly hinted at in the previous section. Although its tempo is “*un peu moins vite*” (“a bit less lively”) there is enough energy in this part to propel the music toward the final return of the opening music and a coda that concludes exultantly in the major key.

There were many precedents for single-movement concertos from Weber, Schumann, Liszt, and others, yet this work bears witness to Saint-Saëns’s thoughtful ingenuity at handling a single movement with a variety of themes and tempos. Because he was well-known from an early age as a virtuoso pianist and organist, it was assumed that he could not possibly compose. Least of all could he compose for the opera, it was said, which is why his first two operas, *The Silver Bell* and *Samson and Delilah*, each had to wait many years before they were performed. His third opera, *The Yellow Princess*, staged in 1872, was his first opera to be played in Paris, and his energetic organization of a new concert society, the Société Nationale, founded in 1871, enabled him to present his own music in defiance of other concert bodies that had no faith in him.

Thus to have a cello concerto played by the Société des Concerts in 1873, against the wishes of the conductor, was a small triumph, the start of a broader recognition that eventually led to his high standing as one of the most respected and most performed musicians in France.

The soloist in 1873 was an interesting individual, Auguste Tolbecque, to whom Saint-Saëns dedicated the concerto. His father was one of three Belgian Tolbecque brothers, all violinists active in Paris in a variety of orchestras, all frequently confused with each other in the records. Auguste studied at the Conservatoire and like his father and uncles played in a number of orchestras, including that of the Société des Concerts. He also played the viola da gamba, which was very unusual at the time, and was interested in early music. He had a collection of old instruments, now part of the great Brussels Conservatory collection. We are also told that he attempted to revive the “componium,” a composing machine which could improvise on any theme. He wrote an opera, edited a music journal, wrote some books on early instruments, and died in 1919 aged 88.

A second cello concerto came from Saint-Saëns in 1902. This was in two movements, and its nostalgic tone made it seem very old-fashioned at that time. It has always remained in the shadows of its exhilarating predecessor.

Hugh Macdonald

Hugh Macdonald taught music at the universities of Cambridge and Oxford and was Professor of Music at Glasgow and at Washington University in St Louis. He has written books on Scriabin and Berlioz and was general editor of the 26-volume New Berlioz Edition. His most recent books are Beethoven’s Century (2008), Music in 1853 (2012), and Bizet (2014).

The first American performance of Saint-Saëns’s Cello Concerto No. 1 took place on February 17, 1876; Carl Zerrahn conducted the Harvard Musical Association at the Boston Music Hall, with soloist Wulf Fries.

The first Boston Symphony performance of the concerto was given on December 10, 1881, with soloist Carl Bayrhammer and Georg Henschel conducting, during the orchestra’s first season. Since then, there have been BSO performances featuring Anton Hekking and Alwin Schroeder (under Arthur Nikisch); Schroeder, Rudolf Krasselt, and Elsa Ruegger (under Wilhelm Gericke); Heinrich Warnke (Max Fiedler); Joseph Malkin (Karl Muck and Ernst Schmidt); Jean Bedetti and Schroeder (Pierre Monteux); Bedetti (Richard Burgin); Gregor Piatigorsky and Bedetti (Serge Koussevitzky); Samuel Mayes (Charles Munch and Burgin); Leslie Parnas (Stanislaw Skrowaczewski); BSO Principal Cello Jules Eskin (William Steinberg); Matt Haimovitz (Leonard Slatkin); Henrich Schiff (Catherine Comet), Han-Na Chang (Seiji Ozawa and James Conlon), Johannes Moser (the most recent subscription series performances, under Ken-David Masur in January 2015), and Gautier Capuçon (the most recent Tanglewood performance, in July 2019).

Richard Strauss

An Alpine Symphony, Opus 64

Richard Georg Strauss was born in Munich, Germany, on June 11, 1864, and died in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Bavaria, on September 8, 1949. His earliest sketches for *An Alpine Symphony (Eine Alpensinfonie)* date from 1911. He began the orchestration on November 1, 1914, and completed the score on February 8, 1915. Strauss himself led the first performance, on October 28, 1915, with the orchestra of the Dresden Hofkapelle at the Philharmonie in Berlin. The score is dedicated to Count Nicolaus Seebach, who was director of the Royal Opera in Dresden.

