ONE HUNDRED TWENTIETH SEASON

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Riccardo Muti Music Director
Pierre Boulez Helen Regenstein Conductor Emeritus
Yo-Yo Ma Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

Global Sponsor of the CSO

Thursday, February 10, 2011, at 8:00
Friday, February 11, 2011, at 1:30
Saturday, February 12, 2011, at 8:00
Tuesday, February 15, 2011, at 7:30

Riccardo Muti Conductor
Vadim Repin Violin

Tchaikovsky

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35
Allegro moderato
Canzonetta: Andante
Finale: Allegro vivacissimo

VADIM REPIN

INTERMISSION

Clyne

«rewind«

First Chicago Symphony Orchestra performances

Hindemith

Symphony in E-flat
Very lively
Very slow
Lively—
Moderately quick half-note

Saturday evening's performance is generously sponsored by Margot and Josef Lakonishok.

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Steinway is the official piano of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

This program is partially supported by grants from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Piotr Tchaikovsky

Born May 7, 1840, Votkinsk, Russia.
Died November 6, 1893, Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

This violin concerto was the best thing to come of a very bad marriage. In May 1877, Tchaikovsky received a letter from Antonina Milyukova, a former student he couldn't remember, who said she was madly in love with him. Earlier that year, Tchaikovsky had entered into an extraordinary relationship, conducted entirely by correspondence, with Nadezhda von Meck, and he found this combination of intellectual intimacy and physical distance ideal. In order to keep his homosexuality from the public, he impulsively seized on the convenient, though unpromising, idea of marriage to a woman he didn't even know. On June 1, Tchaikovsky visited Antonina Milyukova for the first time; a day or two later he proposed.

The marriage lasted less than three months, but it must have seemed a lifetime. Tchaikovsky quickly learned to despise Antonina—he couldn't even bring himself to introduce her as his wife—and he was shocked to learn that she knew not one note of music. In September, he botched a pathetic suicide attempt (he waded into the freezing Moscow River hoping to contract a fatal chill) and then fled to Saint Petersburg. On October 13, Anatoly, one of the composer's younger twin brothers, took Tchaikovsky on an extended trip to Europe. His thoughts quickly turned to composing,

COMPOSED
March–April 1878

FIRST PERFORMANCE
December 4, 1881; Vienna

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE
December 8, 1899; Auditorium Theatre; Alexandre Petschnikoff, violin; Theodore Thomas, conductor

MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCE
May 8, 2010; Orchestra Hall; Robert Chen, violin; Ludovic Morlot, conductor

INSTRUMENTATION
solo violin, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME
34 minutes

CSO RECORDINGS
1940; Nathan Milstein, violin; Frederick Stock, conductor; Columbia

1945; Erica Morini, violin; Désiré Defauw, conductor; RCA

1957; Jascha Heifetz, violin; Fritz Reiner, conductor; RCA

confirming what he wrote to Nadezhda von Meck during the very worst days: “My heart is full. It thirsts to pour itself out in music.” He returned to composition cautiously, beginning with the works that had been interrupted by the unfortunate encounter with Antonina: he completed the Fourth Symphony in January 1878 and finished *Eugene Onegin* the next month.

By March, he had recovered his old strength; he settled briefly in Clarens, Switzerland, and there, in the span of eleven days, he sketched a new work—a violin concerto in D major; he completed the scoring two weeks later. When he returned to Russia in late April, there were still lingering difficulties—Antonina alternately accepted and rejected the divorce papers, and even extracted the supreme revenge of moving into the apartment above his—but the worst year of his life was over.

The Violin Concerto was launched by a visit to Clarens from Tchaikovsky’s student and friend—and possible lover—the violinist Yosif Kotek, who arrived at Tchaikovsky’s door with a suitcase full of music. (Kotek had been a witness at Tchaikovsky’s wedding.) The next day they played through Lalo’s *Symphonie espagnole,* and Tchaikovsky was immediately taken with the idea of writing a large work for violin and orchestra. He liked the way that Lalo “does not strive after profundity, but carefully avoids routine, seeks out new forms, and thinks more about musical beauty than about observing established traditions, as do the Germans.” He plunged in at once, and found to his delight that music came to him easily. (Shortly after he arrived in Clarens, he had begun a piano sonata, but it didn’t go well and he quickly gave it up.) Each day, Kotek offered advice on violinistic matters, and he learned the score page by page as Tchaikovsky wrote it. On April 1, when the work was completely sketched, they played through the concerto for Anatoly’s twin brother, Modest. Both Yosif and Modest thought the slow movement was weak. Four days later, Tchaikovsky wrote a new one (the original Andante became the Meditation from *Souvenir d’un lieu cher),* immediately began scoring the work, and unveiled the finished product on April 11. Clearly he was back on track.

