

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, November 10, 2011, at 8:00

Friday, November 11, 2011, at 1:30

Saturday, November 12, 2011, at 8:00

Tuesday, November 15, 2011, at 7:30

Stéphane Denève conductor

Leonidas Kavakos violin

Prokofiev

Suite from *The Love for Three Oranges*, Op. 33a

The Eccentrics

The Magician Tchélio and Fata Morgana Play Cards

March

Scherzo

The Prince and the Princess

The Flight

Prokofiev

Violin Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 63

Allegro moderato

Andante assai

Allegro, ben marcato

LEONIDAS KAVAKOS

INTERMISSION

Roussel

The Spider's Feast, Op. 17

Ravel

Suite No. 2 from *Daphnis and Chloe*

Dawn—

Pantomime—

General Dance

CSO Tuesday series concerts are sponsored by United Airlines.

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



Sergei Prokofiev

Born April 23, 1891, Sontsovka, Ukraine.

Died March 5, 1953, Moscow, Russia.

Suite from *The Love for Three Oranges*, Op. 33a

In the summer of 1917, Chicago businessman Cyrus McCormick, Jr., the farm machine magnate, met the twenty-six-year-old composer Sergei Prokofiev while on a business trip to Russia. Prokofiev was unknown to McCormick, but the composer recognized the distinguished American's name immediately, because the estate his father had managed owned several impressive International Harvester machines. McCormick expressed an interest in the composer's new music, and he eventually agreed to pay for the printing of his unpublished *Scythian Suite*. He also encouraged Prokofiev to come to the United States, and asked him to send some

of his scores to Chicago Symphony music director Frederick Stock.

McCormick wrote to Stock at once, saying that Prokofiev "would be glad to come to Chicago and bring some of his symphonies if his expenses were paid. But not knowing myself the value of his music, I did not feel justified in taking the risk of bringing him here." After Stock received Prokofiev's scores, he replied to McCormick: "There is no question in my mind as to the talent of young Serge." Although Stock at first doubted that it was feasible to bring the Russian composer to the U.S. right away, Prokofiev (or Prokofieff, as the U.S. press spelled his name at the time) made his debut with the Chicago Symphony

COMPOSED

1919

FIRST PERFORMANCE

Opera: December 30, 1921,
Auditorium Theatre, Chicago

Suite: November 1926,
Boston

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE OF COMPLETE SUITE

November 18, 1965,
Orchestra Hall. Jean
Martinon conducting

MOST RECENT

CSO PERFORMANCES

October 4, 1975,
Orchestra Hall. Erich
Leinsdorf conducting

July 1, 2000, Ravinia Festival.
William Eddins conducting

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

15 minutes

INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and english horn, two clarinets and bass clarinet, three bassoons and contra-bassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, tubular bells, xylophone, cymbals, tam-tam, triangle, bass drum, side drum, tambourine, two harps, strings

the following season, playing his First Piano Concerto under Stock's baton, and conducting the orchestra himself in the American premiere of his *Scythian Suite* in Orchestra Hall in December 1918.

"The appearance here of the young Russian, Sergei Prokofieff, at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra concert was the most startling and, in a sense, important musical event that has happened in this town for a long time," wrote Henriette Weber in the *Herald and Examiner*. "Personally he is middle-sized and blond, somewhat gangling about the arms and shoulders, and entirely business-like in demeanor," reported the *Journal*. "His business is his music, while he is on the stage, and he would seem to resent even the time that it takes to bow." The music itself caused quite a stir. "Russian Genius Displays Weird Harmonies" was the headline in the *American*. "The music was of such savagery, so brutally barbaric," Henriette Weber wrote, "that it seemed almost grotesque to see civilized men, in modern dress with modern instruments performing it. By the same token it was big, sincere, true." The public loved it. "Every man and woman there reacted to it," Weber continued, "and Prokofieff was given a thundering ovation that at least in a slight degree expressed the tumultuous emotions he inspired."

In Chicago, McCormick introduced Prokofiev to Cleofonte Campanini, the director of the Chicago Opera, who asked the composer if he had written an opera. When Prokofiev explained

that he had, but that the score for *The Gambler* was sitting on the shelf of the Mariinsky Theatre back in Russia and would be difficult to obtain, Campanini hit on the idea of commissioning him to write a new opera for the Chicago company. That January, Prokofiev signed a contract to produce an operatic version of *The Love for Three Oranges*, based on the Russian adaptation of Venetian playwright Carlo Gozzi's commedia dell'arte fairy tale, to be premiered in Chicago. By March, citrus growers in Florida and California were fighting over promotion rights.

