

P R O G R A M

PRINCETON
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2006 4:00 P.M. RICHARDSON AUDITORIUM PRINCETON

MARK LAYCOCK, *Music Director*
BENJAMIN ROUS, *Assistant Conductor*

PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

MARK LAYCOCK, *Conducting*

LYADOV **The Enchanted Lake**, Op.62

HOVHANESS **Mysterious Mountain**
(Symphony No.2), Op.132

- I. Andante con moto
- II. Double Fugue
- III. Andante espressivo

I N T E R M I S S I O N

DEBUSSY **La Mer**

- I. De l'aube à midi-sur la mer
(From Dawn till Noon on the Sea)
- II. Jeux de vagues
(Play of the Waves)
- III. Dialogue du vent et la mer
(Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea)

RAVEL **La Valse**

RAVEL **Bolero**

No audio or video recording or photography permitted.
No one will be admitted during the performance of a piece.



Large print programs available by request.

This program is funded in part by the
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ABOUT US

THE PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Founded in 1980 by Portia Sonnenfeld as the “Little Orchestra of Princeton,” today’s Princeton Symphony Orchestra has been hailed by critics as New Jersey’s “virtuoso orchestra.” PSO performs classical masterworks, introduces music by contemporary composers, offers star-studded pops concerts, and delights area schoolchildren with their first orchestra experience. PSO performs its classical subscription series in historic Richardson Auditorium in downtown Princeton, as well as special performances throughout the region. PSO also performs Holiday and Broadway pops concerts, a Sunday afternoon chamber series at Wolfensohn Hall at the Institute for Advanced Study and at the Montgomery Center for the Arts, and *BRAVO!*, an in-school educational series with children’s concerts in Richardson Auditorium, reaching more than 10,000 schoolchildren each year.

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About Us

Princeton Symphony Orchestra



MARK LAYCOCK, *Music Director*, celebrates his 20th year as Music Director of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra during the 2006–2007 season, and his 21st year with the Orchestra. Under his artistic leadership, the Princeton Symphony Orchestra has been shaped into a nationally recognized and mature ensemble that has received two Citations of Excellence from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Maestro Laycock made his conducting début with the Philadelphia Orchestra at age 21. His multiple re-engagements include those with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Montréal Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra of London, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Bochumer Symphoniker of Germany, and the Georges Enescu Philharmonic in Bucharest. His guest conducting engagements include those with orchestras of Paris, Kiev, Ekaterinburg, and Mexico City as well as performances at the Cairo Opera house and at the Royal Cultural Center in Amman, Jordan. A published composer, his works have been performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Alabama Symphony Orchestra, Canton (OH) Symphony Orchestra and the Princeton Symphony Orchestra, among others. Admired for his innovative programming, his ability to provide the audience with an understanding of and connection to the music results in a uniquely satisfying concert-going experience. During the summer months Maestro Laycock is Artistic Director of the Lake Placid Sinfonietta. During the 2006–07 season he will make his Asian début in Korea conducting the TJB Orchestra Daejeon, as well as conducting a world premiere in a return engagement with the Bochumer Symphoniker.



BENJAMIN ROUS, *Assistant Conductor*
Benjamin Rous enjoys a varied musical life as conductor, violinist, and composer. He is the music director of the Brahms Society Orchestra in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a post held since 2000. Previous music directorships include the Campus Symphony Orchestra at the University of Michigan, the Harvard Bach Society Orchestra, and Lowell House Opera at Harvard. His compositions have been performed by the Portland Youth Symphony, the New England Conservatory Preparatory String Orchestra, the Boston Latin High School String Orchestra, and the Fromm Players at Harvard. Interested in spontaneous composition and improvisation, Rous has performed in experimental ensembles in Boston and Atlanta as violist, violinist, and conductor. Rous received his Master’s degree in orchestral conducting, and is currently pursuing Doctoral studies, at the University of Michigan, where he studies with Kenneth Kiesler. In the summer of 2006 he was selected as an Academy Conductor at the Aspen Music Festival.

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dies away.

Despite Lyadov's tendency to never finish a work, *The Enchanted Lake* gives us a marvelous example of Russian impressionism. The programmatic connotations of the work are implicit in the title.

The Enchanted Lake, Op. 62

ANATOLY LYADOV (1855-1914)

Born May 11, 1855 in St. Petersburg.

Died Aug 28, 1914 in Polynovka.

