

Symphony Parnassus

STEPHEN PAULSON,
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Emil de Cou,
guest conductor

KHACHATURIAN
Waltz from “Masquerade”

MENDELSSOHN
Violin Concerto in E Minor
Dustin Breshears, soloist

BEETHOVEN
Yorkscher Marsch

HINDEMITH
Symphonia Serena

3 P.M. SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 18, 2018

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San Francisco

2018-19 Season
Program 1



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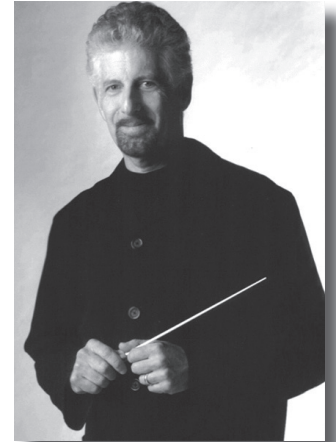
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MUSIC DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first concert of our 29th season! We are thrilled that you are sharing your afternoon with us.

We are delighted that Emil de Cou has stepped in as guest conductor for today's concert. Due to an unavoidable scheduling overlap with my role as principal bassoonist with the San Francisco Symphony, I cannot be here today, but you and the orchestra are in Emil's excellent hands.



We have four musical treats on offer. Two of them—the Khachaturian and the Hindemith—were written in 1941 and 1946, respectively. The first half of the 20th Century is one of the richest periods of musical creativity, and in these two pieces there is something for everyone. The short *Masquerade Waltz* charms with a toe-tapping, catchy tune, while the *Symphonia Serena* transports us to vibrant musical landscapes. Hindemith uses complex time signatures and unpredictable, but memorable, melodies. I encourage you to read Franklin Davis's excellent program notes to learn more about these pieces.

The orchestra had a good laugh at our first rehearsal of the Hindemith. A few minutes into the first movement, many of us thought we recognized the classic riff from the 1968 hit *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* by Iron Butterfly. Maybe you'll hear it too!

Meanwhile, the second movement of the Hindemith quotes directly from the third piece on today's program, a rollicking Beethoven march. From Beethoven to Hindemith to Iron Butterfly... all in a day's work for Symphony Parnassus!

We are also pleased to feature the remarkable Dustin Breshears as our soloist in Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto. Dustin's artistry belies his young age. Today is his twelfth birthday. Happy birthday, Dustin!

Thank you once again for choosing to spend your Sunday afternoon with Symphony Parnassus.

Stephen Paulson
Music Director

PROGRAM

3 p.m. Sunday, November 18, 2018

Taube Atrium Theater

401 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102

Emil de Cou, guest conductor

ARAM KHACHATURIAN (1903–1978)

Waltz from *Masquerade Suite, Op. 48A* (1941)

4 minutes

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64 (1844)

I. Allegro molto appassionato

II. Andante

III. Allegretto non troppo – Allegro molto vivace

Dustin Breshears, soloist

30 minutes

— *Intermission* —

20 minutes

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Yorkscher Marsch (1809)

3 minutes

PAUL HINDEMITH (1895–1963)

Symphonia Serena (1946)

I. Moderately fast

II. Geschwindmarsch by Beethoven

III. Colloquy

IV. Finale

35 minutes

Please silence all cell phones and electronic devices prior to the performance.

