ATLANTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Thomas Søndergård, Conductor
Alexandre Tharaud, Piano

Friday, April 1, 2016 at 8 pm
Dr. Bobbie Bailey & Family Performance Center, Morgan Hall
One-hundred and Second Concert of the 2015-16 Concert Season

Photo credit: Martin Bubandt
program

HECTOR BERLIOZ (1803-1869)
Le corsaire Overture, Opus 21 (1844)

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)
Concerto for the Left Hand for Piano and Orchestra in D Major (1930)
Alexandre Tharaud, piano

THERE WILL BE A 20 MINUTE INTERMISSION

MAURICE RAVEL
Rapsodie espagnole (1908)
I. Prélude à la nuit. Très modéré
II. Malagueña. Assez vif
III. Habanera. Assez lent et d’un rythme las
IV. Feria. Assez animé

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)
La mer (The Sea), Three Symphonic Sketches (1905)
I. De l’aube à midi sur la mer (From Dawn until Noon on the Sea)
II. Jeux de vagues (Play of the Waves)
III. Dialogue du vent et de la mer (Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea)
program notes  by Ken Meltzer

*Le corsaire* Overture, Opus 21 (1844)

Hector Berlioz was born in La Côte-Saint-André, Isère, France, on December 11, 1803, and died in Paris, France, on March 8, 1869. The first performance of *Le corsaire* took place at the Cirque Olympique in Paris on January 19, 1845, with the composer conducting. *Le corsaire* is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings. Approximate performance time is nine minutes.

In 1844, while visiting Nice, Hector Berlioz completed an orchestral Overture. The premiere of the work initially titled *Le tour de Nice* took place in Paris on January 19, 1845, with Berlioz conducting. Berlioz revised the Overture while in London in 1851-2. He called the new version *Le corsaire rouge*, a reference to James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Red Rover*, another work Berlioz greatly admired. Finally, Berlioz shortened the title to its familiar title *Le corsaire* (*The Corsair*), a reference to Lord Byron’s verse tale.

The great 19th-century conductor, Hans von Bülow, compared the Overture’s bracing opening to “a shot from a pistol.” Berlioz launches his *Corsaire* Overture with two sharp chords, followed by scurrying violins and chirping winds. A lyrical interlude (*Adagio sostenuto*) leads to the principal *Allegro assai*, featuring a reprise of the opening violin and woodwind figures, followed by the introduction of the bold descending and ascending main theme. The violins present a contrasting lyrical theme, derived from material first presented in the *Adagio* episode. But for the most part, the *Corsaire* Overture proceeds in heroic fashion right to the fanfares and C-major chords that cap the work.

*Concerto for the Left Hand for Piano and Orchestra in D Major* (1930)

Maurice Ravel was born in Ciboure, Basses-Pyrénées, France, on March 7, 1875, and died in Paris, France, on December 28, 1937. The first performance of the D-Major Concerto took place in Vienna, Austria, on November 27, 1931, with Paul Wittgenstein as soloist. In addition to the solo piano, the Concerto is scored for piccolo, three flutes, two oboes, English horn, E-flat clarinet, two clarinets in A and B-flat, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, triangle, cymbals, suspended cymbal, bass drum, wood block, tam-tam, harp, and strings. Approximate performance time is nineteen minutes.
Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961), brother of philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, was a member of an affluent Viennese family. Paul Wittgenstein made his professional debut as a concert pianist in December of 1913. A promising career was interrupted by World War I, and seemed to come to an early and tragic end when Wittgenstein lost his right arm while serving as a soldier on the Russian front.

After this horrific turn of events, Wittgenstein arranged several solo pieces for left hand that he played in concerts throughout Europe, the United States, and the Near East. Wittgenstein also commissioned piano concertos from such prominent composers as Richard Strauss, Paul Hindemith, Sergei Prokofiev, Benjamin Britten, and Maurice Ravel.

Wittgenstein was the soloist in the premiere of the Concerto for the Left Hand, which took place in Vienna on November 27, 1931. From the time of the first performance, critics have marveled at how the Concerto sounds as if it is indeed written for performance by two hands. At the Paris premiere, critic Henry Prunières marveled that at times, the Concerto seemed to be a work scored for piano duet! Of course, the illusion is due in great part to Ravel's mastery of instrumental colors. But it must also be acknowledged that a piano virtuoso of the highest order is required for the Concerto to weave its magical spell. For in truth, Ravel often requires the left hand to perform the work of two (if not four).

Ravel's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand is in a single movement, featuring various contrasting sections. The opening section (Lento) includes the first of two lengthy solo cadenzas, during which the Concerto’s principal theme is introduced. Another slow-tempo section (Andante) gathers momentum and leads headlong into the central jazz-oriented portion (Allegro). The final section (Tempo 1°) includes the second extended solo cadenza, which, in turn, leads to a final outburst by the soloist and orchestra.

