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Philharmonia Orchestra

Postcards from Europe

Jacob Kaminski, conductor
Cameron May, conductor
Monday, Nov. 16, 2026, 7:30 p.m.
Grusin Music Hall

Program

Overture No. 2 in D Major

Emilie Mayer (1812-1883)

The Banks of Green Willow

George Butterworth (1885-1916)

Scherzo in B-flat Major

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)

Intermission

Symphony No. 31 in D Major, K. 297/300a “Paris”

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

I. Allegro assai
II. Andante
III. Allegro

Program Notes

Overture No. 2 in D Major

Emilie Mayer (1812-1883)

One of the pioneering female composers of the 19th century, Emilie Mayer's compositional output spans eight symphonies, numerous concert overtures, chamber music, lieder, and solo piano music. Although less orchestrally dark than her other overtures like Faust, this comic, light hearted concert overture no. 2 in D major was written in 1850, and serves as a testament to Mayer's wit and control of the orchestral balance.

The overture starts with a dark and foreboding yet energetic opening in D minor highlighted by ominous rising figures in the strings against hopeful woodwind interjections. Seemingly out of nowhere, the woodwinds take over to transition to a quality much more sunny, with a faster tempo in 3/4 led by the flutes. The pastoral melody is interrupted by a regal horn call, changing the character and disorienting the listener.

Following the horn call, the overture truly begins in a spritely D major Allegro led by the first violins. The orchestra builds to the end of the first statement, which is immediately followed by a second, more lyrical idea presented in the flute that is accompanied by triangle. The lyrical yet whimsical theme builds to another climax, touching on darker colors along the way. Suddenly, the closing sections arrives and the orchestra slows, with the flute interjecting the musical material from the opening of the overture serving as a halfway point of the overture.

Following the flute andantino and the subsequent horn call, the Allegro returns once more, playing the same as the first time

juxtaposed against the lyrical second theme with woodwinds and triangle. The comic style overture departs into something far more triumphant highlighted by dotted rhythms and scurrying strings. The final chords are humored one final time by a soft interjection in the woodwinds and strings in the final measure before the arrival of one final victorious D major chord.
Program note by Jacob Kaminski

The Banks of Green Willow

George Butterworth (1885-1916)
British composer and temporary lieutenant in the Durham Light Infantry of the British Army, George Butterworth was 31 years old when he was shot and killed on Aug. 5, 1916, during the Battle of the Somme in World War I. Though his body was never recovered, Butterworth was posthumously awarded the Military Cross on Aug. 25 for "conspicuous gallantry in action." He left behind a relatively small number of compositions, a few of which are quite well known, including the eleven-song cycle *A Shropshire Lad*, based on the eponymous poetry by Alfred Edward Housman, a rhapsody for orchestra of the same name, *Two English Idylls* for orchestra, and its belated companion piece, *The Banks of Green Willow*.

Butterworth, like his friend Ralph Vaughan Williams and their contemporary Percy Grainger, traveled around England collecting folk songs from the countryside. Composed in 1913, *The Banks of Green Willow* uses two folk song melodies Butterworth collected in Sussex in 1907: "The Banks of Green Willow" (known as "Bonnie Annie" or "The Green Banks of Yarrow" in the Scottish tradition) and "Green Bushes" (also used by Grainger and

Vaughan Williams in their own compositions). The titular theme in particular shows up several times, always with slight variation; sometimes it is pastoral in nature, other times agitated, and near the end it takes on a somber, reflective mood, delaying the return of the major home key until the final seconds of the piece.

The Banks of Green Willow received its premiere on Feb. 27, 1914, with 24-year-old Adrian Boult conducting members of the Hallé and Liverpool orchestras; this was Boult's first time conducting a professional orchestra. The work was performed again in London three weeks later, and it is believed that this occasion was the final time Butterworth heard his own music.
Program note by Cameron May

Scherzo in B-flat Major

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)

Modest Mussorgsky was a Russian composer and one of "The Five"—a group of composers led by Mily Balakirev and also including César Cui, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Alexander Borodin. Mussorgsky studied composition with Balakirev, and many of his best-known works explore Russian history and folklore, including the opera *Boris Godunov*, the tone poem *Night on Bald Mountain* and *Pictures at an Exhibition*, which the Symphony Orchestra will be performing later this week. A unique quirk of Mussorgsky's catalog is that several of his compositions were either completed or orchestrated by other composers. Indeed, the most famous version of *Night on Bald Mountain* was arranged by Rimsky-Korsakov, and the most commonly performed orchestration of *Pictures at an Exhibition* (including the Symphony Orchestra's performance this week) is that of Maurice Ravel.

