

Season 2016-2017

Thursday, November 3,
at 8:00
Friday, November 4,
at 2:00
Saturday, November 5,
at 8:00

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Louis Langrée Conductor
Midori Violin

Schnittke *Moz-Art à la Haydn*, for two violins and two small string orchestras
Juliette Kang and Kimberly Fisher, violins
First Philadelphia Orchestra performances

Beethoven Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61
I. Allegro ma non troppo
II. Larghetto—
III. Rondo: Allegro

Intermission

Brahms Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73
I. Allegro non troppo
II. Adagio non troppo—L'istesso tempo, ma grazioso
III. Allegretto grazioso (quasi andantino)—Presto ma non assai—Tempo I—Presto ma non assai—Tempo I
IV. Allegro con spirito

This program runs approximately 2 hours, 5 minutes.

The November 4 concert is sponsored by
Mrs. Herman B. Wagner.

Philadelphia Orchestra concerts are broadcast on WRTI 90.1 FM on Sunday afternoons at 1 PM. Visit WRTI.org to listen live or for more details.

Please join us immediately following the November 4 concert for a free Chamber Postlude, featuring Midori and members of The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Brahms String Sextet No. 2 in G major, Op. 36
I. Allegro non troppo
II. Scherzo: Allegro non troppo—Presto
 giocoso—Tempo I—Animato
III. Poco adagio
IV. Poco allegro

Midori Violin

Ying Fu Violin

Burchard Tang Viola

Che-Hung Chen Viola

Yumi Kendall Cello

Priscilla Lee Cello

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 inspiring the future and 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 connection to the Orchestra's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics 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 continues to discover new and inventive ways to nurture its relationship with its loyal patrons at its home in 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, all of which create greater access and engagement with classical music as an art form.

The Philadelphia Orchestra serves as a catalyst for cultural activity across Philadelphia's many communities, building an offstage presence as strong as its onstage one. With Nézet-Séguin, a dedicated body of musicians, and one of the nation's richest arts ecosystems, the Orchestra has launched its **HEAR** initiative, a portfolio of integrated initiatives that promotes **Health**, champions music **Education**, eliminates barriers to **Accessing** the orchestra, and maximizes

impact through **Research**. The Orchestra's award-winning Collaborative Learning programs engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members through programs such as Play!Ns, side-by-sides, PopUP concerts, free Neighborhood Concerts, School Concerts, and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, presentations, and recordings, The Philadelphia Orchestra is a global ambassador for Philadelphia and for the US. Having been the first American orchestra to perform in China, in 1973 at the request of President Nixon, the ensemble today boasts a new partnership with Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts and the Shanghai Oriental Art Centre, and in 2017 will be the first-ever Western orchestra to appear in Mongolia. The Orchestra annually performs at Carnegie Hall while also enjoying summer residencies in Saratoga Springs, NY, and Vail, CO. For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit www.philorch.org.

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



Noseda Conducts Beethoven

Nov. 25-27

Gianandrea Noseda Conductor

Alexander Toradze Piano

Petrassi Partita

Ravel Piano Concerto in G major

Beethoven Symphony No. 6 ("Pastoral")

Spend Thanksgiving weekend with The Philadelphia Orchestra! Gianandrea Noseda returns to lead a program that whirls from dance to jazz to Beethoven.

The November 27 concert is sponsored by John H. McFadden and Lisa D. Kabnick.

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Music Director

Chris Lee



Music Director **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** is now confirmed to lead The Philadelphia Orchestra through the 2025-26 season, an extraordinary and significant long-term commitment. Additionally, he becomes music director of the Metropolitan Opera beginning with the 2021-22 season. Yannick, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is an inspired leader of the Orchestra. His intensely collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm 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 fifth season include an exploration of American Sounds, with works by Leonard Bernstein, Christopher Rouse, Mason Bates, and Christopher Theofanidis; a Music of Paris Festival; and the continuation of a focus on opera and sacred vocal works, with Bartók’s *Bluebeard’s Castle* and Mozart’s C-minor Mass.

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 was also principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world’s most revered ensembles and 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. He continues fruitful recording relationships with the Rotterdam Philharmonic on DG, EMI Classics, and BIS Records; the London Philharmonic for the LPO label; and the Orchestre Métropolitain for ATMA Classique. In Yannick’s inaugural season The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to the radio airwaves, with weekly Sunday afternoon broadcasts on WRTI-FM.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal’s Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini; he also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick’s honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada, *Musical America’s* 2016 Artist of the Year, Canada’s National Arts Centre Award, the Prix Denise-Pelletier, and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec in Montreal, the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, and Westminster Choir College of Rider University in Princeton, NJ.

