

# Season 2012-2013

**Friday, February 1, at 8:00**  
**Saturday, February 2,**  
**at 8:00**

## The Philadelphia Orchestra

**Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos** Conductor  
**André Watts** Piano

**Bach/orch. Stokowski** "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme"

**Beethoven** Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat major, Op. 73  
 ("Emperor")  
 I. Allegro  
 II. Adagio un poco mosso—  
 III. Rondo: Allegro

### Intermission

**Hindemith** Concert Music for Strings and Brass, Op. 50  
 I. Part I: Mässig schnell, mit Kraft—Sehr breit,  
 aber stets fleissend  
 II. Part II: Lebhaft—Langsam—Im ersten  
 Zeitmass (Lebhaft)

**Liszt** *Les Préludes*, Symphonic Poem No. 3

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 50 minutes.

The February 2 concert is sponsored by  
**Medcomp.**

# The Philadelphia Orchestra



Renowned for its distinctive sound, beloved for its keen ability to capture the hearts and imaginations of audiences, and admired for an unrivaled legacy of “firsts” in music-making, The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the preeminent orchestras in the world.

The Philadelphia Orchestra has cultivated an extraordinary history of artistic leaders in its 112 seasons, including music directors Fritz Scheel, Carl Pohlig, Leopold Stokowski, Eugene Ormandy, Riccardo Muti, Wolfgang Sawallisch, and Christoph Eschenbach, and Charles Dutoit, who served as chief conductor from 2008 to 2012. With the 2012-13 season, Yannick Nézet-Séguin becomes the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Named music director designate in 2010, Nézet-Séguin brings a vision that extends beyond symphonic music into the

vivid world of opera and choral music.

Philadelphia is home and the Orchestra nurtures an important relationship not only with patrons who support the main season at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts but also those who enjoy the Orchestra’s other area performances at the Mann Center, Penn’s Landing, and other venues. The Philadelphia Orchestra Association also continues to own the Academy of Music—a National Historic Landmark—as it has since 1957.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, presentations, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador for Philadelphia and for the United States. Having been the first American orchestra to perform in China, in 1973 at the request of President Nixon, today The Philadelphia

Orchestra boasts a new partnership with the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing. The Orchestra annually performs at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center while also enjoying a three-week residency in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., and a strong partnership with the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival.

The ensemble maintains an important Philadelphia tradition of presenting educational programs for students of all ages. Today the Orchestra executes a myriad of education and community partnership programs serving nearly 50,000 annually, including its Neighborhood Concert Series, Sound All Around and Family Concerts, and eZseatU.

For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit [www.philorch.org](http://www.philorch.org).

# Music Director



Jessica Griffin

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** became the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra with the start of the 2012-13 season. Named music director designate in June 2010, he made his Orchestra debut in December 2008. Over the past decade, Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most exciting talents of his generation. Since 2008 he has been music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic and principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic, and since 2000 artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain. He has appeared with such revered ensembles as the Vienna and Berlin philharmonics; the Boston Symphony; the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia; the Dresden Staatskapelle; the Chamber Orchestra of Europe; and the major Canadian orchestras. His talents extend beyond symphonic music into opera and choral music, leading acclaimed performances at the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, London's Royal Opera House, and the Salzburg Festival.

Highlights of Yannick's inaugural season include his Carnegie Hall debut with the Verdi Requiem, one world premiere, and performances of *The Rite of Spring* in collaboration with New York-based Ridge Theater, complete with dancers, video projection, and theatrical lighting.