MUSICIANS

Violin I

Vivian,
Concertmaster

Annie Li,
Associate Concertmaster

Katie Belleville

Helene Grotans

Elaine Higashi

Courtney Onodera

Gianluca Pane

Mitchell Perilla

Violin II

Krishna Montmorency,
Principal

Julia Lurie,
Associate Principal

Dan Ahn

Nina Bai

Rachel Cloues

Jonathan Eldridge

Nadia Herrera

Karin Katzeff

Nigel Le

Claire Yin

Viola

Hélène Wickett,
Principal

Tom Bodenheimer,
Associate Principal

Nick Blanchard

Julia Kelson

Claire Morrow

Joan Murray

Merle Rabine

Cello

Jennifer Mathers,
Principal

Naoko Maruko,
Associate Principal

Margaret Moores

Leo Baluk

Chris Brann

Daniel Chang

Brian Colfer

Jozo Dujmovic

Nathan Leber

Maggie Nelson

Bass

Justin Jimenez,
Principal

Richard Frazier

Gerald Harris

Flute

Darcy Mironov,
Principal

Jenna Mauro

Piccolo

Winslow Taub

Oboe

Meave Cox,
Principal

Mollie Bernstein

English Horn

David Allen

Clarinet

Kyle Beard

Bert Baylin

Bass Clarinet

Michael Beale

Bassoon

Amy Duxbury,
Principal

Sarah Smith

Contrabassoon

Dan Zimardi

Horn

Nathan Stroud,
Principal

Peter Jilka

Dan Meier

Robin Varga

Trumpet

Chris Wilhite

Chrix Finne

Trombone

Ravi Sahae

Ray Horton

Bass Trombone

Forrest Jones

Tuba

Adam Norton

Timpani

Christian F. Howes

Percussion

Mike Kiely

Piano

Peter Hwang

"The best of the Bay Area's community musicians" —Michael Tilson Thomas

Longtime San Francisco residents may remember Symphony Parnassus's ancestor, the Doctors' Symphony, which began in 1965 when a few doctors' chamber groups coalesced for the first time into an orchestra. Lyn Giovanniello, a recent member of our string bass section, was drafted by the Doctors' Symphony to be their first conductor. The group met regularly and presented concerts at what was then UC Hospital through the 1970s. Almost a decade after that organization folded, biophysics graduate student and amateur cellist Jonathan Davis re-established it as the more community-oriented UCSF Orchestra. He obtained funding from UCSF and started giving concerts in the UCSF Gym in 1989. Davis was able to tap an enthusiastic, supportive pool of both amateur and professional musicians from the faculty, staff and student body of UCSF as well as the local community. The UCSF Orchestra quickly grew, attracted large audiences, and earned a reputation for outstanding performances.

After six years at the orchestra's helm, Jonathan Davis moved to Boston to pursue his career, and Jeremy Swerling was named music director. Two years later, the orchestra elected Stephen Paulson as its third music director. After being cut from UCSF's budget in 1999, the orchestra was reorganized as a nonprofit entity with the name Symphony Parnassus, to honor its roots in San Francisco's Parnassus Heights neighborhood. Symphony Parnassus continues to attract top musical talent from the local community. In addition to members of the UCSF community, the orchestra now includes corporate executives, IT specialists, engineers, scientists and educators, as well as music students and professionals.

Over the years, Symphony Parnassus has collaborated with world-class musicians such as pianist Robin Sutherland, violist Geraldine Walther, oboist William Bennett and sopranos Lisa Vroman and Hope Briggs. Ballet legend Rudolph Nureyev made his West Coast conducting debut with our orchestra. Famed jazz saxophonist and composer John Handy premiered his *Concerto for Jazz Soloist and Orchestra* with us. With its focus on local soloists, composers and visual artists, Symphony Parnassus continues to play a unique and vital role in the Bay Area's arts community.

For further information or questions, please contact us at:

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American conductor **Emil de Cou** is currently the music director of the Pacific Northwest Ballet and appears regularly with orchestras across the country. After his debut with the National Symphony Orchestra in 2000, he became associate conductor and led the NSO on national tours and at the U.S. Capitol. This summer will mark his 14th year as the principal conductor for the NSO's Wolf Trap performances. His innovative concerts there have included the world premiere screenings of *The Wizard of Oz* with the score performed by live orchestra, the first-ever live-

tweeted program notes (Beethoven's 6th Symphony), and a live podcast of his *Fantastic Planet* concert. In 2006 he led the NSO in the Wolf Trap premiere of Holst's *The Planets* narrated by Leonard Nimoy with NASA's images, and in 2008 he conducted the premiere of *Rodgers & Hammerstein at the Movies*.