The score of *An Alpine Symphony* calls for 2 flutes, 2 piccolos (doubling 3rd and 4th flutes), 2 oboes, English horn (doubling 3rd oboe), heckelphone (bass oboe at these performances), E-flat clarinet, 2 clarinets in B-flat, 1 in C, and bass clarinet in B-flat, 3 bassoons and contrabassoon (doubling 4th bassoon), 4 horns, 4 tenor tubas (doubling 5th through 8th horns), 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, 2 bass tubas, 2 harps (“doubled if possible”), organ, timpani, percussion (wind machine, thunder machine, glockenspiel, triangle, cowbells, cymbals, tam-tam, bass drum, side drum), celesta, and strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses). Strauss asks that the flute, oboe, E-flat clarinet, and C clarinet parts be doubled from rehearsal number 94 (just before “The Fog Rises”) to the end of the score. He also recommends use of “Samuel’s Aerophon” to assist the wind players with their long sustained notes. The organist at these performances is Daniel Ficarri.

When we think of Strauss and Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 1893)* immediately comes to mind; but Strauss’s engagement with the German philosopher went far deeper, and this relates to Strauss’s tone poem *An Alpine Symphony* (1915), a determined response to the post-Wagnerian metaphysics of Gustav Mahler.

When Strauss first apprenticed in Meiningen under Hans von Bülow in 1885, he met a musician, Alexander Ritter, who sought to convert him to the spiritual philosophies of Richard Wagner and Arthur Schopenhauer. Strauss’s Wagner enthusiasm was intense, though short-lived. He cultivated a relationship with Cosima Wagner, the

composer's widow, and even conducted *Tannhäuser* in Wagner's Bayreuth Festspielhaus in 1894, with his future wife Pauline de Ahna as Elizabeth. But Strauss soon became estranged from the aura of Bayreuth, and while he always admired Wagner's music, he tired of all the metaphysical trappings that had attached themselves to Wagner's legacy. Nietzsche guided Strauss in his journey away from Schopenhauer and the quasi-religious aura of Bayreuth.

The roots of *An Alpine Symphony* (1915) date back to early as 1899, when Strauss planned a Nietzschean response to Wagner in the form of a tone poem called *An Artist's Tragedy* (*Künstlertragödie*), a two-part symphonic work based on the life and descent into insanity of the famous Swiss artist, Karl Stauffer, who lived in the Alps for most of his life. The original design was:

1) An artist who, despite his joy in creation, suffers from doubt (as did Zarathustra and the Hero of Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*), comforted by his lover who spurs him on to new creative work.

2) The catastrophe, where their "love-madness" ultimately leads to ruin and death.

The plan was dropped and lay dormant until 1911, the year of Gustav Mahler's death. Strauss deeply admired Mahler's work as a conductor and a composer, but simply could not understand why an artist of his caliber could remain attached to metaphysics, more specifically, Christianity. On the day he learned of Mahler's death (1911), he wrote in his diary:

The death of this aspiring, idealistic, energetic artist [is] a grave loss ... Mahler, the Jew, could achieve elevation in Christianity. As an old man the hero Wagner returned to it under the influence of Schopenhauer. It is clear to me that the German nation will achieve new creative energy only by liberating itself from Christianity ... I shall call my alpine symphony: Der Antichrist, since it represents: moral purification through one's own strength, liberation through work, worship of eternal, magnificent nature.

Strauss's disappointment in Mahler's metaphysical leanings was lifelong, but it had reached a high point a year before Mahler's death when he attended the world premiere of his Eighth Symphony in Munich. The Eighth is less a symphony than an oratorio based on the hymn "Veni Creator Spiritus" and a selection from Goethe's *Faust*, Part Two; Strauss's *Alpine Symphony*, as he would come to call it, was in part a response to Mahler's sacred symphony. *The Antichrist* is a book by Nietzsche, published in 1895, a year before Strauss's tone poem *Also sprach Zarathustra*, which was itself a response to Nietzsche's eponymous earlier book.

The setting for Strauss's new work is the Alps, and the struggle between artist and his natural surroundings plays a fundamental role in the shaping of this work. The parallels between *An Artist's Tragedy*, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, and *Ein Heldenleben* are obvious (the struggles with nature and self-doubt), but less obvious and equally compelling is the connection with Strauss's earlier *Wandrer's Sturmlied* ("Wanderer's Storm Song," by Goethe), where in a raging storm the poet wanders, thinking of his former love, asking not God but Genius to protect him from the forces of nature.