To read Yannick’s full bio, please visit www.philorch.org/conductor.

Conductor

Benjamin Eshovgora



The French conductor **Louis Langrée** has been music director of the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center in New York since 2002 and of the Cincinnati Symphony since the 2013-14 season. The Mostly Mozart Festival celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2016 with a program including Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, which Mr. Langrée also conducted at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. Recent and future highlights with the Cincinnati Symphony include a performance in New York as part of Lincoln Center's Great Performers series, a tour to Asia, and several world premieres, including three concertos for orchestra by Sebastian Currier, Thierry Escaich, and Zhou Tian.

Mr. Langrée is making his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these current performances. Other guest conducting projects over the next two seasons include his debut with the Konzerthausorchester Berlin and return engagements with the Leipzig Gewandhaus and Hallé orchestras and the Vienna Symphony. With the Orchestre National de France he conducts Debussy's opera and Schoenberg's tone poem based on Maeterlinck's *Pelleas and Melisande*. He also returns to the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Vienna State Opera, and the Opéra Comique in Paris. He has conducted the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic in both Vienna and Salzburg, and the London Symphony.

Mr. Langrée has held positions as music director of the Orchestre de Picardie (1993-98) and the Liège Royal Philharmonic (2001-06), and chief conductor of the Camerata Salzburg (2011-16). He was music director of Opéra National de Lyon (1998-2000) and Glyndebourne Touring Opera (1998-2003). He has conducted at La Scala, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Paris's Opéra Bastille and Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Dresden Staatsoper, the Grand Théâtre in Geneva, and the Netherlands Opera in Amsterdam. His first recording with the Cincinnati Symphony features Copland's *A Lincoln Portrait*, narrated by Maya Angelou, and world premieres by Nico Muhly and David Lang. His recordings have received several *Gramophone* and Midem Classical awards. Mr. Langrée was appointed Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres in 2006 and Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur in 2014.

Soloist



Timothy Greenfield-Sanders

In addition to performing at the highest levels internationally, violinist **Midori** has also been recognized by the United Nations and the World Economic Forum for her exceptional commitment to education and community engagement throughout the U.S., Europe, Asia, and the developing world. In 1992 she founded Midori & Friends, a non-profit organization in New York that brings music education programs to underserved New York City schoolchildren in every borough each year. Two other organizations, Music Sharing, based in Japan, and Partners in Performance, based in the U.S., also bring music closer to the lives of people who may not otherwise have involvement with the arts. In 2007 she was named a Messenger of Peace by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

More recently Midori has been making a sustained commitment to the violin repertoire of the future, commissioning new concertos and recital works. In the last few seasons she has added several new recordings to her extensive catalogue, including a recording of Bach's complete solo sonatas and partitas and the violin concerto *DoReMi*, written for her by Peter Eötvös and recorded with the Radio France Philharmonic. In 2014 a recording featuring her performance of Hindemith's Violin Concerto with the NDR Symphony and Christoph Eschenbach won a Grammy Award for Best Classical Compendium.

Born in Osaka, Japan, in 1971, Midori began studying the violin with her mother at an early age. Conductor Zubin Mehta first heard her play in 1982 and it was he who invited her to make her now legendary debut—at the age of 11—at the New York Philharmonic's traditional New Year's Eve concert. She received a standing ovation and her career was launched. She made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut the following summer at the Mann Center and most recently appeared with the ensemble in 2008 on tour in Asia. Today she lives in Los Angeles where, in addition to her many commitments, she continues her position as Distinguished Professor of Violin and Jascha Heifetz Chair at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music. Midori plays the 1734 Guarnerius del Gesù "ex-Huberman" violin. She uses three bows—two by Dominique Peccatte and one by Paul Siefert.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1806
Beethoven
 Violin Concerto

Music
 Weber
 Symphony No. 1

Literature
 Armin and
 Brentano
*Des Knaben
 Wunderhorn*
Art

Constable
Windermere
History
 Formal
 dissolution of
 the Holy Roman
 Empire

1877
Brahms
 Symphony
 No. 2

Music
 Saint-Saëns
*Samson and
 Delilah*

Literature
 James
The American
Art
 Homer
*The Cotton
 Pickers*

History
 Edison invents
 the phonograph

1976
Schnittke
*Moz-Art à la
 Haydn*

Music
 Gruber
Frankenstein!!