Composed in 1909.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes, 2 oboes, 3 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, timpani, celesta, percussion, harp, and strings.

Anatoly Lyadov was a young man of exceptional talent and came from a distinguished musical family. His father and grandfather were both eminent conductors, and he was given the most professional training that money could buy. But it should serve as a warning to idle music students that Lyadov (himself thrown out of the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1876 by Rimsky-Korsakov for "incredible laziness") is best remembered for failing to write music for a 1910 ballet commission from Diaghilev: *The Firebird*, which of course led to its composition by Stravinsky, establishing the latter, most deservedly, on the world's stage.

Lyadov's lack of motivation plagued him from a very early age and continued throughout his otherwise highly creative life. The Russian critic V.G. Karatygin wrote, "*Everything has been given to him. He has a marvelous knowledge of technique and of the orchestra; he is a unique poet of the miniature, of the legend; he has an abundance of rare humor; he is a man of unerring taste, or great general and musical intelligence – and what does he give us? Ten printed pages a year, and sometimes less. Is this not a mortal sin against Apollo, who endowed him so lavishly? The increase in Lyadov's creative activity during the past year or two (he is at present engaged on a very important work, a ballet...) suggests that the composer himself has been feeling the twinges of his artistic conscience.*" The short tone poems completed by Lyadov that are most well-known are *Baba Yaga op. 56 (1905)*, *The Enchanted Lake op. 62*, and *Kikimora op. 63*. The last two were written in 1909 and were intended to be part of an unfinished (surprise!) opera, *Zoriushka*.

The Enchanted Lake opens with the strings softly playing an open fifth and the harp providing harmonic splashes of color. We hear fragments of melodies emerge among swells and rumblings. Finally, amid a *Tristan*-esque chromatically slithering crescendo, the strings reach a climax of sorts.

Mysterious Mountain (Symphony No. 2), Op. 132

ALAN HOVHANESS (1911-2000)

Born March 8, 1911 in Somerville, Massachusetts.

Died June 21, 2000 in Seattle, Washington.

Composed in 1955.

First Performance: October 31, 1955 with Leopold Stokowski conducting the Houston Symphony Orchestra.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 5 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, celesta, harp, strings.

American composer Alan Hovhaness studied at the New England Conservatory of Music and later in Finland. His music combines his interests in Gregorian chant, Renaissance polyphony and the musical traditions of his Armenian religious background. The title *Mysterious Mountain* was not in the composer's thoughts as he composed. It occurred to him after the work was complete, thereby reflecting the emotions he felt upon listening to his own music.

Mysterious Mountain is in three movements. The opening *Andante con moto* begins with hymn-like, open-voiced chords in the strings. This builds to a climax and is followed by lyrical melodies tossed between the woodwinds over a pizzicato string background, while the celesta intermittently interjects the only "dissonance" in the piece. The strings then recapitulate the hymn while alternating with a solo trumpet in a call and response manner.

The *moderato maestoso* second movement is a double fugue. The first fugue subject is lyrical and hymn-like, perhaps recalling "*Yes, Jesus loves me.*" The second subject is very fast with a repeated minor third pattern. Eventually both themes are skillfully combined "*with strict four-voice canonic episodes and triple counterpoint episodes.*"¹ The movement ends with a cessation of activity and is once again hymn-like.

The *Andante espressivo* Finale starts with a chant in the horns echoed by the trombones. This is followed by a *con moto* section that begins softly with the horns carrying the

¹ Alan Hovhaness

melody in counterpoint over a harp and timpani accompaniment. Repeated patterns begin appearing in the strings, while the horns are joined by the woodwinds, and finally the trumpets, to reach the climax of the movement. The open-voiced hymn texture from the opening of the first movement returns, again in the strings, followed by a *molto cantabile* section featuring woodwind solos, with the celesta once again injecting an “off-key” arpeggio. The movement ends with an evocation of the opening chant one final time.

La Mer, Trois esquisses symphoniques

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

Born August 22, 1862 in Saint-Germain-en-Laye.
Died March 25, 1918 in Paris.

Composed in 1903-1905.

First Performance: Camille Chevillard, Concerts Lamoreaux, Paris, October 15, 1905.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes, piccolo, 3 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets,
4 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 5 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani,
percussion, 2 harps, and strings.

