IN CONCERT

NASHVILLE SYMPHONY
NASHVILLE SYMPHONY WOMEN’S CHORUS
GIANCARLO GUERRERO, conductor
TUCKER BIDDLECOMBE, interim chorus director
JUN IWASAKI, violin

JOSEF STRAUSS
Music of the Spheres, Waltzes, Op. 235

PHILIP GLASS
Violin Concerto No. 1
Jun Iwasaki, violin

INTERMISSION

GUSTAV HOLST
The Planets
I. Mars, the Bringer of War
II. Venus, the Bringer of Peace
III. Mercury, the Winged Messenger
IV. Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity
V. Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age
VI. Uranus, the Magician
VII. Neptune, the Mystic

Film produced by the Houston Symphony

Proud to conduct a partnership with the Nashville Symphony to make our community a better place to live and work.
**TONIGHT’S CONCERT AT A GLANCE**

**JOSEF STRAUSS**
**Music of the Spheres**
- Josef Strauss is a member of the celebrated Viennese family best known for composing waltzes. Though it was his brother Johann Jr. who wrote the enduring “Blue Danube Waltz,” he claimed that brother Josef “is the more gifted of us two; I am merely the more popular.”
- *Music of the Spheres* was written for the annual Medical Association Ball of 1868. Though intended as a dance piece, it also has qualities of a tone poem and betrays the influence of Wagner and Liszt. Dreamy harmonies and a wistful violin melody allude to the celestial imagery of the title.

**PHILIP GLASS**
**Violin Concerto No. 1**
- One of contemporary music’s best-known composers, Philip Glass will celebrate his 80th birthday on January 31. Frequent citation as an exemplar of the minimalist style, he established his reputation with the ambitious, five-hour opera Einstein on the Beach in 1976, after which he wrote a series of operas.
- Written in 1987, his First Violin Concerto represents Glass’ first major entry into the world of instrumental music for orchestra. He wrote the work for the American Composers Orchestra, which was conducted and co-founded by Dennis Russell Davies, one of his earliest champions.
- The work follows the typical structure of a concerto, with an opening fast movement, a slow middle movement, and a fast closing movement. Glass had originally envisioned a different structure, with five shorter movements. But after he wrote the first two movements, he scaled it back.
- Listeners familiar with Glass’ sound will instantly recognize the propulsive chords, arpeggios, and repetitive patterns in this work. “This piece explores what an orchestra can do for me,” the composer said at the time of its premiere.

**GUSTAV HOLST**
**The Planets**
- British composer Gustav Holst wrote The Planets in 1914-16, during the turbulent early years of World War I. “These pieces were suggested by the astrological significance of the planets,” the composer wrote of his work, in which each movement is named for a different planet. Earth is not included among the movements, nor is Pluto, which wasn’t discovered until 1930.
- The Planets opens with “Mars, The Bringer of War,” which was especially timely for contemporary audiences, given that the war had only recently come to a close by the time of the work’s premiere. The uneven 5/4 meter and the instrumentation here create a mood of looming conflict.

---

**WHAT TO LISTEN FOR**

Certainly Josef Strauss’ more visionary qualities are on display in *Music of the Spheres* (also known by its original German title, *Sphären-Klänge*). Strauss introduced this waltz at a major ball held for Vienna’s Medical Association in the winter of 1868.

In his book Sounds of the Metropolis: The 19th Century Popular Music Revolution, Derek B. Scott notes that Josef and brother Johann shared an interest in Wagner’s revolutionary new music. (Tristan und Isolde had been premiered only three years before Music of the Spheres.) The title *Music of the Spheres* suggests a kinship with the programmatic music of Franz Liszt — Scott writes that it “beats features resembling a symphonic poem” — and the dreamy harmonies in the slow introduction seem to promise a far-ranging journey. The wistful violin melody that emerges near the end becomes the “leading” phrase of the main waltz melody.

Yet this was indeed written as dance music, meant to be immediately “accessible.” Scott observes that “there has often been a comradely alliance between the popular and the ‘advanced’ — one has only to think of the image of Karlheinz Stockhausen on the cover of the Beatles’ album Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band.”

