

## 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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Thursday, December 8, 2011, at 8:00

Friday, December 9, 2011, at 1:30

Saturday, December 10, 2011, at 8:00

**Michael Tilson Thomas** conductor

**Jeremy Denk** piano

### **Mahler**

*Blumine*

Performed to commemorate the centenary of Mahler's death in 1911

### **Beethoven**

Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37

Allegro con brio

Largo

Rondo: Allegro

JEREMY DENK

### **INTERMISSION**

### **Brahms, orch. Schoenberg**

Piano Quartet No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 25

Allegro

Intermezzo: Allegro, ma non troppo

Andante con moto

Rondo alla zingarese: Presto



## Gustav Mahler

Born July 7, 1860, Kalischt, Bohemia.

Died May 18, 1911, Vienna, Austria.

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### *Blumine*

This music was lost for more than seventy years. Mahler conducted it for the last time in June 1894 in Weimar. At that time, this small-scaled andante, titled *Blumine*, was the second movement of his First Symphony, a powerhouse work in five movements. But, after the Weimar performance—the third ever given of the new symphony—the composer decided to drop it from the score. When the symphony was published in 1889, there were just four movements, and *Blumine* was gone for good.

*Blumine* had, in fact, been written earlier, as part of Mahler's incidental music for a staging of Scheffel's poem *Der Trompeter von Säkkingen*; it accompanied the scene where

Werner, the trumpeter, serenades his beloved on the opposite side of the Rhine. It was composed in 1884, when Mahler was working on the *Songs of a Wayfarer* and only just beginning to think about tackling a big symphonic poem, the composition that would eventually become his Symphony no. 1. Although *Blumine* eventually found its way into the symphony, it was never intended for that piece and it never quite fit in. It took Mahler just three performances—the premiere in Budapest in 1889, a second performance in Hamburg in 1893, and the Weimar concert of 1894—before he was convinced that it felt like an insertion, even an interruption, in the narrative

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#### COMPOSED

1884

#### FIRST PERFORMANCE

November 20, 1889, Budapest, as second movement of Symphony no. 1. The composer conducting

#### FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

April 17, 1969, Orchestra Hall. Eugene Ormandy conducting. Performed as the second movement of Symphony no. 1

#### MOST RECENT

#### CSO PERFORMANCE

August 9, 2002, Ravinia Festival. Christoph Eschenbach conducting. Performed as the second movement of Symphony no. 1

#### INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, trumpet, timpani, harp, strings

#### APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

10 minutes

flow of the symphony. Scored for a smaller orchestra than the rest of the symphony, and of slight dimensions and delicate colors, it seemed “insufficiently symphonic,” Mahler later told the conductor Bruno Walter, one of the earliest champions of his music. And with that, *Blumine* disappeared.

In December 1959, Mrs. James M. Osborn of New Haven, Connecticut, bought a manuscript of Mahler’s First Symphony at a Sotheby’s auction and subsequently placed it in the Osborn Collection of the Yale University Library. This, it later turned out, was the version of the symphony Mahler had conducted in Hamburg in 1893, before he decided to cut *Blumine* from the score; the composer had given the manuscript to Jenny Feld, a woman he tutored at the Vienna Conservatory. She, in turn, passed it on to her son, who eventually contacted Sotheby’s. The score sat in the Yale collection, evidently unexamined, until 1966, when Mahler scholar Donald Mitchell saw it and realized that *Blumine* had been found at last.

Benjamin Britten conducted the first performance of the rediscov-

ered movement on June 18, 1967, at the Aldeburgh Festival. “It was a strange and touching experience, like a vivid dream in which one meets a long-dead friend,” William Mann wrote in the *Times*. The following year, a performance given in New Haven reinserted *Blumine* into the First Symphony, an attempt at reconstructing Mahler’s original symphonic plan (even though it inconsistently mixed the 1893 *Blumine* with the 1906 revision of the rest of the symphony). But since then, few conductors have chosen to ignore Mahler’s own wishes, and *Blumine* remains a historical curiosity that stands alone. (Oddly, the only previous Chicago Symphony performances of *Blumine* both treated it not as a separate piece, but inserted it into the symphony.)

The music itself, with its quietly haunting trumpet solo, is pure “innocent, uncomplicated lyricism,” in the words of Donald Mitchell. The name Mahler gave it, *Blumine*, is a tribute to Jean Paul, one of Mahler’s favorite writers, who had titled a collection of his articles *Herbst-Blumine*, apparently inventing the word *Blumine* at the time, as a variant of *Blume*, or flower. ■



## Ludwig van Beethoven

Born December 16, 1770, Bonn, Germany.

