

# Season 2018-2019

Thursday, February 14,  
at 7:30

Friday, February 15, at 2:00

Saturday, February 16,  
at 8:00

## The Philadelphia Orchestra

**Esa-Pekka Salonen** Conductor

**Choong-Jin Chang** Viola

**Strauss** *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Op. 30 

Dawn—

Of the Backworldsmen—

Of the Great Longing—

Of Joys and Passions—

Grave-Song—

Of Science—

The Convalescent—

The Dance-Song—

The Night-Wanderer's Song

### Intermission

**Bartók/completed by Serly** Viola Concerto


I. Moderato—

II. Adagio religioso—

III. Allegro vivace

**Bartók** Suite from *The Miraculous Mandarin*, Op. 19 

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 45 minutes.

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

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

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The February 15 concert is sponsored by

**A. Morris Williams in memory of Ruth W. Williams.**

The February 16 concert is sponsored by

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Please join us following the February 15 concert for a free Chamber Postlude featuring members of The Philadelphia Orchestra.

**Bartók** String Quartet No. 2, Op. 17

I. Moderato

II. Allegro molto capriccioso

III. Lento

**Miyo Curnow** Violin

**Elna Kalendarova** Violin

**Kerri Ryan** Viola

**Kathryn Picht Read** Cello

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# The Philadelphia Orchestra

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** Music Director



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# The Philadelphia Orchestra



Jeffrey Griffin

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Conductor



Mina Haimov/Finnish National Opera and Ballet

Conductor and composer **Esa-Pekka Salonen** will become music director of the San Francisco Symphony in 2020. He is currently the principal conductor and artistic advisor of London's Philharmonia Orchestra as well as the conductor laureate of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, where he was music director from 1992 to 2009. He is artist-in-association at the Finnish National Opera and Ballet, where this season he conducts Debussy's *Pelleas and Melisande* and, in future seasons, his first performances of Wagner's full *Ring Cycle*. He co-founded—and from 2003 to 2018 served as artistic director of—the annual Baltic Sea Festival, which invites celebrated artists to promote unity and ecological awareness among the countries around the Baltic Sea. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 1986.

Thirteen of Mr. Salonen's works are being performed around the world during the 2018-19 season, including *Homunculus* for string quartet, *Pentatonic Etude* for viola, *Memoria* for wind quintet, *Five Images after Sappho* for soprano and chamber ensemble, and major orchestral works: *Helix* at the Minnesota Orchestra and the Oslo Philharmonic; *Nyx* at the St. Louis Symphony and the Colburn Orchestra; *LA Variations* at the Los Angeles Philharmonic; the Cello Concerto at the Rotterdam Philharmonic; and the Violin Concerto at the St. Louis, Houston, and Gothenburg symphonies. The City of Birmingham Symphony Chorus sings "Dona nobis pacem" while the Santa Cruz Symphony closes its season with *Karawane* for chorus and orchestra. *Karawane*, based on a Dadaist poem by Hugo Ball, was written during Mr. Salonen's time as the first-ever composer-in-residence at Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra and was featured in a light-and-sound installation in London as part of a citywide program for cultural renewal of public spaces. He also conducts his own *Pollux* at the Helsinki Festival and the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, and his Cello Concerto at the Baltic Sea Festival and on tour with the Philharmonia with Truls Mørk as soloist.

Mr. Salonen has an extensive and varied recording career. Deutsche Grammophon has released a portrait CD of his orchestral works performed by the Finnish Radio Symphony and conducted by the composer. In 2018 Sony released a box set of all Mr. Salonen's recordings for them.

# Soloist



Jessica Griffin

A native of Seoul, Korea, **Choong-Jin (C.J.) Chang** became principal viola of The Philadelphia Orchestra in 2006 after having joined the Orchestra in 1994. He made his performance debut as a 12-year-old violinist with the Seoul Philharmonic as winner of the grand prize in Korea's Yook Young National Competition. In 1981, at the age of 13, he moved to the United States to attend the Juilliard School of Music. He subsequently studied in Philadelphia at the Esther Boyer College of Music of Temple University and at the Curtis Institute of Music, from which he received degrees in both violin and viola. His primary teachers were Jascha Brodsky and former Philadelphia Orchestra Principal Viola Joseph dePasquale.

