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Western
Music

Don Wright Faculty of Music

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WESTERN UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

One Thousand and One Sounds

Simone Luti, conductor

Thursday, February 13, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

Paul Davenport Theatre

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

Tzigane for Violin and Orchestra

Lento, quasi cadenza
Moderato; allegro

Maurice Ravel
(1840-1893)

Soloist: Kirit Mascarenhas, violin

-Intermission-

Scheherazade, Op. 35

Nicolay Rimsky-Korsakov
(1844-1908)

i. *The Sea and Sinbad's Ship*

ii. *The Legend of the Kalendar Prince*

iii. *The Young Prince and the Young Princess*

iv. *Finale: Festival at Baghdad, The Sea, and the Ship*

Breaks upon a Cliff Surmounted by a Bronze Horseman

On your way out, please consider recycling your program cover using the boxes provided at each exit. Thank you!

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune

In discussions about Western Art Music, there is a strong tendency to sort works into one or more boxes. The need to categorize, to label things as say, "Classical," "Baroque," or "Romantic" often comes to the fore. However, a closer look reveals that some of these labels have been mistakenly applied. Such is the case with Debussy, whose music is today remembered as emblematic of musical "Impressionism," here referring to the movement of French painters that included Claude Monet. In truth, Debussy was ambivalent about his music being described this way. The title of impressionism was apparently thrust upon him by the French press. François Lesure, who authored a critically acclaimed biography of Debussy, noted that the epithet appears in reviews of Debussy's music as early as 1887. While it was true that Debussy was a self-professed fan of Impressionist painters, his stylistic influences were much broader. Lesure points to the works of the French symbolist poets as having a greater impact on Debussy's style, as well as his experiences at the 1889 Paris Exposition. There, Debussy observed the art of far-flung lands: the Russian operas of Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, the prints of Japanese artists like Katsushika Hokusai, and Javanese Gamelan Music from modern-day Indonesia.

The *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* is an interesting synthesis of these disparate influences. It was originally conceived as incidental music for a theatre project by the symbolist author Stéphane Mallarmé, whom Debussy met in 1890. Mallarmé wanted to create a piece of drama centred around his 1876 poem *L'après-midi d'un faune*, but the project never came to fruition. Debussy finished the work anyway and it premiered in Paris in 1894. In the poem, a Faun awakens from an afternoon nap and contemplates voluptuous memories of forest nymphs from that morning, unsure of whether his memories are real or imaginary. The imagery of Mallarmé's stream-of-consciousness text is brought to vivid life through Debussy's orchestrations, which alternate between choir-like string textures and more intimate tableaux of woodwinds, harp (or piano), and solo violin. Harmonically, Debussy juxtaposes more conventional triadic harmonies with pentatonic and whole-tone scales, musical flavours that evoked the Far East in the minds of 19th-Century Parisians. While the music is lacking in narrative sign-posts, Debussy creates a subtle sense of closure

Western University Symphony Orchestra
Simone Luti, conductor

First Violins

Frangel López-Ceseña
(† *first half*)
Kirit Mascarenhas
(† *second half*)
Jillian Yang
Melisa Mogrovejo
Patricio Flores
Esquivel
Ziqi Chen
Jeanny Jung
David Chen
Clovis Pinonnault
Terry Song
Amy Kwon
Kevin Ye
Terrence Wu

Second Violins

Eun Jee Gloria Kim*
Paul Baek
Lia Gronberg
Minji Lee
Sarah Botsford
Michael Theriault
Huimei Lin
Liam Westman
Chunju Tsai
Angel Liang
Samantha Luke
Anna Grass
Elias Cheng
Brooklyn Harriman

Violas

Elizabeth Van't Voort*
Parnian Aghaiani
Christian Wrona
Paige Bursey
Sherry Kwong

Colman Yang
Abbigael Arseneau
Adam Jahanghiri
Ashleigh Potter
Molly Burnett
Cynthia Le

Cellos

Isaac Lee*
Heather White
Matthew Kwan
Sophie Tarnow
Talia Hunter
Tyler Collins
Ariana Fusco
Eve Thompson