Prokofiev prepared the libretto himself; he had read the story on the ocean liner on his way to the U.S., and even began to sketch a plan while crossing the Pacific. "The play, with its mixture of fairy tale, humor, and satire, had a strong appeal for me," he later said. Prokofiev wrote the opera in nine months—he often worked quickly when inspired—and turned in the completed orchestral score by October 1, as his Chicago contract demanded. That December, Campanini died suddenly and the company postponed the premiere till the following season. Prokofiev fought back, demanding compensation for the year-long delay, and, as a result, the new opera was postponed again. Finally, a new executive director, the famous soprano Mary Garden (she was Debussy's original Melisande) gave Prokofiev everything he wanted—a lavish production (it reportedly cost \$100,000), as many rehearsals as he needed, and a firm premiere date: January 30, 1921.

The Auditorium was full that night and Prokofiev later called it a big success. “The Chicagoans were both proud and embarrassed to be presenting a ‘modernist premiere,’” he later wrote. “The music, I fear,” Edward Moore reported in the *Tribune*, “is too much for this generation.” The sets, designed by Boris Anisfeld, who had worked with Diaghilev in Paris (and then settled in Chicago, teaching at the School of the Art Institute), fared better: “Never was paint applied to scene cloth any more lavishly or gorgeously,” Moore wrote. In the end, Garden did not stand by her

high-profile commission; several years later, when she was told that the scenery was falling apart, she said

it should be destroyed because no one would want to see the opera again anyway. That, of course, has not been the case. There were highly successful Soviet productions in Leningrad in 1926 and in Moscow the following year—they helped convince Prokofiev to return to his homeland in the

1930s—and many others, around the world, since (Lyric Opera of Chicago staged the opera in 1976 and 1979).

A few years after the Chicago premiere, Prokofiev made a six-movement symphonic suite of excerpts from the opera that has greatly extended the work’s popularity. The story of *The Love for Three Oranges* is an absurd, highly convoluted fantasy: the central tale involves a prince, who is put under a curse by the witch Fata Morgana that makes him fall in love with three giant oranges, each of which contains a princess, one of whom is destined to be his love. The suite opens with *The Eccentrics*, drawn from the opera’s prologue. The next excerpt accompanies a card game between the sorcerer Tchélió (he loses) and Fata Morgana, who plays a critical role in the rest of the action. The popular, grotesque *March* is essentially the entr’acte connecting the first scenes of act 2. (It was once famous as the theme of the radio program *The FBI in Peace and War*.) The scherzo is the original entr’acte between the first scenes of act 3. The Prince and the Princess uses music drawn from the desert scene in act 3, where the princesses emerge from the oranges; only one survives, and she then begins a love duet with the prince. The *Flight* is taken from the opera’s last scene, when Fata Morgana’s trap door vividly swallows a number of victims. ■



A publicity shot of Prokofiev taken in a Chicago hotel room, 1918



Sergei Prokofiev

Violin Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 63

Prokofiev wrote his first violin concerto shortly before he left Russia in 1918; the second concerto was composed seventeen years later, as he was preparing to return home. Why Prokofiev decided to go back has been variously attributed to patriotism, opportunism, nostalgia, and political naïveté. In the United States, he had found limited popularity and financial difficulty as a wandering pianist and composer; in Paris he was more successful and more comfortable, but he increasingly longed “to see real winters again, and spring that bursts into being from one moment to the next.” In 1933, he concluded that “the air of foreign lands does not inspire me because I am Russian, and there is nothing more harmful to a man than to live in exile, to be in a spiritual climate incompatible with his race.” Nearly all the music Prokofiev is remembered for was

written in his homeland. And in 1933 he couldn’t foresee the harm that would ultimately come to him under Joseph Stalin, who, in a stroke of fate no work of fiction would dare, died on the same day as Prokofiev in 1953.

