

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE THE SHOW PARALLEL EVENTS

1787

Haydn

Symphony No.88



MUSIC

Mozart
*Eine kleine
Nachtmusik*



ART

David
*The Death
of Socrates*



LITERATURE

Goethe
*The Sorrows of
Young Werther*



HISTORY

The U. S. Constitution is signed by delegates of the 13 member states in Philadelphia.

1876

Smetana

"The Moldau" & "Šárka" from *Má Vlast*



MUSIC

Lalo
Cello Concerto



ART

Renoir
*Bal du moulin
de la Galette*



LITERATURE

Twain
*The Adventures
of Tom Sawyer*



HISTORY

Alexander Graham Bell applies for a U.S. patent for the telephone.

1882

Jaëll

Cello Concerto



MUSIC

Wagner
Parsifal



ART

Manet
*A Bar at the
Folies-Bergère*



LITERATURE

Ibsen
An Enemy of the People



HISTORY

The Elektromote, the world's first trolleybus, begins operation in Berlin.

1919

Boulanger

D'un matin de printemps



MUSIC

Elgar
Cello Concerto



ART

Sargent
Gassed



LITERATURE

Wodehouse
My Man Jeeves



HISTORY

A wave of molasses sweeps through Boston.

THE MOLDAU & MORE

For her second program as Music Director of the Rhode Island Philharmonic, Maestro Reinhardt has chosen gems, both familiar and unfamiliar, that have garnered unfiltered praise since their inception.

Lili Boulanger was the younger sister of the 20th century's most influential teacher and mentor of composers, Nadia Boulanger. So, Nadia's opinion that Lili was the true talent in the family is not to be taken lightly. The first woman to win the coveted Prix de Rome in 1913, Lili was tragically plagued with ill-health for all her short life (she died at the age of 24). But she managed to gift us with 24 remarkable works that shimmer with colorful harmonies and instrumentation, of which *D'un matin de printemps* is her most frequently performed by orchestras.

After hearing the slow movement of Haydn's 88th symphony, no less a luminary than Johannes Brahms remarked "I want my Ninth Symphony to sound like this." The embellishments of the legato oboe and solo cello, intermittently punctuated by full-orchestra chords, leave an indelible impression, hanging in the air until long after the last note is played.

Marie Jaëll's name may ring a bell for some pianists in the audience, as she was a renowned and innovative pedagogue whose writings on piano technique are still revered 100 years after her death. Franz Liszt himself admired her immense talent, calling her a "brave, ambitious, and subtle composer....with a philosopher's brain and an artist's fingers." While she wrote the Cello Concerto in 1882 (making it the earliest known cello concerto by a woman composer), the manuscript was only recently discovered in a library in Strasbourg, and did not receive its U.S. premiere until last year.

The cycle of six symphonic poems collectively known as *Má Vlast* is Smetana's peerless musical love letter to the Czech nation, combining elements of history, geography, national character and legend. It quickly became such a symbol of Czech pride that not even Nazi occupation could mute its visceral resonance. A 1939 broadcast reveals an audience which not only follows each movement with ecstatic ovations but breaks into an overwhelming outburst of the Czech national anthem at the end.

THE MOLDAU & MORE

Open Rehearsal: Friday, October 17, 2025

TACO Classical: Saturday, October 18, 2025

D'un matin de printemps

LILI BOULANGER (1893-1918)

This is a RI Philharmonic Orchestra premiere. This piece is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, percussion, harp, celesta and strings.

"Though Lili Boulanger died in 1918 at the age of 24," wrote musicologist David Noakes, "hers was a creative life of more than mere promise; it was a life, at least, of partial fulfillment." Her older sister, Nadia found fulfillment as mentor to many of the 20th century's greatest composers (Elliott Carter, Aaron Copland, Philip Glass, Roy Harris,

Quincy Jones, and Astor Piazzolla, to name a scant few), and cemented a reputation during her long life as one of the most influential musical minds of the century. But Nadia herself was not much of a composer ("not bad, but useless" is how she described her own work). It was her sister, Lili, who had inherited that particular gene and, had she not died prematurely of Crohn's Disease at the age of 24, would undoubtedly have left a mark every bit as important as her sister's.

