

## 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, May 12, 2011, at 8:00

Friday, May 13, 2011, at 1:30

Saturday, May 14, 2011, at 8:00

**Riccardo Muti** Conductor

**Yo-Yo Ma** Cello

### Bates

*The B-Sides*

Broom of the System

Aerosol Melody (Hanalei)

Gemini in the Solar Wind—

Temescal Noir—

Warehouse Medicine

These are the first Chicago Symphony Orchestra performances

### Schumann

Cello Concerto in A Minor, Op. 129

Not too fast—

Slow—

Very lively

YO-YO MA

### INTERMISSION

### Strauss

*Aus Italien*, Op. 16

In the Country

Amid the Ruins of Rome

On the Shores of Sorrento

Neapolitan Folk Life

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These concerts are generously sponsored by Alexandra and John Nichols, Cindy Sargent, and the Zell Family Foundation.

Maestro Muti and the musicians of the CSO have graciously contributed their services for Saturday evening's Pension Benefit Concert.

Maestro Muti's 2011 Spring Residency is supported in part by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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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**Mason Bates**

Born January 23, 1977, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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**The B-Sides**

On March 20, some 1.8 million people watched the YouTube Symphony Orchestra concert that featured Mason Bates’s *Mothership*, the new piece he composed for that ensemble, which has stretched the definition of the orchestra with its novel online audition process and huge laptop following. (Eugene Izotov, the CSO’s principal oboe, traveled to Sydney, Australia, where the 2011 YouTube Symphony project took place, to be one of the orchestra’s coaches and mentors and to perform in the concert.) Since then, an estimated 30 million viewers have seen the performance, a number which was all but unimaginable as recently as, well, March 20. (It is now the most watched lived music concert on the Internet, according to YouTube.)

Mason Bates is already recognized as one of the signal composers of our still young century. He first gained the kind of wide exposure composers rarely ever achieve in April 2009, when the first YouTube Symphony Orchestra, in its highly publicized Carnegie Hall debut concert, played the final section of *The B-Sides* with Bates performing *electronica* in the middle of the orchestra, as he does in these performances of the complete work this week in Chicago. Bates prefers the term *electronica* (which word-processing programs automatically change to electronic) to electronic music, because, as he says, “the trajectory of almost every classical composer into electronics has been through computer music.” That is not Bates’s story.

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**COMPOSED**

2009

**FIRST PERFORMANCE**

May 20, 2009, San Francisco  
 These are the first Chicago Symphony Orchestra performances

**INSTRUMENTATION**

two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and english horn, two clarinets, E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, percussion (suspended and crash cymbals, triangles, sand-paper blocks, tambourine,

woodblocks, castanets, snare drum, bass drum, glockenspiel, marimba, vibraphone, djembe, large broom, typewriter, oil drum), harp, piano, celesta, strings, *electronica*

**APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME**

20 minutes

After a relatively normal musical upbringing in Richmond, Virginia, which included piano lessons and singing in the choir, Bates studied composition and English literature in the Columbia–Juilliard Exchange program. He worked with David Del Tredici (his *Final Alice* was a hit of the Solti era in Chicago) and John Corigliano (the CSO’s first-ever composer-in-residence), and then moved to the Bay Area in 2001 to enroll in the Ph.D. program at Berkeley’s Center for New Music and Audio Technologies. His career, like his music, is a singular mix of old-world establishment and New Age culture: he has been lavished with big-league honors, from institutions such as the American Academy in Rome and the American Academy for Arts and Letters (an award that “acknowledges the composer who has arrived at his or her own voice”), and he has also spent many nights as a DJ, spinning and mixing at dance clubs in San Francisco, New York City, Berlin, and Rome.

Initially, Bates made a name for himself for the thoughtful and engaging ways he merged the classical and electronic sides of his background, beginning with *Omnivorous Furniture*, premiered at Disney Hall in Los Angeles in 2004. With that and the works that quickly followed, Bates seemed uniquely equipped to create an organic mix of different kinds of music that had nothing to do with fads or gimmicky cross-culturalism. As composer and critic Kyle Gann put it, “Eventually, someone was bound to grow up so immersed in

genre-mixing that they would get both sides of the equation right.” In Bates’s recent scores, the fusion is so natural and the use of electronics so integral and unforced that the “electronica” tag seems irrelevant. In works like *The B-Sides*, Bates reveals his love of the grand orchestral tradition of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as well as his innate disregard for stylistic boundaries. “I like mixing it up,” Bates once said, “But I am a classical composer—there is a level of focus at a classical concert that my music needs.” Last season, when the Chicago Symphony played Bates’s music for the first time, the mix was bigger than ever: his *Music from Underground Spaces* was danced here in Orchestra Hall by Hubbard Street Dance Chicago in a work choreographed by Alejandro Cerrudo as *Deep Down Dos*.

