Program

Igor Stravinsky
1882–1971

Funeral Song, Op. 5

Claude Debussy
1862–1918

La mer, L. 109
I. De l’aube à midi sur la mer
II. Jeux de vagues
III. Dialogue du vent et de la mer

INTERMISSION

Sergei Rachmaninoff
1873–1943

Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Op. 44
I. Lento – Allegro moderato – Allegro
II. Adagio ma non troppo – Allegro vivace
III. Allegro – Allegro vivace – Allegro – Allegretto – Allegro vivace

As a courtesy to others, please silence all devices. Photography and recording of any kind is strictly prohibited. Please do not leave the hall during musical selections. Thank you.
Peter Oundjian, *principal conductor*

Toronto-born conductor Peter Oundjian has been an instrumental figure in the re-birth of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra since his appointment as Music Director in 2004. In addition to conducting the orchestra in dynamic performances that have achieved significant artistic acclaim, he has been greatly involved in a variety of new initiatives that have strengthened the ensemble’s presence in the community and attracted a young and diverse audience.

In addition to his post in Toronto, from which he stepped down in 2018, Oundjian served as Principal Guest Conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra from 2006 to 2010 and played a major role at the Caramoor International Music Festival in New York between 1997 and 2007. In 2012 he was appointed Music Director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Oundjian was the first violinist of the renowned Tokyo String Quartet, a position he held for fourteen years. Since 1981, he has been on the Yale School of Music faculty. He was awarded the School’s Samuel Simons Sanford Medal for distinguished service to music in 2013 and named Principal Conductor of the Yale Philharmonia in 2015. He is Professor (adjunct) of Music and Orchestral Conducting at the School of Music.

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Funeral Song

stravinsky

Patrick Campbell Jankowski

Long believed to be lost in the shuffle of the Russian Revolution following Stravinsky’s departure, the instrumental parts to this chant funebre for orchestra were discovered in the Saint Petersburg Conservatory among other manuscripts in 2015. While much of the composer’s orchestral music from The Firebird onward is regularly programmed ad well-known, those early works from his youth (he was in his mid-twenties) when this was first performed, remain somewhat obscure, which makes this discovery all the more significant. Especially in his sense for mixing orchestral colors and textures and in his use of semi-programmatic elements, we can hear those traits that we praise in Stravinsky’s later works even in this formative composition. In this early piece, we can also discern a connection to the Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, the younger composer’s teacher, and the direct inspiration for this Funeral Song, written in his memory in the year of his death in 1908. It is fascinating, if not a touch bittersweet, to think that Stravinsky himself only had his memory to go off of in describing the work, but the central idea, in his words, is of a musical procession. “All the solo instruments of the orchestra filed past the tomb of the master in succession, each laying down its own melody as its wreath against a deep background of tremolo murmurings simulating the vibrations of bass voices singing in chorus.” We couldn’t ask for a better or more evocative description.

La mer

debussy

Julian Pellicano

A lifelong fascination with the sea led Debussy to employ this subject as perhaps his greatest orchestral work, La mer. Debussy started composing this work, subtitled “Three Orchestral Sketches” in 1903 and the work was premiered in October 1905, at the Concerts Lamoureux in Paris. Although La mer is an extremely popular piece in the orchestral repertoire over the past century, its premiere was controversial and critics were largely unfriendly to Debussy’s new freedom of form, harmony, coloristic orchestration, and defiance of rigid classification.

The three movements of La mer carry descriptive titles, which translate to: “From Dawn to Noon on the Sea”, “Play of the Waves,” and “The Dialogue between the Wind and the Sea”. However, Debussy made it clear that he did not intend his work to be a programmatic depiction or representation of the sea. He was attempting to capture the “invisible sentiments of nature” by asking the rhetorical question: “Does one render the mystery of the forest by recording the high of the trees?” Despite his aesthetic motivations, Debussy’s music has been invariably linked with “Impressionism”, a label he detested throughout his life. It is clear that Debussy felt closer to Mallarmé and Baudelaire than to the impressionists, Monet or Pissarro.