Tagging along at the age of five to sit in on her sister's classes at the Paris Conservatoire, Lili managed to learn harp, piano, cello and violin with some of the city's best teachers. But lingering health issues from a near-fatal attack of pneumonia when she was three, left her too weak to master any of those instruments, so she turned to composition. Her talent was clear to all, but chronic illness continued to prevent her from fulfilling her potential. Finally, at the age of 20, she became the first woman to win the prestigious Prix de Rome with her cantata *Faust et Hélène*. Other awards and distinctions soon followed. But the trip to Rome itself took its toll on her fragile system, and she was unable to compose for at least a month after her arrival. Then, while visiting home for what was supposed to be a short break, World War I broke out, causing yet further obstacles.

Despite her early death and the debilitating state of her health, Lili Boulanger completed a substantial number of compositions in which she demonstrated a highly developed creative personality. "Lili Boulanger brought to music a keen and prodigiously human sensibility," wrote one contemporary reviewer, "served in its expression by the full range of natural gifts, from grace, color, charm and subtlety to winged lyricism and obvious power, easy and profound. Such virtues, so rarely brought together for the benefit of one single creative temperament, are to be found in her works."

The complementary works *D'un matin de printemps* ("Of a Spring Morning") and *D'un soir triste* ("Of a Sad Evening"), of 1918, were the last scores Lili Boulanger wrote with her own hand, and both demonstrate a clear mastery of the new harmonic language of Impressionism. But unlike its somber companion piece, *D'un matin de printemps* invokes the bright and festive tones of a carefree spring morning. Arabesque-like melodies playfully twist and turn, revealing rhythmic surprises and poetic lyricism, until the harsh reality of time brings us to an abrupt conclusion with a final chord that seems to shimmer with the rays of the sun.

Symphony No.88 in G major **JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)**

Last performed February 2, 1974 with Francis Madeira conducting. This piece is scored for flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings.

In 1788, Johann Peter Tost, leader of the second violin section in Haydn's Esterháza orchestra, trundled off to Paris with a devious scheme. Hoping to capitalize on the current wave of popularity Haydn was enjoying in Paris as a result of his half dozen "Paris" Symphonies, Tost presented a noted publisher with two new Haydn symphonies (including No.88), as well as some string quartets and other music. But not all of the music was, in fact, Haydn's. When the publisher realized he had been duped, he confronted Haydn directly, hoping to renegotiate. But Haydn, ever one to appreciate a good joke, replied simply "Thus Herr Tost has swindled you."

And while symphony No.88 was indeed penned entirely by the master himself, a similar sleight of hand, albeit of a musical nature, is achieved here: what sounds like an accompaniment turns out to be a theme, recapitulations turn out to be false, melodies disappear into the background only to reappear unexpectedly, and offbeat patterns

abruptly shift to the downbeat. All of this makes the listener feel a bit like they're in the middle of a high-wire act, hoping to find their balance with each new musical phrase.

After a slow introduction, the first movement transitions to a lively Allegro, where Haydn creatively manipulates sonata form conventions to create an air of spontaneity. Listen for the way in which the second theme magically emerges from the first, and for the charming flute solo that lures the first theme back.

Cellos and oboes announce the arrival of the second movement – a set of variations on the theme they present that wafts from the sweet to the melancholy, from the diaphanous to the boisterous, often in the space of a single bar. Usually held in reserve for faster movements, the trumpets and timpani make their first appearance here, adding to its pathos. It was, in fact, Haydn's ability to achieve such a wide range of emotion by such deceptively simple means here that inspired Brahms to remark "I want my Ninth Symphony to sound like this." (Brahms never wrote a ninth symphony).

In order to give the third movement a truly rustic air, the master decides to break a few well-established rules. After a chorus or two of what sounds like a well-loved drinking song, the bassoon and violas seem to have enjoyed themselves a bit too much, and stumble together from note to note in parallel 5ths – a move that would give any first-year harmony student a failing grade. But in Haydn's hands, such an effect adds a touch of humor and drama before throwing us headlong into the high-spirited finale. Once there, offset rhythms – simultaneously buoyant and unsettling – keep the listener on their toes, until Haydn delights us with a perpetual-motion canon that, while fiendishly complicated, is considered one of the most cheerful Haydn ever wrote.

