

SEATTLE **SYMPHONY**

LUDOVIC MORLOT

RAVEL
ORCHESTRAL WORKS
SAINT-SAËNS
ORGAN SYMPHONY

MAURICE RAVEL

1	<i>Alborada del gracioso</i>	7:47
2	<i>Pavane pour une infante défunte</i>	6:03
	<i>Rapsodie espagnole</i>	
3	<i>Prélude à la nuit</i>	3:44
4	<i>Malagueña</i>	2:09
5	<i>Habañera</i>	2:35
6	<i>Feria</i>	7:00

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

Symphony No. 3 in C minor, Op. 78, “Organ”

7	<i>Adagio—Allegro moderato—</i>	10:20
8	<i>Poco adagio</i>	9:05
9	<i>Allegro moderato—Presto—</i>	7:28
10	<i>Maestoso</i>	8:07
	Joseph Adam, organ	

TOTAL TIME 64:23

SEATTLESYMPHONY.ORG

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SEATTLE SYMPHONY

Founded in 1903, the Seattle Symphony has completed more than 140 recordings and received 12 Grammy nominations, two Emmys and numerous other awards. The orchestra has enjoyed national and international acclaim for its programming and performances under Ludovic Morlot, who began his tenure as Music Director in 2011. Performing in one of the world's finest concert venues – the acoustically superb Benaroya Hall in downtown Seattle – the Symphony is internationally recognized for its adventurous and innovative programming of contemporary works, its devotion to the classics, and its extensive recording history. From September through July, the orchestra is heard live by more than 315,000 people. For more information, please visit seattlesymphony.org.





LUDOVIC MORLOT, CONDUCTOR

As the Seattle Symphony's Music Director, Ludovic Morlot has been received with extraordinary enthusiasm by musicians and audiences alike, who have praised him for his deeply musical interpretations, his innovative programming and his focus on community collaboration. Morlot is also Chief Conductor of La Monnaie, one of Europe's most important opera houses.

In the U.S. Morlot has conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and Pittsburgh Symphony. Additionally, he has conducted the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic, Dresden Staatskapelle, Israel Philharmonic, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Saito-Kinen Festival Orchestra and Tonhalle Orchestra (Zürich).

Trained as a violinist, Morlot studied conducting at the Royal Academy of Music in London and then at the Royal College of Music as recipient of the Norman del Mar Conducting Fellowship. Morlot was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music in 2007 in recognition of his significant contributions to music. He is Chair of Orchestral Conducting Studies at the University of Washington School of Music.



SEATTLE SYMPHONY

LUDOVIC MORLOT

The Harriet Overton Stimson Music Director

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Alexander Velinzon
The David & Amy Fulton
Concertmaster
Emma McGrath
The Clowes Family
Associate Concertmaster
John Weller
Assistant Concertmaster
Simon James
Second Assistant
Concertmaster
Jennifer Bai
Mariel Bailey
Cecilia Poellein Buss
Ayako Gamo
Timothy Garland
Leonid Keylin
Cordula Merks
Mikhail Shmidt
Clark Story
Jeannie Wells Yablonsky
Arthur Zadinsky

SECOND VIOLIN

Elisa Barston
Principal, supported
by Jean E. McTavish
Michael Miropolsky
The John & Carmen
Delo Assistant Principal
Second Violin
Kathleen Boyer
Gennady Filimonov

Evan Anderson
Stephen Bryant
Linda Cole
Xiao-po Fei
Sande Gillette
Artur Girsky
Mae Lin
Andrew Yeung

VIOLA

Susan Gulkis Assadi
The PONCHO
Principal Viola
Arie Schächter
Assistant Principal
Mara Gearman
Timothy Hale
Vincent Comer
Penelope Crane
Wesley Anderson Dyring
Sayaka Kokubo
Rachel Swerdlow
Julie Whitton

CELLO

Efe Baltacgil
Principal
Meeka Quan DiLorenzo
Assistant Principal
Theresa Benshoof
Assistant Principal
Eric Han
Bruce Bailey
Roberta Hansen Downey

Walter Gray
Vivian Gu
David Sabee

BASS

Jordan Anderson
The Mr. & Mrs. Harold H.
Heath Principal String Bass
Joseph Kaufman
Assistant Principal
Jonathan Burnstein
Jennifer Godfrey
Travis Gore
Jonathan Green
Nancy Page Griffin

FLUTE

Demarre McGill ++
Principal, sponsored
by David J. and Shelley
Hovind
Christie Reside*
Principal
Judy Washburn Kriewall
Zartouhi Dombourian-Eby

