

# Season 2015-2016

**Friday, November 27,  
at 8:00**

**Saturday, November 28,  
at 8:00**

## The Philadelphia Orchestra

**Gianandrea Noseda** Conductor  
**Simon Trpčeski** Piano

**Rossini** Overture to *The Thieving Magpie*

**Rachmaninoff** Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43,  
for piano and orchestra

### Intermission

**Casella** Symphony No. 2 in C minor, Op. 12  
I. Lento, grave, solenne—Allegro energico  
II. Allegro molto vivace  
III. Adagio, quasi andante  
IV. Finale: Tempo di marcia ben risoluto, con  
fuoco—  
Epilogo: Adagio mistico—Con tutta l'intensità  
di espressione possibile—Maestoso. Trionfale.  
Con tutta l'energia sino alla fine  
*United States premiere*

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 50 minutes.

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90.1 FM on Sunday afternoons at 1 PM. Visit [WRTI.org](http://WRTI.org) to  
listen live or for more details.

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director

JUST ANNOUNCED

## The Philadelphia Orchestra presents the Capitol Steps

Sunday, January 3 2 PM

Verizon Hall



The Capitol Steps, a Washington, D.C.-based political comedy troupe, perform a hilarious lineup of songs providing a unique blend of musical and political comedy. Their show consists of tasteful lampooning guaranteed to leave both sides of the political spectrum laughing.

Please note The Philadelphia Orchestra does not perform on this concert.

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# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Jeffrey Griffin



The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the preeminent orchestras in the world, renowned for its distinctive sound, desired for its keen ability to capture the hearts and imaginations of audiences, and admired for a legacy of imagination and innovation on and off the concert stage. The Orchestra is transforming its rich tradition of achievement, sustaining the highest level of artistic quality, but also challenging—and exceeding—that level by creating powerful musical experiences for audiences at home and around the world.

Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin's highly collaborative style, deeply-rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm, paired with a fresh approach to orchestral programming, have been heralded by critics and audiences alike since his inaugural season in 2012. Under his leadership the Orchestra returned to recording, with two celebrated CDs on the prestigious Deutsche Grammophon label, continuing its history of recording success. The

Orchestra also reaches thousands of listeners on the radio with weekly Sunday afternoon broadcasts on WRTI-FM.

Philadelphia is home and the Orchestra nurtures an important relationship with patrons who support the main season at the Kimmel Center, and also with those who enjoy the Orchestra's area performances at the Mann Center, Penn's Landing, and other cultural, civic, and learning venues. The Orchestra maintains a strong commitment to collaborations with cultural and community organizations on a regional and national level.

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, The Philadelphia Orchestra today boasts a new partnership with the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing. The ensemble annually performs at

Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center while also enjoying summer residencies in Saratoga Springs, New York, and Vail, Colorado.

The Philadelphia Orchestra serves as a catalyst for cultural activity across Philadelphia's many communities, as it builds an offstage presence as strong as its onstage one. The Orchestra's award-winning Collaborative Learning initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members through programs such as PlayINs, side-by-sides, PopUp concerts, free Neighborhood Concerts, School Concerts, and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad. The Orchestra's musicians, in their own dedicated roles as teachers, coaches, and mentors, serve a key role in growing young musician talent and a love of classical music, nurturing and celebrating the wealth of musicianship in the Philadelphia region. For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit [www.philorch.org](http://www.philorch.org).

# Music Director

Chris Lee



Music Director **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is an inspired leader of The Philadelphia Orchestra, and he has renewed his commitment to the ensemble through the 2021-22 season. His highly collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm, paired with a fresh approach to orchestral programming, have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called him “phenomenal,” adding that under his baton, “the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better.” Highlights of his fourth season include a year-long exploration of works that exemplify the famous Philadelphia Sound, including Mahler’s Symphony No. 8 and other pieces premiered by the Orchestra; a Music of Vienna Festival; and the continuation of a commissioning project for principal players.