The idea for *The B-Sides* originated two years ago with the suggestion that Bates write a set of pieces that focus on texture and sonority—something akin to Schoenberg’s Five Pieces for Orchestra (which the CSO introduced to the U. S. nearly a century ago). “Since my music had largely gone in the other direction—large works that bathed the listener in immersive experiences—the idea intrigued me,” Bates recalled. The result was this suite of “off-kilter symphonic pieces,” as Bates calls them, that he named *The B-Sides*. “Like the forgotten bands from the flipside of an old piece of vinyl, *The B-Sides* offers brief landings on a variety of peculiar planets, unified by a focus on fluorescent orchestral

sonorities and the morphing rhythms of *electronica*.” Bates describes the itinerary:

The first stop is the dusky, circuit-board landscape of Broom of the System. To the ticking of a future clock, our broom—brought to life by sandpaper blocks and, at one point, an actual broom—quietly and anonymously keeps everything running, like a chimney sweep in a huge machine. The title is from a short-story collection by David Foster Wallace, though one could place the fairylike broom in Borges’s *Anthology of Fantastic Zoology*.

The ensuing Aerosol Melody (Hanalei) blooms on the north shore of Kauai, where a gentle, bending melody evaporates at cadence points. Djembe and springy pizzicati populate the strange fauna of this purely acoustic movement, inspired by several trips with the Fleishhacker family. The lazy string glissandi ultimately put the movement, beachside, to sleep.

Gemini in the Solar Wind is a re-imagination of the first American spacewalk, using actual communication samples from the 1965 Gemini IV voyage provided by NASA. In this retelling, clips of words, phrases, and static from the original are rearranged to show Ed White, seduced by

the vastness and mystery of space, deliriously unhooking from the spacecraft to drift away blissfully.

His final vision of the coast of Northern California drops us down close to home. The initial grit of Temescal Noir, like the Oakland neighborhood of the title, eventually shows its subtle charm in hazy, jazz-tinged hues. Unbothered by electronics, this movement receives some industrious help in the rhythm department by a typewriter and oil drum. At its end, the broom returns in a cameo, again altering the tempo, and this propels us into Warehouse Medicine. A homage to techno’s birthplace—the empty warehouses of Detroit—the final stop on *The B-Sides* gives no quarter. Huge brass swells and out-of-tune pizzicati emulate some of the visceral sonorities of techno, and on this pounding note *The B-Sides* bows out. ■

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**A profile of Mason Bates begins on page 26.**

**On May 13, at 9:00 P.M. Mason Bates will curate Mercury Soul, an event in partnership with Redmoon Theater that is being described as a “cross between a twenty-first-century salon and a club party,” in which live music from CSO musicians is interspersed with DJ sets of electronica.**



## Robert Schumann

Born June 8, 1810, Zwickau, Saxony, Germany.

Died July 29, 1856, Eendenich, near Bonn, Germany.

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### Cello Concerto in A Minor, Op. 129

Sometime in 1832, after injuring his right hand while practicing the piano with a contraption designed to strengthen his fingers, Robert Schumann took up the cello. It would never become *his* instrument—even after his hand was so crippled that he had to give up the piano for good. He never studied the cello sufficiently to perform in public, and he wrote very little music for it. But the single cello concerto he composed in 1850 is among his finest and most idiomatic works.

By 1850, Clara Schumann, a very accomplished pianist, had become Robert's right hand in more than one sense. Now that he had been forced to give up performing, she regularly played her husband's music in public, campaigned to further his reputation,

and continued to push him to try different genres and to move in new directions.