Basses

Alexander Hemming*
Michael Ippolito
Jun Kim
Eran Foster
Christian Abrams
David Walters

Flutes/Piccolo

Tracey Kennedy*
Asta Coffey
Natalina Scarsellone

Oboes/English Horn

Megan Yuen*
Gabriel Munteanu
Lara Plokhaar

Clarinets

Liam Pistor*
Samantha Johnston

Bassoon

Margaret Fay*
Joseph Smith

Horns

Calvin Dvorsky
(*Principal, Debussy & Ravel*)
Lindsey Cook
(*Principal, Rimsky-Korsakov*)
Ryan Duffy
Marianne Kitchen

Trumpets

Jazzmine Van Veld*
Roma Klufas

Trombones

Victoria Morrish*
Luke Roussy

Tuba

Cameron Williams

Percussion

Josh Milligan*
Quincey Doenges
Andrew Bush
Andrew Robichaud
Marshall Lister
Alexis Wright

Piano

Nicholas Busch

†*Concertmasters*
**Principal Player*

Soloist Bio: Kirit Mascarenhas, violin

Indian-born, Canadian-raised violinist Kirit Mascarenhas is no stranger to the stage, having performed across multiple provinces in Canada and in the USA as a chamber musician and freelance violinist. Most recently, he completed an interprovincial tour with London based chamber group Magisterra Soloists, as a Magisterra Fellow led by artistic director Annette-Barbara Vogel.

Beginning his studies at the age of 9 with Albanian violinist Augustin Cin Simoni, Kirit immediately fell in love with the instrument and the possibility of collaborating with others. He has performed in a wide range of orchestral ensembles across Ontario and the USA, most notably the Mississauga Youth Symphony Orchestra, Port Credit Chamber Strings ensemble, UWOpera, UWO orchestra, and Roundtop Festival orchestra.

He holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Western Ontario and is currently pursuing his Master's Degree in Violin Performance under the tutelage of Prof. Annette-Barbara Vogel. Kirit enjoys an active performing life as a soloist, and has won awards in the London Music Scholarship Foundation (2017), the Hideo Saito award (2015, 2017), Gordon Jeffery Strings and Chamber music award (2018), and most recently the Maritsa Brookes Concerto competition (2019). In his free time, you can usually find Kirit around a soccer field, where if we are lucky he won't injure himself.

UPCOMING SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERFORMANCE

Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College

Saturday, March 28, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. (\$15/10)
250 Years of Sounds

The famous Rachmaninov *Piano Concerto no. 3 in D minor*, Op. 30, and Beethoven's *Symphony no. 5 in C minor*, Op. 67, in the year of his 250th anniversary of birth. Featured soloist, Leonardi Joewono, piano*

Featured soloists* were finalists in last year's Maritsa Brookes Concerto Competition held in January 2019. Congratulations to the 2020 competition winners Camila Montefusco, voice, Terrence Wu, piano, and Eric Tremblay, trumpet. We look forward to hearing them play with the Western University Symphony Orchestra next year.

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by bookending the piece with flute arabesques, bringing to mind Mallarmé's original text: Ne murmure point d'eau que ne verse ma flûte/Au bosquet arose d'accords (No water, but that which my flute pours, murmurs/To the grove sprinkled with melodies*)

*Translation by A.S. Kline

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) ***Tzigane* for Violin and Orchestra**

Ravel's music is frequently sorted into the Impressionist camp alongside Debussy's, this despite their styles being different in certain important ways. Unlike Debussy, Ravel's music is acutely virtuosic and dance-like, two qualities that hardly gel with the blurred lines and imaginative lighting of Impressionist art. Being an accomplished pianist, he created many of his most famous works for that instrument, including *Jeux d'eau*, a brief but devilishly difficult work for piano solo, the Piano Trio, written in a 5-week stint prior to his enlisting in the French Army in 1914, and the Piano Concerto in G, which Ravel himself conducted at its premiere performance in 1932.