Literature
 Vonnegut
Slapstick
Art

Bacon
Triptych
History
 American
 Bicentennial

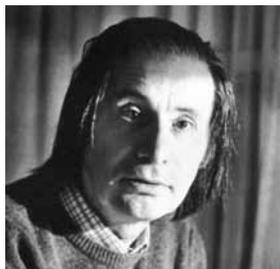
Russian composer Alfred Schnittke often mixed together diverse musical styles from different eras, places, and genres in what he called “polystylism.” His witty *Moz-Art à la Haydn* at times sounds very modern and yet elsewhere is written in the style of the Classical masters Mozart and Haydn named in the title. Schnittke based the piece on some melodic fragments from an amusing composition Mozart wrote for Carnival in 1783. The fascinating piece also incorporates theatrical elements through the use of lighting and the movement of players onstage.

Beethoven’s lone Violin Concerto was an unusually substantive one for its time, which in turn led to its being largely ignored for many decades. This is a signal work from the composer’s “heroic” period, alongside the “Eroica” and Fifth symphonies. And as with those transformative and challenging masterpieces, the Violin Concerto breaks with contemporaneous expectations for entertainment and flashy virtuosity. Beethoven aimed for something more, which may be the reason the piece is still remembered while nearly every other violin concerto of his time is forgotten.

The Philadelphia Orchestra continues its presentation of Brahms’s four symphonies with the majestic Second. After taking decades to complete his first work in this genre, which finally premiered in 1876 at age 43, Brahms wrote his next one quickly and easily the following summer and it, too, won immediate acclaim. If the First Symphony is dark and brooding, the Second is for the most part bright and joyful. Brahms once remarked concerning another pair of orchestral pieces, “one cries, the other laughs,” an apt description of his first two symphonies as well.

The Music

Moz-Art à la Haydn



Alfred Schnittke
Born in Engels, Russia,
November 24, 1934
Died in Hamburg,
August 3, 1998

The first-time listener who knows nothing about the opening piece on today's program—not the composer, title, or date—might well initially be baffled, however much instantly fascinated. The work begins with mysterious soloistic string mutterings of seemingly uncoordinated melodic fragments. Then, after some two minutes, the full string ensemble explodes in a glorious burst of sound and the musical style abruptly shifts to a polite 18th-century dance, though slightly distorted. We are plunged from atmospheric outer space to a much more recognizable and traditional style. We are back on earth.

Modernist and Classical languages are fascinatingly juxtaposed over the course of some 12 minutes. Along the way various musical friends pass by, such as when the famous opening theme of Mozart's Symphony No. 40 in G minor makes a very brief appearance, and there are snippets of other seemingly familiar melodies. The variety is surprising and wonderful.

And if the listener is also a viewer, someone watching a live performance, there are also theatrical elements at play. The piece begins in darkness; midway through the musicians switch positions and later move back to their original formation; and at the end the players gradually exit as the lights slowly dim, leaving only two cellists, the double bass, and conductor.

Polystylism and Reusing the Past The composer of this absorbing work is the postmodern Russian master Alfred Schnittke, wittily channeling the great Viennese Classicists Haydn and Mozart. The origins of *Moz-Art à la Haydn* are some fragmentary remains of a piece that Mozart composed for the 1783 Carnival season in Vienna. Schnittke ingeniously weds Mozart's music to some of Haydn's ideas, notably a burst of light, as happens in the introduction to his oratorio *The Creation*, and having the players gradually leave the stage, as concludes his Symphony No. 45, the "Farewell!"

Schnittke championed what he called "polystylism" achieved through the juxtaposition of musical styles. Polystylism explores "links between the ages" by freely mixing wildly different musical languages from the Middle Ages to the present, as well as from jazz, pop, and world music.

Moz-Art à la Haydn was composed from 1976 to 1977.

These are the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work.

The score calls for two solo violins and strings.

Performance time is approximately 12 minutes.

Schnittke's polystylism may reflect something of his own polyidentity. He is widely regarded as the leading Russian composer since Dmitri Shostakovich, but once remarked: "Although I don't have any Russian blood, I am tied to Russia, having spent all my life here. On the other hand, much of what I've written is somehow related to German music and to the logic that comes out of being German." His life and career veered between things Russian and German, starting with his birth in 1934 in the German-Russian city of Engels, on the Volga River. His father was born in Frankfurt to a Jewish family of Russian origin that moved to the Soviet Union in 1926; his mother was a Volga-German born in Russia.

