

Salonen Leads Bartók, Bjarnason, and Sibelius

Los Angeles Philharmonic
Esa-Pekka Salonen, conductor
Vikingur Ólafsson, piano

INVITATIONAL REHEARSAL

THURSDAY,
FEBRUARY 17, 2022
1:30 – 4:00 PM

BARTÓK

Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta
(c. 27 minutes)
Andante tranquillo
Allegro
Adagio
Allegro molto

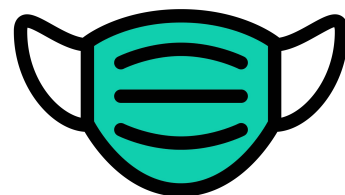
Daníel BJARNASON

Piano Concerto (c. 23 minutes) (North American premiere, LA Phil commission with generous support from the Lenore S. and Bernard A. Greenberg Fund)
Vikingur Ólafsson

INTERMISSION

SIBELIUS

Symphony No. 7 in C major, Op. 105 (c. 21 minutes)



MASKPOLICY

Please keep mask on for the duration of the rehearsal.

Guests must wear a mask at all times unless they are actively eating or drinking.

Food or drink is not permitted inside the theater.

There may be an intermission during this rehearsal.

Thank you for attending the Friends Invitational Rehearsal and for your generous support of the LA Phil!

Please note that this is a working rehearsal.
Programs and artists subject to change.

AT A GLANCE

Primal Urges

The three composers on this program share a keen interest in folk music traditions and myths, and all take inspiration from nature and the natural world in some of their work. It is no coincidence that Bartók, with his earthy roots and boldly original music, was the one composer of the next generation who had the sincere admiration of Sibelius. Now roughly a century later, Daníel Bjarnason is an Icelandic composer who has forged a strong creative

relationship with the LA Phil, and it is likewise no coincidence that he, like Sibelius, should turn to *The Tempest*, that primal fantasy about nature magic, for a major work with his 2012 *The Isle is full of Noises*. Sibelius originally performed his Seventh Symphony under the rubric “Fantasia sinfonica,” and it is heroic in both aspect and achievement, uniting the disparate elements of a symphony in a single organic movement. —**John Henken**

MUSIC FOR STRINGS, PERCUSSION, AND CELESTA Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

Composed: 1936

Orchestration: two complete string orchestras divided spatially by the percussion (timpani, bass drum, cymbals, snare drums, tam-tam, xylophone)—plus harp, piano two- and four-hands, and celesta

First Los Angeles Philharmonic performance: November 14, 1957, Eduard van Beinum conducting

Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta occupies a special place among Bartók’s compositions, not only for its fearlessly independent choice of instruments, but also for the intense expressiveness and vitality of the materials. It was written on commission from that unflinching champion of new music, the Swiss conductor Paul Sacher (1906–1999), in celebration of the 10th anniversary of his Basle Chamber Orchestra.

The beginning of *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* breathes an atmosphere of cloaked mystery, as the violas of both string groups present a theme that is actually the subject of a fugue. This creeping, irregular

motif not only dominates the entire movement but also figures importantly in the subsequent movements. The sinuous twisting of the subject, strings muted, releases a dark tension that defies the “tranquil” part of the moderately slow tempo of the movement’s heading, *Andante tranquillo*. After the initial viola presentation of the subject, various strings take it up; mutes are removed, and with the addition of timpani and cymbals, the music develops tremendous force. A chilling climax, initiated by the thrust of the bass drum, is short lived; the climactic burst subsides quickly; strings are again muted. The subject is now inverted—intervals that went up now go down, and vice versa—and, with celesta cascades producing an unearthly aura, the movement ends in microcosms of the subject.

What is the source of such diabolical music? The chromatic wanderings suggest Wagner and his *Tristan*, which gave us early Schoenberg. But there are other antecedents, and these include Strauss, Stravinsky, Debussy, Ravel, and, crucially, the folk music of Bartók’s native Hungary and its environs. It was this latter, large body of music, researched for years by Bartók, that became the

all-pervading force of his creativity, the distinctive elements of which gave his work an individuality as unmistakable to the ear as a well-developed photograph is to the eye: rhythms that pound insistently or that are arrestingly irregular; modes and exotic scale combinations; severely simple melodies whose rise and fall stem from speech patterns; driving, often barbaric energy and, in contrast, wondrously provocative calms; an amalgam of simple triadic harmonies and acerbic dissonances. From all of these elements came Bartók’s ingenious, novel language.