Mr. Chang made his solo debut recital at Carnegie Hall in 2007 and since then has appeared in numerous recitals in the US and South Korea. In 2008 he was featured as a soloist with The Philadelphia Orchestra during its Asian Tour, performing in Seoul and Shanghai, and its summer residency at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra subscription solo debut in 2009 and since then has been a frequent soloist with the ensemble. In 2013 he planned the Bach and Hindemith Project, which included all the viola pieces by both composers and was performed in four recitals over a year at the Kuhmo Arts Hall in Seoul. As a chamber musician, he performs with the world's great musicians at many prestigious festivals throughout the US and Asia. Mr. Chang is a founding member of the Johannes Quartet, whose debut performances at Philadelphia's Ethical Society and at Carnegie Hall in New York City received glowing reviews. Since 1997 the Quartet has performed to audience and critical acclaim throughout the US. It recently premiered Esa-Pekka Salonen's quartet, *Homunculus*, and William Bolcom's octet, Double Quartet, with the Guarneri Quartet.

Alongside his extensive performing activities, Mr. Chang is a respected teacher on both violin and viola. Among his former pupils are members of The Philadelphia Orchestra and the Cleveland Orchestra, as well as many winners of major competitions. He currently serves as the viola professor at Johns Hopkins University's Peabody Conservatory of Music.

# Framing the Program

## Parallel Events

**1896**

**Strauss**

*Also sprach  
Zarathustra*

**Music**

Puccini

*La bohème*

**Literature**

Chekhov

*The Sea Gull*

**Art**

Leighton

*Clytie*

**History**

Utah becomes a  
state

**1918**

**Bartók**

*The Miraculous  
Mandarin*

**Music**

Stravinsky

*The Soldier's  
Tale*

**Literature**

Cather

*My Antonia*

**Art**

Léger

*Engine Rooms*

**History**

Daylight saving

time introduced

**1945**

**Bartók**

Viola Concerto

**Music**

Britten

*Peter Grimes*

**Literature**

Orwell

*Animal Farm*

**Art**

Moore

*Family Group*

**History**

End of WWII

Richard Strauss conducted *Also sprach Zarathustra* with The Philadelphia Orchestra in 1921 on the second of his two visits to America. He based this bold tone poem on Friedrich Nietzsche's brilliant, puzzling, and disturbing philosophical meditation. The unforgettable opening, which depicts the sunrise viewed from a mountaintop, deploys the organ to magnificent effect.

Strauss's modernist music both shocked and enticed audiences at the dawn of the 20th century. His music proved a crucial inspiration for the young Hungarian composer Béla Bartók, who counted hearing *Zarathustra* in 1902 as a decisive moment in his career: "Freed from Brahms, I could not find the way past Wagner and Liszt. I was aroused as by a flash of lightning by the first Budapest performance of *Zarathustra*. At last I saw a way that would lead me to something new. I threw myself into a study of Strauss's scores and began composing again."

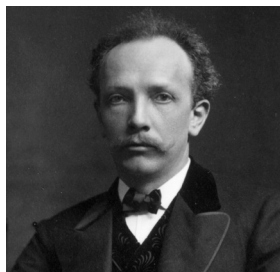
We hear two of Bartók's works on the second half of the concert. The Viola Concerto is his mesmerizing last testament, a final composition that was not quite finished when the composer died in 1945 at age 64, and that was completed by his friend Tibor Serly.

A quarter-century earlier Bartók had run into trouble with Hungarian censors when he used a lurid but forceful narrative about a murdered Mandarin as the basis for one of his most engaging scores. *The Miraculous Mandarin* is a pantomime ballet in which a prostitute's client does not die until he is held in her arms.

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

# The Music

## *Also sprach Zarathustra*



**Richard Strauss**  
Born in Munich,  
June 11, 1864  
Died in Garmisch-  
Partenkirchen,  
September 8, 1949

Many people's first musical association relating to the eminent German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) would be his relationship with Richard Wagner, which was initially worshipful and inspiring but eventually turned confrontational and damning. In fact, Nietzsche was himself a knowledgeable musician and amateur composer. (Some of his compositions are available online.) He once remarked—or rather boasted—that “there has never been a philosopher who has been in his essence a musician to such an extent as I am.” And perhaps he was right: Philosophers ever since antiquity have been fascinated by music and felt compelled to muse about it, but few had much technical command either to play or compose themselves.