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling talents of his generation. He has been music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic since 2008 and artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000. He also continues to enjoy a close relationship with the London Philharmonic, of which he was principal guest conductor. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world’s most revered ensembles, and he has conducted critically acclaimed performances at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Deutsche Grammophon (DG) enjoy a long-term collaboration. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with two CDs on that label; the second, Rachmaninoff’s Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini with pianist Daniil Trifonov, was released in August 2015. He continues fruitful recording relationships with the Rotterdam Philharmonic on DG, EMI Classics, and BIS Records; the London Philharmonic and Choir for the LPO label; and the Orchestre Métropolitain for ATMA Classique.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied at that city’s Conservatory of Music and continued lessons with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini and with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick’s honors are appointments as Companion of the Order of Canada and Officer of the National Order of Quebec, a Royal Philharmonic Society Award, Canada’s National Arts Centre Award, the Prix Denise-Pelletier, Musical America’s 2016 Artist of the Year, and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec, the Curtis Institute of Music, and Westminster Choir College.

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

# Conductor



Bunbury, assac

*Musical America's* 2015 Conductor of the Year, **Gianandrea Noseda** has propelled the Teatro Regio Torino into the ranks of the leading opera houses of the world since becoming its music director in 2007. A regular guest conductor at many of the most renowned international orchestras, he is also principal guest conductor of the Israel Philharmonic, the De Sabata Guest Conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony, principal conductor of the Orquestra de Cadaqués, and artistic director of the Stresa Festival in Italy. He was at the helm of the BBC Philharmonic from 2002 to 2011. In 1997 he was appointed the first foreign principal guest conductor of the Mariinsky Theatre, a position he held for a decade. He has appeared with The Philadelphia Orchestra every season since his debut in December 2010, mostly recently in March 2015.

Under Mr. Noseda's leadership, the Teatro Regio has launched its first tours outside Torino with performances in Austria, China, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, and at the Edinburgh Festival for its United Kingdom debut. In December 2014 Mr. Noseda led the Teatro Regio in a historic first tour of North America, with concert performances of Rossini's *William Tell* in Chicago, Ann Arbor, Toronto, and at Carnegie Hall. Other recent performance highlights include his Berlin Philharmonic and Salzburg Festival debuts. Mr. Noseda's relationship with the Metropolitan Opera dates back to 2002. He has conducted many new productions at the Met, including, in 2014, Borodin's *Prince Igor* staged by Dmitri Tcherniakov and now available on DVD from Deutsche Grammophon. Also committed to young musicians, he led the European Union Youth Orchestra's European Tour in August 2015 with soprano Diana Damrau.

An exclusive Chandos artist, Mr. Noseda has a discography that includes nearly 40 recordings. His critically acclaimed *Musica Italiana* recording project, which he initiated 10 years ago, has chronicled underappreciated Italian repertoire of the 20th century and brought to light many masterpieces, including works by Alfredo Casella, Luigi Dallapiccola, Alfredo Petrassi, and Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari. Born in Milan, Mr. Noseda is a leading cultural ambassador for Italy and holds the honor of Cavaliere Ufficiale al Merito della Repubblica Italiana.

# Soloist



Simon Fowler

Macedonian pianist **Simon Trpčeski** made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2007. He has performed with many of the world's greatest orchestras and is praised not only for his impeccable technique and delicate expression, but also for his warm personality and commitment to strengthening Macedonia's cultural image. He is a frequent soloist in the U.K. with the London and City of Birmingham symphonies; the Royal Liverpool and London philharmonics; and the Philharmonia and Hallé orchestras. Other engagements with major European ensembles include the Royal Concertgebouw, the Russian National, and Bolshoi Theatre orchestras, and the Rotterdam Philharmonic. In North America he has performed with the New York and Los Angeles philharmonics; the Cleveland Orchestra; and the Boston, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Toronto, and Baltimore symphonies. Highlights of the 2015-16 season include a tour of Spain with the Helsinki Philharmonic and a U.K. tour with the Oslo Philharmonic.

Mr. Trpčeski has received widespread acclaim for his recital recordings on the EMI label. His first CD, released in 2002, features works by Tchaikovsky, Scriabin, Stravinsky, and Prokofiev. His concerto recording debut, in 2010 on the Avie label, showcases Rachmaninoff's Second and Third concertos with Vasily Petrenko and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. The album was awarded the Diapason d'Or and Classic FM's Editor's Choice award. His second Avie release features Rachmaninoff's First and Fourth concertos and the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini. His latest recording, Tchaikovsky's First and Second concertos, was released in 2014 on the Onyx Classics label.