After Mahler's death Strauss worked more extensively on his Antichrist symphony, incorporating important elements of the *Artist's Tragedy*, especially the music for the opening at sunrise. The work was completed in short score by 1913 and in full score by 1915, and, as in *Zarathustra*, Strauss does not portray the finite Individual jealous of eternal Nature (as did Mahler in *The Song of the Earth*) but rather one who celebrates—who is inspired to do great deeds—by his natural environment. In an unpublished diary entry on the *Alpensinfonie*, shortly after its premiere, Strauss again stresses that both Judaism and Christianity—in short, metaphysics—are unhealthy and unproductive; they are incapable of embracing Nature as a primary, life-affirming source.

As Nietzschean as all this sounds, Strauss ultimately did not choose the philosopher's *Antichrist* essay as his paratextual model; instead he turned to the very alpine landscape that surrounded his home in Garmisch, some fifty miles south of Munich, Germany. The ascent and descent from an alpine mountain serve as a metaphor for this exaltation of nature. Strauss's *Zarathustra* and the *Alpensinfonie* both begin at sunrise, and in the latter work the composer specified twenty-three tableaux along this twenty-four hour journey:

Night, Sunrise, Ascent, Entry into the Forest, Wandering by the Brook, By the Waterfall, Apparition, On the Flowering Meadows, On the Pastures, Through the Thicket and Briar, On the Glacier, Dangerous Moment, On the Summit, Vision, Mists Arrive, The Sun Gradually Darkens, Elegy, Calm before the Storm, Tempest and Storm, Descent, Sunset, Echo, and Night.

Despite its philosophical roots, *Eine Alpensinfonie* strikes one as outwardly unphilosophical, proclaiming with startling beauty the glories of the natural world. It is unprecedented in Strauss's output both in terms of duration (fifty minutes) and size (requiring over 140 players, including wind and thunder machines, cowbells, offstage horns, trumpets, and trombones). The dynamic range, from the near silence of dawn to the explosive alpine storm, is unmatched among the tone poems. That very dazzling, evocative orchestra caused mixed critical reaction after the

October 1915 premiere; some derided it as “cinema music,” a prescient claim, given that Germany was on the verge of a cinematic revolution that would commence shortly after the First World War.

In the day of analog LPs, the *Alpine Symphony* was among Strauss’s least recorded (and, by extension, least regarded) tone poems. There were only three recordings made in the 1950s, four in the ‘60s, and three in the ‘70s. That all changed with the advent of digital recording and the compact disc, which could accommodate that very unprecedented dynamic range. With the introduction of CDs in the 1980s, there was a sonic explosion with 14 recordings. The 1990s saw 19 CDs, and from 2000 to the present well over 50 recordings have been released. This geometric expansion directly affected current concert hall offerings as well. Indeed, any orchestra that wishes to call itself a major symphonic ensemble offers *An Alpine Symphony* in their repertoire.

Bryan Gilliam

The first Boston Symphony Orchestra performances of An Alpine Symphony were given on December 18 and 19, 1925, by Serge Koussevitzky, who also led further performances the following month in Boston, New York City, and Brooklyn. Koussevitzky led the piece with the BSO in March 1930, after which the orchestra did not play it again until October 1982 under André Previn. Subsequent performances were led by Edo de Waart, Seiji Ozawa, Marek Janowski, Christof Perick, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos (the most recent BSO performance at Tanglewood, although Antonio Pappano led the National Youth Orchestra of the U.S.A. in a performance of the piece at Ozawa Hall on August 1, 2019), and Andris Nelsons (the most recent subscription series performances, in November/December 2017, at which time the work was recorded for Deutsche Grammophon).

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 comprehensive biography of Richard Strauss is Norman Del Mar’s three-volume *Richard Strauss* (Cornell University paperback). More recent books on the composer include *The life of Richard Strauss* by Bryan Gilliam, in the series “Musical lives” (Cambridge paperback); Tim Ashley’s *Richard Strauss* in the series “20th-Century Composers” (Phaidon paperback); Raymond Holden’s *Richard Strauss: A Musical Life* (Yale University Press), and *Richard Strauss: Man, Musician, Enigma* (Cambridge University Press) by Michael Kennedy, who also wrote *Richard Strauss* in the “Master Musicians” series (Oxford paperback). The Strauss entry in the 2001 edition of *The New Grove* is by Bryan Gilliam. *The Cambridge Companion to Richard Strauss*, edited by Charles Youmans, was published in 2010 (Cambridge University Press).