An enduring part of Nietzsche's musical legacy is the inspiration his writings provided for marvelous music. The year 1896 proved especially important as two great composers, who were friends and rivals, set to music *Also sprach Zarathustra* (Thus Spoke Zarathustra). Gustav Mahler used the “Midnight Song,” which begins with the words “O Man! Take heed!,” as the basis for the fourth movement of his monumental Symphony No. 3, sung by an alto soloist. Richard Strauss went even further when he wrote a massive tone poem “freely based on Friedrich Nietzsche,” as he announced on the title page.

**Philosophical Music** Nietzsche's extraordinary *Also sprach Zarathustra*, written between 1883 and 1885, unfolds as an aphoristic poetic narrative. It was his most famous and popular book, an elusive philosophical piece of literature. It consists of some 80 titled proclamations, each ending with the words “thus spoke Zarathustra,” the Greek name for Zoroaster, the ancient Persian mystic. Strauss was deeply drawn to Nietzsche's book, which is in various respects itself musical. (So the philosopher claimed in his autobiography.) Strauss admired this musicality, understood Nietzsche's sense of irony, and shared his disdain for religion. (“God is dead!” is one of Zarathustra's most famous pronouncements.)

When Strauss began composing his sixth tone poem he wanted to depict man's search for knowledge and at one



point realized that *Also sprach Zarathustra* would serve him well. He worried, however, that the composition might be misunderstood, informing a colleague: “if it comes off I can think of a lot of people who will be annoyed.” Strauss indeed encountered a fair amount of resistance along the way. One newspaper warned that the project was “an act of enormous daring, for the danger of writing philosophical music for the intellect, capable of being understood only with the aid of didactic program notes, is all-too-present.”

So Strauss made various attempts at damage control. He explained that he “did not intend to write philosophical music or portray Nietzsche’s great work musically. I meant rather to convey in music an idea of the evolution of the human race from its origin, through the various phases of development, religious as well as scientific, up to Nietzsche’s idea of the Superman. The whole symphonic poem is intended as my homage to the genius of Nietzsche, which found its greatest exemplification in his book *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.” In addition to various ironic comments (at one point he thought of subtitling the work “Symphonic optimism in *fin-de-siècle* form, dedicated to the 20th century”), Strauss offered explanations to the press, colleagues, and performers.

In November 1896 Strauss conducted the premiere in Frankfurt and was enormously proud of the work. After the dress rehearsal, he wrote to his wife:

*Zarathustra* is splendid and by far the most important piece I have ever written—the most perfect in form, the richest in content, and the most distinctive. The opening is capital and the many string quartet passages have come off to perfection; the theme of passion is exhilarating, the fugue gruesome, the dance tune simply delightful. I am as happy as can be and only sorry that you cannot hear it. The climaxes are powerful and the instrumentation—flawless.”

**A Closer Look** As a further aid, Strauss prefaced the score with the opening of Nietzsche’s book, the Prologue, which recounts the 30-year-old Zarathustra leaving his homeland to philosophize in the solitude of a mountain cave. After 10 years he awakens one morning and addresses the rising sun, believing that he has achieved wisdom and that it is time for him to descend to rejoin humanity. Strauss brilliantly captures the **Dawn** in one of the most effective openings in all of orchestral music, made only more famous after Stanley Kubrick used it his 1968 film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Four

*Strauss composed Also sprach Zarathustra from 1894 to 1896.*

*The work received its first Philadelphia Orchestra performance on November 15, 1921, in New York with the composer on the podium. Most recently it was heard on subscription in October 2014 with Vladimir Jurowski.*

*The Orchestra has recorded Zarathustra four times: in 1963 with Eugene Ormandy for CBS; in 1975 with Ormandy for RCA; in 1979 with Ormandy for EMI; and in 1996 with Wolfgang Sawallisch for EMI.*

*Strauss scored the piece for piccolo, three flutes (III doubling piccolo II), three oboes, English horn, two clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, six horns, four trumpets, three trombones, two tubas, timpani, percussion (bass drum, chime, cymbals, glockenspiel, triangle), two harps, organ, and strings.*

*Performance time is approximately 30 minutes.*

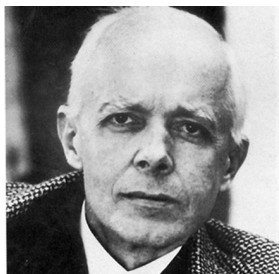
trumpets solemnly sound the primal nature motif of an ascending octave (C-G-C), answered by pounding timpani, before returning to the trumpet motif. Double basses, contrabassoon, and organ provide a foundational pedal point on C. Strauss acknowledged that the piece “is laid out as an alternation between the two remotest keys,” namely C, representing nature, and B, representing man.