Died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria.

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### Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37

**W**e're not certain that Beethoven and Mozart ever met. Their names were mentioned in the same breath as early as 1783, when Beethoven's first composition teacher, Christian Gottlob Neefe, wrote these words in the first public notice of his promising pupil: "This youthful genius is deserving of help to enable him to travel. He would surely become a second Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart were he to continue as he has begun."

Neefe was suggesting that, with proper sponsorship, his young pupil could tour the music capitals and entertain kings with his dazzling keyboard talent—like most musicians, Neefe assumed that Mozart

would make his reputation as a virtuoso performer, not as a composer. Neefe didn't live long enough to understand how limited his view was, but he did see his prize student take the first steps to becoming not a second Mozart, but more importantly, the mature Beethoven.

It's likely that these two great composers did meet early in 1787, when the sixteen-year-old Beethoven made his first trip from his native Bonn to Vienna, to breathe the air of a sophisticated musical city. Beethoven stayed no more than two weeks, and he may even have taken a few lessons from Mozart before his teacher was suddenly called home by the news of

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#### COMPOSED

1800

#### FIRST PERFORMANCE

April 5, 1803, Vienna. The composer as soloist

#### FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

December 16, 1910, Orchestra Hall. Ernest Hutcheson, piano; Frederick Stock conducting

#### MOST RECENT

#### CSO PERFORMANCES

March 2, 2010, Orchestra Hall. Radu Lupu, piano; Gianandrea Noseda conducting

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

#### INSTRUMENTATION

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

#### CADENZA

TBD

#### APPROXIMATE

#### PERFORMANCE TIME

34 minutes

#### CSO RECORDINGS

1959. Gary Graffman, piano; Walter Hendl conducting. RCA

1971. Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano; Georg Solti conducting. London

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

his mother's failing health. There is, however, no mention of Mozart in a letter Beethoven wrote at the time.

When late in 1792, Beethoven returned to Vienna, where he would stay for the rest of his life, it was to study with Haydn, for Mozart lay in an unmarked grave. We can sense disappointment in the famous words Count Waldstein inscribed in the album that served as a farewell gift from Beethoven's friends:

You are going to Vienna in fulfillment of your long-frustrated wishes. The Genius of Mozart is still mourning and weeping over the death of her pupil. She found a refuge but no occupation with the inexhaustible Haydn; through him she wishes once more to form a union with another. With the help of assiduous labor you shall receive *Mozart's spirit from Haydn's hands*.

Beethoven arrived in Vienna in the second week of November 1792. He quickly realized that Haydn had little to teach him and took comfort in the fact that he was welcome in the same homes where Mozart was once popular.

To Beethoven, Vienna was Mozart's city. The first music he published there was a set of variations for violin and piano on "Se vuol ballare" from Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. In March 1795, he played Mozart's D minor piano concerto (K. 466) at a concert organized by the composer's widow Constanze. (He later wrote cadenzas for it as well, the only concerto

by Mozart he so honored.) And on April 2, 1800, at his historic first public concert, Beethoven included a symphony by Mozart on the program, which also was supposed to have introduced his brand new piano concerto (his third) in C minor. For reasons that we will never know, however, Beethoven played one of his earlier concertos instead.

This C minor piano concerto is one of a handful of works in which the spirits of Mozart and Beethoven convene. To suggest, as some writers do, that Beethoven modeled his concerto after Mozart's own C minor piano concerto (K. 491) is to confuse the deepest kind of artistic inheritance with plagiarism. The choice of key certainly can't be taken as a homage to Mozart, for Beethoven seemed unable to get C minor out of his system at the time. (Think of the *Pathétique* Sonata, or, a bit later, the funeral march from the *Eroica* Symphony, the *Coriolan* Overture, and, of course, the Fifth Symphony.)

Obviously, Beethoven remembered Mozart's C minor concerto when he was writing his own—they share too many musical details for sheer coincidence. According to a popular anecdote, Beethoven and the pianist Johann Cramer were walking together when they heard the finale of the Mozart concerto coming from a nearby house; Beethoven stopped and exclaimed: "Cramer, Cramer! We shall never be able to do anything like that!"

But in his own C minor concerto, Beethoven does something far more remarkable: he writes

music that pays tribute to this great masterpiece and, at the same time, transcends the Mozartean model. It was conceived in a complimentary, rather than a competitive spirit. Mozart's untimely death spared Beethoven a head-on rivalry with the one composer he worshiped, leaving him to make his own way in Vienna. (He hardly knew that Schubert existed, even though they lived in the same city for years; once, when asked to name the greatest living composer other than himself, he suggested Luigi Cherubini.)

