Minnesota Orchestra
Eivind Gullberg Jensen, conductor
Tine Thing Helseth, trumpet

Friday, February 21, 2020, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall
Saturday, February 22, 2020, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

Anna Clyne
This Midnight Hour
ca. 12'

Edvard Grieg
March of the Trolls, from Lyric Suite, Opus 54
ca. 4'

Edvard Grieg/
arr. Jarle G. Storløkken
Kuløkk (Cow Call), from Two Nordic Melodies, Opus 63
Tine Thing Helseth, trumpet
ca. 3'

Edvard Grieg
Nocturne, from Lyric Suite, Opus 54
ca. 3'

Edvard Grieg/
arr. Storløkken
Stabbelåten (Peasant Dance), from Two Nordic Melodies, Opus 63
Tine Thing Helseth, trumpet
ca. 3'

Henri Tomasi
Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra
Allegro
Nocturne: Andante
Finale: Allegro
Tine Thing Helseth, trumpet
ca. 15'

INTERMISSION
ca. 20'

Sergei Rachmaninoff
Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Opus 27
Largo – Allegro moderato
Allegro molto
Adagio
Allegro vivace
ca. 60'

Concert Preview with Phillip Gainsley, Eivind Gullberg Jensen and Tine Thing Helseth
Friday, February 21, 7 pm, Auditorium
Saturday, February 22, 7 pm, Auditorium

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live on Friday evenings on stations of Classical Minnesota Public Radio, including KSJN 99.5 FM in the Twin Cities.
Clyne: *This Midnight Hour*
This energetic, poignant and turbulent portrait of the night draws inspiration from Spanish and French poetry.

Grieg: *Selections from Lyric Suite and Two Nordic Melodies*
Two movements from Grieg’s *Lyric Suite* for orchestra are interspersed with two excerpts from his *Two Nordic Melodies*, newly adapted for trumpet and strings by Jarle G. Storløkken. *March of the Trolls* paints a musical picture of hundreds of little troll feet stomping through the Norwegian mountains, while *Kulokk* (Cow Call) is a leisurely, graceful folk melody in 6/8 meter. *Nocturne* summons a tranquil starry night; in the rapid, rousing *Stabbelåten* (Peasant Dance), solo trumpet soars above an accompaniment of strings that switch from plucked to bowed.

Tomasi: *Trumpet Concerto*
Although the basic three-movement structure of this concerto is traditional, its content is anything but predictable, with an extraordinary amount of musical material packed into 15 minutes. Rollercoaster passages and clever hijinks meld with bluesy patterns and beautiful melodies, and all with crystalline clarity from beginning to end.

Rachmaninoff: *Symphony No. 2*
Rachmaninoff’s longest, grandest and most expansive symphony is built on the opening motif, a somber figure for low strings. The lyrical third movement is a standout, containing several gorgeous melodies and an extended clarinet solo of ardent longing. The finale is soaring and magnificent, culminating in a blaze of orchestral sound.
Anna Clyne’s career credentials are impressive—and not just for an under-40 composer: she earned a 2015 Grammy nomination for her double violin concerto *Prince of Clouds*, and she has served as composer in residence for the Chicago Symphony, Baltimore Symphony and Orchestre national d’Île-de-France. An early professional boost came here at Orchestra Hall, where she participated in the November 2006 Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute, and Osmo Vänskä conducted her work *<<rewind>>* at the first-ever Future Classics concert. (In his concert review, the *Star Tribune’s* Michael Anthony gave Clyne the last word, relating her opinion that she wouldn’t live in Minnesota because “it’s bloody freezing.”)

**inspiration from poetry**

Among Clyne’s newer works for orchestra is *This Midnight Hour*, commissioned jointly by the Seattle Symphony and the Orchestre national d’Île-de-France; the latter ensemble premiered it on November 13, 2015, at the Théâtre Espace Coluche in Plaisir, France.