In July 2012 Yannick and Deutsche Grammophon announced a major long-term collaboration. His discography with the Rotterdam Philharmonic for BIS Records and EMI/Virgin includes an Edison Award-winning album of Ravel's orchestral works. He has also recorded several award-winning albums with the Orchestre Métropolitain for ATMA Classique. In addition, his first recording with The Philadelphia Orchestra, Mahler's Symphony No. 5, is available for download.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied at that city's Conservatory of Music and continued studies with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini and with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. In 2012 Yannick was appointed a Companion of the Order of Canada, one of the country's highest civilian honors. His other honors include Canada's National Arts Centre Award; a Royal Philharmonic Society Award; the Prix Denise-Pelletier, the highest distinction for the arts in Quebec; and an honorary doctorate by the University of Quebec in Montreal.

To read Yannick's full bio, please visit [www.philorch.org/conductor](http://www.philorch.org/conductor).

# Conductor



Steve J. Sherman

The 79-year-old **Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos** made his American debut with The Philadelphia Orchestra on Valentine's Day in 1969. Since then he has led the Philadelphians in more than 150 performances. A regular guest with all of North America's top orchestras, he conducts the New York and Los Angeles philharmonics and the Boston, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Toronto symphonies in the 2012-13 season. He appears annually at the Tanglewood Music Festival and regularly with the Chicago and National symphonies. From 2004 to 2011 he was chief conductor and artistic director of the Dresden Philharmonic. This is his first season as chief conductor of the Danish National Orchestra.

Born in Burgos, Spain, Mr. Frühbeck studied violin, piano, music theory, and composition at the conservatories in Bilbao and Madrid; he studied conducting at Munich's Hochschule für Musik where he graduated summa cum laude and was awarded the Richard Strauss Prize. Named Conductor of the Year by *Musical America* in 2011, he has received numerous other honors and distinctions, including the Gold Medal of the City of Vienna; Germany's Order of Merit; the Gold Medal from the Gustav Mahler International Society; and the Jacinto Guerrero Prize, Spain's most important musical award, conferred in 1997 by the Queen of Spain. In 1998 Mr. Frühbeck was appointed emeritus conductor of the Spanish National Orchestra. He has an honorary doctorate from the University of Navarra in Spain and since 1975 has been a member of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid.

Mr. Frühbeck has made tours with ensembles including London's Philharmonia, the London Symphony, the National Orchestra of Madrid, and the Swedish Radio Orchestra. He has toured North America with the Vienna Symphony, the Spanish National Orchestra, and the Dresden Philharmonic. Mr. Frühbeck has recorded extensively for EMI, Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, Spanish Columbia, and Orfeo. Several of his recordings are considered to be classics, including his interpretations of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and *St. Paul*, Mozart's Requiem, Orff's *Carmina burana*, Bizet's *Carmen*, and the complete works of Spanish composer Manuel de Falla.

# Soloist

Steve J. Sherman



At the age of 16 pianist **André Watts** was chosen by Leonard Bernstein to make his debut with the New York Philharmonic in one of their Young People's Concerts, broadcast nationwide on CBS-TV. Only two weeks later he was in the spotlight again when Bernstein asked him to substitute at the last minute for the ailing Glenn Gould in performances of Liszt's E-flat Concerto with the Philharmonic. Those momentous events launched his career, but he had already been discovered by The Philadelphia Orchestra six years earlier: He made his debut with the Philadelphians in 1957, as a 10-year-old winner of the Orchestra's Children's Student Competition. He has since appeared with the Orchestra over 100 times.

Fifty years later Mr. Watts remains a perennial favorite with orchestras throughout the U.S. In addition to performances with The Philadelphia Orchestra at home and on tour in Florida, highlights of his 2012-13 season include return visits to the New York Philharmonic and the Detroit and Cincinnati symphonies. He is a regular guest at the major summer music festivals. He is also a frequent performer on television and has appeared in numerous programs produced by PBS, the BBC, and the Arts and Entertainment Network. Mr. Watts's extensive discography includes recordings of works by Gershwin, Chopin, Liszt, and Tchaikovsky for CBS Masterworks; recital CDs of works by Beethoven, Schubert, Liszt, and Chopin for Angel/EMI; and recordings featuring the concertos of Liszt, MacDowell, Tchaikovsky, and Saint-Saëns on the Telarc label. He is also included in the Great Pianists of the 20th Century series for Philips.

