

## PROGRAM

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

**Bank of America**   
Global Sponsor of the CSO

Thursday, March 24, 2011, at 8:00

Friday, March 25, 2011, at 1:30

Saturday, March 26, 2011, at 8:00

**Charles Dutoit** Conductor

**Evgeny Kissin** Piano

### **Sibelius**

Suite from *Karelia*, Op. 11

Intermezzo

Ballade

Alla marcia

First Chicago Symphony Orchestra subscription concert performances

### **Grieg**

Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16

Allegro molto moderato

Adagio

Allegro moderato molto e marcato

EVGENY KISSIN

### **INTERMISSION**

### **Stravinsky**

*Petrushka*

The Shrovetide Fair

In Petrushka's Room

The Moor's Room

The Grand Carnival

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The appearance of Evgeny Kissin is generously sponsored by the JS Charitable Trust.

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.

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## Jean Sibelius

Born December 8, 1865, Tavastehus, Finland.

Died September 20, 1957, Järvenpää, Finland.

### Suite from *Karelia*, Op. 11

When Sibelius was just seven years old, his family made the forward-looking decision to transfer him from a popular Swedish language preparatory school to the brand-new, first-ever Finnish language grammar school. (Until it was founded, Swedish and Latin were the standard languages of the Finnish school system.) There, he came in contact for the first time with the Finnish folk poetry collections—the *Kalevala* and the *Kanteletar*—finding the source for much of the music that would one day make him famous—and label him, somewhat unfairly, as a nationalistic composer.

Although Sibelius didn't truly master Finnish till he was in his twenties, this exposure to the sounds and rhythms of the language fired his imagination at an early age and sparked his

ongoing project of reading and re-reading these poetry collections that had been compiled by Elias Lönnroth in the first half of the nineteenth century. By 1891, Sibelius's interest was so consuming that he made a special trip to hear Larin Paraske, a well-known runic singer, perform episodes from the *Kalevala*, carefully observing the inflections of her singing in ways that would influence his own musical style.

Sibelius's first major composition was the expansive *Kullervo* symphony that was based on the *Kalevala*, and it was such a success in 1892 that, from that point on, Finland looked no farther for its greatest composer. With Sibelius suddenly acclaimed for the distinctly "Finnish" cast of his music, it was inevitable that he would be commissioned to write

#### COMPOSED

1893

#### FIRST PERFORMANCE

November 13, 1893, Helsinki. Sibelius conducting

#### FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

August 8, 1937 (Alla marcia only), Ravinia Festival. Fritz Reiner conducting

#### MOST RECENT

#### CSO PERFORMANCE

January 30, 1959 (Alla marcia only), Orchestra Hall. Sir Thomas Beecham conducting

These are the first CSO subscription concert performances of the Suite from *Karelia*

#### INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and english horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, tambourine, bass drum, cymbals, strings

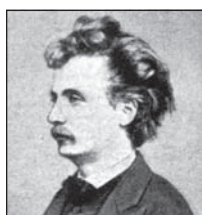
#### APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

14 minutes

political and patriotic music. In 1893, Sibelius was contacted by the Viipuri Student Corporation of the University of Helsinki for a series of tableaux on the history of Karelia, the wooded land directly east of Finland, stretching from the White Sea at its northeast corner to the Gulf of Finland on the southwest. An independent state until the seventeenth century, Karelia was first annexed by Sweden, then taken over by Russia in 1721. (Finland itself was ceded to Russia in 1809.) For the pageant, Sibelius wrote eight musical numbers depicting various incidents in the Karelian saga; he later picked three to form a

concert suite.

The opening *Intermezzo*, which originally depicted a procession of Karelians paying honor to a Lithuanian prince, is a wonderfully atmospheric march, emerging from out of the distance, coming closer, and then receding again. (The mysterious opening, with horn calls over quiet string tremolos, is almost Brucknerian in its effect.) The *Ballade* was written to represent the deposed Karl Knutsson, a fifteenth-century king, as he listens to a minstrel at Viipuri castle. The final number, originally titled “March on an Old Motif,” is a stirring call to battle. ■



## Edvard Grieg

Born June 15, 1843, Bergen, Norway.