In connection with Josef’s intriguing title, it’s interesting to recall that Stanley Kubrick chose the more famous Blue Danube Waltz of Johann, Jr., to accompany cosmic moments in 2001: A Space Odyssey.

*Music of the Spheres* is scored for 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, triangle, cymbal, harp, and strings.

**JOSEF STRAUSS**
Born on August 20, 1827, in Vienna; died on July 22, 1870 in Vienna

**Music of the Spheres**
- **Composed:** 1868
- **First performance:** Believed to be January 21, 1868, at the Medical Association Ball in Vienna
- **First Nashville Symphony performance:** March 18 & 19, 1994, with Music Director Kenneth Schermerhorn
- **Estimated length:** 12 minutes

---

*Despite his being eclipsed by Johann, Jr., in popularity, connoisseurs will argue that Josef was in fact the most talented composer of the brood.*
At the end of this month, one of today’s preeminent musical icons celebrates his 80th birthday. Philip Glass remains intensely active even as he launches his octogenarian decade: among the abundance of concert halls and opera houses celebrating this milestone year, on January 31 (his actual birthday), the composer’s Eleventh Symphony will premiere at Carnegie Hall in a program conducted by longtime champion Dennis Russell Davies.

Davies, a renowned American-born conductor and pianist long based in Europe, has played a critical role in Glass’ career since their paths first intersected in 1980, when Davies conducted the German premiere of Satyagraha in Stuttgart. Since then Davies has been a frequent presence, conducting many important Glass premières in the opera house and concert hall alike. Up through Einstein on the Beach — his debut opera, premiered in 1976 — Glass had focused on composing for the synthesizer-heavy, amplified sound of the Philip Glass Ensemble, which Davies had cofounded. The result was the Violin Concerto, which launched his career in the concert hall as a prolific composer of concertos and symphonies — forms that previously held little interest for him.

Several layers of personal connection shaped the Violin Concerto. The proposed soloist was Paul Zukofsky, with whom Glass had collaborated on Einstein, in which the violinist represented the title figure onstage. Glass dedicated the score both to Davies and to Zukofsky. On a deeply personal level, Glass states that he wrote the Violin Concerto for his late father, Ben Glass, from whom he had suffered a rift in his later years. Ben owned a record store in Baltimore, and his family boasted a number of musicians.

“I knew he loved the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, so I wrote in a way that he would have liked,” the composer says. “In his actual lifetime [he died in 1974], I didn’t have the knowledge, skill, or inclination to compose such a work. I missed that chance by at least 15 years. But when I could, I wrote it for him anyway.”

The music again, and sometimes that can mean doing something that people already know.” At the age of 43, “after almost 12 years with my ensemble, [I was] about to reenter the world of concert music and traditionally presented opera.”

Aside from some student works, these operatic projects marked Glass’ first large-scale compositions calling for traditional symphony orchestra. It was Davies who encouraged Glass to consider applying his unique style to classical instrumental genres as well, suggesting he write a work for the New York-based American Composers Orchestra, which Davies had cofounded. The result was the Violin Concerto, which launched his career in the concert hall as a prolific composer of concertos and symphonies — forms that previously held little interest for him.

The movements grow progressively longer, starting with a recurring chord sequence and pulsating motion that may remind some of Baroque music. In fact, the violinist Robert McDuffie, with whom Glass collaborated on his Second Violin Concerto, The American Four Seasons, came to see the composer as “an American Vivaldi” on account of certain stylistic traits. The solo part explores the violin’s high range during its most melodic ruminations.

In the slow second movement, Glass uses another technique associated with the Baroque: a recurrung pattern of chords that descend, setting up a harmonic framework for the whole movement. With this, Glass builds an ingenius interaction between the orchestra and the violinist that reaches a remarkably indeterminate point, and the movement ceases. The dance-like finale sets up another tension of its own, which finally yields to a slow coda — Glass’ way of acceding to Zukofsky’s desired slow ending — that recalls music from the opening and brings the work to a gentle end.