Mr. Watts studied at the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University and at age 26 became the youngest person ever to receive an honorary doctorate from Yale University. He is the recipient of the 1988 Avery Fisher Prize. In 2004 he was appointed to the newly-created Jack I. and Dora B. Hamlin Endowed Chair in Music at Indiana University. In 2006 he was inducted into the Hollywood Bowl of Fame to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his professional debut with The Philadelphia Orchestra. Mr. Watts received a 2011 National Medal of Arts from President Obama for outstanding contributions to the arts in the United States.

# Framing the Program

## Parallel Events

**1731**

**Bach**

“Wachet auf”

**Music**

Pergolesi

Magnificat

**Literature**

Prévost

*Manon Lescaut*

**Art**

Hogarth

*The Harlot's*

*Progress*

**History**

Treaty of Vienna

**1809**

**Beethoven**

“Emperor”

Concerto

**Music**

Spontini

*Fernand Cortez*

**Literature**

Iving

*Rip van Winkle*

**Art**

Constable

*Malvern Hill*

**History**

Napoleon

annexes Papal

States

**1930**

**Hindemith**

Concert Music

for Strings and

Brass

**Music**

Stravinsky

*Symphony of*

*Psalms*

**Literature**

Hammett

*The Maltese*

*Falcon*

**Art**

Matisse

*Tiaré*

**History**

Pluto

discovered

The program this evening covers exactly 200 years of German music as composed by four masters, beginning with the great Johann Sebastian Bach. This season The Philadelphia Orchestra celebrates the centennial of Leopold Stokowski's appointment in 1912 as its third music director. Among the many celebrated orchestrations of Bach's music that Stokowski crafted for the Philadelphians is “Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme” or “Awake, the Voice Calls to Us.”

While Beethoven had written his first four piano concertos for his own use, to dazzle audiences as a composer and performer, by the time of his last one—the mighty No. 5 known as the “Emperor”—deafness had forced a retreat from public performance. With this magnificent Concerto Beethoven continued to challenge the expectations of his time by creating virtuoso music of real substance.

Paul Hindemith is the most recent composer represented tonight. His brilliant two-part Concert Music for Strings and Brass, written to honor the 50th anniversary of the Boston Symphony, is a tribute to the virtuosity of the modern orchestra, pushing the limits as the other composers on the program had done before him.

Franz Liszt was a pioneer in the Romantic genre of the symphonic poem, of which he altogether composed 13. The most famous of them is *Les Préludes*, which explores the external question “Is our life anything but a series of Preludes to that unknown song whose first and solemn note is intoned by death?”

# The Music

“Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme”



**Johann Sebastian Bach**  
**Born in Eisenach,**  
**March 21, 1685**  
**Died in Leipzig, July 28,**  
**1750**

Leopold Stokowski, conductor of The Philadelphia Orchestra from 1912 to 1941, orchestrated an astounding range of great music. Due to the enormous influence of Walt Disney's *Fantasia* (1940)—which begins with a striking image of Stokowski conducting Johann Sebastian Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor—his transcriptions became emblems of the conductor's long relationship with Philadelphia and its orchestra. Stokowski was particularly drawn to the music of Bach, especially compositions for organ. (That was his own instrument—when Stokowski emigrated from England to America he served as organist at St. Bartholomew's Church in New York City.) Another inspiring source were Bach's cantatas, most of which he composed in Leipzig for weekly use in the Sunday service. The assignment was akin to writing a musical sermon, to meditate musically on the relevant scripture reading for the day.