On September 1, 1850, Robert, Clara, and their six children moved from Dresden to Düsseldorf, where Robert was to succeed Ferdinand Hiller as conductor of the local music society. At first, life seemed uncommonly pleasant—more “easygoing” than in Dresden, as Clara put it, but this didn't last. The members of the Düsseldorf orchestra found Schumann difficult and quarrelsome, and he occasionally seemed ill-prepared or forgetful on the podium. Within a few years, he was asked to resign. In February 1854, Schumann attempted suicide by throwing himself in the Rhine. Shortly afterwards, he was committed to the private asylum in Eendenich, where he died two and a

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#### COMPOSED

October 1850

#### FIRST PERFORMANCE

June 9, 1860, Leipzig, Germany

#### FIRST CSO

##### PERFORMANCE

December 9, 1910, Orchestra Hall. Paulo Gruppe, cello, with Frederick Stock conducting

#### MOST RECENT

##### CSO PERFORMANCE

November 2, 2005, Orchestra Hall. Truls Mørk, cello, with Jukka-Pekka Saraste conducting

#### INSTRUMENTATION

solo cello, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings

#### APPROXIMATE

##### PERFORMANCE TIME

26 minutes

half years later, after being haunted by the voices of angels and visions of tigers and hyenas.

Schumann began this cello concerto less than six weeks after he settled in Düsseldorf. It was finished in just fifteen days (seven to draft and eight more to orchestrate) and it opened a new period of frenetic creative energy. This was not a spurt of inspiration devoted to one medium, like his celebrated year of



Clara Schumann

song writing in 1840, or the symphonic and chamber music years that immediately followed. But it was the last sustained productive stretch of his career—during the rest of 1850 and the beginning of the next year he composed his *Rhenish* Symphony; revised the D minor symphony that was later published as his fourth; and wrote violin sonatas, a series of tragic

overtures, two cantatas, and several songs and other small works.

On November 16, 1850, Clara mentioned the new concerto in her diary: “It pleases me very much and seems to me to be written in true violoncello style.” A year after it was completed, the score still sat on Robert’s desk. In October of 1851, Clara wrote:

I have played Robert’s cello concerto through again, thus giving myself a truly musical and happy hour. The romantic quality, the vivacity, the freshness and humor, also the highly interesting interweaving of cello and orchestra, are indeed wholly ravishing, and what euphony and deep feeling one finds in all the melodic passages!

Robert canceled plans for a performance in 1852 and apparently shelved the score. But in February 1854, during one of his worst periods of depression, he got out of bed and fussed with this concerto to temporarily silence the “eternal sound” of the demons and angels he constantly heard. No further plans were made for a performance, and the concerto wasn’t premiered until four years after the composer’s death, at a concert in Leipzig marking the fiftieth anniversary of his birth.

In his own catalog, Schumann listed this work as a Concert Piece for cello with orchestral accompaniment. As Clara rightly noted, the forces are ingeniously interwoven. They are also balanced

with uncommon care: the cello part is virtuosic but not exhibitionistic; interaction with the orchestra is intimate and generous, never confrontational. The cadenza in the third movement is lightly accompanied, rather than a solo turn in the spotlight. The three movements are closely related and carefully dovetailed, so that they are played without pause. The opening chords of the concerto return to haunt the slow movement, and the cello's first theme becomes a recitative linking that movement and the finale.

The cello establishes a voice of authority with its opening line, a rich and lyrical run-on sentence that spans thirty measures and almost

the entire range of the instrument before pausing for breath. Without ever lightening the virtuoso demands, Schumann proceeds to underplay his soloist's leading role, continually drawing the cello into conversation with the instruments of the orchestra. In the slow middle movement, he even engages the soloist in a duet with the orchestra's principal cello, underlining the concept of musical community. This is a concerto that explores common ground and collaboration rather than contrast and drama, and, as such, it is highly unusual *and* highly successful. In spirit, if not in actual sonority, it comes daringly close to the heart of chamber music. ■

## Symphony Center Information



The use of still or video cameras and recording devices is prohibited in Orchestra Hall.



Latecomers will be seated during designated program pauses.



Please use perfume, cologne, and all other scented products sparingly, as many patrons are sensitive to fragrance.



Please turn off or silence all personal electronic devices (pagers, watches, telephones, digital assistants).



Please note that Symphony Center is a smoke-free environment.

**Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.**

**Note:** Fire exits are located on all levels and are for emergency use only. The lighted Exit sign nearest your seat is the shortest route outdoors. Please walk—do not run—to your exit and do not use elevators for emergency exit.

