



WASHINGTON
PERFORMING ARTS

2022/23 SEASON THE WORLD IN OUR CITY



HELSINKI PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Susanna Mälkki, conductor

Claire Chase, flute

MONDAY, MAY 8, 8:00 p.m.

THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
CONCERT HALL



WASHINGTON
PERFORMING ARTS

2022/23 SEASON

THE WORLD IN OUR CITY

Upcoming events at at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts



EVGENY KISSIN, piano
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Two eminent Grammy winners perform the music of Rachmaninoff, in a program boasting both solo piano and vocal works.

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Co-presented with The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts



GENEVA LEWIS, violin
EVREN OZEL, piano

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The Washington Performing Arts debut of a rising-star violinist from New Zealand, in a centuries-spanning program celebrating the concept of "home."

Special thanks: His Excellency Hasan Murat Mercan, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye
This performance is an external rental presented in coordination with the Kennedy Center Campus Rentals Office and are not produced by the Kennedy Center.

Washington Performing Arts's classical music performances this season are made possible in part through the generous support of Betsy and Robert Feinberg.

TICKETS AND INFORMATION:
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Presents

HELSINKI PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Susanna Mälkki, conductor

Claire Chase, flute

MONDAY, MAY 8, 8:00 p.m.

THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
CONCERT HALL

This performance is approximately 120 minutes, including intermission.

This performance is made possible through the generous support of Frank Islam and Debbie Driesman.

Washington Performing Arts's classical music performances this season are made possible in part through the generous support of Betsy and Robert Feinberg.

His Excellency Mikko Hautala, Ambassador of the Republic of Finland, is the honorary patron of this engagement.

This is one of twenty 2022/23 season performances included in Washington Performing Arts's The World in Our City initiative, which promotes cross-cultural understanding and cultural diplomacy via the presentation of international visiting artists, globally inspired local programming, and the award-winning Embassy Adoption Program, a partnership with D.C. Public Schools.

Special thanks to the following lead supporters of Washington Performing Arts's mission-driven work: Jacqueline Badger Mars and Mars, Incorporated; D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities; the National Capital Arts and Cultural Affairs Program and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts; The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; and the Dallas Morse Coors Foundation for the Performing Arts.

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PROGRAM

JEAN SIBELIUS
(1865-1957)

Lemminkäinen Suite, Op. 22
Lemminkäinen's Return

KAIJA SAARIAHO
(b. 1952)

Aile du songe for flute and orchestra (2001)
Aérienne
Prélude – Jardin des oiseaux – D'autres rives
Terrestre
Oiseau dansant – L'oiseau, un satellite infime
Claire Chase, flute

Intermission

JEAN SIBELIUS
(1865-1957)

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 43
Allegretto
Tempo andante, ma rubato
Vivacissimo
Finale: Allegro moderato

PROGRAM NOTES

Lemminkäinen Suite, Op. 22

IV. Lemminkäinen's Return

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Program note by Eric Bromberger

Finland's struggle for independence – first from Sweden and later from Russia – was long and difficult, and the emerging Finnish national consciousness took strength from the publication in 1835 of the *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic. The philologist Elias Lönnrot compiled this text from ancient verses, songs, and folk-tales and eventually expanded them to an epic poem of about 23,000 lines. The *Kalevala* tells of the adventures of three sons of Kalevala, the mythic land of heroes: Väinämöinen, the wise enchanter and singing musician; Ilmarinen, the magic smith; and the gallant but reckless Lemminkäinen.

Jean Sibelius was an ardent Finnish nationalist, and he fell in love with the *Kalevala* while still a teenager. In 1893, while still only 27, Sibelius set out to write an opera based on events in the *Kalevala*. He compiled a libretto and sketched music for that opera, which was to be titled *The Building of the Boat*. Finally, though, he came to realize that he was not up to the task and abandoned it.

But Sibelius was able to salvage some of the music he had written for *The Building of the Boat*, and from that he assembled his *Four Legends from the Kalevala*. These four tone poems focus on the adventures and misadventures of the handsome (and philandering) Lemminkäinen,

and they tell the following sequence:

Lemminkäinen sets out to win the hand of the beautiful Kyllikki, from the island of Saari, but he is spurned by the maidens of that island. He marries Kyllikki but soon becomes interested in the Maid of Pohjola, the icy and forbidden land to the north, and now resistance to his plans becomes more dangerous. Challenged by that maid's mother to shoot with a single arrow the black Swan of Tuonela (Tuonela is the underworld of Finnish mythology), Lemminkäinen is instead hacked to death by an aged, blind cowherd and his shattered body thrown into the black river that flows around Tuonela. Lemminkäinen's mother turns to one of the other heroes—the magic smith Ilmarinen—who makes a bronze rake for her. With this, she retrieves Lemminkäinen's body from behind a waterfall and brings him back to life, and the two, return home triumphantly.