Tchaikovsky with his wife, Antonina Milyukova, 1877

New problems awaited Tchaikovsky, however. Although the concerto was dedicated to the great violinist Leopold Auer and the premiere was already advertised for the following March 22, Auer stunned the composer by dismissing the piece as unplayable. Tchaikovsky was deeply wounded, and the premiere was postponed indefinitely. “Coming from such

an authority," Tchaikovsky said, Auer's rejection "had the effect of casting this unfortunate child of my imagination into the limbo of the hopelessly forgotten."

Two years passed. Then one day, Tchaikovsky's publisher informed him that Adolf Brodsky, a young violinist, had learned the concerto and persuaded Hans Richter and the Vienna Philharmonic to play it in concert. That performance, in December 1881, was no doubt horrible, as the orchestra, under-rehearsed and reading from parts chock full of mistakes, played pianissimo throughout to avert disaster. Reviewing the concerto, the often ill-tempered critic Eduard Hanslick wrote that, for the first time, he realized that there was music "whose stink one can hear." Tchaikovsky never got over that review, and, for the rest of his life, it is said, he could quote it by heart. Although Hanslick stood by his opinion, Auer later admitted that the concerto was merely difficult, not unplayable, and he taught it to his students, including Mischa Elman and Jascha Heifetz, who both played it in Chicago.

Hanslick's dislike is hard to understand, for this is hardly an inflated, pretentious, and vulgar work, although those are the words he used. In fact, Tchaikovsky's lyric gift has seldom seemed so natural, flowing effortlessly through all three movements. If there is any deficiency here, it is one of form and construction, not content; even the most casual listener may find it disconcerting that—as with the popular "Tonight We Love" tune in the B-flat piano concerto—the lovely theme with which Tchaikovsky begins vanishes into thin air after a few seconds, never to return.

Hanslick also took offense at the demanding, virtuosic solo part, writing in terms that crop up in reviews of new music to this day: "The violin is no longer played; it is pulled about, torn, beaten black and blue." What Hanslick failed to notice is the way Tchaikovsky has taken care to cushion even the most challenging, exhibitionistic passages in music of unforced lyricism and restraint. Even Hanslick admitted that the lovely slow movement made progress in winning him over. But the brilliant finale, with its driving, folklike melodies and very "Russian" second theme over the low bagpipe drone of open fifths, was too much for him, and he concluded sputtering about wretched Russian holidays and the smell of vodka. Even Auer had to admit that Hanslick's comment "did credit neither to his good judgment nor to his reputation as a critic." "The concerto has made its way in the world," he wrote years later, after it had, in fact, become one of Tchaikovsky's most beloved works, "and, after all, that is the most important thing. It is impossible to please everybody." ■

Anna Clyne

Born 1980, London, England.

«rewind«

One of our new Mead Composers-in-Residence, Anna Clyne has now settled into her apartment on Chicago's Near North Side, although she is still trying to figure out the best arrangement of her work desk and piano by the front window that overlooks the street. Regardless, this is a distinct improvement over her previous setup in Brooklyn, where she composed in a gloomy, windowless room in a warehouse down the street because she couldn't fit a piano in her apartment.

"I could probably compose anywhere," Clyne says, thinking about a process that is so consuming that the outside world often disappears. When she's deep into a piece, she sometimes works through the night, which is what happened when she was composing <<*rewind*<<, the first of her works that the Chicago Symphony is playing. Like many of Clyne's compositions, it was originally a collaborative project—in this case, a piece to be danced. Clyne gravitates to collaboration because, as she puts it, it forces you to break out of your shell—and she thrives on the kind of creative dialogue it opens. Although she is known for working with artists in other disciplines—choreographers, filmmakers, writers, painters—she also loves to collaborate with musicians in the process of working out the details of a new composition. At the moment, she is writing a piece for the Chicago Symphony's MusicNOW series—titled *Spangled Unicorn*, after an anthology of poetry by Noel Coward, it will be premiered on March 21 in the Harris Theater—and she is composing it specifically for members of the Orchestra's brass section.