In addition to the solo violin, the Violin Concerto No. 1 is scored for 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, woodblocks, triangle, cymbals, harp, and strings.
Mars made a spectacular opening, so The Planets takes liberties with traditional astronomy. The sequence of movements seems “out of order” for the first three, while the remaining four movements are in the correct order of distance from the sun (and earth). Earth is omitted, since it represents the vantage point from which the other planets are observed. There is no movement for Pluto, which was not discovered until 1930, a few years before Holst’s death, and which in any case has been demoted from its planetary status in recent years.

From the start, listeners have been tempted to bring their own associations to the score. The first audiences associated the symbolism of Mars with the World War I, which officially ended over a month after the premiere — though in fact Holst had composed “Mars, the Bringer of War” in the summer of 1914, when talk of war was in the air, but well before the brutality of the Great War had come to pass. Along with the ancient astrological associations, nowadays we are inclined to think of the dazzling revelations of modern scientific technology — so vividly represented in the HD visuals that accompany this performance.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Holst paints a vast sonic canvas at the beginning of “Mars, the Bringer of War,” with its mixture of aggressive brass, augmented woodwinds, low harp, and strings playing with the wood of the bow. The repetitive background rhythm hammered out in an uneven 5/4 meter suggests an inhuman, mechanizing force that intensifies the menace of the looming three-note motif. Even the fanfares here seem to do battle with each other. At the end, Holst carefully maps out a crescendo to a devastatingly dissonant climax.

“Venus, the Bringer of Peace” moves from the harshness of the brass to an almost pastoral horn solo, using woodwinds and strings to enhance a feeling of serenity. The rocking chords suggest an Impressionist, Debussy-like harmonic stasis that is the opposite of the forward thrust of “Mars.” The vision of Venus here is peaceful rather than erotic.

“Mercury, the Winged Messenger,” the briefest of The Planets, implies a light-hearted scherzo movement for many — following the symphonic analogy of “Mars” as an extroverted opening and “Venus” as the slow movement. The virtuosity Holst demands of the orchestra here extends not only to the music’s gossamer textures, but also to its extraordinarily tricky cross-rhythms, which pit varying pulses against each other.

These first three movements introduce a series of ideas and transformations — motivic, harmonic, rhythmic, and textural — that recur in subtle ways within the highly varied remaining movements.

“Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity” lies at the center and seems to contain a dual aspect, touching on both the playful and the serious. While the orchestra initially dances with joy, at the center of the movement we hear a hymn-like tune that unfolds with stately dignity.

“Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age” recalls the oscillating harmonies of “Venus,” now transformed into something tantalizingly mysterious. Holst conveys a palpable sense of iciness and growing distance through his orchestration. A slow, funereal march proceeds to a frightening climax of clanging bells, but the specter of “physical decay,” notes the composer, yields to “a vision of fulfillment” in the final minutes.

In “Uranus, the Magician,” the enigmatic four-note motif heard at the beginning becomes a sort of incantation. The music conjures elements of a sinister, march-like scherzo, building to a full-scale climax supported by the organ. In a remarkable postlude, the music dissipates into fragments.

“Neptune, the Mystic” seems almost completely liberated from the emotional energy of the first movements. Texture rather than thematic development becomes the focus. Holst asks for pianissimo throughout the piece, shifting from one instrumental texture to another. “Neptune” circles back to reference the beginning by using the same 5/4 time signature as “Mars.” In a stroke of irony, this most-distant and disembodied of The Planets introduces the human voice in the form of a wordless female double choir (singing three parts each), which Holst instructs to remain invisible to the audience. The final bar — a pair of chords echoing the oscillating motion from “Venus,” sung by the women alone — implies an infinitely repeating loop that diminishes toward absolute silence.