Died September 4, 1907, Bergen, Norway.

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## Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16

**G**rieg was an accomplished pianist. He took his first piano lessons, at the age of six, from his mother, a gifted amateur, and music was a constant companion in his childhood home, where Mozart, Weber, and Chopin were always in

favor. In 1858, the celebrated violin virtuoso Ole Bull—a sort of Norse Paganini who charmed everyone from Mark Twain to George Sand—heard the fifteen-year-old play and immediately persuaded his parents to send him to the

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### COMPOSED

1868, frequently revised through 1906

### FIRST PERFORMANCE

April 3, 1869, Copenhagen

### FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

April 16, 1897, Auditorium Theatre. Teresa Carreño, piano, Theodore Thomas conducting

### MOST RECENT

#### CSO PERFORMANCES

November 12, 2005, Orchestra Hall. Lars Vogt, piano, Daniel Harding conducting

August 6, 2008, Ravinia Festival. Orion Weiss, piano, James Conlon conducting

### INSTRUMENTATION

solo piano, two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings

### APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

30 minutes

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Leipzig Conservatory. For a young boy from the provinces, Leipzig was an eye-opening cosmopolitan music center. One of his classmates was Arthur Sullivan, who would later temporarily rival Grieg's own popularity as a composer, and his teacher, E. F. Wenzel, had been a good friend of Robert Schumann. Although Grieg later complained about the strict Germanic training during his five years at the conservatory, the experience broadened his musical outlook considerably. It was also there, under Wenzel's influence, that he developed his lifelong devotion to Schumann's music. One of the highlights of his Leipzig years was hearing Clara Schumann join the Gewandhaus Orchestra in a performance of her late husband's piano concerto.

The single concerto that Grieg wrote shortly afterwards, at the age of twenty-five, is a public declaration of his affection for Schumann's score. Grieg not only picks the same key (A minor), but begins with a similar burst of cascading piano chords—a generous, if obvious, tip of the hat. But Grieg's style was already very much his own, and the melodic freshness and harmonic originality of his concerto owe as much to the folk music of Norway as to any German master. The opening piano flourish, for example, walking unevenly down the steps of the A minor scale (descending a minor second and then a major third), is characteristic of Norwegian folk song and recurs often, not only in the concerto, but throughout Grieg's music.

The year after the premiere, given by Grieg's colleague Edmund

Neupert in Copenhagen, Grieg accepted an invitation from Franz Liszt and (thanks to a government grant) went to visit him in Rome. Liszt played straight through Grieg's concerto, reading from the composer's manuscript and managing both the solo and orchestral parts with astonishing ease ("I'm an experienced old musician and ought to be able to play at sight," he told Grieg). At the very end, when one G-sharp in the big melody unexpectedly switches to G-natural, to great effect, Liszt jumped up, singing the transformed tune and shouting, "Splendid! That's the real thing!" Grieg was ecstatic. But Liszt also suggested that the second theme of the opening movement be reassigned to a solo trumpet, unfortunate advice that Grieg took to heart, giving it back to the cello only in his final revision of 1906. (Grieg was never fully satisfied with the concerto, and for every composer like Liszt or Tchaikovsky, who acclaimed it with lavish praise, there were others, such as Debussy, whose criticism provoked him to keep rewriting.)

"Keep on, I tell you," Liszt said, after playing the whole piece. "You have what is needed, and don't let anything frighten you." But, as it turned out, Grieg's true talent was with musical miniatures—he wrote some 140 songs and many sets of piano pieces—and, aside from a few works of chamber music, this concerto was his last work in the large-scale classical forms. As with Schumann, Grieg's piano concerto proved to be a singular treasure—a beloved and much-played work without a sequel. ■



## Igor Stravinsky

Born June 17, 1882, Oranienbaum, Russia.