While the three sketches of La mer shouldn’t be heard as programmatic, neither can they
be regarded as a purely symphonic discourse, since they abandon conventional theme and development, resisting traditional analysis by manipulating a more cyclical construction and melodic development that relies heavily on color, texture and nuance for its subject matter. “We must agree,” Debussy writes, “that the beauty of a work of art will always remain a mystery, in other words, we can never be absolutely sure ‘how it is made’.”

Debussy greatly admired the seascapes of the British painter J.M.W Turner calling him the “finest creator of mystery in the whole of art!” “The Hollow Wave off Kanagawa,” (from Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji, c. 1829–29) a print by the celebrated Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai was chosen by Debussy for the front cover of La mer in 1905.

Symphony No. 3 in A minor
RACHMANINOFF
Patrick Campbell Jankowski

A distant, chant-like motive—scored for muted cellos, stopped horns, and clarinets begins this final symphony of Sergei Rachmaninoff. This brief gesture is significant, returning again throughout the symphony in various guises. The orchestra responds emphatically with Hollywood flair, almost comically grand in comparison to the chant. Such dualities are prevalent throughout the symphony, as when a melancholy opening theme is introduced in the winds that feels vaguely connected to the opening chant yet distinct in its character. A lush, gauzy second theme is introduced in the cellos, building to a bold, brassy climax, before retreating once again. The composer’s inventive 3-movement structure reveals its cleverness especially in the second, where he combines a scherzo and “slow movement” into one. After a re-statement of the opening chant (now in triple meter and inverted), an Adagio beginning with an aching melody in the violin and featuring the Cor Anglais leads to a mischievous Scherzo with skittering strings and brash woodwind interjections. The Adagio returns again once the Scherzo has exhausted itself of energy. A triumphant finale marches in lead by the strings, who signal fanfares along with the brass. A detour into a slower yet exaltant second theme and a contrapuntal development ultimately to a thrilling, celebratory conclusion.
Yale Philharmonia Roster

Peter Oundjian, *principal conductor*

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<tr>
<th>VIOLIN I</th>
<th>CELLO</th>
<th>CLARINET</th>
<th>TUBA</th>
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<tr>
<td>Herdis Guðmundsdóttir</td>
<td>Cheng “Allen” Liang</td>
<td>Jonathan Lopez ²</td>
<td>Connor Higley</td>
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<td>Sophia Steger</td>
<td>Mafalda Santos</td>
<td>Tianyi Shen ¹</td>
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<td>Gregory Lewis</td>
<td>Jakob Taylor</td>
<td>Lloyd Van’t Hoff</td>
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<td>Emma Carleton</td>
<td>Kyeong Eun Kim</td>
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<td>Jenny Bahk</td>
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<td>Yiqing Fu</td>
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<td>Kenneth Naito</td>
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<td>Ladusa Chang-Ou</td>
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<td>Amy Oh</td>
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<td>Jeein Kim</td>
<td>Xinyun Tu</td>
<td>Darius Farhoumand</td>
<td>Jessie Chiang ²</td>
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<td>Emma Meinreken</td>
<td>Nicole Wiedemann</td>
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<td>Andrew Samarasekara</td>
<td>Hector Ponce</td>
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<td>Xingzhou Rong</td>
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<td>Wilhelm Magner</td>
<td>Hyeonjeong Choi ²</td>
<td>Stephanie Fritz ³</td>
<td>Yun Chai Lee ³</td>
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<td>Emily Rekrut-Pressey</td>
<td>Michael Huerta ³</td>
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<td>Brian Isaac</td>
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¹ Principal on Stravinsky
² Principal on Debussy
³ Principal on Rachmaninoff
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Upcoming Events at YSM

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Doctor of Musical Arts Degree Recital
7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Free admission

DEC 2  George Coleman
Ellington Jazz Series
7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Tickets start at $23, Students start at $10

DEC 4  Yale Clarinet Celebration with David Shifrin & Friends
Faculty Artist Series
3 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Free admission

DEC 5  Liederabend
Yale Opera
7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Free admission

DEC 6  Vista: Chamber Music
7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Free admission

DEC 7  Lunchtime Chamber Music
12:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall
Free admission

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