With most of her compositions, including <<*rewind*<<, Clyne begins

COMPOSED
2005

FIRST PERFORMANCE
February 17, 2005, Manhattan School of Music, New York City

These are the Chicago Symphony's first performances of music by Anna Clyne

INSTRUMENTATION
two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two trombones, harp, piano, percussion (bass drum, suspended cymbal, crotales, ratchet, snare drum, brake drum, xylophone, tam-tam, vibraphone, sizzle cymbal, low metal pipe, laptop), timpani, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME
7 minutes

by working at a piano, because she likes the tactile sensation of trying things out on the instrument. Clyne's music itself is very physical—when she was writing *<<rewind<<*, music that was designed to be danced, she would jump around the room to test how physical gestures matched the sounds and rhythmic patterns in her score. Clyne's music is also deeply personal—never more so than in *Within Her Arms,* the piece she wrote in memory of her mother who died suddenly two years ago. Clyne learned that writing music made the grieving process easier—it was the best way for her to express herself. When *Within Her Arms* was played in Disney Concert Hall, on the L. A. Philharmonic's Green Umbrella series, people came up to her to tell her how moved they were by the piece, even though they had no idea of the circumstances surrounding its composition. "When you touch people who don't know you," Clyne says, "you sense there's something real in the music."

Clyne initially drew attention for the way her music combined electronics and acoustic instruments—that, along with her passion for collaboration (and a fondness for wearing hats—"I have a rather large collection," she admits), quickly became her signature. But in *<<rewind<<,* composed six years ago, she accomplished the same layering of different sound worlds by writing just for the instruments of the orchestra, and for a while she gravitated away from electronics. Now, in her latest works, including the still-unfinished *Spangled Unicorn,* she has begun to return to the acoustic-electronic mix.

Clyne was born in London. She wrote her first fully notated piece, for flute and piano, at the age of eleven. Her professional life has taken her to Edinburgh, Ontario, New York, where she moved in 2002, and now Chicago. She has degrees in composition from the University of Edinburgh and the Manhattan School of Music. Clyne has already received several important honors, including eight consecutive ASCAP Plus Awards and a Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Anna Clyne comments on *«rewind«*

<<rewind<< is inspired by the image of analog videotape rapidly scrolling backwards with fleeting moments of skipping, freezing, and warping. The original version, for orchestra and tape, was composed in 2005 for choreographer and artistic director of the Los Angeles–based Hysterica Dance Company, Kitty McNamee. A distinct characteristic of McNamee's work is its striking and innovative use of physical gestures and movements that recur throughout the course of her work to build and bind its narrative structure. This use of repetitive gestures is utilized in the musical language and structure of *<<rewind<<*.

The approach I used to compose *<<rewind<<* is very much derivative from my work with electroacoustic

music; primarily the layering of multiple sounds and textures to create one solid unit of sound. As you will hear, the strings are the driving force behind this music. I started by composing the entire framework in the strings. This structure stems from an alternating two-chord motif, heard within the opening measures of the work. Once I had this structure in place, I went back to the beginning and added layers in the other instrumental families. These range from long, sustained and warping tones to punchy articulations.

I wrote <<*rewind*<< while living in New York City, a city which is true to its legend as one that doesn't sleep. I worked on this piece at night, when the sounds of the city were very much alive in force. Something that I like about this piece is the way that the city crept into the music. I remember one point when I was sitting at the piano playing through one of the faster sections when a van ripped down the adjacent road, blasting its siren, fading in pitch as it disappeared into the night. By coincidence, the pitch matched perfectly the section I was playing, and I added this siren into the horns—long pitches that fell in pitch through the phrase. ■

A portrait of Anna Clyne begins on page 8.

Paul Hindemith

Born November 16, 1895, Hanau, Germany.
Died December 28, 1963, Frankfurt, Germany.

Symphony in E-flat

On March 25, 1918, Paul Hindemith was playing through Claude Debussy's string quartet with three other German soldiers when they were told that Debussy had just died in Paris. "It was as if our playing had been robbed of the breath of life," he later remembered.