It was long assumed that Bach wrote his great quantity of cantatas by spreading their composition over the course of his nearly 30 years in Leipzig. Then it was discovered that he actually wrote most of them during his initial years there, and rarely produced others later unless for a special occasion or to accommodate a particular textual setting. The latter is the case with one of his most famous cantatas: No. 140, “Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme” (Awake, the Voice Calls to Us). This is the cantata meant for the 27th Sunday after Trinity, which happens relatively rarely. Easter can fall between March 22 and April 25, which means that a 27th Sunday after Trinity (the first Sunday after Pentecost, eight weeks after Easter) occurs only in those years when Easter is on one of the first five days. During Bach's tenure in Leipzig that happened in 1731 and 1742 and it was for the first of these years, on November 25, that he composed “Wachet auf.”

The melody and words of the famous chorale were written by Philipp Nicolai in 1599 and would have been familiar to Bach's congregants in Leipzig. The text relates the story, told in Matthew 25, of the wise and foolish virgins, five of whom are prepared for their bridegrooms, five of whom are not. Bach's cantata is in seven movements, with the chorale tune used in the grand opening one,

*Cantata 140 was composed in 1731.*

*The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of "Wachet auf" in Leopold Stokowski's orchestration were in March 1915, led by Stokowski.*

*Wolfgang Sawallisch led the work as an encore on the Orchestra's final subscription concert at the Academy of Music, in December 2001, and most recently Cristian Măcelaru conducted it at this season's Preview Concert in October.*

*This orchestration was recorded by the Orchestra and Sawallisch in 1995 for EMI.*

*The score calls for three flutes (III doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, five horns, four trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, harp, and strings.*

*"Wachet auf" runs approximately five minutes in performance.*

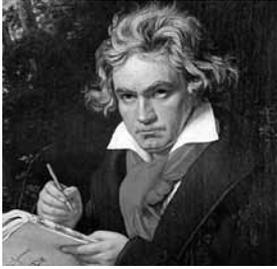
in the middle movement, and in the simple finale in which everyone could sing along. The famous fourth movement that Stokowski transformed initially unfolds with the violins and violas playing a long and winding melody against which the tenors (Stokowski uses brass instruments) intone the chorale's second verse: "Zion hears the watchman singing."

"Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme" was Stokowski's earliest Bach orchestration—the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances were in March 1915. When it came to musical transformations of the piece, however, Bach and others had already beaten him to it. Bach transcribed the cantata movement for organ as the first of his six so-called Schübler Chorales (BWV 645), named after the publisher who released the works in the late 1740s.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

# The Music

## Piano Concerto No. 5 (“Emperor”)



**Ludwig van Beethoven**  
**Born in Bonn, probably**  
**December 16, 1770**  
**Died in Vienna, March 26,**  
**1827**

As Mozart had discovered some two decades earlier, piano concertos offered the ideal vehicle to display both performing and composing gifts, including those of improvisation in the unaccompanied cadenza sections heard near the end of certain movements. Beethoven wrote far fewer keyboard concertos than the some two dozen of his model Mozart, although his involvement goes beyond the five canonic works most familiar today. In 1804-05 he wrote his “Triple” Concerto, for piano, violin, and cello, and he later made a piano arrangement of his Violin Concerto. What we might call Beethoven’s Piano Concerto “No. 0” in E-flat, his true first concerto, he composed as a young man in his native Bonn and although only the piano part survives with some instrumental cues, an orchestration has been reconstructed; a few available recordings of this curiosity give a good idea of how the 13-year-old composer sought to emulate Mozart.

These works span the first half of Beethoven’s public career, taking him from the time of his first fame as a piano virtuoso to the point where he was generally recognized by musicians and critics as the greatest living composer. There is some poetic justice, therefore, in the fact that he composed his last concerto, the so-called “Emperor,” in 1809, the year that Haydn died. For even though Haydn had not composed in years, proper reverence was due to Beethoven’s former teacher as long as he lived.

Beethoven’s last piano concerto (he abandoned work on a later Sixth Concerto in D major) is the only one he did not write for his own use as soloist. By 1809 his hearing had deteriorated to such an extent that he rarely played piano in public and could hardly have negotiated the challenges of this extraordinarily demanding piece. No longer performing concertos himself, he now finally got around to writing cadenzas for his earlier ones. Those of the “Emperor” are built into the fabric from the beginning.