*Rapsodie espagnole* (1908)

*Maurice Ravel* was born in Ciboure, Basses-Pyrénées, France, on March 7, 1875, and died in Paris, France, on December 28, 1937. The first performance of the *Rapsodie espagnole* took place in Paris at the Théâtre du Châtelet on March 15, 1908, with Edouard Colonne conducting the Colonne Orchestra. The *Rapsodie espagnole* is scored for two piccolos, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, sarrusophone (a contrabassoon may substitute for the sarrusophone), four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba,
In an autobiographical sketch, Maurice Ravel noted: “I was born in Ciboure, a township in the Lower Pyrenees next to Saint-Jean-de-Luz, on March 7, 1875. My father, originally from Versoix, on the shore of Lake Geneva, was a civil engineer. My mother belonged to an old Basque family.”

It was from Marie Delouart Ravel that the young Maurice learned about Basque history and culture. Among Ravel’s earliest memories were the Spanish folk songs that his beloved mother sang to him. It’s not surprising that several compositions by this French composer reflect a marked Spanish influence.

Ravel composed his *Spanish Rhapsody* during the span of thirty days in the summer of 1907. Ravel originally composed the piece as a work for piano duet, and completed the orchestration shortly before the *Rhapsody*’s March 15, 1908 premiere at the Paris Théâtre du Châtelet. The *Rapsodie espagnole*’s vibrant rhythms, enticing melodies, and brilliant orchestration continue to weave their magic spell.

The *Spanish Rhapsody* is in four brief movements:

I. *Prélude à la nuit. Très modéré* (Prelude to the Night. Very moderate)

II. *Malagueña. Assez vif* (Relatively lively. A Malagueña is a dance in the fandango tradition that originated in Málaga and Murcia.)

III. *Habanera. Assez lent et d’un rythme las* (Relatively slow and in a weary rhythm. The Habanera is a Cuban dance and song from Havana.)

IV. *Feria. Assez animé* (Relatively lively. “Feria” is the Spanish word for fair or carnival.)

**La mer** (*The Sea*), Three Symphonic Sketches (1905)

Claude Debussy was born in St. Germaine-en-Laye, France, on August 22, 1862, and died in Paris, France, on March 25, 1918. The first performance of *La mer* took place in Paris on October 15, 1905, at the Concerts Lamoureux, with Camille Chevillard conducting. *La mer* is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, three bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, orchestra bells, tam-tam, cymbals, suspended cymbal, triangle, bass drum, two harps, and strings. Approximate performance time is twenty-four minutes.
French composer Claude Debussy once confided to fellow composer André Messager: “You perhaps do not know that I was destined for the fine life of a sailor and that it was only by chance that I was led away from it. But I still have a great passion for the sea.” This “passion” may be traced as far back as Debussy’s childhood visits to Cannes. And, the composer’s fascination with the sea continued throughout his life.

It is perhaps ironic that the majority of the composition of *La mer* took place when Debussy was at inland locations. However, Debussy did not view this as a handicap. As he told Messager:

...you’ll reply that the Atlantic doesn’t wash the foothills of Burgundy...! And that the result could be one of those hack landscapes done in the studio! But I have innumerable memories, and those, in my view, are worth more than a reality which, charming as it may be, tends to weigh too heavily on the imagination.

In fact, Debussy once admitted to a friend that he found it difficult to compose while in close proximity to the sea he loved so much.

The premiere of *La mer* took place in Paris on October 15, 1905, at the Concerts Lamoureux, with Camille Chevillard conducting. While critical reaction varied, most recognized the importance of *La mer* in the development of French musical expression. Debussy’s *La mer* is a magical product of the composer’s lifelong fascination with the sea and its infinite mysteries. Debussy’s *La mer*, like its subject, continues to elude description, all the while exerting a powerful attraction.

*La mer* is in three movements, each with a descriptive title:

I. *De l’aube à midi sur la mer* (From Dawn until Noon on the Sea)

II. *Jeux de vagues* (Play of the Waves)

III. *Dialogue du vent et de la mer* (Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea)
Robert Spano  
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Principal Guest Conductor  
The Neil and Sue Williams Chair*

Michael Krajewski  
Principal Pops Conductor

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Colin Corner•
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Associate Principal
Lucy R. and Gary Lee Jr.*

Jane Little
Assistant Principal Emeritus

Michael Kenady
Michael Kurth
Joseph McFadden

FLUTE
Christina Smith
Principal
The Jill Hertz Chair*

Robert Cronin
Associate Principal

FLUTE (cont.)
C. Todd Skitch
Carl David Hall

PICCOLO
Carl David Hall

OBOE
Elizabeth Koch Tiscione
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Associate Principal