> But we realized for the first time that music is more than style, technique, and the expression of powerful feelings. Music reached out beyond political boundaries, national hatred, and the horrors of war. On no other occasion have I seen so clearly what direction music must take.

That sensibility would drive Hindemith's career from that point on, and it would govern his every move, almost literally, during the Second World War.

When the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, Hindemith was destined to be branded as a degenerate composer, largely because Hitler had walked out of a performance of Hindemith's opera *Neues vom Tage* (News of the day), scandalized by the sight of a soprano singing from her bathtub. (For the record, she was merely extolling the joys of modern plumbing.) "It is obvious that [it] shocked the Führer greatly," Hindemith wrote to his publisher late in 1934. "I shall write him a letter . . . in which I shall ask him to convince himself to the contrary." But in the meantime, Joseph Goebbels spoke out publicly about the horror of modern composers "allowing naked women to appear on the stage in obscene scenes in a bathtub, making a mockery of the female sex." Hindemith wasn't

COMPOSED
1940

FIRST PERFORMANCE
November 21, 1941; Minneapolis, Minnesota

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE
August 5, 1954; Ravinia Festival; Georg Solti conducting

MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCE
January 27, 1974; Orchestra Hall; Sir Georg Solti conducting

INSTRUMENTATION
three flutes and piccolo, two oboes and english horn, two clarinets and bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, triangle, tambourine, rute, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME
36 minutes

mentioned by name, but the message was clear. He made a powerful statement on the value of art—and the role of the artist in society—in his opera *Mathis der Maler,* about the sixteenth-century German painter Mathias Grünewald, who was himself torn between his commitment to art and a life of political activism. That work, too, was attacked and eventually banned. After Hindemith figured prominently in the exhibition of *Entartete Musik* (Degenerate music) in 1938, he had little choice but to leave his native Germany for good.

Hindemith had come to the United States for the first time in 1937; he returned in 1938 and 1939, and the letters he wrote home to his wife Gertrude reveal a man struggling to find his place—and a job—in a new world. On his first U.S. tour, Hindemith appeared as viola soloist in his *Der Schwanendreher* with members of the Chicago Symphony at the Chicago Arts Club. The next year, Hindemith made his American conducting debut with the CSO, leading his *Kammermusik* no. 1 and the Symphonic Dances. In 1939, Hindemith returned to Chicago to attend a concert of his music given by University of Chicago students, but he didn't appear with the Orchestra. During his visit, however, he met with CSO music director Frederick Stock, who asked him to write a piece for the Orchestra's fiftieth anniversary, then two seasons away. "The specifics still need to be discussed," Hindemith wrote to Gertrude in March.

In February 1940, Hindemith reluctantly left Switzerland, where he had been living for the past two years, for the U.S. Feeling unsure of himself and unsettled in his new home at first, he was soon invited to give a series of lectures at Yale University, and those led to a position as visiting professor (Lukas Foss was one of his students). Teaching was important to Hindemith, not only for its salary and the sense of stability it provided. "I don't get ideas just sitting around waiting for them," he once said. "They come from somewhere, and I get them teaching." In no time, ideas did begin to flow. His renewed activity teaching and composing was mirrored by a sudden interest in his music—in a country where he had previously been almost completely unknown by the general public.

Several major works, including the Symphony in E-flat of 1940 that is performed at this concert, a cello concerto also composed in 1940, the *Symphonic Metamorphosis after Themes by Carl Maria von Weber* of 1943, and the 1946 *Symphonia serena,* were all written with the high-powered virtuosity of the American symphony orchestra in mind. The work Hindemith began for the Chicago Symphony's anniversary—a kind of free fantasy, as he called it, on an old Virginian ballad about poor Lazarus and the rich man—was abandoned midway, apparently when the composer realized he had been so busy writing other pieces that he couldn't finish it in time for the 1940–41 Chicago season. (Fifteen other works

commissioned by the CSO came through on schedule, including Kodály's Concerto for Orchestra and Stravinsky's Symphony in C; Hindemith's score for *Poor Lazarus* was later published in its incomplete state.) If Hindemith originally feared he would face a debilitating writer's block living in a strange new country, he had quickly overcome those doubts, and, at the same time, begun the complicated process of distancing himself from his native Germany. The requiem "for those we love," *When lilacs last in the door-yard bloom'd,* a setting of Walt Whitman's poetry dating from 1946—he originally wanted to call it *An American Requiem*—is the work in which he finally voiced his reaction to the Holocaust—his main material is derived from the Jewish melody "Gaza"—and expressed his thanks to the country that had taken him in.