**What’s in a Name?** The nickname “Emperor,” like many others attached to Beethoven’s music (e.g. the “Moonlight” Sonata), has no authority with the composer. While there is a definite militaristic flavor at moments in the Concerto, similar gestures can be found in all

Beethoven composed the *E-flat major Piano Concerto* in 1809.

The piece was first performed by The Philadelphia Orchestra with Constantin von Sternberg as soloist and Fritz Scheel conducting, in March 1903 during the Orchestra's first cycle of the complete Beethoven symphonies. The Fifth was last performed on subscription concerts in December 2007, with pianist Hélène Grimaud and James Conlon.

The "Emperor" Concerto was recorded by The Philadelphia Orchestra twice, both for CBS: in 1950 with Rudolf Serkin and Eugene Ormandy, and in 1958 with Eugene Istomin and Ormandy.

The composer scored the work for an orchestra of two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings, in addition to the solo piano.

Beethoven's Fifth Concerto runs approximately 40 minutes in performance.

his previous ones as well. In this case, the associations were more current: Napoleon's troops had staged their second siege of Vienna in May 1809. The loud mortar-fire continued through the summer, and caused Beethoven particular distress because of his hearing. In July he wrote to his publisher: "Let me tell you that since May 4th I have produced very little coherent work, at most a fragment here and there. The whole course of events has in my case affected both body and soul. I cannot yet give myself up to the enjoyment of the country life which is so indispensable for me. . . . What a destructive, disorderly life I see and hear around me, nothing but drums, cannons, and human misery in every form."

In other respects, however, Beethoven's fortunes, literally and figuratively, were rising. In March 1809 he had been granted an annuity contract from three of his generous aristocratic patrons who pledged their financial support for the rest of his life. Free for the first time from financial cares, Beethoven's professional fame was reaching its summit. He finished the "Emperor" Concerto late in the year and dedicated it to his student, patron, and friend Archduke Rudolph. The first known performance of the piece took place in Leipzig in late 1810, with Johann Schneider at the keyboard. The *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* stated that the Concerto caused such enthusiasm "that [the audience] could hardly content itself with the ordinary expressions of recognition." Still, many contemporaries considered it too difficult, as they did other of Beethoven's works from this period. "The immense length of the Concerto," wrote the same critic, "robs it of the impact that a product of this gigantic intellect would otherwise have upon its hearers."

**A Closer Look** Beethoven opens the Concerto (**Allegro**) in a way like no other: It is not so much the unusual ploy of having the piano appear at the beginning (something he had already done in his Fourth Concerto), but rather that the piano essentially plays virtuoso cadenza-like material, music that traditionally belongs at the end rather than the beginning. After three opening flourishes alternating between orchestra and piano, the ensemble states a vigorous first theme. In the coloristic **Adagio**, the piano emerges from the extremes of its register, *pianissimo*, to state a melody with the quality of a hymn. Beethoven forges ahead without a break into the **Allegro** finale in which the piano first presents the buoyant theme.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

# The Music

## Concert Music for Strings and Brass



**Paul Hindemith**  
Born in Hanau, Germany,  
November 16, 1895  
Died in Frankfurt,  
December 28, 1963

Pride shines in this music. Serge Koussevitzky, who had become chief conductor of the Boston Symphony in 1924, was determined to make his orchestra's 50th anniversary season of 1930-31 a celebration, and to that end he commissioned works from 10 leading composers. Among the results—along with Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, Copland's *Symphonic Ode*, Roussel's *Third Symphony*, Honegger's *First*, Hanson's *Second*, and Prokofiev's *Fourth*—was this piece by Hindemith, the only German invitee.