In the second movement, we have the dynamic Bartók in high gear. Antiphonal exchange between the two string orchestras is exploited to the fullest here. The timpani and now piano and harp contribute to a sonorous, impulsive fabric that explodes with vital energy, retreats to a playful episode very briefly, and then resumes its initial propulsion.

The atmospheric, endlessly evocative musical combinations that have come to be known as Bartók’s “night music” exist in their own special world, and the third movement epitomizes that world. Provocative, chilling, eerie, it is the antithesis of the

romantically colored piano nocturne created by John Field and Frédéric Chopin. A xylophone incantation on a single note coupled with timpani glissandos is a herald of the extraordinary sonorities Bartók was able to conjure. That the materials of this movement are derived from the first movement's fugue subject adds to one's enormous regard for Bartók's inventiveness.

The main theme of the finale, a dynamic melody in Bulgarian dance rhythm introduced by the strumming of strings, has all the elements for an edge-of-the-seat musical adventure—wildness, percussiveness, syncopation, and rapidly changing meters. At one point, the fugue subject, somewhat varied, is openly recalled; later, the dance theme is given a lush, almost romantic broadening. But the movement ends with the dance theme racing to the finish with decisive, no-holds-barred brilliance. —Orrin Howard

PIANO CONCERTO

Dániel Bjarnason (b. 1979)

Composed: 2022

Orchestration: 3 flutes (3rd=piccolo), oboe, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, bassoon, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, strings, and solo piano

First LA Phil performance:

February 18, 2022, Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting, with Víkingur Ólafsson, soloist

Dániel Bjarnason is one of Iceland's foremost musical voices today, increasingly in demand as conductor, composer, and curator. He maintains a close connection with Los Angeles Philharmonic, which has

commissioned, premiered, and presented a number of his works over the past decade, most recently, *From Space I Saw Earth*, written for Gustavo Dudamel, Zubin Mehta, and Esa-Pekka Salonen to conduct together at the orchestra's Centennial Birthday Celebration Concert and Gala in 2019. In 2017, Dudamel led a premiere of Bjarnason's Violin Concerto at the Hollywood Bowl, with Pekka Kuusisto as soloist, and the composer and LA Phil Conductor Laureate Esa-Pekka Salonen co-curated the orchestra's Reykjavík Festival, an eclectic and multi-disciplinary 17-day event, which also featured Víkingur Ólafsson. The pianist now continues his collaboration with Bjarnason in these North American premiere performances of his new Piano Concerto, the latest product of this creative relationship, commissioned by the LA Phil, with generous support from the Lenore S. and Bernard A. Greenberg Fund.

SYMPHONY NO. 7 IN C MAJOR, OP. 105

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

Composed: 1924

Orchestration: 2 flutes (both=piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, and strings

First LA Phil performance:

November 3, 1938, Otto Klemperer conducting

"Have 'in my head' Symphonies VI and VII. As well as the revision of Symph. V." This note in Sibelius' diary on December 18, 1917, is the first explicit mention of the Seventh Symphony. The last one is from March 2, 1924: "Ready with 'Fantasia sinfonica I' in the night." It is not possible to follow

the genesis of this work as closely as that of the two preceding ones, since Sibelius' diary notes drastically decrease in number in the 1920s. But as early as 1915, there is, among the sketches for the Fifth Symphony, melodic material that finally ended up in the Seventh. The process from the first sketches to the final score took at least eight years.