Listeners should not expect from Sibelius' *Four Legends* the kind of precise musical portraiture found in Richard Strauss' tone poems. Instead, these four movements are generalized musical impressions based on events in the legends. *Lemminkäinen's Return* brings a rousing conclusion to the *Four Legends*. This is music of celebration, and it bursts to life on a great orchestral explosion, quickly followed by the three-note bassoon figure that will furnish the movement's thematic material. Sibelius marks this beginning

Allegro con fuoco ("Fast, with fire"), but he also specifies *poco e poco più energico*: this music should become more and more energetic as it proceeds. Already many of Sibelius' mature characteristics are in evidence: entire structures created out of what seem at first merely thematic bits, symphonic movements that build to overwhelming climaxes, and great washes of orchestral color. In *Lemminkäinen's Return* things are in constant motion, as Sibelius urges the tempo forward ever faster. The music sails to a climax marked *Presto*, then slows down for the blazing final chords as Lemminkäinen and his mother arrive home in triumph.

Aile du songe for flute and orchestra (2001)

Kaija Saariaho (b. 1952)

Program note by Jaani Länsiö

Translated by Susan Sinisalo

Kaija Saariaho is not only Finland's best-known contemporary composer, she is also one of the most highly-acclaimed composers in the world today. She has been the recipient of practically all the most prestigious prizes and awards for music, such as the Grawemeyer (2003), Sibelius (2009), Léonie Sonning, Polar (2013), Frontiers of Knowledge (2018), and The Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale (2021). Her opera *L'amour de loin* won her a Grammy award in 2011.

The vast and varied musical output of Kaija Saariaho is marked by a dreamy, airy quality, and subtly shifting tones. This weightlessness is already reflected in the titles of such works as *Asteroid 4179: Toutatis*, *Solar*, *Oi kuu*, *Aer*, *Cloud Trio*, and

the *Oiseaux* (Birds) cycle. *Aile du Songe* (Wing of Dream, 2001), to be heard today, was a joint commission from the Flanders Festival, the London Philharmonic and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra for flautist Camilla Hoitenga.

Aile du songe is based on the collection *Oiseaux* by French Nobel Prize-winning poet Saint-John Perse describing the flight of birds and life's mysteries in metaphors through an abstract and multidimensional language. The titles of the two main parts of the concerto, which is divided into descriptive sections, are borrowed from the poem. The first section is headed *Aérienne*: "In the *Prélude*, the flute gradually pervades the space and generates the orchestra's music," says Saariaho. In *Jardin des oiseaux* (The Garden of Birds), the flute interacts with individual instruments in the orchestra. *D'autres rives* compares the flute to a lone, high-flying bird whose shadow forms different images played by the strings over the unchanged landscape of the harp, celesta and percussion.

The second part is called *Terrestre* and begins with *Oiseau dansant*. "It refers to an Aboriginal tale in which a virtuosic dancing bird teaches a whole village how to dance," Saariaho explains. The piece ends with a musical invocation of a bird orbiting the Earth like a tiny satellite, as a synthesis of the previous aspects, then the sound of the flute slowly fades away.

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 43

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Program note by Eric Bromberger

Sibelius composed his *Symphony No. 2* in Italy in 1901 when he was 35, and it has become one of the most famous symphonies ever written. It is easily Sibelius' most popular symphony, it is a favorite of audiences around the world, and it is a favorite of performers too: over thirty recordings are currently available. This popularity has been explained in various ways. Some sense the sunny atmosphere of Italy warming Sibelius' austere Scandinavian sensibilities. Others hear a *Finlandia*-like program that dramatizes Finland's struggle for national identity in the face of foreign domination. But Sibelius would have had none of this. He wanted his music considered abstractly – as sound-drama and not as a vehicle for extra-musical interpretation – and there is no doubt that the *Symphony No. 2*, in all its austere grandeur, is a stunning success as sound-drama.

Sibelius' music has the sweep of the true symphonist, yet his symphonic methods are unique. Rather than presenting themes and then developing them, a Sibelius symphony will often present its themes at first only as fragmentary shapes. These shapes can come together to assume a more complete form within the course of a movement, but then shatter into fragments once again. And this transformation of material takes place during violent contrasts of mood, long buildups that culminate in a constant series of climaxes, and great splashes of instrumental

color that burst out of the leaden skies of Sibelius' musical landscape. These methods may be unique, but they take us on a true symphonic journey: across the forty-minute span of *Symphony No. 2*, Sibelius moves inexorably from the tentative beginning through the battlefields of the interior movements to the thrilling culmination of the heroic finale. No wonder this is one of the most emotionally satisfying and most popular symphonies ever written.