It seems that as “French Impressionists” Ravel and Debussy are lumped together as if they were from the same compositional pod. They shared a dislike for Wagner and the German school. The titles they chose for their works sometimes were similar: *Miroirs/Images*, *Jeux d'eau/Reflets dans l'eau*, *Rapsodie Espagnole/Ibéria*, *Le Tombeau de Couperin/Hommage à Rameau*, *Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn/Hommage à Haydn*. They sometimes used similar musical elements such as the pentatonic scale and modal harmonies. However, aside from these similarities, the two men were really quite different. Ravel was a classicist. He worked within the classical forms to sketch portraits precisely as he saw them, without revealing his feelings. Debussy expressed his feelings in his music. He avoided standard musical forms. Debussy gave *La Mer* the subtitle *Three Symphonic Sketches*, which might give the impression he was heading towards the symphony. An important point is that he did not use the structural or developmental techniques of symphonic composition.

Debussy affixed descriptive titles to the three movements of *La Mer*: “*De l'aube à midi sur la mer*” – très lent (“From dawn to midday on the sea” – very slowly), “*Jeux de vagues*” – allegro (“Play of waves” – allegro), and “*Dialogue du vent et de la mer*” – animé et tumultueux (“Dialogue of the wind and the sea” – animated and tumultuous). The music is evocative rather than descriptive. The following melody from the first movement could be leaping waves, a surfer standing up and falling, or a penguin porpoising through the air.



The first movement develops from short melodic fragments over muted strings. These fragments are heard later in this movement and also in the fourth movement. A recurring theme appears as the day breaks over the sea.



Debussy uses a modal scale for the next theme. This is not one of the medieval church modes but one he invented.



The theme introduced by the horns uses almost every pitch from his invented mode.



The movement swells, surges and ebbs, passing motifs through the sections. There is a muted climax as a soft brass chorus swells and then dies away.

The middle movement is animated and lively. There are rapid motifs and the orchestration sparkles a bit more. The swirling activity suggests the impending arrival of a big wave, but Debussy reserves the climax for the finale.

The final movement begins ominously as if a storm is brewing. A calm middle section settles things down. The brass theme from the first movement reappears, propelling the motion towards a climatic brass chorale. Debussy's *La Mer* is the very definition of musical impressionism, in which there is no specific program or image, only the impression of one. As Debussy remarked, “*There is no theory. You merely have to listen.*”²

² Debussy on Music. Knopf 1977

La Valse, une poème choréographique

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

Born March 7, 1875, in Ciboure, Basses-Pyrenees.

Died December 28, 1937 in Paris.

Composed in 1919-1920.

First Orchestral Performance: December 12, 1920 with Camille Chevillard conducting the Lamoureux Orchestra of Paris.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, tambourine, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, castanets, tamtam, wood blocks, crotales, 2 harps, and strings.

Around 1906, Ravel began to write a tribute to Johann Strauss entitled *Wien* (Vienna) that he described as, “. . . a kind of apotheosis of the Viennese waltz, with which is associated in my imagination an impression of a fantastic and fatal kind of Dervish's dance.”³ Health problems and war intervened and prevented Ravel from finishing the composition. At the request of the impresario Sergei Diaghilev, Ravel resumed work on *La Valse* in 1919. By that time Vienna was a ghost of her former self, which Ravel portrayed magically in the music. When *La Valse* was completed in 1920, Diaghilev refused to stage it. The Paris dance premiere in 1928 was by Rubenstein who also gave the premiere of *Bolero* two days later.

The score bears a brief scenic description: “Through whirling clouds can be glimpsed now and again waltzing couples. The mists gradually disperse, and at letter A (in the score) a huge ballroom is revealed filled with a great crowd of whirling dancers. The stage grows gradually lighter. At the fortissimo at letter B the lights in the chandeliers are turned full on. The scene is an imperial palace about 1855.”

Ravel portrays the opening “mist” with a very quiet tremolo on the basses with the rest of the strings playing muted bowing over the fingerboard. Over the mist, fragmentary bits of a waltz are peeking through on the woodwinds. At letter A, when the ballroom is in focus, the music is still very soft. A waltz theme is more fully revealed by the violas, which are countered by the woodwinds. It is not until letter B – when the chandeliers are at the height of brightness – that the entire orchestra plays a fortissimo cadence in D major followed by a fully formed waltz played by a solo oboe.



What follows is a series of waltzes in two sections. The second section presents no new thematic material and leads into a “fatal Dervish whirling.”

