



School of Music  
University of Missouri

2024-2025 Series | Large Ensemble

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# University Philharmonic Orchestra

*“French Flair”*

**Dr. John McKeever, conductor**

**April 26, 2025 | 7:00pm**

**Missouri Theatre**

## Program

**D'un matin de printemps ..... Lili Boulanger**  
(1893-1918)

**Ma mère l'Oye: 5 pièces enfantines ..... Maurice Ravel**  
(1875-1937)

- I. Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant
- II. Petit Poucet
- III. Laideronnette, Impératrice des Pagodes
- IV. Les entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête
- V. Le jardin féerique

*intermission*

**Symphony No. 1 in C Major ..... Georges Bizet**  
(1838-1875)

- I. Allegro vivo
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro vivace
- IV. Allegro vivace

## University Philharmonic Orchestra Personnel

### Flutes

John Goodson  
Haley Parks  
Kyrsten Wehner

### Oboes

Sophia Fasone  
Lauren Hynes  
Sadie Middleton

### Clarinets

Meghan Brown  
Samantha Decker  
Jane Guillot-Beinke

### Bassoons

Kim Foley  
Noah Lucas

### Horns

Emily Aponte  
Alexis Doebelin  
Sydney Hendrickson  
Cameron Kelly  
Sean Roche

### Trumpets

Jesse Hamilton  
Brandon Sconce  
Bryce Taylor

### Trombones

Andrew Busch  
Jackson Denney  
Tyler Martindale

### Tuba

Christopher Gentilia

### Percussion

Luke Haymon  
Tanner Prewitt  
Ajay Tosh  
Camihle Williams

### Celesta

Hanyu Zhang

### Harp

Sadie Rinck

### Violins

Maya Anand  
Kip Atteberry \*  
Nevaeh Bouska  
Nathan Bronstein  
Bria Carradine  
Angelina Casey  
Alexandre Negrão +  
Lydia Davis  
Mary Draxler  
Sophia Edwards  
Breanne Garstang  
Thomas Goff  
Sofia Heredia  
Matthew Kim  
Drew Lubiewski  
Brandon Merchant  
Hadley Miller  
Ethan Nguyen  
Abigail Richmond  
Thomas Robert  
Ethan Sanders  
Lucia Smith  
Kyle Stawiarski  
Sydney Studer  
Simon Whitty

### Violas

Ella Frank \*  
Parker Krudop  
Kara Lawson  
Elaina Maurer  
Ash Merenbloom  
Josephine O  
Rebecca Winters

### Cellos

Marcus Fitch  
Sophie Hof  
Sara Lawson  
Mason Murphy  
Jillian Orendain  
Henry Rao  
Rebecca Robuck  
Preston Smith  
Dean Wibe \*

### Basses

Kelsey Atteberry \*  
Samuel Caldwell  
Sydney Hoynacki  
Lucas Reaume  
Trey Rolfes

+ - Concertmaster  
\* - Principal String

Names are listed in  
alphabetical order,  
seatings for the winds and  
percussion rotate on each  
piece

## Biography

**John McKeever** is the Director of Orchestral Activities at the University of Missouri in Columbia, MO. In 2022/23 Dr. McKeever was the Assistant Conductor for the University of North Carolina School of the Arts Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, Dr. McKeever also worked as the Assistant Conductor for Piedmont Opera, where he conducted their 2023 production of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*. Dr. McKeever earned a Doctor of Musical Arts in Orchestral Conducting at the University of Colorado Boulder, graduating in 2021. As a graduate teaching assistant, he served as the director of the CU Boulder Campus Orchestra. He also served as an Assistant and Cover Conductor for the Boulder Philharmonic.

Born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska, Dr. McKeever began his studies on the piano. While continuing on the piano, he switched his focus to the double bass in elementary school. He earned a Bachelor of Music in Double Bass Performance at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts where he studied with Paul Sharpe. While a student at UNCSA, Dr. McKeever developed an interest in conducting and began to work as an assistant conductor for the A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute, Piedmont Opera, and several UNCSA musicals. Dr. McKeever continued his studies at UNCSA, earning a Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting in 2015.