Schnittke's journalist father was posted in Vienna in 1946 and that is where his 11-year-old son began musical studies. The two years the family spent in the most musical of cities left a lasting mark, relevant to the piece we hear today: "It was of decisive importance for my life. ... I recall a basic musical tone, a certain Mozart-Schubert sound that I carried within me for decades and that was confirmed upon my next stay in Austria some 30 years later."

A Closer Look Only fragments of the first violin part survive for Mozart's *Musik zu einer Faschingspantomime* (Music for a Carnival Pantomime), K. 416d, which Mozart performed together with some family and friends on Easter Monday in 1783. During the 1970s Schnittke "kind of" used Mozart (he plays with a double meaning of the German title *Moz-Art*) for several pieces. *Moz-Art à la Haydn* is scored for two solo violins, two small string orchestras, and double bass.

The piece opens in complete darkness with the strange string fragments described above being tossed among the players. When the full ensemble bursts forth fortissimo the lights are to be switched on "suddenly," recreating the effect in the introduction to Haydn's *Creation*, subtitled "The Representation of Chaos," setting the biblical words "Let there be light and there was light." The polite Allegretto dance-like section that follows is one of the more "normal" Classical parts of the piece, which continues thereafter to play with the juxtapositions of different styles. The configuration of the two small string orchestras changes in the middle of the piece as the players are instructed to move to a new seating arrangement and then to return to the original one. Following a brief violin cadenza, the ending returns to the mysterious atmospheric opening as most of the players leave the stage, the lights again go dark, and the conductor continues to beat time unto silence.

The Music

Violin Concerto



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

As he entered his 30s at the turn of the century, Beethoven's personal life dramatically changed, and so, too, did his music. In letters dating from the fall of 1801 he revealed for the first time the secret of his looming deafness. Despite ever growing professional successes, he lamented how "that jealous demon, my wretched health, has put a nasty spoke in my wheel; and it amounts to this, that for the past three years my hearing has become weaker and weaker."

The following spring Beethoven moved to the Vienna suburb of Heiligenstadt, where he penned the remarkable "Heiligenstadt Testament," an unsent letter to his brothers in which he poured out his heart. After describing various social, personal, and professional consequences of his condition, such as that he could no longer hear the sounds of nature, he confessed: "Such incidents brought me almost to despair; a little more and I would have ended my life. Only my art held me back. It seemed to me impossible to leave the world until I had produced all that I felt was within me."

New Paths The challenges Beethoven faced at this crucial juncture in his life can be sensed in many of the compositions he wrote over the next decade, usually labeled as his "heroic" period. He talked of writing in a "completely new manner" and of a "new path," producing music that proved increasingly challenging both for performers and audiences. The Third Symphony, the monumental "Eroica," is a key work in this respect, but his first two symphonies (a genre he came to relatively late) had already been greeted with some skepticism. "Bizarre"—the word is the same in German—crops up more and more often in reviews.

Beethoven initially played it somewhat safer with the genre of the concerto, partly because, as for his model Mozart before him, they were meant for his own use as a virtuoso soloist. While he held off writing a symphony, concertos came early and his involvement extends beyond the canonic five piano concertos; the "Triple" Concerto for piano, violin, and cello; and the Violin Concerto. During his student years in his native Bonn, and then after moving to Vienna at age 21, Beethoven experimented with concertos for piano, for violin, and even one for oboe, but these early works are either incomplete or lost. Around 1800 he

composed two attractive Romances for violin and orchestra, a sort of preview of coming attractions, specifically of the second movement of the Concerto we hear today. Beethoven played the violin, but he was far from the virtuoso that Mozart had been.

A Concerto for a Friend Beethoven's Violin Concerto challenged the expectations of his contemporaries, who were accustomed more to flashy entertainment in such pieces than to works of sustained substance. It took several decades for the piece to enter the standard repertoire. Beethoven composed it in 1806 in an extremely short time, apparently about a month, for Franz Clement, an important figure in Vienna's musical scene whom he had long admired. Clement was first violinist at the Theater an der Wien, a position that gave him the opportunity to present an annual concert for his own benefit. On April 7, 1805, he played his own Violin Concerto in D on a program that also included the first public performance of the "Eroica" Symphony. It was for Clement's concert the next year, given on December 23, that Beethoven wrote his Violin Concerto, which he allegedly completed just before the premiere. The concert opened with an overture by Etienne Méhul followed by the new Concerto. After works by Handel, Mozart, and Cherubini, Clement improvised and then performed a "Sonata on one string played with the violin upside down" before a concluding chorus by Handel. It was not an event of sustained high-mindedness.