With the special support of KulturOp—Macedonia's leading cultural and arts organization—and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Trpčeski works regularly with young musicians to cultivate the talent of the country's next generation of artists. In 2011 he was awarded the first-ever title National Artist of the Republic of Macedonia. Mr. Trpčeski is a graduate of the School of Music at the University of St. Cyril and St. Methodius in Skopje, where he currently makes his home with his family.

# Framing the Program

## Parallel Events

**1817**

**Rossini**

*The Thieving  
Magpie*

**Music**

Paganini  
Violin Concerto  
No. 1

**Literature**

Byron  
*Manfred*

**Art**

Constable  
*Flatford Mill*

**History**

Erie Canal  
begun

**1908**

**Casella**

Symphony  
No. 2

**Music**

Bartók  
String Quartet  
No. 1

**Literature**

Forster  
*A Room with a  
View*

**Art**

Chagall  
*Nu rouge*

**History**

First Model "T"  
produced

**1934**

**Rachmaninoff**

Paganini  
Rhapsody

**Music**

Hindemith  
*Mathis der Maler*

**Literature**

Graves  
*I Claudius*

**Art**

Dali  
*Cousine*

**History**

Lindbergh baby  
kidnapped

An Italian thread weaves through the concert tonight, beginning with Rossini's Overture to *The Thieving Magpie*. This charming work demonstrates why Rossini was the most popular composer in Europe during the early 19th century.

Rossini's contemporary, the great Italian violinist Niccolò Paganini, set new standards for instrumental virtuosity and became the era's "rock star" performer as he toured Europe. His Caprice in A minor for solo violin attracted many later composers. The most famous transformation of its alluring theme is Sergei Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, written for The Philadelphia Orchestra and premiered in 1934 with the composer as soloist under the baton of Leopold Stokowski.

Italian composer Alfredo Casella appeared as pianist and conductor with the Philadelphians several times during the 1920s. On the concert tonight we hear the American premiere of his Symphony No. 2, an immediately compelling piece that begins darkly with mysterious bells and ends magnificently with organ and a blaze of full orchestral glory. Composed in 1908 when Casella was living in Paris, the Symphony displays a deep devotion to Mahler's music, as well the influence of French Impressionism and Russian nationalist composers.

# The Music

## Overture to *The Thieving Magpie*



**Gioachino Rossini**

**Born in Pesaro, February 29,  
1792**

**Died in Paris, November 13,  
1868**

In 1813 the 21-year-old Rossini secured international acclaim with the success of his operas *Tancredi* and *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, both performed in Venice. In 1829, following the successful Parisian premiere of *William Tell*, the 37-year-old composer, at the height of his artistry, permanently retired from the opera stage. His reasons have remained inconclusive; speculation cites laziness, financial security, and ill health, which plagued him for the last 39 years of his life. By the time Rossini retired, he had composed nearly 40 operas in 37 years ... an extraordinary achievement.

Modern audiences have come to love Rossini's operas, especially his less serious works. Their rich interplay between characters and situations makes them the epitome of comic opera. In the late 18th century Italian *opera buffa*, a form that had matured in the Classical era, was in decline. The Romantic period would emphasize expression above form. The world of opera needed its own genius to start it down a corresponding new path. Along came Rossini.

**A Master of His Art** Rossini loved life and lived it fully, his robust and jovial nature carrying over to his works. Music was the means to his ends, and to support his lifestyle he composed one opera after another. His command over traditional musical theory was absolute, especially his understanding of harmony. And even though he often ignored formal rules, his practical nature knew the value of clear part-writing and precise orchestration. He was a musical innovator and left his imprint on a language that later composers would use. From the beginning, he was a consummate composer of overtures, many of which have earned an independent place in the concert hall.