**A Title with a Double Meaning** The German word *Konzert* can mean either "concert" or "concerto," and both connotations are wrapped up in Hindemith's title: This is "concert music" that is also "concerted music," music disposing its forces in the manner of a concerto. In 1925 Hindemith had written what seems to have been the earliest concerto for orchestra, his Op. 38. The next year came his first use of the title *Konzertmusik*, above a score for military band. And in 1930 he composed the present work as the last of three pieces with the same name, the others being for viola and large chamber orchestra (Op. 48, which he wrote for himself as soloist), and for piano, brass, and two harps (Op. 49, for the Chicago Symphony). Certainly the pride was also his, writing for the first time for leading orchestras outside Germany.

For most of his earlier orchestral works (his Op. 38 being unusual in this regard) Hindemith had devised a particular chamber orchestra or ensemble of soloists: Notable examples include the seven pieces of 1922-27 to which he gave the title *Kammermusik* (Chamber Music). His reasons for preferring such reduced groupings seem to have been both practical and philosophical, having to do with the economic malfunctioning in Germany at the time, with his feeling of proximity to Baroque music, and with his sense for what would sound well when heard, via radio or recording, through a loudspeaker.

**Music's New Future** Like other German composers, he had come to feel during the 1920s that music's future lay with these new media. Concerts, it then seemed, would have to become redundant, now that a single musical performance could be heard, potentially, by millions. Live

music would only survive—and might even be reborn—as an activity for amateurs. Hence the stress Hindemith placed, in the late 1920s, on music for radio and for amateur musicians. As he put it in a letter of May 1930 to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, who had commissioned the piece for Chicago: “In recent years, I have almost entirely turned away from concert music and composed nearly exclusively music with pedagogical or social tendencies; for amateurs, children, broadcast, mechanical instruments, etc. I hold this sort of composition to be more important than writing for concert uses because the latter usually serve only as a technical task for the musicians and have hardly anything to do with the advancement of music.”

**A Closer Look** He was on the point, though, of changing his mind—and indeed of rejoicing in a new embrace of the professional symphonic world, if we may judge by the fresh, frank energy he brought to this *Konzertmusik* for Strings and Brass. The work is effectively a concerto for these two most homogeneous orchestral families, which take turns in the leading role. The first of the two parts begins with an oration for pairs of trumpets and trombones in octaves, with strings accompanying. After this, the full brass section, without strings, gives out and plays with a fanfare idea. There follows a short development, again brassy, with only the basses involved from among the strings. The whole outline is then repeated, with considerable variation—not least in that the strings are now to the fore: Indeed, in the “oration” they are alone. The “fanfare” episode has both groupings fully and equally involved for the first time, but the strings recover their dominance in the second development and maintain it into the coda, where the “oration” returns verbatim, now played by strings reinforced by horns.

A passage in lively fugal style opens the second part, again carried by the strings, though with notable comments from the brass. The first of these, introduced by brisk, emphatic chords, is a horn duet reflecting the U.S. popular music that had been important to Hindemith for several years. Some while later, the fugue peters out to be replaced by a new tune, heard twice on the strings and the third time taken up by trumpets. But again the ebullience comes to an end, now giving way to a slow section, whose melody, marked “very tender,” is played three times: first by the violas, then by the first trombone with completion in the strings, and finally by the full violin section, whose greater force retreats as a solo trumpet takes over. After that, the fugue comes back, but it is

*Hindemith composed the Concert Music for Strings and Brass in 1930.*

*The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work were in December 1949/January 1950, with Leonard Bernstein conducting. Most recently it was performed in February 2005; Wolfgang Sawallisch led the Orchestra.*

*The Philadelphians recorded the Concert Music twice, both with Eugene Ormandy: in 1953 for CBS and in 1978 for EMI.*

*Hindemith scored the work for four horns, four trumpets, three trombones, tuba, and strings.*

*The Concert Music for Strings and Brass runs approximately 17 minutes in performance.*