The *Scherzo* in B-flat major on tonight's program was not immune from this trend, though outside influence was less extensive with this piece than those mentioned above. The scherzo was originally composed for piano in 1858 before Balakirev subsequently helped Mussorgsky orchestrate it. It received its first performance in 1860 by the Russian Music Society in St. Petersburg, with Anton Rubinstein conducting. The main section of the scherzo features a fast waltz-like character with playful hemiolas near the ends of phrases. Listeners would be forgiven for hearing similarities to Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* waltz, not least the fact that they are in the same key. The contrasting trio in the middle notably features a sustained D pedal throughout in the horns, violas, cellos, and basses. Gentle, twisting harmonic progressions elsewhere in the orchestra layer on top of this.
Program note by Cameron May

Symphony No. 31 in D Major, K. 297/300a "Paris"

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

In the fall of 1777, Mozart and his mother, Anna Marie Mozart, set out on a six-month journey from Germany to Paris in which a 21-year-old Mozart sought a more permanent post as a court composer. After an unsuccessful trek with no permanent employment, Mozart and his mother arrived in Paris in the spring of 1778. Unfortunately, Anna Marie fell ill during the journey and passed away during the summer of 1778, leaving a young Mozart to return home to Salzburg without a permanent court position and without his mother. However, during the trip across Europe Mozart was inspired by the Parisian orchestral style, and started work on his 31st symphony, K.297/300a, the "Paris" symphony before his mother's death. This jubilant work expands the

orchestral forces from Mozart's previous symphonies and is the first of his symphonies to include clarinet.

Returning to a three-movement style, the first movement opens with large orchestral chords followed by a flurry of "Mannheim rocket" string motives. Mozart's approach to this movement is much more topical in nature, with short motives interplaying with one another against stark character changes. Multiple closing ideas of the exposition permeate the rest of the movement, and with no repeat of the exposition and a very short development, this formal approach by Mozart seems to be how "tightly knit" a symphonic movement can be. In fact, Mozart's awareness of the Parisian musical style and taste of the time is exemplified in a 1778 letter to his father Leopold in which Mozart said, "In Germany we rather like length; but after all it is better to be short and good." The movement returns to the exposition material in the recap, with an extended closing section and a short coda that introduces yet another new idea of triplet figures in the violins to coles the movement in a triumphant D major.

Interestingly, there are two renditions of the second movement of the symphony: one written for the premiere, and another second movement composed in August of 1778. The movement heard this evening is the original second movement, in which Mozart reduces the orchestra by omitting clarinets, trumpets, and timpani to create a lilting 6/8 movement that alternates between lyrical and march-like rhythms. A sense of calm can be felt in this movement, as whimsical violin and flute gestures are omnipresent.

The third movement starts with the second violins playing hushed eighth note figures with the first violins playing syncopated two note gestures. As the musical excitement cannot be contained, a group outburst of orchestral D major flourishes happened almost immediately. The movement is heavily based on quick dialogues between introverted single-voice soft playing juxtaposed against swaths of tutti orchestral sound. A short yet complex development of the music follows based on the second theme, that quickly dissolves into the recapitulation of soft violin playing led by the second violins. Following the soft second theme, a coda appears with cascades of all the orchestral forces leading to a short but sweet ending in D major.

Program note by Jacob Kaminski

Philharmonia Orchestra

Violin

Elsa Andersen
Irelyn Bever
Ryannah Blackman
Concertmaster

LucyMae Evans
Milan Forrester
Michael Han
Principal

Kiera Larson
John Paul Reid Duran
Alex Sabiers
David Schwartz
Jerald Sethanandha
Andrew Storey
Anais Van Dusen
Dana Wolpe
Dylan Younoszai

Viola

Penelope Appl
Kaia Ball
Jane Hanselman
Principal

Ryan Nguyen
Finn Wootton

Cello

Leah Everling
Principal

Ben Nelson
Sawyer Payne
Stephen Story
Cole Sutherland

Double bass

Owen Crofton
Principal

Andrew Delker
Calvin Long
Sasha Mackoff
Dante Osuna-Hughes

Flute

Santiago Reveiz
Timothy Scott
Clara Walker

Oboe

Thomas Goodwin
David Paull

Clarinet
Caden Craig
Ben Rathje
Juan Tovar Vargas

Bassoon
Rylan Denby
Raleigh Eversole
Ciela Heiles

Horn
Jennifer Cirrincione
Ryan Vickrey

Trumpet
Gwen Milette
Justin Sokolowski

Trombone
Luke Meredith
Linn Poston
Jackson Franco

Timpani
Reid Pleuss

Harp
Ava Pluto



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