Even nineteenth-century listeners, who thought Mozart a lightweight and Beethoven a quarrelsome revolutionary, heard the resemblance in this music—both in its details as well as its spirit and sensibility. Certainly the way the soloist continues to play right after the first movement cadenza up to the final bar can be found only in K. 491 among all of Mozart's piano concertos. Beethoven's opening theme, too, tosses a glance at Mozart's. But on the big issues—how the music moves forward, the way it approaches the turning points in its progress—there is less agreement. As Donald Tovey pointed out, Beethoven doesn't yet seem to have figured out what Mozart always understood—that you shouldn't give too much away before the soloist enters and the drama really begins. There are touches of pure Beethoven, like the unannounced entry of the timpani just after the cadenza—a complete surprise, even though it has been thoughtfully prepared by a main

theme that imitates the beating of a drum every time it appears.

There's nothing Mozartean about Beethoven's choice of key for the central slow movement: E major, with its key signature of four sharps, is bold and unexpected in a concerto in C minor, with three flats. For a moment the first E major chord, given to the piano alone, seems all wrong, as if the soloist's hands have landed in the wrong place; at the same time, it's fresh and irresistible. Where Mozart generally wrote *andante* or *adagio*, Beethoven dictates *largo*. Deliberately paced and magnificently expansive, this is the first great example of a new kind of slow movement. Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, composers would profit from remembering this music, although it's arguable that no one after Beethoven ever thought of anything like the lovely, fully blossomed romanticism of the duet for flute and bassoon over plucked strings and piano arpeggios midway through.

The way Beethoven glances over the final double bar of this movement at the opening of the finale also is new. The two movements aren't yet literally connected, as they will be in later music, but Beethoven uses all of his wit and wisdom to carry us from one to the next. He capitalizes on the fact that G-sharp is the same note on the keyboard as A-flat, and he uses that note to pivot from the remote world of E major back to C minor. Our ears easily make the connection, and the rondo finale races forward, full of pranks and good humor.

Having convinced his listeners (and himself, perhaps) that E major is no stranger to C minor, Beethoven returns to the key of his slow movement in the middle of the finale as if it were the most logical move of all. Beethoven recovers C minor again, but, after a brief cadenza, he tears off at a gallop into C major, where he has been headed all along.

It's not clear why this concerto, evidently designed for Beethoven's first Vienna concert in April 1800, wasn't performed that night. Perhaps it simply wasn't ready. The manuscript suggests that last-minute changes were *still* being made before its premiere on April 5, 1803, when Beethoven also introduced his new Second Symphony and the oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives*. Even then, the music was more firmly fixed in Beethoven's mind than on the page. Ignaz von Seyfried, the new conductor at the Theater an der Wien, agreed to turn pages for Beethoven, only to discover that it was easier said than done:

I saw almost nothing but empty leaves, at most on one page or another a few Egyptian hieroglyphs wholly unintelligible to me and scribbled down to serve as clues for him. He played nearly all of the solo part from memory since, as was so often the case, he had not had time to put it all down on paper. He gave me a secret glance whenever he was at the

end of one of the invisible passages, and my scarcely concealable anxiety not to miss the decisive moment amused him greatly, and he heartily laughed at the jovial supper which we ate afterwards.

Nearly a year later, Beethoven finally got around to writing down the piano part for a performance given by his student Ferdinand Ries, who provided his own cadenza.

The first reviewer of the Third Concerto commented that the piece should succeed "even in places like Leipzig, where people were accustomed to hearing the best of Mozart's concertos." He continued, suggesting that this music would always require

a capable soloist who, in addition to everything one associates with virtuosity, has understanding in his head and a heart in his breast—otherwise, even with the most impressive preparation and technique, the best things in the work will be left behind.

Those are wise words, particularly from a man working in a field that to this day expects sound judgments on new music heard cold. What no critic could predict is that this concerto, rooted in the previous century and a pioneer in its own, would continue to speak as strongly and directly to the centuries that followed. ■



## Johannes Brahms

Born May 7, 1833, Hamburg, Germany.

Died April 3, 1897, Vienna, Austria.

