

Thursday Evening, May 23, 2019, at 6:00

The Juilliard School

presents

# Juilliard Orchestra Commencement Concert

Matthias Pintscher, *Conductor*

Hang Zhong, *Piano*

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937) ***La Valse***

RAVEL **Piano Concerto in G major**

Allegramente

Adagio assai

Presto

HANG ZHONG, *Piano*

RAVEL ***Daphnis et Chloé, Suite No. 2***

Lever de jour

Pantomime

Baptismus

Danse générale

*Performance time: approximately one hour, with no intermission*

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Alice Tully Hall

*Please make certain that all electronic devices  
are turned off during the performance.*

Juilliard

## Notes on the Program

by David Crean

### MAURICE RAVEL

*Born March 7, 1875, Ciboure, France*

*Died December 28, 1937, Paris, France*

From an early age, Maurice Ravel seemed immune to criticism. This characteristic, apparently genuine and not assumed, served him very well in a time when intense tribalism and competing musical ideologies left little room for his highly individual and idiosyncratic approach to composing. Early in his career he developed a reputation as a radical—he was twice expelled from the Paris Conservatoire and fielded five unsuccessful applications for the prestigious *Prix de Rome*. The nepotism involved in this last rejection provoked a famous national scandal. Ravel, however, followed a different path than other musical trailblazers, and classification of his works has long proved elusive. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he never became an ideologue—rather, he maintained a receptive and open-minded approach that allowed him to absorb numerous and diverse influences into his style without compromising his unique voice.

This reluctance to align himself with a broader (or inflexible) artistic movement manifested itself throughout his career. Ravel admired—and, for a time, befriended—his older contemporary Debussy but bristled at being classified with him as an “impressionist.” He was sufficiently patriotic to join the French army at the outbreak of World War I (despite being almost 40 and of fragile constitution) but had no interest in joining the chauvinistic group *Ligue Nationale pour la Defense de la Musique Française*, which sought to ban the performance of German music in France. He maintained a deep interest in the music of the 17th and 18th centuries but generally rejected the Neoclassicism of the 1920s and 1930s. He acknowledged Arnold Schoenberg’s importance in promoting a

new freedom of musical expression but his own music remained grounded in traditional (if heavily embellished) harmonic ideals. This radical openness also extended to his well-known reluctance to accept students, as he disliked the idea of imposing his own views on others. In a famous (but possibly specious) anecdote, he is supposed to have refused to teach George Gershwin on the grounds that Gershwin would end up writing “bad Ravel and lose his great gift of melody and spontaneity.” In the absence of an easy stylistic label, critics have often focused on craftsmanship as the defining characteristic of Ravel’s music. He was a slow, painstaking worker, especially after the war, and this approach is reflected in a relatively small body of work of particular refinement and elegance. Tonight’s program features a trio of his best-known and most important works, about equally spaced over a period of some 20 years

### ***La Valse***

*La Valse* is most often heard as a concert work but was originally intended to be a ballet performed by Serge Diaghilev’s Ballet Russes. Upon hearing the work, however, Diaghilev remarked to Ravel that it was “not a ballet, but a portrait of ballet!” and refused to stage it. Impassive as ever, Ravel made no protest but completely severed all ties with the famous impresario. Their only subsequent meeting nearly ended in a duel. Ravel had long been fascinated with the Viennese waltz—in a 1906 letter to a friend he remarked that “you know of my deep sympathy for these wonderful rhythms ... I value the *joie de vivre* expressed by the dance.” *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, a collection of eight waltzes influenced by Schubert, followed five years later. If this earlier collection had been a tribute to the waltz, then *La Valse* is a caricature—the waltz reflected in a fun-house mirror, or perhaps filtered through the anxiety and cynicism of the immediate postwar years. Ravel described his unsettling work as “a sort of apotheosis of the

Viennese waltz” and provided this laconic note to accompany the score:

Through breaks in the swirling clouds, waltzing couples may be glimpsed. Little by little they disperse, one makes out (A) an immense hall filled with a whirling crowd. The stage is illuminated gradually. The light of the chandeliers peaks at the *fortissimo* (B). An Imperial Court, about 1855.