*La gazza ladra* (The Thieving Magpie) is a tragic-comedy (the opera *semiseria* [semi-serious] popular at the time; it contains elements of comedy, but also of sorrow). It was based on a true incident in which a French servant girl (Ninetta) was executed as a thief, only to be exonerated after her death when it was discovered a magpie had stolen the items. In the opera's version of events, young Ninetta is accused of stealing a silver spoon, but due to circumstances she cannot prove her innocence without exposing her

Rossini composed *The Thieving Magpie* in 1817.

Thomas Beecham conducted the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Overture, in November 1941. Most recently on subscription it was presented in January 1998, with Leonard Slatkin on the podium.

The score calls for piccolo, flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, bass trombone, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drums, triangle) and strings.

The Overture runs approximately 10 minutes in performance.

father, an army deserter. In the nick of time, it is discovered that a pet magpie is the real culprit, but only after a dramatic scene in which Ninetta must choose whether to sacrifice her father's or her own life. The libretto, by Giovanni Gherardini, was based on the play *La Pie voleuse*, by Théodore d'Aubigny and Louis-Charles Caigniez.

Just prior to *The Thieving Magpie*, Rossini had an overwhelming success in Rome with *La Cenerentola* (Cinderella). He was thrilled that *The Thieving Magpie* was also a triumph with Milan audiences. According to Stendhal's *Life of Rossini*: "The composer declared that, notwithstanding his delight at the success of the work, he was utterly exhausted by the effort of bowing, literally hundreds of times, to an audience which, at every instant, had been interrupting the performance with its shouting and applause: *bravo maestro! evviva Rossini!*"

**A Closer Look** *The Thieving Magpie* is a perfect example of Rossini's mature style; a drama with an abundance of comic elements and a happy ending. The Overture perfectly establishes the proper fast paced mood for the action to follow. The introductory march, which is more elegant and refined than martial, leads to a spirited development built around very few themes. The breathless pace is broken by moments of relaxation, but the overall structure drives relentlessly to the end. The Overture, filled with original and striking ideas, begins with a stirring introduction of antiphonal snare drum rolls, after which we get the famous and inevitable Rossini crescendo. The lack of profundity in Rossini's characterizations of evil forces intentionally avoids the exaggerations of *buffo* style and the attitudes of *opera seria*.

A notorious procrastinator, Rossini noted: "I wrote the overture to *The Thieving Magpie* on the actual day of the first performance of the opera, under the guard of four stage-hands who had orders to throw my manuscript out of the window, page by page, as I wrote it, to the waiting copyist—and if I didn't supply the manuscript, they were to throw me out myself. Nothing excites inspiration like necessity; the presence of an anxious copyist and a despairing manager tearing out handfuls of his hair is a great help. In Italy in my day all managers were bald at thirty."

—Lyne S. Mazza

# The Music

## Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini



**Sergei Rachmaninoff**  
**Born in Semyonovo,**  
**Russia, April 1, 1873**  
**Died in Beverly Hills,**  
**March 28, 1943**

Sergei Rachmaninoff's five works for piano and orchestra span most of his career and are tied in intimate ways to The Philadelphia Orchestra, a long partnership immortalized on magnificent recordings featuring the composer as soloist. The four concertos hold somewhat unequal positions in the repertoire. On opposite ends are the First Concerto, which Rachmaninoff wrote as a teenager and later extensively revised, and his Fourth Concerto, which the Philadelphians premiered in 1927. The two middle concertos proved the most popular. The encouraging success of the Second in 1901 came at a transformative juncture in Rachmaninoff's career, following a nearly three-year compositional paralysis after the failure of his First Symphony. The Third Concerto proved another triumph in 1909 when it premiered in New York. Rachmaninoff composed his fifth and final piece for piano and orchestra, the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, for The Philadelphia Orchestra in 1934.

### **From Solo Violin to Full Orchestra and Piano**

Rachmaninoff wrote the Rhapsody that summer at his Swiss villa near Lucerne. At the time he described it as "not a 'concerto,' and its name is 'Symphonic Variations on a Theme of Paganini,'" which he changed to "Fantasy." But ultimately it was as a Rhapsody that Leopold Stokowski led the Philadelphians in the world premiere (in Baltimore) on November 7, 1934, with the composer as soloist. The forces recorded the piece on Christmas Eve. Rachmaninoff went on to write his final two orchestral works for the Orchestra as well: the Symphony No. 3 in 1936 and the magisterial Symphonic Dances in 1940.