There follow eight continuous parts with titles taken from the book: **Of the Backworldsmen**, depicts primal man using the key of B minor and alluding to religion through horns playing a plainchant Credo melody, which turns to the organ Magnificat theme in the next section, **Of the Great Longing**, with its aspiring upward phrases. **Of Joys and Passions** contrasts two intense themes before the subdued **Grave-Song**, featuring solo violin. The “gruesome” fugue used for **Of Science** begins with the C-G-C motif and is further complicated by employing all 12 pitches of the chromatic scale as well as contrasting the keys of C and B. The fugue dissipates in **The Convalescent**, with a loud and climatic return of the C-G-C motif for full orchestra, leading to **The Dance-Song**, a joyous waltz with a Viennese flair worthy of Johann Strauss, Jr. (no relation to Richard), and the concluding **Night-Wanderer’s Song** in which we hear 12 strokes of midnight before a quiet ending, in two keys at once, B in the upper woodwinds and C plucked by the lower strings, an unresolved oscillation between man and nature.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

# The Music

## Viola Concerto



**Béla Bartók**  
**Born in Nagyszentmiklós,**  
**Hungary (now Romania),**  
**March 25, 1881**  
**Died in New York City,**  
**September 26, 1945**

Among the reconstructions of musical masterworks left unfinished by their composers, two have taken a special place in the center of the orchestral repertory. One is Mahler's Tenth Symphony, which in Deryck Cooke's performing edition (which has subsequently been joined by a half dozen other versions) has greatly enhanced our understanding of Mahler's last years. The other is Tibor Serly's orchestration of Béla Bartók's Viola Concerto, a work that the composer had left in completed short-score when he died in 1945. Both are masterpieces that we would rather not live without, despite reservations some people voice about the ultimate "authenticity" of the reconstructions that have rendered them usable. Notwithstanding details of scoring and final "polish," in both cases an essential core of the composer's genuine art shines through.

Despite Bartók's careful instructions as to ordering and texture, a great deal of work remained before his Viola Concerto could be made performable. Serly's inscription in the score is a classic of understatement, in fact: "Prepared for publication from the composer's original manuscript." Serly made many essential decisions not only of orchestration but also of the order in which Bartók's confused sketches should be placed. The result, though, is a subtle, elusive work that joins the Concerto for Orchestra and the Third Piano Concerto to form the summit of Bartók's amazing American legacy.

**The Work's Inception** Bartók had already accomplished a full and multifaceted career when he arrived in the US in October 1940. As a composer he had scandalized the music world with his earlier *Bluebeard's Castle* and *The Miraculous Mandarin*; with lavish, densely wrought orchestral and chamber music based on folk material; and with daringly difficult concertos for piano and violin. As a musicologist, he had revolutionized the techniques of field study of folksong, and he had carved out a substantial career for himself as well as pianist and pedagogue. The effect of these successes during the 1920s was that it won him a number of important and lucrative commissions: Nearly all his works after 1930, in fact, were written on demand.

When in the late 1930s he began to see that he could not continue in Hungary, he at first thought of moving to England; during concerts in America, however, he considered the possibility of settling in the US, an idea that was solidified in 1940 through the offer of a temporary appointment as Visiting Research Associate at Columbia University. He accepted the position, which began in 1941. But the Columbia appointment was not renewed, and he found himself in financial straits. In 1943, after becoming so sick he could no longer concertize as pianist, he was finally diagnosed as having polycythemia, an illness of the red blood cells. Friends of ASCAP stepped in and offered to pay for treatment, and Bartók was eventually sent to a sanitarium at Lake Saranac, where he showed improvement. There he composed the Concerto for Orchestra, which Serge Koussevitzky had commissioned for the Boston Symphony.

In December 1944, only months after the resounding triumph of the Concerto for Orchestra in Boston, Bartók's publisher, Ralph Hawkes, suggested to the celebrated violist William Primrose that he ask the composer for a concerto. "He showed no great enthusiasm," Primrose wrote later, of Bartók's noncommittal response. "Rather he seemed doubtful as to the success of such an undertaking on his part. As he was anxious to get some idea of the technical capacity of the viola, we arranged that he should attend a performance of the Walton Viola Concerto I was to give the following week. . . . Unfortunately he was too ill to attend this performance, but he listened to it over the air."