The Planets is scored for a very large orchestra consisting of 4 flutes (3rd and 4th doubling piccolo, 4th also doubling alto flute), 3 oboes (3rd doubling bass oboe), English horn, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, double bassoon, 6 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tenor and bass tuba, 6 timpani, triangle, snare drum, tambourine, cymbals, bass drum, gong, tubular bells, glockenspiel, xylophone, celesta, organ, 2 harps, and strings, plus a 6-part women’s choir.

— Thomas May, the Nashville Symphony’s program annotator, is a writer and translator who covers classical and contemporary music. He blogs at memeteria.com.

ABOUT THE SOLOIST

Jun Iwasaki violin

Jun Iwasaki was appointed concertmaster of the Nashville Symphony by Music Director Giancarlo Guerrero in 2011. A graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music’s prestigious Concertmaster Academy, he has been hailed for his combination of dazzling technique and lyrical musicianship. In a review of Iwasaki’s performance at the Mimir Chamber Music Festival, the Fort Worth Star Telegram called him “the magician of the evening. He could reach into his violin and pull out bouquets of sound, then reach behind your ear and touch your soul.”

Prior joining the Nashville Symphony, Iwasaki served as concertmaster of the Oregon Symphony from 2007-11, and he performed with that ensemble at the first annual Spring For Music Festival in 2011. Throughout his career, he has appeared with numerous other orchestras, including the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Blossom Festival Orchestra, Rome (Georgia) Philharmonic, New Bedford Symphony, Canton Symphony, Richardson Symphony, Cleveland Pops Orchestra, Plano Symphony Orchestra, and the Cleveland Institute of Music Orchestra. In addition, he has served as guest concertmaster of the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra in 2015, Santa Barbara Symphony in 2010, and National Arts Center Orchestra in Ottawa in 2006. He served in the same position with the Canton (Ohio) Symphony Orchestra from 2005-07.

In addition to teaching at Vanderbilt University’s Blair School of Music, Iwasaki is the artistic director of Portland Summer Ensembles in Portland, Oregon, a workshop for young musicians focusing on chamber music.
**NASHVILLE SYMPHONY WOMEN’S CHORUS**

**TUCKER BIDDLECOMBE**, interim chorus director

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOPRANO</th>
<th>ALTO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beverly Anderson</td>
<td>Allison Aaron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther Bae</td>
<td>Carol Armes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amie Bates</td>
<td>Melissa Bourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Belden</td>
<td>Mary Callahan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill Boehme</td>
<td>Cathi Carmack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Breiwa</td>
<td>Kelsey Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Curtiss</td>
<td>Lauren Christians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire Delcourt</td>
<td>Teresa Cissell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Leigh Dier</td>
<td>Lisa Cooper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Donovan</td>
<td>Jaci Cordell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashlinn Dowling</td>
<td>Helen Cornell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie Doyle</td>
<td>Kaitlin Crofford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine Drinkwater</td>
<td>Janet Davies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becky Evans-Young</td>
<td>Leriel Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelli Gauthier</td>
<td>Carla Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Guil</td>
<td>June Dye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ally Hard</td>
<td>Anna Flautt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanessa Jackson</td>
<td>Cara Frank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jené Jacobson</td>
<td>Elizabeth Gilliam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carla Jones</td>
<td>Deb Greenspan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole Lake</td>
<td>Stefanie Griffith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie Lawrence</td>
<td>Leah Handelsman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny Lueckenhoff</td>
<td>Madalynne Skelton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Lynn</td>
<td>Emily Stubbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alisha Menard</td>
<td>Christina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callie Zindel</td>
<td>VanRegenmorter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Thanks FOR COMING! |

**Thank you for attending a concert at Schermerhorn Symphony Center.**

We’d like to know more about your experience.

After the performance, you should receive an email from the Nashville Symphony inviting you to take a survey. You may also take the survey by visiting NashvilleSymphony.org/survey.

The survey consists of 24 questions and should take 10 minutes to complete. Please include your contact information if you’d like to have your name entered to **win a pair of tickets to an upcoming Aegis Sciences Classical Series.**

Your feedback is greatly appreciated, and every response matters to us. Thank you for your continued support of Nashville Symphony!