Lamont School of Music & Theatre

Lamont Symphony Orchestra

Tchaikovsky's Pathétique

Paolo Ponziano Ciardi
Guest Conductor

Lawrence Golan
Music Director

Sebastián Jiménez
Assistant Conductor

Nicholas Recuber
Bass

Tuesday, November 4, 2026
7:30 p.m.
June Swaner Gates Concert Hall

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER
Robert & Judi Newman Center for the Performing Arts

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Program

Intermezzo 'Il Sogno' — **Pietro Mascagni**
from *Guglielmo Ratcliff* (1895) — (1863–1945)

Concerto for Jazz Bass (1989) — **Jeff Beal**
(b. 1963)

I. Westward Expansion
II. After the Storm
III. Mardi Gras

Nicholas Recuber, bass

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 6 in B Minor, Op. 74 "Pathétique" — **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**
(1840–1893)

I. Adagio - Allegro non troppo
II. Allegro con grazia
III. Allegro molto vivace
IV. Adagio Lamentoso

Lamont Symphony Orchestra

Violin I
Breanna Lee, *concertmaster*
Annabelle Linke
Samantha Coffman
Clare Lueken
Joshua Wyly
Madelyn Munley
Brenda Schafer Rodrigues
Collin Hartman
Helena Puhek
Zoe Folland

Violin II
Mari Roes
Auty Scherden
Ju-Young Kim
Sam Turnbow
Sarina Paolini
Chloe Yan
Grace Olivier
Jordan McLuckie
Daniela Pacheco Gómez
Olivia Harper
Cy O'Connell

Viola
Sebastian Saiz-Harrison
Greg Moix
Verónica Gil Amarista
Elidi Clark
Paulina Casas González
Baron Balfour

Cello
Sarah Cupit
Ian Emmer
Jaxon Cox
Bethany Hovermale
Katreia Mori
Rem Bradmon

Bass
Justine Barrera
Dominic Smallwood
Ashley White
Reagan Forney

Flute/Piccolo*
Justise Liu
Sarah Kimbro
Ivy Cuda*

Oboe/English Horn*
Míriam Caballero Mateos
Júlia Ribeiro
Ryan Rosete*

Clarinet/Bass Clarinet*
Aron Kooijman
Isaac Quaas
Roman Gloria*

Bassoon/Contrabassoon*
Robert Nael
Gustav Szczepanek
Phillip Aleshire*

Horn
Jackson Ingram
Cooper Donley
Caledonia Trankel
Logan Bowring
Sofie Cunliffe-Owen
Katelyn Marsh

Trumpet
Katie Thompson
Donovan Ford
Andrew Kagerer

Trombone
Antonio Ricafort
Nathan Smith
Jackson Strahan

Tuba
Charlie Rueschhoff

Percussion
Tres Salas, *principal*
Jakob Garcia
Sean Woodmansee
Matthew Sousa

Harp
Mia Butler

Orchestra Manager
Sebastián Jiménez

Librarian
Auty Scherden

LSO Assistants
Teodora Kandić
Charlotte Gelwick

Program Notes

Intermezzo, "Il sogno," from *Guglielmo Ratcliff*
Mascagni was one of the leading verismo opera composers. He began working on Guglielmo Ratcliff in 1882, while he was still a student in Milan. He eventually set it aside to compose his masterpiece Cavalleria rusticana, the opera that would make him famous almost overnight. Guglielmo Ratcliff finally reached the stage at La Scala in 1895. Based on a play by Heinrich Heine, in an Italian translation by Andrea Maffei, it tells a dark story of jealousy, obsession, and a family tragedy that carries into the next generation.

Set in northern Scotland, the opera follows Ratcliff's destructive attachment to Maria, who has rejected him. Determined that no one else should marry her, he has already killed two of her suitors. In the third act, he challenges her new fiancé, Count Douglas, who defeats him but spares his life. The intermezzo known as "Il sogno" ("The Dream") accompanies the wounded Ratcliff's vision. Two ghostly figures reach toward one another, unable to come together as a representation of an image that connects his own longing with the unresolved past of the two families.