Volunteer ushers provided by The Saints—Volunteers for the Performing Arts ([www.saintschicago.org](http://www.saintschicago.org))



## Richard Strauss

Born June 11, 1864, Munich, Germany.

Died September 8, 1949, Garmisch, Germany.

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### *Aus Italien*, Op. 16

I will never be converted to Italian music,” Richard Strauss wrote to his father, Munich’s most celebrated horn player, during his first trip to Italy in the summer of 1886. But *Aus Italien*, the large-scale symphonic work he began sketching as soon as he arrived, is, in fact, a love poem to Italy in all its splendor—its ancient ruins, the bucolic countryside, the glory of its paintings and sculpture, and, yes, its music. (Strauss’s conversion began mid-journey when he heard Verdi’s Requiem, then just a dozen years old, and found it “pretty and original”; when he conducted Verdi’s *Un ballo in maschera* in Munich immediately after he returned home to start a new job at the Court Opera, he admitted he

had been wrong about Italian music all along.)

Strauss had long wanted to visit Italy, but it was Johannes Brahms who finally urged him to go, saying it would do him more good than he could imagine. Music’s elder statesman and a man of great influence on Strauss, both musically and personally at this point, Brahms had made his first trip to Italy a decade earlier and had fallen completely under its spell. “One travels through the whole of Italy as though it were a most beautiful garden,” he wrote to Clara Schumann, “and to my mind it often rises to the heights of a paradise.” Although Strauss lost his suitcase in Naples and his laundry in Rome, and groused that shopkeepers

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#### COMPOSED

1886

#### FIRST PERFORMANCE

March 2, 1887,  
Munich, Germany. The  
composer conducting

#### FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

December 29,  
1899, Auditorium  
Theatre. Theodore  
Thomas conducting

#### FIRST RAVINIA FESTIVAL PERFORMANCE

July 27, 1973. Riccardo  
Muti conducting

#### MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCE

November 30, 1985,  
Orchestra Hall. Erich  
Leinsdorf conducting

#### INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes and piccolo, two  
oboes and english horn, two  
clarinets, two bassoons and

contrabassoon, four horns,  
two trumpets, three trom-  
bones, timpani, cymbals,  
triangle, tambourine, snare  
drum, harp, strings

#### CSO RECORDING

1941 (On the Shores of  
Sorrento only). Frederick  
Stock conducting. RCA

#### APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

47 minutes

overcharged him everywhere, he too was clearly intoxicated by the land, the people, and the culture. Like Berlioz and Mendelssohn, who both made life-altering trips to Italy in the 1830s, Strauss began to sketch musical ideas almost as soon as he arrived; *Aus Italien*, the work he ultimately fashioned from his musical snapshots, is, along with Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* and Mendelssohn's *Italian Symphony*, one of the great musical travelogues. (And, like Berlioz and Mendelssohn, Strauss packed his sketches and returned home before he set to work transforming them into a finished piece of music.)

By Strauss's own yardstick, *Aus Italien* was his earliest significant work. "This is the first work of mine to have met with opposition from the mob so it must be of some importance," he wrote after the premiere in Munich on March 2, 1887 (less than a month after the premiere of Verdi's *Otello* in Milan). He said that he was "immensely proud" of the controversy it stirred: "Some people applauded lustily, others hissed loudly, but finally the applause won the day." He still clearly took pleasure in calling the piece a "symphonic fantasy embellished by local opposition" when he asked the eminent conductor Hans von Bülow if he could dedicate the score to him.

Strauss himself described *Aus Italien* as "the connecting link between the old and the new methods" of composition. It is, in other words, the transition between those early orchestral pieces of his that we rarely hear today—the

first horn concerto, a *Burlesque* for piano and orchestra, the F minor symphony—and the landmark tone poems that immediately followed—beginning with *Don Juan* and *Death and Transfiguration*—that would make him almost unimaginably famous. Strauss himself called *Aus Italien* a "symphonic fantasy," suggesting its hybrid status between a four-movement symphony with pictorial qualities—a descendant of Mendelssohn's *Italian Symphony* of a half century earlier—and the rich programmatic works by Liszt. Composed just one year after Brahms's Fourth Symphony, Strauss's new score opens the window wide on a different kind of orchestral landscape altogether. (There is no escaping a new influence on Strauss, as well: his way home from Italy, Strauss stopped over in Bayreuth to hear Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* and *Parsifal*.)

