

Minnesota Orchestra

Mischa Santora, conductor

Leila Josefowicz, violin

Classical Season Sponsor: UBS

Thursday, April 23, 2009, 11 am | Orchestra Hall

Friday, April 24, 2009, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

Saturday, April 25, 2009, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

Sergei Prokofiev | *Romeo and Juliet*, Selections from the Orchestral Suites ca. 17'
 Montagues and Capulets (Suite II/1)
 Dance (Suite II/4)
 Masks (Suite I/5)
 Romeo and Juliet (Suite I/6)

Max Bruch | Concerto No. 1 in G minor for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 26 ca. 23'
 Prelude: Allegro moderato
 Adagio
 Finale: Allegro energico
Leila Josefowicz, violin

I N T E R M I S S I O N ca. 20'

Richard Wagner | Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan and Isolde* ca. 17'

Maurice Ravel | Suite No. 2 from *Daphnis and Chloe* ca. 16'
 Lever du jour
 Pantomime
 Danse générale

The Coffee Concert on April 23 is preceded by a fashion show by Blue Willi's, Fawbush's, Laurie Jacobi Designs, Papagallo and Sonnies, coordinated by Mary Steinke.

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live Friday evenings on stations of **Minnesota Public Radio**. The concerts are also featured in **American Public Media's** national programs, *SymphonyCast* and *Performance Today*. Regional broadcasts are supported by the Minnesota Orchestra; by **Patterson, Thuente, Skaar and Christensen, P.A.**; and by **UBS**.

music up close

Bruch Violin
Concerto No. 1
with Brian Newhouse
4/23 at 10:30 am
4/24 at 7 pm
4/25 at 7 pm
Orchestra Hall Auditorium

Ask the Conductor

4/25, post-concert
Stay after the Saturday night
concert for a Q&A with conductor
Mischa Santora.

one-minute notes



Mischa Santora, conductor

Mischa Santora, the Minnesota Orchestra's associate conductor since 2004, has guest conducted on five continents, leading such ensembles as the Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra and Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra. In recent appearances on the Orchestra's subscription series he has conducted Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony and, with Principal Clarinet Burt Hara, the Copland Clarinet Concerto.

Other posts: He is in his eighth season as music director of the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra and recently completed a multi-year tenure in the same position with Hungary's International Opera Festival Miskolc.

Honors: Santora won the 1998 Aspen Conducting Prize and has received awards from the Presser, Kiefer-Hablitzel and Kurt-Dienemann Foundations.

Of interest: In 2006 Santora and his brother, cellist Beni Santora, became co-owners of a vineyard in Hungary.

More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



Leila Josefowicz, violin

Canadian-born violinist Leila Josefowicz has won acclaim for her fresh approach to the standard and contemporary repertoire. She regularly appears with leading orchestras in North America, Europe and Asia, including the New York Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra and Hong Kong Philharmonic, and is active as a recitalist. She last appeared at Orchestra Hall at Sommerfest 2007, performing Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto.

Recent, upcoming: Highlights of her current season include performances of the Thomas Adès Violin Concerto with the Philadelphia Orchestra and concerts with Andrew Litton and the Bournemouth Symphony. Earlier this month she premiered the Esa-Pekka Salonen Violin Concerto with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Recordings: Josefowicz' recent albums include Shostakovich's First Violin Concerto with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the Knussen Concerto with the BBC Symphony.

More: leilajosefowicz.com.

Prokofiev: Selections from *Romeo and Juliet*

These *Romeo and Juliet* selections summon images of feuding families, dances and the famous balcony scene.

Bruch: Violin Concerto No. 1

Dark, throaty sounds open this concerto and color the remainder of the work. The virtuosic *Prelude* leads to a lyrical *Adagio* based on three great melodies, and the energetic *Finale* is full of suspense and musical pyrotechnics.

Wagner: Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan and Isolde*

In Wagner's operatic prelude we hear a series of longing, surging phrases built on a dissonant harmony; the Liebestod—literally, “love-death”—is full of shimmering string tremolos, harp arpeggios and long crescendos.

Ravel: Suite No. 2 from *Daphnis and Chloe*

The lovers Daphnis and Chloe enjoy a sequence of happy moments in Ravel's suite. Rippling woodwinds announce a sunrise; Daphnis tells the story of Pan and Syrinx through solo flute; and the couple celebrates with a joyous dance.

concert guide

love and romance

“Famous lovers from antiquity” is clearly a theme of this program. Daphnis and Chloe hark back to a third-century Greek romance, Tristan and Isolde to a 12th-century legend and Shakespeare’s immortal “star-cross’d lovers,” Romeo and Juliet, to a tale from the 16th century. The stories are totally different: one ends in tragedy (Romeo and Juliet), one in rejoicing (Daphnis and Chloe) and one in transfiguration (Tristan and Isolde). But in each case the music was created for the theater (two ballets and an opera), and in each the composer provided music of mesmerizing power and compelling interest—equal to the intensity of the lovers’ emotions.