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## Piano Quartet No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 25

(Orchestrated by Arnold Schoenberg)

**A**rnold Schoenberg was twenty-two when Brahms died. Both men, the revered master and the young prodigy, were members of the Vienna Composers Association. Although they did not know each other—we are not even certain if they ever shook hands—Schoenberg was poised to become Brahms's true heir and to carry his legacy into the next century. Early in 1897, only weeks before Brahms died, Schoenberg began his first string quartet, a sumptuous work in D major. Alexander von Zemlinsky—a promising young musician and a friend of

both men—showed the score to Brahms, who was impressed—or at least intrigued—by the music and asked about this man, unknown to him. Zemlinsky explained that Schoenberg had been working as a copyist and arranger in Vienna to make ends meet. Brahms at once offered to provide a stipend so that Schoenberg could study at the conservatory, but when Zemlinsky presented the offer, the proud young composer turned it down.

Forty years later—when Schoenberg had become famous not for following in Brahms's footsteps, but instead, in public opinion, for

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### COMPOSED

1855–1859, revised 1861

Schoenberg orchestration:  
May 2–September 19, 1937

### FIRST PERFORMANCE

November 16, 1861,  
Hamburg

Schoenberg orchestration:  
May 7, 1938, Los Angeles

### FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

December 15, 1938,  
Orchestra Hall. Frederick  
Stock conducting

### MOST RECENT

#### CSO PERFORMANCES

April 24, 1999, Orchestra  
Hall. Christoph  
Eschenbach conducting

June 22, 2001, Ravinia  
Festival. Christoph  
Eschenbach conducting

### INSTRUMENTATION

three flutes and piccolo,  
three oboes and english  
horn, two clarinets, E-flat  
clarinet and bass clarinet,  
three bassoons and contra-  
bassoon, four horns, three  
trumpets, three trombones  
and tuba, timpani, glocken-  
spiel, xylophone, triangle,  
tambourine, snare drum,  
cymbals, bass drum, strings

### APPROXIMATE

#### PERFORMANCE TIME

43 minutes

### CSO RECORDING

1964. Robert Craft  
conducting. Columbia

squandering his inheritance and trashing the great Viennese tradition—Schoenberg orchestrated the master’s G minor piano quartet—a gesture of honor, homage, and love. To many, it also looked like an attempt at reconciliation, although Schoenberg passionately believed that he had not shown any disrespect for Brahms and his tradition—that he had never written a note of music that Brahms would not have understood.

Shortly after Brahms’s death, Schoenberg struck out boldly on his own. Even as early as *Transfigured Night*, a richly chromatic string sextet written in 1899, he appeared to be following in Wagner’s rather than Brahms’s footsteps, and over the next decade he carried music to a point beyond the vision of either of his predecessors. After his invention of the twelve-tone system in the early 1920s, Schoenberg was regularly accused of overturning the great tradition of Western music. In 1933, for the centenary of Brahms’s birth, Schoenberg wrote a now-famous essay, “Brahms the Progressive,” that not only demonstrated his forerunner’s far-reaching innovations in musical language—harmony, phrase structure, and rhythmic development—but also implied that Schoenberg had merely picked up where Brahms left off. It was Brahms, Schoenberg insisted, not Wagner, who had pointed the way “toward an unrestricted musical language.” “He would have been a pioneer if he had simply returned to Mozart,” Schoenberg wrote. “But he did not live on inherited fortune; he made one of his own”—words

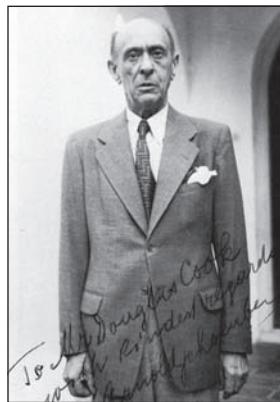
that now might well be applied to Schoenberg himself.

Four years later, in the spring of 1937, Schoenberg undertook an orchestration of Brahms’s first piano quartet, linking his name, by the hyphen on the front of the score, if not by deeper musical affinity, with that of his beloved ancestor—and by implication, with the procession of names to which he felt he now

belonged: Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner (the men he once rightly called his “teachers”). Schoenberg had known Brahms’s chamber music since his youth, and he often had played

either the viola or cello parts of these great works with friends. The early G minor piano quartet was one of his favorites, although he was always frustrated that he could not hear everything he saw on the pages of the score.