Most of Prokofiev’s celebrated Soviet contemporaries had either emigrated permanently, like Stravinsky and Nabokov, or stayed put, like Shostakovich and Pasternak. Prokofiev tried for the best of both worlds, although when he left Russia in May 1918, he expected to be back in a few months. But he found life outside his homeland too promising. Prokofiev received his first official invitation to return to Russia in 1923. He declined the offer, and the next year’s as well. When he did return in 1927, for a three-month tour, he was greeted as a celebrity. The next years were a time of

COMPOSED

1935

FIRST PERFORMANCE

December 1, 1935,
Madrid, Spain

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

April 1, 1943, Orchestra Hall.
Patricia Travers, violin; Hans Lange conducting

MOST RECENT

CSO PERFORMANCE

February 25, 2007, Orchestra Hall. Rachel Lee, violin; Semyon Bychkov conducting

INSTRUMENTATION

solo violin, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, bass drum, snare drum, triangle, cymbals, castanets, strings

APPROXIMATE

PERFORMANCE TIME

26 minutes

CSO RECORDINGS

1983. Shlomo Mintz, violin; Claudio Abbado conducting. Deutsche Grammophon

1993. Itzhak Perlman, violin; Daniel Barenboim conducting. Erato

increasing frustration—Prokofiev recognized the urgent need to settle on both a compatible musical style and a home base. He decided to resume Soviet citizenship as early as 1932. (He didn't close up his Paris apartment until 1936, however.) In 1934, he paved the way for his move by publicly addressing the question of "what kind of music should be written at the present time" in the Soviet Union. For Prokofiev, the solution rested on the abiding strength of melody—"simple and comprehensible, without being repetitive and trivial . . . We must seek a new simplicity." It was a shrewd battle cry—both politically correct and consistent with Prokofiev's genuine beliefs.

The Second Violin Concerto was Prokofiev's last non-Soviet commission; it was written for the French-Belgian violinist Robert Soetens. Prokofiev recalled:

In 1935 a group of admirers [of Soetens] asked me to write a violin concerto for him, giving him exclusive rights to perform it for one year. I readily agreed, since I had been intending to write something for violin at that time and had accumulated some material. As in the case of the preceding concertos, I began by searching for an original title for the piece, such as "Concert Sonata for Violin and Orchestra," but I finally returned to the simplest solution: Concerto no. 2. Nevertheless, I wanted it to be altogether different from no. 1 in both content and style.

Prokofiev worked on the concerto at the same time as the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* during the summer of 1935; the two have much in common, particularly an ardent and voluptuous lyricism. The concerto was begun in Paris, continued in a number of hotel rooms, and completed in Russia, a reflection of Prokofiev's "nomadic concert-tour existence," as he put it, but also a reminder of how he straddled two worlds at the time.

The concerto begins with the solo violin playing an unaccompanied G minor melody, as if Prokofiev wished to establish from the outset the preeminence of melody and a new simplicity of language. The first movement, based on classical sonata form, is almost relentlessly lyrical; the essential drama of contrast comes only from the switch of key and mode to B major for the second theme. The second movement, in E-flat major, combines a light accompaniment, like the ticking of a clock, with a sweet and soaring melody in the violin. The mood is serene, disturbed only from time to time by more urgent and searching music. These roles are reversed at the very end, as the violin plays pizzicato triplets to the main tune, now low in the orchestra. In complete contrast, the finale is brash and athletic, with a rustic main theme that suggests peasants dancing and the unexpected use of castanets—a touch of local color that seems to predict that the world premiere would be given, on another of Prokofiev's whirlwind tours, in Madrid. ■



Albert Roussel

Born April 5, 1869, Tourcoing, France.

Died August 23, 1937, Royan, France.

11

12

The Spider's Feast, Symphonic Fragments, Op. 17

Performed as part of the CSO's one-hundred year retrospective

Albert Roussel came to composing relatively late in life. Like Rimsky-Korsakov, he first enjoyed the naval career that his family assumed was his natural destiny—as a child, Roussel devoured Jules Verne's maritime adventures, delighted in his family's seaside vacations, and decorated his room to look like that of a ship's captain. He enjoyed playing the piano for his family in the parlor at home and excelled in his lessons from the local cathedral organist, but he never thought of music as a serious pursuit. Roussel placed sixteenth among six hundred Naval School candidates, and, at eighteen, he took a berth on the training ship *Borda*. Occasionally he played the piano at officers' dances, and, when he was stationed in Cherbourg, he joined in performances of chamber music. Roussel privately began

to study a harmony textbook and eventually started to compose in his spare time. (In Cherbourg, he tried out one of his pieces with friends, only to realize that, in his inexperience, he had written the viola part in the wrong clef.)