Many have noted that Sibelius seems to reverse the sequence of the first two movements. Rather than opening with a dramatic movement, Sibelius begins with a gentle *Allegretto*. The pulsing string figures at the opening will recur throughout, and over them woodwinds sing an almost innocent tune. These theme-shapes return in a variety of forms, but the movement resolves nothing and concludes on the same tentative chords with which it began. The drama one expects from a first movement erupts in the second, marked *Tempo Andante*. Over the deep pizzicato opening, a pair of bassoons chant the main theme, aptly marked *lugubre*, and soon the music explodes in furious brass and percussion outbursts. Such episodes alternate with melting lyricism in a lengthy movement that is never at peace for long.

The scherzo arrives like a blast of wind across frozen tundra. Its brief trio section, marked *lento e suave*, is in the unusual meter of 12/4: solo oboe sings its gentle song, built of a number of repeated notes. A sudden return of the scherzo leads to a further surprise: Sibelius brings back the music of the trio one more

time before the symphony proceeds—
on gradually more excited waves of
sound—directly into the finale.

This concluding *Allegro moderato*
is heroic in every sense of the term:
its broad D-major opening strides
ahead in thunderous octaves, so
powerfully that one may miss
the fact that this appears to be a
variation of the woodwind tune from
the symphony's very beginning, now
played backwards. Trumpet fanfares
and throbbing accompaniment push
this music steadily forward, and
this heroic beginning might prove
anticlimactic were it not for Sibelius'
control of his material. More lyric
secondary music intervenes, and
Sibelius continually delays the return
of the home key of D major until the
shining return of the main theme in
the triumphant final moments.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra

The Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra (HPO), founded in 1882, is one of the oldest continuously operating professional symphony orchestras in the Nordic countries. The orchestra gives approx. 50 symphony concerts annually at the Helsinki Music Centre and abroad. Under Chief Conductor Susanna Mälkki the orchestra has evolved into an increasingly impressive operator on the international scene of classical music with a distinctive sound.

The orchestra has premiered the majority of Jean Sibelius's orchestral compositions, and it has profiled itself during Susanna Mälkki's tenure as Chief Conductor as a high-class symphony orchestra that tours the most internationally renowned arenas, makes award-winning recordings and commissions and premieres works of leading international composers.

Premieres conducted by Mälkki have included Kaija Saariaho's *Vista*, which is dedicated to her, Felipe Lara's *Double Concerto* and Enno Poppe's *FETT*. Special projects have been launched, such as series of commissions called *The Helsinki Variations* celebrating 100 years of Finnish independence and *HUOM – History's Unheard Orchestral Music*, in collaboration with historians and musicologists, shedding light on previously overlooked orchestral music and its composers. The orchestra is recognized also for its strong investment in reaching

different audiences through, for example, the HPO Kids project and its own HKO Screen online concerts.

Susanna Mälkki and the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra's recordings of Béla Bartók orchestral music on the BIS label have received much praise. In 2021, the recording of Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* was nominated for a Grammy for Best Opera Recording.

During its 140 years of operation, the orchestra has made more than 100 successful tours abroad. The first tour in year 1900 headed to Paris World Fair and since then Helsinki Philharmonic has toured in all continents. Mälkki ends her highly acclaimed tenure as the HPO's Chief Conductor on spring 2023 with a focus on Finland and Finnish music, with a farewell tour in May taking the orchestra to Carnegie Hall and Washington Performing Arts | Kennedy Center.

helsinkiphilharmonicorchestra.fi



Susanna Mälkki, conductor

Susanna Mälkki is sought-after at the highest level with symphony orchestras and in opera houses

worldwide. About to embark on her final season as Chief Conductor of the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, she concludes a seven-year tenure with a distinctive dynamism and imaginative flair to her programming. In addition to a full season in Finland, she has lead the Helsinki orchestra on tour to the prestigious Lucerne and Edinburgh festivals, and will continue with New York's Carnegie Hall and Washington D.C.'s John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts this season.

Susanna Mälkki appears regularly with top orchestras throughout Europe and North America including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, where she was Principal Guest Conductor from 2017 until 2022, Philadelphia Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Symphony, London Symphony Orchestra, the Münchner Philharmoniker, Wiener Symphoniker, Bayerischer Rundfunk, and the Berliner Philharmoniker.