Clyne’s score is prefaced by two poems, one in Spanish by Juan Ramón Jiménez and one in French by Charles Baudelaire. The Jiménez is short and simple, describing the haunting image of a naked woman “running mad” through a “pure night.” (Jiménez provides no details as to what she is running toward—or away from.) The Baudelaire, on the other hand, is a lush, meandering, and ultimately elusive portrait of the night, referring to things like melancholy waltzes, violins thrilling like tortured hearts, and sounds and scents of the evening air.

What to make of these two disparate inspirations? Clyne discourages us from reading too much into them: in her short preface, she writes, “Whilst it is not intended to depict a specific narrative, my intention is that *This Midnight Hour* will evoke a visual journey for the listener.” Every person present, then, will hear something unique and indeed inimitable.

**music of energy and poignance**

Clyne opens the work with a rich and ferociously rhythmic theme played by the lower strings. Is this Jiménez’s wild-eyed woman taking to the streets? Maybe, but the passage also has a more practical inspiration: Clyne admired the lower string section of the Orchestre national d’Île-de-France, and she was eager to showcase its virtuosity. The manic, almost cinematic energy of these instruments is ultimately transferred to dizzying effect across the entire orchestra.

As the piece goes on, the mood turns almost paranoid. Woodwinds begin interrupting the proceedings and interjecting with slow and otherworldly tones, a development greeted by grumbling in the brass and percussion. After this interlude, the music gathers itself into a flurry of blurry bows and whirling winds, and after several stops and starts, a strange melancholy waltz dances out of the ether. This dance’s off-kilter, out-of-tune nature calls to mind composers like Shostakovich or Mahler, who delighted in writing dances to serve their own macabrely poignant purposes.

Eventually, a mood of longing sincerity blossoms, courtesy of a theme that begins in the bassoons, then is taken up by other instruments. A lonely trumpet provides an elegant, world-weary filigree. After so much madness, we seem to have finally arrived at a tentative peace. But then at the final note, the floor drops out from beneath us, leaving listeners breathless and maybe even a little shocked. At the end of the day, the woman appears to have the final say.

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, crotales, suspended sizzle cymbal, slapstick, large tamtam, vibraphone and strings

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**Anna Clyne**

**Born:** March 9, 1980, London, United Kingdom; now living in New York City

**This Midnight Hour**

**Premiered:** November 13, 2015

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**Edvard Grieg**

**Born:** June 15, 1843, Bergen, Norway

**Died:** September 4, 1907, Bergen, Norway

**Selections from Lyric Suite, Opus 54, and Two Nordic Melodies, Opus 63**

**Composed:** 1904 (Lyric Suite); 1895 (Two Nordic Melodies)

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Any lovers of classical music know at least a thing or two about Edvard Grieg: that he stands unchallenged as Norway’s most famous composer; that he wrote a famous Piano Concerto and music to accompany Ibsen’s drama *Peer Gynt*; and that it is easy to misspell his name: is it Grieg or Greig? (Not such
Program Notes

a simple question, it turns out: the composer's great-grandfather Alexander originally spelled his name Greig, but after emigrating to Norway from Scotland about 1765, changed the spelling to Grieg.) Happily, this week's concerts provide an opportunity to scratch beneath the surface of Grieg's most familiar works.

Grieg came from a musical family. His mother Gesine played piano and gave Edvard his first lessons, an older brother John was a fine cellist, and his sister Maren became a well-known piano teacher. As Norway had no advanced music school at the time, Grieg was sent, at the tender age of 15, to Leipzig for further study. The conservatory there, founded in the same year Grieg was born, 1843, held a reputation for being one of the finest institutions of its kind. In Leipzig Grieg learned to compose in the style of Mendelssohn and Schumann, both of whom Grieg highly respected, and his early works bear the influence of these older composers. In 1863 Grieg spent some time in Copenhagen, where he met a fellow Norwegian composer, Rikard Nordraak. The two became close friends, and together organized the Euterpe Society for the promotion of Scandinavian music (as distinct from German and German-influenced music). But Nordraak died soon after, and Grieg was left to continue the project alone. Upon returning to Norway he established the Norwegian Academy of Music in 1867 and embarked on a busy life of performing as a pianist, teaching, and conducting. By the age of 25 he was famous, due in large part to his Piano Concerto.

