

Gustavo Gimeno, conductor  
Javier Perianes, piano

Friday, October 12, 2018 at 8:00PM  
Saturday, October 13, 2018 at 8:00PM

## LIGETI

(1923-2006)

### *Concert Românesc* (1951)

Andantino -  
Allegro vivace -  
Adagio ma non troppo -  
Molto vivace; Presto

## BARTÓK

(1881-1945)

### Piano Concerto No. 3 (1945)

Allegretto  
Adagio religioso; Poco più mosso; Tempo I -  
Allegro vivace

Javier Perianes, piano

INTERMISSION

## RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

(1844-1908)

### *Scheherazade*, op. 35 (1888)

Largo e maestoso; Allegro non troppo  
(The Sea and Sinbad's Ship)  
Lento; Allegro molto  
(The Story of the Kalandar Prince)  
Andantino quasi allegretto  
(The Young Prince and Princess)  
Allegro molto  
(Festival in Baghdad; The Sea; Shipwreck; Conclusion)

David Halen, violin

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2018/2019 Classical Series is presented by **World Wide Technology** and **The Steward Family Foundation**.

Javier Perianes is the **Ann and Paul Lux Guest Artist**.

The concerts of October 12 and 13 are the **Loren and Ken Ludmerer Endowed Concerts**.

The concert of Friday, October 12, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Mr. and Mrs. James von der Heydt**.

The concert of Saturday, October 13, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Dr. and Mrs. Nicholas T. Kouchoukos**.

Pre-concert conversations are sponsored by **Washington University Physicians**.

# #VANLIFE

BY DOYLE ARMBRUST

Hi there. We likely haven't met before, but my name is Doyle Armbrust and I'm the violist in the Chicago-based Spektral Quartet and a music writer. Favorite painter: Francis Bacon; favorite film: *Koyaanisqatsi* (or *The Goonies*); favorite writer: Roberto Bolaño; favorite choreographer: Pina Bausch; favorite TV show: *Chappelle Show*.

(I just wanted you to know up front if we'd get along at the bar, since we're encountering each other for the first time and all. I caught that eye-roll, Jeremy.)

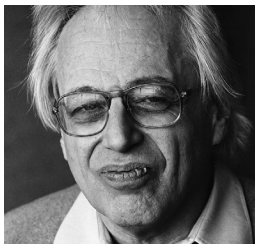
This breaking the fourth wall business is not some misguided attempt by a millennial – technically a “xennial” – to get chummy with you, the reader. Rather, I'm finding it necessary because when I first confronted the program listing for this performance, I did a spit-take.

The thing is, I think most of us are eager to find our own path into the new. We are curious beasts, despite our affinity for the familiar. I first thought drinking coffee was like licking a discarded oil filter, and my initial response to the discombobulated canvasses of Willem de Kooning was to fold my arms smugly in the knowledge that he wasn't pulling off his aesthetic heist on *me*.

In any case, this concert is not about spoonful-of-sugar-ing your Ligeti down with sweet old Rimsky-Korsakov. These three remarkable pieces happen to be touchstones for me as my thirst for contemporary classical music grew to exponential levels. If you'll allow me, I'd like to guide you down this path of mine. Just know now that you are dabbling with musical gateway drugs.

I was told in grade school to Just Say No to Drugs. But maybe experiment with these.

I know this is all a bit first-person. When it comes to music, the facts and figures are wonderful for those eager to seek them out, but your enjoyment – or bewilderment or thrill or meditation – is fully your own. Where this rabbit hole leads is entirely up to you.



## GYÖRGY LIGETI

**Born** May 28, 1923, Budapest, Hungary

**Died** June 12, 2006, New York City

### *Concert Românesc*

Growing up, weekends meant packing into an unfortunately-hued Ford Aerostar minivan and driving the two hours (if the traffic gods were smiling) to viola lessons and youth orchestra rehearsals. My first real “aha” moment as a musician arrived during senior year of high school, when that Aerostar reached the end of its blessed little tan-on-tan life.

As a violist, sweating it out in the Chicago Youth Symphony, Bartók’s *Concerto for Orchestra* served me up a slice of humble pie, with its wicked-fast string passages and a need for rhythmic exactitude. It also served up the first time that I hit a flow state, or nirvana state, or whatever we should call it, on stage. I mention this because the Ligeti there on your program is a proverbial tip of the hat to this very work. It’s not the only connection between these two compositional icons, though.