Sibelius first had a work of several movements in mind, but, in the summer of 1923, when the intense final phase of composition began, he had already decided that there will be one movement only. Hence the name "Fantasia sinfonica I." The work was premiered by that name on March 24, 1924, in Stockholm. The composer conducted the orchestra of the Concert Society, and other works in the program were the First Symphony, Op. 39 (1899/1900) and the Violin Concerto, Op. 47 (1904/05). The work's name was still the same when he conducted it next time, on October 1 in Copenhagen, but after that performance, he came to the conclusion that it was a symphony after all, in spite of its being in one movement.

The roman ordinal "I" after the "Fantasia sinfonica" points to the fact that he had at least one other work of the same kind in mind. This other work was either the symphonic poem *Tapiola*, Op. 112 (1926) or, possibly, Symphony No. 8, on which he worked until he burnt the manuscript, unfinished, in the 1940s.

"I intend to let the musical ideas and their development in my mind determine the form." Sibelius' diary entry from May 8, 1912, does not refer to the Seventh Symphony, but it probably describes the form of this work better than any other explanation. The very first musical idea that ended up in this work is

an “Adagio theme” of which there are many drafts in the composer’s sketchbook. This theme and its variants, of which there are two slightly different families, grow so important in all three main

sections (*Adagio*, *Vivacissimo*, and *Allegro moderato*) of the Symphony that their developments indeed determine the form. The most spectacular variant of this germinal idea is

the majestic C-major trombone theme, heard for the first time after the hymn-like string polyphony of the *Adagio* section that Serge Koussevitzky called “Sibelius’ *Parsifal*.” —**Ilkka Oramo**

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



ESA-PEKKA SALONEN

Esa-Pekka Salonen’s restless innovation drives him constantly to reposition classical music in the 21st century. He is known as both a composer and conductor and is currently the Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony. He is the Conductor Laureate for both the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, where he was Music Director from 1992 until 2009, and Conductor Emeritus for the Philharmonia Orchestra, where he was Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor from 2008 until 2021. As a member of the faculty of the Colburn School, he develops, leads, and directs the pre-professional Negaunee Conducting Program. Salonen co-founded—and from 2003 until 2018 served as the Artistic Director for—the annual Baltic Sea Festival, which invites celebrated artists to

promote unity and ecological awareness among the countries around the Baltic Sea.

Salonen began his second season as Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony with the Opening Night Gala, before leading the Symphony in 12 weeks of programming across the season, including festival programs exploring the music of Stravinsky and musical expressions of the myth of Prometheus. The SFSymphony+ digital programming, which Salonen spearheaded in 2021, also continues this season; both digital-exclusive programming and live-to-digital archival recordings are planned. Other highlights of the San Francisco season include premieres of two commissioned works from Bryce Dessner and Fang Man, a Peter Sellars-led performance of Stravinsky’s *Oedipus Rex*, and a synesthetic performance of Scriabin’s *Prometheus*.

Salonen performs 13 programs across Europe and North America this season, beginning with a concert of Strauss and Bruckner with the Filarmonica della Scala. He then leads the Orchestre de Paris in two programs in Paris, before joining the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra for the world premiere of his new Clarinet Concerto. In January, Salonen joined the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra for two weeks of programming as part of

Elbphilharmonie Hamburg’s two-season residency, *Multiverse Esa-Pekka Salonen*. He later rejoins the Orchestre de Paris for two more programs in Paris and five concerts abroad in Brescia, Bergamo, Torino, Milan, and Ferrara, Italy.

As Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic for 17 years, Salonen is widely credited with revitalizing the organization. Maintaining his close ties with the Los Angeles musical community, he is a frequent and celebrated guest of both the Philharmonic and the Colburn Orchestra. This season, he leads the Colburn Orchestra in a program of Shostakovich and Bruckner. He then conducts the LA Phil in two programs, including world premiere performances of two new commissions from Gabriella Smith and Daniel Bjarnason, and the U.S. premiere of a new orchestral version of his piece *Fog*.

Salonen is known for his enthusiastic adoption of emerging technology. His projects have included the Philharmonia’s *Virtual Orchestra*, the award-winning *RE-RITE* and *Universe of Sound* immersive installations, and the much-hailed app for iPad, *The Orchestra*. In 2015, he addressed the Apple Distinguished Educator conference on the uses of technology in music education, and in 2020, his interactive AI opera installation *Laila*,

presented with the Finnish National Opera and Ballet, was awarded the Fedora Digital Prize.

