


# LACOMBE LEADS CONCERTO FOR ORCHESTRA

JACQUES LACOMBE conductor  
ADAM GOLKA piano  
NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

LIEBERMANN

*Barcarolles for a Sinking City (World Premiere)*   
*Funeral Gondola*  
*Barcarolle/Quodlibet*  
*Barcarolle/Ostinato/Carillon*  
*Barcarolle Oubliée*

RAVEL

Piano Concerto in G Major  
*Allegrement*  
*Adagio assai*  
*Presto*  
ADAM GOLKA piano

~INTERMISSION~

BARTÓK

Concerto for Orchestra, Sz. 116, BB 123  
*Introduzione: Andante non troppo – Allegro vivace*  
*Giuoco delle coppie: Allegretto scherzando*  
*Elegia: Andante non troppo*  
*Intermezzo interrotto: Allegretto*  
*Finale: Pesante – Presto*



*Part of the New Jersey Roots Project, celebrating music inspired by the Garden State.*



NEW JERSEY  
STATE COUNCIL  
ON THE ARTS

This program is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

We kindly request that you silence all electronic devices and take extra caution when recording microphones are on the stage.

Program and artists are subject to change. The use of flash bulbs, cameras or recording equipment during the concert is strictly prohibited. Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the management. Food and beverages may not be taken into the auditorium. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building. Fire notice: The red exit sign nearest your seat is the shortest route outside. The management is not responsible for personal property of patrons.



## LACOMBE LEADS CONCERTO FOR ORCHESTRA

### Introduction

A world premiere by New Jersey-based composer Lowell Liebermann highlights this weekend's concerts. In combining Liebermann's work with music by Ravel and Bartók, Music Director Jacques Lacombe is thinking in broad stylistic terms about compositions that are complementary and illuminating.

### LIEBERMANN: *Barcarolles for a Sinking City*

#### LOWELL LIEBERMANN

**Born:** February 22, 1961, in New York, New York. Currently residing in Weehawken, New Jersey

**Composed:** 2013

**Premiered:** These NJSO performances are the world premiere.

**Duration:** 17 minutes

The music of Lowell Liebermann has been consistently successful with audiences throughout the United States and internationally. Liebermann is regarded as one of the most prominent so-called "new tonalists"—composers who have embraced traditional tonality and techniques, infusing these tried-and-true methods with individual flair.

Liebermann's new piece, *Barcarolles for a Sinking City*, was inspired by the city of

Venice—a place that has long held the fascination of artists, writers and composers—and by the music of Wagner, Liszt, Bach, Offenbach, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Fauré and Beethoven.

Lacombe is particularly excited about working with Liebermann. He conducted Liebermann's Flute Concerto (which the NJSO performed with Sir James Galway in 1993) several years ago, but this new work presents the first opportunity for them to collaborate in person. "I know he has a relationship with the Orchestra, so we immediately thought of him when we contemplated commissioning a piece," Lacombe says. "An important aspect of our New Jersey Roots Project is including new music from composers who not only live and work in New Jersey but who also have a great relationship with the state. He has been living here a long time, and he is one of the most important living American composers.

"I have many recordings of Liebermann's music," the music director continues. "Because I have a good sense of his style, I am confident that his new piece will work very well with the Ravel and Bartók." He points out that those two works were very late in their respective composers' output, "almost valedictory, which makes a nice counterpoint to a new work from a composer in his prime."

*Instrumentation: two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, harp, timpani, a large percussion battery and strings.*

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### MAURICE RAVEL

**Born:** March 7, 1875, in Ciboure, Basses-Pyrénées, France

**Died:** December 28, 1937, in Paris, France

**Composed:** Primarily 1929–31

**Premiered:** January 14, 1932, at the Salle Pleyel in Paris. Marguerite Long was the soloist; Ravel conducted the Lamoureux Orchestra.

**First NJSO performance:** 1971–72 season. Henry Lewis conducted; the soloist was Philippe Entremont.

**Duration:** 21 minutes

### RAVEL: Piano Concerto in G Major

Ravel's magical Piano Concerto in G Major is intended to show off the piano soloist, in a dialogue with the orchestra that is alternately competitive, heartfelt and playful. Particularly in the slow movement, Ravel was paying tribute to Mozart. He acknowledged that his inspiration for the central *Adagio assai* came from the slow movement to Mozart's Clarinet Quintet. The entire concerto evokes Mozart's spirit in its clarity and elegance. The finale revels in Ravel's wit, proving that he often had a twinkle in his eye. At once jazzy and pristine, this concerto is a 20th-century masterpiece.