Spending their early years in Hungary, both composers mined and reimagined the folk traditions of their native region. And both went rogue in the most thrilling possible ways in developing their own musical languages.

Ligeti did a chunk of his formative work transcribing the folk songs of his birthplace, Romania, and this *Concert Românesc* is brimming with snippets of these rousing numbers. This is Ligeti at his most friendly and tuneful, and the melody that runs through the first movement *Andantino* reminds me of Dvořák capturing his North American travels in musical form.



The author as an adorable tyke, joyfully squinting to some tunes.

The *Allegro vivace* that follows has all the exuberance of a boozy barn dance, and it gets the blood pumping, but my jam is the third movement, *Adagio*. A deeply satisfying, more ancient out-of-tune-ness (to our modern ears) in the French horns mimics the earlier technology of the alpenhorn – a system that may sound foreign at first, but is like being transported into the way-back of history or having a trail in a national park all to oneself on a crisp morning.

Then comes the *fuego*, played at a breakneck *Molto vivace*, in which the concertmaster will earn his paycheck on some positively Van Halen-level solos. Keep an ear out for the icy, labyrinthine licks in the strings about a minute-and-a-half in. This *sul ponticello* technique is certainly not Ligeti's invention, but his employment of it here is a glimpse into the Ligeti that (thankfully) sent me down a path of new-music ill-repute.

If you're intrigued by this cogent little *Concert*, seek out this illimitable composer's other work. Like, pretty much anything he wrote. And please feel free to blame me if you develop a dependence.

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**First Performance** August 21, 1971, Fish Creek, Wisconsin, Thor Johnson conducting

**First SLSO Performance** February 24, 2006, Roberto Minczuk conducting

**Most Recent SLSO Performance** January 16, 2011, David Robertson conducting

**Scoring** 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (2nd doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 3 horns, 2 trumpets, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, suspended cymbal), and strings

**Performance Time** approximately 12 minutes



## **BÉLA BARTÓK**

**Born** March 25, 1881, Sânnicolau Mare, Romania

**Died** September 26, 1945, New York City

## **Piano Concerto No. 3**

Mom was captain of our Ford Aerostar minivan, as well as the motivating, benevolent force behind my siblings and me chasing down classical music rather than, say, basketball or The Mall. If there wasn't a patron saint of schlepping kids into the city every week of one's adult life, there is now.

She was also instrumental in broadening our sonic horizons, and I distinctly remember listening to Bartók for the first time while whipping up the highway at 65mph. I was baffled by what I heard. The stark geometry of the rhythms and brashness of the harmonies perplexed and even irritated me.

Now I can't imagine living any sort of meaningful life without Béla's entire catalogue.

The concerto you're about to be awash in is a curious, wondrous piece. Curious because, up until this point, Bartók had written his piano concertos with the intent of performing them himself. You may have heard that near the end of his life in the first half of the 1940s, after moving to New York from Europe, the composer's personal and financial health appeared awfully grim.

Unable to take the stage any longer, Bartók penned this concerto, his final work, for his wife Ditta Pásztory. If it sounds less thick and thorny than his previous piano concerto, the composer was likely eager to write to Ditta's strengths, rather than his own.

What's really notable here, though, is the second movement's connections to the *Heiliger Dankgesang* ("Holy song of thanksgiving") movement of Beethoven's String Quartet op. 132, in which he thanks God for coming out the other side of a medical brush with the Reaper.

Our piano soloist, Mr. Perianes, trades introspective, heart-tugging phrases with the orchestra, the combination of which gives the aural impression of a kind of heavenward entreaty – by turns grateful, anguished, or hopeful – which is the same device Beethoven employs in his devotional dialogue.

I'm a sucker for a deathbed piece – there *must* be some special knowledge bestowed on those given the cue that their account has come due – but beyond the Beethoven parallel (and the *Adagio religioso* marking in the score), I don't hear intimations of impending departure in the outer movements. The puckish duel between the piano and orchestra in the concerto's last movement is pure, classic Bartók, stirring into a red-blooded final climax that seems to promise that a sequel is sure to follow in a year or two...a sequel that would never be written.

