

## PROGRAM

ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIRST 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**   
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Wednesday, January 18, 2012, at 6:30 (Afterwork Masterworks, performed with no intermission)

**Manfred Honeck** conductor

**Till Fellner** piano

**Beethoven** Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15

**Dvořák** Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is grateful to WBBM Newsradio 780 and 105.9 FM for its generous support as the media sponsor for the Afterwork Masterworks series.

Thursday, January 19, 2012, at 8:00

Friday, January 20, 2012, at 8:00

Saturday, January 21, 2012, at 8:00

**Manfred Honeck** conductor

**Till Fellner** piano

**J. Strauss, Jr.**

Overture to *Die Fledermaus*

**Beethoven**

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15

Allegro con brio

Largo

Rondo: Allegro

TILL FELLNER

## INTERMISSION

**Dvořák**

Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88

Allegro con brio

Adagio

Allegretto grazioso

Allegro ma non troppo

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



## Johann Strauss, Jr.

Born October 25, 1825, Vienna, Austria.

Died June 3, 1899, Vienna, Austria.

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### Overture to *Die Fledermaus*

Even Brahms and Wagner, the two competitive, heavyweight composers of the era, shared a great fondness for the music of Johann Strauss, Jr. It is difficult today to imagine music that is so popular with average people and connoisseurs, liberals and conservatives, young and old alike, and to recognize that in the nineteenth century this music was serious business, if not serious music.

Johann Strauss, Sr., a gifted composer who started the family dynasty, tried to dissuade his three sons from the music business, but he lost on all three counts, and before he died in 1849, at the age of forty-four, he saw his oldest son, Johann, Jr., surpass him in fame and fortune.

At the height of his popularity, the younger Strauss employed several orchestras—all bearing his name—and dashed from one ballroom to another to put in a nightly appearance with each. Eventually Johann Strauss, Jr., would be acclaimed as the Waltz King, although, in fact, he wrote nearly as many polkas as waltzes and could have earned his reputation on the basis of his sixteen operettas alone.

*Die Fledermaus* (The bat) is the most famous of the stage works, although the operetta was not an instant success, hitting Vienna just as it was reeling from a stock market crash. Like many operas, it is a comedy of errors; disguise and mistaken identity play central

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#### COMPOSED

1874

#### FIRST PERFORMANCE

April 5, 1874, Vienna

#### FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

November 14, 1933 (popular concert), Orchestra Hall.  
Paul Kerby conducting

#### MOST RECENT

#### CSO PERFORMANCES

March 30, 1996,  
Orchestra Hall. Michael  
Gielen conducting

July 28, 2007, Ravinia  
Festival. Christoph  
Eschenbach conducting

#### INSTRUMENTATION

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

#### APPROXIMATE

#### PERFORMANCE TIME

9 minutes

#### CSO RECORDING

1992. Daniel Barenboim  
conducting. Erato

roles. (The title refers to a costume worn at a masked ball.) The plot is not easily or sensibly summarized: as in Mozart's *Figaro*, a man sets out to deceive, and in the end is deceived himself. (In both cases, a philandering husband unwittingly flirts with his own wife.) There are many loose ends—too many to be resolved except in opera—and,

finally, everyone simply drinks a toast to the wonders of champagne. A story scarcely worth telling has been made unforgettable by music. The overture is a potpourri of the operetta's best moments, and it includes, as its centerpiece, a waltz tune so great that if Strauss had written nothing else, he would still be loved today. ■

## 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 NOTE: Some programs do not allow for latecomers to be seated in the hall.



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))



## Ludwig van Beethoven

Born December 16, 1770, Bonn, Germany.

Died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria.

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### Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15

This is not Beethoven's first piano concerto. We are usually taught that the B-flat major concerto known as no. 2 is really no. 1, but that is not entirely accurate either. Sometime in 1784, when Beethoven was only fourteen years old, he wrote a piano concerto in E-flat major. It is the sort of sprawling, self-important, and florid music that teenagers often write (assuming that they compose music at all), and it is a greater testament to the young Beethoven's apparent virtuosity as a pianist than to his incipient talent as a composer. Although the full score is lost, we still have a copy of the piano part, including indications for orchestral cues. (The concerto was reconstructed by Willi Hess

and performed for the first time in 1943.)