Beethoven's Concerto was in certain respects influenced by Clement's own from the previous year, the work that had been paired with the "Eroica." As with that profoundly challenging symphony, some critics worried that the composer was pursuing the wrong path. The *Wiener Theater-Zeitung* noted that the Concerto was "received with exceptional applause due to its originality and abundance of beautiful passages" and commended Clement's performance, but followed with a word of caution: "It is feared that if Beethofen [sic] continues to follow his present course, it will go ill both with him and the public. The music could soon fail to please anyone not completely familiar with the rules and difficulties of the art. ... [Listeners risk being] oppressed by a multitude of interconnected and overabundant ideas and a continuous tumult of the combined instruments ... [and may] leave the concert with only an unpleasant feeling of exhaustion."

A Closer Look Beethoven establishes an unusually meditative mood at the outset of the Concerto with an expansive orchestral introduction featuring one of his

Beethoven composed the Violin Concerto in 1806.

Conductor Fritz Scheel and violinist Fritz Kreisler collaborated on the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of Beethoven's Violin Concerto, in January 1902. The most recent subscription performances were in March 2014, with Nikolaj Znaider and conductor Stéphane Denève.

The Orchestra has recorded the work only once, in 1950 for CBS, with Zino Francescatti and Eugene Ormandy.

The Concerto is scored for an orchestra of solo violin, flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 45 minutes.

most lyrical themes (**Allegro ma non troppo**)—indeed, a lovely lyricism and soaring melodies in the highest registers characterize much of the movement. The following **Larghetto** opens with a hymn-like theme for muted strings before horns and clarinet take over and the violin provides decorative commentary. This movement, in a modified variation form, leads without pause to the lively and dance-like **Rondo** finale that more overtly showcases virtuosic playing for the soloist.

Beethoven was asked a couple of years later to transform the work into a piano concerto, which was then published in London. While the orchestral parts are the same, the violin solo is arranged for piano. It is not entirely clear how much of this version was actually Beethoven's own work; not many musicians today find the result persuasive, which means it is rarely performed, although a few recordings are available. The arrangement is of some interest, however, because while Beethoven did not write any cadenzas for the Violin Concerto, he did for the piano arrangement. Neither version was often performed during Beethoven's lifetime, nor even in the 1830s, as the work was widely viewed as "ungrateful" and "unplayable." The great violinist Joseph Joachim is credited for championing the Concerto beginning in 1844, when, as a 12-year-old virtuoso, he played it with Felix Mendelssohn conducting the London Philharmonic Society. In the absence of any cadenzas by Beethoven, Joachim's were widely played for many years until displaced by Fritz Kreisler's, which we hear today.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

The Music

Symphony No. 2



Johannes Brahms
Born in Hamburg, May 7,
1833
Died in Vienna, April 3,
1897

“All you need to do is sit down, place your little feet alternately on both pedals, and strike an F-minor chord for a good while, alternately low and high . . . then you will gradually gain the most accurate picture of the ‘latest.’” With typical heavy-handed facetiousness, Johannes Brahms announced the existence of his Second Symphony to his friend Elisabet von Herzogenberg. In a letter sent to her a few days later, he continued by writing that the musicians were wearing black armbands to perform the Symphony because “it sounds so very mournful; it will also be printed with a black border.” He similarly told his publisher, Fritz Simrock, that the score “is so melancholy that you will not be able to bear it”

A Cheerful Work Although Brahms was joking in his ponderous way, his statements about his Second Symphony in D major, Op. 77, reveal how starkly the work differs from his First Symphony, premiered the previous year. While the latter work has a portentous introduction complete with throbbing timpani, the Second begins immediately without introduction. The First Symphony’s tense opening movement was clearly composed under Beethoven’s shadow. By contrast, the first movement of the Second Symphony evinces Schubert’s beneficent and liberating influence. The First is in the somber key of C minor, while the Second is cast in a radiant D major.

Musicologists point to a number of reasons why the Second Symphony is more cheerful than the First. The success of the Symphony No. 1 had undeniably lifted a great weight from Brahms’s shoulders by helping to establish him as a worthy successor to the Beethovenian symphonic tradition. Commentators have also noted that Brahms wrote the Symphony No. 2 during a protracted summer holiday in the idyllic Austrian village of Pörschach on the banks of the Wörthersee in the Styrian Alps. While the natural beauty of this locale certainly contributed to the Symphony’s warmth and lyricism, an equally important reason for Brahms’s good mood during 1877 was largely the result of gaining complete financial independence, which allowed him to concentrate exclusively on composition. The year ended on a triumphant note with the first performance of the Second Symphony by the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Hans Richter on December 30.