From 2012-2018, Dr. McKeever served as the Assistant Conductor for Piedmont Opera in Winston-Salem, NC. In 2018 he made his conducting debut with the company in Piedmont Opera's production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. In 2016, Dr. McKeever shadowed the American Ballet Theatre's spring season at the Metropolitan Opera at the invitation of the company's principal conductor, Charles Barker. Dr. McKeever's teachers include James Allbritten, David Amado, Charles Barker, Michael Jinbo, Christopher James Lees, Gary Lewis, Jonathan Schiffman, and Kevin Stites.

For more information, please visit [johnmckeeverconductor.com](http://johnmckeeverconductor.com).

## Program Notes

### **D'un matin de printemps** ..... Lili Boulanger (1893-1918)

Lili Boulanger was one of the most talented and promising composers of her time, and *D'un matin de printemps* (From a Spring Morning) is a beautiful example of her work. Composed in 1918, it was created as her health deteriorated due to a long-standing illness. Despite her challenges, Boulanger composed a rich, impressionistic piece that captures the fresh energy and hope of Spring.

Boulanger made history as the first female recipient of the prestigious Prix de Rome composition award in 1913 for her cantata *Faust et Hélène*. In doing so, she followed in the footsteps of her father, Ernest, who won the prize in 1835, and her sister, Nadia, who took second place in 1908. *D'un matin de printemps* was completed just before her untimely death at the age of 24, and it was one of the final works she composed in her own hand before she began dictating to Nadia. Even in this piece, Nadia helped refine some of the orchestration's finer details. Had Boulanger lived longer, she likely would have expanded her voice further, pushing the boundaries of orchestration, vocal music, and modernism. Already being compared to Debussy and Ravel at such a young age, she likely would have become a defining figure in early 20th-century music.

In this piece, Boulanger depicts the peaceful beauty of nature with lush orchestral textures and sparkling colors. The piece begins with an ethereal, floating motif in the strings, and the sparkle of the harp and woodwinds paint the picture of dawn breaking over a peaceful landscape. Throughout the work, Boulanger uses lush orchestral hues to paint the gradual coming to life of nature with shifts of tension and release that reflect the re-emergence of life in spring. *D'un matin de printemps* is an elegant realization of the composer's individual sound, a union of French impressionistic lyricism with early 20th-century depth of feeling.

### **Ma mère l'Oye** (1911) ..... Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Maurice Ravel's *Ma mère l'Oye* (Mother Goose), is perhaps the most enchanting and whimsical piece in the orchestral catalog. Composed originally as a suite of five pieces for children for piano four hands in 1908, it was later orchestrated by Ravel in 1911. The piece is an orchestral retelling of several well-known fairy tales, each

brought vividly to life by Ravel's lavish orchestration. Ravel would later add music to the orchestrated version of this piece to create a full-length ballet.

*Ma mère l'Oye's* five movements take us on a journey of fantasy: from the mysterious "Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty," in which the sweet theme calls up the stillness of an enchanted sleep, to the exuberant "Conversation of Beauty and the Beast," in which Ravel plays with contrasting textures and rhythms to paint the picture, musically, of the two characters talking. Ravel, whose orchestral color and texture are unrivaled, contributes to each movement of *Ma mère l'Oye* a unique soundscape that vividly paints the fairy-tale world. The innocence and playfulness of the work have made it a favorite among audiences of all ages, but beneath the fairy-tale surface, Ravel also weaves subtle complexity and sophisticated harmonic language, making the work both compelling and intricate to all.

### **Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant** (Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty)

The first movement evokes the tranquil atmosphere of the court where the princess lies asleep under a magic spell, awaiting the kiss of a prince. Ravel's elegant orchestration features the flute to create a peaceful, dreamlike environment, where the air seems to glow with magic.

### **Petit Poucet** (Little Tom Thumb / Hop-o'-My-Thumb)

In the second movement, Ravel portrays the growing bewilderment and desperation of Hop-o'-My-Thumb as he becomes lost in the forest when birds eat his breadcrumb trail. The solo oboe at the beginning portrays the turning road, and varying time signatures reflect the boy's bewilderment. Listen for the harmonics in the strings and the little interjections in the winds that mimic the birds around him.