In the summer of 1945, during his last months, Bartók worked simultaneously on the Third Piano Concerto—of which he completed all but 17 measures—and the Viola Concerto. Days before his death he wrote to Primrose that "your Viola Concerto is ready in draft, so that only the score has to be written—which means a purely mechanical work, so to speak." Serly, a longtime friend and colleague of the composer, was to spend much time with Bartók during his last months, and we can speculate that the two discussed the works that were underway.

Bartók described the Concerto further, in his letter to Primrose on September 8:

Many interesting problems arose in composing this work. The orchestration will be rather transparent, more so than in the [Second] Violin Concerto. Also the somber, more masculine character of your instrument executed some influence on the general

*Bartók composed his Viola Concerto in 1945. The work was completed by Tibor Serly in 1949.*

*William Primrose was soloist in the first Philadelphia Orchestra performance of the Viola Concerto, in May 1950 in Ann Arbor, with Thor Johnson conducting. Most recently on subscription, Choong-Jin Chang performed the work in May 2009, with Rossen Milanov on the podium.*

*The score calls for solo viola, three flutes (III doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, three horns, three trumpets, two trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, side drum), and strings.*

*The Concerto runs approximately 20 minutes in performance.*

character of the work. The highest note I use is 'A,' but I exploit rather frequently the lower registers. It is conceived in a rather virtuoso style. Most probably some passages will prove to be uncomfortable or unplayable. These we will discuss later, according to your observations.

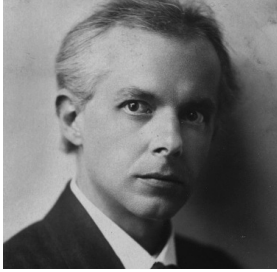
Alas, the composer died three weeks later, leaving these issues and a host of others open. Serly completed his reconstruction of the piece in 1949. "What for Bartók would have been 'a purely mechanical work,'" Serly wrote, "involved a lengthy task that required infinite patience and painstaking labor." Primrose gave the premiere of the Concerto that December, with Antal Dóráti and the Minneapolis Symphony.

**A Closer Look** The first movement of the Concerto (**Moderato**) is a simple sonata form, with motivic and coloristic echoes of the composer's other late works. Canonic and fugal devices abound, as they had in the Second and Third piano concertos and the Second Violin Concerto; most striking is the final *Lento parlando*, a passage of recitative linking the first and second movements. The second, marked **Adagio religioso**, follows without pause; it is built from a simple, song-like tune. Again it is linked to the following movement, this time through an *Allegretto* passage of open-fourth chords. The **Allegro vivace** finale is a driving perpetuum mobile, folk-like in its inspiration, of energy and vigor.

—Paul J. Horsley

# The Music

## Suite from *The Miraculous Mandarin*



**Béla Bartók**

A duke, a prince, and a mandarin—all three of Béla Bartók's stage works are about men bearing noble titles and inhabiting fictitious worlds (legend, fairytale, or a hypothetical modern city). All three can be understood, accepted, or loved by women only under extreme circumstances (if at all). Each of the three works, however, treats this same basic problem in widely divergent ways. *The Wooden Prince* has a happy ending, all obstacles having been removed between the Prince and the Princess. In *Bluebeard's Castle*, both characters—the Duke and Judith—become victims of a total lack of understanding between man and woman. At least in *The Miraculous Mandarin* the protagonist dies happy, having embraced the Girl; but it is tragic that he can only find fulfillment in death.

The one-act play *The Miraculous Mandarin* by Menyhért (Melchior) Lengyel struck a deep nerve in Bartók, who decided to set it to music as soon as he had read it in the literary magazine *Nyugat* (The Occident). Lengyel (1880-1974) was a successful Hungarian playwright who later worked in Hollywood for years, writing screenplays for Greta Garbo, among others.

The action of the pantomime is summarized in the score as follows:

In a shabby room in the slums, three tramps, bent on robbery, force a girl to lure prospective victims from the street. A down-at-heel cavalier and a timid youth, who succumb to her attractions, are found to have thin wallets and are thrown out. The third "guest" is the eerie Mandarin. His impassivity frightens the girl, who tries to thaw him by dancing—but when he feverishly embraces her, she runs from him in terror. After a wild chase he catches her, at which point the three tramps leap from their hiding place, rob him of everything he has, and try to smother him under a pile of cushions. But he gets to his feet, his eyes fixed passionately on the girl. They run him through with a sword; he is shaken, but his desire is stronger than his wounds, and he hurls himself on her. They hang him up, but it is impossible for him to die. Only when they cut him down, and the girl takes him into her arms, do his wounds begin to bleed and he dies.