Rachmaninoff had earlier been attracted to variation form and wrote substantial pieces based on themes by Chopin and Corelli. For the Rhapsody he chose a simple but ingenious tune that also seduced other composers: the Caprice No. 24 in A minor by Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840). The great Italian violinist, the first instrumental "rock star" of the 19th century, wrote a dazzling collection of 24 caprices for solo violin that explored everything that the instrument, and that he as a soloist, could do. In 1820 he published the pieces, on which he had worked for nearly two decades, as his Op. 1. Franz Liszt, who at age

*The Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini was composed in 1934.*

*Sergei Rachmaninoff was the soloist in the world premiere performance of the Rhapsody with The Philadelphia Orchestra and Leopold Stokowski, on November 7, 1934, in Baltimore. The most recent subscription performances were in December 2011, with Yuja Wang as soloist and Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducting.*

*Rachmaninoff's recording of this work and of his four concertos with the Philadelphians count among the monumental documents of the era. In addition to that recording made in 1934 with Stokowski for RCA, the Orchestra has recorded the Rhapsody four times: in 1958 with Philippe Entremont and Eugene Ormandy for CBS; in 1970 with Van Cliburn and Ormandy for RCA; in 1989 with Andrei Gavrilov and Riccardo Muti for EMI; and in 2015 with Daniil Trifonov and Nézet-Séguin for Deutsche Grammophon.*

*The scored calls for an orchestra of two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, orchestra bells, side drum, snare drum, triangle), harp, and strings, in addition to the solo piano.*

*The Rhapsody runs approximately 25 minutes in performance.*

20 was deeply inspired when he first witnessed Paganini perform at the Paris Opera and who aspired to become the “Paganini of the Piano,” transcribed some of the caprices for piano, as did Robert Schumann. More surprising and impressive are Johannes Brahms’s two sets of variations on the A-minor Caprice. Prominent 20th-century composers after Rachmaninoff, including Boris Blacher, Witold Lutosławski, Alfred Schnittke, and George Rochberg, took Modernist looks at Paganini’s alluring theme.

**A Closer Look** The original A-minor Caprice is itself a miniature set of variations. When Liszt and Schumann made their keyboard transcriptions, they closely followed Paganini—their challenge was finding effective ways to transfer violin virtuosity to the piano. Rachmaninoff, like Brahms, took a different approach by using the melody for an independent sequence of variations. Almost by definition variation sets begin with a statement of the principal theme in the simplest possible way so that listeners can grasp the basis for what follows. After a very brief introduction for the full orchestra, Rachmaninoff begins unusually with a pointillist variation (marked “precedente”) before the strings actually state the theme with unobtrusive piano support.

Rachmaninoff’s Rhapsody consists of 24 variations. The first seven are dispatched at a quick pace until things slow down with No. 7, in which the rich piano chords introduce another theme that plays a prominent role in what follows. This is the well-known plainchant *Dies irae* from the Requiem Mass for the Dead. Many composers, including Berlioz in his *Symphonie fantastique*, used the tune as a musical symbol for death. Rachmaninoff, who alluded to or quoted the medieval melody in other compositions, associated this motto not only with death but also with the violin’s longstanding connection to the devil.

Some years after writing the Rhapsody, Mikhail Fokine, the prominent Russian choreographer, used the piece for a ballet called *Paganini*. While in the planning stages Rachmaninoff suggested to him: “Why not resurrect the legend about Paganini, who, for perfection in his art and for a woman, sold his soul to an evil spirit?” He further remarked that “the variations which have the *Dies irae* represent the evil spirit.” Over the course of the 24 variations Rachmaninoff devises many ingenious transformations of the theme, the most famous being the beautiful 18th variation, which offers a lyrical inversion (upside-down) of the tune as the emotional climax of the Rhapsody.