Brahms composed his *Symphony No. 2* in 1877.

The Philadelphia Orchestra's first performance of the *Symphony* was in December 1900, under Fritz Scheel's direction. The most recent appearance on the Orchestra's subscription concerts was in January 2016, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin on the podium.

The Philadelphia Orchestra has recorded Brahms's *Second Symphony* four times: with Leopold Stokowski in 1929 for RCA Victor; with Eugene Ormandy in 1939 for RCA Victor; with Ormandy in 1953 for CBS; and in 1988 with Riccardo Muti for Philips. A live recording from 1995 with Wolfgang Sawallisch is also available by digital download.

The score calls for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings.

The *Symphony* runs approximately 40 minutes in performance.

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The premiere was a complete success; the *Symphony's* piquant scherzo had to be encores.

A Closer Look The opening measures of Brahms's *Second Symphony* are unforgettable: Four quiet notes are played by the cellos and basses and then the French horns intone a theme that is reminiscent of alphorns heard from the distance. By the time he wrote the work, the composer, who had settled in Vienna in 1863, had been seduced by Austrian *Gemütlichkeit*, an untranslatable word with connotations of winsome charm and coziness. Cast in a meter of three beats to a measure, this movement (**Allegro non troppo**) recalls both the waltz and its predecessor, the Austrian folk dance known as the *Ländler*. Many commentators have noticed the resemblance of the second theme to the composer's own "Wiegenlied," Op. 49, No. 4 (1868), best known in Anglophone countries as "Brahms's Lullaby." As is characteristic of Brahms, however, this music is not an expression of undiluted happiness: Troubled passages redolent of darkness and even pain pass over the surface of the music like clouds across a verdant landscape.

The slow movement that follows (**Adagio non troppo—L'istesso tempo, ma grazioso**) is introverted and somber. This movement puzzled early listeners. The Viennese music critic Eduard Hanslick, usually one of Brahms's partisans, quipped that this *Adagio* was "more conspicuous for the development of the themes than the themes themselves." In fact, the eloquent opening theme is one of the composer's finest achievements, at once complex and memorable. This deeply introspective movement is an example of what Arnold Schoenberg called "developing variation"—thematic materials that are constantly developed—while also using an ingenious adaptation of sonata form.

The charming scherzo with its two trios, **Allegretto grazioso (quasi andantino)—Presto ma non assai**, banishes the brooding seriousness of the preceding movement with a burst of musical sunshine. Even here in this lighthearted movement, however, Brahms deploys his ingenuity, subjecting each section to constant variation. He finishes off the *Symphony* with a rambunctious final movement (**Allegro con spirito**), some of the most joyous music of his career. Only the finale of his *Violin Concerto* rivals the last movement of the *Second Symphony* for extroverted high spirits. The finale is yet another example of sonata form, and it is a study in the skillful contrast of exuberance with mystery. The movement concludes with an exultant coda that hurtles forward to its conclusion.

—Byron Adams

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

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

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

Ländler: A dance similar to a slow waltz

Mute: A mechanical device used on musical instruments to muffle the tone

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.

Oratorio: Large-scale dramatic composition originating in the 16th century with text usually based on religious subjects. Oratorios are performed by choruses and solo voices with an instrumental accompaniment, and are similar to operas but without costumes, scenery, and actions.

Romance: Originally a ballad, or popular tale in verse; now a title for

epico-lyrical songs or of short instrumental pieces of sentimental or romantic nature, and without special form

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

Sonata: An instrumental composition in three or four extended movements contrasted in theme, tempo, and mood, usually for a solo instrument

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.

Trio: See scherzo

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Allegretto: A tempo between walking speed and fast

Allegro: Bright, fast

Andantino: Slightly quicker than walking speed

Animato: Lively, animated

Con spirito: With spirit

Giacoso: Humorous

Grazioso: Graceful and easy

Larghetto: A slow tempo

L'istesso tempo: At the same tempo

Presto: Very fast

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Ma non assai: But not much

Ma non troppo: But not too much

Poco: Little, a bit

Quasi: Almost

DYNAMIC MARKS

Fortissimo (ff): Very loud

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