Samuel Nemec
Emily Brebach

ENGLISH HORN
Emily Brebach

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Alcides Rodriguez

E-FLAT CLARINET
Ted Gurch

BASS CLARINET
Alcides Rodriguez

BASSOON
Principal Bassoon - TBD
Principal

Elizabeth Burkhardt
Associate Principal

Laura Najarian
Juan de Gomar
CONTRA-BASSOON
Juan de Gomar

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Brice Andrus
Principal

Susan Welty
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Ernesto Tovar Torres
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Jaclyn Rainey •
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• New this season
Players in string sections are listed alphabetically
Thomas Søndergård, Danish conductor, is Principal Conductor of BBC National Orchestra of Wales (BBCNOW) and also Principal Guest Conductor of Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO). He was Principal Conductor and Musical Advisor of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra from 2009-2012.

Plans for his 2015/16 season include debuts with Leipzig Gewandhaus, Toronto Symphony, Norske Opera, Oslo (Magic Flute – new production), Netherlands Philharmonic and Mahler Chamber Orchestra at the Philharmonie, Berlin in celebration of Carl Nielsen’s 150th anniversary. He also returns to DSO Berlin, Houston, Atlanta and Danish National Symphony Orchestras. Future plans include returns to many of his regular guest orchestras and debuts with Deutsche Oper Berlin, London Philharmonic Orchestra and UK and international touring with BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

Highlights of recent seasons include four contrasting programmes at BBC Proms (with BBCNOW), and successful debuts with Philharmonia Orchestra, Gothenburg, Atlanta, Brussels, Oslo and Luxembourg Philharmonics, Seattle, Sydney, Vancouver, Houston and BBC Symphonies, European touring with...
Junge Deutsche Philharmonie and EUYO and visits to Rotterdam Philharmonic, Aspen Festival, Danish National Symphony, CBSO, Bamberg Symphony. A passionate supporter of the music of Carl Nielsen, his most recent programme with Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra (Symphony No. 5) received wide praise as “equal of the great pioneers of Nielsen interpretation… It’s harder to imagine a finer performance of this remarkable symphony” (*Dagens Nyheter*).

As part of the 2015 anniversary celebrations of both Sibelius and Nielsen, he conducts a wide variety of works by these two composers with many leading orchestras.

Søndergård is also an experienced opera conductor, and last season conducted *Les dialogues des Carmelites* at Royal Stockholm Opera. In the 2012/13 season he appeared at both the Royal Danish Opera (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) and also Royal Swedish Opera (*Turandot* with Nina Stemme), following his success there with *Tosca* in 2011. In 2008 he made his Stuttgart Staatsoper debut (*Tosca*), returning in 2010 for their new production of *Luisa Miller*. He was described as 'a sensation' at his debut with the Royal Danish Opera in 2005 conducting Ruders' opera Kafka's *Trial*: "He is one of the best things that has happened to the art of opera for many years."

Past productions for Royal Danish Opera have included *Il barbieri di Siviglia, Le Nozze di Figaro* and *La bohème* as well as *Rite of Spring* and *Pulcinella* for the Royal Danish Ballet.

In Spring 2015, Søndergård and BBCNOW released their first commercial recording of Sibelius Symphonies 2 and 7 (LINN records). Other noteworthy recordings include Vilde Frang's celebrated first recording for EMI, and Ruder’s Second Piano Concerto on Bridge Records which was nominated for a Gramophone Award in 2011. Admired for his interpretations of Scandinavian contemporary repertoire, his discography also includes a number of other contemporary works. In 2011 he was awarded the prestigious Queen Ingrid Foundation Prize for services to Music in Denmark.
Alexandre Tharaud’s international career continues to flourish with concerts this season in Scandinavia, Germany, Poland, Switzerland, Benelux (where he has been invited to be the Eindhoven Muziekgebouw's Resident-Artist in 2015/2016), Spain (as part of the Great Performers cycle at the Auditorio Nacional in Madrid), Italy (debut at Santa Cecilia in Roma), the UK, Austria and in Asia with tours in China, South Korea and Japan (concerts with New Japan Philharmonic and Kansai Philharmonic) and the US. The year began emphatically with Alexandre playing some of the grandest concert halls in the US such as, the Zankel Hall (Carnegie Hall) and Boston’s Symphony Hall. By popular demand, Alexandre is expected to make at least two further trips back over the pacific, collaborating with Les Violins De Roy and the Atlanta and Philadelphia Symphony orchestras for a total of eight concerts where he will play the Carnegie Hall again and the Walt Disney Hall in Los Angeles. In Europe, Alexandre is launching his new CD the Bach Goldberg Variations, with a performance at the Philharmonie in Paris and St John Smith’s Square in London. Succeeding the launch, the programme will continue at the Cologne Philharmonie, the BOZAR in Brussels and in Tokyo where he will perform Bach’s masterpiece in his tour of Japan.