Jumping ahead nearly a decade, we come to the first works in the genre that Beethoven wished to acknowledge: a concerto in B-flat, probably begun before 1793, and the C major concerto on this program, which was composed in 1795. Both works were published in 1801, but in the reverse order. Although Beethoven played both of these concertos in public on several occasions, he was intensely self-critical, and, when it came time to publish them, he could think of nothing good to say about either one:

One of my first concertos [in B-flat] and therefore not one of the best of my compositions is

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#### COMPOSED

1795

#### FIRST PERFORMANCE

December 18, 1795, Vienna.  
The composer as soloist

#### FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

March 12, 1915, Orchestra Hall. Rudolph Ganz, piano; Frederick Stock conducting

#### MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES

January 15, 2008, Orchestra Hall. Piotr Anderszewski, piano; Alexander Polianichko conducting

July 15, 2010, Ravinia Festival. Jorge Federico Osorio, piano; James Conlon conducting

#### INSTRUMENTATION

solo piano, one flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings

#### CADENZAS

Beethoven

#### APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

37 minutes

#### CSO RECORDINGS

1972. Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano; Sir Georg Solti conducting. London

1983. Alfred Brendel, piano; James Levine conducting. Philips

to be published by Hofmeister, and Mollo is to publish a concerto [in C major] which indeed was written later but which also does not rank among the best of my works in this form.

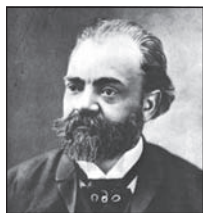
By 1801, Beethoven's style had changed dramatically. He recently had begun a third piano concerto in C minor, one of the works with which he would establish his primacy in the new century. From our viewpoint, the Third Piano Concerto does not mark a critical advance over the first two, but, for Beethoven, every step forward was important and hard won. Later generations, in fact, would lump all three concertos together as "early period" works, although that does not mean lesser Beethoven.

Beethoven apparently was more interested in the C major concerto than he let on because he composed three cadenzas for its first movement. All three are obviously later efforts, apparently dating from 1809, the time of the *Emperor* Concerto—his fifth and last piano concerto. By then, Beethoven realized that his worsening deafness would soon force him off the concert stage, and he wrote out definitive versions of the cadenzas that he previously had improvised.

It's not difficult to understand why this music still held interest for Beethoven as late as 1809, for it is impressive material used with

great mastery. Perhaps inspired by Mozart's great C major concerto, which he undoubtedly knew by the time this piece was written, Beethoven works on a larger canvas here than in the B-flat concerto. (He also adds clarinets, trumpets, and timpani to the orchestra.) Beethoven begins quietly, having already learned that a soft opening is often the quickest way to capture an audience's attention. The music is robust and energetic, despite the dynamic, and it soon bursts forth with typical Beethoven fervor. There is some characteristic horseplay with the choice of keys—the second theme begins in faraway E-flat—and Beethoven borrows from Mozart the unexpected touch of allowing the piano to enter with music the orchestra has not already presented (although, unlike Mozart, he never returns to the piano's new theme).

The slow movement is longer than the corresponding movement of any other concerto by Beethoven, but here he has learned how to move through slow music so that it never drags; the extra length is all bonus. The leisurely coda includes a poignant conversation between the piano and the first clarinet. A look through all the Mozart and Haydn finales will not produce a jazzier ending than this boisterous rondo, full of pranks and surprises. The good time goes on for nearly six hundred measures without seeming a moment too long. ■



## Antonín Dvořák

Born September 8, 1841, Nelahozeves, Bohemia.

Died May 1, 1904, Prague.

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### Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88

**O**n August 12, 1893, Antonín Dvořák conducted his G major symphony at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. According to the printed booklet prepared for Bohemian Day at the fair, the Exposition Orchestra consisted of the Chicago Orchestra (as it was then known) "enlarged to 114 men." The G major symphony was listed as no. 4, which is how it was known during the composer's lifetime, although we now number it the eighth of Dvořák's nine symphonies. In fact, to the late nineteenth century, Dvořák was the composer of just five symphonies; only with the publication of his first four symphonies in the 1950s did we begin to use the current

numbering. By now, even generations of music lovers who grew up knowing this genial G major symphony as no. 4 have come to accept it as no. 8.