Salonen's compositions are inventive and cerebral, ranging from playful early works such as the UNESCO Rostrum Prize-winning *Floof* to the Grawemeyer Award-winning Violin Concerto and recently recorded Cello Concerto. This season's programmed compositions include *Gemini*, which had its world premiere in 2019; *Fog*, a Frank Gehry tribute appearing in a new version for orchestra; *Objets Trouvés*, which made its concert premiere at the Ojai Festival; the Dada-inspired *Karawane*, and the world premiere of his Clarinet Concerto.

Salonen has an extensive and varied recording career, both as a conductor and composer. His recent recordings include Richard Strauss' *Four Last Songs*, recorded with Lise Davidsen and the Philharmonia Orchestra; Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin* and *Dance Suite*, also with the Philharmonia; Stravinsky's *Perséphone*, featuring Andrew Staples, Pauline Chevallier, and the Finnish National Opera, and a 2018 box set of his complete Sony recordings. His compositions appear on releases from Sony, Deutsche Grammophon, and Decca; his Piano Concerto (with Yefim Bronfman), Violin Concerto (with Leila Josefowicz), and Cello Concerto (with Yo-Yo Ma) all appear on recordings conducted by Salonen himself.

Salonen is the recipient of many major awards. In 1995, he received the Royal Philharmonic Society's Opera Award and two years later, its Conductor Award. Salonen was awarded the Litteris et Artibus medal, one of

Sweden's highest honors, by the King of Sweden in 1996. In 1998, the French government awarded him the rank of Officier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. In addition to receiving both the Pro Finlandia Medal of the Order of the Lion of Finland and the Helsinki Medal, he was named Commander, First Class of the Order of the Lion of Finland by the President of Finland. *Musical America* named him its Musician of the Year in 2006, and he was elected an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2010. He was the recipient of the 2014 Nemmers Composition Prize, which included a residency at the Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University and performances by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In 2020, he was appointed an honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE) by the Queen of England. To date, Salonen has received seven honorary doctorates in four different countries.



VÍKINGUR ÓLAFSSON

Pianist Víkingur Ólafsson has made a profound impact with

his remarkable combination of highest-level musicianship and visionary programs. His recordings for Deutsche Grammophon—Philip Glass' Piano Works (2017), Johann Sebastian Bach (2018), Debussy/Rameau (2020), and *Mozart & Contemporaries* (2021)—captured the public and critical imagination and led to album streams of over 260 million. *The Daily Telegraph* called him "The new superstar of classical piano" while *The New York Times* dubbed him "Iceland's Glenn Gould."

Now one of the most sought-after artists of today, Ólafsson's multiple awards include *Gramophone* magazine's 2019 Artist of the Year, Opus Klassik in the Solo Instrumental Recording category (twice), and Album of the Year at the 2019 *BBC Music Magazine* Awards.

Ólafsson continues to perform with the world's leading orchestras and as artist-in-residence at the top concert halls and festivals. He also works with some of today's greatest composers.

A captivating communicator both on and off stage, Ólafsson's significant talent extends to broadcast, having presented several of his own series for television and radio. He was artist-in-residence for three months on BBC Radio 4's flagship arts program *Front Row*. Broadcasting live during lockdown from an empty Harpa concert hall in Reykjavík, he reached millions of listeners around the world.

LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC

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*Walt and Lilly
Disney Chair*

Zubin Mehta
Conductor Emeritus

Esa-Pekka Salonen
Conductor Laureate

Susanna Mälkki
*Principal Guest
Conductor*
Ann Ronus Chair

Paolo Bortolameo
Associate Conductor

John Adams
*John and
Samantha Williams
Creative Chair*

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Concertmaster
*Marjorie Connell
Wilson Chair*