At one point, Roussel discovered among his shipmates Ensign Adolphe Calvet, who happened to be the younger brother of the famous opera soprano Emma Calvé. Calvet asked if he might send one of Roussel's compositions to the distinguished conductor Edouard Colonne. A few weeks later, Calvet reported that Colonne was so impressed that he advised Roussel to leave the service and devote himself to composition. In June 1894, Roussel resigned from the navy and moved to Paris to begin formal training. His progress was slow, but, in 1897, when the

COMPOSED

1912

FIRST PERFORMANCE

April 3, 1913, Paris

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

March 26, 1926,
Orchestra Hall. Frederick
Stock conducting

MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCE

October 15, 1965,
Orchestra Hall. Jean
Martinon conducting

INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes and piccolo, two
oboes and english horn, two
clarinets, two bassoons,
two horns, two trumpets,
timpani, bass drum,
cymbals, triangle, celesta,
harp, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

17 minutes

two madrigals he submitted, each under a different pseudonym, to a major competition were jointly awarded first prize, he knew that he had made the right career move. Only many years later did he learn that Calvet had never sent his manuscript to Colonne.

In 1933, Roussel suggested that his mature career could be divided into three phases, beginning with his “early” work, written around 1910, when he was already forty. These pieces show “some slight influence of Debussy along with certain personal accents.” In his middle, transitional works, “the style changes, the harmony becomes bolder, and the influence of Debussy disappears altogether.” Writing in the third person, he adds, “Roussel’s new manner becomes the target of criticism as well as the object of enthusiastic approbation.” In his third period, Roussel “found his true voice.”

The first of Roussel’s three ballets, *Le festin de l’araignée*, or *The Spider’s Feast*, comes from the composer’s self-proclaimed early phase. The spell of Debussy is still evident, but so is Roussel’s own strong personality and distinctive style, despite what he later claimed. The music is light and refined, but also sensuous and vividly illustrative—Roussel is a master of the highly suggestive use of color and rhythmic gesture. For the concert hall, Roussel prepared the concise set of “symphonic fragments” from the full score performed this week. The ballet, based on a libretto by Gilbert de Voisins, is set in a country garden. The main characters include a butterfly, dung beetles, ants, and the spider of the title. After various insects are trapped in the spider’s web, the spider prepares to enjoy her feast, only to be eaten herself by a praying mantis. The ballet ends with the funeral procession of the mayfly. ■



Maurice Ravel

Born March 7, 1875, Ciboure, France.

Died December 28, 1937, Paris, France.

11

12

Suite No. 2 from *Daphnis and Chloe*

Performed as part of the CSO's one-hundred year retrospective

Maurice Ravel wrote home from his first tour of America in 1928: "I am seeing magnificent cities, enchanting country, but the triumphs are fatiguing. Besides, I am dying of hunger." Although he found the food alarming (Ravel traveled with his own favorite wines and cigarettes) and the pace relentless, in city after city Ravel was reminded of the extent of his celebrity. At the matinee concert of the Chicago Symphony on January 20, 1928, Ravel accepted enthusiastic applause throughout the afternoon, a standing ovation at the conclusion

of the program, and a fanfare from the orchestra he conducted. (The second performance, the following night, started a good half hour late because Ravel, a famously impeccable dresser, discovered that he had left his evening shoes in a trunk at the train station and would not go onstage until they had been retrieved—by his *Sheherazade* soloist Lisa Roma, no less.) The Chicago program included, as its centerpiece, the second suite from the ballet *Daphnis and Chloe*, which Ravel later called his most important score.

COMPOSED

1909–1912

FIRST PERFORMANCE

Ballet: June 8, 1912, Paris
Suite No. 2: April 30, 1914, Paris

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

November 2, 1923,
Orchestra Hall. Frederick Stock conducting

CSO PERFORMANCES CONDUCTED BY RAVEL

January 20 & 21, 1928,
Orchestra Hall

MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCE

November 10, 2007,
Orchestra Hall. With Chicago Symphony Chorus, Bernard Haitink conducting

INSTRUMENTATION

two piccolos, two flutes and alto flute, two oboes and english horn, two clarinets, E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet, three bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, four trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, bass drum, snare drums, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, castanets, celesta, glockenspiel, two harps, strings, optional wordless chorus (omitted at these performances)

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

18 minutes

CSO RECORDINGS

1964. Jean Martinon conducting. RCA

1991. Daniel Barenboim conducting. Erato

2007, complete ballet. With Chicago Symphony Chorus, Bernard Haitink conducting. CSO Resound

A 1958 performance with Carlo Maria Giulini conducting was released on *From the Archives*, vol. 9.

A 1987 performance with Sir Georg Solti conducting was released on *Chicago Symphony Orchestra: The First 100 Years*.