# The Music

## Symphony No. 2



**Alfredo Casella**

**Born in Turin, Italy, July 25,  
1883**

**Died in Rome, March 5,  
1947**

The Germans can keep their symphonies—we have opera. This attitude was apparently prevalent among leading 19th-century Italian musicians. From Rossini through Bellini and Donizetti, to Verdi and Puccini, opera was almost the sole focus of these great composers' careers. Who remembers any 19th-century Italian symphony? Not many were composed (Donizetti wrote some) and none is often performed these days. The situation started to change late in the century with composers such as Giovanni Sgambati and Giuseppe Martucci and somewhat later when Ottorino Respighi began producing his vibrant orchestral tone poems.

Alfredo Casella, the youngest of these composers, was a key figure in trying to change Italian musical priorities. He wrote a handful of stage works (mainly ballets), but that was not his primary mission. Rather he hoped to advance Modernist styles in Italy, bringing the music and language of Mahler, Stravinsky, and others to his native country by arranging concerts, festivals, new music societies, and through his writings.

**An Italian in Paris** With the encouragement of Martucci and others he went off at the tender age of 13 to study in Paris, where he remained for nearly two decades. He studied with Gabriel Fauré at the Conservatory (Maurice Ravel and George Enesco were fellow students) and won top prizes in piano and harmony. Just as importantly, Casella encountered a great amount of music impossible to hear in Italy, from the Impressionist revelations of Debussy and Ravel to the shocking innovations of Stravinsky. Mahler's music became particularly important to him as he learned "by heart" all his symphonies written to date. He transcribed Mahler's Seventh Symphony for piano duet and played an important role in arranging for the first Paris performance of the Second Symphony in April 1910. When he sent Mahler some of his own scores, the composer was so impressed that he passed them on to his publisher in Vienna.

Casella's early music was overtly Romantic, influenced by Mahler, Richard Strauss, and the Russian "Mighty Five" (who included Modest Musorgsky and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov). He later took a more Modernist turn

and later still adopted Stravinsky's Neo-classicism. In 1905 he started writing his Symphony No. 1 in B minor, Op. 5, which he conducted in Monte Carlo. The Second Symphony, dedicated to Enesco, soon followed. As he recalled in his memoirs:

Toward summer [1908], I began the composition of a second symphony in C minor, on which I worked with great diligence. This score has remained unpublished. It is a work lasting about three-quarters of an hour, behind which arise imperiously the shadows of Mahler and Strauss and—less visibly—those of Rimsky-Korsakov and Balakirev. Curiously, the surrounding [Parisian] environment influenced me little, although I had lived in France for eleven years and had completed my training there. It was undoubtedly the result of my Italian nature, which had already become basically anti-impressionist and instinctively sought other paths than those followed by the better French music of the day.

On April 23, 1910, less than a week after the performance of Mahler's Second, he gave a concert of his own works at the Salle Gaveau featuring the Second Symphony, his Suite in C major, and the tone poem *Italia* (a work Mahler planned to conduct that year). Casella recalled "it was quite successful with the public and the critics. In the autumn of the same year, [conductor Willem] Mengelberg invited me to Amsterdam to repeat the same program," at which time he revised the Symphony.

In 1915 Casella returned for good to Italy, where he spread the word of musical Modernism, becoming a particularly passionate advocate for Stravinsky. On his first trip to America in the fall of 1921 he played a Mozart piano concerto with The Philadelphia Orchestra and conducted his *Pages of War: Five Musical "Films" for Orchestra*. He returned several times to perform with the Philadelphians.

**A Closer Look** There is no title or overt program for his impressive Second Symphony, although Casella originally wrote "Prologue for a Tragedy" on its title page. All of its movements begin with an ostinato figure, the repetition of single note or pattern against which other musical ideas appear. The first movement (**Lento, grave, solenne**) starts softly as an eerie atmosphere is interspersed with chiming bells and brass motifs. After this ominous slow introduction, which returns twice in the movement, a vigorous fast theme bursts forth (**Allegro energico**) that

Casella composed his *Second Symphony* from 1908 to 1909 and revised it in 1910.

These are the United States premiere performances of the *Symphony*.