Died April 6, 1971, New York City.

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### ***Petrushka* (1911 version)**

**T**he *Firebird* was Stravinsky's first big hit, and it made him famous, almost literally overnight, at the age of twenty-eight. *Petrushka* is that most difficult of artistic creations—the follow-up. *The Firebird* had not only made Stravinsky the talk of Paris, then the capital of the international art world—capturing the attention of the city's biggest names, including Debussy and Proust—but it had scored a huge success for Sergei Diaghilev, who had taken a risk hiring the young, relatively unknown composer to write music

for the Russian Ballet's 1910 season. Naturally, both men wanted another sensation for the next year.

Stravinsky already had an idea. While he was finishing the orchestration of *The Firebird*, he had dreamed about “a solemn pagan rite: wise elders, seated in a circle, watching a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of spring.” These powerful images suggested music to Stravinsky, and he began to sketch almost at once. (Early in his career, most of Stravinsky's initial musical ideas were inspired by

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#### **COMPOSED**

August 1910–May 26, 1911

Re-orchestrated, 1946

#### **FIRST PERFORMANCE**

Complete ballet: June 13, 1911, Paris. Sergei

Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, Pierre Monteux conducting

#### **FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES**

Suite: November 21, 1930, Orchestra Hall. Frederick Stock conducting

Complete ballet: July 24, 1954, Ravinia Festival. Pierre Monteux conducting

Complete ballet: January 5, 1961, Orchestra Hall. Pierre Monteux conducting

#### **CSO PERFORMANCES, IGOR STRAVINSKY CONDUCTING**

Orchestra Hall: February 22 & 23, 1940; November 7, 8, 12, 1940; January 14 & 15, 1954

Ravinia Festival: July 13, 1963; July 18, 1964

#### **MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCE**

March 1, 2008, Orchestra Hall. Pierre Boulez conducting

#### **INSTRUMENTATION**

1911 version: four flutes and two piccolos, four oboes and english horn, four clarinets and bass clarinet, four bassoons and

contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets and piccolo trumpet, three trombones and tuba, timpani, triangle, cymbal, bass drum, tambourine, side drum, tam-tam, xylophone, celesta, two harps, piano, strings

#### **APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME**

34 minutes

#### **CSO RECORDINGS**

1977. Complete ballet, 1947 version, James Levine conducting. RCA

1993. Complete ballet, 1911 version, Sir Georg Solti conducting. London

visual imagery.) At first he thought of it as a symphony, but when he played parts of it at the piano for Diaghilev early that summer, the impresario immediately knew that this was music for dance. With Diaghilev's urging, Stravinsky continued working on the score that would eventually become their biggest sensation, *Le sacre du printemps*—*The Rite of Spring*. But, in the meantime, Stravinsky got sidetracked.

When Diaghilev went to visit Stravinsky in Switzerland at the



Stravinsky with Nijinsky in costume for *Petrushka*

end of the summer, he was stunned to discover that the composer had begun a completely different work instead. As Stravinsky recalled, Diaghilev “was much astonished when, instead of the sketches of the *Sacre*, I played

him the piece which I had just composed and which later became the second scene of *Petrushka*.”

For the second time that year, one of Stravinsky's landmark ballet scores started out not as music to be danced, but as an unnamed abstract symphonic score. But unlike *The Rite of Spring*, *Petrushka*

moved from sketch to stage without serious interruption. What had begun as just a detour from *The Rite* now became the main project of the year, and, at the same time, the score with which Stravinsky found his modernist voice—the voice that made *The Rite* possible. Musically, it had started innocently enough, almost as a kind of warm-up for *The Rite*. “I wanted to refresh myself,” Stravinsky later explained, “by composing an orchestral piece in which the piano would play the most important part.” The narrative and the title came later, although Stravinsky admitted that “in composing the music, I had in mind a distinct picture of a puppet, suddenly endowed with life.” (*Petrushka* is a Russian version of the male half of the Punch and Judy puppets.) As with *The Rite of Spring*, it was Diaghilev who immediately saw the potential in Stravinsky's dazzling music for another dance classic:

[Diaghilev] was so much pleased with it that he would not leave it alone and began persuading me to develop the theme of the puppet's sufferings and make it into a whole ballet. When he remained in Switzerland we worked out together the general lines of the subject and the plot in accordance with ideas which I suggested . . . I began at once to compose the first scene of the ballet.