Cello Concerto (1882)

MARIE JAËLL (1846-1925)

This is a RI Philharmonic Orchestra premiere. In addition to a solo cello, this piece is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, timpani and strings.

A renowned pianist and pedagogue, who was also a close professional associate of Franz Liszt, Marie Jaëll gave herculean concerts in Paris consisting of all the major piano works of Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, and, of course, Liszt. But, while echoes of those composers can be heard in her original compositions, Jaëll is no mere imitator. Discovered only recently, Jaëll's pioneering Cello Concerto was the first to be written by a woman, and shows her to have been a composer with a truly individual profile and approach. Dedicated to a cellist friend of hers, Jules Desart, who performed the premiere and likely had a hand in advising her on cello technique, the work boasts ample opportunities for the cello to shine as a solo instrument. From soaring melodies to double stops, from descending arpeggio patterns to octave passages, Jaëll's music brims with expressive depth and virtuosic power, making this concerto a true hidden gem of the Romantic era.

"The Moldau" & "Šárka" from *Má Vlast* **BEDŘICH SMETANA (1824-1884)**

The Moldau was last performed September 27, 2008 with Larry Rachleff conducting.

Šárka is a RI Philharmonic Orchestra premiere. These pieces are scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings.

Smetana could not hear a single sound for the last decade of his life. Tragically, this led to intermittent dementia (in the margin of score of the 1882 D minor Quartet he scrawled, "Composed in a state of disordered nerves – the outcome of my deafness." He would die two years later). But things had not yet progressed to such a grim degree when he began work on one of the greatest collections of tone poems ever written. *Má Vlast* ("My Country"), inspired by the land and lore of his native Bohemia, is the main reason that today we think of Smetana as "the father of Czech music," but there are many others. In 1861, when Smetana became active in the newly formed National Theater in Prague, he created a prolific and vivacious repertoire of Czech operas rooted in native folklore (the enduring masterpiece, *The Bartered Bride* among them). Such a show of pride in Czech culture bordered on the revolutionary in those days, when the lands of Bohemia and Moravia were ruled by the Austrian empire and anything not Austrian or German was considered decidedly low-brow.

The second of *Má Vlast*'s tone poems, "The Moldau" (or "Vltava" in the original Czech), is an ode to the river that flows across northern Bohemia and through Prague. In his preface to the score, Smetana wrote "Two springs pour forth in the shade of the Bohemian Forest, one warm and gushing, the other cold and peaceful. The forest brook, hastening on, becomes the river Moldau. Through thick woods it flows, as the gay sounds of the hunt and the notes of the hunter's horn are heard ever nearer. It flows through grass-grown pastures and lowlands where a wedding feast is celebrated with song and dance. At night, wood and water nymphs revel in its sparkling waves. Reflected on its surface are fortresses and castles – witnesses of bygone days of knightly splendor and the vanished glory of fighting times. At the St. John Rapids, the stream races ahead, winding through the cataracts, hewing out a path with its foaming waves through the rocky chasm into the broad riverbed – finally, flowing on in majestic peace toward Prague and welcomed by the time-honored castle Vyšehrad. Then it vanishes far beyond the poet's gaze."

Of the third movement of *Má Vlast*, the composer noted, "This poem depicts the story of Šárka [a daughter of the founding family of Bohemia], swearing vengeance on the whole male race for the infidelity of her lover. From afar is heard the arrival of armed men led by Ctirad, who has come to punish Šárka and her rebellious maidens. In the distance, Ctirad hears the feigned cries of a girl (Šárka) bound to a tree. On seeing her, he is overcome by her beauty and so inflamed with love that he frees her. By means of a previously prepared potion, she intoxicates Ctirad and his men, who fall asleep. As she sounds her horn (a pre-arranged signal), the rebel maidens, hidden in nearby rocks, rush to commit the bloody deed. The horror of general slaughter and the passion and fury of Šárka's fulfilled revenge form the end of the composition." Moving from one scene to the next with the pace of modern cinema, "Šárka" provides a dramatic apex to a work that, for Smetana, seems to have transformed his maddening prison of silence into a torrent of fervor for his country and his people.