Over the past few seasons, Andris Nelsons recorded all the Strauss tone poems and other orchestral works in a historic project divided between the BSO and the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig for a 7-CD box set to be released by Deutsche Grammophon on May 6, 2022. Nelsons and the BSO’s recordings include *Till Eulenspiegel*, the Interludes from *Intermezzo*, and *An Alpine Symphony*. Other reasonably complete sets of the tone poems feature Karl Böhm with the Dresden Staatskapelle and Berlin Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon), Rudolf Kempe and the Staatskapelle Dresden (Warner Classics), Neeme Järvi and the Royal Scottish National Symphony Orchestra (Chandos), and François-Xavier Roth with the SWR Symphony Orchestra (SWR Classic). There are recordings by Strauss himself of several of the tone poems with various orchestras (Music and Arts Programs of America).

Camille Saint-Saëns and his World is a collection of essays, articles, and documents edited by Jann Passler (Princeton University paperback, in the Bard Music Festival series). *Camille Saint-Saëns: On Music and Musicians* is a collection of the composer’s writings translated and edited by Roger Nichols (Oxford University Press). The fullest English-language account of the composer’s life and music is Stephen Studd’s *Saint-Saëns: A Critical Biography* (Fairleigh Dickinson).

Recordings of Saint-Saëns’s A minor cello concerto include those by—listed alphabetically—Gautier Capuçon with Lionel Bringuier and the French Radio Philharmonic (Erato), Jacqueline Du Pré with Daniel Barenboim and the New Philharmonia Orchestra (EMI), Pierre Fournier with Jean Martinon and the Lamoureux Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon), Steven Isserlis with Michael Tilson Thomas and the London Symphony Orchestra (RCA), Yo-Yo Ma with Lorin Maazel and the ORTF National Orchestra (Sony), Johannes Moser with Fabrice Bollon and the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra (Hänssler Classic), and Pieter Wispelwey with Daniel Sepec and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen (Channel Classics).

Marc Mandel/Robert Kirzinger

Artists

Blaise Déjardin

Making his solo concerto debut with the BSO this week, Strasbourg-born cellist Blaise Déjardin was appointed principal cello of the Boston Symphony Orchestra by BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons in spring 2018, having joined the BSO's cello section in 2008. Holding the Philip R. Allen Chair, he is the 14th principal cello in the history of the orchestra. Mr. Déjardin has performed as soloist with orchestra around the world (Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, Kuopio Symphony Orchestra, Boston Pops, Longwood Symphony Orchestra, Cape Ann Symphony, Melrose Symphony Orchestra). Recent solo performances featured concertos by Antonín Dvořák, Camille Saint-Saëns, Johannes Brahms, and Dmitri Shostakovich. A dedicated chamber musician, he spent two summers at Ravinia's Steans Institute and is, since 2018, a member of the Boston Symphony Chamber Players. Previously, Déjardin was a member of the European Union Youth Orchestra and the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester. He was also a founding member of A Far Cry and the Boston Cello Quartet. He has arranged numerous pieces for cello ensembles, earning five ASCAP Plus Awards and receiving commissions from Yo-Yo Ma, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and A Far Cry. In 2013 he launched Opus Cello, his online sheet music publishing company. He has served as artistic director of the Boston Cello Society since its creation in 2015. Mr. Déjardin made his debut with orchestra at age 14 performing Haydn's C major concerto at the Corum in Montpellier, France. Among his numerous awards and honors, he was awarded first prize at the Maurice Gendron International Cello Competition and was also the youngest prizewinner at the 6th Adam International Cello Competition in New Zealand. In 2007 he made his Paris recital debut at Le Petit Palais as a laureate of the program Déclic supporting emerging young soloists in France. In 2019 Mr. Déjardin released the album *MOZART New Cello Duos* with cellist Kee-Hyun Kim, featuring his own transcriptions. He also appears on both Boston Cello Quartet albums *Pictures* and *The Latin Project*. His first album as principal cello of the BSO, *Adès Conducts Adès*, was released by Deutsche Grammophon in 2020. Mr. Déjardin holds a first prize in cello with highest honors from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique of Paris, as well as a master of music diploma and a graduate diploma from the New England Conservatory in Boston. His main teachers were Philippe Muller, Laurence Lesser, and Bernard Greenhouse. He serves on the cello faculty of the New England Conservatory in Boston and is regularly invited to give masterclasses in Europe, China, and North America. His instructional book *Audition Day* was published by Opus Cello in 2022. Please visit www.blaisedejardin.com for more information.

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.