Although Ravel insisted that this was not the case, many listeners have interpreted his work as symbolic of the destruction of European high culture in World War I. His protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, *La Valse* strikes an ominous tone from the outset, with murky, indistinct rumblings in the double basses. The other instruments tentatively enter, playing snippets of melody as if heard from afar or partly remembered. Eventually a series of short waltz melodies does emerge, each with a distinct character, but the constantly shifting harmonies and unusual phrase structure give them an air of tragic parody rather than joie de vivre. About midway through the piece, the opening rumblings return, and from that point the dance begins to disintegrate. The short themes from the first half, already unusual, are now further distorted by jarring cross-rhythms that destabilize the traditional waltz patterns. As the waltz spins out of control, the themes are freely atomized, recombined, and juxtaposed until the whole piece ultimately collapses.

### **Piano Concerto in G major**

Ravel's first term at the Paris Conservatoire was in the piano class, but he never regarded himself as a dazzling virtuoso. When American supporters invited him to undertake an extended concert tour of North America, he initially demurred, but a combination of curiosity regarding American music and the possibility of substantial

remuneration eventually changed his mind. Although Paris had already experienced something of a jazz craze, Ravel's sojourn in America was his first exposure to the authentic American idiom, and he was immediately enamored of its “rich and diverting rhythm.” In the G major concerto, begun the year after his tour, he was able to incorporate the melodic inventiveness and rhythmic diversity of jazz into one of the most venerable classical forms.

Jazz was not the only influence on Ravel's concerto. Its formal clarity, relative concision, economical scoring, and upbeat tone recall 18th-century concertos and reflect Ravel's belief that “a concerto should be a divertissement” rather than a pathos-laden emotional outpouring. This clever marriage of freedom and structure is nowhere more evident than in the opening movement, which manages to fulfil many of the conventions of classical sonata form while giving the impression of a seamless tapestry of spontaneous melody. The piano is involved from the beginning, accompanying the energetic and angular primary theme in the winds, but it falls silent as the melody is picked up by the full orchestra. It returns for a series of transitional, bluesy themes in a slower tempo, and introduces the traditionally lyrical secondary theme shortly thereafter. The development begins with a return to the opening tempo, as driving rhythms in the piano accompany fragmentary statements of the initial theme. The bluesy transitional theme also makes a reappearance before a long piano scale leads to the beginning of the recapitulation. Ravel takes a brief detour into a slow, dreamlike section dominated by the harp before the piano cadenza returns to the secondary theme. An energetic coda concludes the first movement.

Ravel was explicit regarding the influence of Mozart on the slow movement, in particular his Clarinet Quintet. The main theme of this

ABA form combines a 6/8 accompaniment with a tender 3/4 melody to create a subtle tension that undergirds the entire movement. Although it sounds quasi-improvised, Ravel wrote, "I worked over it bar by bar! It nearly killed me!" After nearly three minutes of solo piano, the winds tentatively enter to pick up the theme accompanied by shimmering strings. The music slowly rises to a fleeting climax before the English horn restates the opening, now accompanied by delicate scalar passages in the piano. The rollicking presto begins with toccata-like figures in the piano against a jagged theme in the winds. New themes follow quickly one after another, with the piano taking center stage throughout. Ravel concludes the movement with the same four chords that began it. The piano concerto was to be Ravel's last major work. Shortly after its successful premiere he began to show symptoms of an as-yet-unidentified neurodegenerative disease that eventually robbed him of his ability to perform, conduct, or even hold a pen to compose.

### ***Daphnis et Chloé, Suite No. 2***

The final work on tonight's program was the earliest to be composed: the second of two suites that Ravel compiled from his ballet score *Daphnis et Chloé*. His longest work, it was commissioned by Diaghilev in 1909 but was not premiered until 1912, when it was generally overshadowed by the recent premiere of a choreographed (and scandalously erotic) version of Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*. The scenario, based on the ancient Greek novel of the same name, concerns the love between the goatherd Daphne and shepherdess Chloe, the latter's abduction by pirates, and subsequent rescue by the god Pan.

Ravel is regarded as one of the great orchestrators in music history, and *Daphnis* is one of his greatest essays in the art. The work calls for a large, late-Romantic orchestra of the kind favored by Mahler and Richard Strauss,

but Ravel never allows the sound to become thick or oppressive, expertly maintaining a lightness of touch in the most complex textures. Ravel even includes wordless music for a chorus, almost unheard of in a ballet score, and apparently viewed by Diaghilev as dispensable. Ravel's displeasure at its elimination was a prelude to their later rift over *La Valse*.