“neglected gems” and a wealth of folk music

It is hardly surprising that it was a piano concerto that brought Grieg to the world's attention, for, like Chopin, the piano was the instrument central to his compositional output. (Hans von Bülow called him “the Chopin of the North.”) Grieg's first works were for the piano, written as a boy of 15, his first published work was a collection of piano pieces at age 19, and he wrote all his life for the instrument, including ten volumes of Lyric Pieces, which critic Michael Kimmelman has called "a mountain of neglected gems" totaling some 66 pieces. Book Five of the Lyric Pieces, composed in 1891, includes several of the best and best-known of the entire collection. Four of its six pieces went into the Lyric Suite, orchestrated in 1894 by Anton Seidl and later re-orchestrated by Grieg himself in 1905. At tonight's concert we hear two of those pieces, March of the Trolls and Nocturne—but our musical story is not yet complete, as we turn to yet another chapter of Grieg's repertoire.

At age 25, Grieg spent the summer of 1868 at the family home of Landås. There he discovered a treasury of Norwegian folk music called Mountain Melodies Old and New, collected from sources in remote regions of Norway by the organist Ludvig Mathias Lindeman and notated in piano scores. Shortly after this discovery, Grieg arranged for piano 25 of Lindeman's pieces, which became his Opus 17, the 25 Norwegian Folk Songs and Dances, and Grieg returned to Lindeman for inspiration for the remainder of his life. Thanks largely to Lindeman, the sights, sounds and folklore of Norway are deeply embedded in Grieg's music. Years later, in 1895, Grieg composed the string orchestra work Two Nordic Melodies, Opus 63. The second of these “Two Melodies” is actually an orchestration of not one but two pieces from Opus 17: No. 22, Kulokk (“Cow Call”) and No. 18, Stabbelåten (“Peasant Dance”). At tonight's concert, we hear these two pieces in yet another iteration: the Norwegian guitarist, composer and conductor Jarle G. Storløkken (b. 1977) has newly arranged Kulokk and Stabbelåten for solo trumpet and strings, preserving the original scores nearly intact but incorporating the trumpet as the leading melodic voice—specifically for tonight's soloist, Tine Thing Helseth.

a unique Grieg suite

Tying together all of these strands, on tonight's program we hear two movements from the Lyric Suite for full orchestra, alternating with two selections from the Two Nordic Melodies arranged for solo trumpet and strings.

The programmatic implications of the marvelously descriptive March of the Trolls bring to mind another, even more famous depiction of trolls, In the Hall of the Mountain King from the same composer's Peer Gynt Suite. In the March of the Trolls, we imagine the menacing approach of hundreds of little feet belonging to those evil dwarfs who inhabit Norwegian mountains. Grieg's Kulokk does not summon the sounds of cowbells and bellowing cattle; rather, it sounds more like a languid barcarolle. The melody comes from the Valdres region of Norway, and in this setting, Grieg was following an old custom: the Kulokk genre can be traced back to the Middle Ages, and is reputed to be the oldest musical tradition in Norway. By contrast, the dreamy Nocturne is a ternary structure in whose outer parts a tender melody is supported by a gentle figuration in the accompaniment. “It is a pure (but highly personal) evocation of the spirit of the night,” writes Grieg expert Eleanor Bailie, “…a tranquil rural landscape punctuated with soft rustlings and bird calls.” The rapid, rousing Stabbelåten finale is sure to bring smiles all around as the trumpet soars above an accompaniment of strings that switch back and forth from plucked to bowed.