Where does this leave Bruch’s violin concerto? It follows no story line, has no love element and was not conceived within the context of a theatrical production. Yet like the other works heard here, it is imbued with romantic sentiment ranging from the melancholic to the exuberant. By coincidence, it was begun the same year (1857) as Wagner began writing *Tristan and Isolde*.

Concert Guide by **Robert Markow**.



Sergei Prokofiev

Born: April 23, 1891, Sontsovka
Died: March 5, 1953, Moscow

Selections from *Romeo and Juliet*

In 1934 the Kirov Theater in Leningrad approached Sergei Prokofiev with the proposal that they collaborate on a ballet based on Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*.

Prokofiev completed the massive score by the end of the summer of 1935, but the project came to seem nearly as star-crossed as Shakespeare’s young lovers. The Kirov Ballet backed out, and the Bolshoi Theatre of Moscow took over the project. Prokofiev’s first plan had been to give the story a happy ending in which Romeo would rescue Juliet before her suicide—because, as he explained, “living people can dance, the dying cannot.” Fortunately, this idea was scrapped, but when the Bolshoi finally saw Prokofiev’s score, they called it “undanceable” and refused to produce it.

While *Romeo and Juliet* languished in limbo, Prokofiev transformed excerpts from the ballet’s 52 numbers into a series of orchestral suites. The first two suites were premiered in 1936 and 1937—thus much of the music from the ballet was familiar to audiences long before it was produced on the stage. The third suite was compiled in 1946.

a tale of woe?

The premiere of the ballet itself took place not in Russia but in Brno in 1938. Preparations for the first Russian performance brought more trouble, including a fight between Prokofiev and the choreographer, disputes with the dancers and a threatened walk-out by the orchestra. When the Russian premiere finally took place in Leningrad on January 11, 1940, it was a triumph for all involved. Still, ballerina Galina Ulanova, who danced the part of Juliet, touched on the ballet’s difficult birth when she paraphrased the play’s final lines in her toast to the composer after the opening performance:

Never was a tale of greater woe,
 Than Prokofiev’s music to Romeo.



at the same time...

Bruch’s First Violin Concerto premieres in 1866, the year:

- Tennessee becomes the first Confederate state to be readmitted to the Union
- The undersea Atlantic Cable is successfully laid, making telegraph communication possible between North America and Europe
- Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s epic novel *Crime and Punishment* is published in 12 monthly installments

In 1938, the year Prokofiev’s ballet *Romeo and Juliet* is first performed:

- Nazi activists destroy hundreds of Jewish homes, businesses and synagogues on Kristallnacht—the “night of broken glass”
- Orson Welles’ *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast causes mass panic as some listeners believe a Martian invasion is in progress
- Superman is introduced in the inaugural issue of *Action Comics*

The movements in Prokofiev's orchestral suites from *Romeo and Juliet* are not in chronological sequence: he created the suites by arranging movements in sequences he felt would be effective in the concert hall, and conductors frequently assemble their own selection of movements from these suites.

music tender and dramatic

The music selected for this concert opens with two movements from Suite II and then presents two from Suite I. *Montagues and the Capulets* begins with Prokofiev piling dissonance upon dissonance, after which the music forges ahead brutally on the swagger of the rival families. *Dance* is a sequence from a carnival the young lovers attend. The witty *Masks* depicts a scene in which Mercutio and Benvolio talk Romeo into crashing the ball at the Capulets'. *Romeo and Juliet* accompanies the balcony scene; soaring love music alternates with ominous interludes marked *inquieto*.

Instrumentation:

2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, tenor saxophone, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, cornet, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, tambourine, triangle, harp, piano, celeste and strings

Program note by **Eric Bromberger**.



Max Bruch

Born: January 6, 1838, Cologne

Died: October 2, 1920, Friedenau, near Berlin

Concerto No. 1 in G minor for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 26

Bruch comes perilously close to being a one-work composer, this G-minor Concerto being the one work. In his day, however, he was a most substantial figure on the musical landscape, an artist who consistently won respect for his command of craft and affection for his devotion to euphony.

his life and music

Bruch's mother, a soprano, was his first teacher; his father

was a civil servant. His early musical training outside the home amounted to indoctrination in the conservative Mendelssohn-Schumann-Brahms faction as against the progressive Liszt-Wagner wing. At 20, Bruch settled down to teach in Cologne, where his first opera was staged the same year. He had composed prodigiously since boyhood. He took up conducting and over the years held a succession of appointments, one being in Liverpool, for whose Jewish community he wrote *Kol Nidre* for cello and orchestra.