Nathan Cole
*First Associate
Concertmaster*
*Ernest
Fleischmann Chair*

Bing Wang
*Associate
Concertmaster*
*Barbara and Jay
Rasulo Chair*

Akiko Tarumoto
*Assistant
Concertmaster*
*Philharmonic
Affiliates Chair*

Rebecca Reale
Michele Bovyer
*Deanie and Jay
Stein Chair*
Rochelle Abramson

Camille Avellano
*Margaret and Jerrold
L. Eberhardt Chair*
Minyoung Chang
*I.H. Albert
Sutnick Chair*
Miika Gregg
Tianyun Jia
Jordan Koransky
Mischa Lefkowitz
Edith Markman
Stacy Wetzel
Justin Woo

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Taylor⁺
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*Dorothy Rossel
Lay Chair*

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Associate Principal

Kristine Whitson
Johnny Lee

Dale Breidenthal
*Mark Houston
Dalzell and James
Dao-Dalzell Chair
for Artistic Service
to the Community*
Ingrid Chun
Jin-Shan Dai
Chao-Hua Jin
Nickolai Kurganov
Varty Manouelian
Michelle Tseng
Suli Xue
Gabriela Peña-Kim*
Sydney Adedamola*
*Eugene and Marilyn
Stein LA Phil Resident
Fellow Chair*

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Principal
John Connell Chair

Dale Hikawa
Silverman
Associate Principal

Ben Ullery
Assistant Principal

Dana Lawson

Richard Elegino
John Hayhurst
Ingrid Hutman
Michael Larco
Hui Liu
Meredith Snow
Leticia Oaks Strong
Minor L. Wetzel
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*Sadie and Norman
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Dahae Kim
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Barry Gold
Jason Lippmann
Gloria Lum
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Brittan Chair*
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and Ron Miller Chair*

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Assistant Principal

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Ted Botsford
Jack Cousin
Jory Herman
Brian Johnson
Peter Rofé
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*Virginia and Henry
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Catherine Ransom
Karoly
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Russell Smith Chair*

Elise Shope Henry
Mari L. Danihel Chair
Sarah Jackson

Piccolo

Sarah Jackson

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Grigor Chair*

Marion Arthur
Kuszyk⁺
Associate Principal

Anne Marie Gabriele
Carolyn Hove

English Horn
Carolyn Hove
*Alyce de Roulet
Williamson Chair*

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Principal
*Michele and Dudley
Rauch Chair*

Burt Hara
Associate Principal

Andrew Lowy
David Howard

E-Flat Clarinet

Andrew Lowy

Bass Clarinet
David Howard

BASSOONS

Whitney Crockett
Principal

Shawn Mouser
Associate Principal
Ann Ronus Chair

Michele Grego
Evan Kuhlmann

Contrabassoon
Evan Kuhlmann

HORNS

Andrew Bain
Principal
John Cecil Bessell Chair

Gregory Roosa
Alan Scott Klee Chair
Amy Jo Rhine
*Loring Charitable
Trust Chair*
(Vacant)
*Reese and Doris
Gothie Chair*

Ethan Bearman
Assistant
*Bud and Barbara
Hellman Chair*

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Principal
*M. David and Diane
Paul Chair*

James Wilt
Associate Principal
*Nancy and Donald
de Brier Chair*

Christopher Still
*Ronald and Valerie
Sugar Chair*

Jeffrey Strong

TROMBONES

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Principal

James Miller
Associate Principal
*Judith and Thomas
L. Beckmen Chair*

Paul Radke

Bass Trombone
John Lofton
*Miller and Goff
Family Chair*

TUBA

(Vacant)

TIMPANI

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Principal
*Cecilia and Dudley
Rauch Chair*

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Principal

James Babor
Perry Dreiman
Wesley Sumpter*
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LA Phil Resident
Fellow Chair*

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López-Ferrer
Enluis Montes Olivar
Camilo Téllez
Chloé van
Soeterstède

* Judith and Thomas Beckmen
LA Phil Resident Fellows

⁺ on sabbatical

The Los Angeles Philharmonic string
section utilizes revolving seating on a
systematic basis. Players listed
alphabetically change seats periodically.

The musicians of the Los Angeles
Philharmonic are represented by
Professional Musicians Local 47, AFM.