The popular second suite comprises music from the ballet's third part: *Lever du jour* (Sunrise), *Pantomime*, and the concluding *Danse générale*, often referred to as a Bacchanale. The work opens with a constant stream of rapid arpeggios that are subtly traded off between the wind sections, as the high strings imitate birdsong and the low strings primordially rumble. A long-breathed melody slowly unfolds as the dancers take the stage, accompanied by outbursts of shepherds' pipes and birdsong. More anxious music accompanies the arrival of Daphnis and Chloe, but it is quickly dispelled as the music rises to a thrilling climax. An oboe solo concludes one of the score's most evocative passages and moves the action into the second scene, where Daphnis and Chloe reenact the story of Pan and Syrinx. This passage, as might be expected, features a substantial flute part as the other instruments mimic the onstage action. Following a brief return of the opening arpeggios, the Bacchanale begins with a stately presentation of the theme in the strings and winds. The mood transforms from solemn to ecstatic, however, as Ravel constructs a breathless dash to the finish. The constantly shifting meter gives the effect of the dancers tripping over themselves in their frenzy, and Ravel's deployment of the large percussion section lends a special intensity.

*David Crean teaches organ at Wright State University in Ohio. He is a graduate of the C.V. Starr doctoral program at Juilliard and was the recipient of the 2014 Richard F. French doctoral prize.*

## About the Artists



**Matthias Pintscher**

Matthias Pintscher, who has been on the composition faculty of Juilliard since 2014, is music director of the Ensemble Intercontemporain, the world's leading contemporary music ensemble, which was founded by Pierre Boulez. In addition to a robust concert season in Paris, he and the ensemble tour extensively throughout Europe, Asia, and the U.S. Known equally as one of today's foremost composers, Pintscher has two new works premiering this season: *Nur*, a concerto for piano and ensemble, was performed by Daniel Barenboim and the Boulez Ensemble conducted by the composer in January; and a work for baritone, chorus, and orchestra will be performed by Dietrich Henschel and the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich conducted by Kent Nagano in June. Pintscher—who is this season's creative chair for the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich and artist in residence at the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra—finishes a nine-year term as the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra's artist in association. This season, he made his debuts with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic, and Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin, where he conducted the world premiere of *Violetter Schnee*, a new opera by Beat Furrer. Return guest engagements include the symphony orchestras of Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Indianapolis, and Milwaukee; the New York Philharmonic; and Miami's New World Symphony. In Europe, having begun the season conducting the Scottish Chamber Orchestra at the Edinburgh International Festival, Pintscher also returns to the Orchestre de Paris, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, and Helsinki

Philharmonic. He began his musical training as a conductor, studying with Peter Eötvös while in his early 20s, during which time composing took a more prominent role in his life. He rapidly gained acclaim in both areas and continues to compose. Pintscher's own music—championed by today's finest performing artists, orchestras, and conductors—has been performed by the Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, and Orchestre de Paris, among others. Bärenreiter is his exclusive publisher and his compositions have been recorded by Kairos, EMI, Teldec, Wergo, and Winter & Winter.



**Hang Zhong**

Pianist Hang Zhong is pursuing his bachelor's at Juilliard, studying with Yoheved Kaplinsky. He has performed three solo recitals in China and participated in student group concerts at Sichuan Conservatory. While in high school, he won awards at several competitions including a finalist award in the ILYM Competition at KU School of Music (2016), fourth place in the Golden Bell National Piano Competition for Young Pianists in China and first place in Cooper Festival Piano Competition at Oberlin (2015), and fourth place in the CCTV National Piano Competition in China (2014). He earned a scholarship from Yamaha Music and Electronics China for his performance in its selection competition. He began studying the piano at age 4 with his mother, Litao Fu. While in third grade, he started receiving lessons from Ji Luo, a piano teacher at Neijiang Normal University. From 2008 until high school graduation, he studied with Yan Wang, associate dean of the piano department at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music.

For several months before auditioning at Juilliard in 2017, Zhong was coached by Quming Zhang in Shanghai and Yun-Chin

Zhou in New York. *William Petschek Piano Scholarship, Joan Elizabeth Brown Scholarship, Thoba Corporation Scholarship Fund.*

## About the Juilliard Orchestra

Juilliard's largest and most visible student performing ensemble, the Juilliard Orchestra, is known for delivering polished and passionate performances of works spanning the repertoire. Comprising more than 350 students in the bachelor's and master's degree programs, the orchestra appears throughout the season in concerts on the stages of Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall, David Geffen Hall, and Juilliard's Peter Jay Sharp Theater. The orchestra is a strong partner to Juilliard's other divisions, appearing in opera and dance productions, as well as presenting an annual concert of world premieres by Juilliard student composers. The Juilliard Orchestra welcomes an impressive roster of world-renowned guest

conductors this season including John Adams, Marin Alsop, Joseph Colaneri, Barbara Hannigan, Steven Osgood, and Gil Rose as well as faculty members Jeffrey Milarsky, Itzhak Perlman, and David Robertson. The Juilliard Orchestra has toured across the U.S. and throughout Europe, South America, and Asia, where it was the first Western conservatory ensemble allowed to visit and perform following the opening of the People's Republic of China in 1987, returning two decades later, in 2008. Other ensembles under the Juilliard Orchestra umbrella include the conductorless Juilliard Chamber Orchestra, Juilliard Wind Orchestra, and new-music groups AXIOM and New Juilliard Ensemble.