Bruch completed his Violin Concerto No. 1 in 1866 and conducted the first performance on April 24 that year with Otto von Königslow as soloist. Bruch substantially revised the Concerto with the help of Joseph Joachim, who reintroduced it in its present form in 1868.

In the 1870s, in part because of the phenomenal success of the G-minor Violin Concerto, Bruch enjoyed some patches of prosperity and independence that allowed him to devote himself entirely to composition. In the early 1890s he was granted the titles without which no self-respecting German can go to his reward in peace: a professorship (at the Berlin Academy of Fine Arts) and a doctorate (from Cambridge, received in the distinguished company of Grieg, Saint-Saëns and Tchaikovsky). In 1893 his travels brought him to America, where he conducted his oratorio *Arminius* with the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston.

As Bruch lived in comfortable retirement in his Berlin villa, the world around him changed nearly beyond recognition. Although the popularity of his Violin Concerto No. 1 remained a reassuring constant, when he died at 82 many who read the respectful obituaries must have been astonished to learn that he had been alive until the day before.

“the richest, the most seductive” concerto

Assessing the four most famous German violin concertos—the Beethoven, the Mendelssohn, the Bruch G-minor and the Brahms—Joseph Joachim, who was intimately connected with all four, called Bruch's “the richest, the most seductive.” If you take “richest” to refer to immediate sensuous impressions, Joachim is exactly on target, and it takes less than a minute to find that out.

In the first movement, *Prelude*, orchestral flourishes alternate with solo flourishes: it is a dreamy variant of the opening of Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto. Bruch finds—or makes—room for two expansive and

memorable melodies. Just when a development seems due, Bruch brings back his opening chords and flourishes, using them this time to prepare the soft sinking into the *Adagio*. It is in this movement that the soul of this perennially fresh and touching concerto resides, lyric rapture being heightened by Bruch's artfully cultivated way with form, proportion and sequence.

As for the crackling, Gypsy-tinged *Finale*, having paid no attention to the date of composition, I had always assumed that Bruch had borrowed a notion or two from his slightly older colleague Johannes Brahms. It turns out that Bruch got there first and, always inclined to be jealous of Brahms, he would have found my mistake very annoying.

Instrumentation:

solo violin with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings

Excerpted from **Michael Steinberg's** *The Concerto: A Listener's Guide* (Oxford University Press, 1998), by permission of the author.



Richard Wagner

Born: May 22, 1813, Leipzig
Died: February 13, 1883, Venice

Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan and Isolde*

during the 1850s Wagner was at work on the operas that would make up *The Ring of the Nibelungen*. He completed *Das Rheingold* in 1854 and *Die Walküre* in 1856 and immediately set to work on *Siegfried*. But his plans took an unexpected detour when he became fascinated by the ancient Irish legend of Tristan and Iseult, lovers who find fulfillment only in death. He set aside his work on *Siegfried* for three years and composed *Tristan and Isolde* between 1856 and 1859.

Even before the opera was premiered in Munich in 1865 Wagner had led orchestral excerpts from it in concerts, and the most important of these involves a remarkable

piece of compositional surgery: Wagner took the very beginning of the opera, its opening prelude, and the very ending, Isolde's farewell to life—and fused them in an orchestral work he called *Prelude and Love-Death*. This reduces the four-hour opera to a 17-minute distillation that moves directly from its yearning beginning to Isolde's ecstatic fulfillment in death, and it remains one of the most popular orchestral excerpts from Wagner's operas.

It is also one of the most remarkable works in the orchestral repertoire, so much so that many feel that modern music (whatever that is) begins with the Prelude to *Tristan and Isolde*. The Prelude opens this tale of unfulfilled love with music that is itself the very embodiment of unfulfilled longing—a falling cello line intersects dissonantly with a rising oboe line, and that harmonic clash does not resolve. That same pattern repeats in a new key, again without resolution. It will never resolve. The music's failure ever to find harmonic stasis mirrors the lovers' failure to find fulfillment in life, and despite the beauty of the music, its effect is intentionally unsettling. Berlioz confessed that he was “completely baffled” when he heard Wagner conduct the Prelude in Paris in 1859, and he was quite right to feel assaulted. This music annihilated the conception of a tonal center decades before those other two works that have seemed to launch modern music—Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*—were conceived, in fact, before either of those two composers had been born.