There were still a few details to be worked out, including Stravinsky's

fee (1,000 rubles) and the selection of the painter Alexandre Benois to polish the scenario and to provide costumes and scenery. (Michel Fokine soon signed on as choreographer and Pierre Monteux agreed to conduct the premiere.) With this extraordinary team lined up, Stravinsky and Diaghilev now had their sights set on surpassing the success of *The Firebird*. Aside from Stravinsky's brush with nicotine poisoning in February 1911, work on *Petrushka* progressed smoothly. Rehearsals were a different story. The dancers and orchestral musicians, innocent of the terrors of *The Rite of Spring*, still no more than a pile of sketches, found the complexities of Stravinsky's score almost unmanageable.

Opening night, however, was a great triumph, crowned by Vaslav Nijinsky's brilliant dancing of the title role. Brash, bold, exciting, and in-your-face "modern," *Petrushka* was another overnight hit with the public. For the next two years, until the legendary premiere of *The Rite of Spring* set Paris afire with fresh controversy, *Petrushka* was the latest word in musical modernism.

The scenario is in four scenes; the first and last are public, taking place on the Admiralty Square in Saint Petersburg, in the 1830s; the middle ones are set in private rooms and focus on individual characters. *Petrushka* opens with a busy crowd scene, a kaleidoscopic panorama of street dancers, drummers, a magician playing a flute, a street musician with his hurdy-gurdy, and three puppets—Petrushka, a ballerina, and the Moor. Stravinsky

shifts focus and shuffles events like a modern filmmaker: musical passages are cut and spliced, rhythmic patterns jostle one another. Finally the solo flute charms the three puppets to life and they join in a brilliant Russian dance.

The two middle scenes are more intimate, relying less on the full orchestra and built of more modestly scaled materials. In the first of these scenes, the spotlight falls on Petrushka, alone in his room, pondering his grotesque appearance and despairing over his inability to win the love of the ballerina. This is the music Stravinsky had first played for Diaghilev, with a piano solo "exasperating the patience of the orchestra with diabolical cascades of arpeggios. The orchestra in turn retaliates with menacing trumpet blasts. The outcome is a terrific noise which reaches its climax and ends in the sorrowful and querulous collapse of the poor puppet."

When he first began sketching *Petrushka*, Stravinsky was haunted by the image of a musician rolling two objects over the black and the white keys of the piano, which led him to the idea of a bitonal effect made by combining the white-note C major arpeggio with the black-note F-sharp major arpeggio. This double-sided sonority dominates Petrushka's scene (the first music Stravinsky wrote), and, as the work progressed, it came to represent the conflicting sides of his character—the human versus the puppet.

The Moor's scene builds to a romantic encounter with the ballerina (she enters to a dazzling

high trumpet solo). The lovers dance to waltzes borrowed, without apparent apology, from Joseph Lanner, an Austrian composer who was a friend of Johann Strauss, Sr. They are interrupted by the jealous Petrushka.

The finale is another surging crowd scene, characterized by various kinds of music pushing and shoving against each other. Petrushka enters, pursued by the Moor, who strikes him with his saber. Petrushka falls and the crowd grows silent. But when the

magician is summoned, he demonstrates that Petrushka is merely a puppet stuffed with sawdust. The square empties. Then, as the magician drags the puppet off, he sees Petrushka's ghost on the roof of the set, thumbing his nose. This, according to Stravinsky, "is the real Petrushka, and his appearance at the end makes the Petrushka of the preceding play a mere doll." ■

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