Ravel wrote *Daphnis and Chloë* for Sergei Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes. It was begun in 1909, before Diaghilev's troupe had set Paris ablaze with a series of new ballets



Designs by Léon Bakst for *Daphnis and Chloë*—*Daphnis*; *Chloë*; costumes for shepherds

unlike anything the worlds of music or dance had known, starting with Stravinsky's *Firebird* in 1910 and climaxing with the scandalous premiere of *The Rite of Spring* in May 1913. Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloë* wasn't introduced until June 8, 1912, due to the composer's difficulty in finishing the score, compounded by backstage squabbling once rehearsals began. Although *Daphnis and Chloë* wasn't well received, that date isn't engraved in music history, for this isn't music to provoke fistfights or catcalls.

The principal players in the creation of *Daphnis and Chloë* were a distinguished group: Sergei Diaghilev, the impresario; Michel Fokine, the choreographer; Léon Bakst, the designer; Pierre Monteux, the conductor; and Vaslav Nijinsky and Tamara Karsavina, the leading dancers. Ravel worked tirelessly with Fokine to translate the most famous of the Greek prose pastorals into a scenario for ballet—the collaboration partly hampered, as the composer admitted, because “Fokine doesn't know a word of French, and I know only how to swear in Russian.”

At first, there was also a serious difference of opinion about the style of the piece. “My intention in writing [*Daphnis and Chloë*],” Ravel later said, “was to compose a vast musical fresco in which I was less concerned with archaism than with reproducing faithfully the Greece of my dreams, which is very similar to that imagined by French artists at the end of the eighteenth century.” But Fokine had in mind the “ancient dancing depicted in red and black on Attic vases.” The result has something of the classical austerity of Jacques-Louis David's canvases as well as the stunning clarity of Greek pottery. But it is both more sumptuous and subtle than either.

In rehearsal, Fokine and Nijinsky fought endlessly over the choreography, and Diaghilev grew so tired of serving as intermediary that he finally threatened to cancel the project. As it was, he was forced to postpone the premiere twice, largely because Ravel was having

trouble completing the final dance, on which, by the first rehearsals, he had labored for a full year. (And then, when the music was delivered at last, Diaghilev's dancers were stymied by the finale's asymmetrical 5/4 meter—Ravel suggested chanting “Ser-gei-Dia-ghi-lev” to each measure to help them keep their place.) Ultimately, the rancor and tension of the *Daphnis* rehearsals led to a rift between Diaghilev and Fokine, who left the company at the end of the season.

Daphnis and Chloe is the largest orchestral work Ravel wrote; he called it a “choreographic symphony in three parts,” and in its scale and developmental detail it's as close as he ever came to tackling symphonic form. “The work is constructed symphonically,” Ravel said at the time, “out of a small number of themes, the development of which ensures the work's homogeneity.” *Daphnis and Chloe* is perhaps the greatest example of Ravel's remarkable ear for orchestral sounds, and of the subtlety with which he shades and colors his canvas. Few passages in music are as justifiably famous as the opening of this suite, when the rising sun gently bathes the music in warmth and light.

The story is adapted from a tale by the fifth-century Greek author Longus. Daphnis and Chloe, abandoned as children and raised by shepherds, have fallen in love (Daphnis charmed Chloe by playing for her on his pan-pipes). In

the first part of the ballet, Daphnis earns Chloe's kiss; pirates land and abduct Chloe. In part 2, Pan and his warriors rescue Chloe; part 3 reunites the lovers. Ravel arranged two sets of symphonic fragments from the ballet for the concert hall.

The second suite—the one the Chicago Symphony played under Ravel's baton in 1928—includes the music of part 3 of the ballet. It opens with the sounds of daybreak, one of the most magical depictions of the gradual awakening of nature in all music. The birds (three solo violins and piccolo) sing and the shepherds stir, and the music is slowly warmed by the brightening rays of the sun. Daphnis awakens and joins Chloe. It is now full day.

In a gentle pantomime, Daphnis and Chloe recreate the old story of Pan wooing the nymph Syrinx—the very event that Pan recalled and which moved him to intervene with the pirates and return Chloe to Daphnis. Pan's seductive flute solo is one of the most famous in music. Daphnis and Chloe eventually forget their roles and fall into each other's arms, declaring their love. All that's left is celebration, accomplished in an extraordinary final dance that took Ravel, perhaps the greatest perfectionist among composers, a year to polish and fine tune. ■

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