

D'un matin de printemps (“*Of a Spring Morning*”)

D'un soir triste (“*Of a Sad Evening*”) (1918)

LILI BOULANGER - 1893-1918

The name of Boulanger was indelibly inscribed into the annals of music by Nadia Boulanger, the 20th-century's most influential teacher and mentor of composers. Despite her impact on music, Nadia never considered herself a composer (“not bad, but useless” was how she dismissed her original works), and firmly held that the family's creative talent had been inherited by her younger sister, Lili.

Lili's musical talent was evident from her earliest years. She could reliably carry a tune by two, and three years later began tagging along with Nadia to sit in on her older sister's classes at the Conservatoire. Lili studied harp, piano, cello and violin, but steady bouts of ill health, precipitated by a near-fatal attack of pneumonia when she was three, precluded the physical exertions necessary to master any of them. She turned instead to composition and began serious study in 1909. Three years later, she was admitted to the Conservatoire, but illness prevented her from participating in the *Prix de Rome* competitions. A stay at a sanitarium on the English Channel restored her health sufficiently for her to win the *Prix* in 1913, the first woman to earn that coveted honor. Her arrival at the Villa Medici in Rome was delayed by illness until March 1914, but she then had to return to France when World War I broke out in August, and there organized an extensive program of letter-writing, communication and support among the Conservatoire students who had been mobilized. In 1916, she set to work on an operatic version of Maeterlinck's *La Princesse Maleine*, with whose lonely heroine she identified. She worked on this and other projects, but her health steadily declined during the ensuing months due to the rigors of the war, and she died in Paris on March 15, 1918.

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 that Lili Boulanger wrote. The two compositions share a common idea for their thematic material, but exhibit the contrasting moods implied by their titles — *D'un soir triste* is mournful and painted in somber tones, while *D'un matin de printemps* is bright and festive.

Rapsodie espagnole (1908)

MAURICE RAVEL - 1875-1937

In the years immediately following his failure to win the *Prix de Rome* in 1905, Ravel enjoyed a burst of creativity probably fueled by his freedom from academic restraints for the first time in his life. In the late summer of 1907, when he first took up the *Rapsodie espagnole*, he was bothered by the street noises bombarding his apartment in Paris, and some friends offered him the use of their yacht moored at Valvins. He gladly accepted, and soon took up the life of a recluse, seeing no one except the boat's gruff but likable captain, with whom he shared his meals. Ravel worked quickly, and he as soon able to return to Paris with the finished score.

Rather than a single span of music, the *Rapsodie espagnole* is really a miniature suite of three dances with a prelude. Ravel described the first section of the *Rapsodie*, *Prélude à la nuit* (“*Prelude to the Night*”), as “voluptuously drowsy and ecstatic.” The *Malagueña* was based on a genre that was initially a Spanish courting dance which had developed into a virtuoso vehicle for the café singers of the 19th century. The *Habanera*, whose rhythm is similar to that of the tango, is an orchestration of Ravel's piano piece of 1895, subtitled in both versions *Au pays parfumé que le soleil caresse* (“*In the fragrant land caressed by the sun*”). The *Feria* (“*Festival*”) is an exhilarating depiction of a sun-splashed Iberian holiday.

O Magnum Mysterium for Chorus

MORTEN LAURIDSEN - BORN IN 1994

Morten Lauridsen is a graduate of Whitman College in Walla Walla and USC in Los Angeles, and taught at USC from 1967 to 2019. In November 2007, he was presented with the National Medal of Arts at a ceremony at the White House, and in 2016 received the ASCAP Foundation “Life in Music” award. Lauridsen is most noted for his many art songs and choral works, which have been performed throughout the world and recorded on more than 200 CDs, five of them Grammy nominees.

Lauridsen wrote, “The *O Magnum Mysterium* text depicts the birth of the new-born King amongst the lowly animals and shepherds. This affirmation of God's grace to the meek and the adoration of the Blessed Virgin are celebrated in my setting through a song of inner joy.”

***Miserere* for Chorus and String Orchestra (2022)**

CHRIS ROGERSON · BORN IN 1988

Chris Rogerson, Allentown Symphony Orchestra Composer-in-Residence, was born in December 1988 in the Buffalo suburb of Amherst, New York, and started playing piano at two and cello at eight. He earned a baccalaureate from the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, a master's degree from Yale, and a doctorate from Princeton. In 2016, he joined the Curtis faculty. Rogerson's honors include a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Theodore Presser Career Grant, two BMI Student Composer Awards, Aspen Music Festival Jacob Druckman Award, and prizes from the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts, National Association for Music Education, New York Art Ensemble and Third Millennium Ensemble.

The penitential Psalm 51 — *Miserere mei, Deus* ("Have Mercy Upon Me, O God") — is included in the Roman Catholic services of Matins and Lauds that bracket daybreak on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week. It has been set polyphonically since the 15th century, and in 2022 Rogerson composed his *Miserere* for the Allentown Symphony and Chorus. He wrote, "*Miserere* is a short work with a simple form: the texture alternates between soloists (three different singers) and full choral texture; the soloists sing about mercy and forgiveness while the chorus sings about peace and light. I invite listeners to take their own journey with my setting of this ancient text."

Suite No. 2 from *Daphnis et Chloé* (1909-1912)

MAURICE RAVEL

Ravel's ballet opens in a meadow on the island of Lesbos. Greek youths and maidens enter with wreaths and flowers to place at the altar of the Nymphs as the shepherd Daphnis descends from the hills. His lover, Chloé, crosses the meadow to meet him. Daphnis and the clownish goatherd Dorcon vie for a kiss from Chloé in a dance contest. Daphnis wins his prize, and the crowd leads Chloé away. Daphnis' attention is drawn by shouts of alarm from the woods. Pirates have invaded and captured Chloé. In Scene Two, the brigands lead Chloé, hands bound, into their hideaway. She pleads for her release. When the chief refuses, the sky grows dark and the god Pan appears upon the nearby mountains. The frightened pirates flee, leaving Chloé alone. Scene Three is again set in the meadow. It is sunrise. Chloé has been rescued, and she appears and throws herself into Daphnis' arms. The old shepherd Lammon explains to them that Pan has saved Chloé in remembrance of his love for the nymph Syrinx. In gratitude, Daphnis and Chloé re-enact the ancient tale, in which Syrinx is transformed into a reed by her sisters to save her from the lustful pursuit of Pan, who then made a flute from that selfsame reed — the pipes of Pan — upon which to play away his longing. Daphnis and Chloé join in the joyous dance that concludes the ballet.

The Second Suite parallels the action of the ballet's final Scene: *Daybreak*, *Pantomime* of the adventure of Pan and Syrinx, and the *General Dance*.

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