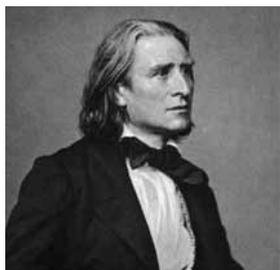
changed and fails to generate the impetus that will continue into the perky tune as before. The music seems to be running out of steam, and a single attempt at the tune, made by the first trombone, fails to revive it. What does work is an expansion of the earlier horn duet into an apotheosis of the big band, saluting elements from throughout the movement as it spreads toward a close in D-flat major (the equivalent to the C-sharp major on which the first part had ended).

The work was warmly received by its early critics, some of whom expressed surprise at this previously spiky, iconoclastic composer's reachievement of traditional tonality and his full espousal of the big gesture. Of course, those critics could not know that Hindemith was on a new path, one that would soon lead to the symphony *Mathis der Maler* (1933-34) and the viola concerto *Der Schwanendreher* (1935). By 1938, when he re-encountered the work on a visit to Boston, it was long in the past: "I was pleasantly surprised, for I hardly remembered it. It is serious but at the same time very lively; it always sounds clear and is not at all ugly."

—Paul Griffiths

# The Music

## *Les Préludes*



**Franz Liszt**  
**Born in Raiding, near**  
**Sopron (Hungary),**  
**October 22, 1811**  
**Died in Bayreuth, July 31,**  
**1886**

Forty years before Richard Strauss began writing works that he called “symphonic poems,” the term was coined to describe the works of a composer whose *sinfonische Dichtungen* Strauss would later admire—Franz Liszt, the flamboyant virtuoso pianist, conductor, Wagnerite, and quasi-mystic whose role in the innovations of 19th-century Romanticism has often been sorely undervalued. In April 1854 a critic used the term “symphonic poem” to describe *Tasso*, another of Liszt’s pioneering tone pictures; the composer became enamored of the term, in various languages. “Härtel is going to engrave several of my scores,” Liszt wrote in a letter that year, “under the title of *Poèmes Symphoniques*.” Implicit in the traditional idea of a symphonic poem is a literary program, or illustration, or story; Liszt’s works, however, are more in the nature of conceptualized reflections on a literary character or idea, with few of the specifically illustrative gestures found in program works of Berlioz or Strauss.

As with Wagner and the other Romantics, literature was at the core of a great deal of Liszt’s music. *Les Préludes* had its origins in 1848 as an introduction to *The Four Elements*, a choral piece based on a poem of Joseph Autran. When Liszt later formed this orchestral overture into a separate work in 1854, he cited the influence of the poet Alphonse de Lamartine’s *Méditations poétiques*, in which life itself was conceived, in true Romantic fashion, as a series of “preludes to death.” This revised version was first performed in Weimar on February 23, 1854, as *Les Préludes*.

“Is our life anything but a series of Preludes to that unknown song whose first and solemn note is intoned by death?” wrote Liszt in the printed score of *Les Préludes*, alluding to Lamartine’s thought. “Love is the enchanted dawn of all existence; but where is the fate for which the first delights of happiness are never interrupted by some storm, whose mortal breath dissipates its beautiful illusions, whose fatal lightning-blast destroys its altar? And where is the soul which, cruelly wounded, does not seek, at the coming of one of these storms, to calm its memories in the tranquil life of the country? Yet a man cannot long resign himself to the kindly tedium that has

*Les Préludes* was composed from 1848 to 1854.

*Fritz Scheel* was conductor in the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work, in March 1901. Most recently on a subscription series it was performed in October 1997, with *Wolfgang Sawallisch* on the podium.

The Orchestra has recorded the work four times: in 1937 with *Eugene Ormandy* for RCA; in 1946 with *Ormandy* for CBS; in 1983 with *Riccardo Muti* for EMI; and in 1999 with *Sawallisch* for *Water Lily Acoustics*.

