

# Arts & Style

## Spring Arts Preview

### Can't-miss music

# The stars are out, but so are beacons such as 'Amleto'



Anne Midgette

The big guns are out in 2016: Iván Fischer brings his Budapest Festival Orchestra to the Kennedy Center (Feb. 15); Daniil Trifonov

performs Prokofiev with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra (March 14); Yuri Temirkanov returns to the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (March 17); and the Ring Cycle finally makes it to Washington (April 30). D.C. is in for a tremendous spring season, studded with big names, big events, and exciting work. There's so much star power, in fact, that some of the smaller events may get overlooked. My list for spring, therefore, includes five can't-miss events that I'm concerned you might miss, with my reasons why I think you'll be glad you went.

**Mad about opera.** In a spring with Wagner's "Ring" (April 30-May 22), is there room for any other news — especially when the Washington National Opera is also presenting Eric Owens in Kurt Weill's "Lost in the Stars" (Feb. 12-20), and the Washington Concert Opera is bringing Donizetti's "La Favorite" (March 4)? Carve out time, though, for "Amleto" by Franco Faccio on May 14, 20 and 22. Why should you

care? Because "Amleto" is essentially a missing link in Italian opera between Verdi and Puccini, with a libretto by Arrigo Boito, who wrote Verdi's "Otello" and "Falstaff." Because "Amleto" wasn't heard from 1871 until 2014, when it was exhumed by the conductor Anthony Barrese and given a concert production in Baltimore (Barrese will conduct it here). Because it's full of melody, pushes the envelope of opera convention at the time, and is well worth hearing for any lover of Italian opera. Because it's going on to the festival in Bregenz, Austria, this summer and is likely to get quite a bit of attention there, and you can say you heard it before that. And because the Delaware Opera is reinventing itself as an annual festival, with Shakespeare as this year's focus (they're also doing "Falstaff"), following a national trend and, perhaps, re-placing itself on the operatic map. This is a great chance to be part of a discovery. [www.operade.org](http://www.operade.org)

**Wings of song.** Don't overlook the recitals, either. Vocal Arts DC is celebrating its 25th anniversary this season with what has so far been a star-studded roster, including stunning recitals by Susan Graham and Jamie Barton. This spring, it's

bringing the Mexican tenor Javier Camarena (March 24), who took the Met by storm a couple of years ago with singing that was at once beautiful, exciting and deeply emotional. He will be followed April 18 by Julia Bullock, whose remarkable D.C. recital two years ago blended the contemporary and the personal in a performance so distinctive as to make me want to hear anything she does. [www.vocalartsdc.org](http://www.vocalartsdc.org)

**Anniversary notes.** It's a good year for anniversaries: The Library of Congress and the Phillips Collection's music series are celebrating theirs as well (90 and 75 years, respectively). To commemorate, the two institutions issued two commissions to one great composer: Frederic Rzewski, whose name is edging its way into the established canon, thanks not least to the increasing recognition of his masterful variations "The People United Will Never Be Defeated!" (which the pianist Igor Levit recently juxtaposed with Bach's Goldberg Variations and Beethoven's Diabellis on a recording for Sony). The two new pieces, both for violin and piano, will have back-to-back performances by significant artists: Jennifer Koh and Benjamin Hochman will play

the first at the Library of Congress on April 30, and Koh and Ursula Oppens will offer the second at the Phillips on May 1. [www.loc.gov/concerts/](http://www.loc.gov/concerts/), [www.phillipscollection.org](http://www.phillipscollection.org)

**Little big man.** Another notable premiere, for another notable anniversary, is a new work by the composer David T. Little, a darling of the new-music scene largely because of the success of his opera "Dog Days." Little, who teaches and heads the new-music program at Shenandoah University, has written a new piece for the ensemble Eighth Blackbird — a group that perhaps no longer counts as a young new-music group, as it celebrates its own 20th anniversary in 2016. "Ghostlight," which the composer describes as a departure, draws from interviews he conducted with members of the ensemble; it will be paired with "Murder Ballades" by Bryce Dessner, guitarist with the band The National and a successful alt-classical composer, and performed at the Kennedy Center on March 7.

**The classics.** Of course I have to mention at least one of the giants in the field. Mariss Jansons and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra are coming to the Kennedy Center on April 12. The program is simple: Korngold's oh-so-sweet violin concerto, played by Leonidas Kavakos, and Mahler's Fifth Symphony. The Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra is the BMW of classical ensembles; Jansons, one of the greatest conductors out there. Yes, they could do something more adventurous, but you won't find anyone who does this repertoire much better. [www.washingtonperformingarts.org](http://www.washingtonperformingarts.org).

[anne.midgette@washpost.com](mailto:anne.midgette@washpost.com)



# Classical Music

## Critic's choice

➤ Critic's recommendations are indicated by arrows. View a gallery of scenes from the hottest spring shows, and access our interactive listings to find the latest showtimes, venue information and more events at [washingtonpost.com/springarts](http://washingtonpost.com/springarts).

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14

## ➤ "Hamlet."

Opera Delaware presents a production of Franco Faccio's "Hamlet." At Opera Delaware Through May 22.