Instrumentation (Lyric Suite selections):
2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, harp and strings

Instrumentation (Two Nordic Melodies selections):
solo trumpet and strings
Henri Tomasi had one of the more colorful careers among 20th-century French composers. Of Corsican descent, he passed through the traditional Paris Conservatory program, but went on to write music inspired and influenced by foreign locales such as Tahiti, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Corsica and the Sahara. Some of his works are infused with impressionistic colors and textures, others show a neo-classical bent, and still others indicate the influence of Gregorian chant and medieval religious songs.

In his early career, Tomasi was music director of different branches of the French National Radio, including a stint in French Indochina from 1930 to 1935. In 1939 and 1940 he served in the French army as an Alpine chasseur. His next post was as music director of the Monte Carlo Opera (1946-1950); later he conducted in his birthplace of Marseille as well. His large and varied catalog includes seven operas, nine ballets, and concertos for nearly every instrument of the orchestra, including saxophone and percussion. Among these, the Trumpet Concerto of 1948 is one of the better-known works by this composer, and his best-known concerto.

At first “unplayable”
Tomasi wrote his Trumpet Concerto on a commission from the Paris Conservatory. In a repeat of the early history of Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto, it was initially declared “unplayable,” only to be proven otherwise not long afterwards. The composer arranged for a Dutch trumpet player, Jas Doets, to perform the work on November 13, 1948, in Hilversum, with the Orchestra of Radio-Hilversum directed by Albert Van Raalte. With its playability now established, the concerto was given its official Parisian premiere the following year on April 7 with soloist Ludovic Vaillant, principal trumpet of the Orchestre National de France, for whom the work was written, with Tomasi himself conducting the Orchestre National. That indefatigable Frenchman Maurice André made the first recording in 1963, and the concerto was off and running to becoming one of the mainstays of nearly every solo trumpet player’s repertory. That same year, the score was used for a ballet choreographed by Joseph Lazzini at the Opéra de Marseille.

On the occasion of a performance in July 1948 in Vichy, Tomasi had these words to say: “If the style of my Concerto for Trumpet is classic by its three movements, the content is not. There is neither subject nor central theme. It is pure music. I tried to make a synthesis of all the expressive and technical possibilities of the trumpet, from Bach up to the present, including jazz. Up until this time, the use of the trumpet was relatively unrefined. It was considered as a secondary instrument while the interest here is in discovering all of its expressive resources. Its use has indeed been expanded by our modern composers. I don’t pretend to be a precursor; I find myself in the middle of a period where one is demanding more from the so called minor elements of the orchestra and hope to have made a useful contribution to this captivating research.”

The concerto: compact and inventive
Though lasting only about a quarter of an hour, Tomasi’s concerto compacts into its three short movements a wide variety of ideas and effects. The startling opening fanfare sets the tone of élan, hijinks and bravura display that pervade much of the work. Tomasi uses a large orchestra in colorful and imaginative ways, but maintains a texture of optimum clarity at all times. The solo line, which at times is of extraordinary difficulty, never becomes obscured. Dizzying high-wire acts, awkward flourishes, and rollercoaster runs for the soloist add to the fun. In addition, there are several extended muted passages of wistful character, bluesy effects, an elaborate first-movement cadenza with discreet accompaniment by snare drum, and a central nocturne movement of haunting beauty that owes more than a bit to the lush, opulent orchestration of Ravel’s *Daphnis and Chloe*. The final movement skips along with tremendous rhythmic verve, its momentum arrested just briefly for a lushly romantic lyrical passage, then it’s back to the acrobatics that bring the concerto to a rollicking close.