The score calls for three flutes (III doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drum), harp, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 16 minutes.

at first charmed him in the companionship of nature, and when 'the trumpet has sounded the signal of alarms,' he hastens to the post of peril, whatever may be the strife which calls him to the ranks, in order to regain in combat the full consciousness of himself and the complete command of his powers."

*Les Préludes* begins with two plucked notes that lead to an elusive opening phrase in the double basses, which is reformulated into a vigorous and martial principal subject with brass and winds. Horns, strings, and harp sound a theme representing the happiness of love. A stormy climax tosses us upon a sea of chromaticism; calm is restored, with an oboe seeming to reflect the tranquility of country life. An agitated conclusion gives way to an affirming coda.

—Paul J. Horsley

# Musical Terms

## GENERAL TERMS

**Cadenza:** A passage or section in a style of brilliant improvisation, usually inserted near the end of a movement or composition

**Chorale:** A hymn tune of the German Protestant Church, or one similar in style

**Chord:** The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

**Chromatic:** Relating to tones foreign to a given key (scale) or chord

**Coda:** A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

**Fugue:** A piece of music in which a short melody is stated by one voice and then imitated by the other voices in succession, reappearing throughout the entire piece in all the voices at different places

**Octave:** The interval between any two notes that are seven diatonic (non-chromatic) scale degrees apart

**Op.:** Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output. Opus

numbers are not always reliable because they are often applied in the order of publication rather than composition.

**Rondo:** A form frequently used in symphonies and concertos for the final movement. It consists of a main section that alternates with a variety of contrasting sections (A-B-A-C-A etc.).

**Scherzo:** Literally "a joke." Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid tempo in triple time, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts.

**Sonata form:** The form in which the first movements (and sometimes others) of symphonies are usually cast. The sections are exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last sometimes followed by a coda. The exposition is the introduction of the musical ideas, which are then "developed." In

the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.

## **Symphonic poem:**

A type of 19th-century symphonic piece in one movement, which is based upon an extramusical idea, either poetic or descriptive

**Toccata:** Literally "to touch." A piece intended as a display of manual dexterity, often free in form and almost always for a solo keyboard instrument.

## THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

### **Aber stets fleissend:**

But always flowing, smooth

**Adagio:** Leisurely, slow

**Allegro:** Bright, fast

**Breit:** Broadly

### **Im ersten Zeitmass:**

Original tempo

**Langsam:** Slow

**Lebhaft:** Animated, lively

**Mässig:** Moderately

**Mit Kraft:** Vigorously,

forcefully

**Mosso:** Moved (faster)

**Schnell:** Fast

## TEMPO MODIFIERS

**Sehr:** Very

**Un poco:** A little

## DYNAMIC MARKS

**Pianissimo:** Very soft

# February

The Philadelphia Orchestra



Tickets are disappearing fast for these amazing concerts! Order your tickets today.

## Carmina burana

**February 14 & 16** 8 PM  
**February 15** 2 PM

**Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos** Conductor

**David Bilger** Trumpet

**Erin Morley** Soprano

**Nicholas Phan** Tenor

**Hugh Russell** Baritone

**The Philadelphia Singers Choral**

**The American Boychoir**

**Haydn** Symphony No. 1

**Hummel** Trumpet Concerto

**Orff** *Carmina burana*

## The Rite of Spring

**February 21 & 23** 8 PM  
**February 24** 2 PM

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** Conductor

**Jean-Yves Thibaudet** Piano

**Ridge Theater**

**Bob McGrath** Artistic Director

**Program includes:**

**Ravel** Piano Concerto in G major

**Stravinsky** *The Rite of Spring*

**TICKETS** Call 215.893.1999 or log on to [www.philorch.org](http://www.philorch.org)

PreConcert Conversations are held prior to every Philadelphia Orchestra subscription concert, beginning 1 hour before curtain.

All artists, dates, programs, and prices subject to change. All tickets subject to availability.