Casella scored the work for three flutes (all doubling piccolo), three oboes (II doubling English horn), three clarinets (II doubling bass clarinet, III doubling E-flat clarinet), three bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, chimes, cymbals, glockenspiel, sleigh bells, snare drum, suspended cymbals, tambourine, tam-tam, triangle, xylophone), two harps, organ, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 50 minutes.

eventually calms down for a richly scored string theme. While Mahler's influence is much in evidence, so too are brief brass themes reminiscent of Wagnerian leitmotifs (particularly from the *Ring*) and luxurious passages such as Strauss deployed in his tone poems.

The second movement (**Allegro molto vivace**) begins as a relentless scherzo in the tradition of a tarantella, the wild dance of death after being bitten by a tarantula. Brilliant brass fanfares are reminiscent of the Russian composers Casella acknowledged influencing the *Symphony*. A slower middle section introduced by a harp glissando projects an exotic Orientalist flavor, first from the woodwinds and elaborated in a rich string melody. An intense return of the opening section closes off the ABA form of the movement before a brief final allusion to the bells that began the *Symphony*.

The slow and expressive third movement (**Adagio, quasi andante**) starts with a chorale texture in the woodwinds that leads to a full bodied string theme, lamenting and Mahlerian in its unfolding. A second theme, in a major key, brightens the desolate landscape. The **Finale: Tempo di marcia ben risoluto, con fuoco** offers a Mahlerian march that alternates with a funereal passage featuring lower brass instruments. The **Epilogue (Adagio mistico)** follows without a break. Casella prefaced it with a quotation from the opening canto of Dante's *Purgatorio*: "To run over better waters the little vessel of my genius now hoists its sails to leave behind it so cruel a sea." The music is to be played "with all possible intensity." The organ appears for first time (as in the finale of Mahler's *Second Symphony*), violins bring back the principal theme of the slow movement and then the Lento introduction to the entire *Symphony*. The work ends triumphantly in a blaze of C-major glory.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

# Musical Terms

## GENERAL TERMS

**Antiphonal:** Works in which an ensemble is divided into distinct groups, performing in alternation and together

**Capriccio:** A short piece of a humorous or capricious character, usually in ternary form

**Caprice:** See capriccio

**Chorale:** A hymn tune of the German Protestant Church, or one similar in style. Chorale settings are vocal, instrumental, or both.

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

**Divertimento:** A piece of entertaining music in several movements, often scored for a mixed ensemble and having no fixed form

**Fantasia:** A composition free in form and more or less fantastic in character

**Glissando:** A glide from one note to the next

**Harmony:** The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

**Leitmotif:** Literally "leading motif." Any striking musical motif (theme, phrase) characterizing or accompanying one of the actors, or some particular idea, emotion, or situation, in a drama.

**Monophony:** Music for a single voice or part

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

**Ostinato:** A steady bass accompaniment, repeated over and over

**Plainchant:** The official monophonic unison chant (originally unaccompanied) of the Christian liturgies

**Rhapsody:** Generally an instrumental fantasia on folksongs or on motifs taken from primitive national music

**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. Also an instrumental piece of a light, piquant, humorous character.

**Suite:** A set or series of pieces in various dance forms. The modern orchestral suite is more like a divertimento.

**Tarantella:** A Neapolitan dance in rapid triple time

**Tone poem:** A type of 19th-century symphonic

piece in one movement, which is based upon an extramusical idea, either poetic or descriptive

## THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

**Adagio:** Leisurely, slow

**Allegro:** Bright, fast

**Andante:** Walking speed

**Con fuoco:** With fire, passionately, excited

**Con tutta l'energia sino alla fine:** Full of energy to the end

**Con tutta l'intensità di espressione possibile:** With as much expression as possible

**Energico:** With vigor, powerfully

**Grave:** Heavy, slow

**Lento:** Slow

**Maestoso:** Majestic

**Mistico:** Mystical, spiritual

**Precedente:** Preceding

**Risoluto:** Boldly, vigorously, decisively

**Solenne:** Solemn

**Tempo di marcia:** Tempo of a march

**Trionfale:** Triumphant

**Vivace:** Lively

## TEMPO MODIFIERS

**Ben:** Quite

**Molto:** Very

**Quasi:** Almost

## DYNAMIC MARKS

**Crescendo:** Increasing volume

# December

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Photo: Jessica Griffin

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