In January next year, Alexandre will present the world premiere of Hans Abrahamsen’s concerto for the left hand together with the WDR Sinfoniorchester Köln, directed by Ilan Volkov. Subsequent performances include national premieres with the CBSO in Birmingham, the Rotterdam Philharmonic (directed by Yannick Nézet-Séguin), the Danish Radio Orchestra in Copenhagen and the Göteborgs Symfoniker, Sweden.
Alexandre has embarked on a variety of exciting projects including a major tour to China, his BBC Proms orchestral debut (with the BBC Philharmonic under the baton of Juanjo Mena), appearing in his own ‘Domaine Privé’ at the Cité de la Musique, writing his book (Piano Intime) and featuring in the film Le Temps Dérébé, directed by Swiss film maker Raphaëlle Aellig-Régnier. Last but by no means least, Alexandre has been asked to revise a new edition of Maurice Ravel’s complete solo piano works.

Alexandre’s discography reflects his eclectic affinity to many musical styles. His recordings range from Bach, Mozart and Haydn (with Les Violons du Roy) to Le Bœuf sur Le Toit, a homage to the roaring twenties. Other works on ERATO include Autograph, Scarlatti, Journal Intime (Chopin) and his major release of the 2015/16 season: Bach’s Goldberg Variations. For harmonia mundi he has recorded: Rameau, Ravel’s complete piano works (winning the Grand Prix de l’Académie Charles Cros, Diapason d’Or de l’Année, CHOC du Monde de la Musique, Recommandé de Classica, 10 de Répertoire, Pick of the Month BBC Music Magazine, Stern des Monats Fono Forum, Meilleur disque de l’Année de Standaard), Bach’s Italian Concertos (one of the events of the year, 2005), Couperin, Satie (Diapason d’Or de l’Année 2008), and Chopin (Complete Waltzes and the 24 Preludes).

As a recitalist, Alexandre Tharaud has performed across the world: Teatro Colón de Buenos Aires, Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, Opéra de Versailles, Cologne Philharmonie, Prague Rudofinum, Essen Philharmonie, Queen Elizabeth Hall Southbank Centre, Royal Albert Hall and Wigmore Hall, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, John F. Kennedy Centre Washington D.C., Vienna Musikverein, Bern Casino, Krakow Philharmonie, Hoam Art Hall and LG Arts Center Seoul, Hyogo Performing Arts Center, Oji Hall and the Suntory Hall in Tokyo. His festival appearances include the BBC Proms, Edinburgh International Festival, Gergiev Festival, Aix-en-Provence, La Roque d’Anthéron, Schleswig-Holstein, Rheingau, Ludwigsburg, Ruhr Piano Festival, Nuits de Décembre de Moscou, Rimini, Domaine Forget and Lanaudière.

As a soloist he has appeared with the main French orchestras (Orchestre National de France, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio-France, Orchestre National de Lille, Orchestre National de Bordeaux-Aquitaine, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Orchestre du Capitole de Toulouse, Orchestre National de Lyon) and elsewhere (London Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra, Munich Chamber Orchestra, Sinfonia Varsovia, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich and Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra, as well as the Bavarian, Saarbrücken and Frankfurt Radio, Estonian National,
Toronto, Singapore, Taiwan, Sao Paulo, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Umea and Hamburg Symphony Orchestras, and the Japan and Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestras) under the direction of Lionel Bringuier, Bernard Labadie, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Georges Prêtre, Marc Minkowski, Stéphane Denève, Leo Hussain, David Zinman, Yannik Nézet-Séguin and Claus Peter-Flor. Dedicatee of numerous works, Alexandre Tharaud premiered Thierry Pécou's cycle *Outre-Mémoire* which included two concertos; *L'Oiseau Innumérable*, with orchestra and *Le Visage – Le Cœur*, with the choir Les Eléments at La Roque d'Anthéron Festival under the direction of Joël Suhubiette. In 2012, he premiered Gérard Pesson's concerto in Zurich, Frankfurt and Paris with the Tonhalle Orchester Zurich and RSO Frankfurt. Alexandre has also both commissioned and premiered three cycles: ‘Hommages à Rameau,’ ‘Hommage à Couperin’ and ‘Pianosong.’
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- Eileen Moremen, Opera
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- David Watkins
- Soohyun Yun
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- Georgia Youth Symphony Orchestra and Chorus
- KSU Faculty Chamber Players
- KSU Faculty String Trio
- KSU Community and Alumni Choir
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Please take the time to meet our faculty, students and staff. Interact with them, talk shop with them - their enthusiasm is contagious whether on or off the stage. I look forward to a long and rewarding relationship, and with your involvement as an audience member and patron, there are no limits to what we can become. If we can be of assistance to you, simply ask.

Stephen W. Plate, DMA
Director, School of Music
Kennesaw State University

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