## Juilliard Orchestra

**Matthias Pintscher**, *Conductor*

### Violin

Alice Ivy-Pemberton,  
*Concertmaster*  
Kyung-Ji Min,  
*Principal Second*  
Zeynep Alpan  
Shenae Anderson  
Yuki Beppu  
Mark Chien  
Ann Sangeun Cho  
Ji Soo Choi  
Phoebe Gardner  
Leerone Hakami  
Qianru Elaine He  
Chisa Kodaka  
Yi Hsin Cindy Lin  
Yaegy Park  
Yeri Roh  
Lucas Stratmann  
Ziyao Sun  
Agnes Tse  
Jacqueline Tso  
Angela Wee  
Christine Wu  
Mira Yamamoto  
Cherry Choi Tung Yeung  
Hikaru Yonezaki  
Mitsuru Yonezaki  
Pinhua Zeng  
Wei Zhu  
Emma Zhuang

### Viola

En-Chi Cheng, *Principal*  
Sofia Basile  
Charles Galante  
Esther Kim  
Halam Kim  
Ao Peng  
Taylor Shea  
Lauren Siess  
Sophia Sun  
Yin-Ying Tseng  
Jacob van der Sloot  
Chien Tai Ashley Wang

### Cello

Philip Sheegog, *Principal*  
Clare Bradford  
Mari Coetzee  
John-Henry Crawford  
Noah Krauss  
Songhee Lee  
Thapelo Masita  
Sung Moon Park  
Anne Richardson  
Rachel Siu  
Aaron Wolff

### Double Bass

Yi-Hsuan Annabel Chiu,  
*Principal*  
Brittany Conrad  
Janice Gho  
Dominic Law  
Justin Smith  
Andrew Sommer  
Reed Tucker

### Flute

Hae Jee Ashley Cho,  
*Principal*  
Giorgio Consolati,  
*Principal*  
JiHyuk Park, *Principal*  
Audrey Emata

### Piccolo

Hae Jee Ashley Cho  
Audrey Emata  
JiHyuk Park

### Alto Flute

JiHyuk Park

### Oboe

Rachel Ahn, *Principal*  
Lucian Avalon, *Principal*  
Mitchell Kuhn, *Principal*

### English Horn

Rachel Ahn  
Lucian Avalon

### Clarinet

Wonchan Will Doh,  
*Principal*  
Ruogu Wang, *Principal*  
Ning Zhang, *Principal*  
Sydney Lusby

### E-flat Clarinet

Dan Giacobbe

### Bass Clarinet

Ning Zhang

### Bassoon

Soo Yeon Lee, *Principal*  
Steven Palacio, *Principal*  
Rebecca G. Crown

### Contrabassoon

Emmali Ouderkirk

### French Horn

Vincent Kiray, *Principal*  
Jasmine Lavariega,  
*Principal*  
Cort Roberts, *Principal*  
Harry Chiu Chin-pong  
Jason Friedman

### Trumpet

Wyeth Aleksei, *Principal*  
Anthony Barrington,  
*Principal*  
Michael Chen, *Principal*  
Madison Lusby

### Trombone

Kevin Carlson, *Principal*  
Stephen Whimble,  
*Principal*

### Bass Trombone

Aaron Albert

### Tuba

David Freeman

### Timpani

Joseph Bricker  
Tyler Cunningham  
Harrison Honor

### Percussion

Joseph Bricker, *Principal*  
Tyler Cunningham,  
*Principal*  
Harrison Honor, *Principal*  
Benjamin Cornavaca  
Toby Grace  
Simon Herron  
Stella Perlic  
Leo Simon

### Harp

Madeline Olson, *Principal*  
Lenka Petrovic, *Principal*  
Katy Wong, *Principal*

### Keyboard

Chang Wang

### Administration

Adam Meyer, *Director, Music Division, and Deputy Dean of the College*

Joe Soucy, *Assistant Dean for Orchestral Studies*

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