Hindemith began the Symphony in E-flat in the summer of 1940, while he was lecturing at Tanglewood—"for variety's sake, I've started a symphony," he wrote to Gertrude that August. It had been commissioned by Koussevitzky's Boston Symphony, which Hindemith heard regularly that summer, and it was tailor-made for the orchestra's brilliant playing. The first movement of the "grown-up symphony"—as Hindemith called it once he got going—was completed in September, with each of the subsequent movements following a month at a time. When the final pages of the score trickled in just before Christmas, Koussevitzky pulled the premiere from that winter's programs—he claimed there wasn't adequate time to prepare the work—causing a falling-out between composer and conductor that was never repaired. The symphony was premiered the next year by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra under Dmitri Mitropoulos, where it was well received by critics who noted its ancestry in Beethoven and Bruckner, and by an audience that, according to a local critic, had been noticeably cool toward "atonal" music in the past.

The very fact that Hindemith would choose to compose a four-movement symphony and include a key in its title in 1940 (though, oddly, there is no key signature in the opening measure of the score itself) suggests how he viewed his place in the chaotic world of modern music. (Hindemith's interest in the traditional forms of music was there from the start: among his earliest pieces, written in the 1920s, are string quartets and the first of his series of chamber concertos—the landmark *Kammermusik.)* Ironically, both Stravinsky and Schoenberg introduced new works in classical forms in 1940—Stravinsky's Symphony in C and Schoenberg's Violin Concerto. Both of those composers had already taken music down paths Hindemith resisted, and their return to the symphony and concerto was a way of putting new wine in old bottles—Schoenberg's score is a twelve-tone work, after all—rather than embracing the past.

For Hindemith, composing a "tonal" symphony was a rallying cry. His important 1937 treatise, *The Craft of Musical Composition,* is a declaration of the preeminence of tonal music. He once said that music without a tonal center was no more than "a mental activity scarcely superior to the invention or solution of a crossword puzzle"—a stance that got him into hot water with the avant-garde and lost him the sympathy of a new generation of composers forever. To a great extent, Hindemith's music still struggles to overcome its late-twentieth century dismissal as old-fashioned, conservative, even reactionary. Hindemith never saw himself that way—"only a coward retreats into history," he once said—but thought of his finest works, such as this E-flat symphony, as part of a grand, centuries-spanning continuum.

The first movement, with its strong main theme, rhythmic drive, and impressively worked-out development, is the kind of symphonic opening that ties Hindemith unmistakably to the grand Germanic musical heritage of his upbringing. The prominence and brilliance of the brass writing throughout the work was inspired by the sound of the Boston orchestra that Hindemith had in his ear while he was composing. The slow second movement is broad and richly melodic. Even Francis Poulenc, whose own music came from a completely different tradition, said he loved Hindemith's lyricism "both heavy and lively, like quicksilver." Hindemith's third movement is a scherzo, in both structure and style (though it is not so titled), with a contrasting trio launched by an expansive oboe solo. The finale, which follows without pause, begins as a march, turns brilliant and brassy, relaxes into an intermezzo, as Hindemith calls it, and continues with a grand apotheosis. The last pages confirm Hindemith's belief that the composer cannot escape the pull of the major triad "any more than the painter his primary colors or the architect his three dimensions."

After the Symphony in E-flat, Hindemith continued to write "symphonies" of various kinds, including one in B-flat for concert band, the popular Weber metamorphosis, and finally, in 1958, the *Pittsburgh* Symphony, which quotes both a Pete Seeger song and Webern's Symphony, op. 21, as if to embrace the Germanic heritage he had never completely put behind him as well as his status as a U.S. citizen, with a recently purchased house in New Haven, Connecticut, and a newly acquired taste for American culture.

A postscript. In March 1963, at the very end of his life, Hindemith returned to conduct the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; he died ten months later. The program was the *Academic Festival* Overture by Brahms, Hindemith's own Concert Music for strings and brass, and Bruckner's Seventh Symphony. ■

Phillip Huscher is the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

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