Instrumentation: solo trumpet with orchestra comprising 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, cymbals, triangle, wood block, xylophone, harp, celesta and strings
Sergei Rachmaninoff

Born: April 1, 1873, Semyonovo, district of Starorursky, Russia
Died: March 28, 1943, Beverly Hills, California

Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Opus 27
Premiered: February 8, 1908

One of the most surprising things about Rachmaninoff’s Second Symphony is that it was written at all. The premiere of his First Symphony in 1897 was a debacle, plunging the composer into a depression so profound that he wrote nothing for several years thereafter. It wasn’t just that the public didn’t like it, or the critics, or his friends, or his colleagues. No one liked it, including its own author. A long series of treatments involving hypnosis by a Dr. Dahl brought him to the point where he could write his Second Piano Concerto, completed in 1900. But it was ten years before Rachmaninoff could face the prospect of writing another symphony. And at first, he told no one about his endeavor.

A success from the start

Rachmaninoff had moved to Dresden at the time, in the fall of 1906, to escape the demands of public life in Moscow, where he was in constant demand as a pianist, conductor, committesman, guest and collaborator on all things musical. The stately old city, where Rachmaninoff and his wife had spent their honeymoon several years earlier, appealed strongly to the composer. Also, the peace and anonymity he found in Dresden were conducive to artistic creativity. His Second Symphony was fully sketched by New Year’s Day of 1907. Revisions and orchestration took place over a longer period, both back home in Russia and during a return visit to Dresden. Rachmaninoff conducted the first performance, which took place on January 26, 1908, in St. Petersburg. He also led the Moscow premiere a week later, as well as an early American performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra in November 1909.

In each case the audience responded enthusiastically, and the symphony has enjoyed an unbroken run of popularity to this day. The score was published in 1908, but then the manuscript went missing for nearly a century. Musical sleuths rejoiced when, in September of 2004, it turned up in a cellar in Switzerland. Until then, it was the only Rachmaninoff manuscript not accounted for, making it all the more tantalizing as a prize find. Rachmaninoff specialist Geoffrey Norris notes that “quite apart from the score’s potential monetary value, its significance for musicians and scholars is priceless, because, with the hundreds of emendations, crossings-out and annotations that Rachmaninoff made on the manuscript, it gives clues to his earlier thoughts on the symphony.”

The music: haunted by a motto

 largo – allegro moderato. Most of the symphony’s melodic material derives from a single motif, heard in the opening bars in the somber colors of low cellos and basses. In a multifarious variety of guises and transformations, this “motto” haunts the entire symphony in both obvious and subtle ways, infusing it with coherence and compelling impetus. After its initial statement, the motto passes to other instruments, eventually giving birth to a sinuous violin phrase, which grows to an impressive climax as it weaves its way through lushly orchestrated textures and luxuriant counterpoint. Following the slow introduction, the main Allegro moderato section of the movement is ushered in with a shivering, rising figure in the strings. Violas then spin out a long, winding, aspiring theme based on the motto. The delicate, gentle second theme, divided between woodwinds and responding strings, also derives from the motto.

allegro molto. The second movement, a scherzo, is built on the motif of the Dies Irae, the medieval Gregorian chant for the dead. Four horns in unison proclaim a boldly exuberant version of the Dies Irae, which itself has its seeds in the symphony’s motto. (This motif was used in the composer’s Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini.) Two contrasting ideas of note are the warmly flowing lyrical theme for the violins and a brilliant fugato section that demands the utmost in virtuosity from the strings.

adagio. The third movement is one of the lyric highlights of all Rachmaninoff. No fewer than three gorgeous melodies are heard, beginning with one of the most popular ever written. Following immediately on this theme of great repose and tranquility comes one of the glories of the solo clarinet repertory—an extended theme full of ardent longing.

allegro vivace. The enormously energetic finale too is a broadly expansive movement, beginning with a boisterously robust idea that might easily conjure up the spirit of a carnival. This is followed by a dark, grim, march-like episode, then by another of Rachmaninoff’s most famous themes—a magnificent, soaring affair that sweeps onward over an expanse of more than one hundred measures. Rachmaninoff’s longest, grandest, most expansive symphonic work ends in a veritable blaze of sound.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel and strings

Program notes on the Grieg, Tomasi and Rachmaninoff works by Robert Markow.