Here, the orchestra takes over the storytelling. An expressive oboe melody is taken up by the strings, gradually growing into what I consider one of the most expansive and impassioned climaxes in the operatic repertoire, made all the more remarkable by how quickly Mascagni builds the tension. He gives the phrases time to breathe, and the instruments sing with the freedom and warmth we might expect from an operatic voice. Both tenderness and pain emerge through the beautiful harmonic language so characteristic of Mascagni. Knowing the scene makes that tenderness especially moving: we hear the longing of someone who has caused terrible suffering and can find no peace himself.

Sebastián Jiménez

Concerto for Jazz Bass
Composed in 1989 for bassist John Patitucci, who commissioned the work and recorded it on Heart of the Bass, Jeff Beal's Concerto for Jazz Bass reflects a musical imagination shaped by both jazz and classical traditions. Beal studied classical and jazz trumpet before attending the Eastman School of Music, where his teachers included Christopher Rouse and Rayburn Wright. An early influence was Miles Davis and Gil Evans's Sketches of Spain, a recording that helped shape his development as a trumpeter and composer. His music has since reached audiences through concert works and scores for productions including *Pollock, Monk*, and *House of Cards*.

(cont.)

The concerto places the soloist at the center of an ensemble of strings, woodwinds, horns, piano, and drums. Its three movements explore contrasting instrumental voices: six-string electric bass in the outer movements and acoustic double bass in the central slow movement. Throughout, written orchestral passages make room for improvisation, allowing the soloist's individual musical imagination to become part of the work's design.

In "Westward Expansion," accented orchestral writing establishes a compelling opening. The electric bass's rhythmic presence and opportunities for improvisation bring the energy of jazz performance into the concerto genre. "After the Storm" offers a more inward contrast. The soloist turns to acoustic double bass, introduced with the bow against muted strings. Marked Rubato espressivo, the movement invites flexible, expressive phrasing and draws attention to the instrument's lyrical warmth.

"Mardi Gras" returns to electric bass and a much faster pulse. The title suggests a festive atmosphere, while the emphatic rhythms and energetic solo writing provide an exciting counterpart to the slow movement. Across the concerto, Beal gives the bass room to sing, improvise, and lead the musical conversation.

Sebastián Jiménez

Symphony No. 6 in B Minor, Op. 74 "Pathétique"

This symphony is Tchaikovsky's last work—he died of cholera only nine days after its première—and it is universally hailed as one of his finest. It exhibits all of the characteristic passion and melodic beauty for which the composer justly is known, and is suffused with a dark and tragic essence. Tchaikovsky struggled all of his life with his identity, fears of social rejection, and frustrated relationships with others. By the end of his life these issues had surely come to a head, and the composer freely spoke with his brother of the reflection of his suffering in this final, gripping composition. There is even a current musicological fight over whether or not he poisoned himself to end his life (under threat of social disgrace), or deliberately drank the un-boiled glass of water during an epidemic. In any case, the circumstances of his life's final struggles are manifest in this beautiful and tragic work. In the event, he had at first actually considered "Tragic" as a subtitle for the symphony, but his brother suggested the Russian for "pathos," and the French equivalent, "pathétique," is the evocative descriptor that we all know. But, be aware of inexact translations–there is nothing pathetic here.

The first movement is conventional in its form, but the mature composer exhibits a sense of tight construction, and weaves the movement with

his characteristic contrast of exciting, dynamic motives and delicious lyrical melodies. The mood for the entire symphony is set at the very beginning by the brooding bassoon solo. The second movement is one of the most well known of his symphonic movements, cast as it is in five-four time, an absolutely innovative use of the metre in art music (is it not unknown in Russian folk music). The main theme and its manipulation is so smooth and adroit that it is altogether easy to forget the unusual time signature, and simply experience the music as being some kind of waltz with a "limp." And remember, no one excelled Tchaikovsky in the waltz. The third movement is an exciting and optimistic march, but the heavy brass and snappy rhythms notwithstanding, it doesn't seem a military march at all. Rather, it is a march from the world of the ballet—the Nutcracker and Sleeping Beauty come to my mind. No Shostokovitchian Russian soldiers are goose stepping here! The final movement in many respects is the characteristic movement of the symphony. It is most unusual in that it ends softly—very softly. No Romantic symphony had ever ended that way—they end loud and with a bang—right? And great applause! But in this case the agony and beauty of this reflection of the composer's life and experience terminates in a final expiration that is remarkable for its challenging softness. "This is the way the world ends/Not with a bang but a whimper."