As musical consultant for NASA, he has conducted several collaborations, including *Human Spaceflight: The Kennedy Legacy* at the Kennedy Center for the 50th anniversary of John F. Kennedy's declaration to land a man on the moon. De Cou will lead the NSO in three performances of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, co-produced by NASA and The Kennedy Center, for the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon landing. For his work with NASA, de Cou was awarded the agency's Exceptional Public Achievement Medal; he is the first musician to receive this honor.

For eight seasons, Mikhail Baryshnikov engaged Emil de Cou to conduct American Ballet Theatre in New York and on national and international tours. De Cou's performance of Academy Award-winning composer Elliot Goldenthal's ballet *Othello* was aired on PBS's Great Performances series, and the soundtrack was released on the Varese Sarabande label. Among de Cou's other releases is *Debussy Rediscovered* on Arabesque, which includes first-ever recordings of music by Claude Debussy.

Born in Los Angeles, Emil de Cou studied with Daniel Lewis at USC and was chosen for Leonard Bernstein's master class at the Hollywood Bowl. De Cou made his Carnegie Hall debut with the New York Pops in 2006. He has led many of America's leading orchestras, including those of Philadelphia, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Minnesota and St. Louis. He has also led the Boston Pops, and served as principal conductor of the San Francisco Symphony Pops. Emil de Cou now makes his home in both San Francisco and Seattle with his husband, conductor Leif Bjaland.



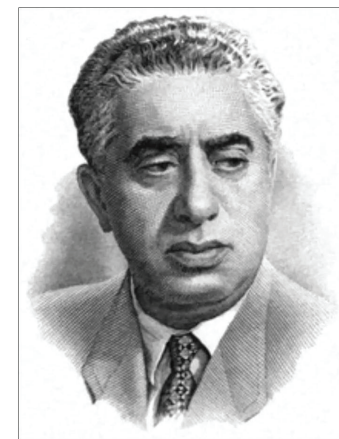
Dustin Breshears, age 12, began violin lessons at age 4 with David Mallory. At the age of 7, Dustin started studying at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music's Pre-college Division under William Barbini, and currently studies with Zhao Wei. Additionally, Dustin is coached by his accompanist, Ayke Agus. Since the age of six, Dustin has soloed with four different orchestras. He has won numerous solo awards, including the Symphony Parnassus—San Francisco Conservatory of Music

Concerto Competition, first place in the MTAC State VOCE Competition, first place in the U.S. International Music Competition, first place in the U.S. Open Music Competition, first place in the ASTA-Sacramento Competition, first place in the CAPMT-Sacramento Competition, first place in the DVS-HNU Competition, and first place in the Classical Masters Competition. Dustin is currently concertmaster of the SFCM Pre-College Division String Orchestra.

ARAM KHACHATURIAN

Waltz from *Masquerade Suite*, Op. 48A (1941)

Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978) was an Armenian composer and conductor who lived and worked in the Soviet Union. Khachaturian was famous for his symphonies, concertos, ballets, and scores to over three dozen plays and films. His displaced parents immersed young Aram in the folk music of their homeland, Armenia, situated just north of Turkey in the Caucasus region between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea. In much the same way that American jazz suffused the music of George Gershwin, Armenian folk music profoundly influenced Khachaturian's compositions. It's remarkable that, while Khachaturian never lived in Armenia, his cultural identity was such that he was posthumously honored with his portrait on Armenian currency.



Masquerade, sometimes translated as *The Masquerade Ball*, is a tragic play by the great Russian Romantic poet Michail Lermontov (1814-1841), a contemporary of Pushkin and Tolstoy. In 1941, Khachaturian wrote music to accompany a stage production of the play. From this music, he assembled a suite of five movements, the first of which is the sparkling *Waltz*.