Bartók stretched my ears at a time when my native language was Bach/Schubert/Brahms/etc., and even though memory of this unease has been erased, what strikes me is just how vital and fresh his music still sounds. A listener who has grown up with pre-Béla classics will often feel grounded in one key or another, but then Bartók starts meticulously stacking vertical towers of notes. Stacking and stacking, until his harmonies burst open in an eruption of color.

If you're hearing this masterpiece for the first time today...I'm supremely jealous of you.

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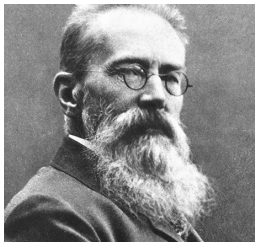
**First Performance** February 8, 1946, Eugene Ormandy conducting with György Sándor as soloist

**First SLSO Performance** December 12, 1953, Vladimir Golschmann conducting with Leonard Pennario as soloist

**Most Recent SLSO Performance** January 27, 2013, Gilbert Varga conducting with Peter Serkin as soloist

**Scoring** solo piano, 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (2nd doubling English horn), 2 clarinets (2nd doubling bass clarinets), 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbal, snare drum, triangle, tam tam, xylophone), and strings

**Performance Time** approximately 23 minutes



## NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

**Born** March 18, 1844, Tikhvin, Russia

**Died** June 21, 1908, Saint Petersburg, Russia

### *Scheherazade*

Our Aerostar minivan sojourns required entertainment, and cassettes were our salvation. As the sons and daughter of a plumber, ours were not deep cuts. The *1812 Overture* (with the thrilling “you may explode your speakers” warning on the cover), Dvořák’s “American” quartet, and *Scheherazade* were on constant rotation.

You know from Rimsky-Korsakov’s first, gutting low brass salvo, E~~B~~D~~~, that this is going to be some Anna Karenina-level drama, son. Hector Berlioz travelled to Russia in the 1860s, and let’s just say that the opium-fueled fever dream of his *Symphonie fantastique* (which the SLSO will perform later this season) made a bit of an impression on the Russians. In fact, this brass statement reminds me of the famous, devastating “Dies irae” theme quoted in the gallows bit of that piece.

Anyway, the thing is that the titles in your program are not really his. Nor did he much care for them. This piece is inspired by the ubiquitous “1001 Nights,” yes, but it doesn’t tell a distinct story the way Richard Strauss does, portraying himself as a superhero – seriously, this guy is like the Gene Simmons of composition – in *Ein Heldenleben*. It’s nearly impossible to hear Rimsky-Korsakov’s indelible violin



A 1993 Ford Aerostar, similar to the model that gave the author his first taste of Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade*.

solos as anything other than the voice of the story's hero, Scheherazade, but all Sinbad- and prince-related yarns were suggested after the fact by a colleague.

Now, take a moment. Consider for a moment why you are here. Some of us come to get our breath taken away with virtuosity. Some seek beauty within an otherwise complicated or frustrating existence. And some have been dragged here by significant others who have truly excellent taste in music.

Whatever your backstory, you are in for some serious escapism with Rimsky-Korsakov's next 45 minutes...and I'd suggest you let it wash over you like a summer blockbuster. You can just see the action playing out before your ears, can't you? This is music that makes one believe that the orchestra is capable of Godzilla-like destruction and Arwen-like elven exquisiteness. (I see you, fellow *Lord of the Rings* nerds.)

And what about that final movement, "Festival at Baghdad?" It's like everyone on stage just discovered a new gear, and when the trumpets hit those lickety-split triplets about halfway through, they are sweating under their collars, for real. This is music for the big screen, and those epic waves are coming at you in 3D.

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**First Performance** October 28, 1888, Saint Petersburg, Rimsky-Korsakov conducting

**First SLSO Performance** March 11, 1910, Max Zach conducting

**Most Recent SLSO Performance** October 26, 2013, Peter Oundjian conducting

**Scoring** 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), piccolo, 2 oboes (2nd doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, snare drum, triangle, tambourine, tam tam), and strings

**Performance Time** approximately 42 minutes

**Doyle Armbrust** is a founding member of the Grammy-nominated Spektral Quartet, and his writing can be found in *Chicago Magazine*, *WQXR's Q2 Music*, *Crain's Chicago Business*, *Time Out Chicago*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. When not abusing his viola by way of a new commission for his quartet, he can usually be located kayaking among the Apostle Islands of Lake Superior.