By the time he came to Chicago, Dvořák had already conducted this symphony several times, always to an enthusiastic response—first in Prague and then in London, Frankfurt, and Cambridge, when he received an honorary doctor of music degree there in 1891. ("Nothing but ceremony, and nothing but doctors," he remembered. "All faces were serious, and it seemed to me as if no one knew any other language but Latin.") The Chicago reception, capped by "tremendous outbursts of applause,"

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#### COMPOSED

August 26–November 8, 1889

#### FIRST PERFORMANCE

February 2, 1890, Prague.  
The composer conducting

#### CSO PERFORMANCE CONDUCTED BY THE COMPOSER

August 12, 1893, World's  
Columbian Exposition

#### FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES

August 4, 1939,  
Ravinia Festival. Artur  
Rodzinski conducting

November 15, 1945,  
Orchestra Hall. Hans  
Lange conducting

#### MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCE

June 11, 2009,  
Orchestra Hall. Sir Mark  
Elder conducting

#### INSTRUMENTATION

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

#### APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

36 minutes

#### CSO RECORDINGS

1978. Carlo Maria  
Giulini conducting.  
Deutsche Grammophon

A 1966 performance with  
Rafael Kubelík conducting  
was released on *From the  
Archives*, vol. 16.

according to the *Tribune*, was equally positive.

In the 1880s and 1890s, Dvořák was as popular and successful as any living composer, including Brahms, who had helped promote Dvořák's music early on and had even convinced his own publisher, Simrock, to take on this new composer and to issue his *Moravian Duets* in 1877. Dvořák proved to be a prudent addition to the catalog, and the *Slavonic Dances* he wrote the following year at Simrock's request became one of the firm's all-time best sellers. Dvořák was then insulted and outraged, when, in 1890, Simrock offered him only a thousand marks for his G major symphony (particularly since the company had paid three thousand marks for the last one), and he gave the rights to the London firm of Novello instead. (At least he did not follow the greedy example set by Beethoven and sell the same score to two different publishers.)

Dvořák's G major symphony is his most bucolic and idyllic—it is, in effect, his *Pastoral*—and like Brahms's Second or Mahler's Fourth, it stands apart from his other works in the form. Like the subsequent *New World* Symphony, composed in a tiny town set in the rolling green hills of northeast Iowa, it was written in the seclusion of the countryside. In the summer of 1889, Dvořák retired to his country home at Vysoká, away from the pressures of urban life and far from the demands of performers and publishers. There he realized that he was ready to tackle a new symphony—it had been four years

since his last—and that he was eager to compose something “different from the other symphonies, with individual thoughts worked out in a new way.”

Composition was remarkably untroubled. “Melodies simply pour out of me,” Dvořák said at the time, and both the unashamedly tuneful nature of this score and the timetable of its progress confirm the composer's boast. He began his new symphony on August 26; the first movement was finished in two weeks, the second a week later, and the remaining two movements in just a few days apiece. The orchestration took only another six weeks.

The first movement is, as Dvořák predicted, put together in a new way.

The opening theme—pointedly in G minor, not the G major promised by the key signature—functions as an introduction, although, significantly, it is in the same tempo as the rest of the movement. It appears, like a signpost, at each of the movement's crucial junctures—here, before the exposition; later, before the start of the development; and finally, to introduce the recapitulation. Dvořák is particularly



**An image believed to be Dvořák conducting at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893**

generous with melodic ideas in this movement. As Leoš Janáček said of this music: “You’ve scarcely got to know one figure before a second one beckons with a friendly nod, so you’re in a state of constant but pleasurable excitement.”

The second movement, an *adagio*, alternates C major and C minor, somber and gently merry music, as well as passages for strings and winds. It is a masterful example of complexities and contradictions swept together in one great paragraph. The central climax, with trumpet fanfares over a timpani roll, is thrilling.

The third movement is not a conventional scherzo, but a lilting, radiant waltz marked *Allegretto grazioso*—the same marking Brahms used for the third movements of his second and third symphonies. The main theme of the trio

was rescued from Dvořák’s comic opera *The Stubborn Lovers*, where Toník worries that his love, Lenka, will be married off to his father.

The finale begins with a trumpet fanfare and continues with a theme and several variations. The theme, introduced by the cellos, is a natural subject of such deceptive simplicity that it cost its normally tuneful composer nine drafts before he was satisfied. The variations, which incorporate everything from a sunny flute solo to a determined march in the minor mode, eventually fade to a gentle farewell before Dvořák adds one last rip-roaring page to ensure the audience enthusiasm that, by 1889, he had grown to expect. ■

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