The plot of Lermontov's play revolves around the character of Eugene Arbenin, a wealthy socialite who suspects his wife, Nina, of infidelity. The intrigue begins at a masked ball, when a prince flirts with a baroness who gives him a bracelet as a token of affection. The prince then brags to Arbenin about it and shows him the bracelet, which he recognizes as Nina's. When Arbenin confronts Nina about the bracelet, she confesses that she lost it, unaware that her husband doubts her. His suspicions consume him to the point of poisoning Nina. When the baroness finally steps forward to inform him of Nina's innocence, it's too late—Nina is dead, and Arbenin, overcome with grief and remorse, goes mad.

Khachaturian's music reflects the glittering upper crust of society that masks the darkening drama. He said that composing the *Waltz* was especially challenging, as it had to illustrate Nina's exclamation, "How beautiful the new waltz is! ... something between sorrow and joy gripped my heart." With its perfect mixture of gaiety and melancholy with an ominous undercurrent, the *Waltz* has become one of Khachaturian's biggest hits. It was even performed at his funeral.

The *Waltz from Masquerade* is scored for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets & bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings.

Program notes by Franklin Davis

Continued on page 8

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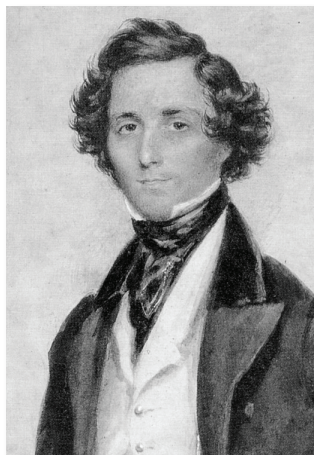
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FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64 (1844)

Felix Mendelssohn was born February 3rd, 1809 into a prominent Jewish family in Hamburg, the son of banker Abraham and grandson of philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. Young Felix exhibited a prodigious musical talent comparable to Mozart's: from an early age, he composed prolifically, completing his first symphony at 15, and his first masterpieces, the *String Octet* and the Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, at ages 16 and 17 respectively. Enamored with the music of J. S. Bach, he spearheaded a revival of

Bach's music in 1829 that continues to this day. He also led a revival of Handel's music in 1833, and did the same for Schubert in 1839, when he conducted the premiere of Schubert's recently discovered Ninth Symphony. Mendelssohn toured the British Isles ten times between 1829 and 1847; Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were his ardent fans. In 1847, exhausted from overwork and his last tour to London, and despondent over the loss of his sister Fanny that May, Mendelssohn suffered a series of strokes and died in Leipzig on November 4th, at the age of 38.

When Felix Mendelssohn became music director of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra in 1835, he hired his childhood friend and virtuoso violinist Ferdinand David as concertmaster. This marked the start of a long professional relationship, of which the E minor violin concerto, Mendelssohn's last large orchestral work, is the best-known result. Mendelssohn had wanted to write a mature violin concerto for some time since his adolescent attempt, the D Minor Concerto of 1822, had not enjoyed much popularity. He had at last found a trusted colleague for whom he could write a concerto, and with whom he could discuss the compositional and technical aspects of the work. As he wrote to David, "I should like to write a violin concerto for you next winter. One in E minor runs through my head, the beginning of which gives me no peace." It took six more years to complete the concerto, due to a wide variety of professional commitments that kept Mendelssohn occupied. Nevertheless, Mendelssohn and David maintained a regular correspondence during this time, with the composer seeking input on both compositional and technical matters. Thus began the tradition of collaboration between composer and soloist in the development of concert works. The concerto was first performed in Leipzig on March 13th, 1845, with Ferdinand David as soloist.