# MAYBE DON'T WRITE A PIECE FOR THE VIOLA IF YOUR HEALTH IS SUSPECT...

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*Doyle Armbrust, himself a viola player, muses on the dangers of writing for his instrument.*

In addition to this piece you're hearing today, Béla Bartók was in the midst of writing his lone viola concerto at the time of his death. Unlike the piano concerto, it needed more finishing than just seventeen measures, but even in its raw form, hey, at least we violists nabbed a Bartók number (great music for our instrument is in short supply around this era and before). Come to think of it, Shostakovich (whose Eleventh Symphony was performed by the SLSO two weeks ago) went into that good night penning his viola sonata. Composers, if your health is uncertain, please avoid writing for the viola, altogether.



Violist William Primrose, who commissioned and first performed Bartók's Viola Concerto.





MARCO BORGREVE

Gustavo Gimeno is making his SLSO debut.

## GUSTAVO GIMENO

Gustavo Gimeno is Music Director of the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg (OPL) and incoming Music Director of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO).

Gimeno made his Canadian debut with the TSO—to public and critical acclaim—in February 2018 with a virtuosic concert program featuring music by Beethoven, Ligeti, and Dvořák. Gimeno has signed a five-year contract with the TSO to begin in the 2020/2021 season. He will be the TSO's 11th Music Director starting in the Orchestra's 99th season. He will return to Toronto on June 29-30, 2019 to conduct *The Firebird*—a program anchored by the famous Stravinsky suite, also featuring works by Sibelius and Prokofiev.

Since he became Music Director of the OPL in 2015 he has conducted the orchestra in a wide variety of concert formats, appearing with the orchestra in many of the most prestigious concert halls throughout Europe. In 2017, the OPL and Gimeno extended their contract until the 2021/2022 season inclusive. In the current season, he builds on the successful tours of previous seasons with guest performances in Germany, Austria, Belgium, Turkey, and Greece. During past seasons, Gimeno has shared the stage of the Philharmonie Luxembourg with soloists such as Daniel Barenboim, Krystian Zimerman, Khatia Buniatishvili, and Bryn Terfel. Guest artists during the 2018/2019 season will include Leonidas Kavakos, Yuja Wang and Katia, and Marielle Labèque.

Gimeno and the OPL will continue their series of recordings on the classical label Pentatone, which was launched in 2017. Since this collaboration began, the First Symphonies of Dmitri Shostakovich and Anton Bruckner, Maurice Ravel's complete ballet music to *Daphnis et Chloé* and, most recently, Gustav Mahler's Fourth Symphony have been released.

Gimeno is also a much sought-after guest conductor worldwide. In 2018/2019, he returns to the Cleveland Orchestra, the Vienna Symphony, the Mariinsky Orchestra, the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. He makes his debut conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, the Houston Symphony, the Seattle Symphony, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Gimeno will again appear with the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, which specializes in historically informed performance practice, conducting symphonies by Robert Schumann.



JOSEP MOLINA

Javier Perianes is making his SLSO debut.