*Bartók composed The Miraculous Mandarin from 1918 to 1923.*

*Eugene Ormandy conducted the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Suite from The Miraculous Mandarin in October 1948. Pierre Boulez led the first performances of the complete work in February 1973. The most recent subscription performances of the Suite were in March 2008, with Charles Dutoit on the podium.*

*The Suite has been recorded twice by the Orchestra, both times with Ormandy: in 1962 for CBS and in 1978 for EMI.*

*The score calls for three flutes (II and III doubling piccolo), three oboes (III doubling English horn), three clarinets (II doubling E-flat clarinet, III doubling bass clarinet), three bassoons (III doubling contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, large snare drum, soprano snare drum, tam-tam, triangle, xylophone), harp, piano, celesta, organ, and strings.*

*The Miraculous Mandarin Suite runs approximately 21 minutes in performance.*

**A Closer Look** The music depicts the successive stages of the action with great vividness. After a frenetic introduction, which portrays the hustle and bustle of a large city, the three tramps order the girl to perform her “decoy game,” a seductive dance whose melody, played by the clarinet, we hear three times—more and more agitated each time.

After the first two visitors are dispatched, a menacing theme for trombones and tuba, based on a single descending minor third, announces the approach of someone who is positively outside the four characters’ realm of previous experience. The Mandarin enters the room to the ominous restatement of the descending minor third by the brass.

“General consternation. . . The girl overcomes her repugnance and calls to the Mandarin: ‘Why don’t you come closer?’” The music hesitates for a long time before the girl finally begins her dance. Out of short melodic fragments played by solo woodwinds, a waltz theme gradually emerges. It is symbolic that the waltz begins with the same descending minor third we heard earlier at the Mandarin’s entrance. “The dance gradually becomes livelier, as does the music, ending in a wild erotic dance. The girl sinks down to embrace him; he begins to tremble in feverish excitement.” The waltz leads into an Allegro section dominated by an agitated trombone theme. As the Mandarin begins his frenzied chase after the girl, a wild fugato starts in the orchestra, to the thudding accompaniment of the low winds and percussion, at the end of which, the Mandarin catches the girl.

It is at this point that the Suite version, prepared by Bartók in 1927, ends. This version omits the thrice-attempted murder and the final denouement, yet by concluding at such a climactic moment, it makes for a highly effective concert piece, and with performances of the complete pantomime few and far between, this is the form in which the music is most frequently heard.

—Peter Laki

# Musical Terms

## GENERAL TERMS

**Canon:** A device whereby an extended melody, stated in one part, is imitated strictly and in its entirety in one or more other parts

**Chord:** The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

**Chromatic:** Relating to tones foreign to a given key (scale) or chord

**Coda:** A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

**Diatonic:** Melody or harmony drawn primarily from the tones of the major or minor scale

**Fugato:** A passage or movement consisting of fugal imitations, but not worked out as a regular fugue

**Fugue:** A piece of music in which a short melody is stated by one voice and then imitated by the other voices in succession, reappearing throughout the entire piece in all the voices at different places

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

**Monophony:** Music for a single voice or part

**Octave:** The interval between any two notes that are seven diatonic (non-

chromatic) scale degrees apart. Two notes an octave apart are different only in their relative registers.

**Op.:** Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output

**Pedal point:** A long-held note, usually in the bass, sounding with changing harmonies in the other parts

**Perpetuum mobile:** A title sometimes given to a piece in which rapid figuration is persistently maintained

**Plainchant:** The official monophonic unison chant (originally unaccompanied) of the Christian liturgies

**Recitative:** Declamatory singing, free in tempo and rhythm. Recitative has also sometimes been used to refer to parts of purely instrumental works that resemble vocal recitatives.

**Scale:** The series of tones which form (a) any major or minor key or (b) the chromatic scale of successive semi-tonic steps

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

by a coda. The exposition is the introduction of the musical ideas, which are then "developed." In the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.

**Symphonic poem:** See tone poem

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

**Tonic:** The keynote of a scale

## THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

**Adagio:** Leisurely, slow

**Allegretto:** A tempo between walking speed and fast

**Allegro:** Bright, fast

**Capriccioso:** Fanciful, freely

**Lento:** Slow

**Moderato:** A moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow

**Parlando:** In an expressive, declamatory style

**Religioso:** Sacred, devout

**Vivace:** Lively

## TEMPO MODIFIERS

**Molto:** Very