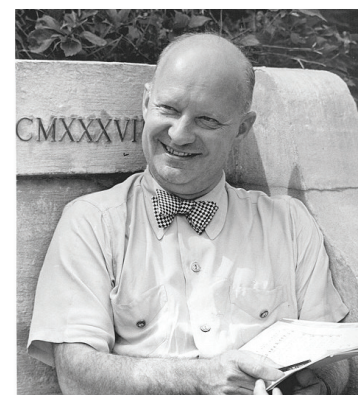
This is arguably the first truly romantic violin concerto. Ignoring the looming shadow of Beethoven's model, and actively consulting David, Mendelssohn combined a Schubertian lyrical intensity with a host of technical innovations. First and foremost was an emphasis on discourse between orchestra and soloist, with the former having an unprecedentedly active role and the latter an equally unprecedented share of the accompaniment.

Secondly, Mendelssohn pays tribute to Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, which he himself rescued from obscurity by performing it in Leipzig. In both works, the soloist gets first crack at the opening theme. In this case, the solo violin introduces Mendelssohn's lengthy *Allegro molto appassionato* opening melody - the very tune in E minor that gave him no peace - while the orchestra quietly lays the groundwork.

Third, there is no break between movements: a long-held solo bassoon note bridges the first and second movements, and a short epilog led by solo violin (*Allegro non troppo*) connects the melodious *Andante* to the sparkling *Allegro molto vivace* finale. This linking was designed to discourage applause between movements, which came as a surprise to Mendelssohn's audience, who were used to applauding each movement.

The E Minor Violin Concerto was an instant success, warmly received at its premiere by both public and critics. By the end of the nineteenth century, the work was already considered one of the greatest violin concertos in the repertoire, and has become one of Mendelssohn's most popular pieces.

Program notes by Franklin Davis



PAUL HINDEMITH

Symphonia Serena (1946)

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963) was among the most prodigiously gifted musicians of the 20th century. Besides being one of the greatest composers of the age, he was a conductor, writer, theorist, teacher, master performer on viola, cartoonist, and scholar. He possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of all periods of music, choosing to emulate the technique of J.S. Bach's works as the foundation for his own compositional style. After emigrating

from his native Germany to Switzerland in 1938, then to the United States in 1940, Hindemith directed Yale University's early music ensemble during his years on that institution's faculty. His research into 19th century music led to the discovery of little-known piano works by German Romantic composer Carl Maria von Weber, which served as the basis of his popular 1943 composition, *Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber*. *Symphonia Serena* was composed during 1946, and received its premiere in concerts on February 1st and 2nd, 1947, by conductor Antal Dorati and the Dallas, Texas Symphony Orchestra, for whom it was written.

Symphonia Serena is the third of Hindemith's six symphonies. It's an athletic work, along the lines of a concerto for orchestra. (There are, in fact, climactic moments in the first movement that seem to recall the pathos of Bartok's 1943 *Concerto for Orchestra*.) Like much of Hindemith's music after World War II, the *Symphonia Serena* combines intensely chromatic counterpoint with a wry sense of humor.

Continued on page 10

PROGRAM NOTES

As a composer whose own instrumental expertise fostered a special affinity for performers, Hindemith stocked his scores with a multitude of felicities to delight his musicians and listeners alike, with witty parody, ingenious instrumental combinations, and simultaneously contrasting tempi. *Symphonia Serena* is scored for piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, 2 timpani, various percussion, glockenspiel, celesta and strings, with a solo violin and a solo viola offstage.

The first movement, marked “Moderately fast,” presents an appropriately serene, noble and long-boned theme proclaimed by horns against a spacious backdrop of celestial-sounding strings. A pastoral second theme appears in counterpoint in the woodwinds. The movement proceeds much like a set of variations, utilizing the second theme in a series of episodes that highlight various sections and individual instruments of the orchestra. The wistful treatment of that theme by the solo violin, accompanied by chordal woodwinds, builds to a fine contrapuntal climax at the first theme’s re-entry. There follows a remarkably delicate sequence, again exploiting the endlessly pliable second theme on English horn and piccolo, accompanied by pizzicato strings and tuned woodblocks. The movement’s final section is a fugal episode, culminating in a blazing brass proclamation of the opening theme.