PICCOLO

Zartouhi Dombourian-Eby
The Robert & Clodagh
Ash Piccolo

OBOE

Ben Hausmann
Principal

Chengwen Winnie Lai
Stefan Farkas

ENGLISH HORN

Stefan Farkas
CLARINET
Christopher Sereque
The Mr. & Mrs. Paul R.
Smith Principal Clarinet
Laura DeLuca
Larey McDaniel

E-FLAT CLARINET

Laura DeLuca

BASS CLARINET

Larey McDaniel

BASSOON

Seth Krinsky
Principal
Paul Rafanelli
Mike Gamburg

CONTRABASSOON

Mike Gamburg

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The Charles Simonyi
Principal Horn
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Associate Principal

Jonathan Karschney*
Assistant Principal
Adam Iascone

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David Gordon
The Boeing Company
Principal Trumpet
Alexander White*
Assistant Principal
Geoffrey Bergler

TROMBONE

Ko-ichiro Yamamoto
Principal
David Lawrence Ritt
Stephen Fissel

BASS TROMBONE

Stephen Fissel

TUBA

Christopher Olka
Principal

TIMPANI

Michael Crusoe
Principal

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RAVEL ORCHESTRAL WORKS SAINT-SAËNS ORGAN SYMPHONY

This recording by Ludovic Morlot and the Seattle Symphony presents work by two great French composers. Despite their common nationality and the fact that both were active during the last years of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th, Camille Saint-Saëns and Maurice Ravel represent very different aspects of French music. Born in 1835, Saint-Saëns was a Romantic by virtue of chronology (he came of age at a time when Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner were still very much active), but with a strong affinity for German Classicism, based largely on his reverence for Bach, Mozart and Beethoven. Like those composers, Saint-Saëns made harmony and thematic development the principal focus of his work. The more sensual elements of music – texture and instrumental color – are not absent from his music, but they are relatively incidental.

By contrast, Maurice Ravel began composing in an impressionist vein indebted to, yet distinct from, that of Debussy; his style later evolved into a very personal brand of French modernism. While he could write affecting melodies and employed a rich harmonic palette, Ravel is most admired for his exquisite sense of aural color. He was a superb and original orchestrator, and his crystalline musical textures constituted a bracing alternative to the inflated sound-world of the late 19th-century Romantics. And whereas Saint-Saëns occasionally ventured into musical exoticism (the *Bacchanale* from his opera *Samson et Dalila* is a famous instance), Ravel used rhythms,

melodic contours and harmonic inflections from non-French sources frequently, making them an integral part of his idiom.

Ravel was especially attracted to the music and culture of Spain. This was no mere caprice, for he had deep personal roots in Spain. His mother was Basque, and his parents had met, married and conceived their son while living near Madrid. The composer was born in the Basque village of Ciboure, only a few miles inside France from the border with Spain. And while he always resided in France, Ravel often visited Ciboure and Spain itself, evidently gleaning inspiration in what he heard and saw there. That inspiration led to such compositions as the opera *L'heure espagnole* ("The Spanish Hour"), the ever-popular orchestral showpiece *Boléro* and his three works included on this recording.

The title of the first of these pieces, ***Alborada del gracioso***, merits some explanation. The word "*alborada*" indicates a morning song or serenade. "*gracioso*" is a clown in traditional Spanish comedy (hence the light character of *Alborada del gracioso*). Ravel originally wrote this composition as a piano piece in 1905. In 1918 he transcribed the music for orchestra.

Alborada del gracioso unfolds in three broad sections. The composition opens with an animated passage that, among other things, presents a striking orchestral imitation of guitar playing. This and the sounds of castanets and tambourine establish a colorful Spanish ambience. A definitive chord signals the start of the work's slow central episode, which begins with a declamatory solo for bassoon, alternating with shimmering

string sonorities. At length, however, Ravel returns to the more energetic vein of the opening and concludes the piece with a blaze of orchestral color. Both *Alborada del gracioso* and *Rapsodie espagnole*, the third work on our recording, evoke Spain in folkloric terms – particularly through the rhythms of popular Spanish dances and the use of certain percussion and guitar-like sonorities. But in ***Pavane pour une infante défunte***, Ravel imagined a Spanish scene of a more refined sort.

Like *Alborada del gracioso*, this work originated as a piano solo, which Ravel composed in 1899. He orchestrated the music a dozen years later. The title, which translates as “Pavane for a Deceased Princess,” led many to the assumption that Ravel conceived this piece as a mournful, if sentimental, elegy. The music’s subdued character – which is typical of the *pavane*, a stately dance of Spanish origin – only reinforced this misconception. Ravel, however, dispelled that idea. “It is not a funeral lament for a dead child,” he explained, “but rather an evocation of the pavane which could have been danced by a little princess painted by Velasquez at the Spanish court.” In other words, the music pays sentimental homage to the Infanta Margarita, daughter of King Philip IV of Spain, whose portrait the great Spanish artist Diego Velasquez painted a number of times.