³ Rollo Myers, Ravel: Life and Works

Bolero

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

Composition completed October 6, 1928.

First Performance: Paris Opéra on November 22 1928 with Walter Staram conducting and choreography by Bronislava Nijinska.

Ravel conducted the Lamoureux Orchestra in the first concert performance on January 11, 1930.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, oboe d'amore, English horn, E-flat clarinet, 2 B-flat clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, trumpet in D, 3 trumpets in C, 3 trombones, tuba, 3 saxophones (soprano, alto, tenor), 3 timpani, 2 snare drums, cymbals, tam-tam, celesta, harp, and strings.

It is hard to believe it is possible that a piece that was once called, “*the most insolent monstrosity ever perpetrated in the history of music*,”⁴ generated more audio recording sales in the 1980s for orchestras than any other work. The infamous Bo Derek movie of 1979 may have had something to do with it, or even perhaps the gold medalist ice skaters from the 1984 Olympics. It is not regarded as a work of great depth, but perhaps there is something more to the music than that which appears at first glance.

Russian dancer Ida Rubinstein (1885–1960) commissioned Ravel to orchestrate Isaac Albéniz' set of piano pieces *Iberia*. However, the rights belonged to another composer, and Ravel decided that it would be easier to write his own music.

A Bolero is a Spanish dance in triple meter performed by a couple who alternate between paired and solo movements. Nijinska's choreography was set in a Spanish tavern where a dancer on a table slowly gathers the attention of the men in the bar. Gradually, one then another of the men join her while the excitement builds until violence erupts near the end.

The tempo marking at the beginning is *Tempo di Bolero, moderato assai* (quarter=72). That is the only tempo marking in the entire piece. Ravel was adamant that the tempo not accelerate but remain constant. Toscanini famously ignored both instructions, which led to an unpleasant confrontation between him and Ravel.

The *Bolero* opens with a single snare drum beating out an unchanging ostinato pattern over pizzicato strings, perhaps invoking castanets and a guitar.



The flute enters with the first melody, which is then taken up by the clarinet while the second flute echoes the ostinato pattern.



⁴ Edward Robinson, The American Mercury, 1932

Program Notes
Gene De Lisa

This is followed by a second more chromatic melody introduced by the bassoon.



Ravel uses just these materials throughout the work. His skill as an orchestrator is shown by the interplay between the two melodies (the male and female dancers).

In a letter to fellow Les Apaches society member Michel Calvocoressi, Ravel wrote, "I am particularly desirous that there should be no misunderstanding as to my Bolero. It is an experiment in a very special and limited direction, and should not be suspected of aiming at achieving anything different from, or anything more than, it actually does achieve. Before the first performance, I issued a warning to the effect that what I had written was a piece lasting seventeen minutes and consisting wholly of orchestral tissue without music – of one long, very gradual crescendo. There are no contrasts, and there is practically no invention except in the plan and the manner of the execution. The themes are impersonal – folk tunes of the usual Spanish-Arabian kind. Whatever may have been said to the contrary, the orchestral treatment is simple and straightforward throughout, without the slightest attempt at virtuosity. In this respect, no greater contrast could be imagined than that between the Bolero and L'Enfant et les sortilèges, in which I freely resort to all manners of orchestral virtuosity."⁵

Although each work on today's concert can be categorized as "impressionistic" and we see some similarities, each composer takes a different approach. *La Valse* and the first movement of *La Mer* both emerge through a mist. The methods used to create that effect are quite different. The orchestration in each work is remarkable. Ravel adds unusual instruments such as an oboe d'amore (a timbre somewhere between an oboe and an English horn) and saxophones; even including the very rare soprano member of that family. *La Mer* and *The Enchanted Lake* are evocative and simply suggest images of the lake or sea. In two very different works, Ravel portrays specific scenarios. Finally, *Mysterious Mountain* was written without any preconceived images in mind.

⁵ Ravel. Daily Telegraph July 11, 1931



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Violin I

Basia Danilow, *Concertmaster*
Margaret Banks
Elizabeth Rivard
Kevin Tsai
Hanfang Zhang
Peter Bahng
Kiri Murakami
Mary Kim
Rachel Golub
Song-a Dell'Aquila

Violin II

Jody Rajesh, *Principal*
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PRINCETON
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MARK LAYCOCK MUSIC DIRECTOR



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Walton Symphony No. 1



Jeffrey Solow

APR 15

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