## JAVIER PERIANES

Ann and Paul Lux Guest Artist

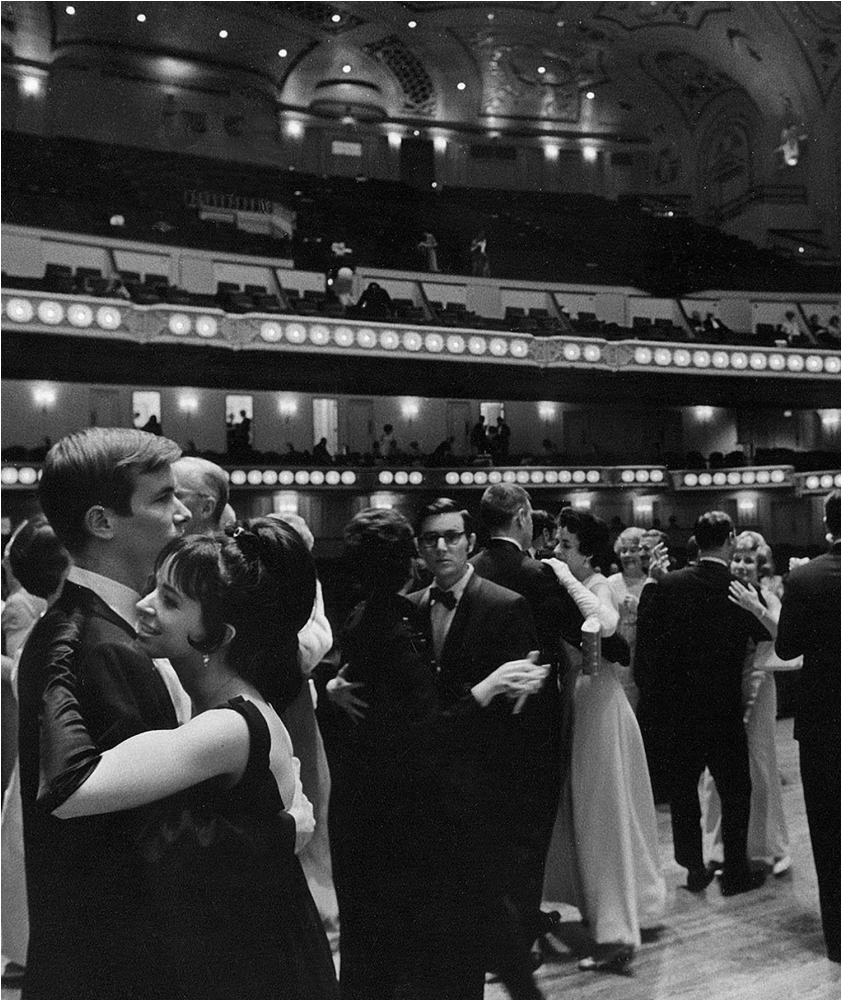
Javier Perianes' flourishing international career spans five continents, taking him to some of the world's most prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall in New York, the Barbican, Royal Festival, Wigmore Halls in London, Philharmonie and Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Philharmonie in Berlin, the Musikverein in Vienna, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, St. Petersburg's Philharmonic Hall, the Great Hall at the Moscow Conservatory, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, and Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. He has performed with conductors such as Barenboim, Dutoit, Dudamel, Mehta, Maazel, Frühbeck de Burgos, Harding, Temirkanov, López Cobos, Oramo, Mena, Afkham, Heras-Casado, Pons, Orozco-Estrada, Ticciati, Dausgaard, Jurowski, Yu Long and V. Petrenko, among others, and appeared at festivals such as Lucerne, BBC Proms, Vail, Blossom, Ravinia, La Roque d'Anthéron, Bregenz, Grafenegg, San Sebastián, and Granada.

The 2017/2018 season included high-profile concert dates including returns to Los Angeles Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, Finnish and Norwegian Radio, Danish National, City of Birmingham, and Hamburger Symphoniker, as well as debuts with Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Basel, RTÉ National, Oslo Philharmonic, Lille, and Moscow State Symphony orchestras. He also tours with the Münchner Philharmoniker and Spanish National Orchestra.

Recent highlights include concerts with the Wiener Philharmoniker, Philharmonia Orchestra, Münchner Philharmoniker, Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago, Boston, and Atlanta Symphony orchestras, Los Angeles, New York and London Philharmonic orchestras, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin and the Finnish and Swedish Radio Symphony orchestras, as well as tours with ensembles in Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore, and a month-long recital tour of North and South America.

Perianes records exclusively for harmonia mundi. His diverse discography ranging from Beethoven, Schubert, Debussy, Chopin, and Mendelssohn to Turina, Granados, Mompou, Falla, and Blasco de Nebra, has earned acclaim from press and public alike. His most recent album with the label are Schubert's Sonatas D.960 & D.664 and his recording of Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 3 with Münchner Philharmoniker and Heras-Casado.

# FROM THE ARCHIVES



Patrons waltzing on stage at the SLSO's inaugural Powell Hall concert in 1968.

We would love to know a little more about the patrons in this photo. If you know of anyone from the photo, whether it's the handsome gent with black hair staring directly at the camera, or the woman wearing black gloves to the left, or if your family has other pictures from that night, please email us at [archive@slo.org](mailto:archive@slo.org).

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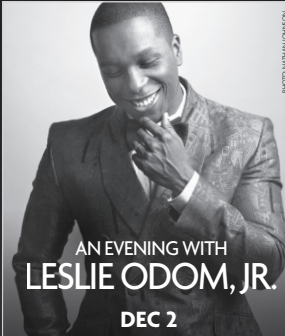



PHOTO: LARRY GREEN/CEA

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