Ravel was a devout believer in musical craftsmanship. He meticulously fleshed out his compositions bar-by-bar, chord-by-chord, and note-by-note. He is quoted as saying that "Conscience compels us to turn ourselves into good craftsmen. My objective, therefore, is technical perfection." Ravel's fastidiousness motivated him to study various international styles of music and incorporate them into his own. His brand of musical cosmopolitanism was likely influenced by exoticism in French art, a trend which coincided with the increasingly globalized interests of European colonial empires. But whereas his contemporaries thoughtlessly appropriated the music of other cultures, Ravel took steps to pay homage to his sources, as we can plainly hear in *Tzigane*.

Ravel wrote *Tzigane* in 1922-4 for the Hungarian violinist Jelly D'Aranyi, the niece of legendary violinist/composer Joseph Joachim. The piece consists of two parts: A rhapsodic cadenza for solo violin, followed by a lively dance with the orchestra, mirroring the traditional Hungarian *czardas*. The violin solo is jam-packed with Romani-inspired fireworks, including the use of harmonics to mimic birdsong, rapid-fire left-hand pizzicato, brash *sul ponticello*

passages (Where the violinist plays on top of the bridge with their bow), and indulgent slides on the violin's G-string. As the soloist settles on a double-stop trill, the orchestra enters the fray with a rising flourish, instigating a tumultuous crescendo that leads directly into the second part. The original version of the piece was scored for violin and a piano modified with a device called a luthéal, which changed the tone-colour of the piano to resemble a cimbalom, a Hungarian instrument which is played with mallets like a dulcimer. However, Ravel immediately took to orchestrating the keyboard part, applying his considerable skills to produce one of the most exciting and beloved concert pieces of the 20th Century.

Nicolay Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) ***Scheherazade*, Op. 35**

Rimsky-Korsakov's music is synonymous with the aptly-named "Russian Style," which emerged in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. His music proved to be quite influential in Western Europe, particularly among the French composers featured in the first part of tonight's program. Interestingly, his standing among the other figures of the New Russian School (Balakirev, Borodin, Cui, and Mussorgsky), was less favourable. Rimsky-Korsakov's embrace of the academic establishment was at odds with Balakirev et al.'s more grassroots vision for Russian music. Over time, Rimsky-Korsakov severed almost all ties with his former circle of friends, and at times he found himself opposed to them politically. For instance, during the 1905 student protests in St. Petersburg (or the "First Russian Revolution"), Rimsky-Korsakov aligned himself with the students, prompting his superiors to remove him from his post at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Meanwhile, Balakirev and Cui decried that he had thrown in his lot with "vandals and hooligans".

However, this friction with his musical cohort didn't prevent Rimsky-Korsakov from striking a chord with the public. Many of his Russian-language operas were critical and commercial successes. Over the years, he painstakingly perfected his signature style of orchestration, which drew on the expanded instrumental forces of the opera orchestra. Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestral writing features a wealth of different textures and colouristic effects, as opposed to previous orchestral styles which aimed for transparency of the melodic line. He would later codify his

approach in a highly influential textbook, and his methods continue to be studied by modern-day students of orchestration.

Rimsky-Korsakov's adoration for the orchestra is most clearly seen in *Scheherazade*. He wrote this suite in 1888 based on the Medieval anthology of Middle-Eastern folk tales *One Thousand and One Nights*. The suite's title alludes to the frame narrative of that anthology, in which the titular Queen Scheherazade distracts her murderous husband, the Persian King Shahryar, by telling him enthralling tales of ancient heroes and grand journeys. The titles of the suite's four movements refer to several of these stories, lending each movement the dramatic scope of a Lisztian symphonic poem. Throughout the suite, we hear interjections from various characters, such as Queen Scheherazade, represented by a flirtatious solo violin, or the magical Kalendar Prince, brought to life by the hypnotic timbre of a solo bassoon. It's what conductor Marina Alsop cleverly described as orchestral "technicolour" in a 2007 interview with NPR's Scott Simon.

Program Notes by Jeffrey Komar