Equally in demand with major opera houses, past notable appearances include at the Opéra national de Paris, Teatro alla Scala Milan, the Wiener Staatsoper, and The Metropolitan Opera. This season she visits The Royal Opera House, London with Saariaho's *Innocence*, which Mälkki premiered in 2021

at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, and the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona for Puccini's *Il trittico*. Future operatic titles include Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Beethoven's *Fidelio*.

Recognised for her significant contribution to the art form, Mälkki was awarded the Pro Finlandia Medal of the Order of the Lion of Finland – one of Finland's highest honours – in 2011. She was made the Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France in 2014 and in January 2016 was made a Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur in France. She is a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music in London and a member of the Kungliga Musikaliska Akademien in Stockholm. In October 2016 she was named *Musical America's* 2017 Conductor of the Year, and in November 2017 she was awarded the Nordic Council Music Prize.



Claire Chase, flute

Claire Chase, described by *The New York Times* as "the North Star of her instrument's ever-expanding universe," is a

musician, interdisciplinary artist, and educator. Passionately dedicated to the creation of new ecosystems for the music of our time, Chase has given the world premieres of hundreds of new works by a new generation of artists. She was the first flutist to be awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 2012, and in 2017 was the first flutist to be awarded the Avery Fisher Prize from Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Chase has been awarded

Honorary Doctorates from The Curtis Institute of Music and The Cleveland Institute of Music.

In 2013, Chase launched the 24-year commissioning project *Density 2036*. Now in its eighth year, *Density 2036* reimagines the solo flute literature over a quarter-century through commissions, performances, recordings, education, and an accessible archive at density2036.org. Each season until 2036, Chase premieres a new program of commissioned music, with eight hours of new repertory created to date. At the conclusion of the project, she will play a 24-hour marathon of all of the repertory created in the project. Chase released the world premiere recordings the first five years of the Density cycle in collaboration with the producer Matias Tarnopolsky at Meyer Sound Laboratories in Berkeley, CA in December 2020, and released the 2019-2021 cycles on a triple-album on New Focus Recordings in Fall 2022.

A deeply committed educator, Chase is Professor of the Practice in the Department of Music at Harvard University, where she teaches courses on contemporary music, interdisciplinary collaboration, nonprofit arts organizations, and community-building through the arts. From 2016-2019, she served as Co-Artistic Director, with her longtime collaborator Steven Schick, of *Ensemble Evolution*, a hybrid summer intensive designed to foster a holistic understanding of the artist as a global citizen at Banff Centre for Arts & Creativity in Canada.

Ensemble Evolution is now a project of the International Contemporary Ensemble in collaboration with The New School's College of Performing Arts (CoPA) in New York City.

Chase grew up in Leucadia, CA with the childhood dream of becoming a professional baseball player before she discovered the flute. She lives in Brooklyn.

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Pekka Kauppinen,
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Kasmir Uusitupa,
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Totti Hakkarainen
Maiju Kauppinen
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Pauli Pappinen
Adrian Rigopulos
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Washington Performing Arts deeply values its partnerships with local organizations and other arts

institutions. Through events online and in a myriad of performance venues and neighborhoods, Washington Performing Arts engages international visiting artists in community programs and introduces local artists to wider audiences. We place a premium on establishing artists as a continuing presence in the lives of both young people and adults through residencies and education programs.

For its achievements, Washington Performing Arts has been recognized with a National Medal of Arts and with three Mayor's Arts Awards from the D.C. Government. We have now embarked upon our second half-century, ever inspired by the motto of our founder, Patrick Hayes: "Everybody in, nobody out."

For more information, please visit WashingtonPerformingArts.org

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The Ruth Bader Ginsburg Memorial Fund was established in 2021 to honor the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's life, legacy, and passion for music with an annual award to a distinguished artist that includes the opportunity to choose a musical talent deserving of wider recognition to be presented in a Washington Performing Arts recital in Justice Ginsburg's memory.

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“The Reggie” is an annual award established in 2018 to honor former Washington Performing Arts Board Chair Reginald Van Lee, granted to a high school junior or senior member of the Washington Performing Arts Children of the Gospel Choir to pursue additional arts-related education or activities.

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For more information about Washington Performing Arts’s endowed fund opportunities, contact Meiyu Tsung at MTsung@WashingtonPerformingArts.org.

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Legacy Society members appreciate the vital role that performing arts play in the community, as well as in their own lives. By remembering Washington Performing Arts in their will or estate plans, members enhance our annual fund, endowment, or donor-designated programs and help make it possible for the next generations to enjoy the same quality and diversity of presentations both on stages and in our schools and community.

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