Ravel’s *Pavane* seems to portray the Infanta with a blend of innocence and sophistication. Its principal melody is both simple and elegant, and subtle dissonances bring a tinge of poignancy to the work’s otherwise euphonious harmonies. Moreover, the varied and often irregular phrase lengths balance the unusually (for Ravel) regular rhythms, lending the

music a suppleness rarely found in dance pieces. And the work’s uncommon and ravishing shades of instrumental color confirm Ravel’s reputation as a masterful orchestrator.

Completed in 1908, ***Rapsodie espagnole*** was the most ambitious Spanish-flavored piece Ravel had yet written and his first important orchestral composition. This “Spanish Rhapsody” unfolds in four movements. First comes a “Prelude to Night” (*Prélude à la nuit*), featuring a motif of four notes in a descending line that repeats over nearly the entire length of the movement. With an imaginative use of instrumental color and admirable economy, Ravel creates a perfumed nocturnal atmosphere.

Malagueña, the second movement, employs the rhythms of the traditional Spanish dance of its title. The initial theme has the vitality of gypsy music, while a second subject, introduced by English horn, is more languorous and brings with it a brief recurrence of the descending four-note motif of the previous movement. The ensuing *Habañera* takes its title and characteristic rhythms from another popular Spanish dance, one made famous to French audiences – and, indeed, around the world – by the opera *Carmen*.

The last movement, *Feria*, meaning a fair or festival, presents a kaleidoscopic array of novel sonorities, including prominent contributions from the percussion. Except for a slow central episode, which again features English horn and a reprise of the signature four-note motif, the music is festive and energetic.

Camille Saint-Saëns was one of the leading French musicians of his day, a distinguished pianist, organist and conductor as well as a prolific composer. But his achievements were hardly confined to music. A man of broad-ranging intellect, Saint-Saëns also wrote plays and poetry, studied archeology, astronomy and other sciences, and authored treatises on philosophy and ancient music. Saint-Saëns composed his **Symphony No. 3 in C minor** – the “Organ” Symphony – in response to a commission from the London Philharmonic Society, which asked specifically for a new symphony. In response, the composer began sketching a large-scale composition of that kind early in 1886. Shortly after beginning this work, Saint-Saëns learned of the death of Franz Liszt. Liszt’s compositional innovations exerted a strong influence on many French composers of the late 19th century, and especially Saint-Saëns, who shared his Hungarian counterpart’s interest in descriptive program music, and penchant for virtuosity in both keyboard and orchestral composition. Moreover, Liszt had encouraged and materially aided Saint-Saëns during the latter’s youth, and the two men had remained devoted though distant friends over the years.

The news of Liszt’s passing therefore affected Saint-Saëns deeply, and it immediately altered the character of the symphony he was writing. Saint-Saëns decided to make the work a tribute to Liszt, and to dedicate the composition to his memory. The inclusion of prominent roles for both piano and organ were part of this tribute. Liszt had, of course, enjoyed a brilliant career as a concert pianist, but he spent a substantial portion of his final years in a monastery composing sacred music, much of it for the organ. Equally important homages were the recurrent use throughout the

symphony of a single principal motif (a technique favored by Liszt), and the music’s lush, often ecstatic Romanticism, a quality that marks many of Liszt’s own compositions.

The symphony is nominally in two large movements, but each of these unfolds in two distinct parts, thus yielding what is essentially a traditional four-movement symphonic structure. Saint-Saëns opens with a brief prelude in slow tempo that presents a rising figure of four notes, introduced by the oboe. Various transformations of this motif make up most of the succeeding *Allegro*, and its ascending contour may also be heard at the start of the long melody of the *Adagio* that follows. The organ, heard here for the first time, underscores the feeling of religious serenity this second portion of the symphony seems to convey.

The ensuing third section is a scherzo in all but name. Saint-Saëns develops its main theme in several brilliant episodes, but in the midst of the last of these passages a new, more austere melody is heard rising in the strings. This subject, again an outgrowth of the symphony’s initial motif (it also bears a strong resemblance to the “Jupiter theme” of Mozart’s last symphony), soon dispels the fantastic atmosphere of the scherzo and leads to a series of contrapuntal passages punctuated by massive organ chords. New ideas are introduced and earlier ones recalled as the symphony builds to a brilliant final climax.

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Recorded live in concert at the S. Mark Taper Foundation Auditorium, Benaroya Hall, Seattle, Washington, on September 19–21, 2013 (Ravel), and June 27–30, 2013 (Saint-Saëns).

Saint-Saëns' Symphony No. 3 was performed on the 4,489-pipe Watjen Concert Organ.

Produced, engineered and edited by Dmitriy Lipay
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