### **Laideronnette, impératrice des pagodes** (Laideronnette, Empress of the Pagodas)

The third movement tells the story of Laideronnette, the princess transformed into a hideous frog by a witch, who lives in a pagoda. The orchestra is meant to mimic the sounds of the small instruments made of walnut and almond shells that were played by the Pagodas to entertain the princess. The xylophone replicates the percussion of the East, while the strings and woodwinds emphasize her royal nature, creating an atmosphere of whimsical, imperial power in a fantasy world.

### **Les entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête** (Conversation of Beauty and the Beast)

In the fourth movement, Ravel depicts the conversation between the contrasting elegance of Beauty and the roughness of the Beast, as well as their evolving

relationship. Beauty's elegance is portrayed by the clarinet and the Beast's brutishness by the contrabassoon. As they speak, their melodies become intertwined, symbolizing their evolving relationship. The curse is at last broken, and the Beast transforms into a handsome prince when Beauty says, "He is not a monster and is not ugly." The transformation of the Beast into a prince is illustrated by a glissando in the harp and harmonics performed by the solo violin.

### **Le jardin féerique (The Fairy Garden)**

The fifth and final movement illustrates the magical, otherworldly nature of a fairy garden in which fairies dance and frolic. The entire orchestral palette in this movement is light, transparent, and magical. The whirling figures in the woodwinds imitate the dancing movement of the fairies in this enchanted atmosphere.

Ravel's *Ma mère l'Oye* is a masterpiece of narrative orchestration. Every movement is carefully crafted to summon the characters and emotions of the fairy tales through instrumental timbre, texture, and color as Ravel brings these favorite stories to life with consummate artistry.

### **Symphony No. 1 in C Major ..... Georges Bizet (1838-1875)**

Georges Bizet is best known today for his opera *Carmen*, but his Symphony No. 1 in C major is an interesting early piece that shows the composer's extraordinary ability. Bizet composed this symphony at age 17, while still a student at the Paris Conservatory. It is believed that this composition was the result of an assignment given to him by his teacher Charles Gounod, whose own symphony in D had very heavily influenced the young composer. This work was never performed during his lifetime. It lay in the Paris Conservatory archives until it was discovered in 1933 and premiered in 1935. The symphony is in four movements and features a very "classical" structure, despite Bizet technically being a Romantic era composer. This can be explained due to his youth at the time of composition and the influence of his teacher.

### **Allegro vivo:**

The first movement is lively and energetic. It starts with a sprightly, quick theme played by the strings, with plenty of drive. This is responded to by the woodwinds, creating a playful back-and-forth between the two sections of the orchestra. A lyric contrasting theme then emerges in the oboe, demonstrating Bizet's ability to craft



a beautiful tune even at this young age. The movement ends in a thrilling burst of energy, taking the opening energy to an exciting conclusion.

**Adagio:**

The second movement offers a serene, more contemplative melody. It begins with a warm, flowing theme in the oboe, accompanied by the strings. The oboe's beautiful theme is then carried over into the strings. After this, the music moves to a more complex section, where the theme is altered and passed around the different sections of the orchestra. The opening material then returns along with the solo oboe to bring the movement to a beautifully quiet ending.

**Allegro vivace:**

The third movement is full of rhythmic life and vitality. Alternations between winds and strings help give the music its lively nature. The trio has a dance-like, rustic quality, and the woodwinds contribute a lighter, flowing melody. Following the classical form, the scherzo is repeated bringing the movement to a lively close.

**Allegro vivace:**

The final movement has a playful, almost-joking quality to it. It opens with a strong chord that quickly dissolves into just one repeated note which is soon joined by the rest of the orchestra in a soft, but energetic, scherzo-like melody. After some wind and brass fanfares, the music shifts to a more lyrical and subdued theme, allowing for a contrasting moment before the energy is brought back. The movement ends with a firm and rousing race to the finish, taking the symphony to a triumphant conclusion.

Bizet's Symphony No. 1, despite its young nature, already contains hints of the rich harmonic palette and dramatic flair that would be characteristic of his later works. Bizet's melodic talent, orchestration, and dramatic sense are apparent, and though this symphony was never heard during his life, it is a delightful glimpse into the mind of a composer who would go on to shape the landscape of French opera.

Program notes by Wendy Kleintank