When Lacombe chose to program the Ravel, he had the young American pianist Adam Golka in mind as soloist. "He is making his debut with us. I've met him before; he's an up-and-coming artist, and I believe that he is headed for a very strong career."

Lacombe believes Ravel's 1931 concerto is unique. "There is something quite classical about it, something far simpler than some of his other orchestral works. Especially in the second movement, you have these fantastic dialogues between the piano and the winds. Sometimes the piano has the melody, then it recedes to the background. Ravel gives magical, almost crystalline melodic lines to the woodwinds; then the recapitulation with the English horn is one of the great moments in Western music, in my opinion.

"The first and third movements are quite virtuosic," he adds, "particularly the first movement. Even the orchestra has some very exposed moments for horn and trumpet; their parts are quite flashy. It makes for an interesting combination with the piano. Ravel was strongly influenced by American jazz in the 1920s and early 1930s. You can hear that clearly in the Piano Concerto."

*Instrumentation: flute, piccolo, oboe, English horn, B-flat clarinet, E-flat clarinet, two bassoons, two horns, trumpet, trombone, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, triangle, wood block, slap stick, harp, strings and solo piano.*

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### BARTÓK: Concerto for Orchestra, Sz. 116, BB 123

Following intermission, we hear a different type of concerto: Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra. This 1943 work shows off all the coloristic and expressive potential of the orchestra, giving many of our excellent NJSO players a chance to shine.

Indeed, the Concerto for Orchestra features the entire ensemble in a democratic approach to musical material. Virtually every player, and every instrumental section, has a moment in the spotlight. This concerto became the quintessential orchestral showpiece of the 20th century, and it remains a work with which

## BÉLA BARTÓK

**Born:** March 25, 1881, in Nagy Szent Miklós, Transylvania

**Died:** September 26, 1945, in New York, New York

**Composed:** 1942–43; revised 1945

**Premiered:** December 1, 1944, in Boston. Serge Koussevitzky conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

**First NJSO performance:** 1964–65 season. Kenneth Schermerhorn conducted.

**Duration:** 35 minutes

symphony orchestras cut their teeth and prove their mettle. It is both the symphony that Bartók never composed and the ultimate concerto grosso for our time. In addition, the Concerto for Orchestra, like many of Bartók's late works, is written in a more accessible language than his earlier music. Its roots lie in the peasant folk music of Hungary.

Following a trouble-plagued relocation to the United States, Bartók expressed doubt to friends as to whether he would compose again. He was, however, a vastly imaginative and energetic musician in spirit, even when his physical energy began to fail. When conductor Serge Koussevitzky visited him in May 1943 to request a new piece for the Boston

Symphony, Bartók threw himself into the new commission, which took shape rapidly that summer.

Perhaps because it was his first large composition in a while, ideas poured out of him. He was certainly inspired to write with superb orchestral players in mind, knowing that Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony would play the first performance.

Lacombe feels a special connection to the Bartók Concerto, in part because he made his debut with several orchestras conducting this work. "It has the Hungarian element, of course, but there is so much maturity in the Concerto for Orchestra. Other Bartók works have a more complex structure—*The Wooden Prince*, for instance, or *The Miraculous Mandarin*—but the Concerto for Orchestra has both a richness and a clarity that I appreciate very much.

"It's a flashy piece, and the finale is especially difficult for the orchestra. Bartók wanted the tempo to be extremely fast. Because of his musical language, the scales he uses are not the typical ones that musicians have in their fingers. You have to work at them! But once you have mastered them, his system is very organic. It's the kind of piece that once you have it, you have it for life."

*Instrumentation: three flutes (third doubling piccolo), three oboes (third doubling English horn), three clarinets (third doubling bass clarinet), three bassoons (third doubling contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, two harps, timpani, side drum, bass drum, tam-tam, cymbals, triangle and strings.*



Learn more about the works on the program, including Lowell Liebermann's description of his new work, at [www.njsymphony.org/notesNov29-Dec1](http://www.njsymphony.org/notesNov29-Dec1).