By 1937, Schoenberg was a master at transcribing music for orchestra—early in his career he had arranged countless operetta tunes to make a living, and, more recently, he had made magnificent transcriptions of Bach’s organ works. From the Bach project he had proved how, in the translation from keyboard to full orchestra,



**A formal photograph of Arnold Schoenberg**

ironically, one could achieve greater clarity. “Our ‘sound-requirements’ do not aim at ‘tasteful colors,’” he wrote at the time. “Rather, the purpose of the colors is to make the individual lines clearer, and this is very important in the contrapuntal web! . . . We need transparency, that we may see clearly!”

In the case of Brahms’s piano quartet, Schoenberg was especially aware that the piano often drowned out the strings, and in reassigning the lines of Brahms’s music to the full orchestra, he was careful to redress that balance. (Schoenberg eschews the obvious and naïve idea of leaving Brahms’s string parts to the orchestral strings and letting the winds and brass take over the

piano music.) Schoenberg’s orchestration is a marvel of ingenious and savvy planning—betraying at every turn his craftsmanlike knowledge of the orchestra from the inside out. It’s as if a great painting has been touched by the hand of a sensitive restorer, shedding new light on familiar shapes, brightening colors, and sharpening contrasts. Schoenberg is always faithful to the original—he does not “touch up” the notes of Brahms’s score as he goes; he merely adds color and weight.

Schoenberg later referred to this score as “Brahms’s Fifth,” implying that he had merely brought the inherent symphonic nature of this music to light. (The remark

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## SCHOENBERG’S COMMENTS ON ORCHESTRATING BRAHMS’S QUARTET

In a letter dated March 18, 1939, Schoenberg wrote the following comments to Alfred Frankenstein, the music critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Here are a few remarks about the “Brahms.”

### MY REASON:

1. I like this piece.
2. It is seldom played.
3. It is always very badly played, because the better the pianist, the louder he plays and you hear nothing from the strings. I wanted once to hear everything, and this I achieved.

### MY INTENTIONS:

1. To remain strictly in the style of Brahms and not go farther than he himself would have gone if he lived today.
2. To watch carefully all these laws which Brahms obeyed and not to violate such, which are known only to musicians educated in his environment.

### HOW I DID IT:

I am for almost fifty years very thoroughly acquainted with Brahms’s style and his principles. I have analyzed many of his works for myself and with my pupils. I have played as violist and cellist this work and many others numerous times: I therefore know how it should sound.

I had only to transpose this sound to the orchestra and this is in fact what I did.

Of course, there were heavy problems. Brahms likes very low basses, of which the orchestra possesses only a small number of instruments. He likes a full accompaniment with broken chord figures, often in different rhythms. And most of these figures cannot easily be changed, because generally they have a structural meaning in his style. I think I resolved these problems, but this merit of mine will not mean much to our present-day musicians because they do not know about them and if you tell them there are such, they do not care. But to me it means something.

recalls Robert Schumann's comment, made nearly a century earlier, that he heard "veiled symphonies" in the young Brahms's piano music.) Despite the integrity of his approach, Schoenberg calls for an orchestra Brahms himself never used—beginning, in the very first measure, with an E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet that do not appear in any Brahms score, and later calling for sizeable percussion. (In his four symphonies, Brahms allowed nothing more than a single triangle in the Fourth.) Still, Schoenberg's orchestration is purely in the spirit of Brahms, despite its little anachronisms—which Schoenberg handily dismissed, claiming that he had done nothing that Brahms himself would not have done "if he lived today." (For Schoenberg's full defense, see his letter to Alfred Frankenstein reprinted here.) The true mark of Schoenberg's achievement is that, without changing a single note in Brahms's score, he has managed to reveal new truths about the original work.

In the first movement, for example, Schoenberg refuses to orchestrate a repeated passage the same way twice. What was mere repetition in Brahms becomes development here. And, in the development section, where Brahms wrote a rapid-fire dialogue

between piano and strings, dramatic in its black-and-white repartee, Schoenberg produces instead a continual unfolding of shifting orchestral colors. (The movement is also enhanced and even transformed by the addition of cymbals, triangles, and bass drums.)

Schoenberg's light-as-a-feather orchestration of the second movement makes something surprisingly dramatic of Brahms's gentle intermezzo. In the middle section of the following slow movement, Schoenberg provides all the fire and brilliance of a real military band where Brahms had only mimicked one. In the finale, which Brahms marked *alla zingarese* (in the gypsy style), Schoenberg makes something hair-raisingly explicit of the composer's original intent, throwing in the tambourine and xylophone, and luxuriating in the kind of orchestral effects that Brahms suggested but never used. The lasting impression of the entire score is that it is neither pure Brahms nor characteristic Schoenberg, but instead a meeting of two peers, different but utterly compatible. ■

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