

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Hilary Hahn graces Disney Hall

R. Daniel Foster · Thursday, March 24th, 2022

Three-time Grammy Award winner [Hilary Hahn](#) happily blazed through Samuel Barber's "Violin Concerto, Op. 14" at Disney Hall on March 19, adding grace and muscular musicality to the 1939 composition.

The evening also included [Arvo Pärt](#)'s "Silhouette," composed in 2009, and Antonín Dvořák's "Symphony No. 7" (1884). Grammy award-winning conductor [Paavo Järvi](#) led the [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#).



Conductor Paavo Järvi. Photo courtesy of the LA Phil

A musical homage to Gustave Eiffel

Pärt's "Silhouette," at about nine minutes long, was the evening's starter—first performed by the LA Phil the evening before, on March 18. Estonia-born Pärt was inspired to compose the work after hearing Järvi's interpretations of his work. The conductor was also born in Estonia.

"Silhouette" was composed as an homage to an architect—Gustave Eiffel. Captivated by a book of illustrations that detailed the blueprints and plans for the Eiffel Tower, Pärt went to work, turning out an intriguing, and often curious, composition. He found that the iconic tower, with its web-like structure, has similarities with musical structural elements.

"The piece came out short and light, like a dance, a waltz, something dizzying," Pärt has written. "Perhaps like the winds which caress this pointed colossus."

Performed by the LA Phil, the piece possessed a delightful mechanized precision—with percussion predominating (crotales, vibraphone, chimes, triangle, suspended cymbal, sizzle cymbal, piatti, tam-tam, bass drum). At times the composition seemed and felt like clockwork, forever building, rising. And at other times stretched and underscored as single notes were held for long periods, and then allowed to dissipate into the ethers.



The Los Angeles Philharmonic. Photo courtesy of the LA Phil.

Hahn plays Barber

Hahn's confidence and aplomb were evident the moment she strode on stage in a rainbow tulle

dress. She easily mastered Barber's concerto—hand in glove to the LA Phil's rendition, finely etched by Järvi's skilled conducting.

Hahn took a year-long sabbatical over the 2019-20 concert season, so it's good to have her back. She plays an 1864 copy of Paganini's Cannone—known for its force of reverberation—built by Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume.

Bach is a favorite of Hahn's; at age 17 she made her recording debut with "Hilary Hahn Plays Bach." (2007, Sony Classical). She's also known for being accessible to fans, committing to signings after nearly every concert, and treasuring the fan art she receives. Hahn is also an avid blogger—"By Hilary" includes her writings dating to 2002. You can follow her on Instagram (@violincase) where she leads a practice initiative under the hashtag #100daysofpractice.



Hilary Hahn's debut album, released when she was 17.

The evening concluded with Dvořák's "Symphony No. 7," a 40-minute powerhouse first performed by the LA Phil in 1959.

"My new symphony," Dvořák wrote to a friend in 1884, "must be such as to make a stir in the world."

That it did and it continues to do so. Under Järvi's hand, the LA Phil seized the composition from the start of its forbidding opening, all the way through the four movements—at times rhapsodic, and at times erupting into a kind of volcanic wonder that filled each corner of the hall.

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[The 2021/22 season](#) at the LA Phil, with tickets starting at \$20.

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