Funded entirely by his wealthy father and his even wealthier uncle, Georg Pschorr—the Pschorr brewery fuels Munich's Oktoberfest to this day—Strauss's Italian journey took him to Verona, Bologna, Rome, Naples, Sorrento, Salerno, Capri, and Florence. In Bologna, Raphael's celebrated painting of Saint Cecilia, the patron saint of music, moved Strauss to tears. (Just six years earlier, the English poet Percy Shelley wrote, after viewing the painting, that Saint Cecilia "seems rapt in such inspiration as produced her image in the painter's mind. . . . She is listening to the music of heaven.") Strauss himself began to hear snatches of music as he traveled, and he not only began

writing them down—obviously already knowing that a big orchestral piece would be his most important souvenir of the trip—but he made notes of tonalities that corresponded to each of the sights he visited. He later told von Bülow that he had “never really believed in inspiration



Conductor Hans von Bülow

through the beauty of nature, but in the Roman ruins I learned better, for ideas just came flying to me.”

All the characteristics of the soon-to-be-famous Strauss are already present in *Aus Italien*, except perhaps for economy (and that would never become Strauss’s strong suit). On page after page of *Aus Italien* we find the bold orchestral swagger of *Don Juan*, or the broad lyric outpouring of *Death and Transfiguration*, the brilliantly descriptive writing of *Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks*—works that were all written within the next decade. Strauss still owes a great deal to Brahms’s orchestral music, but as he pointed out, with *Aus Italien* he was taking “a first step toward independence” as a tone poet.

**A***us Italien* was the only work for which Strauss published a specific program, later learning to

trust that the music could speak for itself. The first movement, marked *Andante* and titled *In the Country*, suggests the magical effect of the Roman countryside “bathed in sunlight as seen from the Villa d’Este at Tivoli.” This expansive and atmospheric music, which Strauss called a prelude, comes the closest to the model of the symphonic poem by Liszt, another influential composer who found musical inspiration in his Italian travels. The second movement, inspired by standing amid the Roman ruins, conveys “fantastic images of vanished glory, feelings of melancholy and grief amid the brilliant sunshine of the present.” Strauss said it resembled a “great symphonic first movement,” and the shadow of Brahms lingers over much of this music, even though Strauss, finally finding his own voice, knew that Brahms was the past. On the *Shores of Sorrento*, Strauss’s third movement, is his first effort at serious musical pictorialism—the rustling of the wind, birdsong, “the distant murmur of the sea”—and with these few exquisitely scored pages he suggests that this will prove to be one of his greatest talents. The finale is based on “a well-known Neopolitan folk song” and, at the end, “a tarantella which the composer heard in Sorrento.” The first tune, so ubiquitous and natural sounding that Strauss mistook it for folk song, is, in fact, the ever-popular “Funiculi, funiculà” composed by Luigi Danza in 1880 to celebrate the new funicular on Mount Vesuvius, which put on a spectacular show

the day Strauss visited. The entire movement—"a hilarious jumble of themes," as Strauss admitted—is colored by fireworks of its own, and was meant to depict "the colorful bustle of Naples." The tarantella eventually sweeps the finale to its conclusion, though not without a fond glance back at the glorious Italian countryside.

Although *Aus Italien* is regularly overlooked today, it was this work that announced Strauss as the leading musical revolutionary of the day and introduced him to many concertgoers. (*Aus Italien* was his first orchestral piece performed in England, for example.) Theodore Thomas, who had given the U.S. premiere of Strauss's F minor symphony in New York in 1884—at a time when Strauss's music was almost completely unknown in America—wrote to Strauss to ask if he could introduce *Aus Italien* to this country. That performance, with Thomas's own orchestra, took place in Philadelphia, on March 8,

1888, just a year after the Munich premiere. Once Thomas came to Chicago three years later to launch the Chicago Orchestra, he began to champion Strauss's music here. He programmed - during the Orchestra's ninth season, and then played it just twice more—in 1905 and 1908—before it disappeared from the Orchestra's repertoire—while *Don Juan*, for example, continued to be performed here nearly every season up through the 1950s. (The third movement of *Aus Italien*, *On the Shores of Sorrento*, was a favorite of the Stock era and often appeared on evenings of lighter music.) When Riccardo Muti conducted *Aus Italien* at the Ravinia Festival in 1973, the Orchestra had not played the complete score in sixty-five years. ■

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