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Biographies

Born in Genoa, **Paolo Ponziano Ciardi** began his conducting career at an early age. Alongside his education in the classics and humanities, he studied piano, composition, organ, orchestral conducting, and choral conducting in Rome, graduating in 1981. During this period, he also attended courses at the Mozarteum in Salzburg with Milan Horvat and at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena with Franco Ferrara. In 1981, He pursued advanced studies at the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna, studying orchestral conducting with Otmar Suitner, opera conducting with Karl Etti, and choral conducting with Günther Theuring.

A regular guest conductor in both symphonic and operatic repertoire, Ciardi has worked with orchestras, opera companies, and concert societies internationally. His engagements include the RAI Orchestra in Turin, the Teatro Verdi in Trieste, the Ente Lirico "G. P. da Palestrina" in Cagliari, the Teatro Massimo Bellini in Catania, the Teatro Rossini in Pesaro, the Philharmonic Academy of Messina, the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra, the Scarlatti Orchestra in Naples, the Milano Classica Orchestra, the Udine Philharmonic Orchestra, the Sanremo Symphony Orchestra, the Abruzzo Symphony Orchestra, and the Bari Symphony Orchestra.

He has performed at Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow, Abravanel Hall in Salt Lake City (USA), the Liszt Academy in Budapest, the Rendano Theatre in Cosenza, the Ventidio Basso Theatre in Ascoli Piceno, the Vittorio Emanuele Theatre in Messina, Bossi Hall at the Bologna Conservatory, the Auditorium Foro Italico in Rome, the Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the Teatro Argentina in Rome, the Chapelle des Pénitents blancs in Avignon (France), and the Manoel Theatre in Valletta. Other appearances include performances at the Teatro Comunale in Cagliari, the Auditorium in Mexico City, the Budapest Opera House, the Roman Theatre in Carthage (Tunisia), the Ankara Opera House (Turkey), the Teatro Municipal in Puebla (Mexico), Cecilia Meireles Hall in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), and the Fujairah Theatre (United Arab Emirates).

Ciardi previously served as full professor of orchestral training at the "L. Cherubini" Conservatory of Music in Florence, the "J. Tomadini" Conservatory in Udine, and the "N. Sala" Conservatory in Benevento. He also served as music director of the G. Rossini Symphony Orchestra in Pesaro and artistic director of the Ischia International Music Festival.

Since 2020, he has been artistic director of the Istituzione Sinfonica Italia Classica.

Nicholas Recuber serves as Assistant Principal Bass with the Colorado Symphony and teaches double bass at the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music. His career encompasses classical, jazz, and popular music. Previously Principal Bass of the Santa Barbara Symphony and a two-season fellow with the New World Symphony, he has also performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the San Francisco, Utah, and Atlanta symphonies.

Born in Philadelphia, Recuber began studying double bass at fourteen. He earned his bachelor's degree in jazz studies at Rowan University, studying with Douglas Mapp, before pursuing classical performance at The Juilliard School, where he completed his master's degree with Orin O'Brien. He subsequently earned a graduate certificate at the University of Southern California under Nico Abondolo.

A performer on both upright and electric bass, Recuber has collaborated with Gregory Porter, Cynthia Erivo, Ingrid Michaelson, Steve Vai, and Nathaniel Rateliff. His recordings include releases with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and Compass Resonance. Festival appearances include Grand Teton, Moab, Colorado, and Lucerne Forward.

Before joining the University of Denver, Recuber led the classical bass program at the University of Northern Colorado for more than a decade. He regularly presents masterclasses and is the editor of Fantasies for Double Bass, published by Carl Fischer Music, which adapts Telemann's solo violin repertoire for double bass.

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Thursday, November 5, 7:30 p.m.
Wind Chamber Ensembles
Hamilton Recital Hall
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