A military march by Beethoven, the *Yorkscher Marsch* of 1809, provides the thematic basis for the second movement, “Geschwindmarsch by Beethoven.” In Hindemith’s hands, though, the march is utterly transformed into a mercurial scherzo, scored only for the orchestra’s woodwind and brass sections, with the occasional support of celesta, glockenspiel, timpani, snare drum, cymbal and triangle. True to his style, Hindemith ingeniously exploits the sonorities of the wind instruments in various groupings. At the outset, chattering winds create a shifting chromatic background for fragments of Beethoven’s themes, amusingly stuttered by horns, trombones and tuba. Throughout most of the movement, these thematic bits are embedded in a continuous stream of quicksilver woodwinds. A trio section presents part of the march theme in irregular chordal phrases, with woodwind phrases imitating the reedy drone of bagpipes. The return of the main section presents Beethoven’s march theme in its entirety, orchestrated with emphatic élan and harmonic abandon.

The third movement, “Colloquy,” is an ingenious interlocking puzzle in three sections, the third section a superimposition of the first two. The sections are divided by two mirror-like cadenza sequences, each featuring a dialogue between an onstage and an offstage solo instrument. Where the second movement featured winds with percussion underpinning, “Colloquy” is scored for strings alone, divided into two groups. The first section presents chorale-like phrases played *divisi* and *arco* by the first string group. Three slashing chords introduce cadenzas for solo violin, echoed by an offstage violin. The middle section of the movement is played quietly *pizzicato* by the second string group. In a reversal of the first cadenza sequence, the second cadenza features an offstage solo viola (again heralded by three slashing chords) answered

by its onstage colleague before the two solo violins return and usher in the final section of the movement. Here, the *arco* and *pizzicato* sections run simultaneously, providing a striking and satisfying conclusion to this sophisticated hall of musical mirrors.

The entire orchestra is reunited for the finale, marked “Gay.” After a bold initial fanfare by brass and percussion, an unusually wide-ranging theme is presented by the solo clarinet. The whirlwind interplay of this and subsequent themes results in one of Hindemith’s most complex essays. The sections of the orchestra and their principal players are called upon to create a tricky contrapuntal web featuring a new motif characterized by an insistently repeated note, and pairs of woodwind lines that chase each other. All of this activity climaxes, appropriately, with a return of the symphony’s opening horn theme, and a lengthy coda that again features the clarinet theme. After the music gradually quiets down to a whisper, the bold introductory fanfare storms in to end the symphony with a bang.

Program notes by Franklin Davis

MEET THE MUSICIANS

Ravi Sahae

Instrument: Trombone

Hometown: Millbrae, California

Joined Symphony Parnassus: 2015

Day job: Attorney (Real Estate and Business)

When did you start playing your instrument?

When I was in 4th grade I chose trombone because Commander William Riker, First Officer of the USS Enterprise, played trombone.

What do you like best about playing trombone?

Let’s face it: it’s the slide.

Favorite Parnassus moment?

One of the reasons I love playing in the orchestra is it introduces me to great music that I don’t know. I’m ashamed to say I hadn’t really paid close attention to the 2nd movement of Dvorak’s Cello Concerto before. It was my loss because it is incredibly good and contains a horn chorale that is out of this world! The first time I heard the chorale at rehearsal I think my jaw may have hit the floor.

Hobbies and Interests:

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Symphony Parnassus

STEPHEN PAULSON, MUSIC DIRECTOR



Our 29th season continues!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 27, 2019 AT 3 P.M.

TAUBE ATRIUM THEATER, SAN FRANCISCO

SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 2019 AT 3 P.M.

TAUBE ATRIUM THEATER, SAN FRANCISCO

SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 2019 AT 3 P.M.

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