The Prelude, built on a series of longing, surging phrases, comes to a quiet close on two deep pizzicato strokes, and the music continues directly into the concluding *Liebestod*, or Love-Death. It was Wagner himself who invented that name, though he considered calling this concluding excerpt *Verklärung*, or Transformation. Tristan has died, and Isolde, dying herself, clings to his body and finds in death the union that the two could never achieve in life. The *Liebestod* is built on a quite different orchestral sonority than the Prelude, full of shimmering sounds—string tremolos, harp arpeggios and long crescendos—that mirror Isolde's transfiguration.

Instrumentation:

3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, harp, and strings

Program note by **Eric Bromberger**.



Maurice Ravel

Born: March 7, 1875, Ciboure, Basses-Pyrénées
Died: December 28, 1937, Paris

Suite No. 2 from *Daphnis and Chloe*

In 1909 the impresario Serge Diaghilev brought the Ballets Russes to Paris as part of his ongoing presentation of things Russian (art, sculpture, icons, opera and ballet) in the City of Lights. The ballet company's seasons in Paris would prove a spectacular success: over the next four years, an unknown Russian composer would write *The Firebird*, *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring* for them. But even before he thought of asking Stravinsky to compose the first of these, Diaghilev approached Ravel during the summer of 1909 and asked him to write a score for the Ballets Russes. The French composer, then 34, could not have had more distinguished collaborators: Diaghilev oversaw the project, Mikhail Fokine was choreographer, Leon Bakst designed the sets, and Vaclav Nijinsky and Tamara Karsavina would dance the lead roles.

gentle story, stormy collaboration

But it proved a stormy collaboration. For the subject, Diaghilev proposed the story of Daphnis and Chloe, a pastoral by the Greek Longus (fourth or fifth century B.C.). Translated into French in 1599 by Pierre Amyot, the tale had already attracted composers: Jacques Offenbach wrote an operetta called *Daphnis and Chloe* in 1870, and the young Debussy had thought of writing a ballet based on the same tale. It tells a gentle love story. A young man and woman, abandoned as infants by their respective parents and raised by a shepherd and a goatherd, meet and fall in love. She is kidnapped by pirates but rescued by the intercession of the god Pan, and the ballet concludes with general rejoicing.

The story seems simple enough, but quickly the collaborators were at odds, as Ravel made clear in a letter to a friend: "I must tell you that I've just had an insane week: preparation of a ballet libretto for the next Russian season. Almost every night, work until 3 a.m. What complicates things is that Fokine doesn't know a word of

French, and I only know how to swear in Russian. In spite of the interpreters, you can imagine the savor of these meetings." Part of the problem was that while Bakst had conceived an opulent oriental setting for the ballet, Ravel imagined "a vast musical fresco, less thoughtful of archaism than of fidelity to the Greece of my dreams, which identifies quite willingly with that imagined and depicted by late eighteenth-century French artists." Paintings of the verdant sets suggest that Ravel's conception—described by Madeline Goss as "a typically 18th-century atmosphere of Watteau shepherdesses"—finally prevailed.

"into our hearts like a comet"

The *Daphnis* premiere was conducted by Pierre Monteux at the Châtelet Théâtre on June 8, 1912. The ballet had an overwhelming impact. Poet and dramatist Jean Cocteau, then only 23, asserted: "*Daphnis et Chloé* is one of the creations which fell into our hearts like a comet coming from a planet, the laws of which will remain to us forever mysterious and forbidden."

Ravel drew two suites from the ballet for concert performance. The familiar Suite No. 2 constitutes the closing celebration of the ballet. Rippling flutes and clarinets echo the sound of rivulets as Daphnis awakes and the sun comes up. This glorious music is derived from the soaring horn melody heard at the very beginning of the ballet. Chloe appears, and the joyful lovers are united. Told that Pan had saved her in memory of the nymph Syrinx, Daphnis and Chloe now act out that tale in pantomime, and Daphnis mimes playing on reeds, a part taken in the orchestra by an opulent flute solo. The two collapse into each other's arms and pledge their love. The stage is filled with happy youths, whose *Danse générale* brings the ballet to a thrilling conclusion.

The final word may be left to another who was at the premiere. Igor Stravinsky would later have some snippy things to say about Ravel, but he was overwhelmed by *Daphnis and Chloe*, calling it "not only Ravel's best work, but also one of the most beautiful products of all French music."

Instrumentation:

3 flutes (2nd and 3rd doubling piccolo), alto flute, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, E-flat clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, castanets, cymbals, tambourine, glockenspiel, snare drum, triangle, celeste, 2 harps and strings

Program note by **Eric Bromberger**.