

BRUCKNER ORCHESTER LINZ

Dennis Russell Davies, *conductor*

First Violin

Lui Chan, *Concertmaster*
Tomasz Liebig, *Concertmaster*
Piotr Gladki
Chie Akasaka-Schaupp
Ana Pauk
Josef Herzer
Peter Beer
Simone Schreiberhuber
Vera Kral
Elisabeth Nusko
Judith Längle
Julia Kürner
Elisabeth Eber
Magdalena Hofmann
Ulla Obereigner
Anna Dimberger

Second Violin

Jochen Gröpler
Johanna Bohnen
Răzvan Negoită
Hartwig Munz
Alois Mares
Wolfgang Zimmermann
Sonja Hollerweger
Rieko Aikawa
Shushanik Aleksanyan-Frühwirt
Shiori Horiguchi
Cornelia Neumann
Sebastian Gogl
Nina Pohn
Barbara Wincor

Viola

Walter Haas
Gerhard Paal
Ulrike Landsmann
Monika Hemetsberger
Sabine Luger
Joachim Brandl
Matthias Frauendienst
Ekaterina Timofeeva
Johann Ratschan
Anna Siakala
Georg Hübner
Stefanie Kropfreiter

Cello

Elisabeth Bauer
Bernhard Walchshofer
Stefan Tittgen
Maria Vorraber
Mitsuaki Vorraber
Eva Voggenberger
Annekatriin Flick
Ji In Choi
Un Mi Han
Stefanie Prenn

Double Bass

Stanislaw Pasierski
Filip Cortés
Herwig Krainz
José Cortez Cortés
Yamato Moritake
Sarah Bruderhofer
Jakob Hornbachner
Paul Salomon

Flute

Ildiko Deak
Anneliese Fuchsluger
Gudrun Hirt-Hochreiner
Ting-Wei Chen

Oboe

Franz Scherzer
Jan Andreas Mendel
Susanne Spitzer

Clarinet

Günther Gradischnig
Kathrin Moser
Josef Fahrnberger
Gernot Fresacher
Daniela Rohrsdorfer

Bassoon

Johannes Platzer
Clemens Wöss
Johannes Wregg

Horn

Robert Schnepps
Christian Pöttinger
Daniel Loipold
Bernhard Obernhuber
Walter Pauzenberger

Trumpet

Gerhard Fluch
Markus Eder
Johannes Peer
Regina Angerer-Bründlinger

Trombone

James Justin Kent
Walter Schiffler
Anton Miesenberger

Tuba

Jernej Oberzan

Percussion

Leonhard Schmidinger
Alfred Steindl
Vladimir Petrov
Fabian Homar
Viktor Burgstaller
Sebastian Wieland
Sofia Garzotto
Felix Lindner

Piano

Reinhold Puri-Jobi
Na Kyeong Kim

Harp

Christoph Bielefeld
Maria-Theresia Trefny

Guitar

Wolfgang Bründlinger

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BRUCKNER ORCHESTER LINZ SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12 / 4:00 PM BING CONCERT HALL



PROGRAM NOTES

by Aaron Grad

DUKE ELLINGTON (1899–1974)

SUITE FROM *BLACK, BROWN, AND BEIGE* (1943)

Pianist, composer, and bandleader Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington lifted the dance band from simple nightclub entertainment to a profound form of music and social commentary. From his Carnegie Hall debut in 1943 to the “Sacred Concerts” he created in his final years, Ellington proved that he and his improvising ensemble were as adept with large-scale compositions as any “classical” artists. As the choreographer Alvin Ailey once said of Ellington, “His band was his Stradivarius.”

For that historic 1943 appearance at Carnegie Hall, Ellington created a sweeping 50-minute suite for jazz orchestra entitled *Black, Brown, and Beige*, which he described as a “tone parallel to the history of the American Negro,” depicting everything from an African’s arrival on a slave ship to the vibrant culture of Harlem in the 1920s.

With Ellington’s blessing, the conductor Maurice Peress created an orchestral suite in 1970, distilling the seven sections of the original *Black, Brown, and Beige* into the three movements heard here and preserving the flavor of Ellington’s band in a fully notated score for a symphony orchestra (augmented by saxophones and drum set). The first section, *Black*, bears the subtitle “A Work Song,” and its main theme is an anthem of power and pride, offset by passages of bright and casual swing. A solo for trombone channels the sound of “Tricky Sam” Nanton, the longtime trombonist in Ellington’s band, who pioneered the use of a plunger mute and its characteristic “wah-wah” effect.

The middle movement, *Brown*, centers on the melody of “Come Sunday,” the most well-known song from the suite and one that has become a jazz standard in its own right. Once again, swinging sections arise as counterpoint to the church-like atmosphere. The alto saxophone solo, with its luxurious glissandos between pitches, honors the signature sound of Johnny Hodges, who played with Ellington from 1928 until his death in 1970.

Beige celebrates the Harlem Renaissance, a cultural flowering that Ellington witnessed firsthand and shaped in his own way. A masterly stroke occurs at the point when the “Work Song” theme from *Black* and “Come Sunday” from *Brown* reappear simultaneously, reinforcing the unbroken lineage of African American culture.

SAMUEL BARBER (1910–1981)

VIOLIN CONCERTO, OP. 14 (1939)

Samuel Barber graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music in the same class as Ivo Pogorelec, a Russian-born violinist. Pogorelec’s patron and guardian, the soap tycoon Samuel Fels, later commissioned Barber to write the violinist a concerto, providing a \$500 advance that allowed Barber to work on the score in Europe until the advent of World War II drove him back to the United States.

After Barber delivered the first two movements, the concerto ran into its first trouble when Pogorelec’s violin teacher, Albert Meiff, wrote to Fels, “The composition possesses beautiful romantic moods, many somber and quite interesting parts typical of that composer—in any event, very interesting. However, it bears a serious defect: it is not a composition gratifying for a violinist to perform. The technical requirements are very far from the requirements of a modern violinist, and...some of the parts are childish in details.”

In light of the feedback he received, Barber made a point of incorporating “brilliant technique” in the perpetual motion finale, which he delivered two months before the planned premiere. A story that has been widely circulated since its publication in a 1954 biography claims that Pogorelec then rejected the concerto on the grounds that the finale was unplayable; Barber countered by setting up a test reading by another violinist, proving its viability.

Pogorelec did in fact object to the finale, but judging from a letter from Barber to Fels, the dispute appeared to be a matter of taste and not technique. The reasons mentioned include complaints that the finale was “not violinistic” and “rather inconsequential.” Barber stood by the “concertino,” as he called it in the letter—a title that matched his conception of a work more compact than a grand violin concerto in the 19th-century mold—and Fels and Pogorelec ultimately relinquished their claim on the exclusive performance rights.

The Violin Concerto’s opening movement is indeed lyrical and understated, more an expression of intimate chamber music than virtuosic bluster. The soloist enters with no fanfare at all, launching the soaring first theme right on the downbeat. The other distinctive theme, with its vigorous rhythmic snap, appears only in the orchestra until the soloist finally takes it up in a throbbing coda.

In the central *Andante* movement, the melodious oboe solo that prefaces the violinist’s entrance is perhaps the greatest concerto melody *not* written for a soloist since Brahms penned a similar oboe solo in the slow movement of his own Violin Concerto. The solo violin waits patiently through the first quarter of the movement, building anticipation for its delicate entrance and moody counter-theme.

The perpetual motion finale, the source of so much trouble for Barber at the birth of the concerto, is a dazzling tour de force, not just for its rapid figurations but also for its seamless construction and ceaseless variety of musical material. An accelerated coda has the white-knuckled intensity of a gymnast’s final dismount.

PHILIP GLASS (B. 1937)

SYMPHONY NO. 11 (2017)

Long before Philip Glass completed his Symphony No. 1 (“Low”) based on music by David Bowie and Brian Eno, his opera scores and major works for his electric-acoustic ensemble demonstrated that this was a composer well equipped to handle extended time spans and broad swaths of sound. It was 25 years ago that Dennis Russell Davies led the Brooklyn Philharmonic through the first American performance of a Glass symphony; now the same maestro who has helped launch all but one of Glass’ symphonies celebrates this prolific composer’s 80th birthday with the world premiere of the Symphony No. 11 at Carnegie Hall.

Glass spent much of 2016 working on this latest symphony, which is cast in three large movements. “In terms of musical language,” he explained in a program note, “it shares much of the same with recent symphonies—No. 8 and No. 9—as well as operas of the last few years, such as *Appomattox*, *The Perfect American* and *The Trial*. Also it relates to the later parts of the *Etudes* for Piano.”

The hallmarks of Glass’ musical language are present from the outset of the Eleventh Symphony, with repeating triads and cycling rhythms undergoing subtle shifts and transformations. A meter of five beats per measure, used for much of the first movement, provides an asymmetrical pulse that helps propel the music ever forward.

“Structurally it is fairly free,” Glass noted, “and little of recent musical strategies are present—no Classical or Baroque forms at all, no variations or passacaglias. Nor will ‘modernist strategies’ (mathematical or structural) be found.” The central movement makes a slight nod to Classical tradition by adopting a somewhat slower tempo and smoother, more slurred sound quality at first, but once again it accumulates layers of rhythmic vitality and counterpoint, moving away from the function of a stereotypical “slow” movement.

The rhythmic layering that is such a key component of Glass’ sound come to the fore in the symphony’s final movement, beginning with a steady buildup from one percussionist to a battery of five on a variety of unpitched instruments. The arrival of a seven-beat pattern, sometimes alternating with measures of four-square rhythm, gives this music a dance-like quality.

Glass’s unassuming note suggests to the listener, “Perhaps the best way—as with other recent works of mine—is to just go with the music, paying attention as well as you can. It was a great pleasure for me to spend some serious time composing this work and I hope you enjoy it as well.”